

EMERGENCY Management

Helping You To Help Yourself

Storms, Rain and Flooding



COMMUNITIES PREPARED



Without exception we cannot have failed to be affected in some way by the storms and constant rain we have experienced this winter. The most recent bout in February brought with it severe gales and our coast line took a hammering, our rail links broken and some rivers were at severe flooding warning.

When we look at other parts of southern England we might also consider we have been fortunate in Devon and avoided the significant flooding to communities, homes and businesses that other areas have seen.

Community resilience is not a new concept and we have been working together for a long time developing this capacity; snow wardens, flood wardens, community and household emergency plans are all part of this process.

There are a host of websites

offering information and advice; most recently the Emergency Planning College has created a 'Communities Prepared Hub'. This hub helps communities to find out how to be prepared for emergencies, where to find support, read policy and guidance and learn how they can help in an emergency. It includes information on preparing for an emergency for households, communities and businesses.

There are also links to local sources of support and advice across the country. A really useful part of the hub provides information a guide on how individuals and communities can get involved. There is also specific advice and information on business survival, insurance matters, and links to various policies and guidance.

The website is:

<http://bit.ly/1m5rjmE>



Flooding health advice

We are probably aware of most of the obvious issues of flooding but there are also some important health issues to be aware of.

A document has been prepared by Public Health England in collaboration with the Environment Agency (England) to provide advice on dealing with flooding.

The document contains advice on:

- Planning for flooding before it happens.

- What to do during a flood.
- Recovering and cleaning up after a flood.

For more information visit:

<http://bit.ly/1lyvJ8O>

There is also further general information and links on the Devon County Council website:

<http://bit.ly/1clfd5O>



Don't lose your central heating oil due to flooding and strong winds



With many areas of the country under water, OFTEC, the Oil Firing Technical Association, is alerting rural home owners using oil-fired central heating to a potential problem caused by extreme weather conditions. In some cases, central heating oil tanks may be at risk of becoming buoyant in floodwater and floating away, leaking oil and causing widespread pollution in the process.

A further risk is from high winds which can also dislodge a tank and break the supply line. Tanks most susceptible are free-standing plastic tanks with a low level of oil. Any oil tanks in areas prone to flooding should be secured firmly to their base by strapping. Homeowners are advised to have an OFTEC registered technician review their tank installation by visiting the OFTEC website

<http://bit.ly/1eQquMY>

Malcolm Farrow, of OFTEC, said: "Although there is normally a very small risk of this happening, unfortunately it can cause a lot of disruption. In light of current flooding and high winds we want to remind people to think about securing their oil tanks to prevent any problems.

"An oil leak is bad news for the environment, and is quite literally money down the drain. It's really important if you think your tank might be at risk to call a qualified technician straight away for advice on how best to secure your tank."



Power failure

what would you do?

The problems caused by the long term power failures experienced in the South East during the recent storms showed how much we all rely upon electricity.

The energy suppliers all run their own Priority Services Register designed to identify the more vulnerable people in the community. If you know anyone who is a pensioner, has long-term ill health problems, is registered disabled or has a hearing or visual impairment, let them know that they should register with their energy supplier. Remember if gas and electricity come from different suppliers, they will need to register with both suppliers.

If you are a carer, you can register on their behalf. There is no charge and as well as registering for priority

reconnection there are others useful services available.

Services which might be available include:

- a service more tailored to your needs. For example, you can ask to have your bills and meter readings in Braille, large type or audio tape.
- moving your meter free of charge to make it easier for you to access.

having controls or adaptors provided to make your meter or appliances easier to use

- free quarterly meter readings if you tell your supplier you can't read it yourself.
- priority reconnection if your

supply is interrupted and advance notice if they have to stop your supply

- alternative facilities for cooking and heating if your energy supply is interrupted.
- additional protection from bogus callers with a password protection scheme.
- arranging for your bills to be sent or copied to someone else, such as a carer, who can help you read and check them.
- free advice and information about the services available because of your age, disability or chronic illness.

For more information:

<http://bit.ly/1nNnMeu>



Adviceguide
self help from Citizens Advice

Severe winter weather and your business



Snow and severe weather costs UK businesses £millions in lost revenue and opportunities every year.

The main reason for this is staff shortages: many staff may be unable to get to work during severe weather because roads and public transport services are disrupted, or because they must look after children unable to go to school.

Snow in particular can disrupt supply chains, making it difficult for businesses to get the supplies or services they usually rely on.

Preparing your business for severe winter weather

If your staff can work remotely, set this up and test it before the winter. That way they can still work, even if they can't get into the office or business premises. To help them make informed decisions about whether to work from home, your staff may find it useful to have access to weather and travel updates and information about

driving in severe weather (for example through a notice board, or company intranet which you can link to the Met Office and Highways Agency websites).

- If there are staff members or particular operations that your business relies on, train up some deputies so that you are not reliant on any one person being able to get into work.
- Have a copy of all staff, key customers' and suppliers' contact details at home, so that if you are unable to get in, you can direct people and keep them informed.
- Check in with your most important suppliers ahead of severe weather, to ask about their plans for coping with it and to find out how any disruption to their operations might affect you.
- If you're not confident in the resilience of your supplier, you could investigate alternative companies you could go to at short notice, or get your existing supplier to make extra

deliveries ahead of time which you can store just in case.

Find out more about preparing your business for emergencies at

<http://bit.ly/1eXg1ud>



Devon counts the cost of the storms

We have all experienced the severe weather so far this year and many communities are still working hard to recover from the impacts.

The impacts of the February storm alone included:

- 400 trees down
- 269 reports of flooding
- 33 properties flooded
- 256 potholes reported
- 89 reports of road surface damage
- 16 embankment slips
- 4 power cables down

That was in addition to the damage to the sea wall and railway at Dawlish and Lympstone.



What to do with sandbags

Advice for the public

Sandbags are not routinely collected by local authorities after flooding incidents, although in this major event, local authorities may want to consider this option in some areas.

Unused sandbags

Wherever possible, store full bags that have not come into contact with flood water in a dry shady place to use again if you need them in the future.

Sacking material is normally biodegradable and will perish if left in place for a long time. It is therefore advisable to empty sacks and keep them dry for re-use. Store the sand in your garden, or yard for future use.

If you do not want to store the sand or the bags, once empty the bags can be placed in your normal household waste and the sand dug into the garden if you have one, or taken to your local Civic Amenity site.

Used sandbags

Sandbags tend to retain contaminants such as sewage and oils when they come into contact with floodwater. Ensure you wear gloves and wash hands thoroughly after handling. If sandbags are contaminated by flood water you should take them to your local Civic Amenity Site and inform the

staff that they have been contaminated. Where this is not possible you should seek advice from your local authority as to whether any other options are available to dispose of the sandbags.



First point of Contact

For assistance with community Emergency Planning your first point of contact is your City, District or Borough Emergency Planning Officer.

You will find them listed below for reference and remember they are all there to help you!

Don't forget, the Devon County Council website has lots of useful information for both individuals and communities:

-  www.devon.gov.uk
-  Safety and Emergencies
-  Emergencies
-  Emergency Planning - Community (Parish) Planning

Useful information:

Floodline	0845 988 1188
Environment Agency	www.environment-agency.gov.uk
Consumer Council for Water	www.ccwater.org.uk
National Flood Forum	www.floodforum.org.uk
Blue Pages Directory	www.bluepages.org.uk
Association of British Insurers	www.abi.org.uk or 020 7600 3333
British Insurance Brokers Association	www.biba.org.uk or 0870 950 1790
Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors	www.rics.org/flooding
Know Your Flood Risk campaign	www.knowyourfloodrisk.co.uk

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