

Ensure all surfaces that food will come into contact with are sound and cleaned using hot water and household detergent, following the detergent manufacturer's instructions, and disinfected using a food-safe disinfectant. If work tops and other areas show signs of damage, avoid food contact with these areas. Particularly make sure that all shelves, including those in your refrigerator where food is stored, are cleaned and washed with hot water and detergent.

- All crockery, pots, pans and other utensils should be thoroughly washed with hot soapy water and disinfected with a food-safe disinfectant, use a dishwasher set to hot wash if available. Do not use any which are chipped or damaged.
- If there is any suggestion that the drinking water is contaminated use boiled water which has been allowed to cool 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.
- Caterers should seek detailed advice from Environmental Health Officers (EHOs).
- Keep any opened food in an enclosed box or tin.
- Frozen food that has been at ambient temperature for a few hours should be discarded. Put contaminated flood-damaged food in black plastic refuse sacks, seal and put out when your next refuse collection is due. Check with insurers before disposal. Don't be tempted to try and salvage damaged food - including tins as they may be contaminated with sewage and chemicals left from the floodwater.
- Ensure the water taps are cleaned with hot water and detergent before using them for the first time.
- Only boiled tap water or bottled water should be used for drinking, brushing teeth, washing food, cooking and making ice.
- If there is no gas or electricity available to householders to boil water, bottled water should be used in all circumstances.

If Your Water Supply has been Interrupted

If your water supply was cut off and has now been resumed it is important that you follow the advice of your water company. The water company will inform you when it is safe to drink.

The Safe Use of Emergency Generators

Remember that petrol or diesel generators, dehumidifiers and pressure washers should never be used indoors without adequate ventilation. The exhaust gases contain carbon monoxide which can quickly build up to poisonous levels without proper ventilation.

More detailed information is provided on our website:

www.ribblevalley.gov.uk

or can be obtained by contacting us at Ribble Valley Borough Council, Council Offices, Church Walk, Clitheroe, BB7 2RA or by telephoning 01200 425111

Further general health advice is available on the Health Protection Agency's website at:

<http://www.hpa.org.uk/flooding>

or contact NHS Direct on 111 or visit their website:

<http://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk>

The Flood Warning Codes

When a flood is forecast, the Environment Agency will either issue a Flood Alert, a Flood Warning, or a Severe Flood Warning. The flood warning codes are based on expected danger levels.



Flood Alert.
Flooding possible
Be prepared



Flood Warning.
Flooding is expected
Immediate action required



Severe Flood Warning.
Act Now. Severe flooding is expected
Danger to life and property

Warning no longer in force

No further flooding is expected. Water levels will start to go down.

Telephone Contacts & Information

Environment Agency

Floodline (24hours).....0345 988 1188
General enquires (Daytime).....08708 506 506
www.gov.uk

Ribble Valley Borough Council

Daytime.....01200 425111
Out of Hours.....01200 444448
Further guidance: www.ribblevalley.gov.uk

Revised December 2016



Ribble Valley
Borough Council
www.ribblevalley.gov.uk

Cleaning Up After a Flood



If you live in a Flood Warning Area register for Floodline on 0345 988 1188

Protection Against Infection

The physical devastation that accompanies a flood is enormous. But as the flood waters recede, there may be more threats to your personal health and safety. By taking some basic precautions, you can help prevent many injuries as well as the possibility of some infections:

- Do not switch on electrical appliances, which have been in contact with floodwater unless a competent electrician has checked them.
- Ensure that the house is properly aired to encourage drying.
- If you have been advised to boil your water, then all water should be brought to the boil and then cooled before using. Remember that boiling water can carry a risk of scalding - use a kettle rather than pans.
- If you feel unwell this does not necessarily mean that you are suffering from an infection. **If you are concerned - visit your own doctor.**
- Both physical stress associated with cleaning up premises and mental stress caused by temporary relocation may make you feel unwell. The major health hazard of floods comes from all the stress and strain of the event, not infection.
- You may need to take some time to consider your mental health as well. Remember some sleeplessness, anxiety, anger, hyperactivity, mild depression, or lethargy are normal, and may go away with time. If you feel any of these symptoms acutely, seek some counselling.
- Finally, in the midst of all this water, remember to keep warm, being cold can play a major role in your personal health.

Advice on Protecting Against Infection

Floodwater affecting your property may be contaminated with sewage, animal waste and other contaminants. Infection problems arising from floods in the UK are rare. Harmful micro-organisms in flood water are very diluted and present a 'low' risk.

Hand Washing Guidance

Hand washing is the single most important method of reducing infection. Hand washing with warm water and soap should remove most germs from the hands.

In the absence of water use disposable soapy, wet wipes to physically clean all parts of your hands and dry them.

The following precautions should prevent unnecessary additional health problems

- Floodwater and sewage often leaves a muddy deposit. However, experience has shown that risk to health is small. (You do not need booster immunisations or antibiotics.)

- Keep any open cuts or sores clean and use waterproof plasters.
- Do not use tap or bowser water for cleaning or storing contact lenses - this may cause a rare but serious eye infection.
- Harmful gut bacteria such as *E. coli O157* may be present in flood water. Contact your Doctor if you develop a 'tummy upset' following flooding or if you become ill after accidentally ingesting (swallowing) mud or contaminated water.
- If the floodwater contained oil, diesel etc this should in the main be removed with the floodwater and silt. Any remaining oil or diesel contamination in accessible areas can be removed by using a detergent solution and washing the surface down after initial cleaning has been carried out.
- Rats can move into buildings following flooding, but are generally wary of humans. Avoid approaching or cornering rats and encourage them to leave. If bitten seek medical advice.

How to Clean Up

When returning to your home after a flood, be aware that flood water may contain sewage. Protect yourselves by following these steps:

Inside your Home

- Wear rubber boots and waterproof gloves during cleanup.
- Keep children and pets out of the affected area.
- Thoroughly clean all hard surfaces, including walls, hard-surfaced floors, furniture etc with hot soapy water, using an ordinary household detergent, until they look clean.
- DO NOT mix detergents with chlorine based bleaches as this may release hazardous fumes.
- Allow to thoroughly dry - this will help destroy germs left behind.
- All kitchen and other surfaces that come in contact with or are used for food preparation, should be thoroughly washed with hot soapy water and disinfected with a food-safe disinfectant.
- Wash all linens and clothing in hot water with detergent or dry-clean them.
- Remove and discard all soft furnishings that are damaged beyond repair, mouldy or that you suspect may have been contaminated, (eg. wall coverings, cloth, rugs, mattresses, carpeting, carpet padding, upholstered furniture, pillows, cosmetics, stuffed animals, baby toys, foam-rubber items, books, and most paper products.) **If items are likely to be the subject of an insurance claim, speak to the insurer and find out what evidence the claim will require.** In the interim, it is recommended that affected items are moved and stored in areas away from those used

for day to day living. Discard contaminated items at the earliest opportunity.

- Remove dirty water and silt from the property including the space under the ground floor if you have wooden floors. This space may need pumping out
- Heating and good ventilation will assist the drying process. Help the drying process by using fans, air conditioning units, and dehumidifiers.
- Thoroughly clean all hard surfaces (such as flooring, concrete, mouldings, wood and metal furniture, countertops, appliances, sinks, and other plumbing fixtures) with hot water and laundry or dish detergent.
- After completing the cleanup, wash your hands with soap and water.

Gardens and Play Areas

- Do not let young children play on affected grassed or paved areas until cleaned down and restored to normal condition.
- Sunlight and soil help destroy harmful bacteria and any excess risk to health should disappear completely within a week or so.

Kitchen Gardens and Allotments

- It is recommended that products from allotments or kitchen gardens that have been flooded should not be eaten either raw or cooked and should be destroyed.

Clothing and Bedding

- Clothing, bedding and other soft/fabric articles including children's toys etc should be laundered on a hot wash (60° or the highest temperature indicated on manufacturer's instructions) which will destroy most germs that may be present. Other soft furnishings that have been contaminated and cannot be put in a washing machine will have to be professionally cleaned or, if this is not possible, may have to be disposed of.
- Wash all clothes worn during the cleanup in hot water and detergent. These clothes should be washed separately from uncontaminated clothes and linens.
- Use a Launderette for washing large quantities of clothes and linens until your onsite waste-water system has been checked.

Food Preparation and Storage

- Do not eat any food that has been covered by or come into contact with sewage or floodwater.
- Wash your hands before and after preparing food.