



### PREPARING YOUR BUSINESS FOR FLOODING

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There are occasions when floods can be predicted. For example, tide tables can be used in conjunction with the predicted weather conditions to indicate when coastal areas might be prone to flooding. However, more often than not, floods occur without warning; rivers, lakes or the sea can overrun defences and surge through the surrounding areas.

The fickle nature of the UK weather only exacerbates the unpredictability of floods, and with so many areas susceptible to flooding, one unexpected severe storm can trigger widespread, damaging flooding. In England and Wales alone, more than five million properties (as many as 1 in 6) are at risk of flooding. In Scotland 1 in 14 properties are at risk and in Northern Ireland the figure is 1 in 20. With these odds, there is a good chance that one of these properties at risk belongs to you.

Not preparing your property for possible flooding could sink your business. Stay afloat with solid preparation and a comprehensive flood plan.

## PREPARING FOR FLOODS

It is impossible to completely floodproof your property, but thorough preparation can lower the risk of damage and reduce interruptions to your business.

Begin your preparation by consulting your area's flood risk map. The Environment Agency (EA) publishes maps for England, Wales and Scotland, which can be accessed by [clicking here](#). The EA makes three types of maps, each addressing a different flooding hazard: surface water, reservoirs, and rivers and the sea. There are separate flood risk maps for Northern Ireland; [click here](#) to access these.

For areas of high flood risk, the EA offers Floodline Warnings Direct, a free service that provides flood warnings via telephone, mobile, email, SMS text messaging and fax. [Sign up here](#).

Once you have assessed your risk, it is time to prepare your business accordingly. Buy and install products in advance that fortify your property against water.

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Consider the following precautions against flooding when building or carrying out refurbishment:

- Purchase floor boards for your doors that you can install when flooding is imminent
- Seal floors to prevent water seeping up through the ground
- Fit non-return valves to drains and both inlet and outlet water pipes
- Install high shelving where you can store items when flooding is imminent
- Raise electrical sockets, fuse boxes and wiring at least 1.5 metres above the floor
- Keep a pump in the basement or lowest level to remove flood water

In tandem with your business's physical flood prevention measures, adopt the organisational precautions listed below for a more comprehensive flood preparation:

- Compile a list of useful telephone numbers, including Floodline, your local authority and your insurer
- Learn how to shut off your gas, electricity and water
- Develop a flood contingency plan with suppliers and clients
- Designate an emergency flood contact
- Train your employees in correct flood safety procedures, and establish a safe meeting place in case you need to evacuate
- Stockpile useful materials like plastic sheeting, plywood, sandbags, nails, hammers and shovels

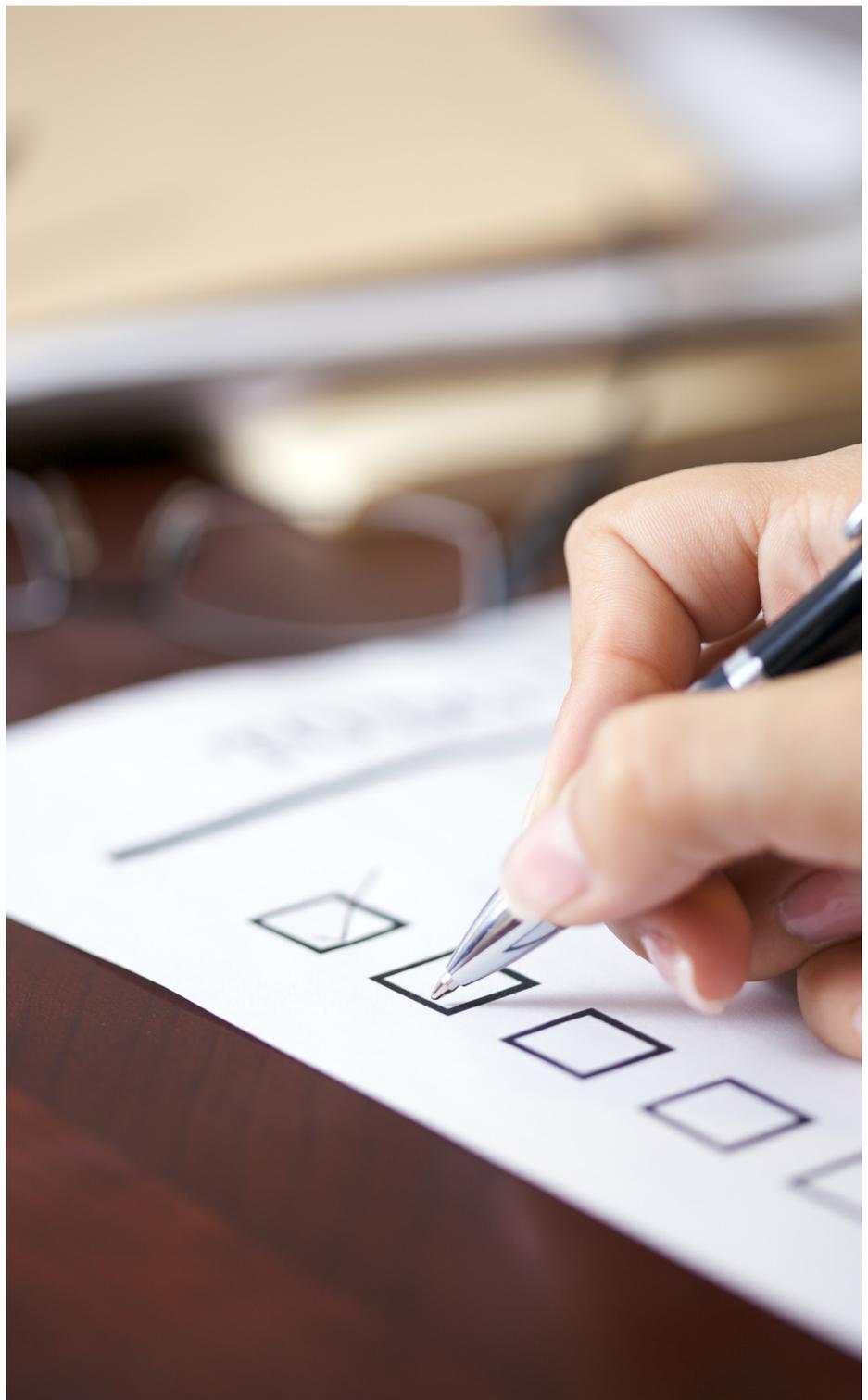


# CREATING A FLOOD PLAN

A flood plan is a written document outlining how your business will respond to a flood. Store your business's flood plan in an easily accessible location; everyone should know where it is at all times. All flood plans should include the following:

- A list of important contact information, including Floodline (0345 988 1188) and any additional flood warning systems, building services, suppliers and evacuation contacts
- A map showing locations of supplies, protective materials and shut-off points
- An outline of basic strategies for protecting property, ensuring health and safety, minimising business disruption and facilitating recovery
- Procedural checklists for staff to use during a flood

Review and update your plan annually. Flood risks and procedures can change, so make sure your business is always prepared.



To find out more about how working with Miles Smith can benefit you, please email Ian Cook, Sales & Development Director - [icook@milesmith.co.uk](mailto:icook@milesmith.co.uk) at Miles Smith or call him on 020 7977 4800.

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