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Burnham-On-Sea, Brean and Highbridge Flood Plan



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Public Information Leaflet

Supported by:

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Floodline
0845 988 1188
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**BURNHAM-ON-SEA,
BREAN AND HIGHBRIDGE
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.

BACKGROUND

Why Burnham-On-Sea, Brean and Highbridge might flood

Burnham-on-Sea, Brean and Highbridge are all located on the Somerset Coast north of the River Parrett Estuary and are at risk from extreme tidal flood events. The area has a history of flooding with significant events in 1859, 1903, 1910 and 1926. The two most recent events occurred in 1981 and 1990 when considerable damage was caused.

There is a flood defence scheme present along the coast protecting Burnham, Brean and Highbridge. These defences which follow the line of the coast will protect Burnham, Brean and Highbridge from most floods, however there remains a possibility that extreme severe flood events could overtop or breach the flood defences and flood the areas behind them. If this were to occur approximately 8000 properties could be affected. No defence can give absolute protection; it can only reduce the risk of flooding.

The Local Authorities, the Environment Agency and the emergency services are in the process of revising their plans to take into account the possibility of flooding extending beyond Burnham-on-Sea, Brean and into the Highbridge area.

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Overtuned lorry due to 1981 flood event

Why is a Flood Plan required?

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 or when a defence breaches, it is important that properties previously protected, are given a flood warning. In addition arrangements should be in place so that Emergency Services and Local Authorities can provide effective assistance. People living in areas protected by flood banks and walls 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 flood warning, residents can considerably reduce the damage and stress which flooding can cause.

What does the Flood Plan cover?

It is a joint plan agreed by Sedgemoor District Council, Somerset County Emergency Planning, Police, Fire Service and the Environment Agency.

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
- **Local Authorities** prepare 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

THE FLOOD WARNING SYSTEM FOR BURNHAM-ON-SEA, BREAN AND HIGHBRIDGE

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 for Burnham-On-Sea, Brean and Highbridge are based on tide levels monitored at the Hinckley Point tide gauge.

Warnings to the public at risk

A flood warning will be issued to properties at risk of flooding using loud hailers when there is a **strong likelihood** that the flood banks will overtop. The Environment Agency will aim to issue the public warning at least **two hours** prior to the expected onset of flooding.

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.

Updates on the flooding situation will be broadcast on local radio.

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 flood banks 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, tide levels will begin to fall and a public warning will not be necessary.

Possibility of false warnings

Flood warning is not an exact science. In deciding when to issue a flood warning the Environment Agency has to balance the need for giving the public sufficient time to protect their property, versus 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 strong indications that the flood banks will overtop.

Other causes of flooding in Burnham-On-Sea, Brean and Highbridge

- 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 that will broadcast flood warnings and updated flood information.

- BBC Radio Bristol/
Somerset Sound 95.5FM
- Orchard FM 102.6 FM
- Galaxy Radio 101 FM

Flood warnings on TV - ITV Teletext page 169, BBC Ceefax page 419

Live flood warning information on the internet - www.environment-agency.gov.uk/floodwarning

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 Quickdial code **0432** to get information on the **Somerset Coast** at **Burnham-On-Sea**.

For further information or to request a flood pack on how to prepare and deal with flooding call the Floodline number.

Floodline
0845 988 1188
ENVIRONMENT AGENCY

HOUSEHOLDER'S 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 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 places where water could enter your property, e.g. 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 which you could reasonably undertake.

Know how warnings will be issued

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

For more Information?

Call FLOODLINE 0845 988 1188 - to obtain a Floodpack of information and advice on how to be prepared. Live information on the Flood Warning Pages of the Environment Agency website www.environment-agency.gov.uk/floodwarning

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 water proofs to hand
- Keep up to date with flood warning information on local radio
- Put flood boards in place or contact the local council who will 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.