



Guidance Notes: NON-INTERNAL FLOODING

If you are unsure about anything within these notes then please contact Flood Risk Management (FRM) using the details at the end of this document.

Where flooding poses risk to life, always contact the Fire and Rescue Service via the 999 service.

If you require sandbags in an emergency you should contact your district council. However, district councils do not have a statutory duty to provide residents with sand bags and usually have only a limited supply. Please refer to the [Before, During and After Guidance Notes](#) for further support and information.

All enquiries where there is reported internal flooding or where there is a very high risk of internal flooding to a number of properties are classed as a high priority. **Please note** that flooding to a domestic garage is not considered to be a high priority. The remaining enquiries are prioritised using parameters such as vulnerability, historic flood events, size and scale of the flooding.



Based on the nature of your enquiry, and/or the level of resources available, you may only receive standing advice or be directed to Guidance Notes available on the website at <https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/flooding-and-drainage>. These notes are designed to help you help yourself in the absence of resource availability from FRM. **Please note** that the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) tries to investigate as many flooding enquiries as possible, however, it is not possible to investigate all. For further information on how FRM prioritise and investigate flooding incidents please refer to the [Flood Reporting and Enquiries Investigation Guidance Notes](#).

Flooding in Leicestershire

Identifying the source of flooding

Non- internal flooding is frequently reported to FRM and can be caused and influenced by a wide range of sources.

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If there is no immediate risk of internal flooding to your property then it is important to try to identify the causes of the flooding in order to understand the responsible landowner, person or organisation.

Flooding from groundwater or surface water

Signs to look out for:

- Streams or evidence of water flow.
- Water bubbling at the surface.
- Water seeping out of the ground.
- Seasonal flooding, or during prolonged wet spells.
- Flood water remains for a long period of time (days to weeks) after a storm.
- Flooding does not occur after a very intense storm, but does during long periods of wet weather.



Water bubbling up at the surface

Flooding from groundwater can often be mistaken for surface water flooding and often occurs in back or front gardens where the water beneath the ground surface emerges to the surface when the water table is high.

Flooding associated with surface water may be linked to a very heavy storm resulting in a delay in the time taken for water to infiltrate into the ground or a low point of the ground surface causing the water to accumulate. Flooding may also result from surface water runoff from adjacent high ground.

For further guidance on groundwater and surface water flooding please see the [Groundwater Guidance Notes](#) or the [Surface Water Guidance Notes](#).

Flooding from a blocked, collapsed or damaged land drain

Please be aware flooding from this source may occur throughout the year. A culvert or land drain may exist beneath your property and may appear on your property deeds.

Signs to look out for include:

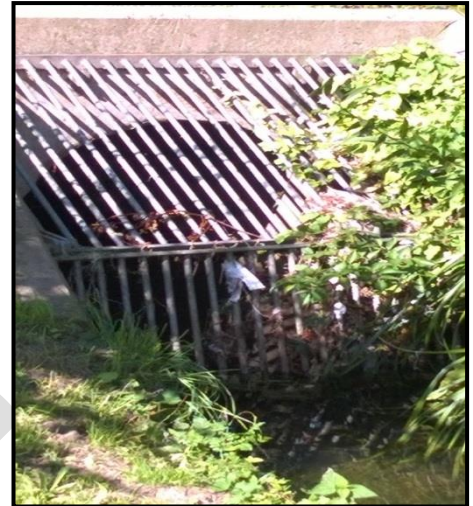
- Water bubbling in a concentrated area.
- Intermittent flow or pulses of water seepage.
- A clear depression/dip in the ground.



A blocked land drain forcing water to escape through an inspection chamber

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If the flooding presents itself periodically during wet and dry weather it could be the result of damaged or blocked drainage infrastructure. If you find that your garden has become flooded you may wish to speak to your neighbours and check your property deeds to try to identify if the flooding may be related to a blocked land drain. A series of inspection chamber lids placed at regular intervals is a good indication that there may be a hidden culvert or drain within your land.



A blocked trash screen

If you identify a culvert or land drain within your property, the section which falls within your land is your responsibility to maintain or if you identify damaged, blocked or collapsed drainage infrastructure outside of your landownership that may be contributing towards your garden flooding, then please refer to the [Riparian Landownership Guidance Notes](#), [Enforcement Powers Guidance Notes](#) or liaise with FRM, if required.

Flooding from a blocked watercourse

Signs to look out for:

- Overland flow that would not usually be there, particularly if you are near a watercourse.
- Debris within a watercourse, main river or ditch causing water to leave the watercourse.
- Debris blocking a trash screen.
- A channel with little to no flow where there would usually be substantial flow.

Our Guidance Notes for "[Riparian Landownership](#)" may be useful.

If the cause of garden flooding may be related to a blocked watercourse or an obstructed trash screen then please refer to the [Riparian Landownership Guidance Notes](#).

Flooding may also occur if an interception ditch (which has no connectivity to a watercourse) is not maintained, particularly where it is designed to intercept surface water runoff. In this instance the watercourse is not classified as an ordinary watercourse and therefore its management is not governed by the Land Drainage Act (1991). You are advised to liaise with the relevant landowner in the first instance.

Flooding from the Highway

Signs to look out for:

- A blocked/broken gully or culvert.

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- An overwhelmed gully or culvert draining the public Highway.
- Overland flow running off the public Highway.

If the flooding is believed to be caused or exacerbated by Highway infrastructure (gullies, culvert) then the Highways Division should be contacted; Call Leicestershire on **(0116) 305 0001** or online 'Report a blocked drain'¹. For more information please refer to the [Highways Statutory Duties and Vested Powers Guidance Notes](#).

If the Highways issues are related to the strategic Highway network (i.e. a Motorway or Trunk Road) then please contact the Highways England on **(0300) 123 5000**.

Flooding from a public or private sewer system

Signs to look out for:

- Backing up of gullies serving household waste pipes.
- Water seeping out of water company inspection chamber lids located within your property boundary.
- Water seeping up through the ground anywhere, including footways.
- A private sewer identified on your property deeds.
- Waste material in flood water.
- A foul odour to the flood water.
- Discoloration of the flood water.

If the flooding is believed to be caused or exacerbated by a public sewer then the relevant water service provider for your area should be contacted. If you are unsure of your service provider then please refer to your water utility bill.

- Severn Trent Water - 0800 783 4444
- Anglian Water- 03457 145 145

If you find that garden flooding is as a result of a private sewer located within your land then it is your responsibility to maintain the asset. Your local water service provider may also be able to provide further guidance.

Natural sources of Flooding

There may be some instances when the cause of flooding is due to the severity and duration of a rainfall event and unfortunately little can be done to prevent this. This can manifest in a number of ways including:

¹ www.leicestershire.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/road-maintenance/roadside-drains.

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- Ponding of surface water.
- Overwhelming of a Highway drain or sewer system above the design capacity of a system.
- A watercourse, drainage ditch, Main River becoming overwhelmed and flooding onto its natural floodplain (i.e. land either side).



A natural intense rainfall event overwhelming the Highway infrastructure causing flooding of the highway

General advice if your garden has been flooded

- FRM recommends that you document any flooding through the use of photographs and notes.
- Deploying sandbags or other preventative barriers/measures to help reduce the potential impact of the flooding.
- FRM recommends that you open dialogue with your neighbour, the local community or Parish Council to obtain as much information as possible which may assist you with understanding the frequency, severity and impact of any potential future flooding.
- You may wish to join a local Flood Action Group or other community level initiative if the flooding affected other members of the community.
- Where the responsibility for the cause of flooding may rest with yourself you may wish to utilise a specialist contractor to clarify the cause of the flooding and recommend potential mitigation measures to help prevent further flooding. Should you require further information on sourcing a specialist contractor then please refer to the [Using Experts Guidance Notes](#).
- Property owners often choose to pave over the frontages of their property to create additional off-street parking; this process is often referred to as 'Urban Creep' and can contribute towards garden flooding. For more information please refer to the [Planning and Development Guidance Notes](#).

PROTECTING YOURSELF FROM FLOODING

Frequently asked questions

I reported my garden flooding incident a week ago. How is my reported garden flooding prioritised?

FRM logs all enquires relating to flooding and look to respond to all enquires as swiftly as possible. All reports are however prioritised to ensure those who need help most get help as a priority (i.e. internal flooding). For more information relating to prioritisation please refer to the [Communications Strategy and Prioritisation Guidance Notes](#). For information about the classification of flooding inquiries please refer to the [Flood Reporting and Enquiries Investigation Guidance Notes](#).

I have looked into the source of the garden flooding but I am still unsure. Who can I speak to?

You may wish to contact FRM using the details at the bottom of this guidance.

I have a ditch in my back garden that only flows for a small part of the year. Can I fill it in without approval?

If you wish to make an amendment to or work within close proximity to a ditch, dyke, culvert, river or watercourse then you may require consent under the Land Drainage Act (1991). Please contact FRM for further guidance.

I'm worried about a ditch that runs adjacent to my property boundary, most likely designed to intercept surface water runoff from adjacent land, can you help?

It may be that the interception ditch is designed to intercept water and then allow water to naturally filtrate into the ground. These types of ditches are not governed under the Land Drainage Act (1991).

If you feel that your property may be at risk you are advised to liaise with the relevant landowner and request that they maintain the ditch in the first instance. If the ditch is connected to a watercourse it legally forms part of an ordinary watercourse under the Land Drainage Act (1991). Please refer to the [Riparian Landownership Guidance Notes](#) for further details.

Leicestershire County Council

Flood Risk Management

County Hall, Glenfield, Leicestershire, LE3 8RJ

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Email: flooding@leics.gov.uk