

# Isle of Man *Fire* & Rescue Service



## **Advice and Guidance on Flooding**

Flooding can be a year-round problem, but with high tidal conditions and heavy rainfall always a possibility it would be a prudent time to look at what can be done to lessen the risk to you and your property.

- First of all it is a good idea to find out if there is a history of flooding in your area.
- If you have recently moved you could ask a neighbour if your area is susceptible to flooding
- Check access to the property - if it was flooded would you be able to get out easily?
- Is it very low-lying and therefore more vulnerable to flooding?
- It is also important that you don't underestimate the damage a flood can do. Make sure you have adequate insurance cover for buildings and contents.
- Check all your drains and gutters to make sure they are clear and not blocked with leaves or any other foreign matter.
- Keep a list of useful numbers to hand e.g. local authorities, the emergency services, your insurance company.

## **If you feel you are at risk from flooding then it would be prudent to consider the following steps.**

- Have a few sandbags or flood boards prepared to block doorways and airbricks.
- Make up a flood kit - including a torch, blankets, waterproof clothing and boots, a portable radio, first aid kit, rubber gloves and key personal documents. Keep it upstairs, if possible.

- It is also a good idea to talk about possible flooding with your family or those with whom you live.
- Consider writing a flood plan and store these notes with your flood kit. To avoid any other potential problems that flooding could cause make sure you know where to turn off your gas and electricity supplies.
- You also need to consider your pets. Where would you move them if a flood was on its way?
- You may also need to consider where your car is parked, especially over night. If flood waters do enter your vehicle the damage done to the engine and electrical systems can be enough to put the vehicle beyond economic repair.
- Get into the habit of storing valuable or sentimental personal belongings upstairs or in a high place downstairs or certainly consider moving them during times of potential flooding. You will also need to think about medication, once again store it somewhere accessible.

**If the worst does happen and your property floods take care - flooding can kill.**

- Don't try to walk or drive through floodwater - six inches of fast flowing water can knock you over and two feet of water will float your car.
- Don't walk on sea defences or riverbanks, don't cross river bridges - they may collapse in extreme situations or you may be swept off by large waves.
- Take care when walking through shallow water - manhole covers may have come off and there may be other underwater hazards. It is also important to avoid contact with floodwater as it may be contaminated with sewage.
- Never try to swim through fast flowing water - you may get swept away or struck by an object in the water.
- Beware of flooding at dips in the roads, bridges and low spots – don't be tempted to press on if the water starts to get deeper. The general safety rule is turn back if the road is flooded.
- If you do drive through shallow flood water in your car, make sure you drive slowly, the possible wave created by your vehicle could make any potential flooding in properties at the side of the road that much worse.
- Beware of pebbles and stones being thrown up by waves as well - they may hit you, your car or your home.
- By preparing now for any potential flooding, if the worst does happen, you will be much better equipped to handle the situation.

