Contact details

Floodline
0845 988 1188

Dudley Council
www.dudley.gov.uk
01384 812345

Highways Agency
08457 50 40 30

Environment Agency
www.environment-agency.gov.uk
08708 506 506

National Flood Forum
www.floodforum.org.uk
01299 403055

Association of British Insurers
www.abi.org.uk/floodinfo
0207 600 3333

Citizens Advice
www.citizensadvice.org.uk

A guide to flood advice and safety
Flood advice

While the risk of floods may not always be high on the agenda in Dudley, it is important we know how to react to all severe weather conditions.

There are simple steps we can all take to ensure we are prepared to cope before, during and after a flood.

Measures to have in place at all times:
- Make sure you have the correct insurance cover
- Find out how to isolate gas, water and electricity supplies
- Keep a list of useful numbers you may need
- Make an emergency kit
- Think about the needs of babies, children, the elderly and infirm and help them by ensuring they know what to do in an emergency

If floods are forecast for your area:
- Listen out for severe weather warnings for flash floods on radio and TV, or phone Floodline on 0845 988 1188 for river floods
- Move valuables, sentimental items and important documents to safety
- Look after pets and move vehicles to high ground
- Have a supply of sandbags
- Alert vulnerable neighbours

If floods are imminent:
- Switch off gas, water and electricity at the mains
- Ensure sandbags and other flood defences are in place and cover air bricks
- Put plugs in sinks, baths and low level shower trays and weigh them down to prevent backflow
- Store electrical items and furniture as high as possible
- Do what you can in daylight
- Evacuate basements

Water advice:
- Follow the advice of water companies regarding the safety of water supplies
- If in doubt boil water for drinking, washing food and cooking
- Use bottled water for infant feed

After the floods:
- Clean taps and run water through before use
- Have power and gas supplies checked by professionals before turning them back on
- Throw away contaminated and perished food
- Contact your insurance company

Your insurance company will arrange for a loss adjuster and other specialists to visit your home to assess the damage. They will manage the clean-up of certain damaged areas.
Other clean-up considerations following a flood:

- You may need pumps to remove water as the fire service will only do this during an emergency. Beware of fumes from petrol or diesel generators or gas heaters as they can kill
- Shovel out mud
- Wear protective clothing and wash well after, as you may be contaminated by sewerage and other contaminates which may have been present
- Hose out affected areas and then clean with disinfectant and soapy water before rinsing
- Take furniture and contents outside to prevent mildew and mould
- Use fans and dehumidifiers or the central heating to dry out the building. Drying out can take weeks or even months. If done too quickly it could cause structural damage to the property
- Keep windows and doors open for ventilation and remove any air brick covers
- Don’t let children play in flood water as it may be contaminated
- Don’t let children or pets onto contaminated land. Remove any sewerage by bagging it then hosing the area down. Allow grass to grow, and once cut, sunlight and soil will destroy harmful bacteria within a week

Financial help:

- If you are unable to live in your property you may get council tax relief
- Talk to the Citizens Advice Bureau for free confidential and independent advice
- Flood relief funds may be available to provide assistance
- Your insurance company will confirm your level of cover and inform you what you are entitled to claim

Beware of cold callers:
Beware of doorstep callers offering help and bogus contractors. They may be looking to benefit from your misfortune and overcharge or attempt to steal from you.

- Use door chains
- Check a caller’s identification and phone the company to check they are genuine if you have any doubts
- Tradesmen who can start the next day can often be the ones you need to be most wary of
- Ask to be put in touch with past clients to check their work
- Beware of someone with only a mobile phone number and no business address

Waste disposal:
Some flood waste can be disposed of by the normal refuse collection. However, other waste may be special waste which will need to be loaded into skips. The council can advise if you need a license to put a skip on a public highway.

Flood defences:
Consider if your property needs some form of flood defence system. These are expensive but if you are prone to regular flooding it may be worth the investment.
Emergency Kit

- Important documents e.g. insurance
- Telephone numbers for your insurance company, local council, utility companies and family and friends
- Local radio frequencies
- Torch (wind up preferable)
- Batteries (not rechargeable)
- Portable radio (wind up preferable)
- Mobile phone
- First aid kit with essential prescription medication / repeat prescription form

If you are in an area susceptible to floods you may wish to include:

- Bottled water (check use-by date)
- Non-perishable food items (including energy or cereal bars)
- Blankets, warm clothes
- Wash kit and essential toiletries (including toilet paper and wet wipes)
- Children’s essentials (milk, baby food, sterilised bottles & spoons, nappies, wipes, nappy bags, clothing, comforter, teddy or favourite toy)
- Camera to record damage for insurance purposes
- Emergency cash
- Additional items for flood kit: wellington boots, waterproof clothing, rubber gloves