

Oxfordshire County Council

Sandbag Policy and Advice note

Policy

Sandbags will only be provided in response to emergency situations, where flooding from the public highway is occurring. Oxfordshire County Council will not provide sandbags where flooding from rivers or ground water is occurring.

Advice Note

Sandbags

If your property is in imminent danger of flooding, please telephone 0345 310 1111

If you require sandbags as a precautionary measure, you will need to make your own arrangements to purchase them from local suppliers. You cannot collect sandbags from any of our depots.

Oxfordshire County Council has in place an Emergency Management Plan and will respond to flooding events. We do not have a statutory duty to provide sandbags, but experience shows that the community expects the council to help if flooding is imminent. It is important that we handle enquiries sympathetically but in accordance with the following principles:

- We will maintain a stock of sandbags at depots across Oxfordshire with a minimum of 1500 bags at each storage location.
- We will supply sandbags free of charge on a “needs” basis in response to flooding emergencies.
- We will supply sandbags where flooding from the public highway is occurring, however, we will not provide sandbags where flooding from rivers or ground water is occurring.
- We will not supply sandbags in advance based on forecasts.
- We will work with Town and Parish Councils with regard to the development of community emergency plan.
- If requests for supply or delivery are received during an emergency situation, we will consider them and prioritise them sympathetically on a case-by-case basis according to apparent vulnerability. Timescales for delivery will be dependent on the numbers and locations of enquiries.
- We will encourage property owners in known flood areas to adopt a “self-help” approach and prepare in advance and respond to forecasts or flood warnings. We will encourage people making enquiries for sandbags at these stages to look to local suppliers such as builder’s merchants where they can purchase them or possibly have them delivered. This will help to preserve our stocks for emergency response.

- The Environment Agency promotes self-help schemes, and we will refer people to their website www.environment-agency.gov.uk
- For foul water flooding (i.e. flooding from sewers), please contact Thames Water <https://www.thameswater.co.uk/help/emergencies/flooding>
- Once issued to householders, the disposal of contaminated sandbags following a flooding event will not be the responsibility of Oxfordshire County Council. Information can be provided on the most appropriate method of disposal but once issued the sandbags become the property of the occupier or organisation. We suggest you visit your local District Council website to further advise on disposal of used sandbags:

<https://www.cherwell.gov.uk>

<https://www.southoxon.gov.uk/>

<https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/>

<https://www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/>

Notes:

1. We have limited supplies of sandbags, but these can disappear quite quickly when storms do occur
2. Builders Merchants / sandbag supplier details for the various areas - see Builders Merchants in yellow pages or carry out a search on the internet
3. Visit National Flood Forum for helpful advice www.floodforum.org.uk and supplier information from www.bluepages.org.uk
4. The Environment Agency website is www.environment-agency.gov.uk
5. For further information please visit Oxfordshire County Council Flood Toolkit Website <https://www.oxfordshirefloodtoolkit.com/>