

# FLOODING

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Flooding can have a devastating effect on people, property, businesses and land. This leaflet provides guidance on the roles and responsibilities of the different organisations involved in managing and responding to flooding in Aberdeenshire. It also provides advice on what property owners should do to reduce their own flood risk and who to contact for help or advice.

### Who does what?

New legislation (The Flood Risk Management (Scotland) Act 2009) widens the roles and responsibilities of organisations involved in flood risk management. All organisations are placed under a duty to work together to reduce overall flood risk and there are specific requirements on each which can be summarized as follows.

### Scottish Government

- Setting National Policy on Flood Risk Management and Flood Warning
- Setting Scottish Planning Policy
- Provision of resources to enable authorities to address flooding

### Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA)

- Provide a flood warning service for Scotland
- Operates the Floodline service
- Provides advice to Local Authorities on flood risk and planning
- SEPA also have an important new role in the coordination of flood risk management policy and activities across Scotland.

### Aberdeenshire Council

- Assessing water bodies for conditions likely to pose a flood risk
- Undertake maintenance works in water bodies including the clearance of watercourses where the works will significantly reduce flood risk
- Maintenance of existing flood prevention schemes
- Maintain road gullies – these are as not designed to cope with extreme weather events but it is still important that they operate efficiently to avoid localized flooding. Report blocked road gullies to the Council.
- Planning and development control (with flood risk advice from SEPA)
- Working with the emergency services in response to severe flooding
- Coordinating reception centres for people evacuated from their homes and arrange temporary accommodation if appropriate
- Coordinating the aftermath of a flood
- Dealing with road closures (except on trunk roads)
- Preparation of strategic Flood Risk Management Plans (from 2012)

Local Authorities also have powers to promote new flood alleviation schemes where these can be justified and funding is available. There is no statutory duty for a Local Authority to prevent property from flooding nor is there a duty to provide sandbags in the event that there is deemed to be a risk of flooding. Aberdeenshire Council will make sandbags available for collection at depots in the event of a serious flood event. Property owners are strongly advised to make prior preparations for protecting their own property as flood incidents can occur with little warning and can be widespread



meaning that available resources will be stretched. Aberdeenshire Council may also offer alternative flood prevention products at discounted costs to property owners by taking advantage of its bulk purchasing power. Contact the Council for more information on these products.

## Scottish Water

- Maintaining water supply and drainage infrastructure
- Managing the discharge of surface water that enters the public drainage system
- Working in partnership with the local authority and emergency services
- Dealing with flood damaged mains and any flooding caused by bursts
- Liaising with SEPA, local authorities and the emergency services during a flood event to alleviate any flooding from public sewers.

Scottish Water also have new responsibilities for reducing the risk of flooding from urban drainage and combined sewer flooding that can result from higher than usual rainfall overwhelming these systems. Actions to reduce surface water flooding in urban centres will be delivered in close working partnership with Local Authorities.

## Police Scotland

The role of the Police Service in Scotland is to guard, patrol and watch so as (i) to prevent the commission of offences, (ii) to preserve order, and (iii) to protect life and property.

In the event of flooding or other natural disasters, Police Scotland do not have the capabilities or equipment to carry out rescue work, this role falls to our emergency service colleagues of Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, Scottish Ambulance Service and HM Coastguard.

Our role is to co-ordinate the actions of all agencies involved during the course of the incident. A Senior Police Officer will meet regularly with his/her counterparts of the other agencies involved to set a strategy and establish the priorities of all those involved. The protection of life will always be the main priority.

The Police will control the scene at its outer limits by setting up cordon points and setting up a traffic management system in conjunction with the Local Authority. We are also responsible for co-ordinating the evacuation of the area.

## Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

Scottish Fire and Rescue Services have a duty to save lives in the event of serious flooding. This means rescuing people trapped, or likely to become trapped, by water; and protecting them from serious harm,

"Serious flooding" in this context means flooding that causes or is likely to cause one or more individuals to die, be seriously injured or become seriously ill and which results from—

- (a) natural causes; or
- (b) an escape of water.

It is not the role of the fire and rescue service to provide or deploy sandbags during flooding events, nor can they remove floodwater which is just a few inches deep. The primary focus will always be the protection of life but should resources be available, assisting other agencies and the removal of large quantities of flood water using high volume pumps will be a consideration.

## Grampian Emergency Planning Unit

- Coordinate local authority emergency plans which detail the role of responders in the event of an emergency

## Met Office

- Produces weather forecasts which help the UK public make informed decisions about day-to-day activities
- Warns people of extreme weather to mitigate its impacts
- Provides dedicated forecasting services to SEPA's flood warning team

## Scottish Flood Forum

- Scottish Government Supported Organization which provides help and advice to those affected by flooding

## Landowners

- Under law are primarily responsible for the maintenance of watercourses and other water bodies including repairs and clearing
- Responsible for private flood defences on their land and maintenance of private drainage systems

## Home Owners

- Responsible for protecting their property from flooding
- Responsible for acquiring home contents and buildings insurance
- Responsible for taking action to prepare for flooding
- Responsible for maintaining private drainage, including gullies and drains on shared private access roads / courtyards etc.

## What you can do

You can help protect against flooding by taking appropriate action to stop flood water entering your property. This can be done by blocking doorways and other entrances to your property with sandbags or alternatives products. If sandbags or other defences are not readily available a pillowcase or plastic shopping bag filled with earth or sand will make an effective substitute.

## Advice and support - precautionary measures

Flooding will often catch you by surprise. Taking some precautionary measures could make all the difference when you are faced with a flood. Creating a flood plan is a good way of preparing for a flood. You should:

- Check your insurance to make sure you have adequate flood cover
- Know how you will protect your property if there is a flood
- Keep a 'flood pack' of batteries, wind up or battery radio, torch, first aid kit, sanitary supplies, bottled water, etc
- Consider arrangements for children, pets and elderly family members during a flood.
- Ask neighbours if they will need help during a flood.
- Keep a list of contact numbers you may need in a flood: (use the back of this leaflet to keep records of contact numbers)
- Plan alternative accommodation if at all possible
- During adverse weather, check flood warnings or call Floodline
- Place important documents, photos, personal items in a watertight container and move along with expensive electrical equipment to upper floors if you are in imminent danger of flooding.

## Advice and support - during a flood

During a flood there are a number of actions you can take to ensure your safety and that of your family and your property:

- Be aware that floods can escalate very quickly
- Tune into local radio for flood warnings and information
- Call the Council during working hours. We may be able to offer help
- Outside of normal working hours, contact the police contact number 101
- If life is at risk contact 999
- If you are being flooded from a sewer call Scottish Water
- Place sandbags or alternative products, across doorways, block air vents and other routes where water may enter your property
- Keep safe your house keys, mobile phone, credit cards, medication, children's essentials and your 'flood pack'

- In the event of evacuation turn off gas and electricity if this can be done safely without risk to yourself
- Move your car to higher ground if you can do this safely
- Keep out of flood water – even shallow water can be dangerous and there may be hidden hazards such as displaced manhole covers
- Advise the local authority about your whereabouts if you evacuate your property. This will help the relevant agencies contact you in the aftermath of a flood

Flooding can occur at any time of the year and from a range of sources including from rivers, surface water runoff, the sea or even burst water mains or sewers. It is important to be aware of how you would protect your property in the event of a flood. Being prepared can reduce the damage caused by flooding and help keep you and your property safe.

There are a number of organisations who are involved in managing the risk of flooding. The following gives details of how to contact these organisations.

Contact	Phone No	Website / Notes
Police Scotland	101	<a href="http://www.scotland.police.uk">www.scotland.police.uk</a>
Emergencies Services	999	<b>Emergencies Only</b>
SEPA / Floodline	0345 988 11 88	<a href="http://www.sepa.org.uk">www.sepa.org.uk</a>
Aberdeenshire Council	0345 608 12 05	<a href="http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk">www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk</a>
Scottish Water	0800 077 87 78	<a href="http://www.scottishwater.co.uk">www.scottishwater.co.uk</a>
Scottish Flood Forum	0169 883 90 21	<a href="http://www.scottishfloodforum.org">www.scottishfloodforum.org</a>