



Flood Warden Handbook

Updated October 2021

This Flood Warden Handbook belongs to:

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On behalf of the Parish/ Town Council or Flood Action Group of:

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The Primary Flood Warden (*if applicable*) for this community is:

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Deputy Flood Wardens (*if applicable*) for this community are:

| Deputy Warden Name | Contact Details |
|--------------------|-----------------|
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| | |

The EA Flood Alerts & Warnings for flooding in this community are:

| EA Flood Alert/ Warning Name | Quick Dial Number |
|------------------------------|-------------------|
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Handbook User Information

Thank you very much for agreeing to be a Flood Warden!

Welcome to the Flood Warden Handbook. Flood Warden schemes are important in the monitoring, warning and preparation for flooding at a community level. Flood Wardens aim to help and prepare those in the local community that are at risk of flooding. They are a vital link between the local residents and those responsible to responding to flooding events.

This handbook is designed to help you to perform your Flood Warden duties by providing guidance and information.

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Please note- if your community has an existing Community Flood Plan and / or Community Emergency Plan (or are thinking of preparing such plans), it is vital that as a Flood Warden you link in with the arrangements documented in the plan, so that the response to flooding is as joined up and effective as possible.

1. Types of Flooding

Flood Wardens may encounter many different types of flooding. A variety of factors determine what type of flood event can occur.

Types of flooding

River flooding

Happens when a watercourse cannot cope with the water draining into it from the surrounding land. This can happen, for example, when heavy rain falls on an already waterlogged catchment.

Surface water flooding

Happens when heavy rainfall overwhelms the drainage capacity of the local area. It is much more difficult to predict and pinpoint than river or coastal flooding. The Environment Agency does not offer a flood warning service for surface water flooding.

Flash flooding/ rapid response catchments

Rapid Response Catchments (RRC) contains rivers and streams (including smaller tributaries and ordinary watercourses) that could react rapidly to extreme rainfall, resulting in extreme flash flooding. Extreme flash flooding is where a river or stream reacts very rapidly to rainfall, and generates **dangerous flood depths and high velocities** of water that pose an extreme **threat to life**.

THINK Boscastle Flooding of 2004, Coverack (Cornwall) in 2017 and Reeth (Yorkshire) in 2019.

Sewer flooding

Happens when sewers are overwhelmed by heavy rainfall or when they become blocked. The likelihood of flooding depends on the capacity of the local sewerage system. Land and property can be flooded with water contaminated with raw sewage as a result. Rivers can also become polluted by sewer overflows.

Groundwater flooding

Results from water levels in the ground rising above surface levels.

Reservoir flooding

Some reservoirs hold large volumes of water above ground level, contained by walls or dams. Although the safety record for reservoirs is excellent, it is still possible that a dam could fail. This would result in a large volume of water being released very quickly.

2. Roles and Responsibilities of Authorities Involved in Flooding

The following information shows the principal roles and responsibilities of the key organisations involved in flooding. Responding organisations have finite resources and therefore their duties and ability to act is also finite. Property owners and occupiers need to be aware that they should make their own arrangements to protect their property from flooding as far as is possible.

Environment Agency (EA)

- Issue flood warnings for flooding from rivers, the sea and groundwater.
- Monitor the situation and advise other organisations.
- Maintain and operate EA flood defences.
- Deal with emergency repairs and blockages on main rivers and EA owned structures (where resources allow).
- Receive and record details of flooding incidents.
- Respond to pollution incidents.
- Provide support and advice on the development of Community Flood Plans.
- Strategic overview of the management of all sources of flooding and coastal erosion.
- Operational responsibility for managing the risk of flooding from main rivers, reservoirs, estuaries and the sea.
- Construct and maintain flood risk management assets.

Gloucestershire County Council (Lead Local Flood Authority)

- Investigate and report flooding incidents.
- Work with partners to manage flood risk from surface water, ground water and 'ordinary watercourses' (i.e. watercourses that aren't a 'main river').
- Co-ordinate local authority support to multi-agency flood response as appropriate.
- Provide support to District Councils affected by flooding as necessary.
- Liaise with other agencies to identify, inform and support vulnerable people.
- Provide health advice to members of the public affected by flooding.
- Deploy emergency response teams to provide support to the emergency services and other partners as appropriate and resources allow.
- May take action to protect property from flooding by water from the highway where there is a failure of the highway drainage system.
- Implement road closures / traffic diversions and appropriate signage in liaison with the Police/ National Highways as necessary.
- Coordinate specialist sub-contractors (e.g. to empty gully, jetting) to enable highway drainage clearance where possible.
- Support or lead the recovery from a flooding event as appropriate.

Cotswold District Council

- Works with partners to manage flood risk.
- Provides advice to residents on flood protection, including grants that may be available.
- Clears district council owned trash screens/ blocked culverts if safe to do so.
- Provides welfare support to flood affected communities including liaison with partners e.g. to arrange access to cut off communities to meet specific welfare needs.
- Liaises with parish and town councils, Flood Wardens and Community Flood or Emergency Plan contacts to provide the latest information and monitor the situation on the ground.
- Delegated responsibility from Lead Local Flood Authority (GCC) to consent and enforce works to maintain flow on 'ordinary watercourses'.
- Receives and records details of flooding incidents.
- Deals with environmental health issues.
- Undertakes clean-up activities such as waste collection/ street cleansing etc.
- Leads or supports the emergency recovery phase, including longer term support to affected communities where necessary.
- Provides advice on developing Community Emergency Plans (alongside support from GRCC)

Parish/ Town Council / Community Flood Plan/ Emergency Plan

(Note; there is no statutory responsibility for Parish or Town councils or community groups to plan for, or respond to, emergencies in their locality).

- Identify hazards and make simple plans on how they may assist other agencies should an emergency occur.
- Identify volunteers to act as Flood Wardens and / or emergency responders and make sure other agencies are aware of who they are.
- Report flooding or other emergencies in their community.
- Ensure any plans and volunteers are appropriately resourced and ensure both are regularly reviewed.
- Work with other agencies by providing support such as information and updates, when those agencies are providing an emergency response in their community.
- More details are contained elsewhere in this booklet.

Police

- Take an overall co-ordination role during a flooding incident.
- Provide security as far as reasonably practical (evacuated properties/ areas, cordons).
- Undertake traffic management/ road closure duties in partnership with GCC Highways team / Highways Agency.
- Coordinate the multi-agency media response

Fire and Rescue Service

- Lifesaving through Search and Rescue including provision of water rescue capability.
- If necessary, arrange mutual aid for flood rescue e.g. boats/trained crews and equipment e.g. high volume pumps.
- Assist with evacuation as appropriate.
- Where resources allow, and activity is deemed to be appropriate, support other agencies with 'welfare issues' for communities that may only be accessible by boat e.g. welfare checks, dropping off medication.
- Prioritise and provide infrastructure protection and pumping activities in liaison with utility companies if necessary.

Utility Companies

- Implement operational / contingency arrangements in the event of a disruption to services.
- Repair services disrupted by flood events as quickly as possible.
- Provide alternate means of supply during service disruption if life/health risks identified.
- Keep the public affected by supply disruptions/ other service issues informed
- Work in partnership with local authorities/NHS to identify and support 'vulnerable people' who may be affected by disruption to services

3. The Flood Warden Role

The role of a Flood Warden depends on the specific requirements of each community and the flooding issues found within the town or parish. Flood Wardens **may** be involved in the following activities during/ following flooding and at other times. **However, Flood Wardens should discuss with their parish their specific role.**

Flood Wardens should never place themselves in situations where personal safety is at risk. In particular you should not enter flood water. Call the emergency services on 999 to deal with such situations. For more guidance on safety please see Chapter 4.

During a flood

Report flooding

If you become aware of any flooding issues within your local community and there is no immediate risk to life, these should be reported to Cotswold District Council (**see Appendix 1 Contact Directory**). It would be helpful if as much information as possible on the flooding could be provided e.g. location of flooding, approximate number of properties that have flooded/are at risk of flooding, any issues arising from the flooding e.g. vulnerable people who may be affected. If lives are at immediate risk, ring 999.

Only if it is safe to do so, it is really helpful for the authorities if you are able to take photographs of the flooding, as these can provide an immediate visual understanding of the situation, as well as a longer-term record/ evidence for future flood risk management work. See **Appendix 2** for suggested Flood Warden equipment.

Act as a communication channel

Flood Wardens are the communication channel during times of flooding between the community and those whose job it is to provide support. Residents may look to their parish council and Flood Warden(s) to provide information and guidance.

The main role of a Flood Warden is to pass information from the Environment Agency, district council and emergency services to local residents, and vice-versa. It is quite possible that during times of large-scale flooding emergency responders will prioritise their resources to attend high priority incidents, such as providing a response to communities isolated by floodwater. The information provided by the Flood Wardens will help the responding agencies to allocate resources appropriately.

Contact details of the agencies that you should pass information to can be found in the Contact Directory in Appendix 1

Ensure local people are aware of flooding and encourage them to take action

Flood Wardens can play a vital role in ensuring local people are aware of flooding/ imminent flooding risk e.g. checking if they are aware if an Environment Agency flood warning has been issued.

If safe to do so, Flood Wardens can also be effective in encouraging residents to take action as appropriate to respond to or prepare for impending flooding e.g. helping put flood boards and air brick covers in place, moving valuables upstairs, making sure they have their Emergency / Flood Kit to hand etc. People recently moving into the community may appreciate being made aware of issues relevant to them. This will also help identify if they have any specific needs or vulnerabilities (see below).

Help to coordinate Community Flood / Emergency Plan actions

If your community has a Community Flood Plan or Community Emergency Plan, it may document specific actions for the Flood Warden (which obviously you need to be aware of and comfortable with). Alternatively it may be that you wish to take a role instigating the Community Flood Plan, or helping to coordinate the actions within the plan with other members of the local community Flood Action Group/ Community Emergency Plan volunteers as appropriate.

Help to identify vulnerable residents

Local authorities and NHS organisations have tried and tested procedures in place to identify vulnerable people who are known to the authorities and may be affected by an emergency. However the authorities may not be aware of everyone who is vulnerable during a flooding incident.

As a Flood Warden, your local knowledge could be invaluable in helping the authorities to identify vulnerable residents who may require additional support during a flooding event. Such residents may be disabled, elderly, infirm, have young children, pregnant etc. In addition residents who don't normally need any assistance, may have been made 'vulnerable' by the flooding situation e.g. their property is inaccessible resulting in them being unable to access food, medication and other supplies etc.

Flood Wardens should not keep lists of 'vulnerable people' as these can go out of date and may be in breach of data protection legislation. As such, if you become aware of any residents who are vulnerable and need support, it may be this can be provided at a local level by neighbours/ others in the community depending on what is required.

If not (and no one should put themselves at any risk), please either call 999 if it is an emergency or contact Cotswold District Council.

Pet owners may need consideration, as the whereabouts and wellbeing of their pets will cause them additional concern. Encourage them to plan in advance how to keep their animals safe.

Visitors (e.g. to holiday properties) could also potentially be 'vulnerable' as they may not be aware of the flooding risk, or have any local arrangements in place.

Keep a log of events and action taken

If possible, it is helpful if you keep a log of events and any action taken during flooding. This can provide a useful reminder of what happened and can also be helpful in identifying lessons learnt in terms of the local community's and authorities' response to the flooding, to try to build on this and prepare for any future flooding. If more than one Flood Warden operates locally, it will also act as a good source of information on what has been done (or not) for the others.

An example log sheet template is found at Appendix 3

Following a flood

Following a flood event it is important that you should stay in a state of readiness until the all clear has been received from the emergency services and Environment Agency. This is because flooding could recur quite quickly, especially if the flooding is due to inclement weather and the catchment (an area where surface water converges) is saturated.

Post flooding information collection & reporting

It is important to try and collect as much information as possible about the flooding that occurred and properties affected (residential and business as appropriate). This could be in the form of writing down notes throughout the incident of where and when the water levels rose, taking photographs detailing the location and time or speaking with members of the community of their experiences. This should ideally be completed as soon after the flood event as possible while details are still fresh in the memory.

The information is valuable to the local authorities and the Environment Agency to support the flood recovery, for informing decisions about future flood risk management and also as evidence to apply for Government funding for flood risk management schemes. Such information also enables the EA to develop their flood maps, and improve the Flood Warning service.

Gloucestershire County Council has a [Flooding Online Reporting Tool \(FORT\)](#) that can be used to record current and recent flooding, to assist with flood risk planning.

An example of a post flooding record sheet is found at Appendix 4

Continue to act as a communication channel

During the recovery from flooding, Flood Wardens can continue to be effective two-way communication links between the authorities and local community.

This may involve highlighting to the relevant authorities any residents who may require practical and emotional support and disseminating information from the authorities in relation to flood recovery e.g. guidance and signposting to support available.

Feedback if any clearance work is needed

Following a flooding event, watercourses and drainage systems e.g. culverts may be blocked with debris. Local authorities/ Environment Agency may not have the resources to check all areas initially, so feedback on such issues will be very beneficial, and enable the authorities to prioritise clearance work.

Assist in the review of the Community Flood/ Emergency Plan

If your community has a Community Flood Plan or Emergency Plan, it's a good idea to review the plan following a flooding event. This is to see if the plan needs any changes or improvements in light of lessons learned from the community's response to the flooding. As a Flood Warden you may wish to lead or assist with the plan review.

At other times

A Flood Warden may be able to give advice and information to those at risk during drier periods, educating those in the community of the risk of flooding and encouraging residents and the community to be prepared for flooding.

Monitoring watercourses

Monitoring the condition of watercourses within the community can be an important part of the role. Flood Wardens can provide valuable feedback from 'on the ground' by keeping an eye on local stretches of river / watercourse where the EA or local authorities may not have the resources to do so regularly.

Flood Wardens also often have a great deal of local knowledge and experience that enables them to recognise changes in river levels and potential issues e.g. blockages. By reporting blockages and maintenance requirements early, unnecessary floods may be avoided. Please call Cotswold District Council to report blockages on smaller watercourses such as ditches, drains, brooks and small rivers. If you notice a blockage in Main Rivers e.g. the Rivers Thames, Churn & Windrush etc. and larger brooks for example the Ampney & Poulton call the free Environment Agency 24 hour Incident Hotline on **0800 80 70 60** to report any blockages /other flooding issues. You can find out whether a watercourse is classed as Main River using the Environment Agency interactive map [here](#)

Help to raise awareness of riparian owners

Flood Wardens can also provide a valuable role in engaging with riparian owners to make them aware of their responsibilities and encourage proactive clearance and maintenance of watercourses as appropriate. Information on 'waterside living' and the responsibilities of riparian owners is available on [Gloucestershire County Council website](#). This includes a copy of '[Waterside Living](#)' leaflet that can be downloaded (NB please note this is being updated November 2021) The EA also provide information for owning a watercourse on [gov.uk website](#)

However, please remember it is not your responsibility as a Flood Warden to absolve riparian owners of their responsibility to clear and maintain watercourses.

Help to raise awareness of flooding and promote 'self- help'

As trusted members of the local community, Flood Wardens can be extremely effective in making residents aware of flooding risk, and promoting 'self-help' to improve resilience to flooding. Residents may be more likely to take action on the advice of someone from the local community than anyone else.

Flood Wardens may be able to direct residents to where they can get information on flood risk e.g. EA info on [gov.uk website](#) and raise their awareness of services available e.g. EA Flood Warnings / Floodline (please see below).

New residents moving into the area, or temporary residents like tourists, are very vulnerable to flooding due to their lack of knowledge of local flood risk. You could list the properties of all new residents and contact owners reasonably soon after moving in, explaining your role and encouraging them to sign up to receive free flood warnings. For visitors who are staying at a holiday cottage for example, it is not recommended that you approach temporary visitors to

explain the Flood Warden role. However, it may be appropriate to note these properties for attention during times of flooding.

Flood Wardens can also encourage residents of those properties at risk of flooding to prepare in advance by putting together their own:

- **Personal flood plan** (see Environment Agency template on [gov.uk website](#))
- **Household flood kit** (see Appendix 5)

Whilst Flood Wardens shouldn't recommend specific property level protection measures such as fitting barriers against flood water, replacing carpets with waterproof tiling and raising electricity sockets, you could direct residents to the National Flood Forum ['Blue Pages' website](#) which is an independent directory of flood protection products. You could also liaise with Cotswold District Council to find out if there are any grants available for property level protection and pass this information onto residents within your local community as appropriate.

EA Flood Information Service / Floodline Awareness

During drier periods, you could encourage residents who have not already done so, to [sign up to receive EA Flood Warnings](#) if they live in an area covered by the service. The EA can provide material for you to display on parish notice boards, via leaflet drops or to distribute at parish council meetings.

You could also raise the awareness of Floodline and online EA flooding information sources e.g. [river levels](#), among residents so they can access up to date flooding information upon receipt of a Flood Warning. The Floodline telephone number and local quick dial code is one of the most important pieces of information that you can pass on to local residents. Advertising in a local parish magazine or on the parish council website would be a great way to inform the community of the EA Flood Information and Floodline services.

Quick dial codes for the EA Floodline can be found at Appendix 6

Assist in the preparation of a Community Flood Plan / Community Emergency Plan

A Community Flood Plan is an important document. It will help to define actions required within your community before, during and after a flood. It should contain all the necessary information needed to prepare your community for flooding and help to ensure a smooth, well prepared community response to flooding. The plan's contents will vary depending on the specific issues faced by the community. It is likely to include contact details and practical issues such as how information will be passed on to the community etc.

Your community may have already prepared a Community Flood Plan but if not, the EA has a [template available on gov.uk website](#) . The local EA office can provide advice on developing the plan. Alternatively, your local community may have already prepared a Community Emergency Plan, which is a more general plan to respond to any emergency that may affect the community i.e. not just flooding. If your community does not have a Community Emergency Plan, GRCC can provide advice and a template on preparing the plan. For more information, and access to their toolkit and templates, see their [website](#) or contacts in Appendix 1

What not to do

Your commitment to being a Flood Warden is greatly appreciated, but you should bear in mind the extent of the role and your own personal limits.

The specific role of Flood Wardens may vary depending on the requirements of the local community. However, consider these general principles in your Flood Warden role:

Ideally Flood Wardens should not:

- **Live in a property that is vulnerable to flooding.** This is because a Flood Warden cannot very easily fulfil their role if they are trying to prevent their own property from flooding. This is not always possible so if you are at risk of flooding, it is recommended that you ensure you are personally well prepared, so that you can quickly implement your own flood plan before helping others.
- **Place yourself at risk or undertake any activity that places you in any danger.**
- **Rescue residents from flood water.** Leave this to the emergency services.
- **Drive or walk through flood water.** It takes only 15cm of fast flowing water to knock an adult over and only 60cm (two feet) of water to lift and sweep away a vehicle.
- **Undertake any activity that you are not comfortable with.**
- **Deal with any potentially difficult situations.** This applies to dealing with someone who may be hindering the flood response efforts e.g. insist on driving through flood water/ closed roads, or are generally aggressive and uncooperative. You should not try to deal with this situation but contact the relevant authorities to take appropriate action.
- **Remove debris from watercourses, ditches or culverts or operate flood defences e.g. sluice gates.** Unless you have been specifically asked or trained to do so, please leave this to properly equipped and trained staff;
- **Take responsibility for protecting anyone else's property.**
- **Absolve riparian owners of their responsibility to clear and maintain watercourses.**
- **Go on private property to monitor watercourses-** although you could ask local people to keep you informed of any problems with watercourses on their land.

Please remember – your role as a Flood Warden is to inform the community and the authorities of the developing situation and undertake any action identified in a Community Flood Plan or Emergency Plan. It is not your role to carry out the job of the Emergency Services. If the Emergency Services are at the scene please tell them what they need to know and then let them proceed unhindered.

4. Safety Information

This section highlights the possible hazards and dangers that a Flood Warden may encounter while performing their duties. Below is a list of hazards, with an explanation of what they are and how they can be avoided.

Drowning: Common perception is that drowning occurs in deep water such as a main river when actually a person could drown in just an inch of water. It is also worth bearing in mind that six inches of flowing water is all it takes to sweep an adult off their feet. This is particularly relevant when entering flooded fields near to a river where the water could still be flowing. **We advise all Flood Wardens against the practice of entering floodwaters of any description.** It is preferred that Flood Wardens carry out their duties without the need to 'get wet'.

Contamination: After a flood there is a high probability that the flooding equipment used, such as sandbags and flood boards, will be contaminated with sewage and pollutants. This can pose a problem when it comes to the disposal of contaminated items. If a Flood Warden thinks that the items used during a flood have been contaminated then they are advised to contact Cotswold District Council for information on disposal. Environment Agency information on [gov.uk website](http://gov.uk) provides useful guidance on recovering from flooding including clean up.

Manual handling: While attending to your responsibilities as a Flood Warden, residents may ask you to help move items e.g. furniture/ valuables. It is up to individual Flood Wardens whether they are willing and able to provide such support. If as a Flood Warden you are happy to assist, be very careful not to lift anything too large, awkward or heavy and refuse to do so should you think it so. Before a flood event and as part of your flood plan, you may want to consider holding a list of local volunteers who could help with lifting.

Hostile people/residents: When under stress, such as that from flooding, people can become irrational and aggressive. Always approach people in a civil, polite manner, clearly explaining what role you hold and how/if you can help. If they become aggressive in any way, leave them alone and do not attempt to help unless approached and asked specifically.

Hypothermia: caused by getting too cold. It is a condition in which your normal body temperature of 37°C (98.6°F) drops below 35° (95°F). This is most common in cold environments, and the risk is increased if you are not wearing enough layers to keep warm, or do not have your head covered (the largest proportion of body heat is lost through the head). Hypothermia is also possible in mild weather, for example, if you get soaked in a rain shower and do not dry off properly soon afterwards, particularly if there is also a cool wind. The water evaporating from your skin brings down your body temperature.

If the weather is cold, make sure you're dressed appropriately before you go outside. Most body heat is lost through the head, so wear a warm hat. Layers of clothing trap air, which helps to keep you warm – tightly woven, waterproof clothes are best. Drink plenty of fluids and hot drinks (not alcohol) and eat regular, balanced meals to give you energy.

A Flood Warden should cease their duties and return home immediately if they start to show signs of hypothermia. Remember to listen to the advice of other residents, as they may see you showing signs of hypothermia before you realise the onset of it.

Other hazards

Slips, trips and falls: Try not to walk on uneven or slippery ground and always wear sturdy, appropriate foot wear.

Livestock: Livestock are unpredictable in behaviour and can be very dangerous, especially if under stress. Only enter an area inhabited by livestock with trained personnel, such as a farmer or specially trained Fire Service personnel, and only if you feel it is safe to do so.

Traffic / Road Closures: During flooding, people will want to remove people and property away from the affected area as quickly as possible, and will not always be concentrating on their driving and the road ahead. Poor driving conditions and decreased visibility in bad weather can exacerbate this problem. A Flood Warden should always wear a high visibility jacket and take extra care when traversing public highways and thoroughfares.

It is also possible that a road might be severely flooded and will need to be closed to traffic. This is the responsibility of the police/ county council highways team. As a Flood Warden it is really helpful if you can alert the relevant authorities if any roads in your local community may need to be closed due to flooding.

However, it is recognised that in some areas where a road is at risk of flooding, there may be permanent road signs that can be flipped down to warn of flooding / road closures. In some areas the Flood Warden may take on responsibility for deploying such signs as necessary.

5. Flood Warden responsibilities & liability advice

Flood Wardens are volunteers and do not receive payment. There is no employment contract between a Flood Warden and local authorities, parish councils or the Environment Agency.

When Flood Wardens complete the registration form they are confirming that they have read, understood and will abide by the guidance in this handbook. All Flood Wardens will need to complete induction with GRCC and commit to attend at least one of the three meetings held per year by GRCC.

If damage is caused by a Flood Warden, who is liable?

Local authorities and the Environment Agency advises all Flood Wardens that they should conduct themselves as any reasonable and prudent person would, thereby protecting themselves against claims of negligence.

The Flood Warden role (Section 3) clearly states expectations of Flood Wardens acting within this scheme and if acting within the role it should be highly unlikely that Flood Wardens would undertake an activity which causes damage.

The Environment Agency advises that in an emergency situation there is a possibility that Flood Wardens could be under considerable pressure. It is more likely that a court would give an unpaid volunteer (as opposed to a paid employee) the benefit of the doubt as to whether they acted reasonably.

What if a Flood Warden is injured?

The role is largely one of raising awareness, communication and co-ordination. Flood Wardens are not asked to carry out any duties that would put them at any personal risk. See Section 3, pages 8 to 13.

6. Sandbags

Provision of sandbags

Local authorities do not have a duty to provide either sandbags or similar assistance at times of flooding. However many local authorities take the threat seriously and will put aside adequate resources to help combat the risk of flooding.

Nevertheless householders must take appropriate measures to protect their own properties as far as possible from flooding.

Cotswold District Council (CDC) do not provide sandbags for individual domestic use. They can provide sandbags for strategic deployment during flooding, for the protection of essential services such as electricity or water supplies.

You can buy sandbags from most local builders merchants in advance if you think your property may be at risk from flooding.

- The Environment Agency have published [a guide on how best to use them](#)
- The Gloucestershire Local Resilience Forum have produced a video guide on [how to effectively protect your property against flood water using sandbags](#)

Use of sandbags

If sandbags are used, they are effective only if they are used properly. By laying the sandbags correctly, it can also reduce the number of sandbags that are required to reduce the flooding risk to a property.

Gloucestershire Local Resilience Forum has produced a 'How to Sandbag' video available via [YouTube](#) with which you may wish to familiarise yourself, and advise residents who may be using sandbags.

Disposal of sandbags

If Sandbags are contaminated with sewage and other pollutants they should be disposed of correctly. For more information see the following guidance from the Environment Agency <https://www.gov.uk/after-flood>. Suggested contact for advice on safe disposal by EA is your local Environmental Health Team 01285 623000

7. Sources of Information

Environment Agency services

Flood Warnings

The Environment Agency provides a free service to issue flood warnings by phone, email or text message to homes or businesses at risk of flooding and to organisations responding to emergencies. Please note not all watercourses are covered by the flood warning service. You can sign up to receive flood warnings either registering online [via gov.uk website](https://www.gov.uk) or calling Floodline on 0345 988 1188.

As a Flood Warden it is a good idea to sign up for the flood warning service if you are not already. If you live in part of the community that does not receive a flood warning service, but are the Flood Warden for area(s) that do, you can contact the local Environment Agency Office (see Appendix 1 Contacts Directory) to ask to receive the relevant flood warnings. As previously mentioned an important aspect of your role could be to make local residents aware of the flood warning service and encourage them to sign up if they haven't already.

Flood Warning codes

Flood Warnings are issued by the Environment Agency using a set of three easily recognisable codes. Each of the three codes indicates the level of danger associated with the warning. The codes are not always used in sequence, for example, in the case of a flash flood, a Severe Flood Warning may be issued immediately, with no other warning code preceding it.

The Flood Warnings and their codes are shown on page 20.

Floodline

This is a recorded message system that anyone can call. Floodline can be contacted on **0345 988 1188** and can provide detailed flooding information for your local area. Floodline quick dial codes can be found in **Appendix 6**. Floodline call operatives can also be reached to help with specific flooding enquiries.

River Levels online

The Environment Agency provides data on river levels via [gov.uk website](https://www.gov.uk). This data is collected from EA monitoring stations and is regularly updated (at least daily). It covers all of the major rivers and shows the current level, typical range, recent highest level and the highest historical level recorded at the location. A limited number of the monitoring stations also have the capability to show a modelled forecast river level, although as with any forecast the level of confidence is less for than for actual recorded data.

Advice and guidance

The Environment Agency publishes online practical and useful information to help communities prepare for flooding. **Please see Appendix 7 for a list of links.**

Other useful websites

Other useful websites with flooding/ related information include:

- [Cotswold District Council](#) – general flooding information
- [Gloucestershire County Council](#) – general flood risk management and flooding info
- [Flood Guide](#) – online guide developed by multi-agency partners to provide flood advice
- [Flood Online Reporting Tool](#) – to report current and recent flooding
- [Gloucestershire County Council Highways 'Report It'](#) – to report flooded roads
- [GCC Highways Road Closures](#) – info placed on this webpage if roads flooded/ closed
- [Highways England Road Closures](#) – info on Highways England managed roads
- [Gloucestershire Local Resilience Forum](#) – info on flooding and community resilience
- [Gloucestershire Rural Community Council](#) – info on community emergency plans
- [Met Office](#) – for weather forecasts and severe weather warnings
- [National Flood Forum](#) – charity providing flooding advice
- [Flood Re](#) – info on joint initiative between Government and insurers for flood insurance
- [Government information on flooding](#) – information on before, during & after flooding
- [Flood risk check](#) – EA info to check long term flood risk of a property
- [What3Words](#) - to find and share exact locations e.g. to direct Emergency Services




Useful Apps



Met Office Weather - for the latest weather information including severe weather warnings and rain radar.



What3Words- is a way to identify precise locations. Every 3m square has been given a unique combination of three words to find, share and navigate to precise locations using three simple words.

| |  FLOOD ALERT |  FLOOD WARNING |  SEVERE FLOOD WARNING | Warning no longer in force |
|----------------------------------|---|---|--|---|
| What it means | Flooding is possible. Be prepared | Flooding is expected. Immediate action required | Severe flooding. Danger to life. | No further flooding is currently expected for your area. |
| When it is used | Two hours to two days in advance of flooding | Half an hour to one day in advance of flooding | When flooding poses a significant risk to life or significant disruption to communities | When a Flood Warning or Severe Flood Warning is no longer in force |
| Impacts likely to be seen | Flooding on fields, recreation land and car parks. Flooding of minor roads and farmland | Flooding of homes and businesses Flooding of rail infrastructure Flooding of roads with major impacts Extensive flood plain inundation (including caravan parks or campsites) Flooding of major tourist/recreational attractions | Deep and fast flowing water Debris in the water causing danger. Potential or observed collapse of buildings and structures Communities isolated by flood waters Critical infrastructure for communities disabled Large number of evacuees | No new impacts expected from flooding, however there still may be standing water following flooding Flooded properties Flooding or damaged infrastructure |
| Recommended actions | Be prepared to act on your flood plan. Prepare a flood kit of essential items. Avoid walking, cycling or driving through floodwater. Farmers should consider moving livestock and equipment away from areas likely to flood. | Protect yourself, your family and help others. Move family, pets and valuables to a safe place. Turn off gas, electricity and water supplies if safe to do so. Put flood protection equipment in place. If you are caught in a flash flood, get to higher ground. | Stay in a safe place with a means of escape. Be ready should you need to evacuate from your home. Cooperate with the emergency services. Call 999 if you are in immediate danger Call Floodline for up to date information. | Be careful. Flood water may still be around for several days and be contaminated. If you have been flooded, ring your insurance company as soon as possible. |

Appendix 1 Contact Directory

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Emergency Services | 999 | |
| Police (non-emergency) | 101 | www.gloucestershire.police.uk |
| Fire and Rescue Service (non-emergency) | 01452 888777 | www.glosfire.gov.uk |
| GCC Highways Team | 08000 514 514 (24hr) | |
| NHS 111 Service | 111 (24hr) For medical help not 999 | https://111.nhs.uk/ |
| Environment Agency | | |
| General Enquiries | 03708 506 506 (Mon-Fri 8am-6pm) | https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/environment-agency |
| Floodline | 0345 988 1188 (24hr) | |
| Incident Hotline | 0800 80 70 60 (24hr) | |
| Cotswold District Council | | |
| General queries and flooding emergencies in office hours | 01285 623000 | customer.services@cotswold.gov.uk |
| Emergency out of hours | 01285 623000 | |
| Watercourse blockages | 012875 623000 & ask for Land Drainage Team | https://www.cotswold.gov.uk/environment/flooding/watercourses-and-ditches/ |
| Gloucestershire Rural Community Council (GRCC) (during office hours only) | Laurence Murphy 01452 528491 ext 222 07707 281805 LaurenceM@grcc.org.uk | https://www.grcc.org.uk/community-led-planning/emergency-planning |
| Water / Sewerage Company | | |
| Thames Water | 0800 316 9800 or text phone 0800 316 9898 | https://www.thameswater.co.uk/ |
| Severn Trent | General enquiries 0800 7834 444 | https://www.stwater.co.uk/ https://www.stwater.co.uk/in-my-area/check-my-area/ |
| Bristol Water | General enquiries 0845 702 3797 | https://www.bristolwater.co.uk/ |
| Gas Leaks any supplier | 0800 111 999 (24hr) | www.nationalgrid.com |
| Gas Distributor Wales and West Utilities | 0800 912 2999 | www.wuutilities.co.uk |
| Electricity: Power Cut | 105 | Appropriate for any supplier |
| Western Power Distribution Loss of supply interactive map | 0800 6783 105 (24hr) | www.westernpower.co.uk http://www.westernpower.co.uk/Power-outages/Power-cuts-in-your-area.aspx |
| Community Well Being Service for Cotswold Area (GRCC) | 07738 106 384 cws.grcc@nhs.net | https://www.grcc.org.uk/what-we-do/community-wellbeing-service |

Other Contact Details

Please feel free to add any other contacts below which you may find useful in your role as Flood Warden e.g. Parish Council, local Police Community Support Officer

**NB –contact details should be checked at least annually to note any changes.
Ensure you have permission to collect and use any personal information**

| Organisation / Name/ Email | Office Hours | Out of Hours |
|----------------------------|--------------|--------------|
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Appendix 2 Flood Warden Equipment

As a Flood Warden, if you haven't already done so you may want to ensure that you have the appropriate equipment to enable you to carry out your role. Please see some suggestions of such equipment noted below.

Please note the Environment Agency can provide Flood Wardens with leaflets to handout to residents (as detailed in Appendix 7).

Flood Warden Equipment

- Warm/ waterproof clothing
- Appropriate footwear
- Gloves
- Hi-Viz vest*
- Torch
- Handbook
- Leaflets for householders*



*Hi-Viz and leaflets will be provided by the scheme, contact LaurenceM@grcc.org.uk for more information

Appendix 3 Example Log Sheet Template

| Date | Time | Information / Decision / Action | Initials |
|------|------|---------------------------------|----------|
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| Date | Time | Information / Decision / Action | Initials |
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Appendix 4 Example Post Flood Record Sheet

Please send completed sheets to LaurenceM@grcc.org.uk Please let Cotswold District Council know of the assistance you are able to offer to make sure there is no duplication. Please send the form once you have a reasonable amount of information that can be acted upon and feel free to resubmit an updated form as many times as is needed. The form can be altered for other types of emergency events.

| Post Flooding Record | | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|--------------|--------|
| Flood Warden Name: | | Area: | |
| Contact Details: | | | |
| Location | Time & date of flooding | Flood type | Notes: |
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| Location | Time & date of flooding | Flood type | Notes: |
|----------|-------------------------|------------|--------|
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Appendix 5 Household Flood Kit Contents

Households at risk of flooding, may find it beneficial to put together a 'Flood Kit'.

Most householders will have many of the items anyway, but putting them all together in one place, to be easily at hand can make it easier in a flooding emergency.

Below are some suggestions of what a Flood Kit might contain:

Flood Kit

- Waterproof clothing
- Rubber gloves
- Wellington boots
- Torch
- Battery or wind-up radio to monitor local news and weather
- First aid kit
- Spare batteries (for torch & radio)
- Mobile phone and charger
- Bottled water (check use by date)
- Tinned and non-perishable food (e.g. cereal bars), and a tin opener
- Blankets
- Emergency cash and credit cards
- Essential prescription medication/ repeat prescription forms
- Copies of insurance and any other important personal documents
- Contact Details e.g. friends/ family, insurers, bank, utility companies etc
- Children's essentials (if necessary) e.g. milk formula, baby food, sterilised bottles and spoons, nappies, wipes, nappy bags, clothing, teddy etc.

Appendix 6 EA Floodline Local Quick Dial Codes

Information on the current situation in your area can be heard by dialing Floodline on 0345 988 1188. This local information can be heard by **selecting option 1** and then holding to wait for further instructions before dialing one or more of the following quick dial codes.

| Flood Alert Area | Flood Warning Area | EA Floodline Quick Dial Code |
|--|---|------------------------------|
| River Windrush from Bourton to Newbridge | River Windrush at Bourton on the Water | 171071 |
| River Dikler from Condicote to Little Rissington | River Dikler between Stow on the Wold and Bourton on the Water | 171251 |
| River Thames from St John's Lock, Lechlade to Eynsham Lock, Eynsham. | River Thames between Buscot and Shifford | 171161 |
| The River Evenlode from Moreton in Marsh to Cassington and also the River Glyme at Wooton and Woodstock | River Evenlode at Moreton in Marsh | 171086 |
| The tributaries on the Upper River Thames above Cricklade | Swill Brook below Oaksey | 171204 |
| The River Churn from Coberley to Cerney Wick and also The Hilcot Brook, The Daglingworth Stream and The Gumstool Brook | River Churn from Baunton to Siddington including Cirencester | 171465 |
| | River Churn at South Cerney | 171466 |
| | River Churn at Cerney Wick | 171467 |
| Ampney Brook from Barnsley Wood to Sheeppen Bridge near Latton including Ampney Crucis | Ampney Brook from Ampney Crucis to Sheeppen Bridge near Latton | 171483 |
| River Leach from Northleach to Mill Lane near Lechlade including Fyfield and Little Faringdon | River Leach from just below Southrop to Mill Lane near Lechlade | 171106 |

| Flood Alert Area | Flood Warning Area | EA Floodline Quick Dial Code |
|---|---|------------------------------|
| River Thames from Ewen to Cricklade including Somerford Keynes and Ashton Keynes | River Thames at Ewen | 171201 |
| | River Thames from Somerford Keynes to Cricklade | 171202 |
| River Coln and its tributaries from Whittington to the confluence with the River Thames | River Coln from Fossebridge to Quenington | 171492 |
| | River Coln at Fairford | 171493 |
| | River Coln for Cotswold Water Park and Whelford | 171494 |
| River Thames and its small tributaries from Calcutt to Lechlade | River Thames from Calcutt to Lechlade including Hannington Wick | 171207 |
| | Marston Meysey Brook for Marston Meysey | 171208 |

Appendix 7 Weblinks to Further Flooding Guidance

Guidance to help communities and households to prepare for flooding is available online via the links below:

| | Website Address Available from |
|--|---|
| What to do before, during and after a flood | https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/flooding-what-to-do-before-during-and-after-a-flood |
| Would your business stay afloat? A guide to preparing your business for flooding | https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preparing-your-business-for-flooding |
| Prepare your property for flooding: guide for households & small businesses | https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/prepare-your-property-for-flooding |
| Personal Flood Plan Template | https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/personal-flood-plan |
| Community Flood Plan Template | https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/community-flood-plan-template |
| Flood Minimising the Risk. Flood Plan guidance for communities and groups. Practical advice to help you create a Flood Plan. | https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/flood-plan-guidance-for-communities-and-groups |
| Sandbags: how to use them properly for flood protection | https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sandbags-how-to-use-them-to-prepare-for-a-flood |
| Flooding: Health guidance and advice | https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/flooding-health-guidance-and-advice |
| Food Standards Agency: Food safety after flooding | https://www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/food-safety-after-a-flood |
| GRCC Emergency planning advice: Your Community Emergency Plan toolkit | http://www.grcc.org.uk/community-led-planning/emergency-planning |
| Gloucestershire Prepared: Local Resilience Forum for advice e.g. Are you Ready Booklet | http://glosprepared.co.uk |
| Help for businesses and flood planning | https://floodrepairable.wordpress.com www.floodresilientbusiness.co.uk |