

Heavy rain increases South East flood-risk

Before and after picture shows blockage on the River Stour near Ashford cleared by Environment Agency field teams

The Environment Agency is warning communities that persistent heavy rain could lead to an increased risk of flooding across South East England over the next few days.

The forecast heavy rain could cause surface water flooding in local communities, and see a rise in river levels, and travel disruption as roads and rail lines may be affected.

At 4.30pm today, Friday, there were 53 alerts across the South East, where flooding is possible, and one warning, at Barcombe Mills in East Sussex, which mean flooding is expected. With further rainfall forecast, this figure is likely to go up.

Maria Herlihy, duty manager for the Environment Agency, said:

“Heavy downpours are expected across the South East on Friday night and into the weekend, which could lead to surface water flooding and significant travel disruption.

“Current forecasts indicate a heightened risk of flooding in parts of Surrey, Kent, Sussex and Hampshire. The Environment Agency is making preparations to operate flood defences, flood storage reservoirs and to issue flood warnings and advice and to those at risk ahead of the incoming weather.

“Our teams have been out on the ground checking flood defences, clearing debris from rivers, and will continue to support other agencies to reduce the impacts of the heavy rain. We will issue flood alerts and warnings where necessary.

“We urge the public to prepare to take action when at risk of flooding, even if a temporary barrier is in place. There are a number of things you can do to prepare for flooding to keep yourself and your family safe. Find out if your home is at risk, sign-up for flood warnings and be ready to take action. For more information, visit www.gov.uk/flood or call Floodline on 0345 988 1188.

“People should remain vigilant, check their flood-risk and plan to stay safe. We urge people to stay away from swollen rivers and not to walk or drive through flood water as just 30cm/12ins of flowing water is enough to move your car.”

People on Twitter can follow updates on flood-risk on the Environment Agency’s South East and national accounts, @EnvAgencySE and @EnvAgency.

All media enquiries 0800 141 2743 E-mail us at communications_se@environment-agency.gov.uk Follow us on Twitter at @EnvAgencySE

Notes to editors: Flood alerts indicate that people should be aware. Flood warnings mean that flooding is expected and people should take action to stay safe. A severe flood warning means that there is a risk to life – people should take immediate action and follow the advice of the emergency services.