

## How sandbags work

Traditionally, sandbags have been used to block doorways, drains and other openings into properties as well as to weigh-down manhole covers, garden furniture and to block sink, toilet and bath drains to prevent water backing up.

- They can keep water out for short periods which can be improved by using them in conjunction with plastic sheeting.
- They can filter out some muddy sediment found in flood waters.
- They are cheap and easy to obtain (in dry weather!)

However, sandbags are relatively ineffective when compared to purpose-designed flood protection products.

As a result, we strongly encourage people to use purpose made flood protection products, such as flood boards, non-return valves for plumbing and air brick covers.

## Where can I get them from?

Don't assume that the authorities will provide you with sandbags in a flood emergency.

It is the responsibility of property owners to take appropriate action to protect their property from flooding.

Rossendale Borough Council does not provide sandbags but sandbags may be

obtained from most builders merchants who hold limited stocks such as:

**Fielden Factors**, Warth Road, Waterfoot  
- Tel. 01706 228464

**Valley Building Supplies**, Station Road, Haslingden  
- Tel. 01706 212521

Remember, during a flood crisis demand may exceed supply as people rush to buy them, there may be limited stocks per person or supply routes may get blocked.

Sandbags should last for years if stored properly. Store them off the ground and in a dry place. You can store them out of doors as long as you keep them covered as they will rot after a period of time if damp.



## Protecting your property

Sandbags are of no use if your property is already flooded - concentrate your efforts on protecting yourself, your belongings and moving precious items out of harm's way! Consider all entry points that water could get through, not just doorways, such as airbricks, utility service points, and cable entry points. Use other solutions for entry points where sandbags won't work (such as silicone sealant).

You'll need at least 6 sandbags to keep out 20cm depth of water for a standard door opening

## Placing the bags

- Clear any debris from the area where the bags are to be placed.
- If you can, put a large sheet of heavy-duty plastic between the sandbags and the wall of your house and seal in place with tape.
- Place the bags lengthways, tucking the open end under the filled half of the bag and position it pointing into the direction of water flow.
- Place bags in layers, like a brick wall, make sure that in the next layer each bag overlaps the one below by half.
- Stamp bags firmly into place to eliminate gaps and create a tight seal
- To lay sandbags in a doorway, it may be necessary to empty some of the contents out or shape the sandbags to achieve a good fit without overlapping

You should seal all air brick vents on your property.

- Place a plastic bag over the vent and hold in place with tape.
- Place sandbags against the plastic bag and tread into place to give a good seal.

## Positioning sandbags



## Remember!

Sandbags are cheap but they have disadvantages:

- During an emergency sufficient quantities may be difficult to obtain
- They are time-consuming to lay properly
- They can be difficult to handle, particularly for the elderly or infirm.
- When they come into contact with floodwater they tend to retain contaminants such as sewage.
- Sacking material is biodegradable, and will disintegrate if left in place for long periods of time.

## Telephone Contacts & Information

More general information about preparing for a flood is on our website:  
[www.rossendale.gov.uk](http://www.rossendale.gov.uk)

More information about other flood protection products and services that are available to protect your home is available here:  
[www.bluepages.org.uk](http://www.bluepages.org.uk)

More information on protecting yourself from flooding can be found on the Environment Agency website:  
[www.environment-agency.gov.uk/flooding](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/flooding)

**Tel: 08708 506 506**  
(Mon-Fri 8am-6pm)

**Report flooding via the incident hotline:**  
0800 80 70 60 (24hrs)

**Floodline (flood warnings )**  
**0845 988 1188**

Other formats available on request.  
Tel: 01706 217777 or contact:  
Rossendale Borough Council  
PO BOX 74, Bacup, OL13 0WU

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## The Use of Sandbags in the Event of a Flood



**If you live in a Flood Warning Area, register FREE for Floodline on 0845 988 1188**

**Report flooding on 0800 80 70 60**