



Lough Erne System



Preparing for a flood

- Keep a list of useful numbers to hand including the flood emergency numbers contained in this leaflet, emergency services and your insurance company.
- Think about the location of your car, caravan, farm machinery and other perishable or valuable items. Could they be moved to a safer location?
- Have adequate stocks of basic supplies including food, medicines, bottled water and childcare essentials.
- Ensure that you are aware of transport arrangements for school children - liaise with Western Education and Library Board (WELB).
- Ensure that alternative arrangements are in place for carers and those being cared for - liaise with Social Services.
- Ensure that arrangements are in place to facilitate animal husbandry. Care should be taken when attending stock in flooded areas. Ensure that livestock do not become trapped in flood waters.

Other safeguards

- If an electricity circuit has been affected by flooding, a qualified electrician will need to check the safety of the system and appliances. Northern Ireland Electricity (NIE) can provide advice to customers.
- Contact your insurance company as soon as possible. It may offer advice regarding replacement or cleansing of damaged items.

Useful contact numbers

Fermanagh District Council	028 6632 5050
Flooding Incident Line	030 0200 0100
NIE	084 5764 3643
Rivers Agency Fermanagh Office	028 6638 8529
Social Services	028 9052 0500
WELB	028 8241 1411
Insurance company	



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This leaflet provides information on how the Lough Erne system works.

It also contains useful advice on how to prepare for and deal with flooding from Lough Erne if it happens.

Flooding from Lough Erne can occur after exceptionally long periods of heavy rainfall, causing the water levels to rise above normal levels.

The Erne System – the facts

- River Erne rises in Lough Gowna, Co Cavan, and flows through Fermanagh and onwards to Ballyshannon in Co Donegal where it enters the sea.
- River Erne is 100km long and drains an area of 4,350km².
- Lower Lough Erne has a surface area of 111km² and is nearly three times the size of Upper Lough Erne. The Loughs act as a natural storage system for water.
- The current system for managing the Loughs was set up in 1950 when the Erne Drainage and Development Act (NI) was passed.

- No absolute statutory levels were set in the Act. As far as reasonably preventable, levels in the Upper Lough and the inter-lough channel are kept below certain levels.
- The management regime is a balance between power generation, flood alleviation, agricultural land use, environmental considerations, tourism and leisure interests. It is operated in conjunction with the Electricity Supply Board (ESB).
- Maximum and minimum operating levels reflect the optimum balance between all these interests.
- There are two water level control structures on the Erne system. The gates at Portora and a hydro-electric station at Cliff.
- The gates at Portora control water levels upstream through Enniskillen and into Upper Lough Erne.
- The hydro-electric dam at Cliff controls water levels through Belleek and upstream into Lower Lough Erne.
- There is also a hydro-electric dam further downstream from Cliff at

Cathleen's Falls, Ballyshannon. This generates power and allows spillage of water. It does not have a direct impact on the water levels in the Erne system.

- Exceptional periods of prolonged and heavy rainfall can cause the Lough levels to rise above the operating levels. The volume of water flowing into the Loughs can be up to three times more than the maximum outflow volumes.

Type of flooding event

- The water levels rise slowly in the Loughs. The volume of water makes it difficult to prevent flooding.
- Flooding can occur in the following two scenarios.
 - When the amount of water entering the upper Lough significantly exceeds the capacity of the channel connecting it with the lower lough.
 - When the amount of water entering the lower Lough significantly exceeds the capacity of the Belleek channel flowing towards the hydro-electric dam at Cliff.

