

WHAT CAN I DO TO PREPARE FOR CLIMATE CHANGE?

Premises

Ask Yourself?

- Do you know if you are in an area at risk from flooding or flash flooding? Remember that climate change means that risks will change.
- If you are currently located in a flood zone, do you have appropriate flood defences (for example, sandbags, plywood or metal barriers)?
- If you are moving premises, have you checked whether the location is within a flood zone?
- Are you about to sign a long term lease agreement which would make it difficult to relocate? If you are, have you checked if you can afford the relevant insurances, including business continuity insurance?
- Do you have the equipment to clean up after an extreme weather event? Are you able to purchase this now?
- If your premises are damaged by extreme weather, think about re-instating it to a higher standard of resilience to prevent the same damage happening again.
- Have you considered whether you could operate from alternative premises if you had to?
- Are there mutual weather warning systems that you could share with neighbouring businesses? Can you share alternative suppliers, accommodation, etc?
- How well do your buildings and building services cope with high temperatures?
- Could increased chances of subsidence affect your business?

Prolonged clean-up operations arising from stormwater contaminated with sewage is a particular problem for restaurants, takeaways, doctors etc.

Take Action:

- Before you sign a lease, make sure you are comfortable with the lease conditions. If you are in a flood risk area, consider the length of the lease agreement and potential implications.

- When upgrading your premises, for whatever reason, consider ways to make your property more resilient to severe weather. You could, for example, consider relocating to a lower risk area (higher ground, not on a flood plain, etc).

Other practical measures you can take include:

- Move electrical sockets to above the flood level and separate electrical circuits.
- Lay ceramic tiles on the floor and use rugs instead of fitted carpets.
- Use lime plaster instead of gypsum.
- Fit stainless steel or plastic kitchens instead of chipboard.
- Position main parts of a heating or ventilation system upstairs, above the ground floor.
- Fix floodboards to window and door frames.
- If you are in a high flood risk area, fit back-flow devices to drains and sewers.
- You can check the NI Strategic Flood Maps on the River's Agency website to identify if you are in an area at risk of flooding. See:
<http://www.dardni.gov.uk/riversagency/index/statagic-flood-maps.htm>

- Avail of NI Direct's flooding advice information, available at:
[%20Flooding](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/index/information-and-services/property-and-housing/your-neighbourhood-roads-and-streets/flooding-in-your-area.htm)

To report flooding call 0300 2000 100, which is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

- Plastic covers can stop flood water coming through air bricks. Equipment such as pumps, driers and dehumidifiers will aid the clean up after a flood. If you have these prior to a flood it will save you time. Consider sharing the cost of equipment (e.g. a water pump) with your neighbours.
- Sandbags and pre-prepared plywood or metal barriers can reduce flooding around doors. Using a blanket or silicone sealant around the barrier can also help. If sandbags are in short supply you can buy your own sand and bags or use pillowcases/plastic bags. However, note that a flood may contaminate these items with sewage so they should not be reused. Alternatively, demountable flood defences are also available.
- Check buildings maintenance, gutters, drains and culverts.

Further Information:

- The **Rivers Agency** flood advice leaflet may be downloaded from:
http://www.dardni.gov.uk/riversagency/rivers_agency_flooding_leaflet_2009_-_final.pdf.pdf
- **NI Business Info** website provides a step-by-step guide on how to protect your business from flooding:
<http://www.nibusinessinfo.co.uk/bdotg/action/layer?r.l1=1079068363&r.l2=1087319510&r.s=tl&site=191&topicId=1075437245>
- The **Met Office** provides weather forecasts – Tel: 01392 885680 or 0870 9000100.
<http://www.metoffice.gov.uk>
- Ask your plumber for advice.
- More information is available on the repair and restoration of buildings following extreme weather at **CIRIA's (Construction Industry Research and Information Association)** website: <http://www.ciria.org/flooding>
- **UKCIP's BACLIAT tool** gives some information on the risks and opportunities a changing climate may pose for premises: <http://www.ukcip.org.uk/bacليات/>

Do not assume that because the Rivers Agency does not identify your area to be at risk of flood that you are not. You may still be at risk from flash flooding, surface water or groundwater flooding.

This information has been adapted from the Weathering the Storm Business guide produced by the West Midlands Climate Change Adaptation Partnership. The concept originated and was developed by the following funding partners within the West Midlands: Environment Agency, Sustainability West Midlands, UKCIP, Government Office West Midlands, Advantage West Midlands, Business Link West Midlands and DEFRA.
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