

Flood Warden Handbook

Version 1.2



This Flood Warden Handbook belongs to:

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On behalf of the Parish Council/ Flood Action Group of:

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The Primary Flood Warden (*if applicable*) for this community is:

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Deputy Flood Wardens (*if applicable*) for this community are:

Deputy Warden Name	Contact Details

The Flood Alerts and Warnings for flooding in this community are:

Flood Alert/ Warning Name	Quick Dial Number
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Handbook User Information

Welcome to the Flood Warden Handbook. **Thank you very much for agreeing to be a Flood Warden.**

Flood Warden Schemes are important in the monitoring, warning and preparation for flooding at a community level. Flood Wardens aim to help and prepare those in the local community that are at risk of flooding. They are a vital link between the local residents and those responsible to responding to flooding events.

This handbook is designed to help you to perform your Flood Warden duties by providing guidance and information.

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Please note- if your community has an existing Community Flood Plan and / or Community Emergency Plan (or are thinking of preparing such plans), it is vital that as a Flood Warden you link in with the arrangements documented in the plan, so that the response to flooding is as joined up and effective as possible.

1. Types of Flooding

Flood Wardens may encounter many different types of flooding. A variety of factors determine what type of flood event can occur. The main types of flooding are:

Types of Flooding

Coastal flooding

Resulting from a combination of high tides and stormy conditions. If low atmospheric pressure coincides with a high tide, a tidal surge may happen which can cause serious flooding.

River flooding

Happens when a watercourse cannot cope with the water draining into it from the surrounding land. This can happen, for example, when heavy rain falls on an already waterlogged catchment.

Surface water flooding

Happens when heavy rainfall overwhelms the drainage capacity of the local area. It is much more difficult to predict and pinpoint than river or coastal flooding. The Environment Agency do not offer a Flood Warning service for surface water flooding.

Flash flooding/ Rapid Response Catchments

Rapid Response Catchments (RRC) contain rivers and streams (including smaller tributaries and ordinary watercourses) that could react rapidly to extreme rainfall, resulting in extreme flash flooding. Extreme flash flooding is where a river or stream reacts very rapidly to rainfall, and generates **dangerous flood depths and high velocities** of water that pose an **extreme threat to life**.

THINK Boscastle Flooding of 2004 and Helmsley in 2005

Sewer flooding

Happens when sewers are overwhelmed by heavy rainfall or when they become blocked. The likelihood of flooding depends on the capacity of the local sewerage system. Land and property can be flooded with water contaminated with raw sewage as a result. Rivers can also become polluted by sewer overflows.

Groundwater flooding

Results from water levels in the ground rising above surface levels.

Reservoir flooding

Some reservoirs hold large volumes of water above ground level, contained by walls or dams. Although the safety record for reservoirs is excellent, it is still possible that a dam could fail. This would result in a large volume of water being released very quickly.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

The following information shows the principal roles and responsibilities of the key organisations involved in flooding. Responding organisations have limited resources so may not be able to provide assistance in all circumstances. In such cases property owners and occupiers need to be aware that they should make their own arrangements to protect their property from flooding as far as possible.

Environment Agency (EA)

- Issue Flood Warnings for flooding from rivers, the sea and groundwater;
- Monitor the situation and advise other organisations;
- Maintain and operate EA flood defences;
- Deal with emergency repairs and blockages (where resources allow) on main rivers and EA owned structures;
- Receive and record details of flooding incidents;
- Respond to pollution incidents; and
- Provide support and advice on the development of Community Flood Plans
- Takes a strategic overview of the management of all sources of flooding and coastal erosion.
- Has operational responsibility for managing the risk of flooding from main rivers, reservoirs, estuaries and the sea
- Constructing and maintaining flood risk management assets

Gloucestershire County Council (Lead Local Flood Authority)

- Investigate and report flooding incidents
- Work with partners to manage flood risk from surface water, ground water and 'ordinary watercourses' (i.e. non 'Main River');
- Consent and enforce works to maintain flow on 'ordinary watercourses';
- Co-ordinate local authority support to multi-agency flood response as appropriate;
- Provide support to District Councils affected by flooding as necessary;
- Liaise with other agencies to identify, inform and support vulnerable people;
- Provide health advice to members of the public affected by flooding;
- Deploy emergency response teams to provide support to the emergency services and other partners as appropriate and resources allow;
- May take action to protect property from flooding by water from the highway where there is a failure of the highway drainage system.
- Implement road closures / traffic diversions and appropriate signage in liaison with the Police/ Highways Agency as necessary;
- Coordinate specialist sub-contractors (e.g. gully emptiers, jetting) to enable highway drainage clearance where possible;
- Support or lead the recovery from a flooding event as appropriate.

District Council

- Work with partners to manage flood risk;
- Provide advice to residents on flood protection, including grants that may be available;
- Clear District Council owned trash screens/ blocked culverts if safe to do so;
- Some District Councils may provide sandbags to 'vulnerable residents' at risk of flooding
- Provide 'welfare' support to flood affected communities including liaison with partners e.g. to arrange access to 'cut off' communities, to meet specific welfare needs etc;
- Liaise with Parish & Town Councils, Flood Wardens and Community Flood or Emergency Plan contacts to provide the latest information and monitor the situation 'on the ground'.
- Receive and record details of flooding incidents;
- Deal with environmental health issues, including pollution;
- Undertake cleanup activities such as waste collection/ street cleansing etc;
- Lead or support recovery phase as agreed, including longer term support to affected communities as necessary;
- Provide advice on developing a Community Emergency Plan.
- Run emergency planning support groups.

Parish Council/ Community Flood Plan/ Emergency Plan Group

Please note the role of Parish Councils in flooding may vary depending on what the District Council has encouraged them to do e.g. store/ distribute sandbags etc.

Also not all areas will have a Community Flood Plan or Community Emergency Plan, but as a Flood Warden this is something you could encourage.

- Work with the authorities to manage flood risk as appropriate;
- Encourage residents to prepare for flooding/ other emergencies;
- Assist in raising awareness of flood risk in the local community;
- Liaise with the District Council during a flooding event;
- Liaise with Flood Wardens as appropriate during a flood event;
- Be the 'eyes and ears' on the ground to provide updates to the authorities during a flood event;
- Alert the authorities to any 'vulnerable people' who may require support during flooding;
- Assist in disseminating information from authorities before, during and after flooding events as appropriate.

Police

- Take an overall co-ordination role during a flooding incident.
- Provide security as far as reasonably practical (evacuated properties/ areas, cordons)
- Undertake traffic management/ road closure duties in partnership with GCC Highways Team / Highways Agency.
- Coordinate the multi-agency media response

Fire and Rescue Service

- Life saving through Search & Rescue including provision of water rescue capability.
- If necessary, arrange mutual aid for flood rescue e.g. boats/trained crews and equipment e.g. High Volume Pumps
- Assist with evacuation as appropriate.
- Where resources allow, and activity is deemed to be appropriate, support other agencies with 'welfare issues' for communities that may only be accessible by boat e.g. welfare checks, dropping off medication etc.
- Prioritise and provide infrastructure protection and pumping activities in liaison with utility companies if necessary.

Ambulance Service

- Life saving in conjunction with other emergency services
- Treat and care for anyone injured during a flooding event
- Determine the priority for evacuation if necessary of those injured/medically vulnerable.
- Assist the local authorities with the transport of medically vulnerable people.
- Deploy specialist resources e.g. Hazardous Area Response Team (HART) to assist Fire & Rescue Service with water search and rescue operations

Utility Companies

- Implement operational / contingency arrangements in the event of a disruption
- Repair services disrupted by flood events as quickly as possible.
- Provide alternative means of supply during service disruption if life and health risks are identified
- Keep the public affected by supply disruptions other service issues informed as far as possible.
- Work in partnership with Local Authorities/NHS to identify and support 'vulnerable people' who may be affected by disruption to services

3. The Flood Warden Role

The role of a Flood Warden depends on the specific requirements of each community and the flooding issues found within the town or parish. Flood Wardens may be involved in the following activities during/ following flooding and at other times. **However, Flood Wardens should discuss with their Parish / District Council their specific role.**

Please note- Flood Wardens should never place themselves in situations where your own personal safety is at risk. In particular you should not enter flood water. Call the Emergency Services to deal with such situations.

For more guidance on safety issues please see Section 4.

During a flood

Report flooding

If you become aware of any flooding issues within your local community, these should be reported to the EA/ District Council (**see Appendix 1 Contact Directory**). It would be helpful if as much information as possible on the flooding could be provided please e.g. location of flooding, approximate number of properties that have flooded/are at risk of flooding, any issues arising from the flooding e.g. vulnerable people who may be affected.

Take photographs

Only if it is safe to do so, it is really helpful for the authorities if you are able to take photographs of the flooding, as these can provide an immediate visual understanding of the situation, as well as a longer-term record/ evidence for future flood risk management work.

Act as a communication channel

Flood Wardens are the communication channel during times of flooding between the community and those whose job it is to provide support. Residents may look to their Parish Council and Flood Warden(s) to provide information and guidance.

The main role of a Flood Warden is to pass information from the Environment Agency, District Council and emergency services to local residents, and vice-versa. It is quite possible that, during times of large-scale flooding, the Environment Agency and emergency crews will have limited resources to attend every incident. Some communities may well become physically isolated by floodwater. If this does occur, it may be necessary to prioritise those communities requiring help. The information provided by the Flood Wardens will help the responding agencies to allocate resources appropriately.

Contact details of the agencies that you should pass information to can be found in the Contact Directory in Appendix 1

Ensure local people are aware of flooding and encourage them to take action

Flood Wardens can play a vital role in ensuring local people are aware of flooding/ imminent flooding risk e.g. checking if they are aware if EA Flood Warning has been issued etc.

If safe to do so, Flood Wardens can also be effective in encouraging residents to take action as appropriate to respond to or prepare for impending flooding e.g. putting any property level flood protection measures in place e.g. flood boards/ air brick covers, moving valuables upstairs, making sure they have their 'Emergency / Flood Kit' to hand etc.

Follow Community Flood/ Emergency Plan guidance

If your community has a Community Flood Plan or Community Emergency Plan, it may document specific actions for the Flood Warden (which obviously you need to be aware of and comfortable with).

Alternatively it may be that you wish to take a role instigating the Community Flood Plan, or helping to coordinate the actions within the plan with other members of the local community Flood Action Group/ Community Emergency Plan volunteers as appropriate.

Help to identify vulnerable residents

As a Flood Warden, your local knowledge could be invaluable in helping the authorities to identify vulnerable residents who may require additional support during a flooding event.

Such residents may be disabled, elderly, infirm, have young children, pregnant etc. In addition residents who don't normally need any assistance, may have been made 'vulnerable' by the flooding situation e.g. their property is inaccessible resulting in them being unable to access food, medication and other supplies or they are temporarily need support e.g. just come out of hospital or have a broken leg etc.

Pet owners may need consideration, as the whereabouts and wellbeing of their pets will cause them additional concern. Encourage them to plan in advance how to keep their animals safe.

Visitors (e.g. to holiday properties) could also potentially be 'vulnerable' as they may not be aware of the flooding risk, or any local arrangements in place.

Keep a log of events and action taken

If possible, it is helpful if you keep a log of events and any action taken during flooding. This can provide a useful reminder of what happened and can also be a helpful in identifying lessons learnt in terms of the local community's and authorities response to the flooding, to try to build on this and prepare for any future flooding.

An example log sheet template is found at Appendix 3

Following a flood

Following a flood event it is important that you should stay in a state of readiness until the all clear has been received from the emergency services and Environment Agency. This is because flooding could recur quite quickly, especially if the flooding is due to inclement weather and the catchment could be saturated.

Post flooding information collection

It is important to try and collect as much information as possible about the flooding that occurred and properties affected (residential and business as appropriate). This could be in the form of writing down notes throughout the incident of where and when the water levels rose, taking photographs detailing the location and time or speaking with members of the community of their experiences. This should be completed as soon after the flood event as possible while details are still fresh in the memory.

The information is valuable to Local Authorities/ Environment Agency to support the flood recovery, for informing decisions about future flood risk management and also as evidence to apply for Government funding for flood risk management schemes. Such information also enables the Environment Agency to map the flood event to develop their flood maps, and improve the Flood Warning Service.

Contact your District Council to see if they have a specific form to record flooding

Continue to act as a communication channel

During the recovery from flooding, Flood Wardens can continue to be effective two-way communication links between the authorities and local community.

This may involve highlighting to the relevant authorities any residents who may require practical and emotional support and disseminating information from the authorities in relation to flood recovery e.g. guidance and signposting to support available.

Feedback if any clearance work is needed

Following a flooding event, watercourses and drainage systems e.g. culverts may be blocked with debris. Local Authorities/ Environment Agency may not have the resources to check all areas initially, so feedback on such issues will be very beneficial, and enable the authorities to prioritise clearance work.

Assist in the review of the Community Flood/ Emergency Plan

If your community has a Community Flood Plan or Emergency Plan, it is advisable to review the plan following a flooding event. This is to see if the plan needs any changes or improvements in light of lessons learnt from the community's response to the flooding. As a Flood Warden you may wish lead/ or assist with the plan review as appropriate.

At other times

A Flood Warden may be able to give advice and information to those at risk during drier periods, educating those in the community of the risk of flooding and encouraging residents/ the community to be prepared for flooding.

Monitor watercourses

Monitoring the condition of watercourses within the community can be an important part of your role. Flood Wardens can provide valuable feedback on the ground by keeping an eye on local stretches of river/ watercourse where the EA/ District Councils may not have the resources to do so regularly.

Flood Wardens also often have a great deal of local knowledge and experience that enables them to recognise changes in river levels and potential issues e.g. blockages. By reporting blockages and maintenance requirements early, unnecessary floods may be avoided. Please call the free Environment Agency 24 hour Incident Hotline on 0800 80 70 60 or your local District Council to report any blockages or other flooding issues.

Flood Wardens can also provide a valuable role in engaging with riparian landowners to make them aware of their responsibilities and encourage proactive clearance and maintenance of watercourses as appropriate. The Local Authorities and Environment Agency both have developed leaflets giving guidance to riparian owners (called '*Waterside Living in Gloucestershire*' and '*Living on the Edge*' respectively) which can be made available to Flood Wardens to hand out. Please remember, that it is not your responsibility as a Flood Warden to absolve riparian owners of their responsibility to clear and maintain watercourses.

Help to raise awareness of flood risk

As trusted members of the local community, Flood Wardens can be extremely effective in making residents aware of flooding risk, and promoting 'self-help' to improve resilience to flooding. Residents are more likely to take action on the advice of someone from the local community rather than the authorities.

Flood Wardens may be able to direct residents to where they can get information on flood risk e.g. Environment Agency website <https://www.gov.uk/prepare-for-a-flood/find-out-if-youre-at-risk> and raise their awareness of services available e.g. EA Flood Warnings Direct/ Floodline (please see below).

New residents moving into the area, or temporary residents like tourists, are very vulnerable to flooding due to their lack of local knowledge of local flood risk. You could list the properties of all new residents and contact owners reasonably soon after moving in, explaining your role and encouraging them to sign up to receive free Flood Warnings. For visitors who are staying at a holiday cottage for example, it is not recommended that you approach temporary visitors to explain the Flood Warden role. However, it may be appropriate to note these properties for attention during times of flooding.

Promote 'self-help'

Flood Wardens can also encourage residents of those properties at risk of flooding to prepare in advance by:

- **Personal Flood Plan** (see Environment Agency template online <http://apps.environment-agency.gov.uk/flood/151256.aspx>)
- **Household Flood Kit** (see Appendix 4)
- **Property Level Protection**

Whilst Flood Wardens can obviously not recommend specific property level protection measures, you could direct residents to the National Flood Forum '**Blue Pages Directory**' www.bluepages.org.uk (an independent directory of flood protection products). You could also liaise with your District Council to find out what grants may be available for property level protection and details of the application process and pass this information onto residents within your local community as appropriate.

Flood Warnings Direct/ Floodline Awareness

During drier periods, you could encourage residents to sign up to the free Environment Agency Flood Warnings Direct service (if available) and distribute information to raise awareness within the community. The EA can provide material for you to display on parish notice boards, via leaflet drops or to distribute at Parish Council meetings.

You could also raise the awareness of Floodline among residents so they can access up to date flooding information upon receipt of a flood warning. The Floodline telephone number and local quick dial code is possibly the most important piece of information that you can pass on to local residents. Advertising in a local parish magazine or on the Parish Council website would be a great way to inform the community of Flood Warnings Direct and Floodline services.

Quick dial codes for the EA Floodline can be found at Appendix 5

Assist in the preparation of a Community Flood Plan / Community Emergency Plan

A Community Flood Plan is an important document. It will help to define actions required within your community before, during and after a flood. It should contain all the necessary information needed to prepare your community for flooding and help to ensure a smooth, well prepared community response to flooding. The plan's contents will vary depending on the specific issues faced by the community. It is likely to include contact details and practical issues such as how information will be passed on to the community, practical issues such as the potential storage and distribution of sandbags.

Your community may have already prepared a Community Flood Plan but if not, the EA has a template (www.gov.uk/government/publications/community-flood-plan-template). The local EA office can provide advice on developing the plan. Alternatively, your local community may have already prepared a Community Emergency Plan, which is a more general plan to respond to any emergency that may affect the community i.e. not just flooding. If your community does not have a Community Emergency Plan your District Council can provide a template and advice on preparing the plan.

Also, Gloucestershire Rural Community Council has issued a free dvd entitled Your Community Emergency Plan to all parishes in Gloucestershire in 2015. This will guide you through preparing a plan .For more information see www.grcc.org.uk and click on emergency planning.

Please remember – if your community has (or is preparing) a Community Flood Plan or Community Emergency Plan as a Flood Warden you need to link with the plan.

Encourage your community to think about communication

A key part of raising awareness of flood risk and for the community to respond during a flood event is effective communication. As a Flood Warden, you could play an important role in encouraging the community to think about communication as part of the Community Flood Plan or Community Emergency Plan development.

This may include thinking, before flooding events, about ways to raise awareness of flood risk and encouraging 'self- help' and supporting the Community Flood/ Emergency Plan as appropriate. Various means could be used to raise awareness such as Parish Council or community newsletters and websites, public meetings, workshops, at other events taking place in the community, via existing community/ social/sports clubs and regular updates via social media.

Consideration could also be given to how communication will take place during and after a flooding event to ensure key information is shared with the community and enable appropriate support to be provided to those who need it. Again various forms of communication could be considered including door knocking (if feasible), telephone cascades, use of websites/ social media etc.

Raise awareness of the responsibility of riparian owners

As a Flood Warden you could if you felt comfortable doing so, speak to riparian owners to make them aware of their responsibilities if they own property next to a watercourse, and signpost them to advice such as:

- **Environment Agency's 'Living on the Edge' leaflet**
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/403435/LIT_7114.pdf
- **Joint 'Waterside Living in Gloucestershire' leaflet** produced by the local authorities in Gloucestershire available via <http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/flooding>

What not to do

Your commitment to being a Flood Warden is greatly appreciated thank you but you should bear in mind the extent of the role and your own personal limits.

The specific role of Flood Wardens may vary for each District Council area, depending on the requirements of the District/ Parish Council and local community. However, there are some general principles of what you should **not** do in your Flood Warden role:

- **Ideally Flood Wardens should not live in a property that is vulnerable to flooding.** This is because a Flood Warden can not very easily fulfil their role if they are trying to prevent their own property from flooding. If you are at risk of flooding, it is recommended that you ensure you are personally well prepared, so that you can quickly implement your own flood plan before helping others.
- **Place yourself at risk or undertake any activity that places you in any danger;**
- **Rescue residents from flood water** – leave this to the Emergency Services;
- **Drive or walk through flood water.** It takes only 15cm (6 inches) of fast flowing water to knock an adult over and only 60cm (2 feet) of water to lift and sweep away a vehicle.
- **Undertake any activity that you are not comfortable with;**
- **Deal with any potentially difficult situations-** this applies to dealing with someone who in someone who, in some way, hinders the flood response efforts e.g. insist on driving through flood water/ closed roads, or are generally aggressive and uncooperative. You should not try to deal with this situation but contact the relevant authorities to take the necessary action.
- **Remove debris from watercourses, ditches or culverts or operate flood defences e.g. sluice gates** – unless you have been specifically asked/trained by the District Council to do so otherwise please leave this to properly equipped and trained staff;
- **Take responsibility for protecting anyone's property;**
- **Absolve riparian owners of their responsibility to clear and maintain watercourses;**
- **Go on private property to monitor watercourses-** although you could ask local people to keep you informed of any problems with watercourses running through their property.

Please remember – your role as a Flood Warden is to inform the community and the authorities of the developing situation and undertake any action in identified in a Community Flood Plan/ Emergency Plan as appropriate. It is not your role to carry out the job of the Emergency Services. If the Emergency Services are at the scene please tell them what they need to know and then let them proceed unhindered.

4. Safety Information

This section highlights the possible hazards and dangers that a Flood Warden may encounter while performing their duties. Below is a list of hazards, with an explanation of what they are and how they can be avoided.

Drowning

Common perception is that drowning occurs in deep water such as a main river when in actual fact a person could easily drown in just an inch of water. It is also worth bearing in mind that six inches of flowing water is all it takes to sweep an adult off their feet. This is particularly relevant when entering flooded fields near to a river where the water could still be flowing. **We advise all Flood Wardens against the practice of entering floodwaters of any description.** It is preferred that Flood Wardens carry out their duties without the need to 'get wet'.

Contamination

Disposal of flooding equipment

After a flood there is a high probability that the flooding equipment used, such as sandbags and flood boards, will be contaminated with sewerage and pollutants. This can pose a problem when it comes to the disposal of contaminated items. If a Flood Warden thinks that the items used during a flood have been contaminated then they are advised to contact the local council for information and disposal. The EA booklet 'What to do before, during and after a Flood' also contains useful advice about how to clean up after a flood.

Hypothermia

Hypothermia is caused by getting too cold. It is a condition in which your normal body temperature of 37°C (98.6°F) drops below 35° (95°F). This is most common in cold environments, and the risk is increased if you are not wearing enough layers to keep warm, or do not have your head covered (the largest proportion of body heat is lost through the head). Hypothermia is also possible in mild weather, for example, if you get soaked in a rain shower and do not dry off properly soon afterwards, particularly if there is also a cool wind. The water evaporating from your skin brings down your body temperature.

If the weather is cold, make sure you're dressed appropriately before you go outside. Most body heat is lost through the head, so wear a warm hat. Layers of clothing trap air, which helps to keep you warm – tightly woven, waterproof clothes are best. Drink plenty of fluids and hot drinks (not alcohol) and eat regular, balanced meals to give you energy.

A Flood Warden should cease their duties and return home immediately if they start to show signs of Hypothermia e.g. constant shivering, slow and shallow breathing, cold / pale skin, tiredness, confusion. Remember to listen to the advice of other residents, as they may see you showing signs of hypothermia before you realise the onset of it.

Hostile people/residents

When under stress, such as that from flooding, people can become irrational and aggressive. Always approach people in a civil, polite manner, clearly explaining what role you hold and how/if you can help. If they become aggressive in anyway, leave them alone and do not attempt to help unless approached and asked specifically.

Manual handling

While attending to your responsibilities as a Flood Warden residents may ask you to help move items e.g. furniture/ valuables. It is up to individual Flood Wardens whether they are willing and able to provide such support. If as a Flood Warden you are happy to assist, be very careful not to lift anything too large, awkward or heavy and refuse to do so should you think it so.

Lone working

Where possible work in pairs or at least try to keep visual contact with other Flood Wardens/ Community Flood Plan/Emergency Plan volunteers or the emergency services etc. Where this is not possible make sure you let someone know where you are going and roughly how long you expect to be and let them know once you have completed your task and are back home. Make sure the person you tell has your mobile phone number (if you have one) and also other suitable numbers for them to call in case of an emergency.

Other hazards

Slips, trips and falls

Try not to walk on uneven or slippery ground and always wear sturdy, appropriate foot wear.

Livestock

Livestock are unpredictable in behavior and can be very dangerous, especially is under stress. Only enter an area inhabited by livestock with trained personnel, such as a farmer/ specially trained Fire Service personnel, and only if you feel it is safe to do so.

Traffic

During flooding, people will want to remove people and property away from the affected area as quickly as possible, and will not always be concentrating on their driving and the road ahead. Poor driving conditions and decreased visibility in bad weather can exacerbate this problem. A Flood Warden should always wear a high visibility jacket and take extra care when traversing public highways and thoroughfares.

It is also possible that a road might be severely flooded and will need to be closed to traffic. This is the responsibility of the Police/ County Council Highways Team. As a Flood Warden it is really helpful if you can alert the relevant authorities if any roads in your local community need to be closed due to flooding.

Summary of Health and Safety Considerations

Remember your personal health, safety and wellbeing are of paramount importance. Do not place yourself at risk of injury or harm. This applies not only during a flood event but any activities you may be involved in before and after. Keep the following health and safety points in mind:

- Do not place yourself at unnecessary risk of injury or harm.
- Always follow the advice and guidance of the Emergency Services.
- Do not enter flood water
- Do not feel pressurised to undertake any activity you are not comfortable with.
- Do not attempt to enter any areas that have been cordoned off by the Emergency Services
- Do not attempt to drive through flood water on any roads that have been closed by the Emergency Services.
- Wear suitable warm and waterproof clothing and where possible a high visibility vest while carrying out Flood Warden activities.
- Make sure you take regular breaks, keep warm and watch for signs of hypothermia in yourself and others.
- As far as possible don't work alone and if you have to make sure you tell someone where you are going and roughly how long you expect to be. Let them know once you have returned home.
- Wash your hands after coming into contact with flood water, especially before eating or drinking.
- Take extra care when walking on wet, slippery or uneven ground.
- Do not enter confrontational situations and be polite when talking to others.
- Do not attempt to clear drains, culverts, trash screens and watercourses unless you have been trained and authorised to do so. Report any blockages to the authorities.
- Do not operate any equipment or machinery unless you have been trained and authorised to do so e.g. sluice gates
- Do not operate or install any individual property level protection equipment such as flood gates, unless you have been trained and authorised to do so.

5. Insurance and Liability

Insurance

As a Flood Warden it is suggested that you speak to your Parish Council to see if they can extend their insurance cover to include Flood Wardens and other Community Flood Plan/ Emergency Plan volunteers. There are various types of cover a community group may wish to take but most communities tend to focus on **public liability insurance**.

There are also a number of private insurance companies that can offer municipal insurance for volunteer community groups.

If damage is caused by a Flood Warden, who is liable?

Flood Wardens should talk to their Parish Council or Community Flood/ Emergency Group as appropriate, to check their insurance policy to covers against liability for their actions.

The Environment Agency advises that in an emergency situation there is a possibility that Flood Wardens could be under considerable pressure. It is more likely that a Court would give an unpaid volunteer the benefit of the doubt as to whether they acted reasonably in the circumstances. Local Authorities and the Environment Agency advise all Flood Wardens that they should conduct themselves as any reasonable and prudent person would, thereby protecting themselves against claims of negligence.

What if a Flood Warden is injured?

It is important to check whether as a Flood Warden you are indemnified against personal injury within the Parish Council or Community Flood/ Emergency Group's insurance policy. Local Authorities and the Environment Agency will not be liable for Flood Warden injuries unless the injury arose due to their negligence. Flood Wardens will never be asked to carry out any duties that a reasonable, competent person is not able to do.

What if a Flood Warden fails to pass on a Warning?

It is important to remember that the Environment Agency has a power rather than a duty to give Flood Warnings, and the same principle also applies to a Flood Warden. In English law, a failure to act does not normally attract liability. Therefore, as the law stands, it is highly unlikely that any Court will prosecute a Flood Warden as a consequence of their actions as long as the Flood Warden acted in good faith with good intentions.

Recent legislation in the form of the 'Social Action, Responsibility and Heroism Act (2015) provides legal reassurance that Courts will take account of the fact that volunteers and community groups were acting to help society if something goes wrong and volunteers end up having to defend themselves against being sued.

6. Sandbags

Provision of sandbags

Sandbags have traditionally been used as a form of property protection and to divert water during a flood. However, they should not be relied upon and for properties at risk of flooding, property level flood protection measures can be far more effective.

Local Authorities do not have a statutory duty to provide sandbags but they will usually endeavour to help, particularly in cases of emergency. However, resources are limited and the view of most authorities on residential flooding is that householders should take appropriate measures to protect their own properties as far as possible from flooding as sandbag deployment to individuals by Local Authorities may not be possible.

If your local council **is** able to provide sandbags, they may have criteria in place regarding who is eligible for sandbags, and arrangements for delivery/ collection etc, which may alter depending on the flooding event/ scale. Information on each District Council's Sandbag Policy should be available on their website. **As a Flood Warden you may wish to contact your District Council to see what arrangements they have in place for sandbag provision.**

Your local District or Parish Council may request assistance from Flood Wardens in supervising, coordinating and distributing sandbags as appropriate within your community. It is up to individual Flood Wardens as to whether they are willing/ able to provide such support and also assisting residents with laying sandbags etc.

Use of sandbags

If sandbags are used, they can be most effective if they are used properly for example by fixing plastic sheeting behind them first (even plastic bin liners can help) and by laying the sandbags correctly. This can also reduce the number of sandbags that are required to help keep the water out of a property.

Gloucestershire Local Resilience Forum has produced a 'How to Sandbag' video available via <http://glosprepared.co.uk/flooding/> which you may wish to familiarise yourself with and also direct residents who may be using sandbags to.

Disposal of sandbags

Sandbags are likely to be contaminated with sewage/ possibly other pollutants. Therefore it is essential that they are disposed of correctly. It is important that any sand from sandbags is not washed into drains as this could lead to blockages and worsen potential flooding. Your local council should be able to provide advice on arrangements to dispose of used sandbags.

7. Sources of Information

Environment Agency services

Flood Warnings

The Environment Agency has the lead role for issuing Flood Warnings in order to protect people or property at risk of flooding. The EA provide Flood Warnings to the public and professional partners/ organisations. Floodline Warnings Direct (FWD) is a multimedia messaging system that disseminates warning messages via multiple channels such as telephone, mobile phone, pager, email, SMS text messaging and fax. You can sign up to FWD by calling Floodline on 0345 988 1188 or by registering online at: <https://fwd.environment-agency.gov.uk>

As a Flood Warden you should be signed up for the FWD service if you are not already. If you live in part of the community that does not receive a Flood Warning service, but are the Flood Warden for area(s) that do, you can contact the local Environment Agency Office (see Appendix 1 Contacts Directory) to ask to receive the relevant Flood Warnings. As previously mentioned an important aspect of your role could be to make local residents aware of the Flood Warning Direct Service and encourage them to sign up if they haven't already.

Flood Warning codes

Flood Warnings are issued by the Environment Agency using a set of three easily recognisable codes. Each of the three codes indicates the level of danger associated with the warning. The codes are not always used in sequence, for example, in the case of a flash flood, a Severe Flood Warning may be issued immediately, with no other warning code preceding it.

Many parts of the country are covered by the Environment Agency's Flood Warning Service. The lowest level of warning that the general public generally receives is the Flood Warning. This is because a Flood Warning indicates that property flooding is expected.

The Flood Warning codes can be found on page 22.

Floodline

This is a recorded message system that anyone can call. Floodline can be contacted on **0345 988 1188** and can provide detailed flooding information for your local area. Floodline quick dial codes can be found in **Appendix 5**. Floodline call operatives can also be reached to help with specific flooding enquiries.

River Levels on the Internet

The Environment Agency provides data on river levels on its website <http://apps.environment-agency.gov.uk/river-and-sea-levels/> This data is collected from EA monitoring stations and is updated daily. It covers all of the major rivers and shows the current level, typical range, recent highest level and the highest level recorded at the location.

Gauge Boards

The Environment Agency (Shropshire Herefordshire Worcestershire & Gloucestershire) Area can provide Flood Wardens with relevant 'Gauge Boards'. These provide information for specific river gauges including an overview of levels EA Flood Warnings are issued at, historic flooding levels, and potential impacts at particular levels.

Please note EA West Thames Area does not currently produce Gauge Boards, so these are not yet available for rivers in the Cotswold area.

Practical advice and guidance

The Environment Agency publishes practical and useful information to help communities prepare for flooding. The majority of these publications are available on internet or can be ordered for free by calling Floodline 0345 988 11 88. **Please see Appendix 6 for a list of relevant titles and weblinks.**

Other information

'Gloucestershire Prepared' - Local Resilience Forum (LRF)

'Gloucestershire Prepared' www.glosprepared.co.uk is the public facing website of Gloucestershire Local Resilience Forum (LRF). Gloucestershire LRF is the principal mechanism for multi-agency partners to work together to prepare for and respond to emergencies. The website includes information on community resilience and flooding. Gloucestershire LRF has a Twitter account **@Glos_Prepared** which will be used during flooding to share information.

Gloucestershire LRF 'How to Sandbag' Video

<http://glosprepared.co.uk/flooding/>

Other useful websites

Other useful websites include:

- **Met Office** - www.metoffice.gov.uk
- **National Flood Forum** - www.nationalfloodforum.org.uk/
- **Blue Pages Directory of flood products** - www.bluepages.org.uk
- **Gloucestershire County Council** – www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/flooding
- **Gloucestershire Rural Community Council** www.grcc.org.uk/emergency-planning/emergency-planning



FLOOD ALERT



FLOOD WARNING



SEVERE FLOOD WARNING

Warning no longer in force

What it means	Flooding is possible. Be prepared	Flooding is expected. Immediate action required	Severe flooding. Danger to life.	No further flooding is currently expected for your area.
When it is used	Two hours to two days in advance of flooding	Half an hour to one day in advance of flooding	When flooding poses a significant risk to life or significant disruption to communities	When a Flood Warning or Severe Flood Warning is no longer in force
Impacts likely to be seen	Flooding on fields, recreation land and car parks. Flooding of minor roads and farmland	Flooding of homes and businesses Flooding of rail infrastructure Flooding of roads with major impacts Extensive flood plain inundation (including caravan parks or campsites) Flooding of major tourist/recreational attractions	Deep and fast flowing water Debris in the water causing danger. Potential or observed collapse of buildings and structures Communities isolated by flood waters Critical infrastructure for communities disabled Large number of evacuees	No new impacts expected from flooding, however there still may be standing water following flooding Flooded properties Flooding or damaged infrastructure
Recommended actions	Be prepared to act on your flood plan. Prepare a flood kit of essential items. Avoid walking, cycling or driving through floodwater. Farmers should consider moving livestock and equipment away from areas likely to flood.	Protect yourself, your family and help others. Move family, pets and valuables to a safe place. Turn off gas, electricity and water supplies if safe to do so. Put flood protection equipment in place. If you are caught in a flash flood, get to higher ground.	Stay in a safe place with a means of escape. Be ready should you need to evacuate from your home. Cooperate with the emergency services. Call 999 if you are in immediate danger Call Floodline for up to date information.	Be careful. Flood water may still be around for several days and be contaminated. If you have been flooded, ring your insurance company as soon as possible.

Appendix 1 Contact Directory

Organisation	Office Hours	Out of Hours
<p><u>Environment Agency</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Floodline • Local Environment Agency Office • Number for reporting flooding/ blockages 	<p>0345 988 11 88</p> <p>01684 864557</p> <p>0800 80 70 60</p>	<p>0345 988 11 88</p> <p>01684 864557</p> <p>0800 80 70 60</p>
<p><u>District Councils</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cheltenham Borough Council • Cotswold District Council • Forest of Dean District Council • Gloucester City Council • Stroud District Council • Tewkesbury Borough Council 	<p>01242 262626</p> <p>01285 623000</p> <p>01594 810000</p> <p>01452 396396</p> <p>01453 766321</p> <p>01684 295010</p>	<p>Flood Wardens given number</p> <p>01625 854581</p> <p>01594 810000</p> <p>01452 396220</p> <p>01453 222104</p> <p>01684 293445</p>
<p><u>Gloucestershire County Council</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GCC Highways Team 	<p>08000 514 514</p>	<p>08000 514 514</p>
<p><u>Emergency Services</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Police (non emergency) • Fire HQ switchboard (non emergency) 	<p>999</p> <p>101</p> <p>01452 888777</p>	<p>999</p> <p>101</p> <p>-</p>
<p><u>NHS</u></p> <p>NHS 111 Service (when less urgent than 999)</p>	<p>111</p>	<p>111</p>
<p><u>Water/ Sewerage Company</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thames Water • Severn Trent Water • Bristol Water • Wessex Water • Dŵr Cymru (Welsh Water) – water emergency • Dŵr Cymru (Welsh Water) – sewer emergency 	<p>0800 316 9800</p> <p>0800 783 4444</p> <p>0845 702 3797</p> <p>0845 600 4600</p> <p>0800 052 0130</p> <p>0800 085 3968</p>	<p>0800 316 9800</p> <p>0800 783 4444</p> <p>0845 702 3797</p> <p>0845 600 4600</p> <p>0800 052 0130</p> <p>0800 085 3968</p>
<p><u>Electricity Distributors</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Western Power Distribution • Scottish and Southern Electricity 	<p>0800 6783 105</p> <p>0800 072 7282</p>	<p>0800 6783 105</p> <p>0800 072 7282</p>

Appendix 2 Flood Warden Equipment

As a Flood Warden, if you haven't already done so, you may want to ensure that you have the appropriate equipment to enable you to carry out your role. Please see some suggestions of such equipment noted below.

Please note the Environment Agency can provide Flood Wardens with a 'Hi-Viz' vest and laminated gauge boards* relevant to your community and leaflets to handout to residents (as detailed in Appendix 7).

***Please note EA West Thames Area does not currently produce gauge boards, these are not yet available for rivers in the Cotswold area.**

Please contact your local council who will liaise with the EA to arrange the above for you.

Flood Warden Equipment

- Warm/ waterproof clothing
- Appropriate footwear
- Gloves
- Hi-Viz vest*
- Torch
- Gauge boards*
- Handbook
- Leaflets for householders*



*** Items can be provided by Environment Agency- but please liaise with your local council about these items.**

Appendix 4 Household Flood Kit Contents

Households who are at risk of flooding, may find it beneficial to put together a 'Flood Kit'.

Most householders will have many of the items anyway, but putting them all together in one place, that can be easily at hand, can make it easier in a flooding emergency.

Below are some suggestions of what a Flood Kit may contain:

Flood Kit

- Waterproof clothing
- Rubber gloves
- Wellington boots
- Torch
- Battery or wind-up radio to monitor local news and weather
- First aid kit
- Spare batteries (for torch & radio)
- Mobile phone and charger
- Bottled water (check use by date)
- Tinned and non-perishable food (e.g. cereal bars), and a tin opener
- Blankets
- Emergency cash and credit cards
- Essential prescription medication/ repeat prescription forms
- Copies of insurance and any other important personal documents
- Contact Details e.g. friends/ family, insurers, bank, utility companies etc
- Children's essentials (if necessary) e.g. milk formula, baby food, sterilised bottles and spoons, nappies, wipes, nappy bags, clothing, teddy etc.

Appendix 5 EA Floodline Local Quick Dial Codes

Information on the current situation in your area can be heard by dialing Floodline on 0845 988 1188 or 0345 988 1188. This local information can be heard by selecting option 1 and then dialing one or more of the following quick dial codes, **which have been listed by District Council area for ease.**

Cheltenham Borough Area

Flood Alert Area	Flood Alert Code	Flood Warning Area	Flood Warning Code	EA Floodline Quick Dial Code
Rivers in North Gloucestershire	031WAF212	River Chelt at Charlton Kings	031FWFCH10	0524141
		River Chelt at Cox's Meadow	031FWFCH15	0524145
		River Chelt at Cheltenham Town	031FWFCH20	0524142
		River Chelt at Springbank	031FWFCH30	0524143
		River Chelt at Uckington and Boddington	031FWFCH40	0524144

Cotswold District Area

Flood Alert Area	Flood Alert Code	Flood Warning Area	Flood Warning Code	EA Floodline Quick Dial Code
River Windrush from Bourton to Newbridge	061WAF10Windrush	River Windrush at Bourton on the Water	061FWF10Bourton	171071
River Dikler from Condicote to Little Rissington	061WAF10Dikler	River Dikler between Stow on the Wold and Bourton on the Water	061FWF10Dikler	171251
River Thames from St John's Lock, Lechlade to Eynsham Lock, Eynsham.	061WAF23BsctKngs	River Thames between Buscot and Shifford	061FWF23Buscot	171161
The River Evenlode from Moreton in Marsh to Cassington and also the River Glyme at Wooton and Woodstock	061WAF12Evenlode	River Evenlode at Moreton in Marsh	061FWF12Moreton	171086
The tributaries on the Upper River Thames above Cricklade	061WAF23UpThTrbs	Swill Brook below Oaksey	061FWF23SwillBk	171204
The River Churn from Coberley to Cerney Wick and also The Hilcot Brook, The Daglingworth Stream and The Gumstool Brook	061WAF02Churn	River Churn from Baunton to Siddington including Cirencester	061FWF02Circnstr	171465
		River Churn at South Cerney	061FWF02SCerney	171466
		River Churn at Cerney Wick	061FWF02CrnyWick	171467

Continued overleaf

Cotswold District Area Continued

Flood Alert Area	Flood Alert Code	Flood Warning Area	Flood Warning Code	EA Floodline Quick Dial Code
Ampney Brook from Barnsley Wood to Sheeppen Bridge near Latton including Ampney Crucis	061WAF04AmpneyBk	Ampney Brook from Ampney Crucis to Sheeppen Bridge near Latton	061FWF04ACrucis	171483
River Leach from Northleach to Mill Lane near Lechlade including Fyfield and Little Faringdon	061WAF08Leach	River Leach from just below Southrop to Mill Lane near Lechlade	061FWF08Leach	171106
River Thames from Ewen to Cricklade including Somerford Keynes and Ashton Keynes	061WAF23EwnCrkld	River Thames at Ewen	061FWF23Ewen	171201
		River Thames from Somerford Keynes to Cricklade	061FWF23SKCrkld	171202
River Coln and its tributaries from Whittington to the confluence with the River Thames	061WAF06Coln	River Coln from Fossebridge to Quennington	061FWF06Bibury	171492
		River Coln at Fairford	061FWF06Fairford	171493
		River Coln for Cotswold Water Park and Whelford	061FWF06Whelford	171494
River Thames and its small tributaries from Calcutt to Lechlade	061WAF23CalcLech	River Thames from Calcutt to Lechlade including Hannington Wick	061FWF23CalcLech	171207
		Marston Meysey Brook for Marston Meysey	061FWF23MMeys	171208

Forest of Dean Area

Flood Alert Area	Flood Alert Code	Flood Warning Area	Flood Warning Code	EA Floodline Quick Dial Code
Severn Estuary	031WAT217	Tidal Severn from Elmore to Rodley	031FWTSE630	05241312
		Westbury, Broadoak and Newnham on the Severn Estuary	031FWTSE680	05241314
		Sharpness and Lydney Harbour on the Severn Estuary	031FWTSE710	05241318
Rivers in the Forest of Dean	031WAF215	River Lyd at Lydney	031FWFLY10	0524161
River Wye in Gloucestershire	031WAF120	River Wye at Lydbrook	031FWFWY0E	0524181
Wye Estuary	031WAT122	Wye Estuary at Brockweir	031FWTWY0F	0524182
		Wye Estuary at Elmdale, Chepstow	031FWTWY0G	0524183

Gloucester City Area

Flood Alert Area	Flood Alert Code	Flood Warning Area	Flood Warning Code	EA Floodline Quick Dial Code
River Severn in Gloucestershire	031WAF214	River Severn at Gloucester	031FWBSE590	0524121
		River Severn at Alney Island, Gloucester	031FWBSE600	0524122
		River Severn at Hempsted	031FWBSE610	0524123
Severn Estuary	031WAT217	River Severn at Minsterworth and Quedgeley	031FWBSE620	05241311

Stroud District Area

Flood Alert Area	Flood Alert Code	Flood Warning Area	Flood Warning Code	EA Floodline Quick Dial Code
Severn Estuary	031WAT217	River Severn at Minsterworth and Quedgeley	031FWBSE620	05241311
		Tidal Severn from Elmore to Rodley	031FWTSE630	05241312
		Epney on the Severn Estuary	031FWTSE640	052413211
		Frampton, Upper Framilode and Saul on the Severn Estuary	031FWTSE650	052413212
		Framilode & Priding on the Severn Estuary	031FWTSE660	052413213
		Arlingham on the Severn Estuary	031FWTSE670	052413215
		Slimbridge on the Severn Estuary	031FWTSE690	052413216
		Purton on the Severn Estuary	031FWTSE700	052413217
		Sharpness and Lydney Harbour on the Severn Estuary	031FWTSE710	052413218
Rivers Frome and Cam	031WAF216	River Cam at Cambridge	031FWFCA10	0524171
		River Frome at Chalford	031FWFFG10	0524151
		River Frome at Brimscombe and Thrupp	031FWFFG20	0524152
		River Frome at Stroud	031FWFFG30	0524153
		River Frome at Stonehouse and Bridgend	031FWFFG40	0524154
		River Frome at Fromebridge and Eastington	031FWFFG50	0524155

Continued overleaf

Stroud District Area Continued

Flood Alert Area	Flood Alert Code	Flood Warning Area	Flood Warning Code	EA Floodline Quick Dial Code
Severn Estuary at Oldbury-on-Severn, Northwick and Avonmouth	112WATSVN2	Severn Estuary from Sharpness to Oldbury-on-Severn, Shepperdine and Oldbury Power Station areas	112FWTSHA01	164288
		Severn Estuary from Sharpness to Oldbury-on-Severn, Clapdown, Hill and Nupdown areas	112FWTSHA02	164289
		Severn Estuary from Sharpness to Oldbury-on-Severn	112FWTSHA03	164290

Tewkesbury Borough Area

Flood Alert Area	Flood Alert Code	Flood Warning Area	Flood Warning Code	EA Floodline Quick Dial Code
River Avon in Worcestershire	031WAF209	River Avon at Twyning	031FWFAV80	0523247
River Severn in Gloucestershire	031WAF214	River Severn at Tewkesbury	031FWFSE520	0524111
		River Severn at Severn Ham, Tewkesbury	031FWFSE525	05241112
		River Severn at Chaceley and Haw Bridge	031FWFSE530	0524112
		River Severn at Abbots Court Deerhurst	031FWFSE540	05241131
		River Severn at Deerhurst	031FWFSE545	05241132
		River Severn at Apperley and the Leigh	031FWFSE550	0524114
		River Severn at Ashleworth	031FWBSE560	0524115
		River Severn at Sandhurst and Maisemore	031FWFSE570	0524116
		River Severn at Twigworth and Longford	031FWFSE580	0524117
Severn Estuary	031WAT217	River Severn at Minsterworth and Quedgeley	031FWBSE620	05241311
		Tidal Severn From Elmore to Rodley	031FWTSE630	05241312

Appendix 6 EA Publications

The Environment Agency publishes practical and useful information to help communities prepare for flooding. The majority of these publications are available on internet via the below links or can be ordered for free by calling Floodline 0345 988 11 88. If you call Floodline to order any publications it is helpful if you can provide the Reference number shown below.

Publication Title	Ref Number	Website Address Available from
What to do before, during and after a flood	LIT 5216	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/flooding-what-to-do-before-during-and-after-a-flood
Would your business stay afloat? A guide to preparing your business for flooding	LIT 5284	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preparing-your-business-for-flooding
Prepare your property for flooding: A guide for households and small businesses to prepare for floods.	LIT 4284	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prepare-your-property-for-flooding
Personal Flood Plan Template	LIT 4112	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/personal-flood-plan
Community Flood Plan Template	LIT 7488	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/community-flood-plan-template
Flood Minimising the Risk. Flood Plan guidance for communities and groups. Practical advice to help you create a Flood Plan.	LIT 5286	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/flood-plan-guidance-for-communities-and-groups
Sandbags: how to use them properly for flood protection	LIT 3833	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sandbags-how-to-use-them-to-prepare-for-a-flood
Living on the Edge – A guide to your rights and responsibilities of riverside ownership.	LIT 7114	https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/297423/LIT_7114_c70612.pdf