



HUMBERSIDE  
Fire & Rescue Service



## Flooding Feb / March 2020 Q&A

### **Why weren't we warned about the risks sooner? There wasn't enough warning to allow us to make plans to evacuate or save items**

We encourage residents and businesses that live in a flood risk area to make sure that they are signed up to the Flood Warning service so that they are prepared and can take necessary action as soon as possible.

Our service includes three types of warning – Flood Alert, Flood Warning and Severe Flood Warning. Each warning type is triggered by particular weather, river or sea conditions which cause flooding. We aim to warn people who have signed up to the flood warning service at least 2 hours before the onset of flooding.

**Flood Alerts** can be issued two hours to two days before flooding.

During Storm Ciara we issued a **Flood Alert** along the tidal River Aire on Sunday 9 February at 1935 hrs. This alert was regularly updated and currently remains in place today. Flood Alerts mean that flooding is possible and people should be prepared.

A **Flood Warning** means that flooding is expected and immediate action required. Flood Warnings can be issued between 30 minutes and 1 day before flooding is expected.

At 0752 hrs on Tuesday 25 February, a **Flood Warning** was issued on the River Aire at Snaith Ings, and on the same day further Flood Warnings were issued at 0806 hours on the River Aire at Snaith and Lidgate and 0941 hours on the River Aire at Gowdall. When the warnings went out on Tuesday, the washlands had not yet started to fill.

On Wednesday 26 February at 1537, a **Flood Warning** was issued on the River Don and Dutch River at West Cowick and East Cowick.

Reports of flooding began on Tuesday – mainly to properties in Snaith washland and flooding became more widespread on Wednesday as Snaith washland filled to capacity and began to overspill.

### **Are the water levels going to rise further?**

Our forecasts show that we're not expecting heavy rain this week and river levels have begun to drop. The tides are also beginning to fall which will help drain the washlands and

we have pumping operations in place moving approximately 7,800 litres per second/28,080,000 litres per hour, which equates to 11 Olympic sized swimming pools per hour from the affected areas. We expect tide levels to rise again on Friday 6 March. The next set of high tides are due to peak from Tuesday 10 to Thursday 12 of March.

### **Are there any other areas at risk?**

At the moment, water from the River Aire has stopped spilling into the washlands and the levels look to have stabilised. We are closely monitoring areas such as East Cowick where there are further properties potentially at risk while the river levels drop and the washlands slowly drain. We don't expect that any other areas are at risk of flooding from this event.

### **How are you getting rid of the water, what are you doing to reduce the levels?**

Now that the river levels are dropping, we are able to pump water from the washlands. We have deployed over 30 pumps around the flooded communities to help remove the water as quickly as possible. This period of dry weather will also allow the washlands to drain naturally through the outfall structures (pipes through the embankments) back into the river.

### **How long will the water stay for - when will we be able to get into our homes?**

River levels and washland levels are starting to fall. Different properties are on different levels and those on higher ground will be accessible first. Water will remain in the washlands for over a week and possibly longer if we get further rain and high tides.

### **Can we get any financial compensation if our home/business has been flooded?**

Yes. Where water has got into a habitable room in a house, there is financial support available. There is a £500 recovery grant, assistance with council tax and, in due course, resilience grants will also be available to help protect properties from flooding again. For businesses, there will be a grant available of up to £2,500 for uninsured losses and assistance with business rates and recovery grants. For more information visit <https://www.eastriding.gov.uk/living/emergencies/preparing-for-emergencies/flooding/#funding-to-recover>

### **Will drinking water supplies be affected?**

Currently, there is no reason to suspect that drinking water supplies will be affected by the flood.

### **What help is there to help us once we get into our homes? (i.e. don't move items until your insurers have confirmed it's ok to do so, the Council will collect bulky waste for free)**

When the flood waters have receded and it is safe for you to return to your property, you will receive support from council officers who will visit every flood-affected property to give advice and guidance, including contacting insurers. The council will organise a free bulky waste collection to help remove damaged goods.

Some insurance companies will allow you remove items from your house without a loss adjuster visiting and others will want you to leave everything as it is until they have visited. Consider taking photographs and videos of the damage to your property and possessions to assist your insurance company. You may not need to use these, but it is better to gather this evidence before you start to move or remove anything in/from your property.

You should remember that, whilst the sewerage system was not damaged during this flood, the flood water will have levels of contaminants within it (such as oil, petrol, diesel, other fuels, human and animal sewerage, etc). You should ensure that you wear rubber gloves, practice good hand hygiene and make sure that any items that you decide to keep are well cleaned using disinfectant.

### **What are the Police doing to protect evacuated properties?**

We have had extra officers deployed over the weekend to actively patrol the area and to provide a highly visible police presence. We have not had any reports of burglaries or looting and will continue to actively support the response to flooding through the clean-up and recovery stages as needed.

### **How long will the road closures be in place for?**

The current road closures are in place because the roads are impassable. Once the waters recede we will carry out an inspection of the carriageways and only at that point - when we know the carriage ways is safe - will we open the road to traffic.

### **What are you going to do to stop this happening again?**

We can never stop flooding, but we will continue to do everything we can to reduce the impact to people and their properties. Flooding has a devastating effect and our thoughts go out to those who have been affected over the past month. We will continue to issue Flood Alerts and Flood Warnings and we urge people to check if they are at risk and sign up to our flood warning service.

### **Exceedance plans**

We are aware of a copy of our 'exceedance plan' for Snaith has been publicly circulated. We create exceedance plans for flood risk communities as part of our contingency planning for worst case scenarios. We produce these plans for flood risk communities to focus our operational response should the worst case happen.

### **Council tax**

**The council has offered a waiver of council tax for residents and businesses for three months who have been flooded. I already pay my council tax by direct debit, which is ten monthly payments. So does the three month waiver include February and March?**

No matter what your payment plan is for council tax, the council tax liability covers the full year from April to March. Therefore, if you have already paid in full for the current year you will receive a refund for the period for which you have been flooded and eligible properties will also receive a reduction on the new council tax bill covering the period from 1 April 2020.