

Essex Flood Guide

A guide to non emergency
flooding issues



Introduction

Understanding the various responsibilities related to flooding can be difficult and complicated.

This guide shows you which organisations within Essex are responsible for water and drainage, and who to contact first if you have a problem. If more than one organisation is needed, we'll work together to resolve the issue.

Flooding from surface water, groundwater, rainfall, ditches and small watercourses

**County Council or Unitary Authority
Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA)**

Flooding from main rivers and sea

Environment Agency

Private Landowner

Have a role to:

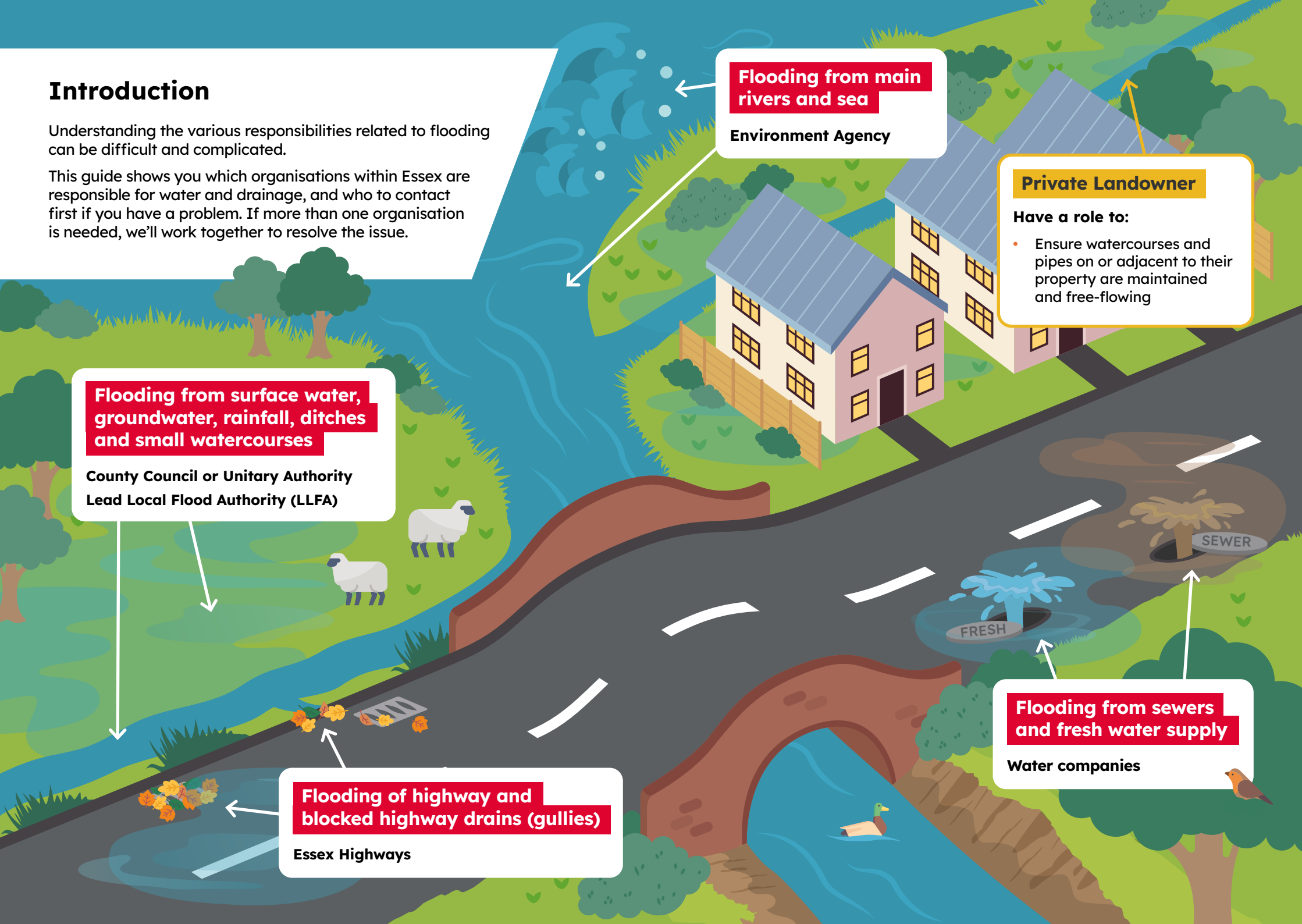
- Ensure watercourses and pipes on or adjacent to their property are maintained and free-flowing

Flooding of highway and blocked highway drains (gullies)

Essex Highways

Flooding from sewers and fresh water supply

Water companies



Private Landowner

Streams and ditches (known as an ordinary watercourse) are an important part of flood risk management, ensuring they are well maintained and flowing correctly helps to reduce the risk of flooding.

If a stream or ditch runs through or alongside your land, you're likely a **riparian owner** – which means you're legally responsible for keeping it clear and flowing. This usually isn't the job of the council or highways authority unless the watercourse is on their land or designated under their ownership.

Where the watercourse borders multiple properties, responsibility for maintenance is shared between landowners. This therefore involves multiple **riparian owners**, each corresponding to their respective landholdings.

Making Changes to a Stream or Ditch?

Thinking of altering a stream or ditch? You'll need to get permission from the LLFA first, this is through the application for an 'Ordinary Watercourse Consent'. If work is done without consent or a watercourse isn't being looked after properly, the LLFA can act under the Land Drainage Act 1991.



[What are your legal obligations as a Riparian Owner?](#)

Flooding from rainfall, groundwater and watercourses

The County Council / Unitary Authority is known as the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) and they have a role in overseeing the management of flooding from:

- rainfall or surface water
- groundwater
- piped or open smaller streams and ditches (known as ordinary watercourses)

Reporting a Flood?

This can be done using the online reporting tool



You might also be eligible for a **Property Flood Resilience grant** which aims to help residents whose properties are at risk of flooding by equipping their homes against flooding and flood damage with measures such as flood barriers, puddle pump or air brick covers.



Flooding from highway and impassable roads

Essex Highways is responsible for maintaining roads and pavements in Essex (excluding Southend and Thurrock).

It operates a routine maintenance programme for cleaning drains, alongside reactive maintenance to resolve issues such as drainage blockages and other drainage issues that are reported.

If Essex Highways receive a report of an impassable road due to flooding, the road will be assessed, and if deemed necessary the road will be closed.

Residents can use Essex Highways online reporting tool to report and track issues with road drainage such as blocked gullies.

Essex Highways only deals with surface water drainage on the roads and pavements on the publicly maintainable highway.

Southend-on-Sea City Council and Thurrock Council have their own highways departments. Any highways concerns in these areas should be reported to them.



Flooding from main rivers, reservoirs, estuaries and sea

The Environment Agency manages flood risks from main rivers, reservoirs, estuaries, and the sea. They also maintain main rivers and their flood defences.

Maintenance can include:

- grass cutting and weed control
- removing obstructions from rivers
- repairing and operating sluice gates and pumping stations

They provide a 24-hour Floodline where you can listen to recorded flood warning information for your area or speak to an operator for advice and information.

Environment Agency 24 hour Floodline **0345 988 1188**.

A main river is a watercourse marked on a main river map, including any structure or device for controlling its flow – [Statutory Main River Map](#)



Flooding from sewers and fresh water supply

Thames Water, Anglian Water, Affinity Water and Essex and Suffolk Water

Wastewater companies are responsible for the removal and treatment of foul or combined (foul and surface water) wastewater across Essex.

In Essex, Thames Water and Anglian Water have a responsibility for the removal of wastewater, this includes foul and surface water (rainfall).

Unusual heavy rainfall can overwhelm their system and cause flooding.



Ensure you know your provider to report issues effectively.

Thames Water, Anglian Water, Affinity Water and Essex and Suffolk Water provide fresh water supply to residents across Essex. Fresh water leaks are often more noticeable during times of drier weather.



Types of flooding and Lead authorities

Cut this page out and keep it somewhere handy!

Flooding Type	Authority	Website
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surface Water • Groundwater • Rainfall (inclusive of Ditches) 	 Essex County Council  thurrock.gov.uk  Southend-on-Sea City Council	flood.essex.gov.uk/what-to-do-about-flooding/report-a-flood
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gully • Impassable Road 	 Essex Highways  thurrock.gov.uk  Southend-on-Sea City Council	www.essexhighways.org/tell-us
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main River • Coastal 	 Environment Agency	www.gov.uk/report-environmental-incident
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sewer (manhole) • Fresh water supply 	   	www.thameswater.co.uk/help-report-a-problem#/view-and-report-problems www.anglianwater.co.uk/your-local-area/report-an-issue www.eswater.co.uk/help-and-support/water/leaks myonlineaccount.affinitywater.co.uk/ReportaLeak/Index

If there is a risk to life, call 999 and ask for the Fire Service



Additional Useful Resources

This page contains additional useful resources should you find that the issue you are faced with does not have a definitive lead authority.

Flood Mary

Flood Mary has a guide on creating a household flood plan with checklists to help prompt ideas

> floodmary.com

Flood:Re

Aims to make the flood cover part of household insurance policies more affordable.

> www.floodre.co.uk

OFWAT

OFWAT regulate the water sector in England and Wales.

> www.ofwat.gov.uk/nonhouseholds/supply-and-standards/responsibility-supply-pipes

Advice on groundwater flooding

Find out more about groundwater flooding, how it might affect you and what to do.

> www.gov.uk/guidance/groundwater-flooding

Citizen Advice

Citizens Advice provides useful information on who is responsible for maintaining drains and sewers.

> www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/water/sewerage/who-is-responsible-for-repairing-drains-and-sewers

The Flood Hub

Flood Hub is designed to be a one stop shop for flood information and resources to support householders, businesses and communities.

> thefloodhub.co.uk

National Flood Forum

Advice and guidance on many types of flood protection products can be found at National Flood Forum website. They produce 'The Blue Pages' which provides extensive information on flood protection measures available.

> nationalfloodforum.org.uk

Check your flood risk!

If you are at risk of flooding, give yourself a head start and have a think about how you would prepare your property for potential flooding.



Are you at risk of flooding?

The long term flood risk mapping shows flooding from rivers, the sea, surface water, groundwater (where data is available) and reservoirs across England. The map also shows how climate change could increase the chance of flooding in an area.

www.gov.uk/check-long-term-flood-risk

In the event of a major flooding incident local authorities coordinate with emergency planning and emergency services to aid in the evacuation of people from their homes where necessary.

You can find out more about the Environment Agency's Flood Warning service at the following page: www.gov.uk/sign-up-for-flood-warnings

The Environment Agency offers a helpful guide on a personal flood plan, so you know what to do before, during and after a flood.

www.gov.uk/government/publications/personal-flood-plan/personal-flood-plan



This information is issued by:
Environment and Climate Action

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