

# Flooding

in Test Valley

People living in areas that are prone to flooding should take as many precautions as possible so they are prepared to act quickly - especially making sure that numbers of insurance companies and specialist suppliers are readily available.



**TEST VALLEY**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

## Helping to prevent flooding

### Options

### Comments

#### Sandbags

Useful for diverting water flow, but where the water is rising up through the ground, they are of limited value and will not prevent groundwater coming through floorboards.

If the Council is unable to help you, you will need to obtain the materials to make your own - local builders' suppliers may be able to help you with this.

However, there is nothing special about sandbags. Growbags, bin liners or plastic bags filled with earth will suffice.

#### Flood boards

These are better - a piece of 18mm (3/4 inch) ply cut to fit across outside door jambs and temporarily nailed in place with newspaper or any other suitable material, such as old carpet underlay, sealing the gap.

#### Heavy-duty polythene

An alternative is heavy-duty polythene tacked to the outside of jambs or sills. Low airbricks will need to be plugged (as a temporary measure only - it is very important that they are unsealed as soon as floodwater has receded).

### What to do...

Test Valley Borough Council can provide filled sandbags free of charge in an emergency to householders, however there may be insufficient bags for everyone wanting them.

For information telephone 01264 368000 or 01794 527700 (9am to 5pm Monday to Thursday and 9am to 4.30pm on Friday).

Sandbags may be collected by prior arrangement. Call 01264 368000.

Contact Builders' Supplies merchants - see the phone book.

Contact DIY stores or Builders' Supplies merchants - see the phone book.

## Other things to consider

**Traffic** - vehicles passing through floodwater may cause waves, forcing water to enter homes. Avoid driving through floodwater unless absolutely necessary. If it is essential, go slowly (below 10 mph) to avoid making waves.

**Moving** - if your property is at risk from flooding, give some thought as soon as possible to what arrangements you could make for yourself, personal belongings and any pets if you should need to move out temporarily.

Most people will be able to make their own arrangements and insurance may cover temporary accommodation - check your policy. In the event of urgent need where alternative arrangements could not be made, the Council will do whatever it can to re-house people temporarily.

The Council will do what it can to help people in difficulty. However, in the first instance, contact your insurance company and get approval to employ specialist firms, such as removal contractors and chemical toilet suppliers, if you need such help. If this proves impossible, the Council will try to provide assistance directly.

## If your drainage system fails

Immediately: Contact your insurance company for advice regarding appropriate steps you should take under your policy and what action your insurers will take to help you. Advise the Borough Council's Environment & Health Service, make alternative sanitary arrangements and minimise your use of water.

### Type of System

### Comments

Mains sewers

Advise Southern Water/your service provider.  
If necessary, households will be provided with suitable alternative foul drainage by the water authorities, for example Portaloo's, but check with your local water company if you are concerned.

Septic Tank

If possible, temporarily block the outflow from the septic tank to the soakaway (a sandbag can be helpful) and use the tank as a cesspit.  
Have the tank emptied before unblocking the outlet when the waters recede.

Cesspit

If your cesspit fails due to rising water, arrange for it to be emptied if possible. If it fills up again, it will be with groundwater and floodwater; pollution due to foul water will be minimised.

### What to do...

Call Southern Water on 0845 278 0845 (24 hours for emergencies).  
For general advice contact Test Valley Borough Council's Environment & Health Service on 01264 368000.

Contact your usual supplier for emptying your tank.  
For general advice contact Test Valley Borough Council's Environment & Health Service on 01264 368000.

Contact your usual supplier for emptying your cesspit.  
For general advice contact Test Valley Borough Council's Environment & Health Service on 01264 368000.

## Coping with a flood

- call your insurance company - tell them what has happened
- check the classified telephone directories under 'Flood Damage' for suppliers of cleaning materials or equipment to dry out your property
- contact the gas, electricity and water companies. You'll need to have your supplies checked before you turn them back on. Find their numbers on the back of a recent bill or in the phone book
- open doors and windows to ventilate your home, but remember to keep your property secure when you are not there. It takes about a month to dry out 25mm or 1 inch of brick
- remember to unblock your airbricks after floodwater has receded
- take care when choosing traders. If you have a lot of flood damage it could be tempting to take the first offer that comes along. Always check references and, if possible, get recommendations.

There's always a risk that it could happen again, so remember to re-stock your supplies!

# Health and safety

## Concerns    Comments

Contaminated floodwater	<p>Provided you follow health and hygiene advice, the risk of contracting infections from floodwater is low.</p> <p>Always wash your hands with soap and clean water after having been in contact with floodwater, sewerage or items that may have come into contact with floodwater.</p>
Contaminated drinking water	<p>Most public water supplies will not be affected by flooding. Where mains water is contaminated, the water company will issue a notice telling you to boil your water.</p> <p>Boiling water kills bacteria, viruses and parasites. Bring water to the boil and allow to cool before drinking. Boiled water may be stored in the fridge.</p> <p>Don't use contaminated water to drink, wash dishes, brush your teeth, wash or prepare food or make ice. If in any doubt about your water supply use boiled or bottled water.</p> <p>After flooding, wash taps and run water for a few minutes before use. Mains water taps should not be contaminated, but check with you local water company if you are concerned.</p>
Electrical equipment	<p>If the interior of your house floods, do not use electrical equipment until you are sure it has dried out properly.</p>
Injuries	<p>Keep wounds clean and cover with waterproof plasters to prevent infection from water-borne diseases, particularly if you are in contact with floodwater, or items that have been in contact with floodwater.</p> <p>Watch out for any broken glass or nails while you are clearing up after a flood.</p>
Stress	<p>Citizens' Advice Bureaux and other organisations may be able to help if you feel under pressure.</p>
Cleaning and disinfecting	<p>On returning to your home after flooding, all equipment, particularly kitchen equipment, should be thoroughly washed and disinfected, where possible using a dishwasher on a high setting.</p> <p>For items that cannot go in the dishwasher, such as plastics, it may be possible to use bleach to kill germs. Please read the label on disinfectant/bleach containers to ensure they are suitable for this use.</p> <p>All other items should be wiped and cleaned thoroughly.</p>
Food	<p>If power is lost from fridges and freezers, food should be stored at an alternative location, e.g. with friends if possible.</p> <p>Dry ice may help to keep frozen foods cold for several hours.</p> <p>Frozen food that has started to thaw can usually be used if it is still cold, but should never be refrozen.</p> <p>Food that has been at room temperature for a few hours should be discarded.</p> <p>Never eat food that you suspect may have been in contact with floodwater.</p>
Children	<p>Don't allow children to play in floodwater areas and wash children's hands frequently.</p> <p>Disinfect floodwater-affected toys before allowing them to be used.</p>

## What to do...

- If you do become ill, seek medical attention as soon as possible.
- If your water comes from a private supply you should boil it before use and only drink bottled or boiled water until your supply has been tested for contamination.
- Contact your supplier to check the purity of your supply before use.
- The Council can also give advice and check private water supplies by prior arrangement. Contact the Environment & Health Service on 01264 368000.
- Before using your electricity supply again, have it checked by a qualified electrician.
- If in doubt, seek medical attention.
- Numbers for organisations that can help can be found in the phone book.

Test Valley Borough Council  
Beech Hurst  
Weyhill Road  
Andover  
Hampshire  
SP10 3AJ  
Telephone: 01264 368000

# Useful Contact Numbers

## Highways

The County Council is responsible for ensuring that all road drains are working as effectively as possible, but large volumes of floodwater may submerge them. In the event of flooding on the highways contact Hampshire County Council on **0845 603 5633**. Also visit the website: [www.hants.gov.uk](http://www.hants.gov.uk)

## Advice on Flooding

The Hampshire Flood Warning Directory contains information on how to prepare for a flood and is available through the Environment Agency's Floodline on **0845 988 1188**. You can also visit the website: [www.environment-agency.gov.uk](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk)

## Urgent Assistance and Advice

The Borough Council can provide limited numbers of sandbags free of charge and can offer advice and emergency support to those in need of temporary accommodation or who have health and safety concerns. Call Test Valley Borough Council on **01264 368000** (out of hours, this number will be connected to the Council's Emergency service). Also visit the website: [www.testvalley.gov.uk](http://www.testvalley.gov.uk)

## Drinking Water and Mains Sewers

If you are concerned about the quality of your drinking water, or if your sewers are flooded, contact Southern Water on **0845 278 0845** (your customer reference number and/or your postcode will help to ensure your enquiry is dealt with as quickly as possible). If you use a private water supply, contact your supplier.

Make a note of your important phone numbers and keep this leaflet to hand:

Insurance company:

Water supplier (if private):

Gas supplier:

Electricity supplier:

Doctor:

Sewage consultant (for septic tanks and cesspits):

Specialist suppliers:

Other important numbers:

Test Valley Borough Council, Beech Hurst, Weyhill Road, Andover, Hampshire, SP10 3AJ

Telephone: **01264 368000**

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