

AA Severe weather team prepared for East Coast tidal surge



The AA's specialist severe weather team, AA Special Operations, is being deployed in North Wales, Scotland and Eastern England coastal locations today (Thursday 05 December) as warnings of coastal flooding from the Environment Agency, Scottish Environment Protection Agency and Met Office escalate

Darron Burness, head of the AA's flood rescue team, says that areas most likely to be affected stretch from the Firth of Forth and down the East Coast of England to Kent. A number of homes are being evacuated as a precautionary measure.

"We are working with the Environment Agency and the emergency services to provide support in North Wales, to coincide with high tide at noon today, then the East Coast at locations such as Washington (Tyne & Wear), Grimsby, Cromer (Norfolk) and Sandwich (Kent)," he says. "However, the situation is fast developing and we will change our plans to ensure we offer support where it is most needed."

The AA is urging homeowners and drivers to take seriously the warnings of flooding caused by tidal surges.

"I would particularly warn motorists to avoid coastal routes where the combination of high winds and flooding with sea water will be life-threatening," Darron Burness says, pointing out that a third of flood-related deaths involve a vehicle because drivers take unnecessary risks.

"Coastal flooding is particularly dangerous because of the risk of high waves and very fast-moving water," he says.

This comes at a time when the AA and the Environment Agency only last week warned that over half of drivers (54%)* admitted that they would endanger themselves by driving through flood water, while a quarter (27%) said they would drive through moving flood water that is more than a foot (30cm) deep.

“Moving flood water is powerful, relentless and deceptively dangerous. A foot or 30cm of moving water can float your car while a tidal surge could carry your vehicle into the sea – so just stay out,” he says.

The AA also says that if you must venture on to the roads in severe weather; take a fully-charged phone and warm, waterproof clothing.

Plan your journey, don't attempt to drive down roads that have been closed due to flooding, avoid fords and check both weather and traffic bulletins regularly, remembering that some exposed roads or bridges may be subject to closures because of floods, high winds or fallen trees.

You can follow regular updates and driving advice from AA Special Operations on Twitter: @AASORT while there is also a weather blog <http://www.theaa.com/emergency>

The Environment Agency currently has 24 Severe Flood Warnings, over 100 Flood Warnings and 59 Flood Alerts (as at 09.00 Thursday 04 December) in place, while the Scottish Environmental Flood Agency has issued 11 Flood Warnings and 18 Flood Alerts for Central Scotland, Edinburgh, the Lothians, Fyfe, Skye and Lochaber. Parts of Scotland are also expected to suffer winds of up to 100mph and blizzards especially over high ground.