



# St. Helens Council

---

## **Sandbag Policy**

-----

Policy to be used in conjunction with the Lead Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (LFRMS) and with the Well-Managed Highway Infrastructure - A Code of Practice

-----

**May 2019  
Version 1**

---

## Contents:

<b>1</b>	<b>Responsibility</b> .....	<b>3</b>
1.1	Council Responsibility .....	3
1.2	Property Owners Responsibilities.....	3
<b>2</b>	<b>Procedures</b> .....	<b>4</b>
2.1	Provision of Sandbags .....	4
2.2	Primary Prioritisations for Allocation: .....	4
2.3	Secondary Prioritisations for Allocation .....	4
2.4	Control of Sandbag Provision.....	4
2.5	Sandbag Stocks .....	4
2.6	Delivery of Sandbags .....	5
2.7	Collection/Removal of Sandbags .....	5

# 1 Responsibility

## 1.1 Council Responsibility

1.1.1 The Council has no legal duty to provide sandbags to the community unless the flooding is due to flooding from the Highway or other Council owned land. Although the Council have no legal responsibility to provide assistance to residents during times of flooding, where possible, the Council will provide sandbags and other equipment to protect people or property within areas being affected by flooding. However, in times of emergency the Council will be trying to protect the public at large and may not be able to assist a large number of individual homeowners who find their properties threatened.

1.1.2 St.Helens Council has considered the issues in relation to flooding and the impact it can have on the communities affected. As a result, sandbags may be provided on condition that the situation fits the criteria in this policy. St.Helens Council **will not**;

- Provide sandbags for properties not at imminent risk of flooding;
- Provide sandbags to protect gardens;
- Provide sandbags for protecting outbuildings (including garages, whether integral or external);
- Provide sandbags for protecting non-habitable parts of any private dwelling;
- Provide sandbags for protecting commercial premises unless it is deemed to be a community facility e.g. hospitals, police and fire stations, residential care homes etc.;
- Provide sandbags to protect critical infrastructure (e.g. water, gas, electric infrastructure) as this is the responsibility of the property owner.

1.1.3 St.Helens Council will assist in the protection of critical infrastructure if the resources of the company are overwhelmed causing an impact on any of the priorities outlined in the allocation protocol. In these cases the council will re-claim the cost of this provision from the company following the incident.

- Provide sandbags as a precautionary measure unless there is a real risk of internal flooding within the next 2 hours;
- Guarantee the supply of sandbags to any premises. Residents are responsible to make their own arrangements before flooding occurs;
- Guarantee the effectiveness or adequacy of supply of sandbag products provided by the Authority;
- Accept responsibility for placement of sandbags, except at locations where the infirmity or disability of the sole occupant is an issue where known.

## 1.2 Property Owners Responsibilities

1.2.1 The responsibility for flood protection of property is the sole responsibility of the property owners. As a result all such owners should assess the risk of flooding to their property and take the necessary precautions to protect their own property which may include installing physical flood protection barriers and joining the Environment Agency Flood Warning System. Where it is safe householders should move valuable possessions and important documents upstairs and consider moving vehicles to higher ground.

## 2 Procedures

### 2.1 Provision of Sandbags

2.1.1 Sandbags will only be deployed having regard to the order of the following priorities provided stocks are available:

### 2.2 Primary Prioritisations for Allocation:

- To prevent loss of life or serious injury.
- To maintain access for emergency services.
- To assist in the protection of vital facilities within the community e.g. hospitals, police and fire stations, residential care homes etc.
- To protect Warrington Borough Council business property that are required for the delivery of essential services.
- To protect key transport and main access routes.

### 2.3 Secondary Prioritisations for Allocation

- To reinforce flood defences preventing the flooding of multiple properties.
- If a privately owned property (not including a garage, garden shed etc.) is at imminent risk of flooding i.e. within the next 2 hours and that the 'fabric' of a building is at risk as a result.
- Mutual aid to other responding agencies.

### 2.4 Control of Sandbag Provision

2.4.1 In a localised minor/major flooding event the decision to deploy sandbags may be taken separately outside the provision of sandbags criteria as above. In this case the decision will be made at the discretion of the Public Realm Division.

2.4.2 In the case of an Emergency flood event the decision would be taken by the Borough Emergency Co-ordinator with advice provided by the Highways Co-ordinator.

2.4.3 Where it is decided to supply sandbags then the number of sandbags delivered to any property will be based on the following: Domestic Properties in imminent risk of internal flooding:

- 6 per door
- 3 per airbrick
- Up to a maximum of 18

### 2.5 Sandbag Stocks

2.5.1 In order to facilitate the council response 6,000 sandbags are kept in stock.

2.5.2 The Council does not maintain large stockpiles of sandbags for the protection of private residences for the following reasons:

- Sandbags have a limited shelf life;
- Sandbags provide limited protection in the event of a flood and often their correct placement is critical;
- Sandbags are most effective when placed prior to a flood event. In most cases it will not be possible to arrange transportation and placement of sandbags to prevent flood damage. This is due to the limited time available between warnings and the onset of flooding (in some areas no warning will be available);
- Cost of storage.

## **2.6 Delivery of Sandbags**

2.6.1 The Council Highways Contractor who provides this service has a 2 hour response time in an emergency situation. That is to say that it will take 2 hours from the initial call to the contractor to the delivery being made on site subject to the availability of labour, equipment and dependent on access due to the flooding.

2.6.2 The Council only has a small stock of sandbags, staff and vehicles that may be deployed to deliver them. Delivery may not be possible to all areas which are flooding. Council resources may be deployed elsewhere in the larger geographical area dependent upon the emergency situation. Priority help will be given to vulnerable people where these are known.

## **2.7 Collection/Removal of Sandbags**

2.7.1 Due to the risk of contamination, sandbags will be collected and disposed of by the council following a flood event free of charge unless a specific request is made to retain them.

Page Blank

Finished Document