

Press Release

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## **Flooding risk – advice for residents and businesses**

Homes and businesses across Kent are being urged to make sure they are ready for flooding this winter.

After the exceptional rainfall of last winter, when Kent experienced the highest tidal surge in 60 years and average rainfall totals 270 percent above the long term average, communities across the county are encouraged to make sure they are prepared if flooding occurs this year.

In order to help residents and employers prepare for flooding the Kent Resilience Forum – made up of rescue services and local authorities – has published a handbook: “What should I do in an emergency?” while Kent County Council has created a one-stop online information point.

The handbook – which can be downloaded at [www.kent.gov.uk/flooding](http://www.kent.gov.uk/flooding) – details how to prepare, what to do if flooding happens, and provides information about clearing up afterwards, such as contacting electricity suppliers, photographing evidence of damage for insurance firms, and protecting yourself from contamination.

Mark Douch, Flood and Coastal Risk Manager for the Environment Agency, explains: “Groundwater levels are high as a legacy of last winter’s exceptional rainfall. I would encourage everyone to check their risk and make a plan. Flooding is a horrible experience, but simple steps can make a real difference.

“Since last winter the Environment Agency has inspected 11,000 flood defences across Kent and South London, and repaired all of those which were damaged by the flooding. There are now no communities who face a higher level of flood risk as a result of last year’s flood impacts on defences. We have also helped train 160 Flood Wardens across Kent to help communities respond better to any flooding.”

Mike Hill, Kent County Council Cabinet Member for Community Services, said: “Kent was the third worst hit area of the country last winter, with more than 900 homes and firms hit by flooding. Drawing on the lessons learned from these floods, we have teamed-up with a number of partner agencies to further enhance our levels of planning, and training, and provide clearer information for residents and businesses.

“This includes a dedicated webpage that summarises where people can go for help and advice, and a downloadable guide for those affected by what can be a devastating experience.”

The booklet also provides contact numbers for the Environment Agency and other important services – and advice such never drive through flood water, because 80% of flood deaths occur in vehicles.

For more information, residents and businesses can visit: [www.kent.gov.uk/flooding](http://www.kent.gov.uk/flooding), where “What should I do in an emergency?” can be downloaded.