

Guidance Notes: GARDEN FLOODING

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

Water accumulation in the front or back garden of a property is frequently reported to the FRM team. Garden flooding can be caused and influenced by a wide range of sources.

If garden flooding is threatening to enter your property

If flood water has the potential to enter the living areas of your property and you feel that sandbags could help, then you should call the County Council's Emergency Planning Team on (01629) 538364. Out of normal working hours, contact can be made through Call Derbyshire on (01629) 533190. In extreme circumstances where residents may need to be temporarily evacuated from their home, further help will be provided by the County Council.



Garden flooding in Derbyshire

For further guidance please see the [Before, During and After a Flood Event Guidance Notes](#). Once the flooding has stopped threatening your property you should look to try to identify the source of the flooding. For any further guidance please contact the FRM team on the details at the end of this guidance.

Identifying the source of garden flooding

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

Flooding from groundwater or surface water

Signs to look out for:

- Water bubbling at the surface.
- Water seeping out of the ground.
- Flooding is seasonal, 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 grounds surface emerges to the surface and flows uncontrollably when the water table is high. Flooding from groundwater can also be associated with flooding from a blocked land drain or sewer system (please see below for the difference).

Garden flooding associated with surface water may be linked to a very heavy storm resulting in a delay in which the water can infiltrate into the ground or a low point of the grounds surface causing the water to accumulate. Garden 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

Signs to look out for:

- Water bubbling at the surface in a concentrated area.
- Intermittent flow or pulses of water seepage.
- A clear depression/dip in the ground.
- Can occur throughout the year.
- A culvert or land drain may exist beneath your property and may appear on your property deeds.
- Inspection chamber lids within the property grounds.



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

If the flooding presents itself suddenly and materialises during dry weather it could be the result of damaged or blocked drainage infrastructure. Often when associated with damaged or blocked drainage infrastructure water may emerge periodically, often associated with a rain event. 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 good indication that there may be a hidden culvert or drain within your land is the location of inspection chamber lids/metal lids placed at regular intervals.

If you identify a culvert or land drain within your property, the section which falls within your land is your responsibility to maintain. 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](#) and liaise with a member of the FRM team.

Flooding from a blocked watercourse

Signs to look out for:

- Overland flow onto your land due to a blocked ditch, watercourse or Main (large) River.
- Debris blocking a trash screen.



A blocked trash screen

If the cause of garden flooding may be related to a blocked watercourse or you would like more information about watercourse maintenance or riparian responsibilities then please refer to the [Riparian Landownership Guidance Notes](#).

Garden flooding may also occur if an interception ditch (which has no connectivity to a watercourse) is not maintained, 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 or if this is not successful you may wish to take civil action under Common Law. For any further support or guidance you may wish to contact the FRM team.

If you identify that the cause of flooding to your garden may be related to an obstructed trash screen please contact the FRM team.

Flooding from the Highway

Signs to look out for:

- A blocked/broken gully or culvert.
- An overwhelmed gully or culvert draining the public Highway.
- Overland flow running off the public Highway.



An overwhelmed Highway asset

If the flooding is believed to be caused or exacerbated by Highway infrastructure (gullies, culvert) then the Highways team should be contacted via Call Derbyshire on **(01629) 533190** or online via 'Report a blocked drain' www.derbyshire.gov.uk/do_it_now. 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) then please contact the Highways Agency on **(0300) 123 5000**.

Flooding from a public or private sewer system

Signs to look out for:

- 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 – not all incidences of sewer flooding.
- A foul odour to the flood water – not all incidences of sewer flooding.
- Discoloration of the flood water - not all incidences of sewer flooding.

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.

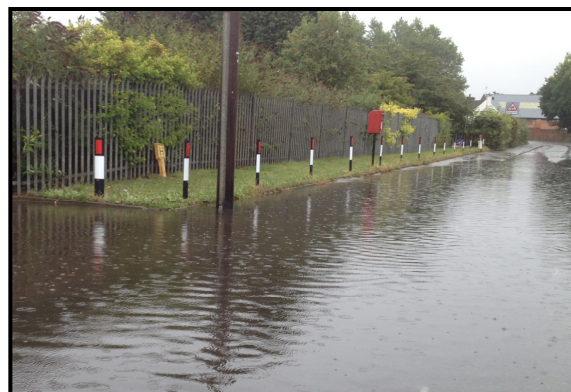
- Severn Trent Water - 0800 783 4444
- Yorkshire Water - 0345 124 24 24
- United Utilities - 0345 672 3723

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 Garden Flooding

There may be some instances when the cause of flooding to your garden is due to the severity and duration of a rainfall event and therefore not a lot can be done to stop it. This can result in a number of issues including:

- 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 flooding into a garden

General advice if your garden has been flooded

- Any internal property flooding incident should be reported to the FRM team, when it is safe and convenient to do so. If the flooding to your property relates to a public sewer then you must also report this flooding to your water service provider.
- You may wish to contact your insurance company. For more information please refer to our [Insurance Guidance Notes](#).
- The FRM team recommend that you document any flooding through the use of photographs etc.
- Deploying sandbags or other preventative barriers/measures to help reduce the potential impact of the flooding.
- The FRM team highly recommended 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.
- 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 Note](#).
- Property owners often chose 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](#).

Frequently asked questions

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

The FRM team log 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**.

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

Please contact the FRM team on 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 the FRM team for further guidance or visit the website at:

www.derbyshire.gov.uk/flooding/ordinary_watercourse_consents

A ditch runs adjacent to my property boundary, most likely designed to intercept surface water runoff from adjacent land?

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.

For more guidance on surface water flooding and steps you may wish to take to help mitigate an impact please refer to the **Surface Water Guidance Notes**.

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.

Derbyshire County Council

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Economy, Transport & Environment
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