

# FLOODING RISKS – HOW TO STAY SAFE

Irish Water Safety has warned about the increased risk to the public in flood conditions which can be compounded by high winds, heavy rain and a new or full moon (bringing large tides); deep areas of low pressure tracking over the Atlantic further increase the level of floods especially in our estuaries exposed to onshore winds. Further periods of heavy rain increase flooding levels and it is then that you need to know how to stay safe.

Flood conditions expose the public to hazards they need to be aware of. Fast moving water can exert pressure of up to four times its speed against the legs of someone attempting to cross it. Because water displaces bodyweight, the deeper a person becomes immersed the less the person weighs so the more difficult it is to remain upright. Never put ones feet down if swept away in floodwater, because foot and body entrapments and pinning are the leading cause of accidental death in rivers.

Motorists need to be particularly vigilant to avoid flooded areas on roads but particularly near rivers, with poor light and short days it is not possible to determine the depth of floods easily. Swift water will carry cars and other vehicles away and there have been very tragic drownings in the past as a result of such accidents.

Children are naturally curious about water, therefore parents should caution them that floodwater hides the true depth and that manhole covers may be open and that small streams when swollen are very fast and deeper than normal.

## What should I do when I hear a Flood Warning?

- LISTEN TO THE NATIONAL AND LOCAL RADIO FOR MET EIREANN UPDATES AND AA ROAD WATCH UPDATES
- CHECK ON NEIGHBOURS PARTICULARLY IF THEY ARE ELDERLY, INFIRMED OR FAMILIES WITH YOUNG CHILDREN
- MOVE YOUR VEHICLES TO HIGHER GROUND
- MOVE ANIMAL STOCK TO HIGHER GROUND
- CHECK YOUR SMALL CRAFT TO ENSURE THEY ARE WELL SECURED OR MOORED
- MAKE SURE YOU HAVE WARM CLOTHES, FOOD, DRINK, A TORCH AND RADIO.
- BLOCK DOORWAYS AND AIRBRICKS WITH SANDBAGS OR PLASTIC BAGS FILLED WITH EARTH. FLOODGATE PRODUCTS WILL WORK EFFECTIVELY ALSO.
- SWITCH OFF GAS AND ELECTRICITY SUPPLIES IF FLOODING IS IMMINENT.
- CHECK THE TIME OF HIGH WATER IN THE NEWSPAPER OR AT [HTTP://EASYTIDE.UKHO.GOV.UK/EASYTIDE/EASYTIDE/SELECTPORT.ASPX](http://easytide.ukho.gov.uk/easytide/easytide/selectport.aspx)

## Personal Safety

- AVOID FLOOD WATERS.
- CARRY A MOBILE PHONE AT ALL TIMES IN CASE YOU NEED TO CALL FOR HELP – CALL 112 OR 999 IN EMERGENCY
- WEAR SUITABLE PROTECTIVE CLOTHING & A LIFEJACKET IN ON OR AROUND WATER
- AVOID FAST FLOWING WATER.
- NEVER PUT YOUR FEET DOWN IF SWEEP AWAY BY FAST FLOWING WATERS
- FLOODING ON ROADS WILL BE DEEPER AT DIPS AND AROUND BRIDGES.
- STAY AWAY FROM SEA AND FLOOD DEFENCES.
- WHEN WALKING OR DRIVING, BE AWARE OF MANHOLE COVERS AND GRATINGS THAT MAY HAVE BEEN MOVED DUE TO THE HEAVY FLOW OF WATER.
- TAKE CARE WHEN USING ELECTRIC APPLIANCES IN DAMP OR FLOOD CONDITIONS.
- REMEMBER THAT DURING THE HOURS OF DARKNESS THE DANGERS ARE MULTIPLIED.

### **After the flood**

- AVOID EATING FOOD THAT HAS BEEN IN CONTACT WITH FLOOD WATER.
- RUN WATER FOR A FEW MINUTES AND WASH YOUR TAPS.
- CHECK GAS AND ELECTRICITY SUPPLY.
- LEAVE WET ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT ALONE TO DRY AND HAVE IT CHECKED PRIOR TO USE.
- VENTILATE YOUR PROPERTY WELL.
- CHECK OUT [WWW.FLOODING.IE](http://WWW.FLOODING.IE) FOR MORE DETAIL ON GENERAL FLOODING
- CHECK ON ELDERLY NEIGHBOURS.

Further information on water safety can be obtained by contacting:

Irish Water Safety, The Long Walk, Galway. LoCall: 1890.420.202 / Tel: 091-56.44.00