

what counts in a flood is good information you can act on...

Information Counts

Whether we like it or not, floods happen. Over the years, forecasting techniques have improved, giving us more time to prepare for flooding. But we still cannot tame nature itself.

The Environment Agency is here to help. We are responsible for issuing flood warnings throughout England and Wales.

We help by:

- Building and maintaining flood defences.
- Issuing timely, practical warnings.
- Ensuring that the many agencies responding to a flood all share the best information.

It's our job, working with our professional partners, to reduce the impact of flooding when it happens.

Flood Warning Triggers

Everyone needs to understand our Flood Warning Codes and know what to do when they are sent out. Each of the four codes is 'triggered' by particular weather, river or sea conditions which cause flooding. These examples (inside) are a guide to how the different warning codes are used.

Would you like to find out more about flooding or about the Environment Agency?

Then contact us on

Environment Agency Floodline
0845 988 1188

Environment Agency Floodline
Minicom Service
0845 602 6340

Environment Agency Customer
Service Line
08708 506 506

Website
www.environment-agency.gov.uk

Email
enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk



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Flood Warning Codes – what they are and what to do

A guide to the Environment Agency's
Flood Warning Codes

We are the Environment Agency. It's our job to look after your environment and make it a better place – for you, and for future generations.

Your environment is the air you breathe, the water you drink and the ground you walk on. Working with business, Government and society as a whole, we are making your environment cleaner and healthier.

The Environment Agency. Out there, making your environment a better place.

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Flooding of low-lying land and roads is expected. Be aware, be prepared, watch out.

Triggers

- Forecasts of high tides, surges or strong winds.
- Recorded rainfall that will cause flooding.
- Recorded or forecast water levels that will cause flooding.
- Snow melt forecast.

Impact on the ground

- Fast flowing rivers.
- Bank-full rivers.
- Flooding of fields and recreation land.
- Minor road flooding.
- Car park flooding.
- Farmland flooding.
- Surface water flooding (linked to river flooding).
- Spray/wave overtopping on coasts.
- Overland flow from rivers and streams.
- Localised flooding due to heavy storms.

Advice to the public/media

- Further flooding may be possible. Ring Floodline on 0845 988 1188 for up to date flooding information.
- Tune in to weather and travel bulletins.
- Keep a watch on the weather and water levels.
- Tell your family, friends and neighbours.
- Drive carefully – roads may be flooded.
- Farmers – Check Livestock.
- Check availability of torches and batteries.

Advice to operational organisations

- Notify others in accordance with Local Flood Warning Plan(s).
- Local Authorities should consider activating emergency procedures as appropriate.
- Flooding is expected in the specified area – Be prepared should the situation worsen.
- Keep a watch on the weather.
- Alert us to local flooding from rivers or the sea.



Flooding of homes and businesses is expected. Act now!

Triggers

- Forecasts of high tides, surges or strong winds.
- Heavy rainfall that could cause flash flooding.
- Snow melt.
- Observed rising level – critical trigger point reached.
- Forecast level or flow – trigger point for Flood Warning forecast.
- Site observations (e.g. blockages or defence failures).
- Actual flooding.

Impact on the ground

- Flooding of homes.
- Flooding of businesses.
- Flooding of cellars and basements.
- Underground rail stations and lines vulnerable.
- Flooding of major road infrastructure.
- Flooding of rail infrastructure.
- Significant wave/spray overtopping on coasts.
- Significant flood plain inundation (high risk to caravan parks or campsites).
- Flooding of major tourist/recreational attractions.
- Damage to flood defences.

Advice to the public/media

- As per Flood Watch plus:
- Move family, pets and valuables to safety.
 - Help neighbours.
 - Use sandbags or flood boards to block doors and airbricks.
 - Don't drive through flood water.
 - Be prepared to turn off gas and electricity supplies.
 - Have warm clothing and wellingtons ready.
 - Have medication to hand (if needed).
 - Check you have adequate water and food supplies.

Advice to operational organisations

- As per Flood Watch plus:
- Consider need to mobilise resources – personnel, plant, sandbags etc.
 - Prepare for possible evacuation of the public in risk areas.



Severe flooding is expected. There is extreme danger to life and property. Act now!

Triggers

- As for Flood Warning plus:
- Site observations of severe flooding or major problems with infrastructure and services.
 - Forecasts predict a worsening situation and severe flooding likely.
 - Predictions of major surges threatening coastal locations.
 - Actual flooding .
 - Professional judgement, including consultation with Professional Partners.

Impact on the ground

- Large numbers (at least 100) of homes/businesses expected to flood.
- Large numbers of people are likely to be affected by flooding.
- Highest risk to life.
- Severe adverse impact on local infrastructure anticipated: e.g. transport, hospitals, utilities.
- Significant impact on the capacity of professional partners, organisations and the public (e.g. vulnerable groups) to effectively respond.
- Flood defence failures or overtopping which could result in extreme flooding.

Advice to the public/media

- As per Flood Warning plus:
- Protect yourself, your family, pets and valuables – floods can kill.
 - Co-operate with emergency services and the authorities – people may be evacuated from their homes to rest centres.
 - Be prepared to turn off power supplies and be ready for power cuts and loss of services.
 - Avoid contact with floodwater – it may be contaminated.

Advice to operational organisations

- As per Flood Warning plus:
- Local Authorities consider activating any major incident/emergency plans.
 - Begin necessary evacuation procedures.



Flood Watches or Warnings are no longer in force for this area.

Triggers

- Rivers back in-bank, levels falling and no significant rain forecast.
- Rivers back below trigger levels that activated initial warnings.
- Tidal risk of flooding reducing and no significant tides forecast.
- Flood Watch, Flood Warning or Severe Flood Warning issued but no resultant flooding or forecast improved (false warning situation).

Impact on the ground

- No further impact in terms of flooding as it's an improving situation.
- Though this will be a busy time for property owners and local authorities as they start to clean up after the flooding.

Advice to the public/media

- Keep an eye on the weather and water levels in case the situation deteriorates and new Flood Warnings are issued.

Advice to operational organisations

- Actions will depend on the nature of incident that has preceded the All Clear.
- Notify all relevant departments and personnel.
 - Keep an eye on the situation in case the weather deteriorates and new Warnings are issued.
 - Consider reviewing emergency procedures in light of recent events.