

Drainage & Flooding

A short guide for residents

This short guide has been produced by Kent County Council, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and Southern Water to explain the role of each agency with regards to flooding and the services they provide.

Roles and responsibilities for flooding

The responsibilities surrounding drainage and flooding are varied, and a number of agencies have a responsibility for dealing with different aspects, as summarised in the diagram below:



© Southern Water

If you live in a known flood risk area, you should adopt a self-help approach by purchasing sandbags or sandless flood sacks from your local builders' merchants; prepare in advance and respond to forecasts or flood warnings.

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council do not routinely supply sandbags to residents and businesses but they do make sandbags available at high risk locations.

Who to contact if you experience flooding

It is important to contact your insurer immediately to tell them about any damage flooding has caused to the interior of your property.

If you don't, it may affect any insurance claims you need to make.

Who you need to contact depends on what's flooding:

Rivers and the sea

The Environment Agency has a 24-hour Floodline on **0845 9881 188**. If your property is flooded by river water, you should contact your home insurance company.

Call the Environment Agency to report:

- a blockage, for example a fallen tree
- collapsed or badly damaged river or canal banks
- unusual changes in river flow
- flooding from the sea or a main river - [you can check which are main rivers](#)

Contact Tunbridge Wells Borough Council to report flooding from other rivers, brooks or streams.

Highway drains and flooded roads

Kent County Council Highways is responsible for the removal of surface water from roads and footways to maintain safety; prevent damage to the highway and minimise the impact on the surrounding environment. Their priority is to keep road drainage systems flowing and manage the flows that they are built to carry i.e. rainwater that falls onto the highway.

If you are concerned about blocked drains or to report highway flooding, you should call Kent County Council on 03000 41 81 81.

For more information about how KCC Highways maintain the highway drainage visit <http://www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/what-we-look-after/drainage-systems>

Sewers and burst water mains

Southern Water is responsible for ensuring that their customers can continue to use their wastewater services, such as toilets and sinks.

To report flooding from the public sewer, you should call Southern Water's 24-hour customer service team on 0330 303 0368.

Let them know if any nearby properties have been affected so they can be helped too.

For more information on what to do in the event of sewer flooding, visit:

<https://www.southernwater.co.uk/media/default/PDFs/internal-floodcare.pdf>

Private drains

Property owners are responsible for maintaining any private drains or sewers that serve their property.

Drainage ditches

Property/ Land Owners (Riparian Owners) are responsible for maintaining any watercourse, including drainage ditches, that run through or adjacent to their land or property

Who is responsible for flood recovery?

After flooding, a multiagency response is required. The following table shows which agencies are responsible for each of the different flood recovery activities:



- Removing litter from watercourses
- Pumping flood water from public areas

24hr Floodline
0845 9881 188

www.gov.uk/help-during-flood

www.flood-warning-information.service.gov.uk/warnings



- Replacing missing or dislodged manholes
- Removing silt and sewer debris from public sewers and pumping stations
- Controlling access to water hydrant use
- Restoring free flowing public sewers
- Restoring public wastewater pumping stations

24hr emergency number
0330 303 0368

www.southernwater.co.uk



- Cleaning highway debris
- Removing silt and debris for highway drains
- Repairing safety critical defects that have occurred on the highway
- Assessing the impact of flooding on roads and footpaths

03000 41 81 81

(Mon – Fri 9am – 5pm)

03000 41 91 91

(Mon – Fri 5pm – 9am,
Sat & Sun)

www.kent.gov.uk/highways



- Washing and removing silt and sewer debris from open spaces
- Disposing of flood-damaged household items
- Assisting with temporary re-housing
- Removing sandbags

01892 526121

www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk



- Internal cleaning of properties
- External cleaning (e.g. gardens and drives)
- Providing dehumidifiers or driers
- Pumping out flooded properties
- Restoring allotments and food crops
- Restoring internal electricity
- Restoring free flowing private drainage

- Restoring septic tanks
- Restoring private wastewater pumping stations

It is important to contact your insurer immediately to tell them about any damage flooding has caused to the interior of your property. If you don't, it may affect any insurance claims you need to make.

Who is responsible for investigating the cause of flooding?

After significant incidents of flooding, the Environment Agency, Kent County Council, Southern Water, Tunbridge Wells Borough and others work together to review what happened and identify actions that might be taken to reduce the risk of flooding and/ or minimise the impact of flooding. We all have to work within the constraints of our budgets and legal duties but by working together we are often able to achieve more than if we work in isolation.

Where can I find more information about drainage and flooding?

Flood risk in Tunbridge Wells

Flood Risk to Communities – Tunbridge Wells provides information on the flood risk across the district, and outlines the existing and proposed approaches to manage the risk identified.

http://www.kent.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/71671/Flood-risk-to-communities-in-Tunbridge-Wells.pdf

Keeping sewers clear

Every year there are thousands of blockages in these pipes, caused by people flushing the wrong things down the toilet or pouring fat, oil and grease down the sink. **Keep it Clear** explains the are simple steps you can take to help protect your home from flooding and help keep our environment clear.

<https://www.southernwater.co.uk/keep-it-clear>

Maintaining your Ditches and Watercourse

If you own land or property next to a river, stream or ditch you are a 'riparian landowner'. **Living on the Edge** explains the rights and responsibilities of riparian landowners.

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/454562/LIT_7114.pdf