

Flood preparation in the UK

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Warnings, a household flood plan, a grab bag, and regional services. The right plan is the one your household can understand, access, and maintain. Start with the items and contacts that matter most in your situation, then improve it a little at a time.

Check your local flood risk before a warning. In England, use the official flood warning service and sign up for alerts where available. Scotland uses SEPA, Wales uses Natural Resources Wales, and Northern Ireland uses NI Direct. Follow the latest local advice because services and warning terms differ across the UK.

Make a simple household flood plan while you have time. Agree how you will contact one another, where you will go, and how you will collect children or support someone who needs help. Write key phone numbers on paper. Know how to turn off water, gas, and electricity if it is safe and you are confident doing so.

Put essential medication, documents, phone chargers, a torch, warm layers, drinking water, and a few familiar snacks in a grab bag. Include items for babies, pets, and mobility needs. Keep a waterproof bag for documents and medicines. Store the bag where it is easy to reach, not in a basement or low cupboard.

Never walk or drive through flood water. It can be deeper or faster than it looks, hide hazards, and move covers. Keep away from riverbanks and drains during flooding. If water is entering your home, move to a safe higher place and call 999 only when there is immediate danger.

After flood water recedes, avoid contact where possible and follow local advice about cleaning and returning home. Photograph damage only when it is safe. Do not switch on electrical items that have been wet. Contact your insurer and relevant local services for guidance.

A practical household plan

Think about the layout of your home and the routes people normally use. Decide in advance which belongings matter most and can be moved safely without delaying anyone. Keep essential items upstairs if your home has a floor above the ground floor, but do not enter a building or room if water is already making it unsafe. Put copies of key details in a waterproof pouch and keep original documents somewhere

secure. If you rent, note your landlord or managing agent's contact details. If you own your home, save your insurer's claims contact and policy number. Ask your local council where to find flood support and recovery information. Check whether someone in the household needs assistance with stairs, transport, communication, or medication. Build that into your plan and confirm who can help. Do not rely on a single route or person. Let a trusted contact know where you plan to go if you leave.

Review the plan with your household

Choose a regular moment to look over the list together. A six-month review is easy to remember and matches the household checklist, but update the plan sooner when someone moves in, a baby changes feeding routine, a pet starts a new diet, or a health need changes. Check that everyone knows where the torch, radio, first aid kit, and written contacts are kept. Replace items that have been used, expired, or damaged. Confirm phone numbers and equipment instructions against current information. A plan can be short and still be useful when each person knows their part. If someone else may help, ask them to read the instructions before an incident and check that they can reach the supplies. Record only the information helpers need, store it safely, and update it when those needs change. A familiar routine can make a difficult day easier to manage.

Use the household kit builder to turn your household numbers into a checklist. It is a planning aid, not a substitute for local warnings, an individual care plan, or professional advice. Store essential information where the people who may need it can find it.

Frequently asked questions

What should I do first?

Start with the relevant official information for your area and the needs of the people or animals at home. Make a short written plan, gather what you already have, and fill gaps in stages.

How often should I review the plan?

Review it every six months and after a major change at home. Check dates, contact numbers, medicines, batteries, feeding needs, and any equipment instructions.

Where can I get urgent medical help?

Use NHS 111 or ask a pharmacist for non-life-threatening urgent advice. Call 999 for an emergency.

Sources

- [UK Government household advice](#)
- [UK Government emergency checklist](#)
- [Priority Services Register information](#)
- [Met Office warnings](#)
- [Flood warnings in England](#)
- [Sign up for flood warnings in England](#)
- [SEPA flood guidance](#)
- [Natural Resources Wales flood guidance](#)
- [Northern Ireland flood information](#)
- [Power cut help on 105](#)
- [British Red Cross emergency kit advice](#)

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