

Cumbria Flood Factsheet

Public health information

Stay safe and protect against infection

The main health hazard in floods come from the stress and strain of the event and clean-up. Take time to look after you and your family's mental health and wellbeing. Do not overexert yourself in the clean-up.

What's the best health advice – isn't there a risk from bugs in the water?

Infection problems arising from floods in this country are rare. Usually any harmful bugs in floodwater become very diluted and present a low risk, but there are a few precautions to be aware of when dealing with flooding which should prevent unnecessary additional health problems:

- 1. General hygiene and safety precautions should be taken.** When cleaning up use waterproof boots and protective gloves. Keep any open cuts or sores clean and prevent them being exposed to floodwater - wear waterproof plasters if you can.
- 2. Always wash your hands with soap and clean water after going to the toilet,** before eating or preparing food, after being in contact with flood water, or soiled items.
- 3. Don't allow children to play in floodwater** and wash children's hands frequently (always before eating). There may be no need to throw away household items as long as they can be properly cleaned.
- 4. Clean and disinfect all hard surfaces,** walls, furniture, pans, plates and cutlery with hot soapy water or kitchen disinfectant until they look clean. Powerful disinfectants, such as strong bleach are not necessary and may be harmful to surfaces.
- 5. Remove and dispose of all soft furnishings** and fittings that are damaged beyond repair. Clothing, bedding and other soft articles including children's toys should be washed on a hot wash (60° C or the highest temperature indicated on washing instructions). This will destroy most germs that may be present.
- 6. Other soft furnishings** that have been soiled and cannot be put in a washing machine will need to be professionally cleaned - if this is not possible, they may need to be disposed of.
- 7. Take care with electrics and gas.** Do not switch on electrical appliances that have been in contact with floodwater unless a competent electrician has checked them, as there is risk of electrocution. Even if gas appliances appear to be working normally, the flue or ventilation systems maybe affected. For safety reasons have appliances inspected by a Gas Safe Register engineer (call 0800 408 5500 for advice). Don't use any outdoor cooking equipment such as barbecues inside your house again be aware of toxic fumes and fire risk.
- 8. There is also a serious danger posed by carbon monoxide fumes** from the indoor use of generators and other fuel-powered equipment, such as driers. Remember that petrol or diesel generators and other fuel-driven equipment should NEVER be brought indoors. If you are using a fuel driven generator or other fuel driven equipment this should be properly sited outdoors. However, if you experience dizziness, headaches or disorientation, switch off appliances, move to a well- ventilated area and seek medical advice.
- 9. It is recommended that you only fully re-occupy your home once cleaning has been carried out.** There may also be additional works to be done as advised by your insurance company, housing officer, landlord, builder etc.
- 10. Keep yourself and your family safe - don't try to undertake any difficult or dangerous work yourself** - replacing roof tiles and checking electrical or gas safety should be done by qualified professional.

Further flooding health advice can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/flooding-health-guidance-and-advice>

Helpful telephone numbers

Age UK

Northwest 01946 828100
South Lakeland 01539 728180

Allerdale Borough Council -

Environmental Health 01900 702590
Pollution (blocked drains etc),
01900 702580
Refuse Collection (flood damaged/
freezers etc), 01900 702800

Carlisle City Council

01228 817200

Children and Families Information Service

08457 125 737
For anyone experiencing problems with childcare or
early education due to the floods.

Citizens Advice Bureau

Carlisle 01228 633909
Cockermouth 01900 604735
Kendal 015394 46464
Keswick 01900 604735
Maryport 01900 604735
Penrith 01768 891503
Ulverston 015394 46464
Whitehaven 01946 693321
Wigton 01900 702890
Windermere 015394 46464
Workington 01900 604735

Consumer direct including any calls about
bogus tradesman 08454 040506

Cumbria Chamber of Commerce

Carlisle – 08452 260040
South Lakeland – 01539 735891
West Cumbria – 01946 592329
Furness – 01229 840253

Cumbria Community Foundation

01900 825760

Cumbria County Council

01228 606060

Cockermouth Churches Together

01900 829926

Cumbria Law Centre 01228 515129

Department of Work and Pensions
03708 506506

Derwent and Solway Housing

01900 607500

Environment Agency

08708 506506

Foodbank:

The Salvation Army, St Nicholas Street,
Mon, Thu, and Fri 1pm – 3pm
Emergency Tel: 07512 552 449

Floodline 0845 988 1188

Gas Safe Register (gas safety advice and
registered local engineers) 0800 408 5500

Highways

0845 6096609

Impact Housing

03448 736290

National Flood Forum

01229 403101/01229 403055

NHS Direct 111

Police 101

Prescription help and advice

NHS Direct 111

Red Cross

03448 711111

Riverside Housing

0345 111 0000

RSPCA

0300 1234 999

Rural Wheels

0845 602 3786

Samaritans

UK Wide 116 123

Transco (gas leaks)

0800 111999

Traveline

0871 200 2233

United Utilities (electricity) – 0345 6723723

Victim Support 0300 3030157
Carlisle 01228 526688
Police Workington 01900 638830
Police Whitehaven 01946 66207
Kendal 01539 738830

Volunteering help 01900 826505
Cumbria CVS 01768 800350

Voluntary Car Scheme 07788 396194

WRVS 01228 524508

Shelter - temporary emergency helpline number
offering expert housing advice to anyone affected by
floods – on **0344 515 2370**.