

Press release: Environment Agency warns of flood risk in Devon and Cornwall

The Environment Agency is urging people to remain vigilant to potential flooding as a low pressure coastal storm is forecast to hit the south coasts of Cornwall and Devon on Saturday.

Current forecasts show a low pressure storm on Saturday 21 October which, combined with close-to-spring tides, means flood warnings are likely to be issued along the south coasts of Cornwall and Devon and will require the routine closure of flood gates.

On Thursday 19 October the Environment Agency will be deploying temporary flood barriers in Fowey. The temporary barriers are designed to give Fowey better protection from potential coastal flooding. This type of flood defence has been used to prevent flooding from rivers for a number of years but this is the first time they have been used on the Cornish coast.

Environment Agency teams have been mobilised across the area to check on flood defences, clear any river blockages and closely monitor river levels. These teams have been working around the clock to reduce the risk of flooding, and will be out in force over the weekend.

Kevin Ward of the Environment Agency said:

We urge residents to take care on the coast this weekend. Strong winds pose a risk of waves overtopping defences and we advise not to stop and admire the waves or take 'storm selfies'.

Also, avoid exposed coastal areas and do not walk or drive through flood water, which can be dirty and contain hidden debris. Just 30cm of flowing water can move a car and driving through water can also create waves.

The Environment Agency continue to monitor the situation across Devon and Cornwall and will review their plans as the forecasts are updated.

Residents and businesses are encouraged to sign up to [flood warnings on the Environment Agency website](#). People can also call Floodline on 0345 988 1188. Once registered, if a flood warning is issued, they will receive an automatic message by telephone, SMS text message, email and/or fax.

Find out [how to prepare for flooding and if your home is at risk](#).

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Press release: £15billion road upgrade plan updated to minimise congestion

Plans for twenty-six road upgrades have been revised to reduce roadworks taking place in the same area of the network or on popular journey routes at the same time. This will mean less congestion for motorists as Highways England embarks on the biggest road upgrade plan for a generation.

The Supplementary Delivery Plan published today will see Highways England rescheduling its programme for the schemes between three and 24 months – meaning a number of schemes will be completed earlier than planned. All are still set for delivery as part of the Government's first road investment strategy.

Jim O'Sullivan, Highways England Chief Executive said:

Our update today is a sensible and responsible way to deliver major national investment in road infrastructure. It will keep our roads moving, deliver a lasting legacy for the country and ensure best value for money for the taxpayer.

Now, more than two years into delivery of a £15 billion Government investment in motorways and major A roads, Highways England has already completed 18 major schemes, adding more than 190 lane miles of much-needed capacity to the nation's roads.

The 10 schemes being brought forward are:

- A19 Testos
- A19 Downhill Lane
- M56 junctions 6-8 smart motorway
- M6 junctions 21a – 26 smart motorway
- M6 junction 22 upgrade
- A500 Etruria
- M6 junction 10
- M4 Heathrow Slips
- A47 Acle Straight -small scale improvement
- A47 and A12 junction enhancement

The 16 schemes being re-scheduled to smooth the timing and frequency of roadworks are:

- A5 Dodwells to Longshoot widening
- M3 junction 9 improvement
- A31 Ringwood

- M27 junctions 4-11
- A47 North Tuddenham to Easton
- A47 Blofield to North Burlingham dualling
- M25 junction 25 improvement
- M25 junction 28 improvement
- A1 Birtley to Coal House
- M60 junctions 24-27 and junction 1-4 smart motorway
- A47/A11 Thickthorn
- A47 Wansford to Sutton
- A47 Guyhirn Junction
- A12 Chelmsford to A120 widening
- M25 junction 10/A3 Wisley interchange
- M25 junctions 10-16

Highways England is obliged to ensure that investment in the road network delivers good value for money. Following a full review the Road Investment Strategy (RIS) programme some schemes require further development to achieve an acceptable return on investment. As a result, in addition to the 26 schemes above, 6 schemes have been paused for further review and consideration as part of future RIS planning process.

These schemes are:

- A1 & A19 Technology enhancements
- M11 junctions 8 to 14 technology upgrade
- A12 whole-route technology upgrade
- M53 junctions 5-11 smart motorway
- A14 Junction 10a
- M62/ M606 Chain Bar

Two further schemes required rework to achieve value for money; however, changes in local development plans mean that these schemes can be progressed, albeit in the early stages of Road Period 2. These are:

- M5 Bridgwater junction improvements
- A50 Utttoxeter Project B growth corridor project

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

Press release: New guidance to help charities comply with financial sanctions

New [guidance](#) has today been published by the Office of Financial Sanctions Implementation (OFSI) to help ensure compliance with financial sanctions which are designed to support UK foreign policy and national security.

OFSI works closely with charities, regulators and banks to understand common challenges faced by those operating in some of the most hostile environments.

The move was prompted by requests, notably from smaller charities, asking for clearer information on issues affecting the sector so they could ensure they complied.

Rena Lalgie, Head of OFSI, said:

We realise that charities often operate in challenging environments. This practical guidance is an important step in our efforts to raise awareness of financial sanctions and help charities and NGOs better understand their responsibilities.

We look forward to continuing to work with the Charity Commission in England and Wales, and its equivalents in Scotland and Northern Ireland, to further the UK's sanctions and humanitarian aid policies.

Michelle Russell, Director of Investigations, Monitoring and Enforcement at The Charity Commission, said:

We have listened to feedback from our outreach work with charities operating internationally. Some charities weren't aware that it is illegal to receive money, goods or economic resources from – or send these to – an individual or organisation subject to financial sanctions unless they have a licence or an exemption applies. Others found it challenging to navigate the rules about this. We're pleased to have worked with OFSI on the guidance to address this knowledge gap.

We will continue to work proactively and collaboratively with international charities and other authorities to ensure that laws designed to restrict access to finances to terrorists and others are complied with, without impacting the important, often life-saving, work of many charities in high-risk areas around the world.

Further information

This guidance helps clarify what activity may be permitted under an OFSI licence and how to apply. It also promotes various sources of information and advice available to charities and NGOs, including OFSI's email and telephone enquiry service and the Charity Commission's toolkit for charities and NGOs.

The new guidance document is available on [OFSI's guidance page](#).

[Press release: Have your say on Alney Island flood defence scheme](#)

The event, which will be held at Riverside Sports Club, St Oswald's Road, Gloucester, GL1 2TF on Monday 30 October from 2pm until 7pm. Attendees can meet the Environment Agency's project team who will be on hand to provide information about the scheme, which will benefit more than 70 properties in the area with an increased level of protection.

Due to the location of Alney Island, the area is at risk from both fluvial and tidal flooding from the River Severn and the Environment Agency has been working closely with consultants, partners and the community on a range of technical options, including raising the existing defence or constructing a new defence. The proposed plans have been created using the latest two-dimensional modelling technique capture more accurate detail of the area.

At the drop in event, members of the local community and other interested parties, will be able to view and discuss the current options.

The area was severely flooded in 2007 following record breaking rainfall across the area, leading the Environment Agency to investigate whether further protection measures could be possible.

Craig Barker, Project Manager at the Environment Agency said:

We have worked closely with our consultants and partners to develop potential options. We are looking forward to hearing what residents and businesses have to say about the proposals at the event on 30 October.

For further information about how to prepare for flooding, sign up for flood warnings and to find out if your home is at risk please visit <https://www.gov.uk/prepare-for-a-flood>