

# **Press release: Public urged not to take dangerous risks as Storm Diana hits Britain**

Fire and Rescue Services in England attended around 15,000 flood-related incidents last year, and rescued or evacuated around 1,000 people from flood waters. On average around 170 people a year are rescued from inside or on top of a vehicle surrounded by water. Driving through flood water is the number one cause of death during flooding, with storm selfies and wave watching also recorded as causes of death.

As winter hits, the Environment Agency is encouraging people to protect themselves in a flood by with the [‘Prepare Act Survive’ plan](#) – by checking flood warnings, taking practical actions such as moving valuable possessions to safety, and not taking dangerous risks.

In September, [dramatic footage](#) was posted online of a woman trapped in her car on a flooded road in Yorkshire. In a heroic rescue, a passer-by was able to smash her car window and pull her from the vehicle to safety moments before the car became submerged.

But it’s not only drivers that could be at risk as a result of more extreme weather. Serah Cullinan-Stooks’ family home was flooded in West Yorkshire during the Boxing Day floods in 2015, it took a year to repair the damage that was done to the family’s Georgian house with floodwaters having risen to nine feet into their home.

## **The mother-of-three said:**

Until it has happened to you, no one can have any idea of the destruction an event like that can cause or the huge impact on your life. It was really tough on our children, they were very distressed by it all.

This week, the government published [new climate change projections](#) which show that sea levels are set to rise over this century and more frequent, extreme weather requires urgent action. This means that knowing your flood risk and understanding what action to take in a flood is more important than ever.

## **Sir James Bevan, Chief Executive of the Environment Agency, said:**

Knowing what to do in a flood could save your life and keep the people that you care about safe. Taking some simple steps to prepare in advance could prevent thousands of pounds of damage to your home and your possessions.

We urge people, wherever they live, to look at the Prepare Act Survive plan and find out how to protect themselves and their homes.

**Dawn Whittaker, NFCC Water Safety and Drowning Prevention Lead said:**

Unfortunately fire and rescue services are often called to incidents where people have just underestimated the risks posed by flood water.

Floods can quickly turn into life-threatening situations so NFCC ask that people listen to advice and avoid entering flood water whether on foot or in a vehicle.

The Environment Agency is spending more than £2.6billion to build flood schemes around the country which will better protect 300,000 homes by 2021. This winter, the EA is prepared to take action wherever it is needed, with an arsenal of kit which includes 40km of flood barriers and 250 high volume pumps which are ready to be moved to communities that need them in a flood whilst also working more closely with partners such as the Fire & Rescue Service.

To find out more about what to do in a flood visit [what to do in a flood](#) on Gov.uk.