





Surface Water Flooding

Overview

-  Surface water flooding occurs when rainwater is unable to drain away through normal drainage systems in the built environment, or soak into the ground in more rural areas.
-  This water accumulates on or flows over the surface and can cause flooding.
-  During autumn fallen leaves and tree debris can exacerbate surface water flooding.
-  Flooding from surface water is not tied geographically to existing bodies of water, unlike flooding from rivers or the sea.

Surface Water Flooding in the UK

Surface water flooding represents a significant hazard in the UK. Around 35,000 properties were affected by surface water during the major floods of 2007 and it is estimated that around 3 million properties are at risk of surface water flooding in England and Wales. Surface water flooding often results from heavy summer showers and thunderstorms where intense downpours can overwhelm local drainage systems, with urban areas particularly at risk. However, surface water flooding can also result from more persistent, though less intense, winter rainfall.

Lead Local Flood Authorities (the unitary authority or county council) are responsible for managing the risk from surface water flooding. They work in partnership with other organisations, including the Environment Agency, SEPA, district councils and water and sewerage companies to manage the local flood risk. The Environment Agency is responsible for taking a strategic overview of the management of surface water flooding in England and supports others through, for instance, the publication of the risk of flooding from surface water maps.

Impacts

Surface water flooding impacts include:

Disruption to transport from flooded roads and railway lines.

Building damage and disruption to critical infrastructure e.g. hospitals from water entering buildings.

Disruption to businesses due to no access from flooded roads and flooded premises.

Disruption to energy and telecommunications from the flooding of power stations and transformers.

Health impacts both direct e.g. drowning and indirect e.g. from disruption to services.

Notable surface water flooding events

20 July 2014 - Canvey Island, flooding due to intense summer downpours.

12 June 2012 - 'Toon monsoon' resulting in flooding across parts of Newcastle and NE England

Summer 2007 - extensive flooding across the UK



More information can be found at: www.naturalhazardspartnership.org/hazards/surface-water-flooding