

Flood Defences

Orkney Islands Council's Operations team are responsible for the maintenance and operation of fixed and temporary flood defences to limit the risk to life and property in the County. Some of these operations are outlined below. **Remember, property owners are responsible for protecting their properties from flooding.** You can find out more about steps to improve the flood resilience of your property and preventing flood damage from the main 'Flooding Information' page

Kirkwall Harbour Flood Prevention Scheme

The Kirkwall Harbour flood prevention scheme is designed to protect low lying parts of central Kirkwall against flooding from the sea.

The stone wall along the harbour front is augmented with flood gates when forecasts predict a flooding risk, creating a 1.1m high uninterrupted barrier around half a mile in length between Ayre Mills and St Catherine's Place roundabout.

When the flood gates are in place, there will be an impact on access to Kirkwall Pier and the wider harbour area. It will also affect drivers, who will be unable to move vehicles in and out of the Waterfront West-Shapinsay Slip car park.

Together with the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) we will endeavour to give people plenty of advance warning that the flood gates are likely to be deployed.

If you live and work in Kirkwall, we would encourage you to sign up for SEPA's Floodline Warnings service for Kirkwall. This aims to provide advanced warning when coastal flooding is likely to occur. See the 'Steps you can take now' section on the main webpage for more information on how to do this.

In addition, the Council will provide updates on the OIC_Roads Twitter (X) feed when the flood defences are – or are likely to be – deployed. The OIC_Roads Twitter (X) feed also provides updates when the Churchill Barriers are closed, or when closure of the barriers is under consideration.

Images: Kirkwall harbour before and after the KHFPS was constructed. One of the 23 deployable flood gates can be seen in place



Flood barriers at St Margaret's Hope

When early flood forecasting from SEPA indicates a risk of coastal flooding at St Margaret's Hope, whether due to high tide levels, storm surges associated with low pressure weather systems, or high winds (or a combination of those factors), the Council will deploy floodstops, pictured here.

In the leadup to the floodstops being deployed, we ask folk to remove any parked cars from the Cromarty Slip/Front Road area.

If time and resources allow, the Council will also provide a limited number of sandbags locally, available for members of the public to use.

The flood barriers remain in place until conditions ease.

You can sign up to receive live flood alerts and warnings from SEPA, and view current flood advisories on their website. See the 'Steps you can take now' section on the main webpage for more information on how to do this.



Flood barriers deployed at St Margaret's Hope