

3. Plan where to go if you get caught in a flash flood

The greatest danger occurs when people panic or are uncoordinated in their response to flash flooding, particularly before the emergency services arrive. If you plan what you would do in advance, you are more likely to be able to stay safe.

If you are in a building with at least two storeys and believe it is safer to stay where you are, you should:

- move to a higher storey of the building
- wait for instructions from the emergency services

If you are in vulnerable accommodation such as a bungalow, caravan or tent - or caught outside - you should:

- seek shelter in the nearest two-storey building or go to higher ground
- call 999 if you are trapped

Flood warnings - Flash floods can happen very quickly and there's often no time to issue flood warnings in advance. However, our free Floodline Warnings Direct service, where it's available, will give you advance warning of flooding from rivers and the sea. Sign up and check your flood risk by phoning Floodline on 0845 988 1188 or visit www.environment-agency.gov.uk/floodnorthwest

Insurance – If we know your area is at risk of flooding it's likely your insurance company does too. Most UK insurers have copies of our river flood risk maps. Being aware and taking action to reduce the risk of flooding to your property may bring your insurance premiums down.

Call us

- To report flooding, call our **incident hotline** on 0800 80 70 60 (24 hrs)
- To register for flood warnings & get safety advice, call **Floodline** on 0845 988 1188
- For **general queries** call 03708 506 506 (Mon–Fri 8–6)

Email us

enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk

Visit our **website** for flood advice, to see our three day weather forecast and to review our latest flood alerts and warnings

www.environment-agency.gov.uk/floodnorthwest

Follow us on Twitter @EnvAgencyNW

Find useful flood information on **Facebook** by searching for **Flood Group UK**

You can also download a **FloodAlerts App** to your smart phone or tablet to access latest flood alerts while on the move. To find the App, search for **FloodAlerts** on Facebook and follow the instructions



Your community
is at risk of
Flash Flooding

Stay safe - know what to do

This leaflet explains the dangers of flash flooding and how to stay safe.

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 businesses, Government and society as a whole, we are making your environment cleaner and healthier.

We also work hard to identify and reduce flood risk and work with communities to develop action plans that help people stay safe when flooding occurs.

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

Published by:
Environment Agency
Ghyll Mount, Penrith,
Cumbria, CA11 9BP
Tel: 03708 506 506
Email: enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk
www.environment-agency.gov.uk

© Environment Agency
August 2012

Your area is at risk of flash flooding. We work hard to try and pinpoint where flash floods are likely to happen and have identified that your community is at risk. Most major flash floods occur in places where there have been none in living memory so it is vital that, even if flooding hasn't happened in your community for a long time, you know what to do and how to stay safe.

This leaflet sets out some simple actions to ensure you know what to do if a flash flood happens.

What is flash flooding?

Flash floods occur extremely quickly - much faster than other forms of flooding - and with massive force. They can move rocks, tear out trees, sweep away vehicles and destroy buildings and bridges.

They tend to happen when heavy rainfall runs off land and quickly swells rivers and streams. This often causes a build up of debris, which can give way causing a wave of water to surge down the river increasing the speed and height of the water within minutes. Water can also build up quickly in urban areas when rainfall is unable to drain away.

Three steps to safety

1. Be aware and know the signs

Flash flooding can happen suddenly. You may have to act before the Environment Agency can issue a warning, or before emergency services can reach you. It's important to know what signs to look for in your location so you can ACT FAST.

Signs to watch for:

- heavy rain or severe weather reports
- rising water levels with churning, dark water
- a build up of debris in rivers or streams

People particularly at risk are:

- in basement or single-storey accommodation such as a bungalow
- staying in a mobile home, tent, caravan, on a boat or in a wooden structure
- unfamiliar with the area, eg. tourists

2. Do not walk or drive through flood water

In a flash flood most injuries and deaths happen when people try to cross flood water on foot or in a vehicle.

Never underestimate the danger of a flash flood:

- It only takes 15cms (six inches) of fast-flowing water to knock an adult over
- It only takes 60cms (two feet) of water to lift and sweep away a 4 x 4 car or small lorry
- There may be hidden dangers in the water including rubble, vegetation and exposed drains

