

AGMA Policy for Investigating Flood Incidents

THE LEGISLATION

Section 19 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 states that:

- (1) On becoming aware of a flood in its area, a lead local flood authority (LLFA) must, to the extent that it considers 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 carried out an investigation under subsection (1) it must –
 - (a) Publish the results of its investigation, and
 - (b) Notify any relevant risk management authorities

NB. The term 'flood' includes any case where land not normally covered by water becomes covered by water (from natural sources). It does not include flooding from a burst water main or any part of the sewage network (unless caused by the volume of rainwater entering the system).

1.0 RATIONALE

There has been no guidance provided on how to discharge this duty and many elements remain highly subjective. As a result, and to avoid inconsistency across the conurbation; this policy has been drafted for local implementation to improve the understanding of flood risk and flood risk management uniformly.

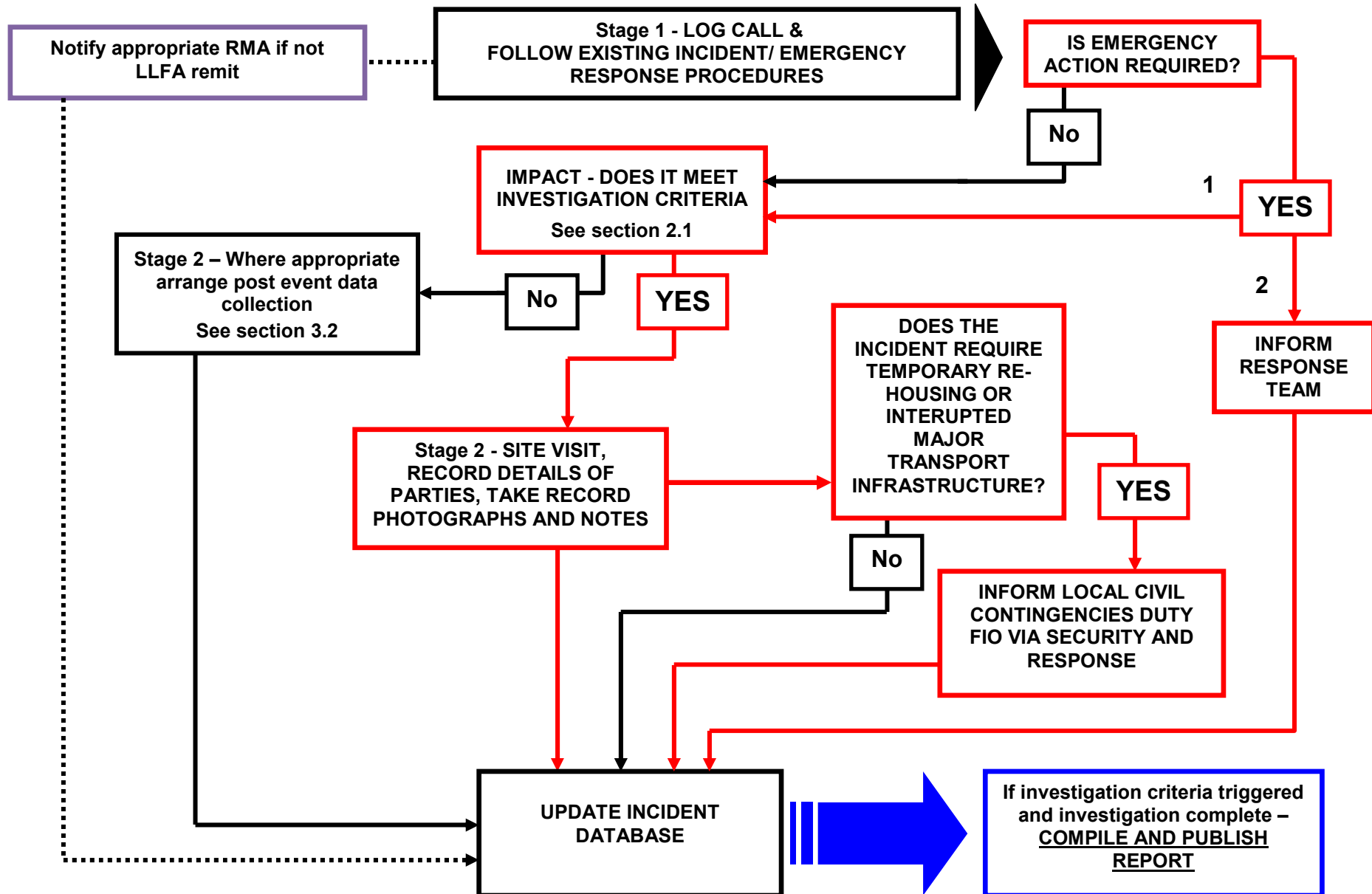
The focus of this policy is not solely around the identification of the necessity to instigate an investigation but to ensure that a process is in place to gather supporting evidence. Initially from the information received relating to a flood incident it may be deemed a full investigation is not appropriate but by having a process in place as outlined in this document the supporting evidence is in situ if the incident escalates to one of much greater significance once the impact of the flooding is known.

1.1 REPORTING PROCEDURES

Depending on the circumstances, flooding may be reported to the LLFA through a number of different sources, including: The Contact Centre; Highways and Engineering Service; Emergency Planning Service; Housing Management Services and the Emergency Services, any of which may take the initial notification of the incident. It is therefore vital to ensure that one nominated contact (the Lead Local Flood Officer or the relevant team) is identified, and that training and awareness sessions are put in place to ensure reports and details of the incident are all correctly directed and are not missed. A secondary contact should also be nominated to ensure cover during absences, and a system should also be put in place to cover flood incidents which occur outside of normal office hours.

CALL INTO LLFA

Fig 1 - Process for dealing with flood reports:



2.0 CRITERIA FOR UNDERTAKING INVESTIGATION

Not all flood incidents will justify a full investigation. Despite this, it is necessary to collect focal information from all incidents, even where the impact of the incident is minimal. All data gathered can be used to inform and predict the consequences of more serious incidents, not doing this may hinder a comprehensive understanding of risk across an LLFA area.

Where the incident has impacted on resources it may be decided that data is gathered post event when resources allow. Information such as photographs, flow paths and sources should be recorded where possible and even if they are not required as part of an investigation will become useful evidence especially to support and quantify the identified risk areas.

If it is found that flooding occurs on a frequent basis to a property/area it may be frequency rather than the scale of the incident that triggers an investigation in the future.

2.1 IMPACT/CONSEQUENCE

It is recommended that an incident be defined as 'significant' based on any of the following factors and would potentially trigger a full investigation (see assessment matrix section 5.0):

| Trigger | Consequence. |
|--|---|
| Risk to life | Death, accident/ injury. |
| Weight of public, media, political and planning interest | Reputation. |
| Impact on critical services | Critical services include schools, hospitals, nursing homes and emergency services. |
| Internal residential property flooding - \geq 5/6 | 'Internal' flooding includes flooding inside the main property and any outbuildings which provide living accommodation. Any flooding of other outbuildings and garages etc should be classed as 'external', except where they are integral to the main property and accessible via an internal door. – It is important to collect accurate records of internal property flooding, to support any decisions on flood defence funding. This information may be requested in regards to future property purchases, any inaccurate data could potentially prejudice a sale resulting in legal action. |
| Economic disruption | Consider the relative impacts of flooding of commercial property . In some cases, flooding of a single commercial property could no more warrant investigation than flooding of a single residential property; but in other cases, the serious flooding of a large, single property could be extremely disruptive to the economic functioning of a community or have significant impact on a local or regional economy, and would therefore certainly trigger an investigation. Other causes of economic disruption should be covered by consideration of impacts upon infrastructure. |
| Impact on critical infrastructure and installations | Critical infrastructure includes motorways, 'A' roads, rail links, port facilities, utility installations, bridges, flood defences etc. |
| Frequency of flooding | Also consider depth of flooding, were residents displaced and the duration of such. |

- Effective deployment of defensive measures should also be recorded.
- Consideration should also be given to any locally significant flood incidents which the LLFA may choose to investigate regardless of the criteria above.

3.0 SCOPE OF EVIDENCE GATHERING

Regardless as to whether a flood incident will result in a full and formal published investigation gathering information relating to the cause and impact of the flooding is necessary at all stages of the event.

Whilst the amount of data required to provide an insight into the cause of the flooding should remain **proportionate** to the size of the event it is imperative that all LLFA's ensure a process is embedded to support this. It is each districts responsibility to nominate a Lead Flood Officer and provide training and incident response procedures which align with this policy.

If there are issues around the nominated Flood Officer having the capacity or correct training to attend, this should be overcome through training and awareness sessions between all involved directorates and a strong Flood Risk Management Working Group.

Part of the process should also identify the means of capturing this data and in what format it should be recorded and stored to ensure the information can be viewed and shared for use by any relevant parties. This will not only ensure relevant data is captured in a timely manner but evidence is available to support future bids within the GM investment programme.

3.1 STAGE 1 – Incident Recording

The following information should be gathered at the time the incident is reported:

| Information type | Information required |
|--|---|
| <u>Caller details:</u> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name • Address • Telephone number • e-mail |
| <u>By what route was the call received:</u> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct from the caller • 3rd party <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ family or friends of the person affected ○ other RMA's ○ Emergency services ○ Councillor on behalf of their constituency ○ Other – please state |
| <u>Incident details:</u> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reference no: • Address/ location: • Date and Time of incident: |
| <u>What is/has flooded:</u> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Property – internal – If Yes, ask whether basement or Ground floor • Property – external • Level of flooding (if already occurred) – approximate depth • Highway • Open space (define) • Other (define) |
| <u>Where is/was the water coming from:</u> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overflowing Manhole/Drain • Overflow from a river or stream • Water running off the highway • Water running off a field • Other (define) • Don't Know |

| | |
|--|---|
| <u>Additional risk information:</u> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is/was there a danger to life? (if yes advise caller to contact the emergency services immediately) • Is/was there a foul smell? • Is/was there evidence of sewage in the water? • Is the water still rising? If so, how deep is it? • Is there a watercourse nearby? If so, what is it called? • Is there ongoing traffic disruption? • Other factors (define) |
|--|---|

3.2 STAGE 2 - Site Information Data Gathering

This information whilst again being proportionate to the size of the event is necessary to validate initial reports received from the public or 3rd parties including the media and would be included in the final report if a full investigation is required. Each LLFA should aim to gather the following information:

| Information type | Information required |
|---|---|
| <u>Incident details:</u> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reference no: • Location: • Date and time of incident: • Date and time of site visit |
| <u>What is/has flooded:</u> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • number and type of receptors affected; • extent, depth and velocity of flooding • extent of damage to critical infrastructure |
| <u>Where is/was the water coming from:</u> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • source and cause of flooding and any interactions with other sources of flooding; |
| <u>Additional risk information:</u> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • duration of event; • topographic / land use / drainage infrastructure information associated with the affected site; • any immediate resolution, and any links to longer term mitigation / management measures; • previous similar and historic incidents • any measures taken during the event to limit damage and their apparent effectiveness • photographic evidence of flooding |

4.0 PUBLISHING

If a Formal Investigation has been undertaken, the LLFA has a legal Duty to publish a report of its findings. Local procedures for approval and publishing of public documents should apply.

Special consideration should be made for cross-boundary incidents, and the format of reporting and sharing of information should be agreed between neighbouring LLFAs.

5.0 ASSESSMENT MATRIX

The following table provides guidance as to determine whether a full investigation is required:

| NUMBER | FLOODING IMPACT | IF 'YES' GO TO: | IF 'NO' GO TO: |
|--------|--|--------------------|-------------------|
| 1 | Has a flood incident occurred? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal property flooding - residential/commercial Economic disruption Risk to life or public health Affecting critical services, infrastructure and or installations Deployment of defensive measures | 4 | 2 |
| 2 | Has a flood incident occurred to; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non-priority highways? Parks, gardens or open space (posing no threat to life or public health)? | 3 | --- |
| 3 | Is there a local/ political desire to investigate the incident? | 4 | 12 |
| 4 | Have you identified the relevant risk management authority? If necessary, arrange a meeting of the local flood risk management partnership (A meeting may only be necessary for major events – minor events may only need information circulated by phone or email between LLFA, the Environment Agency and United Utilities) | 8 | 5 |
| 5 | Notify the relevant flood risk management authority | 6 | --- |
| 6 | Is the risk management authority exercising their functions in relation to this incident? | 7 | 4 |
| 7 | Log the correspondence in the incident file and request copies of the outcome if/ when appropriate. | --- | --- |
| 8 | Is there a history of flooding in the area? | 9 | 13 |
| 9 | Has this been investigated before? | 10 | 13 |
| 10 | Is the cause and extent the same as previous incidents? | 11 | 13 |
| 11 | Log incident details; promote self-help and community resilience. | 12 | --- |
| 12 | REVIEW SITE VISIT & DATA COLLECTION Is a full investigation required based on information available? | 13 | 11 |
| 13 | FULL INVESTIGATION – AND PUBLISH <i>Consider scope for Flood Defence Grant in Aid application for property-protection scheme.</i> | --- | --- |