

Checklist for church properties to prepare for flooding

Flooding in your church and associated properties can cause inconvenience and heartache to your church community. It's impossible to flood-proof your church properties but there are some simple actions you can take to reduce the damage a flood may cause.

1. Find out if you're at risk of flooding

A nearby river may be an obvious flood risk, but sometimes the risk may be less clear. You can check your situation in a number of ways:

- The Environment Agency (EA - England and Wales) and Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) offer an online postcode search to see if your local area is at risk.
- You can sign up to Flood Warnings Direct from EA to receive warnings by phone, text or email. SEPA offer a similar warning system by phone.
- Your local authority can tell you what flood prevention schemes are available or are planned in your area.
- Specialist advice is available from the National Flood Forum at www.nationalfloodforum.org.uk

2. Protect your property

If you are at risk, you can take steps to form a barrier against flood water getting into your church or other properties. You can:

- Use temporary flood barriers/defences both around the buildings themselves and the perimeter where water can get in.
- For basic and emergency protection have sandbags or similar alternatives available.
- If you have a brick building, fit air brick covers to prevent water entering the property which can be removed when flood waters have receded.
- Fit non return valves to drainage systems prevent water backing up into the property.
- Use pump and sump systems to mitigate damage.

If you're going to make permanent changes to protect your church against flooding, such as installing walls, gates and additional drainage to site perimeters, we strongly recommend that you seek professional advice from a church architect, building surveyor, or other professional.

If you decide to make changes to the fabric of the church please contact us to ensure you have appropriate insurance cover in place.



3. Planning for a flood

Making your church building more resilient can reduce the impact of water entering your church and also aid the recovery process. Steps you can take include:

- Raising electrical sockets, fuse boxes, controls and wiring to above likely flood levels. If rewiring, bring cables down the wall to meet the raised socket so cabling isn't affected by flood water.
- Where possible, relocating more vulnerable items to higher levels and trying to raise as much as possible above likely flood levels.
- For Church Halls consider more flood resistant flooring such as concrete with tiles instead of carpet.
- Where possible, use plaster, which is more water resistant, on walls or on part of the wall.
- If you can, use flood proof materials such as plastic skirting, stainless steel, solid wood or plastic fixtures/fittings or even removable fixtures/fittings at vulnerable levels.

Your emergency flood plan should include

- Instructions for how to disconnect services such as gas, electricity and water.
- Contact telephone numbers for your plumber, local authority, architect, builder and recovery experts.
- Our Customer Services number **0845 777 3322**
- Our Claims number **0845 603 8381**
- A salvage list of irreplaceable items that should be moved to a safe place if possible.
- Photographic records of special items.

Useful websites

Environment Agency –

www.environment-agency.gov.uk/flood

Scottish Environment Agency -

www.sepa.org.uk/flooding

National Flood Forum -

www.nationalfloodforum.org.uk

Ecclesiastical -

www.ecclesiastical.com/churchflood

4. Recovery after a flood

If the worse happens and you are flooded make sure you:

- Contact our Claims team on **0845 603 8381**. We have a range of specialists who can provide advice on drying out and cleaning up your property and undertaking any repairs or replacements.
- Take photographs of areas or items affected by flood water.
- Be aware - flood water could be contaminated. Approach with caution and use anti-bacterial hand gel if you have to touch the water.
- Open the doors to reduce humidity but ensure the building is secure when closed.
- Don't throw away any damaged items until our claims team say it is ok to do so. We will work with you to get your building back in use as soon as possible.
- Make certain any emergency works comply with Listed Building legislation if appropriate.



For more information

www.ecclesiastical.com/church

or call us on **0845 777 3322**

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