



changes

to our flood warning

service

Introduction to Floodline Warnings Direct

We are improving the way we issue flood warnings. Our new system, Floodline Warnings Direct will use new messaging technology, accessible over the Internet, to simultaneously warn homeowners, businesses, emergency services and local authorities of the threat of flooding. This is groundbreaking work in the field of emergency warning systems and we are the first organisation to develop such an innovative way of delivering messages via multiple channels such as, telephone, mobile phone, pager, email, SMS text messaging and fax.

Changing the way we deliver flood warnings

Currently five million people (10% of the population of England and Wales) live or work in areas at risk of flooding from rivers and the sea. This is likely to increase as the effects of climate change become a reality. Added to this is the projection that up to three million new homes will be built in England and Wales in the next 20 years, a number of which will inevitably be in areas at risk from flooding. As we continue to raise awareness of flooding there will be an increased demand on our information systems with more people wanting accurate and timely information from us.

Floodline Warnings Direct will deliver a number of innovative improvements to the current flood warning service that will underpin the requirements of the Civil Contingencies Act (2004). The benefits being:

- a system that will target warnings to people at home, work, or on the move by the method of their choice
- an improvement in public perception and confidence. Customers will be able to manage their own contact details, view previous warnings and register for services they require online.
- a more efficient, robust and adaptable system which uses the latest available technology
- improving our ability to warn and inform those at risk from flooding
- in the future, a distribution service that could be integrated and used by third parties for their own operations

Underpinning the whole system is a central database that maintains the information we need to operate the service, including:

- customer information
- properties at risk of flooding

- contact information (e.g. telephone numbers)
- warning and information messages
- flood warning areas (e.g. the geographical areas for which flood warnings are issued)

Our staff will use Geographical Information System (GIS) tools to help pinpoint geographical areas at risk from flooding, so that more targeted warnings can be issued. We will also use the latest technology such as “single data entry” and text-to-speech (available in English only at this time) to reduce the time we spend inputting data and recording information.

Using Floodline Warnings Direct

Floodline Warnings Direct can be accessed online. Once you are registered to the service, you can access all the information you need, such as summaries of flood warnings in force within your own operational boundary. We will still encourage the general public to view live flood-warning information online and get regular updates from our recorded message service.

Registering to receive flood warning information

The system will provide a fully-interactive service that meets the needs of our customers. Everyone will have a choice of methods for accessing and receiving the latest information on flooding.

Customers can find out if they live and/or work in an area where a flood warning service is available by entering their post code on the Environment Agency's web-site or by contacting Floodline. If they are in one of our designated areas, they will be able to register to receive flood warnings from Floodline Warnings Direct. Following registration, the Floodline Warnings Direct system will send a welcome letter to confirm personal and property details, as well as a test message to their chosen priority method of receiving flood warnings (e.g. mobile phone).