

Introduction

If your home or business is flooded the effect can be devastating. This leaflet contains information about what you can do if you have been flooded or are at risk of flooding.

How can I find out if my home or business is at risk of flooding

Visit the Environment Agency website:

www.gov.uk/environment-agency or www.gov.uk/check-if-youre-at-risk-of-flooding then click on the "Flood risk to your property" you can enter your postcode or home town. This will give you information about your risk of flooding.

Property protection

It is important to be aware that if you have flooded, or live in a known flood area, you should take measures to protect your property.

It is estimated that half of all properties at risk from flooding are in areas where large scale public defences are unlikely to be feasible so you should consider taking steps to protect your own property and possessions from flooding.

Resistance measures

These can be very effective when installed as part of flood repair works. A survey should always be undertaken by a competent professional to ensure that what is planned will make a real difference. The survey will consider which parts of the property are vulnerable, its construction and what could be installed.

The most common items are:

Permanent fixtures

- Flood doors which look like ordinary doors but are designed to stop water entering.
- Automatic self closing air bricks
- Non-return valves fitted to water and waste pipes.
- Impervious sealants or "skins" applied directly to the exterior of the building.
- External bunding, such as walls or gates.

Temporary or demountable defences

- Flood barriers for doors and windows
- Toilet bungs
- Sandbags or gel sacs
- Air brick covers

Resilience measures

If your property is liable to repeated flooding you can limit the potential damage, cost and time taken before you are able to return to your house by modifying services and interior fixtures and fitting.

- If you can move services such as boilers and service meters above the likely flood height.
- Install electrical circuitry, fuse boxes and heaters at a higher level.
- Ensure power cables are carried down from the ceiling level rather than up from flood level.
- Install a pump with submersible emergency power supply to assist in draining cellars and basements.
- Replace gypsum plaster board with lime plaster and lay boards horizontally rather than vertically.
- Solid timber doors are more water resistance than modern hollow core doors.
- Stainless steel or solid timber kitchen units are more resistant to water.
- Install tiled or stone flooring that can be washed and cleaned easily.

- Put appliances above flood level where possible.
- Effective maintenance such as keeping masonry or pointing in good order and sealing gaps around pipes that penetrate external walls will all help in keeping water out.
- Check drains to ensure they are in good working order and external ground levels are below the finished internal ground or damp course.

Whatever you decide to do you should never underestimate the forces that flood water can exert, particularly if your property is surrounded by water or partially flooded. The general guidance is that if the flood water exceeds one metre in height it should not be held back otherwise there is significant likelihood that structural damage will occur, so you may have to let the water in. Installing passive or temporary measures allows more time to secure, protect or move possessions away from the flood water.