

Simple measures

Minimising Floodwater Entry and Damage

You can reduce the amount of water entering your property by using sandbags, plywood or metal sheeting placed on the outside of doors, window frames and airbricks. Even if you cannot create a complete seal, this will reduce the amount of floodwater entering. If you have silicone sealant to hand this will help to make doors and windows more resistant to floodwater. Open the door or window and place the sealant around the frame, then close and lock the door until the flood has passed. Do not permanently seal any airbricks, wall vents, or air intakes/vents for appliances such as boilers. These will need to be re-opened as soon as possible after the flood and permanently blocking them may be hazardous.

Floodwater can enter through drains, toilets and other outlets such as washing machines. The simplest way to prevent this is by putting plugs into sinks and baths and weighing them down with a sandbag or other heavy object. Outlets from washing machines and dishwashers should be disconnected. Place a sandbag in the toilet bowl and block the washing machine drain with a suitable plug (e.g. cloth or towel) to prevent backflow. Floodwater can contaminate foodstuffs and chemicals such as paints, garden pesticides and household cleaning products. Similarly they may spill or leak into the floodwater causing additional cleaning-up problems. Store any materials like this in the upper part of your home, garage or garden shed.



Furniture and Household Appliances

Move as much furniture and electrical items as you can upstairs. If you have time, roll up carpets and rugs and put them upstairs (or in a safe place). Empty furniture that cannot be moved and carry the contents upstairs. See if you can raise the item above floor level using bricks or blocks – this may be particularly helpful for larger appliances such as fridge-freezers.

Move furniture away from walls as this helps with drying the property later. Leave internal doors in the open position and if time allows, remove them and store them upstairs. Remove cabinet drawers. If items of furniture cannot be moved, weigh them down with a heavy object or stack and tie them together. If the flood is severe this will stop furniture floating around and causing damage such as broken windows. If there is no time to remove curtains, hang them up over the curtain rods so that they are kept above the floodwater.



Personal Items

You cannot replace sentimental items. If a flood is on the way, you may forget to move them to a safe place. So think about keeping them upstairs or somewhere high up in your property on a permanent basis. Personal documents, insurance and bank details and essential contact telephone numbers should be collected and kept in polythene bags. Think about storing them NOW in a place safe from floodwater.

Remember that sentimental items can include favourite toys or family photographs, not just valuable items like jewellery.

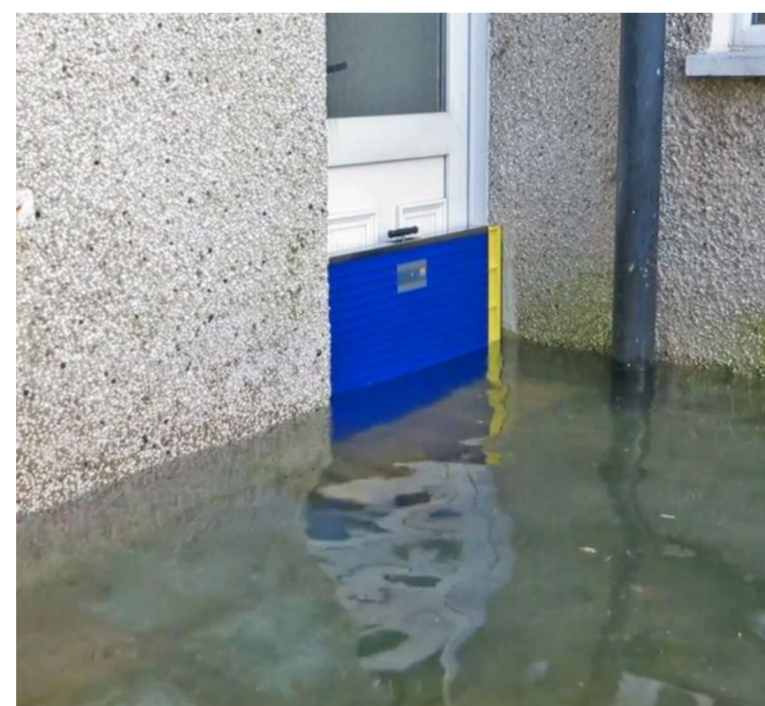


Outside the Home

If possible move anything kept outside and not fixed to the ground to a safer location, eg dustbins, garden chemicals, car oils which you keep in the garage or shed. Floodwater may get into the garage and damage your car. Move it to higher ground if safe to do so.

Weigh down any manhole covers on the property with sandbags or a heavy object. If they lift up during a flood, the drain may be left open which will create a hazard. Close off the flow valves on propane tanks, oil drums or other fuel containers that supply the home through pipes and fittings.

Work with your neighbours to make your flood protection measures more effective. This is particularly important if your home is part of a terrace or is semi-detached as water can come through adjoining walls.



For more specific detail about the use of sandbags, flood boards and wrapping a property - navigate back to the main Flooding Information page and click the relevant link under the 'Before a Flood' heading

