

Guidance to support engagement with flood risk communities.

Flood Wardens Information Note

A Flood Warden Scheme can provide vital link between the community and responsible authorities. They can raise awareness of those residents at-risk of flooding and help them prepare not only themselves but their property against flooding. Flood Wardens can help a community to be prepared for flooding and can bring the community together during difficult times. Flood Wardens can also help to protect life and reduce the potential damage to property from flooding. However, the exact role of a Flood Warden in any given community will be agreed between the community and the local authority/resilience partnership.

Flood Wardens are the eyes and ears of the community and often called '*flood watchers*'. Whether they are out walking their dog or just walking to the shop they can keep an eye out for blocked drains and culverts, tree branches in rivers, and anything else that may cause a flood risk and report them to the appropriate land, property owners or relevant responsible authority.

Flood Warden plays a crucial role in helping to prepare the community for the risk of flooding. They provide a valued, voluntary service before, during and after a potential flood event. Their local knowledge can assist in minimising the impact of flooding should it occur, and they may act as the key points of contact between the local authority, emergency services and the community in the event of a flood.

The Flood Warden Role Prior To A Flood:

- The role of a flood warden depends on the specific requirements of your Community flood, resilience or emergency plan and the flooding issues found within your community.
- A warden's number one priority is to be safe and identify the properties of potentially vulnerable residents as well as other flooding problems associated with your community.
- A flood warden should be able to give advice and information to those at risk during drier periods, as well as provide appropriate support during a flood event.

Good Practice Point:

Prior training of flood wardens is recommended good practice to ensure there is clarity on the roles and responsibilities of all partners.

The Flood Warden Role During A Flood:

Flood Wardens provide a vital communications link between responsible authorities and local residents, businesses and property owners in the event of a potential flood event. When deemed appropriate, the Wardens may be asked by the Council to alert all residents, businesses and property owners in their designated Flood Zone.

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On-Going Support:

The [Scottish Flood Forum](#) can provide training on creating a flood warden scheme, working with the local authority and the community; this ensures that all partners are clear on the agreed roles and duties of the wardens, and the agreed communication channels for that particular scheme.

Key Points:

When volunteers are undertaking flood warden duties, they should remember to carry Flood Warden identification and a copy of any emergency plan.

In an ideal world the house of a flood warden is not vulnerable to flooding. This is because a flood warden must be readily available to co-ordinate the response to flooding of a community and cannot easily do so if they are trying to prevent their own property from flooding.

Flood wardens who have their own flood risks to contend with must ensure they are prepared for any flood risks so they can implement their own flood plan before helping others.

Good Practice Point:

Flood warden schemes can give those directly impacted by flooding a passionate cause to engage with flood risk management and emergency planning.

The personal safety of flood wardens is of paramount importance. Flood wardens are not part of the paid emergency services and must NOT place themselves in danger in any way. The emergency services or incident officer's advice must always be heeded.

Flood wardens may face potentially difficult situations. This applies to dealing with someone who, in some way, hinders the flood response efforts. This could be through not moving a car when asked to do so or generally being aggressive and uncooperative during the flood relief effort. Flood wardens should not try to deal with this situation but contact the relevant authorities that will take the appropriate action.

Flood wardens are there to assist the community, not to carry out the job of the emergency services. 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.

Following a flood event, it is important that Flood Wardens stay in a state of readiness until the all clear has been received from the Emergency Services and the responsible authority.

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This is because flooding could reoccur quite quickly, especially if the flooding is due to inclement weather and Flood Wardens will be asked to participate in post flooding event debrief sessions.

Good Practice Point:

After a flooding incident it's important that responsible authorities consider how they are going to involve and engage Flood Wardens in the debrief process to plan future actions to improve response.

It is important Flood Wardens pass relevant information back to the responsible authorities about the extent of the flooding in their zone. This enables more accurate modelling and forecasting of future flood events and can contribute to flood risk management actions.

Any particular problems encountered by residents, businesses and property owners during the flood event can also be passed on to the responsible authorities via the Flood Wardens to improve response operations in future events.

Important Note:

This information note has been provided by the Scottish Flood Forum to indicate how Flood Wardens can be utilised to assist engagement and play a part in flood risk management. It should be recognised that it cannot cover the diversity of situations that may be faced when dealing with flooding. Therefore, it is essential that when setting up any scheme, specific roles and duties are agreed between the local authority and the Flood Wardens so professional judgment can be applied.

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