

Flooding guide

Where to find help and assistance



Security classification:
Not protected

Purpose of this guide

This document is intended as a general guide for members of the community, our colleagues and partner agencies. Its aim is to assist with relevant information on flooding, providing:

- Links to services that may be required in an emergency.
- Answers to frequently asked questions.
- An overview of what Central Bedfordshire does in relation to flooding, and where it can to explain the roles and responsibilities of other agencies.

The guide is not intended to be an exhaustive list of options, nor does it seek to provide all the information that other agencies (with specific responsibilities) are better qualified to assist you with.

Contents

Purpose of guide	2
Contents	3
Emergency contact summary sheet	4
Frequently asked questions	5 – 6
Further information and advice	7
Flooding from the public highway	8
Flooding from a main river	9
Flooding from a watercourse in the Central Bedfordshire operating area	10
Flooding from public sewers and water mains	11
Flooding from private sewers and drains	12
Flooding from a neighbours property	13

Emergency contact summary sheet

This is a summary of the emergency contact telephone numbers for the organisations involved with flooding incidents.

Environment Agency

Floodline 0845 988 1188 (24-hrs)
www.environment-agency.gov.uk

Anglian Water

Customer Services 08457 145 145 (24-hrs)
www.anglianwater.co.uk

Thames Water

Customer Services 0845 9200 800 (24-hrs)
www.thameswater.co.uk

Central Bedfordshire Council

Customer Services (Home & Environment) 0300 300 8302 (Office hours)
0300 300 8098 (Out of hours)
www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Bedfordshire Group of Internal Drainage Boards

Main Office 01234 354396
www.idbs.org.uk

Bedfordshire Police

Main switchboard 01234 841212

Bedfordshire and Luton Fire and Rescue Service

Main switchboard 01234 351081 (24-hrs)

If you believe that your personal safety is at risk from a flood, please call the Fire and Rescue Service via 999.

If your property or a row of properties will be **imminently** flooded, call the Fire and Rescue Service on 01234 351 081. They will discuss the situation with you and give you advice. If they are able to help, they will provide whatever assistance is possible: however their first priority will be to save lives.

Frequently asked questions

What are the causes?

There are a number of causes of flooding, the descriptions often include the following terms; surface water, groundwater, escaping water, river and costal flooding. In our area we are fortunate not to be at risk of costal flooding but we could see any of the others.

How do you know if you're at risk?

Well it's difficult to be precise, as there are many variables involved when you consider all the potential sources for flooding; but where it's likely to be from a river you can visit the Environment Agency Website and check your local area against their maps. Further work is being done to identify and manage flood risk from other sources, particularly surface water flooding.

Who is responsible?

The last thing you would want to be told when your property is affected is "that's the wrong sort of flooding 'so and so' is responsible for that". However the facts do mean that responsibilities fall in different areas; on pages 8 to 13 we have tried to show who is responsible for what and how you access those areas. Property owners also have responsibilities particularly for taking measures to protect their own property.

How do I go about protecting my property, or worse still what would I do after a flood?

As a Local Authority we have a level of knowledge and experience but would want you to access the most authoritative and up to date information, for this reason we would ask you to consider the following sources:

The Environment Agency's Floodline 0845 988 1188

This provides a single 24-hour national number for you to ring on anything to do with flooding; all calls are charged at local rate. The Minicom number 08702 422 549 is for people with impaired hearing only.

The Environment Agency's Website

<http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/homeandleisure/floods>

The Environment Agency (EA) will be able to provide advice on many flood related topics, including:

- How to investigate the risk to your property and local area.
- Information on the 'flood warning' system and how to sign up to receive that service.
- Ways to reduce the impact of flooding to your home or business.
- What you might do in the event of flood, the EA have produced a series of information booklets that can be viewed, downloaded or listened to via their website.

So what does Central Bedfordshire Council do?

Specifically in relation to flooding or in discharging our function as a local authority we:

- Utilise the skills and knowledge within the council e.g. Land Drainage Engineers, and officers in Environmental Health and Emergency Planning.
- Receive, manage and respond to 'professional partner' information on severe weather and flood warnings.
- Monitor the local situation and where appropriate deploy trained officers as part of a Flood Monitoring Team to help gather information on the ground.
- Utilise local authority services to assist the response and/or recovery process.
- Provide emergency assistance centres for those that may be evacuated.
- Assist with temporary accommodation.
- Lead on the recovery from a flood event.

In general terms, either working as a single agency or when responding in the multi agency arena we:

- Make sure we are as resilient as we can be, by assessing the risks, having effective emergency plans, and by making arrangements for our services to continue in challenging times.
- Cooperate and share information with our partners in other local authorities, health and the emergency services to enhance the coordination and efficiency in responding to and recovering from emergencies.
- Maintain public awareness and put in place arrangements to warn, inform, and advise our community, particularly the most vulnerable.

What about sandbags?

None of the local authorities in Bedfordshire issue sandbags to the general public as a form of flood defence for private property and small businesses. Our decision in this respect is based on the outcome of recent reviews that suggest their effectiveness is quite limited, and so issuing them would misinform you on their value in protecting your property.

We accept the protection of your property is a matter for you and ultimately it's your choice; however we would suggest you consider other flood defence products that have appeared in recent times that are proven to be more efficient and effective. The Blue Pages directory (details on the following page) will help you when considering your options, the best advice on the use of sandbags is available from the Environment Agency who produce a leaflet, and this is available by following the link:

<http://publications.environment-agency.gov.uk/pdf/FLHO0309BPSL-e-e.pdf>

Further information and advice

Bedfordshire and Luton Local Resilience Forum (BLLRF)

The Bedfordshire and Luton Local Resilience Forum brings together the emergency services, local authorities, National Health Service and other agencies which are all required to respond to any major emergency in Bedfordshire and Luton.

The BLLRF website has a great deal of information, maps and advice on how to 'self help' by preparing plans and knowing what to do in the event of flooding.

http://www.bllrf.org.uk/get_informed/lr_major_river_flooding.php

The National Flood Forum

<http://www.floodforum.org.uk>

The National Flood Forum is a collective, authoritative voice that aims to influence central and local government and all agencies that manage flood risk. It provides support and advice to communities and individuals that have been flooded or are at risk of flooding

The National Flood Forum is a charity run by people who have experienced the trauma, loss and frustration that go with flooding or have first hand experience of supporting the victims of flooding both during and after the event.

Blue Pages directory

<http://www.bluepages.org.uk/>

This is an independent directory of flood protection products and services. It has been put together to advise and inform you about what's available to help you protect your home or business against flooding.

Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) flood guide

<http://www.rics.org/usefulguides>

The RICS describe themselves as an independent professional body committed to setting and upholding the highest standards of excellence and integrity – providing impartial, authoritative advice on key issues affecting business and society. On their Website they provide links to various guides if you follow the one titled flooding you can download their document

Flooding from the public highway

Typical problems

- Flooding from a road.
- Flooding from a blocked road gully or grating.
- Flooding from a blocked culvert.
- Flooding from a highway surface water sewer.

General

Central Bedfordshire Council is the highway authority for this area.

Investigation policy

The highways authority will investigate flooding and drainage problems affecting or originating from the highway (including footways and verges). Roadside gullies are cleaned once a year or as necessary. Some highway drainage systems do not have the capacity to cope with high intensity rainfall so localised flooding may occur.

Road side ditches are generally the responsibility of adjacent landowners although the highway authority may contribute towards their maintenance.

Emergency response

The highway authority operates a 24-hr emergency service.

Contact details

Central Bedfordshire Council
Highways
PO Box 1395
Bedford
MK42 5AN

Telephone

0300 300 8049 (24 hours)

e-mail

highways@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk



Flooding from a main river

Typical problems

- Flooding from a main river.
- Fly tipping in a main river.
- Removal of animal carcasses from main river.

General

The main rivers in the Central Bedfordshire area are:-

- The River Hiz between Letchworth and Henlow.
- The River Ivel between Henlow and Tempsford.
- The River Flit between Shefford and Langford.
- The Clipstone Brook at Leighton Buzzard.
- The River Ouzel at Leighton Buzzard.

These Rivers are managed by the Environment Agency.

Investigation policy

The Environment Agency will investigate instances of flooding from main rivers. Adjacent landowners or riparian (bank) owners are generally responsible for maintaining banks and removing fly tipping on main rivers although the Environment Agency may use their permissive powers under the Flood and Water Management Act to carry out maintenance and new works.

Emergency response

The Environment Agency operate Floodline, telephone 0845 988 1188, which is a 24-hr flood information service.

Contact details

The Environment Agency
National Customer Contact Centre
PO Box 544
Rotherham
S90 1BY



ENVIRONMENT AGENCY

Telephone	08708 506 506
e-mail	enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk
website	www.environment-agency.gov.uk

Flooding from a watercourse in the Central Bedfordshire operating area

Note – watercourse includes streams and ditches (which can be piped)

Typical problems

- Flooding from a watercourse blocked by an obstruction.
- Flooding from a watercourse because banks are overgrown.
- Flooding from a watercourse because of a blocked culvert.
- Flooding from a watercourse because of an undersized culvert.

General

Land drainage and flood defence responsibilities can be assigned to various people or agencies; these include the Environment Agency, the Internal Drainage Board, Local Authority and Land Owners. It would be too complex to try and explain all the detail in this guide, if you have a query please contact us and we will be pleased to help in whichever way we can.

Investigation policy

Central Bedfordshire Council will investigate drainage problems on watercourses within their operating area. Adjacent landowners or riparian owners are generally responsible for the maintenance of watercourses although the Council may use their permissive powers under the Flood and Water Management Act to carry out maintenance and new works.

Emergency response

The Council operates a 24-hr emergency service.

Contact details

Land Drainage Team
Central Bedfordshire Council
Priory House
Monks Walk
Chicksands
Shefford
Beds. SG17 5TQ



Telephone	0300 300 8000 Office hours 0300 300 8098 Out of office hours
e-mail	customer.services@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk
Website	www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Flooding from public sewers and water mains

Typical problems

- Flooding from a blocked or surcharging public sewer.
- Flooding from a burst water or rising main.
- Flooding from a pumping station.
- Loss of toilet facilities because of problem with public sewer.

General

Anglian Water owns and manages a network of public storm and foul water sewers and water and rising mains in the Central Bedfordshire Council area. The majority of public sewers are within the highway.

Investigation policy

Anglian Water will investigate instances of flooding originating from their apparatus. They can also arrange for water to be tested to determine if it is mains water.

Emergency response

All emergency calls should be directed to the Anglian Water's contact centre Tel. 08457 145 145.

Contact details

Anglian Water
Customer Services
PO Box 770
Lincoln
LN5 7WX

The logo for Anglian Water, featuring the word "anglianwater" in a blue, lowercase, sans-serif font.

Telephone 08457 145 145

Website www.anglianwater.co.uk

There are some areas in Central Bedfordshire where Thames Water might be the water company providing the services affected, in those cases the following details are applicable:

Thames Water
PO Box 286
Swindon
SN38 2RA

Telephone 0845 9200 800

Website www.thameswater.co.uk

Flooding from private sewers and drains

Typical problems

- Flooding from a blocked or surcharging private sewer.

General

Private sewers and drains are the responsibility of landowners/householders. If a private sewer is blocked and overflowing the landowner/householder will need to contact a drainage contractor to investigate the blockage. Central Bedfordshire Council does not operate a drain clearing service for private households.

Investigation policy

Central Bedfordshire Council may investigate if residents are unable to resolve a problem.

Contact details

Central Bedfordshire Council
Priory House
Monks Walk
Chicksands
Shefford
Beds. SG17 5TQ



Telephone	0300 300 8000 Office hours 0300 300 8098 Out of office hours
e-mail	customer.services@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk
Website	www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Council owned property

If the property is owned by Central Bedfordshire Council, the following additional contact details may assist:

Council house repairs	0800 074 0263
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Central Bedfordshire Council
Technical Services Manager
High Street North
Dunstable
Bedfordshire
LU6 1LF

Flooding from a neighbours property

Typical problems

- Flooding from an adjacent field.
- Flooding from a private car park.
- Flooding from a neighbours garden or patio.

General

Land and property owners must not carry out activities that may cause flooding to a neighbouring property. Anyone who is being flooded because of the activities of an adjacent land or property owner can take civil action against that owner.

Investigation policy

In extreme cases, Central Bedfordshire Council may investigate problems of this nature. If a property is experiencing regular and severe flooding, Central Bedfordshire Council may consider using their permissive powers under the Flood and Water Management Act to carrying out maintenance works or construct new works to alleviate the flooding.

Emergency response

The Council operates a 24-hr emergency service.

Contact details

Land Drainage Team
Central Bedfordshire Council
Priory House
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Contact us...

by telephone: 0300 300 8000

by email: customer.services@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

on the web: www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Write to Central Bedfordshire Council, Priory House,
Monks Walk, Chicksands, Shefford, Bedfordshire SG17 5TQ