

THE EMERGENCY WARDEN - HELPING SAFEGUARD OUR COMMUNITY

This paper is for the community's volunteer wardens. Please take it away and read it – all comments and additions very welcome.

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Patterdale Parish Community Flood Group www.parishfloodgroup.org

We'll call it the 'Community Flood Group', or **CFG** for short, was set up as a consequence of the December 2015 floods with the remit of sorting out the mess and making sure we're better prepared if it happens again. The group was organised into several teams looking at the following areas:

- **The Communications team** aimed to ensure that we remain in touch with each other and the outside world during a future event using satellite phones, generators etc.
- **The Maintenance team** was tasked with monitoring and coordinating any necessary physical infrastructural work in our water courses and drainage. Repairs, improvements, blockages, you name it.
- **The Property Flood Defences and Resilience Grants team** helped those affected by the flood understand the complex grants available.
- **The Upstream Management team** has looked at practical ways of slowing the water flow off the fells into the valley floor
- **The Resilience team** (Fra Cooke, Judith Cooke, Jon Holdsworth, Gillian Beggs) was given the direct aim of creating resilience within the community with the focus on safeguarding the **people** of our community. The Emergency Warden network is part of this team's activities.

Resilience team – aims & objectives

Over the last nine months we have honed down the ways in which we can realistically achieve this goal. Our work has centred around these key areas:

- Creating a network of **Emergency Wardens** across six designated zones to improve communications with, and dissemination of information to, their local communities.
- Enlisting local businesses to act as **Refuge Centres** to provide shelter and refreshment for those dis-located by an emergency, and for those helping with the recovery effort needing R&R.
- Helping the maintenance team to research and implement **Equipment Stores** strategically placed in safe areas around the dale

2. WHAT IS AN EMERGENCY WARDEN?

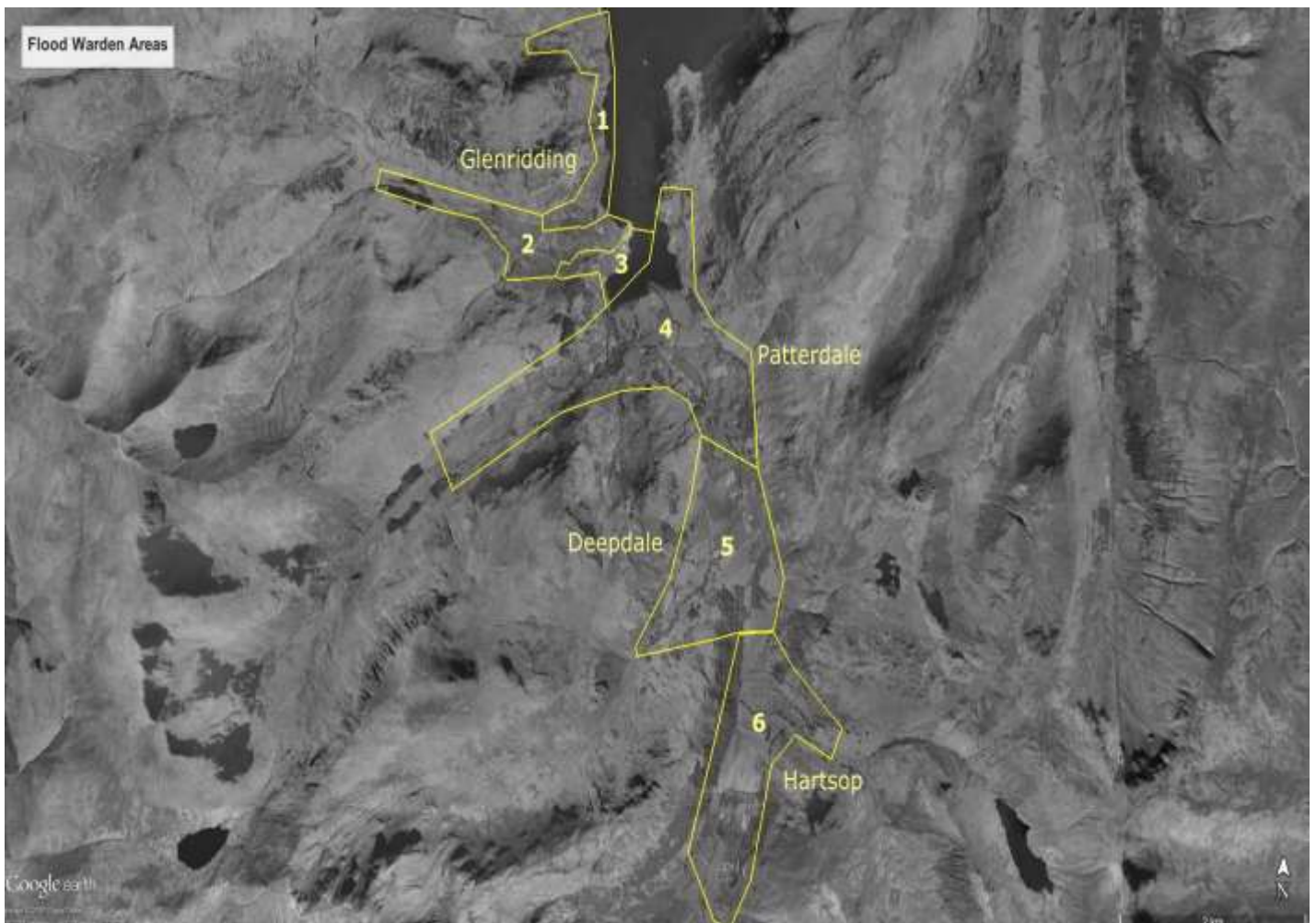
- Emergency Wardens are the communication channel during times of flooding (or other emergencies) between the community and those whose job it is to provide support. Residents may look to their Emergency Warden to provide initial organisation and guidance. When a flood does occur, the Community Flood Plan, once complete, will contain the contacts and other details needed.
- It is quite possible that, during times of large-scale flooding, some communities may well become physically isolated by floodwater. The emergency crews may not have enough staff to allow them to attend every single incident, but the information provided by the Emergency Wardens can help the responding agencies to allocate their resources appropriately. This should be done responsibly, as the resources will inevitably be spread thinly, and must be targeted where most needed.
- The dale has never tried to set up anything like this before, so in many ways we are creating the role as we go along. The Resilience Team are quite happy to admit that. We have clear ideas about what the Wardens will do, but this is bound to evolve as we discuss the role and fathom out how best to use the network. Every Warden is a pivotal part of this process, so we need you to speak up, share ideas, tell us if we are being unrealistic, and between us we'll shape the role. It is as important to say from the outset what the warden's role **does NOT entail**, as to say what it does. The Warden's role is not a physical one, it is...
 - **NOT rescuing people from houses or becks**
 - **NOT unblocking watercourses or drains**
 - **NOT distributing equipment during an emergency**
 - **NOT putting yourself or others in any danger**
 - **YES to keeping a close eye on your own flood area community during an event**
 - **YES to knowing your own 'patch' – who lives where, where the full time residents are, where the holiday cottages are, where the people most likely to need help during an emergency are**
 - **YES to being the eyes and ears of the flood group during an event, acting as a hub for local information gathering to be reported to the CFG representative**
 - **YES to local knowledge – compiling a list of 'trigger points' in your area known to precede floods and and give early warning to flood group if these are looking threatening.**
 - **YES to being familiar with the CFG communication structure. Knowing who to ring and when to do so.**
 - **YES to reporting problems in watercourses and drains throughout the year**
 - **YES to being the representative of their own area community to voice ideas and concerns to the CFG at any time**
 - **YES to being calm and competent in any difficult situation.**

3. EMERGENCY WARDEN AREAS

We have designated six areas and we'd ideally like two or three Emergency Wardens per area. The areas are:

- **Area 1.** **Glenridding:** From Dobbinwood down to North Glenridding including Great Close, Glenridding House Hotel & the Birkett Estate.
- **Area 2.** **Glenridding:** From Greenside Mines down past Rakes, Halton Terrace, Gillside, main village to the Inn on the Lake
- **Area 3.** **Glenridding:** The whole track Village Hall track alongside Glenridding Beck, the shops, the Glenridding Hotel, Beech House, The Steamer Pier, St Patricks Boat Landing.
- **Area 4.** **Patterdale:** From Patterdale Hall Estate along to the Youth Hostel, including Grisedale Valley, Rookins, Blowick, Side Farm, Grassthwaite Howe, Braesteads, Dawes wood, Grisedale Bridge etc
- **Area 5.** **Deepdale:** From Noran Bank Farm along to Deepdale Hall Farm including Lane Head, Lane Foot, Wall End etc
- **Area 6.** **Hartsop** including Sykeside, Brotherswater, Hartsop Hall

Map of Emergency Warden Areas



4. EMERGENCY WARDEN KEY ROLES

A. PREPAREDNESS

1. Looking after your own emergency area community

Try to familiarise yourself with every house in your area and whether it is occupied by full time residents, part time residents, if it's a holiday cottage etc. We can annotate this information onto a map or keep a list (see 'Personal Details' note on next page).

- **Neighbourliness:** Particular focus should be placed upon those who may require more help and support during an event - for example elderly or isolated people and those with specific medical conditions or needs.
- **Buddy System:** Set up and maintain a 'buddy system', giving a 'buddy' to those more vulnerable folk that require a partner to help keep an eye on them in the event of any kind of emergency. See '**WARDEN AREA & BUDDY SYSTEM DATABASE**' in the 'What to do Next' booklet.
- **Cascade System:** Help set up and maintain a cascade call system for your flood area to disseminate information and warnings efficiently. See '**WARDEN CALL CASCADE**' sheet.

A note on personal details - looking after data safely

It is advised that Flood Wardens keep a list of contact numbers for the residents in their area. This list does, however, present a security issue, even more so as regards the more vulnerable members of the community. It is very useful for Flood Wardens to identify those properties where disabled, elderly or infirm people live (as they are more likely to need help) and, where possible, it is important for the individual themselves to identify their vulnerability. Well-meaning or uninformed members of the community may well be in breach of an individual's right to privacy should they contribute or record information received from a 3rd party.

It vital that each individual agrees to you holding their details and is willing to let you share the information with others if necessary.

It is most important that this type of information is up-to-date and accurate but is kept safely. For example, the list with local residents' contact details should ideally be kept in a locked drawer (or similar) to which only the Flood Warden has access. It should never be left lying around the home where a casual visitor might be able to see the information.

Residents newly arrived in an area, and temporary residents (such as holiday-makers) may also be particularly vulnerable in a flood situation due to their lack of local knowledge. We should ensure that the properties of all such residents are noted.

2. Using local knowledge and gathering local intelligence

Nobody knows a local area like the people who live there, so please feed back your local knowledge of:

- **Danger areas:** places particularly vulnerable to flooding, why you think this is so, the effect it would have, and any suggestions for dealing with it.

- **Trigger points:** which would act as early warning indicators and, if reached, set in motion pre-arranged actions (eg: beck reaches a designated ‘danger depth’ near houses, resulting in evacuation of residents to refuge centres).
- **Help accurately map your area:** This info will be compiled by the CFG and anything missed off the Community Flood Plan can be added to it. We can then map out your flood area as has been done for the whole dale on the plan.

www.parishfloodgroup.org/flood-plan.html

- **Gathering intelligence during a flood:** Collect flood event information, including photographs, maps and levels, **provided you can do so safely**. Also collect reconnaissance from your area community. This can all help improve the Community Flood Plan in the future.

3. Help us create a TROUBLESHOOTING GUIDE

We need to set up a list of procedures so that we all know what to do and who to contact when something happens. For example:

Event:	Action	Contact Info
Loss of power during an ‘event’ (ie: not just a bog standard power cut)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform Electricity NW • Inform Emergency coordinator • Check vulnerable persons Ok • Disseminate info to persons in flood area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electricity Northwest Hotline 0800 1954141 • CFG contact 017684 82### • Use cascade contact system
Trigger points neared or reached	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform CFG contact 	017684 82***
Loss of Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform United Utilities • Inform Emergency coordinator • Check vulnerable persons Ok • Disseminate info to persons in flood area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • United Utilities Water 0845 746 2200 • CFG contact 017684 82### • Use cascade contact system
etc	etc	etc

Note: It would be vital for wardens to have an ‘old fashioned’ telephone that does not rely on an electricity supply. If you do not have one then the CFG may be able to fund the purchase of one.

4. Periodic visual beck and landscape inspections

The wardens should help set up a visual inspection regime of water courses, landscape and footpaths at regular intervals in their flood area– at least every quarter and especially in late summer well before serious rain starts.

- Beck depths should be closely monitored

- Blockages reported
- Report any debris close to a watercourse which could become a problem if washed in
- If a beck needs dredging let the CFG know.
- Basically, anything worrying should be noted and **the findings should then be passed on to the CFG**, who in turn can involve the maintenance team or one of the key stakeholders (EA; LDNPA; Highways Agency etc).
- The wardens may want to help rectify problems, but this is not a requirement of the role. If a warden does get involved then they must keep their own health and safety and that of any volunteers clearly in mind and ALWAYS seek the landowner's permission to access private land first. Here's a prototype example of a beck inspection schedule:

Area to be inspected	Month of Inspection	Person/s designated	Sign/date when Completed
Check Grisedale Beck and surroundings from Braesteads down to Goldrill Beck and Ullswater.	March	Frank Spencer	
	June	Joe Bloggs	
	September	Digby Smith	
	December	Bobby Banks, Joe Bloggs	

- Please note that **'Riparian owners'** (owners of private land with watercourses running over or under it) have a legal responsibility to keep their watercourses clear of debris and running smoothly. If you spot a problem that needs rectifying, do not approach landowners yourselves – **go through the CFG**. Often a neighbourly chat can be enough to get a problem sorted out – but don't put yourself in the firing line, let the CFG do it!

5. Equipment and storage

- Each warden will get an Emergency Grab Bag for personal use.
- We are currently selecting sites for potential equipment stores which should be close to the risk areas, but not in danger of being flooded.
- The warden should know what type of equipment is stored, where it is and how to get access.
- The key objective would be to advise and direct people who require it, wardens would NOT have a responsibility to distribute or use any equipment (other than the items for personal use in their own grab bags).
- The stores could contain hydrosacks, sand bags, pumps (etc).

6. Disseminating information to improve emergency preparedness

Wardens are not needed just when flooding is happening - on behalf of the community they can raise awareness of flood risk in their area. **This helps individuals to take measures to**

protect themselves and their property in future floods. This would help ensure the community members:

- Avoid putting themselves at risk
- Make themselves aware of the action they should take if flooding is about to happen
- Stay aware of developing conditions (by listening to local radio, for example)

Wardens should distribute help sheets to residents/houses in their flood area, encouraging residents/owners to prominently display the information or at least keep it in an obvious and easily accessible place (for example in a Welcome Folder in a holiday cottage; or on the kitchen wall – not in the bottom of a drawer!). Residents should be encouraged to have non-electrical telephones, working torches, and to keep a back up of listed emergency numbers and key details such as insurance/ health/valuables list (etc). The help sheet could look like the table below, but between us we need to devise a full list of contents and then the CFG can design, print and laminate the info sheets and we can all start distributing them:

To report...	Call	Number
<i>...a life threatening situation at any time</i>	Emergency Services	999
<i>...a blocked road drain</i>	Cumbria Highways	0845 6096609
<i>...a sewer flooding</i>	United Utilities Water PLC	0345 6723 723
<i>...a main river flooding</i>	Environment Agency: Floodline	0345 988 11 88
<i>...a blockage in the river</i>	Environment Agency: Incident Hotline Number	0800 80 70 60
<i>... anything non-emergency flood related in our village can go through the CFG</i>	Community Flood Group contacts • Rob Shephard • Jon Holdsworth • Carl Scrivvens	07767 794225 07879 057229 07786 134179
<i>To talk to your area Emergency Wardens</i>	• Joe Bloggs • Bob Cratchett	017684 82*** 017684 82***
<i>To enquire about flood related things...</i>	National Flood Forum: a charity dedicated to supporting groups, campaigning on groups behalf, have a dedicated helpline for all flooding issues, including insurance	01299 403055
<i>To get information on how to protect your house and family from flooding...</i>	http://www.knowyourfloodrisk.co.uk/ http://www.knowyourfloodrisk.co.uk/sites/default/files/FloodGuide_ForHomeowners.pdf 0844 844 9966	

7. Communications:

The wardens should be familiar with the location and use of whichever emergency communication system is set up by the Comms team. Further details to follow.

8. Refuge Centres

Several local businesses have pledged to open their doors as refuge centres in an emergency. Strategically located down the valley they will help accommodate stranded or evacuated people, or provide a dry haven for flood workers to get rest and to recuperate. This worked really well in the December floods when the Inn on the Lake took in anybody that needed help,

- The wardens should know where the active refuge centres are so that they can advise residents if necessary. They may also liaise with the centres if needs be.
- If deemed necessary, the wardens should help encourage persons to relocate to a refuge centre if it is safe to do so. Safe routes and methods of transport should be worked out in advance. The Mountain Rescue folk will no doubt be performing their usual excellent services during a flood, so if in doubt get them out!

Name of Refuge Centre	Contact Number
Inn on the Lake	017684 82444
Patterdale Hall	017684 82233
The Rectory	017684 82209
Patterdale Hotel	017684 82231
Brotherswater Inn	017684 82239
Fairlight Guest House	017684 82397

B. EMERGENCY WARDEN KEY ROLES BEFORE A FLOOD

1) Look out for the indicators:

i) Weather Warnings

It is important that the wardens recap and make sure they understand their role clearly should the likelihood of a flood increase. They should be as prepared as possible, and weather warnings are a key part of this. There are a number of ways we can monitor the weather:

- **Social media:** Users of Twitter can follow: @metoffice and also check their 'Met Office' Facebook page
- **TV/Radio:** Watch on TV or listen to the radio for local and national weather reports. Especially BBC Radio Cumbria for transport and weather updates including road closures after storms.
- You could also sign up to the **Cumbria Community Messaging Service** at www.cumbriacommunitymessaging.co.uk

- **Severe weather warning service from the Met Office**



The Met Office issues warnings for rain, snow, wind, fog and ice. These warnings are given a colour depending on a combination of both the likelihood of the event happening and the impact the conditions may have.

If unusually severe weather looks likely to occur, the Met Office issues warnings as early as is practical through its website. These are colour-coded, as shown above, and the symbol used for extreme rainfall is also illustrated. The forecasters assess what colour warning is used, taking into account the possible outcomes (the degree of 'impact') and how confident they are that the weather system involved will actually continue to develop as forecast at that time (the 'likelihood').

You can subscribe to the Met Office's email alerts for this area by visiting: <http://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/UKMETOFFICE/subscriber/topics>

And view the Met Office weather Warning map at:

<http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/public/weather/warnings/#?tab=map>

- **Three day flood risk forecast from the Environment Agency**

The EA provide a forecast of the level of flood risk to be expected each day and for the two days that follow:

<http://apps.environment-agency.gov.uk/flood/3days/125305.aspx>

- **Look out of the window!**

Let's not forget that **nobody** predicted the volume of rain we enjoyed on 5th December 2015. We knew that we were in trouble well before the EA and Met Office did. We can help inform them by providing local intel using the CFG as a middle man, that way the emergency services won't be caught unprepared and they won't be bombarded with lots of different messages from different people..

Using the weather warnings to inform preparedness

Here is a generic County Council checklist of preparedness for each weather warning level, please note that this is general advice and is NOT necessarily within a Warden's remit, it's just an indication of what we need to think about:

Yellow Warning of severe rainfall – Be Aware

Flood Warden's actions:

- a) Check their own flood kit (including spare batteries for torches/radios)
- b) Put mobile phone(s) on to charge
- c) Be prepared to act on their Emergency Plans
- d) Monitor local water levels in ditches or streams, where relevant (trigger points)
- e) Check community flood store
- f) Keep your area community as informed as possible using the cascade system
- g) Make sure your buddies are all there to look out for their vulnerable 'partners'
- h) Stay tuned to TV/ local radio and check social media, if used.

Other members of the community should:

- a) Make sure they have everything they need to put their Emergency Plans into action
- b) Put mobile phone(s) on to charge
- c) Alert their neighbours, particularly the elderly/vulnerable
- d) Check pets and livestock
- e) Watch water levels in ditches and streams, where relevant (trigger points)
- f) Stay tuned to TV/ local radio and check social media, if used.

Amber Warning of severe rainfall – Be Prepared

Flood Warden's actions:

- a) Call 999 if anyone is in immediate danger.
- b) Prepare to liaise with emergency services, with information regarding vulnerable members of the public or specific properties likely to be affected
- c) Protect themselves and their family; help others in a safe manner
- d) Put your own flood protection in place (if applicable)
- e) Move pets vehicles, food and valuables (including important documents) to a safe place
- f) Be prepared to turn off gas, electricity and water supplies

Other members of the community should:

- a) Call 999 if anyone is in immediate danger.
- b) Protect themselves and their family; help others in a safe manner
- c) Put flood protection in place (if applicable)
- d) Move pets vehicles, food and valuables (including important documents) to a safe place
- e) Be prepared to turn off gas, electricity and water supplies
- f) Make sure they have everything they need to put their Emergency Plans into action
- g) Put mobile phone(s) on to charge
- h) Alert their neighbours, particularly the elderly/vulnerable
- i) Watch water levels in ditches and streams, where relevant
- j) Stay tuned to TV/ local radio and check social media, if used.

Red Warning of severe rainfall – Take Action

Flood Wardens and community members:

- a) Turn off gas, electricity and water supplies, if necessary and safe to do so
- b) Co-operate with emergency services and local authorities
- c) Be prepared to evacuate, if need be
- d) Try to keep calm, and to reassure others, especially children.

ii) Eyes & Ears - Trigger Points

Keep a close eye on the agreed trigger points and pass on all pertinent information to the CFG contact. We need to minimise calls as things might be getting interesting right down the dale, but all relevant and important information needs to be passed on.

iii) Liaising with the CFG

As well as you sharing local intelligence with the CFG, in turn the CFG will do its best to keep all area wardens updated with any pertinent information regarding the ongoing situation.

2) Prioritise your own safety

So... if the indicators suggest that we may have a potential flood on our hands, then make sure that you are familiar with your own personal emergency plan aimed at minimising risk to your own home, your family, your pets (etc). Once you are satisfied that you have done all you can for yourself, then you can move on to your area community...

3) Buddy System

As best you can, make sure that this is working and that no vulnerable people have been 'missed out'. If any of the buddies are away or are unable to fulfil their role for other reasons, then try to find somebody to fill the gap.

4) Cascade System

It is important to keep your area community informed, but we should be very careful not to cause unnecessary worry. This is why **liaising with the CFG contact is important** before sending out any warning messages via the cascade system.

5) Equipment Stores

If it is safe and relevant to do so, check your area store and make sure it is accessible and that the equipment is in working condition. If periodic checks have been done then all should be well!

6) Refuge Centres and escape routes

Keep in mind where the nearest refuge centre is and assess the conditions to evaluate what the best route to the centre would be for your area community.

7) Communications and grab bags

- Wardens should make sure that their personal comms are in order – charging mobile phones up, making sure they have a non-electricity dependent phone at hand, charging up walkie-talkies if we supply them (decision TBD).
- Wardens should make sure they are familiar with the emergency communication system – where the satellite phones are located and how people can go about using them. They should also have their contact/troubleshooting guide with their grab bags ready to use.
- A Grab Bag check and reminder system will be implemented

C. EMERGENCY WARDEN KEY ROLES DURING A FLOOD

IMPORTANT SAFETY WARNING

Wardens, always prioritise your own safety!

Never place yourselves in positions where your own personal safety is at risk!

In particular:

- Emergency Wardens must **never enter deep fast flowing water**, and should always call the emergency services to deal with such situations. This means setting aside the very natural impulse to try and help someone in difficulty.
- Emergency Wardens should not try to move huge objects, climb where it is dangerous, or put themselves in any avoidable risk.
- Emergency Wardens must not use any equipment that they have not been trained and authorised to use.
- Heed emergency services advice at all times.
- Follow your community's agreed plan covering flood events.
- Do not try to deal with argumentative or aggressive people yourself!*

***A note about dealing with the public**

When flood water is affecting their homes or businesses it is understandable that people can become frightened, but sometimes individuals may become irrational or even angry. Flood wardens should always approach people in a civil, polite manner, clearly explaining their role and how they can help. If people should become aggressive in any way, the Warden should leave them alone and not attempt to help further, unless approached and asked specifically. If the person requires emergency assistance, the Warden should contact the emergency services.

1) Prioritise your own safety

Make sure you're safe and, if necessary, implement your own emergency safeguarding plans to protect yourself, your home, your family, your pets etc Then, once your own safety has been ensured...

2) Use the 'Troubleshooting Guide'

With your help we will develop this guide to help you make decisions during an event.

3) Assisting the Community

- Note: Wardens must always bear in mind that their role is to assist the community: if the emergency services are at the scene, tell them what they need to know and what your role is, and let them proceed unhindered.
- Be ready to guide your area community if necessary, letting them know about refuge centres, emergency communications, reassuring them if you can etc
- Call the Emergency Services or the CFG depending on the severity of the situation

4) Buddy System

Make sure the 'Buddy System' is working and that none of the people who are buddied up to vulnerable individuals are away or unable to help for other reasons. If there is a problem and a vulnerable person is left buddy-less then try to get a stand-in buddy to keep an eye on them.

5) Cascade System

Having liaised with the CFG, use the Cascade System (or other practical means if easier and as effective) to keep your area community updated with information.

6) Eyes and Ears

Keep a close eye on events and pass on any pertinent information you've gathered to the CFG. We need to minimise calls as things might be getting interesting right down the dale, but all relevant and important information should be passed on.

7) Gather intel to help with future events

Collect flood event information, including photographs, maps and levels, provided you can do so safely.

D. EMERGENCY WARDEN KEY ROLES AFTER A FLOOD

1) Prioritise your own situation

You can only start helping others once you have sorted out your own situation, that's your absolute priority.

2) Assisting the Community

- Make sure that everybody is OK – check in with your buddies, listen to your area community and report any problems either to the Emergency Services or the CFG depending on the urgency.
- Use the Cascade System to disseminate any information that the CFG needs to put out.

3) Eyes and Ears

Continue to monitor your area and report any problems with the water courses or structural problems to the relevant contact (emergency services; EA; CFG etc). Remember, just because we've flooded once does not mean it won't happen again soon – just like it did in Glenridding in December 2015. We need to get the water running efficiently as soon as possible after an event, so keep an eye out WITHOUT putting yourself in any danger.

4) Clearing Up

- Once the water level has gone down, the community can begin to clear up the damage done by the flood. Physical tidying up is NOT part of the Warden's remit, but the CFG might ask the wardens to help coordinate efforts in their own area or elsewhere.

- NOTE: Bear in mind that where residents will be making insurance claims, it may be necessary for loss adjusters to visit prior to removal of damaged belongings. In this case, residents should not be encouraged to throw away items such as damaged food from fridges/freezers until their insurance company has authorised this, in case this affects their claim. A good source of information on recovering from flooding, including useful tips on dealing with insurance claims is available here: http://www.knowyourfloodrisk.co.uk/sites/default/files/FloodGuide_ForHomeowners.pdf
- Residents and business owners should also be very wary of anyone driving around a flooded area making direct offers of work, as they could be 'rogue traders'. The property owner should always ask for references and check these carefully.

5) Equipment

Check your grab bag, tell the equipment store contact what you used, and inform the flood group what needs replacing.

6) Remain Vigilant

The initial flood is over, but we need to stay alert and remain vigilant. Refer back to the 'BEFORE A FLOOD' section and start preparing again!