



## **PRESS RELEASE – PREPARE YOURSELF AND FAMILY FOR FLOODING AND VIOLENT WINDS**

2<sup>nd</sup> October 2019

Water Safety Ireland is warning the public to take necessary precautions in advance of Storm Lorenzo and to exercise caution throughout its transit over our country and waters on Thursday and Friday.

Storm Ophelia, one of the worst recent storms to hit Ireland on the 16<sup>th</sup> October 2017 did huge damage to our country and three people died as a result. High Water at that time was at 1548 in Galway with a height of 4.7 Metres. On January 2<sup>nd</sup> 2018 Storm Eleanor hit Galway High Water was at 1817 with a height of 5.5 Metres and we experienced the worst flooding of the two storms. Lorenzo will hit us at 2124 at 4.7 metres on Thursday, on Friday at 0944 at 4.6 Metres. So if your coastal property is on the South West or West coast and it flooded during Ophelia, then it will almost certainly flood again with Lorenzo unless it loses its power as it tracks northwards. Our situation is compounded this time by unseasonably high water in our rivers. So estuarine rivers facing the south and west are likely to be flooded badly and bear the brunt of the coastal flooding.

Water Safety Ireland is alerting the public to take the necessary precautions now, in advance of the storm as follows:

We are asking people to keep away from the water's edge during Storm Lorenzo as there are likely to be violent storm force winds and high seas. Ireland averages 124 drownings every year and a number of tragedies occur as a result of people walking too close to the edge of coastal areas, cliffs, harbours, marinas, rivers and lakes during such stormy conditions.

If you own a small craft make sure that it is well secured and when doing so, to wear a lifejacket at all times as there have been drownings during such activities in the past. Do not risk your life to check on it during the storm.

Motorists need to be particularly vigilant to avoid flooded areas on roads but particularly near bridges and rivers, because with poor light and shorter days it is not possible to determine the depth of floods. Swift water will carry cars and other vehicles away and there have been very tragic drownings in the past as a result of such incidents.

Fast moving water can exert pressure of up to four times its speed against the legs of someone attempting to cross it. Because water displaces bodyweight, the deeper a person becomes immersed, the less the person weighs so the more difficult it is to remain upright. Never put one's feet down if swept away in floodwater, because foot and body entrapments and pinning are the leading cause of fatal drownings in our rivers – float yourself in to shallow water.

Farmers should check their stock now and ensure they are safe prior to the storm. Move them to higher ground so that they are not left in flooded areas where they too can drown.

Children are naturally curious about water, therefore parents should caution them that floodwater hides the true depth, that manhole covers may be open and that small streams when swollen are very fast and deeper than normal. Please supervise your children at all times when they are out of the house. Check on elderly neighbours in advance of this storm to ensure they are prepared for it.

### **What should I do when I hear a Flood Warning?**

- LISTEN TO THE NATIONAL AND LOCAL RADIO FOR MET EIREANN UPDATES AND AA ROAD WATCH UPDATES
- CHECK ON NEIGHBOURS PARTICULARLY IF THEY ARE ELDERLY, INFIRMED OR FAMILIES WITH YOUNG CHILDREN
- MOVE YOUR VEHICLES TO HIGHER GROUND
- MOVE ANIMAL STOCK TO HIGHER GROUND
- CHECK YOUR SMALL CRAFT TO ENSURE THEY ARE WELL SECURED OR MOORED
- MAKE SURE YOU HAVE WARM CLOTHES, FOOD, DRINK, A TORCH AND RADIO.
- BLOCK DOORWAYS AND AIRBRICKS WITH SANDBAGS OR PLASTIC BAGS FILLED WITH EARTH. FLOODGATE PRODUCTS WILL WORK EFFECTIVELY ALSO.
- SWITCH OFF GAS AND ELECTRICITY SUPPLIES IF FLOODING IS IMMINENT.
- CHECK THE TIME OF HIGH WATER ONLINE OR IN THE NEWSPAPER.
- POWER CUTS ARE LIKELY - CHARGE YOUR PHONE & POWER BANK
- NEW BATTERIES IN YOUR TORCH & ONE IN THE CAR TOO
- CHECK OUT [WWW.FLOODING.IE](http://WWW.FLOODING.IE) AND <https://waterlevel.ie> FOR MORE DETAIL ON GENERAL FLOODING AND WATER LEVELS

### **Personal Safety**

- AVOID FLOOD WATERS AT ALL TIMES
- CARRY A MOBILE PHONE AT ALL TIMES IN CASE YOU NEED TO CALL FOR HELP – CALL 112 OR 999 IN EMERGENCY
- WEAR SUITABLE PROTECTIVE CLOTHING & A LIFEJACKET IN, ON, OR AROUND WATER
- DO NOT ENTER FAST FLOWING WATER.
- NEVER PUT YOUR FEET DOWN IF SWEEPED AWAY BY FAST FLOWING WATERS
- FLOODING ON ROADS WILL BE DEEPER AT DIPS AND AROUND BRIDGES.
- STAY AWAY FROM SEA AND FLOOD DEFENCES.
- WHEN WALKING OR DRIVING, BE AWARE OF MANHOLE COVERS AND GRATINGS THAT MAY HAVE BEEN MOVED DUE TO THE HEAVY FLOW OF WATER.
- TAKE CARE WHEN USING ELECTRIC APPLIANCES IN DAMP OR FLOOD CONDITIONS.
- REMEMBER THAT DURING THE HOURS OF DARKNESS THE DANGERS ARE MULTIPLIED.

### **After the flood**

- DON'T EAT FOOD THAT HAS BEEN IN CONTACT WITH FLOOD WATER.
- RUN WATER FOR A FEW MINUTES AND WASH YOUR TAPS.
- CHECK GAS AND ELECTRICITY SUPPLY.
- LEAVE WET ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT ALONE TO DRY AND HAVE IT CHECKED PRIOR TO USE.
- VENTILATE YOUR PROPERTY WELL.

- CHECK ON ELDERLY NEIGHBOURS.

Further information on water safety can be obtained by contacting:

Mobile: John Leech 087-6789600;

Water Safety Ireland, The Long Walk, Galway. LoCall: 1890.420.202 / Tel: 091-56.44.00

[www.watersafety.ie](http://www.watersafety.ie)