

SANDBAG DISTRIBUTION POLICY

1 Background

During times of inclement weather, the Authority will make reasonable efforts to assist residents at imminent risk of flooding, but this is subject to resources available at the time of an event.

No guarantee can be offered to residents that we can assist with all flood incidents.

If residents are concerned that they may be at risk of flooding, it is **strongly recommended** that they consider implementing their own flood resilience measures in advance of a flood event.

Advice can be sought from the following resources:

Natural Resource Wales

Customer Care Centre - 0300 065 3000
(Mon-Fri, 8am-6pm)

National Floodline

0845 988 1188 (24hr)

Floodline Type Talk – 0345 602 6340
(for hard of hearing customers).

Incident hotline 0800 80 70 60 (24 hours)

enquiries@naturalresourceswales.gov.uk

Streetscene Contact Centre

01352 701234 (24hrs)
Out of Hours

See also: www.flintshire.gov.uk

2 Practical Steps for Property Owners

Sandbags are one of the most well-known means of keeping floodwater out of a property during flooding events. The materials are easily available and relatively cheap, and in most cases, they are effective. However, their use does have some disadvantages as listed below:

- Filling is time consuming and requires two people.
- They can be difficult to handle.
- They may contain contaminants such as sewage if they come in contact with floodwater.
- The sacking material is biodegradable and will disintegrate with time.

Owners of properties that are at risk of flooding are therefore encouraged to keep, where possible, their own stock of empty sandbags together with sufficient stocks of sand to fill the bags at times of potential flooding. Further information on practical measures to minimise floodwater entry and damage to property is contained within the Environment Agency's document "Damage Limitation Guide" and can be obtained from the Environment Agency's website at:

www.environment-agency.gov.uk.

In addition, there are proprietary products available on the market to protect openings such as doors, windows and vents.

In the event of severe weather and where there is a genuine risk of flooding, Flintshire County Council will endeavour to provide filled sandbags to properties upon request. Our primary response will be to flooding incidents originating from the

SANDBAG DISTRIBUTION POLICY

highway and non-main river sources. Main Rivers are governed by Natural Resources Wales, who may not always be in a position to provide sandbags, depending on demand and local circumstances. Therefore each request made to Flintshire County Council will be considered in relation to the prevailing circumstances, irrespective of the flooding source. It should be borne in mind that there is a limit to both the availability and the ability to distribute sandbags, particularly when wide-scale flooding is being experienced. Therefore, reliance on the County Council to provide sandbags should not be considered as being the primary means of protection. The Council will give priority to known flooding black spots and where there is the potential of several properties being flooded. Distribution will be in accordance with Section 3.

3 Distribution

Requests for sandbags from the public as a result of flood warnings, severe weather warnings or actual flooding events, will normally be received directly by Contact Centre staff during normal working hours. Outside normal working hours, requests will be passed to the relevant Duty Officer, via the Council's 24-hour service provider.

Requests will generally be dealt with in the order they are received and arrangements will be made to distribute sandbags as requested. However, at times of more serious widespread flooding events, the distribution of sandbags will need to be prioritised according to severity, risk, location and available resources. The County Council will endeavour to respond to most requests but there may be some delay, particularly for the more widespread or large scale events.

Delivery of sandbags will normally be to the nearest point of access to a property from the highway or access road. Further manoeuvring of the sandbags within the boundaries of a property will be the responsibility of the property owner. The Council workforce may assist in this respect in some circumstances, but such assistance will not always be possible.

It may be necessary during extreme weather events to call upon external help from the armed forces to distribute further sandbags. This may be the case when filled sandbag stocks have been exhausted and labour resources are over-stretched. The decision to call upon the armed forces will be made by the Chief Officer for Streetscene & Transportation following discussions with the Duty Officers. The Chief Officer for Streetscene & Transportation will make a formal request via the Council's Emergency Centre. The procedures for requesting aid from the Armed Forces are documented within the Council's Integrated Emergency Response Plan. However, the availability of the armed forces in such circumstances cannot be guaranteed, and the timing of their response will be dependent on their location/commitment at the time.

Members of the public will not be allowed to collect sandbags directly from Council depots.

The removal of sandbags on private property will be the responsibility of the householder.

SANDBAG DISTRIBUTION POLICY

Flintshire County Council **WILL**:

- Deploy sandbags to divert the flow of flood water originating from Local Authority assets such as highway gullies, culverts and ditches in addition to watercourse, culverts and ditches lying within local authority owned land;
- Subject to availability; deploy sandbags at locations where there is an imminent risk to life or property. The decision to deploy sandbags shall be taken at the discretion of responding officers. Where possible, elderly and vulnerable residents shall be given priority.
- Collect sandbags from authority owned land and public open spaces and dispose of them in an appropriate manner.

Flintshire County Council **WILL NOT**:

- Deploy sandbags to private properties in advance of a flood event;
- Deploy sandbags to commercial properties at any time before, during or after a flood event, unless deemed necessary under exceptional circumstances to protect adjacent residential and/or essential infrastructure from flood damage;
- Allow residents to collect sandbags from FCC depots;
- Collect sandbags from private land, commercial premises, or residential properties (other than when deployed by FCC to elderly or vulnerable residents), and;
- Collect sandbags which have not been deployed by FCC.

4 Stocks and supplies

The County Council will at all times keep a minimum of 750 filled sandbags in serviceable condition and ready for deployment at Alltami Depot.

The County Council will keep a stockpile of 20 tonnes of sand at the above depot at all times together with an ample stock of unfilled sandbags.

5 Policy review

The policy will be reviewed regularly (at least every 2 years) and amended as necessary.