

Flooding can happen in a flash

Notification that Axmouth is at risk of flash flooding

The exceptionally wet weather over the last twelve months has resulted in floods affecting communities across the South West. The suffering and disruption this has caused reminds us about the impacts of flooding. To stop future floods having an impact on you and your family, it is important to consider your flood risk and whether you are prepared for flooding.

The Environment Agency has recently undertaken a study to identify areas at risk of flash flooding. The study confirmed that Axmouth may be at risk from this type of flooding. Although flash floods are rare, it's important that we take action to be prepared.

Flash flooding is caused by intense rainfall. It occurs suddenly, with little or no warning – often before emergency services arrive. Flash flooding can be very destructive: flooding homes, moving rocks, tearing out trees, sweeping away vehicles and damaging buildings, walls and bridges. This is like the severe flash flooding that occurred in Axmouth in 1960, which affected over 50 properties, tore up roads and moved large volumes of rocks and debris.

Flash flooding can also happen where drainage systems are unable to cope with extreme rainfall.

The Environment Agency is working with Axmouth Parish Council, to help raise awareness of the risk of flash flooding and to help Axmouth's community become resilient to the risk. Key to this is the development of a Community Flood Plan. We will keep you updated as this progresses.

In the meantime, there are lots of things you can do to prepare for flooding to minimise the risk to people and property e.g. moving valuables and family mementos upstairs, moving cars to higher ground, or businesses moving stock and equipment to protect it from floodwater. You could also prepare a flood kit in advance. You could also consider investing in flood prevention products, or a stockpile of useful materials including plywood, plastic sheeting, sandbags and sand.

For further information, you can visit the Environment Agency's website, email dc.flood@environment-agency.gov.uk or speak to us by phoning 03708 506 506 and ask for 'Flood Resilience Devon.'

FLOOD KIT:

Important documents - such as passport and insurance certificates. Some documents are expensive to replace. Having these in your kit will keep them safe and to hand.

Torch - in case it floods at night and your power is affected.

Radio - a wind-up or battery radio will help you monitor local news and weather broadcasts for the latest flooding situation.

Batteries - have spare batteries available to power your torch or radio.

Blankets or warm clothing - it may be cold and you could be without power for some time.

First aid kit - keep a first aid kit to hand in case of minor injuries. Put any prescription medication in your kit so that you have easy access to it.

Bottled water - flood water can contain sewage, chemicals and animal waste. Drinking bottle water will keep you hydrated and make sure your water hasn't been contaminated by the flood water.

Tinned food - you don't know how long the flood will last. Have tinned and non-perishable food available for you to eat.

Personal items - some items are irreplaceable. Put items of personal value such as photos, family videos or treasured mementos in your flood kit so that they are safe.

Mobile phone - keep a fully charged mobile with you so that you can contact people in an emergency or call for help. If your phone has Internet access you can use it to check on the latest flood situation.

Waterproof clothing - keep wellies and rubber gloves available should you need to enter the flood water.