

Salisbury chosen to test temporary flood barriers

The Environment Agency and emergency services are teaming up to test ways to protect Salisbury from flooding.

Exercise Touchpaper will last 3 days and is led by the Environment Agency, who will supply flood barriers, about 50 staff and all the necessary equipment for a pump.

The army's ability to set up barriers will be tested at Ashley Road on Tuesday 1 October 2019. It should take soldiers about 3 hours to set up 350m of defences, before they are taken down again. Access to properties won't be affected.

Guy Parker of the Environment Agency said:

This is an opportunity to test the speed and efficiency of the army in setting up temporary flood barriers at Ashley Road and Fisherton Recreation Ground to reduce flood risk to properties in Salisbury in times of need.

Practicing with the barriers now to get the alignment right and give valuable experience to the military is obviously preferable than during a flood.

The exercise will also trial:

- new equipment to allow firefighters' pumps and hoses to be connected to Environment Agency equipment
- a new way to capture water from hoses during firefighting to stop it from entering watercourses and be reused
- Community information officers – a new role for the Environment Agency to give face-to-face information and updates during an incident

Dorset & Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service will be supporting the exercise by helping to set up the temporary flood barriers, and a high volume pump will be brought up from Christchurch on the third day (operational commitments allowing).

The Environment Agency has a world class flood forecasting service which provides people, businesses and the emergency services vital time to prepare in a flood. 1.4 million properties are signed up to our free flood warnings – an increase of 129,000 since last winter.

For more information on flood risk and to sign up to receive free flood warnings go to www.gov.uk/check-flood-risk or call Floodline on 0345 988 1188.