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EA-South West/03-8

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Sidmouth Flood Plan



ENVIRONMENT AGENCY

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Exeter EX2 7LQ



EA-SOUTH WEST 103-8

Public Information Leaflet

Supported by:

- THE ENVIRONMENT AGENCY
- SIDMOUTH TOWN COUNCIL
- EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL
- DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL
- DEVON AND CORNWALL CONSTABULARY

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Floodline

0845 988 1188

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BACKGROUND

Why Sidmouth might flood

Sidmouth is at risk of flooding from the River Sid. Flooding is likely to be caused by prolonged heavy rainfall on a saturated catchment, or intense rainfall over a short period as occasionally experienced during summer thunderstorm activity.

Sidmouth is also at risk from the sea during a combination of high spring tides, low pressure and on-shore gales causing large wave action. The town has a history of flooding and major river channel improvements and bank defences were carried out following the 1968 flood. Tidal defences consisting of sea walls and rock armour tide breaks protect the town against tidal flooding. The defences will protect the town from most floods, however, there remains a possibility that extremely severe conditions will overwhelm the defences and flood low-lying parts of the town. No defence can give absolute protection, it can only reduce the risk of flooding.

The Local Authorities, the Environment Agency and the Emergency Services have put together a joint plan to deal with the possibility of flooding in Sidmouth. Plans are also in place for other locations across the South West.

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ARE YOU PREPARED FOR A FLOOD?

SIDMOUTH FLOOD PLAN RESIDENTS INFORMATION

IMPORTANT: The following information is to advise people living in flood risk areas of the arrangements that have been put in place to deal with a flood. It is unlikely that flooding will occur and you should not be alarmed. However it is important that you read this leaflet so that you are aware of what could happen, what you can do to limit damage and what help will be available.

*Front cover: Mill Street, Sidmouth,
22 October 1960*



Plan of Sidmouth

 Area at risk

Why is a Flood Plan required ?

There are approximately 250 properties at risk of flooding in Sidmouth. Flood defences reduce the likelihood of properties flooding but they do not completely stop it. For the rare occasions when an extreme storm overwhelms the top of a defence, it is important that properties previously protected, are given a flood warning and that arrangements are in place so that Emergency Services and Local Authorities can provide effective assistance. People living in areas protected by flood defences should be just as prepared, as those who are at risk of flooding on a more frequent basis. Householders also have an important part to play in the overall plan. By taking a few basic precautions and being prepared to act promptly on receiving a warning, residents can considerably reduce the damage and stress which flooding can cause.

What will the Flood Plan cover ?

It is a joint plan, agreed by East Devon District Council, Devon County Emergency Planning, Police, Fire Service, Sidmouth Town Council and the Environment Agency. Details of the plan can be viewed in the local library, at Local Authority offices or at the Environment Agency offices at Exminster.

In simple terms, the plan indicates:

- The Environment Agency issues flood warnings
- The Police take an overall co-ordination role and advise on the need to evacuate
- The Local Authority prepares rest centres in case evacuation is necessary
- Highway Authorities post road closure signs
- Fire Service and Local Authorities provide assistance to deal with flooding.

To find out if your property is in an area at risk of flooding call - FLOODLINE 0845 988 1188 or check on the Environment Agency Website www.environment-agency.gov.uk/flood

SUMMARY OF INFORMATION

Flood Risk - Understand why areas of Sidmouth might flood and check if your property is in an area which might flood.

Be Prepared - Know what to do :

BEFORE A FLOOD

- Check insurance
- Plan how to protect your property
- Know how flood warnings will be issued

DURING A FLOOD

- Alert neighbours and assist the elderly or infirm
- Move people, pets and valuables to safety
- Have spare warm clothing, a torch, a battery powered radio and waterproofs to hand
- Keep up to date with flood warnings on local radio
- Put flood boards in place or contact the local council who may be able to help you locate a supply of sandbags
- Switch off gas and electricity supplies if flooding is imminent
- Do not enter deep or fast flowing water - think safety !
- Take police advice on the need to evacuate.

AFTER A FLOOD

- Do not eat food which has been in contact with floodwater
- Check gas, electricity and water supplies and equipment for safety before use
- Contact your insurers
- Ventilate your property
- Beware rogue repairmen.

Direct Flood Warning Service

Flood warnings will be issued directly to properties at risk of flooding in Sidmouth using local radio and TV and various other means such as loud hailer and a leaflet drop.

Other Local Flood Warning Information

All flood warnings are serious. They are broadcast on local TV and radio during news, weather and traffic reports. Keep tuned to local radio for updates on the flooding situation.

In your area you should listen to:

- BBC Radio Devon - 103.4/96/95.8/94.8 FM
- Gemini Radio - 96.4 / 97 FM
- Orchard FM - 96.5/97.1/102.6 FM

You can also keep informed by checking ITV teletext on page 154; Ceefax 419.

Live Flood Warning Pages on the Internet

www.environment-agency.gov.uk/flood

Flood Warning Information Line

For recorded information about current flood warnings in your area ring **FLOODLINE on 0845 988 1188** and follow the recorded instructions. If you have a touch tone phone, you can obtain information for your area more quickly if you key in the Quick Dial code when asked to do so.

The Quick Dial code for the River Sid is **042144** and for the South Devon Coast **04222**. Listen out for severe flood warnings for the **River Sid** and the **South Devon Coast at Sidmouth**.

Floodline
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THE FLOOD WARNING SERVICE FOR SIDMOUTH

The flood warning service is run by the Environment Agency. It warns of the risk of flooding from the flood banks and walls overtopping. **It cannot warn for surface water flooding** due to localised blocked drains. Warnings are based on upstream river levels on the Sid, monitored at Sidbury. Tidal flood predictions for Sidmouth are based on astronomical tide heights taken from POL and Admiralty tide tables, and forecasts of surges and wave heights predicted by the Met Office. The Devonport tide gauge is monitored via telemetry in the Environment Agency's Flood Warning Offices in Exeter and Exminster to assist predictions on the South Devon coast.

Warnings to the public at risk

A Flood warning will be issued to properties at risk of flooding using a variety of methods, such as loud hailers and a leaflet drop, when there is a **strong likelihood** that the flood defences will overtop. The Environment Agency will aim to issue the public warning at least **two hours** prior to the expected onset of flooding. At Sidmouth, the amount of advance warning of flooding is likely to be:

- Tide- could be four to six hours.
- River Sid - could be as little as one hour.

Warnings will also be broadcast by local radio and TV, although the effectiveness of these will depend on the time of day of the flood.

Warnings to Emergency Services and Local Authorities

The Environment Agency will alert Local Authorities and the Emergency Services when there is a possibility of the defences overtopping. This notification will be in advance of a public warning being issued and will enable these services to make preparations for dealing with a possible flood. Such alerts may not be followed by a public warning being issued. On some occasions, river levels will begin to fall and tide levels may not reach the levels predicted -

therefore a public warning will not be necessary.

Possibility of false warnings

Flood warning is not an exact science. In deciding when to issue flood warnings the Environment Agency has to balance the need for giving the public sufficient time to protect their property, against the need to reduce the possibility of issuing false alarms. Public warnings will only be issued as a result of very severe weather conditions and indications that **the flood banks will overtop**.

Other causes of flooding in Sidmouth

- Heavy rain could also cause drains and gullies to be overwhelmed, i.e. surface water flooding

It is **not possible to provide warnings** for local flooding from surface water.

LOCAL RADIO STATIONS who will broadcast flood warnings and updated flood information.

- BBC Radio Devon - 103.4/96/95.8/94.8 FM
- Gemini Radio - 96.4 / 97 FM
- Orchard FM - 96.5/97.1/102.6 FM

Flood warnings on TV - ITV Teletext page 154, Ceefax page 419

Flood warnings on the Internet:
www.environment-agency.gov.uk/flood

FLOOD WARNING INFORMATION LINE FLOODLINE 0845 988 1188

Call this number and select the recorded information service, for all current flood warnings in force. When prompted - use the Quick Dial code **042144** for the Rivers Otter and Sid and listen out for a severe flood warning for the River Sid. You can hear warnings for the South Devon Coast by using the Quick Dial code **04222**. Listen out for a severe flood warning on the South Devon Coast at Sidmouth.

Call **FLOODLINE** to receive free guides, leaflets and advice including information on flooding provided by Local Authorities in Devon.

HOUSEHOLDERS RESPONSIBILITIES

What should householders who live in the flood risk area do ?

Insurance:

Check that your household contents and buildings insurance covers you against flooding. One of the greatest causes of stress experienced by people who have flooded is due to lack of adequate insurance. Research has shown that about 20% of properties are inadequately insured - please do not be one of these.

Flood protection measures:

Consider the idea of installing flood board slots in doorways. Although the need to use them is very remote, they can be more effective than sandbags and quicker and easier to handle. Be aware of other access points where water could enter your property, i.e. air bricks and how you could block these.

What do you value?

Assess what belongings, furniture and fittings may be at risk on the ground floor. Consider what damage might be done and whether it would be possible to move items to prevent damage. You may decide to store certain items of sentimental value and important documents upstairs. Decide what is important to you and have a plan of action.

Know how warnings will be issued.

Read the section on the Direct Flood Warning Service in this leaflet. This will tell you how warnings will be issued and where information can be obtained to keep you updated.

Keep this leaflet in a safe place for future reference.

For more information ?

Visit the flood warning pages of the Environment Agency website at www.environment-agency.gov.uk/flood **or**

Call FLOODLINE 0845 988 1188 - to obtain a Floodpack of information and advice on how to be prepared.

KNOW WHAT TO DO IF A FLOOD WARNING IS ISSUED:

- Act promptly
- Alert neighbours and assist the elderly or infirm
- Move people, pets and valuables to safety
- Have spare warm clothing, a torch, a battery powered radio and waterproofs to hand
- Keep up to date with flood warnings on local radio
- Put flood boards in place or contact the local council who may be able to help you locate a supply of sandbags
- Switch off gas and electricity supplies if flooding is imminent
- Do not enter deep or fast flowing water – think safety !
- Take police advice on the need to evacuate.

IF FLOODING HAS OCCURRED

- Do not eat food which has been in contact with floodwater
- Check gas, electricity and water supplies and equipment for safety - **before use**
- Contact your insurers
- Ventilate your property - less damp means less damage
- Avoid contact with floodwater - it may be contaminated
- Beware rogue repairmen or traders who may visit after a flood.