

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Highways Authorities

Highways authorities (the Highways Agency and unitary/county councils) have the lead responsibility for providing and managing highway drainage and roadside ditches under the Highways Act 1980. The owners of land adjoining a highway also have a common-law duty to maintain ditches to prevent them causing a nuisance to road users. To manage these risks as set out in the national strategy, highways authorities will need to work effectively with the Environment Agency, Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFAs) and district councils to ensure their flood management activities are well coordinated.

South Gloucestershire Council – 01454 868000 / <http://www.southglos.gov.uk/>

Highways England (Agency) – 0300 123 5000 /
<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/highways-england>

Water and sewerage companies (Bristol Water / Wessex Water Plc)

Water companies play a major role in managing flood and coastal erosion risks. They manage the risk of flooding to water supply and sewerage facilities and the risk to others from the failure of their infrastructure.

The main roles of water and sewerage companies in managing flood and coastal erosion risks are to:

- ensure their systems have the appropriate level of resilience to flooding, and maintain essential services during emergencies
- maintain and manage their water supply and sewerage systems to manage the impact and reduce the risk of flooding and pollution to the environment
- provide advice to LLFAs on how water and sewerage company assets impact on local flood risk
- work with developers, landowners and LLFAs to understand and manage risks – for example, by working to manage the amount of rainfall that enters sewerage systems
- work with the Environment Agency, LLFAs and district councils to coordinate the management of water supply and sewerage systems with other flood risk management work, they also need to have regard to FCERM plans in their own plans and work

Where there is frequent and severe sewer flooding, sewerage undertakers are required to address this through their capital investment plans, which are regulated by Ofwat.

Bristol Water – 0345 702 3797 / <http://www.bristolwater.co.uk/contact/general-enquiries/>

Wessex Water – 0345 600 4 600 / <https://www.wessexwater.co.uk/>

Internal Drainage Boards (IDBs)

IDBs have an important role to play in flood risk management, and in creating and managing natural habitats. Each IDB operates within a defined area, known as a drainage district. They are made up of elected members who represent land occupiers, and others nominated by local authorities who represent the public and other interest groups. IDBs are independent public bodies responsible for managing water levels in low-lying areas.

Telephone: 01454 868 000

Email: LeadLocalFloodAuthority@southglos.co.uk

They are the land drainage authority within their districts and their functions include supervising land drainage and flood defence works on ordinary watercourses. This is primarily funded by drainage rates and levies from land occupiers and local authorities. By doing this, they closely manage water levels, both in watercourses and underground (groundwater), by improving and maintaining ordinary watercourses, drainage channels and pumping stations to reduce the risk of flooding. They are able to involve local people, encourage volunteering and raise funds from those who benefit from their work.

Within South Gloucestershire the local IDB is the Lower Severn internal Drainage Board.

Lower Severn Internal Drainage Board – 01454 413340 / <http://www.lowersevernidb.org.uk/>

Parish Councils

Can play an important role in managing flood risk at the community level and generally have vast local knowledge of historic areas prone to flooding as well as areas at risk and can help gather information and report any flood incidents.

<http://council.southglos.gov.uk/mgParishCouncilDetails.aspx>

Riparian Responsibilities

If you are a landowner of any kind; be it a homeowner, business owner, community, farmer, developer, authority, tenant or whoever you have a responsibility to prevent flooding from your land. This is called Riparian Responsibility. You are a riparian owner of any watercourse within or adjacent to the boundaries of your land. This could be an open watercourse (river or stream), a ditch or a culvert for example.

Riparian owners are responsible for maintaining and clearing debris (even if this is not from their land) from the watercourse or ditch as well as vegetation on the banks, in order to keep these clear and prevent flooding. As a riparian owner you could face legal action if lack of maintenance of your watercourse causes flooding.

Communities

Communities and individuals at risk of flooding should prepare Community and Household Flood Plans. Residents can also get involved with the community and local councils by becoming a Flood Warden.

Outlined are some of the options communities and individuals may consider

- Join (or form) a flood action group.
- Work with your local authority to address flood risk issues.
- Take responsibility for monitoring local watercourses.
- Protect your property from flooding.
- Sign up to Floodline warnings direct (if available for rivers in your area with the Environment Agency)
- Report flood incidents (all incidents of flooding need to be reported to the Council, to ensure we have a clear picture of flooding here in South Gloucestershire).