

water to knock an adult over.

- It only takes 60cms (two feet) of water to lift and sweep away a 4 x 4 car or small lorry.
- There may be hidden dangers in the water including rubble, vegetation and exposed drains.

3. Plan where to go if you get caught in a flash flood

The greatest danger occurs when people panic or are uncoordinated in their response to flash flooding, particularly before the emergency services arrive. If you plan what you would do you are more likely to be able to stay safe.

If you are in a building with at least two storeys and believe it is safer to stay where you are, you should:

- move to a higher storey of the building
- wait for instructions from the emergency services

If you are in vulnerable accommodation such as a bungalow, caravan or tent - or caught outside - you should:

- seek shelter in the nearest two-storey building or go to higher ground
- call 999 if you are trapped.

Flood warnings - Flash floods can happen very quickly and there's often no time to issue flood warnings in advance. However our free Floodline Warnings Direct service, where it's available, will give you advance warning of most other types of flooding from the sea and rivers. Sign up by phoning Floodline on 0845 988 1188 or visit www.environment-agency.gov.uk.

For further information call our 24-hour Floodline service on 0845 988 1188 which offers information and advice on all flooding matters or visit www.environment-agency.gov.uk/flood.

Would you like to find out more about us, or about your environment?

Then call us on

08708 506 506 (Mon–Fri 8–6)

Approximate calls cost: 8p plus 6p per minute (standard landline).

Please note charges will vary across telephone providers.

email

enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk

or visit our website

www.environment-agency.gov.uk

incident hotline 0800 80 70 60 (24 hrs)

floodline 0845 988 1188

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Flash floods can kill

Know what to do

Your area is at risk of flash flooding. This leaflet explains the dangers of flash flooding and how to stay safe.



We are the Environment Agency. It's our job to look after your environment and make it a better place - for you and for future generations.

Your environment is the air you breathe, the water you drink and the ground you walk on. Working with business, Government and society as a whole, we are making your environment cleaner and healthier.

The Environment Agency. Out there, making your environment a better place.

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Your area is at risk of flash flooding. We know where flash floods are likely even if none have happened for years or even decades. In fact most major flash floods, even on the scale of Boscastle and Helmsley, occur in places where there have been none in living memory.

Flash floods are extremely destructive, so being prepared could save lives.

This leaflet sets out some simple actions to ensure you know what to do if a flash flood happens.

What is flash flooding?

Flash floods 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. This often causes a build up of debris, which can then give way causing a wave of water to surge down the river increasing the speed and height of the water within minutes.

Insurance – If we know your area is at risk of flooding it's likely your insurance company does too. Most UK insurers have copies of our river flood risk mapping. Being aware and taking action to reduce the risk of flooding to your property may even bring your insurance premiums down.

Three steps to safety

1. Be aware and know the signs

Flash flooding can happen suddenly. You may have to act before emergency services can reach you. It's important to know what signs to look for in your location so you can ACT FAST.

Signs to watch for:

- heavy rain or severe weather reports
- rising water levels with churning, dark water
- a build up of debris in rivers or streams

People particularly at risk are:

- in basement or single-storey accommodation such as a bungalow
- staying in a mobile home, tent, caravan, on a boat or in a wooden structure
- unfamiliar with the area, eg. tourists

2. Do not walk or drive through flood water

In a flash flood most injuries and deaths happen when people try to cross flood water on foot or in a vehicle.

Never underestimate the danger of a flash flood:

- It only takes 15cms (six inches) of fast-flowing

