



Investigation Protocol

The Flood Investigation Protocol has been developed by Southampton City Council's Flood Risk Management (FRM) team to outline how and when flood investigations will be carried out.

The extent to which a flood incident will be investigated by FRM is determined on a case by case basis considering factors including the source, duration and severity of impact of the flood incident.

Purpose of a Flood Investigation

The purpose of a Flood Investigation is to record the flood incident and any impacts, establish the source of flooding and inform the relevant person(s) and/ or Risk Management Authority(s) of their responsibilities, whilst supporting the identification of any proposed actions. In some cases the investigation findings may be used to support development of future flood risk mitigation schemes.

It should be noted that is not practical or realistic for FRM to undertake an investigation for all incidents of flooding that occur within the Southampton City Council administrative boundary. All reports of flooding made to FRM will be recorded within our flood record database, including the location and a summary of the incident.

Section 19 Flood Investigation

Section 19 of the Flood and Water Management Act (2010) places a statutory duty on Southampton City Council, as a Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA), to undertake a flood investigation and produce an investigation report for areas that have been affected by flooding. This duty is fulfilled by the Council's FRM team.

Section 19 of the Flood and Water Management Act states that:

1. On becoming aware of a flood in its areas, a Lead Local Flood Authority must, to the extent that it considers it necessary or appropriate, investigate –
 - a) Which risk management authorities have relevant flood risk management functions, and
 - b) Whether each of those risk management authorities has exercised, or is proposing to exercise, those functions in response to the flood.
2. Where an authority carries out an investigation under subsection (1) it must –
 - a) Publish the results of the investigation, and
 - b) Notify any relevant risk management authorities.

The Flood and Water Management Act (2010) does not define the 'extent' or 'necessity' of a flood investigation, leaving this to the LLFA to determine. Southampton City Council have set out the following criteria for a Section 19 Flood Investigation:

- There is a risk to (or loss of) life as a result of a flood incident.
- Internal flooding to five or more properties within a single area within a single flood incident.

- External flooding of a property on five or more separate occasions.
- Internal flooding of a habitable area of a single property (residential or commercial) on two or more separate occasions.
- A major transport route is closed for more than 10 hours.
- Critical infrastructure is affected resulting in a loss of or disruption to a service for more than 10 hours.
- There is ambiguity surrounding the source or responsibility of a flood incident.
- There is overriding public interest to carry out an investigation.

Where criteria notes 'on X or more separate occasions' a timescale of 18 months has been set.

Desk-based Investigation

FRM acknowledge that whilst not all flooding incidents meet the threshold for a Section 19 Flood Investigation they can cause an impact to people, property and travel. FRM may therefore carry out a desk-based investigation to investigate smaller flooding incidents (depending on the capacity of the team), in particular if the flooding has impacted property. A risk-based approach will be taken to decide whether a desk-based investigation is appropriate.

The following criteria has been set for when a desk-based investigation may be carried out:

- Internal flooding to one or more properties (residential or commercial) within a single area within a single flood incident.
- A road is flooded that restricts access to one or more properties (residential or commercial) for more than three hours.
- Recurring flooding (three or more reports on separate occasions) to a road or property curtilage (e.g., a driveway or garden).
- Flooding to a strategic transport route for any period of time.

Where criteria notes 'on X or more separate occasions' a timescale of 18 months has been set.

Significant rainfall events

If a significant widespread flood event occurs in the city, or a number of incidents that meet the threshold for a desk-based or Section 19 Investigation occur simultaneously, investigations will be undertaken on a priority basis.

It should be noted that high intensity rainfall events (>32mm/hour rainfall) often exceed the capacity of the drainage network (gullies and surface water sewers) which can result in temporary pooling of water on the highway. Whilst FRM understand this type of flooding can cause disruption it will drain away soon after rainfall stops and will not be subject to an investigation. If flooding persists a number of hours after the rainfall stops this may be the result of infrastructure failure and this should be reported to the Council.

Role of the responding officer

The responding Flood Risk Officer is not an emergency responder and it is not their responsibility to directly solve the issue presented by the resident. A Flood Risk Officer is tasked with inspecting the situation, collecting evidence and building a case to ensure that relevant organisations or individuals are aware of their responsibilities and take the appropriate action to reduce further flooding.



Flood Investigation Process

FRM will likely follow the process outlined below when flood incident reports are received. The responding officer will then establish whether a desk-based or Section 19 Investigation will be carried out.

1. A flood incident is reported to Southampton City Council.
2. The corresponding officer will review the information provided to determine whether the incident meets the threshold for a desk-based or Section 19 Investigation. If the incident does not meet the threshold for an investigation it will be recorded on the Council's flood records.
3. If the incident meets the threshold for an investigation, the corresponding officer will contact the reporter to gain any further information including photos and/ or videos of the incident.
4. The corresponding officer will determine the appropriate action(s) which could include: contacting the relevant Risk Management Authority(s), conducting a site visit, raising the incident at the Surface Water Drainage Board or Flood Risk Management Board, amongst others.
5. The corresponding officer will draft an Investigation Report.
6. The Investigation Report will be circulate to all relevant stakeholders for review and will update the report with any necessary revisions e.g. actions undertaken.
7. In the case of a Section 19 Investigation, the final report will be published online at www.southampton.gov.uk.

Flood Investigation report
Section 19 Investigation

Southampton
Southampton City Council

As the Local Authority for Southampton, Southampton City Council has a duty to investigate flood incidents as well as in Section 19 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010.

A flood event occurred on **05/11/2020**. The flood incident caused damage to **PROPERTY** in **Southampton**.

Date of Incident: **05/11/2020** Date of Investigation: **05/11/2020**

City Reference No: **05/11/2020**

Incident Officer: **05/11/2020**

Published Date: **05/11/2020**

Investigation Report

Date	Location	Description	Date

Investigation Reports

An investigation report will be undertaken by the FRM department which will describe the flood incident and aim to determine the cause or contributing factors. The report will recommend actions for the relevant person(s) and/ or Risk Management Authority(s).

Following the conclusion of a Section 19 Investigation an investigation report will be published online on the Southampton City Council website. The findings of the investigation will be communicated to key stakeholders.

Data Protection and Information

Information supplied for a flood investigation will be recorded electronically in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and any subsequent legislation. To protect residents in defining the flood area and for the purpose of Investigation Reports Southampton City Council will:

- Exclude all personal details of members of the public and officers.
- Refer to the locality of the flooding at a street level without reference to an individual property or properties affected.

