

# Flood Advice/Public Health Information

South Hams District Council supports the Environment Agency's policy of encouraging people to protect their own property from the effects of flooding.

Information about measures that can be taken is available on the Environment Agency's web site [www.environment-agency.gov.uk](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk) or in the Flood Directory available through the Environment Agency Floodline 0845 988 1188.

Sandbags can be purchased from builder's merchants. A limited stock of filled sandbags is usually available at the council depots detailed below ([click here](#)), which can be collected during normal working hours, after a telephone call.

Members of the public can help reduce the risk of flooding by telling Devon County Council if they see blocked road gullies or roadside ditches. Obstructions in rivers and streams should be notified to the District Council.

In severe weather, our resources are usually fully deployed dealing with emergencies, therefore, it is not always possible to provide a response to individual incidents such as property flooding. However, if flooding occurs please phone the appropriate telephone number, telling us the nature and source of the flooding.

Useful contact numbers at the bottom of this page ([click here](#)).

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## FLOODING AND PUBLIC HEALTH

### What are the likely hazards to me and my family from flooding?

- Stomach upsets - Human and animal faeces can contain a variety of harmful organisms.
- Leptospirosis (Weil's Disease)- following flooding in the UK it has not been commonly detected.
- Electrocutation - Your local Electricity Board will be checking main supplies.

The floodwater affecting your home or property may have been

contaminated with sewage, animal waste and other contaminants. Harmful micro-organisms in flood water are very diluted and present a low risk, however there are a few precautions to be aware of when dealing with flooding. If you follow the basic advice below you should not experience any additional health problems.

## SOME DO'S

DO	wash your hands with soap and clean water after going to the toilet, before eating or preparing food and after being in contact with flood water.
DO	wash down all hard surfaces with hot soapy water, particularly in the kitchen.
DO	ensure that any cuts or sores are protected from flood water.
DO	contact your Doctor if you become ill after accidentally swallowing mud or contaminated water.
DO	ensure that flood water containing oil, diesel etc is removed, by washing down the affected area with a detergent solution.
DO	<b>ensure that the house is properly aired to encourage drying and restrict mould growth</b>
DO	hot wash clothing, bedding and other soft/fabric articles including children's toys etc (60°C or the highest temperature indicated on manufacturer's instructions)
DO	replace any manhole covers dislodged by the flood

## AND SOME DON'TS

DON'T	switch on electrical appliances, which have been in contact with floodwater unless a competent electrician has checked them.
DON'T	eat any food that has been covered by or come into contact with sewage or floodwater.
DON'T	use frozen food that has been at ambient temperature for a few hours and damaged/contaminated food.
DON'T	allow children to play in flood-water areas and wash children's hands frequently (always before meals). Wash floodwater-contaminated toys with hot water or disinfect before allowing them to be used.
DON'T	let young children play on affected grassed or paved areas until they have been cleaned down and restored to their normal condition.
DON'T	use bottled water for bottle fed babies, unless it is recommended by a doctor or health visitor. Boiled tap water should be safe to drink provided it is not grossly contaminated.

## **WATER**

Most public water supplies will not be affected by flooding (mains). People with private water supplies are more at risk as such supplies are more easily affected by flooding. If you have a private water supply and you are worried that it may have been affected by the flooding, you should boil your water until you have had your water tested and are sure that it is safe.

### **If your drinking water becomes contaminated**

- Ensure the water taps are cleaned and disinfected before using them for the first time.
- Remember Water from the hot tap is not suitable for drinking.
- Use boiled water to wash food which is eaten raw. It is safe to use unboiled tap water in the preparation of food which is to be cooked. It is safe to use unboiled tap water for cooking if it will be boiled during the cooking process.
- Boiling water kills pathogenic bacteria, viruses and parasites that may be present in water. Bring the water to the boil and then allow it to cool before drinking.

For advice regarding

- **Public (Mains) supplies contact South West Water on 0800 1691144**
- **Private supplies contact Environmental Health on 01803 861234**

### **Commercial Premises**

- Only safe high quality water should be used for dental surgery
- Caterers should seek detailed advice from the Environmental Health Service.
- Before disposing of any goods or equipment contact you insurance company for advice.

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## **Useful telephone numbers in the event of flooding**

### **South Hams District Council**

During normal working hours - 01803 861234

Out of normal working hours - 01803 867034

**Council Depots collection of sandbags during normal working hours**

Totnes - 01803 862200  
Kingsbridge - 01548 852246  
Ivybridge - 01752 690412  
Dartmouth - 01803 833009

### **Obstructions to rivers or streams**

Contact Dick Allen 01803 861248

### **Commercial premises, food hygiene and prevention of infection**

Contact Peter Wearden - 01803 861296

### **Foul sewerage pollution issues**

Contact either South West Water - 0800 169 1144

Or Drew Powell (SHDC) - 01803 861296

### **Homelessness**

Contact Andrew Fiske - 01803 861187

### **Emergency planning advice**

Contact Peter Dale - 01803 861278

This information has been produced by the Environmental Health Service of South Hams District Council for further advice contact us at:

E-mail: [Environmental.Health@southhams.gov.uk](mailto:Environmental.Health@southhams.gov.uk)

Environmental Health  
Follaton House  
Plymouth Road  
Totnes  
Devon  
TQ9 5NE

Tel 01803 861234

**Emergency Out of Hours 01803 867034**

**[Top of Page](#)**