

# FACTS: YOUR NEW FLOOD WARNING SERVICE

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**We are pleased to offer residents in Honiton  
a new free flood warning service for the Gissage Steam**

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Our staff use the latest technology to monitor rainfall, river and tide levels 24 hours a day to forecast flooding. You will receive a flood warning when we believe properties in your area are expected to flood.

The accuracy of flood warnings improves over time as we gather more data and get a better understanding of how the river reacts to heavy rainfall. In the short term, as this is a brand new service, there may be a higher than normal occurrence of false alarms.

In some built up residential areas, flooding can happen extremely quickly after heavy rain. This means that flooding could occur very soon after a flood warning is issued, so you may need to act fast. In some circumstances there may be no time to issue a flood warning in advance so it's important to be prepared, know the signs to look out for and stay alert.

It is important for us to verify what happens every time a flood warning is issued to improve the service. To do this, we deploy staff to affected areas to validate flood extents and our warning alarm levels to improve the accuracy of our warnings.

We welcome your involvement to improve the service. You can help by reporting and recording any actual flooding to Floodline on 0345 988 11 88 or our Incident Communication Service on 0800 80 70 60.

# FLOOD

**PREPARE. ACT. SURVIVE.**

Floodline 03459 88 11 88  
Incident Hotline 0800 80 70 60  
Customer Service Line 03708 506 506



**Environment  
Agency**

## Check your flood risk

We have received government funding which has enabled us to invest in the latest technology and infrastructure needed to provide a flood warning service in your area.

We are targeting all properties at high risk of river and coastal flooding, however some properties at lower risk are included in this service. This service includes 257 properties in your area.

To help us reduce flood risk we have invested significantly in collecting detailed survey data about our rivers, modelling how floods could occur and mapping those areas that have been affected or could be affected in the future.

You can check your flood risk online and find out more information about what this means for you and your property at [www.gov.uk/check-flood-risk](http://www.gov.uk/check-flood-risk).

## Prepare

Know what to do when you receive a flood warning, use our 3-point flood plan.



**FLOOD  
ALERT**

**PREPARE**

- Prepare a bag that includes medicines and insurance documents
- Visit [flood-warning-information.service.gov.uk](http://flood-warning-information.service.gov.uk)



**FLOOD  
WARNING**

**ACT**

- Turn off gas, water and electricity
- Move things upstairs or to safety
- Move family, pets and car to safety



**SEVERE  
FLOOD  
WARNING**

**SURVIVE**

- Call 999 if in immediate danger
- Follow advice from emergency services
- Keep yourself and your family safe

We issue 3 levels of flood warnings: Flood Alert, Flood Warning and Severe Flood Warning.

- **Flood Alert** – Prepare. Flooding is possible.
- **Flood Warning** – Act. Flooding to property is expected. Immediate action required.
- **Severe Flood Warning** – Survive. Severe flooding. Danger to life.

## What you can do now to prepare

Prepare a bag of essential items now to take with you if you have to leave your home. Keep this in a safe place. You could include things like spare medication, glasses, mobile phone, clothing, important documents and contact numbers.

- Check if your community has a flood group. If not, consider setting up your own, and complete a community flood plan. Search [flood plan guidance for communities and groups](#) on GOV.UK.
- Further independent information to help you prepare for flooding can be found on the National Flood forum website [nationalfloodforum.org.uk](http://nationalfloodforum.org.uk).

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## Know the signs (flash floods)

Flash floods occur extremely quickly - much faster than other forms of flooding - and with massive force. They can move rocks, tear out trees, sweep away vehicles and destroy buildings and bridges.

They tend to happen when heavy rainfall runs off land and quickly swells rivers and streams. Water can also build up quickly in urban areas when rainfall is unable to drain away.

How to recognise a flash flood:

- heavy rainfall
- a short time between the rainfall and flooding
- large amounts of fast flowing water
- damage to buildings and structures
- dangers presented by debris
- there is an urgent threat to life.

## During a flood

- We urge people to stay safe on the coast – take extreme care on coastal paths and promenades, and don't put yourself in unnecessary danger trying to take 'storm selfies'.
- Don't be a flood tourist – if the emergency services have to rescue you, it could prevent them getting to someone else who needs urgent help.
- Avoid driving through flood water; just 30cm of fast flowing water is enough to move your car.
- Avoid walking through floodwater, even shallow moving water can knock you off your feet.
- Keep children and pets away from flood water – it contains hidden dangers such as heavy debris, sharp objects, open manhole covers, sewage and chemicals.
- Local Authorities set up rest centres for people evacuated from their homes and arrange temporary shelters or accommodation for people who have nowhere else to go. Some may provide sandbags.

## After a Flood

If you have been flooded, contact your insurance company and follow their advice. If you haven't got insurance the National Flood Forum can offer help and support. Call them on 01299 403055 or visit them at [www.nationalfloodforum.org.uk](http://www.nationalfloodforum.org.uk).

If you have had to leave your home, make sure you check with the emergency services that it's safe to return.

Take advice from specialists before starting repairs to your property. Most of the repair work after flooding will need to be undertaken by professionals appointed by your insurers.

If you need emotional support contact your doctor or an organisation that could help such as the Red Cross or the Samaritans.

Flood water may contain harmful substances such as sewage, chemicals and animal waste which could make you unwell. When cleaning your home after a flood always wear gloves, a face mask and sturdy footwear. For information about cleaning your home after a flood contact Public Health England or visit [www.gov.uk/flooding-health-guidance-and-advice](http://www.gov.uk/flooding-health-guidance-and-advice).

If you have questions about recovering from a flood such as disposing of used sandbags or damaged furniture please contact your local authority.

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## Automated flood warning flood registrations

In England, the Environment Agency sends flood warnings to phone numbers registered in areas at risk of flooding from rivers or the sea. The service is anonymous and free.

We have a legal duty to warn people who may be at risk of flooding so they can take action to protect themselves, their family and property.

### Your information

We tell phone companies about areas at risk of flooding. They send us phone numbers registered in those areas. They do not give us the names or addresses associated with those numbers. Mobile phone numbers are provided by EE, O2, Vodafone and 3. We get BT landline numbers from the same system used by the emergency services which includes ex-directory numbers.

We hold phone numbers securely in our flood warning system in line with our privacy notice.

If you are with a participating landline or mobile network provider, you may receive a text message or voicemail explaining that we will contact you when a flood warning is issued. This may happen because your phone number has been automatically added to our free flood warning service. This has not created a full account for you.

You may not be contacted if your landline or mobile network provider does not participate in this scheme, but you are still at risk of flooding.

### Fully register your details

Fully register your details now to get the best experience of the flood warning service. The service is free. You can also choose to be sent:

- flood warnings, which indicate that flooding to property is expected
- flood alerts, which indicate that flooding is possible
- warnings and alerts by text message, recorded voice message, or email
- warnings and alerts about more than one location

Make the most of the free service by giving us 5 ways to reach you, wherever you are.

Call Floodline on 0345 988 1188 or 0345 602 6340 (for the hard of hearing) or

Go online via [www.gov.uk/sign-up-for-flood-warnings](http://www.gov.uk/sign-up-for-flood-warnings)

## Insurance

Think about getting insurance to protect your home or business. Check that flood cover is included as part of your buildings and contents insurance. Flood Re is an organisation set up by the Government and the Insurance industry, to help householders at risk of flooding have access to affordable cover. Visit [www.floodre.co.uk](http://www.floodre.co.uk) or [www.nationalfloodforum.org.uk](http://www.nationalfloodforum.org.uk) for more information.

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03 November 2021

Dear Honiton Householder,

## Honiton's new flood warning service

- **You have been automatically registered to receive a free flood warning for the Gissage Stream at Honiton.**
- **Call 0345 9881188 to let us know how you would like to receive your flood warnings**

Over the last year, the terrible impacts of the coronavirus reminded us that nature can change everything at a moment's notice.

Flooding is the most common and widespread natural hazard in the UK.

Your property is located in an area that could be affected by flash flooding. This type of flooding happens extremely quickly with potentially devastating impacts as seen in Boscastle in 2004 and Coverack in 2017. These types of events are rare, but can be very dangerous.

The average cost of flooding to a home is around £30,000. Flooding is dangerous. The mental health impacts of flooding can last for two years or more after flooding has happened.

But crucially, taking steps to prepare for flooding can avoid damages and some of the trouble and stress. Flood warnings give you valuable time to prepare for flooding – time that allows you to stay safe and minimise damage

We're pleased to be able to offer you a new, free Flood Warning Service for the Gissage Stream at Honiton.

We have worked with mobile network providers to automatically register people at risk to our new free flood warning service in your area. You may receive a text message or voicemail from your landline or network provider explaining that we will contact you when a flood warning is issued.

You can register for our full service which allows you to receive flood warnings by landline, mobile, email or text message. **Call us on 0345 988 1188 to let us know how you'd like to receive warnings.** We will register your preferred contact details.

We issue 3 levels of flood warnings: Flood Alert, Flood Warning and Severe Flood Warning. Make sure you know what to do:

**Flood Alert: PREPARE** - Pack medicines and insurance documents. Visit the flood warning information service.

**Flood Warning: ACT** - Move family, pets and belongings to safety. Turn off gas, water and electricity.

**Severe Flood warning: SURVIVE** - Immediate danger? Call 999. Follow emergency services' advice.

customer service line 03708 506 506  
[gov.uk/environment-agency](https://www.gov.uk/environment-agency)

In the short term, as this is a brand new service, there may be a higher than normal occurrence of false alarms. The accuracy of flood warnings improves over time as we gather more data and get a better understanding of how the river reacts to heavy rainfall. We welcome your involvement to improve the service. You can help by reporting and recording any flooding to Floodline on 0345 988 11 88 or our Incident Communication Service on 0800 80 70 60.

In some built up residential areas, flooding can happen extremely quickly after heavy rain. This means that flooding could occur very soon after a flood warning is issued: you may need to act fast. In some circumstances there may be no time to issue a flood warning in advance so it's important to be prepared, know the signs to look out for and stay alert. Read the enclosed leaflet for advice on what signs to look out for.

**Prepare, Act, Survive:**

- Call 0345 988 1188 and let us know how you'd like to receive flood warnings. We'll register your preferred contact details
- Prepare a flood plan: <https://floodsdestroy.campaign.gov.uk>
- Find out if there are measures you can take to reduce the impact of flooding on your home. Visit [www.befloodready.uk](http://www.befloodready.uk)
- Register for the Met Office's National Severe Weather Warning Service, so that you are alerted to the possibility of severe thunderstorms and rain that could cause flash flooding:  
<https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/weather/guides/warnings>

For more information on how to prepare for flooding and our Flood Warning System please visit our website <https://floodsdestroy.campaign.gov.uk> or call our Floodline on 0345 988 1188.

Yours Faithfully

Kate Pearson  
Flood Resilience Advisor  
[dc.flood@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:dc.flood@environment-agency.gov.uk)

## Flash Flood– What to do

Before	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Communication</b> at an early stage is essential</li> <li>• Alert your Community Emergency Response Team to the rainfall forecast, especially if heavy rain has started</li> <li>• <b>Be aware. Know the signs.</b></li> <li>• <b>Start local observations.</b> Signs to watch for include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Heavy rain and/or severe weather reports</li> <li>○ Rainfall not draining away, leading to surface water flooding</li> <li>○ Rising river levels, with dark churning water</li> <li>○ A build-up of debris in rivers, which could give way and cause a wave of water to surge</li> <li>○ Spray or wave overtopping on the coast</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Start an incident log</b></li> </ul>
During	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Report flooding</b> and blockages that may increase flood risk: phone 0800 807060 and ask to speak to your local Flood Warning Duty Officer</li> <li>• <b>Call 999 if there's a risk to life</b>, or if you're trapped</li> <li>• <b>Stay safe. Prioritise your own safety</b> at all times</li> <li>• Be ready to relocate to a safe place, if told to do so by the emergency services</li> <li>• Do not walk or drive through flood water</li> <li>• <b>Provide support and guidance ahead of the arrival of the emergency services.</b> For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ "Stay in a safe place with a means of escape.</li> <li>○ If you're in a building with at least two storeys and believe it's safer to stay where you are, move to a higher storey of the building and wait for instructions from the emergency services. Turn off your gas, electricity and water mains supplies.</li> <li>○ If you are in vulnerable accommodation e.g. bungalow, caravan or tent, seek shelter in the nearest two storey building or go to higher ground</li> <li>○ Be ready should you need to evacuate your home.</li> <li>○ Cooperate with emergency services</li> <li>○ Do not walk or drive through flood water</li> <li>○ Call 999 if you're in immediate danger"</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Collect information about the flood</b>, if it's safe to do so <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Take photos</li> <li>○ Note the date and time</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>When emergency services arrive</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Community Emergency Response Team coordinator to make themselves known to the Operational commander at an early stage</li> <li>○ Provide an overview of the issues present. Relay concerns, local knowledge and issues to relevant authorities.</li> <li>○ You may be asked to help relay information to the community (e.g. by door to door visits), such as areas to avoid/promote health, safety and well-being</li> <li>○ You may be asked to assist with evacuation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Cooperate with emergency services</li> <li>▪ You can provide valuable support by directing people to a place of safety e.g. temporary community shelter/official local authority rest centre</li> <li>▪ Remember: Nobody has the powers to force people out of their homes</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Liaise with emergency responders before interacting with the media, even if 'off the record'</li> </ul>
After	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Collect information about the flood</b>, if it's safe to do so <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Take photos</li> <li>○ Note the date and time</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Help relay concerns</b>, local knowledge and issues to the relevant authorities</li> <li>• <b>Signpost</b> flood recovery advice e.g. <a href="http://www.bdma.org.uk/publications/flooddocs">http://www.bdma.org.uk/publications/flooddocs</a></li> </ul>

