

Information to Support drafting Flooding section for a Community Councils Emergency Plan.

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January 2019

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Background.

The Scottish Government encourages communities to create their own Emergency Plan: see their “Ready Scotland” website under “My Community” where you can find a guide to emergency planning for community groups.

<http://www.readyscotland.org/my-community/>

Developing a plan does not mean a community group replaces emergency services or other organisations with their own responsibilities, rather a community develops resilience by understanding its own strengths and knowing in advance how they can best help in an emergency for the three key phases:

- a) Preparation before an event.
- b) Response to an event.
- c) Recovery from an event.

The Flood Risk Management (Scotland) Act 2009 creates a framework for the co-ordination and co-operation between all organisations involved in flooding.

The Highland Councils resilience teams can assist community groups develop their own plans.

emergency.planning@highland.gov.uk. Please also see the Resources section to SEPA’s Floodline website

<http://www.floodlinescotland.org.uk/>

Who does what?

SEPA sets out on its website a list of those with responsibility for flooding.

<https://www.sepa.org.uk/environment/water/flooding/responsibilities-for-flooding/>

Property Owners

Under common law, property owners are responsible for safeguarding and insuring their land or property against all natural hazards including flooding. This includes taking steps to reduce the risk of flooding, provided these actions do not increase the risk of flooding to other properties. Riparian owners have the primary responsibility for maintaining their element of a watercourse.

SEPA provides guidance here: <http://www.floodlinescotland.org.uk/> Scottish Flood Forum also produce an individual checklist. <http://www.scottishfloodforum.org/factsheets/>

Key Steps

- a) **Are you at risk?** Check SEPA Flood Maps (see below), ask neighbours who are familiar with the area and its history of flooding. Consider access to and from your property in a flood, such as local roads, do these flood? Who is nearby who can help?
- b) **Sign up for Floodline.** Obtain advance warning (See below).
- c) **Make a Plan and prepare in advance.**

Property owners do not have a free reign: Some aspects like door barriers are permitted but works that impact neighbours or the environment may require planning permission and authorisation from SEPA. If properties have existing drains or defences that protect more than their own land then they must ensure that they remain fit for purpose. Owners can be held liable under common law if they cause flooding to their neighbours through actions such as dumping rubbish or building of structures or obstructions which alter the flow or form of the watercourse.

Communities

While community organisations have no formal responsibility when it comes to flooding; it is widely recognised that they can provide really valuable support to a) Their community members and b) Emergency Services and other public bodies tasked with managing flood risk.

Communities of course understand their own patch; there is a huge collective history of previous events and where problems typically arise.

Communities can prepare lists of volunteers, identify where support is needed, mobilise local resources of skilled people and equipment (E.g. Individuals with 4x4s Farmers with tractors, builders with diggers and foresters with chainsaws).

Communities can hold equipment for everyone's benefit.

Volunteer groups (e.g. WRVS, Red Cross, and Mountain Rescue) may well have local members within the community.

Scottish Environment Protection Agency.

SEPA is a non-departmental public body of the Scottish Government, its role and responsibility is to regulate and advise on a wide range of environmental activities: Several of its duties directly relate to flooding:

- a) SEPA is Scotland's national flood forecasting and flood forecasting authority. To facilitate this SEPA runs Floodline; by signing up to this free service, you can receive messages direct to your phone or mobile to let you know when flooding may happen. To help forecast this, information is obtained directly from measurement of river levels and rainfall, SEPA's own forecasting models and through working closely with the Met Office. For more information see <https://www.sepa.org.uk/environment/water/flooding/floodline/>

Please read the section on Understanding Flood Alerts and Flood Warnings. This outlines the messages that you receive when you sign up to Floodline. Flood Alerts indicate that flooding is possible and gives an indication of potential flooding. Flood Warnings indicate that Flooding is imminent and that action is required for those at risk.

More information is given in the Floodline leaflets.

- b) SEPA produces Flood Maps: These are designed to help you understand how you could be affected by flooding. The maps show areas which are likely to flood from rivers, the sea and surface water. To find out more see <https://www.sepa.org.uk/environment/water/flooding/flood-maps/> SEPA is also a statutory consultee for Planning Authorisations. The maps form part of the information used by SEPA in providing flooding advice for any proposed development. (see LUPS-GU23 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment: SEPA technical guidance to support development planning) <https://www.sepa.org.uk/library/> (enter LUPS-GU23 into search)
- c) SEPA is responsible for producing the National Flood Risk Management Strategy. This co-ordinates efforts to tackle flooding in Scotland, by Government, SEPA, Local Authorities, Scottish Water and a number of other organisations. The current strategies cover the planning cycle 2016 to 2022 and identifies and prioritizes work in designated "Potentially Vulnerable Areas (PVA's)". <http://apps.sepa.org.uk/FRMStrategies/> . Work is beginning on the preparation of the next strategy for the period 2022 to 2028. The strategy and plans identify 18 possible actions to manage flood risk; for each PVA only a subset are generally applicable.
- d) SEPA is also responsible for the regulation of Scotland's Waters for activities including Abstraction, Impoundments and Engineering works. If you intend to carry out any activity which may affect Scotland's water environment, you must abide by regulations and, if necessary, obtain an authorisation from SEPA to proceed. Guidance on what can be done within a river before, during and after a flood can be found through this link. <https://www.sepa.org.uk/media/163497/sepa-advice-note-on-repair-work-in-rivers-after-recent-floods.pdf> If in doubt, even in an emergency, contact SEPA.
- e) Report a Flood is run by SEPA as a means for making people aware about where flooding is happening. It is means for alerting emergency bodies. Reports are used by SEPA in identifying known impacts and are considered as part of the development of Flood Risk Management Strategies. <http://www.floodlinescotland.org.uk/report-a-flood/>
- f) The Civil Contingencies Act, identifies 'Category one' responders who work together in a major emergency which includes flooding. These include SEPA, The Police, The Fire Service, The Health Service, Local Authorities and other organisations.

The Highland Council

Local authorities are responsible for producing Scotland's first Local Flood Risk Management Plans, and work in partnership with SEPA, Scottish Water and other responsible authorities to develop these. Local authorities also consult with local organisations through flood risk management local advisory groups to raise awareness, capture local knowledge and share information about flooding. It is the responsibility of your local authority to implement and maintain flood protection actions, as outlined in the Local Flood Risk Management Plans. Local authorities also inspect, clear and repair watercourses (as part of an ongoing schedule) to reduce flood risk and routinely maintain road gullies on roads adopted by the local authority. You can help your local authority to manage flooding by letting them know if debris is blocking watercourses or flood defences are tampered with.

Flood Risk Management Plans can be found here <https://www.sepa.org.uk/environment/water/flooding/local-fm-plans/> further information can be obtained through the following link: <https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/1226/emergencies/81/flooding> .

During severe flooding, local authorities will work with the emergency services and co-ordinate shelter for people evacuated from their homes. There is no requirement for local authorities to provide flood protection products, like sandbags, for your home although in some areas these may be available.

https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/1226/emergencies/71/emergency_contacts

The Local Authority also provide support through the Civil Contingency Act,. For more information see https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/1226/emergencies/72/emergency_planning The website identifies that they are able to provide advice and guidance to communities developing emergency plans.

Scottish Water <http://www.scottishwater.co.uk/you-and-your-home/your-home/flooding-information>

Scottish Water is responsible for the drainage of surface water from roofs and paved ground surfaces within a property boundary. Scottish Water can help to protect properties from flooding caused by overflowing or blocked sewers. To report a flooding incident which appears to be contaminated with sewage please phone the Scottish Water Customer Helpline on 0800 0778 778. To find out more about waste water flooding please visit the Scottish Water website.

Scottish Water is a responsible authority for flood risk management and works closely with SEPA, local authorities and other organisations in developing the Flood Risk Management Strategy and Plans.

Emergency Services

The emergency services provide emergency relief when flooding occurs and can co-ordinate evacuations. You should call the emergency services on 999 if you are concerned about your safety or the safety of others and act immediately on any advice provided. For non-emergencies, you can contact the police on 101 and the fire service on 01382 835804 (24 hours). The Police take a key co-ordinating role under the Civil Contingencies Act for co-ordinating Multi Agency Groups.

Scottish Flood Forum <http://www.scottishfloodforum.org/>

The Scottish Flood Forum is a Scottish based Charitable Organisation that provides support for and represents those who are affected by or are at risk of flooding and is funded by the Scottish Government.

The following is taken from their website *what we provide to you "Flood advice, information, awareness, education and training to all parts of the private, voluntary and statutory sectors to help reduce the risk of flooding and particularly to support the recovery process following a flood incident..... Our aim is to establish a network, throughout Scotland, of community flood resilient groups to share information, experience and best practice."*

They have a wealth of useful leaflets on their web-site <http://www.scottishfloodforum.org/factsheets/>

Links

Highland Council: Flooding Team. <https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/1226/emergencies/81/flooding>

Highland Council Resilience Team. https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/1226/emergencies/72/emergency_planning

Highland Council Emergency Contacts:

https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/1226/emergencies/71/emergency_contacts

Scottish Flood Forum: Your household Flood Plan: <http://scotfloodforum.wpengine.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/SFF-Your-Household-Flood-Plan-Web.pdf>

Scottish Government: Resilient Communities Leaflet: <http://www.readyscotland.org/media/1411/resilient-communities-leaflet.pdf>

Scottish Government: Ready Scotland: <http://www.readyscotland.org/>

Scottish Government Guide to Planning for Community Groups:

http://www.readyscotland.org/media/1057/guide_to_emergency_planning_for_community_groups.pdf

Scottish Government: Ready Scotland Flooding: <http://www.readyscotland.org/are-you-ready/severe-weather/flooding/>

Scottish Government: Managing Flood risk in Scotland. <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Environment/Water/Flooding>

SEPA: Flooding Webpage; <http://www.floodlinescotland.org.uk/>

SEPA: Sign up to Floodline: <https://www.sepa.org.uk/environment/water/flooding/floodline/>

SEPA Flood Maps: <https://www.sepa.org.uk/environment/water/flooding/flood-maps/>

SEPA: Responsibilities for Flooding <https://www.sepa.org.uk/environment/water/flooding/responsibilities-for-flooding/>

SEPA: Flood Risk Management Strategies: <http://apps.sepa.org.uk/FRMStrategies/>

SEPA: Repair work to rivers as a result of flooding: <https://www.sepa.org.uk/media/163497/sepa-advice-note-on-repair-work-in-rivers-after-recent-floods.pdf>

SEPA: Introducing the new approach to flood risk management.
https://www.sepa.org.uk/media/33493/new_approach_frm.pdf

SEPA: Links to flood risk management plans. <https://www.sepa.org.uk/environment/water/flooding/local-frm-plans/>

Scottish Water: Responsibilities concerning flooding: <http://www.scottishwater.co.uk/you-and-your-home/your-home/flooding-information>