

## Be Vigilant!

### **If your home has been affected by flooding**

Be vigilant! Rogue traders and criminals may try to trick or steal from you at this very difficult time.

Depending on the extent of the damage to your home, Choice may be able to assist in providing alternative temporary accommodation.

It is important to recognise that when there is extreme weather, subsequent high call volume may result in delays in answering your calls. Please be patient.

Due to call volume, access difficulties or where other agencies are responsible, repairs may not be completed within the designated time frames. Once you have reported your repair, try to avoid repeat calls to our Services Centre.

Our contractors will deal with repairs in order of priority. We appreciate that this may be a difficult time for tenants and your co-operation is very much appreciated.

***If your home is affected by flooding or to report any repairs please contact Choice on 0300 111 2211***

#### **Further advice is available is available from:**

- **Floodline:**  
0300 2000 100
- **Nidirect:**  
[nidirect.gov.uk/articles/flooding](http://nidirect.gov.uk/articles/flooding)
- **The Met Office:**  
[metoffice.gov.uk](http://metoffice.gov.uk)
- **Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service:** 028 9266 4221
- **The Association of British Insurers:**  
[abi.org.uk](http://abi.org.uk)

**Choice**  
Leslie Morrell House  
37 - 41 May Street  
Belfast  
BT1 4DN

**T: 0300 111 2211**  
**[choice-housing.org](http://choice-housing.org)**

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## **Protecting your home from flooding**

[choice-housing.org](http://choice-housing.org)



## Protecting your home from flooding

Whilst some properties are more prone to flooding than others, protecting your home and preparing for flooding is becoming more important with the increase in flash flooding as a result of torrential rain. This information is intended to help you prepare and assist you if you experience flooding.

### Preparing for flooding

#### Things you can do now

There are a number of simple steps that you can do to prepare for flooding:

- Make sure you have home contents insurance that includes flood damage. (Choice will carry out repairs to the structure of the properties. It is your responsibility to have insurance cover for personal property, furnishings and the decoration of your home.)
  - Know where to turn off your electricity or gas supply.
  - Consider where to move your car to.
  - Consider how to move or protect your home contents.
  - Prepare a Flood Kit check-list and save useful contacts.
  - Store important documents safely and in sealed bags.
  - Keep gullies and drains clear of leaves etc.
  - If your home is at risk of flooding, have some sandbags, flood-boards or plastic covers prepared to block doorways and air bricks.
- Gather a Flood Kit of essential items you may need if evacuated such as mobile phone and charger, medication and first-aid, children's essentials, warm / waterproof clothes and boots, cash, bottled water, food, rubber gloves & hand sanitiser, a torch, insurance and other essential documents, and useful contact details.
  - Agree a meeting point should you get separated from family or friends.
  - Switch off gas, electricity and water at the mains if safe to do so.
  - Move pets, vehicles, valuables and other sentimental items, to a place of safety.
  - Plug sinks/baths or low-level shower trays and weigh them down to prevent back-flow.
  - Alert vulnerable neighbours.
  - Listen out for severe weather warnings or flash floods on local radio and TV.
  - Fit sand-bags and air-brick covers where possible. Pillowcases or plastic bags filled with soil or sand can be used in an emergency.
  - Move or weigh down, external furniture.

#### Things you can do if flooding is expected in your area

#### Staying safe during flooding

- If flood water has penetrated your home, gas and electricity supplies should remain switched off until a qualified professional has checked the systems thoroughly.
- Avoid electric shocks – keep extension cables out of water.
- Emergency Services will tell you if you need to evacuate your home, please follow their instructions carefully. Do not return unless you are told by authorities that it is safe to do so.
- Shut all windows and lock doors.

#### Help your neighbour

- During flooding, please check on your neighbours if they are elderly, have a disability or are housebound as it will be a difficult time for them to get out and about. A friendly visit from a neighbour will be very much appreciated.

Emergency Services will tell you if you need to evacuate your home, please follow their instructions carefully.



## Returning to properties after flooding

### The three step clean-up for returning to damaged properties:

#### 1. Remove Water and Mud

- The Fire & Rescue Service may pump out standing water.
- Shovel out mud (which may be contaminated) then hose out.
- Choice maintenance staff and contractors will try and help as many tenants as possible to remove water and mud. We may need to prioritise the assistance we can offer.

#### 2. Clean and Disinfect

- Flood-water may be contaminated so disinfect all areas affected after cleaning. Make sure you wash your hands with disinfectant after cleaning up. Disinfecting also avoids harmful mildew and moulds.
- Wear protective clothes, boots, a mask and rubber gloves when cleaning.
- Do not eat contaminated food and disinfect contaminated cooking utensils, crockery etc.
- Wash contaminated clothing at high temperatures.
- Keep open cuts or sores clean and use waterproof plasters to prevent them being exposed to flood-water.

#### 3. Dry

- Good ventilation is essential, keep windows and doors open on dry days and remove and air brick covers.
- Have the central heating on at 22°C or above.
- Drying out can take weeks or even months. If it is done too quickly, it can cause structural damage and long-term problems.

**Please note:** Your insurer will arrange for a loss adjuster and other specialists to visit your home to assess the damage. They will manage much of the clear up, so speak to them before acting on anything. We strongly recommend that you take photos of any damage.