

Surface Water flooding summary: Methodology and mapping

1. Introduction

The Flood Risk Management (Scotland) Act 2009 (FRM Act) introduced a co-ordinated and partnership approach to how we sustainably tackle flood risk in Scotland. To fulfil this we are considering all sources of flooding and whole river catchments when making flood risk management decisions.

A key milestone of the FRM Act is the production of flood hazard and flood risk maps for Scotland. These maps provide the most comprehensive national source of data on flood hazard and risk and include information on different likelihoods of flooding:

Time Horizon	Likelihood of flooding	Return period
Present Day	High	10 year
Present Day	Medium	200 year
Present Day	Low	200 year plus climate change ¹

To produce a flood hazard map for each source of flooding SEPA has developed datasets and methodologies for coastal, river and surface water flooding.

This summary provides information on how we developed our surface water flood map and how to interpret this data. Previous knowledge of flood modelling and mapping is beneficial when using this summary.

¹ In the absence of a modelled 1000-year return period scenario for surface water, the 200-year return period plus climate change scenario has been used as a proxy for a low likelihood present day flood event. This will be updated as we develop our surface water flood mapping for Scotland.

2. Development and review

The surface water map combines information on pluvial (rainfall) and sewer model outputs. Whilst these flood sources are shown on the same map they have been considered modelled independently of one another and therefore the map does not show their interaction.

2.1 Future review and development

The mapping of flooding is a dynamic process and the flood maps will be subject to review and change as we develop our input data, methodologies and techniques. SEPA will continue to work with responsible authorities and partner organisations to improve our confidence in representing surface water flood hazard across Scotland.

Ongoing developments that SEPA is working towards include:

- Improved input data. For example:
 - the use of Light Detection And Ranging (LiDAR) information that extends our coverage of higher resolution ground models;
 - Variations in rainfall and storm duration to reflect local contexts;
- Investigate how to effectively apply hydrological and hydraulic modelling methods;
- Incorporation of outputs from detailed local studies where appropriate.

3. Methodology and data

3.1 Approach

The flood maps provide an indication of the flood hazard across the country. A nationally applied methodology has been used to produce the surface water flood map for Scotland. The map provides indicative flood hazard information and identifies communities at risk from surface water flooding. The approach develops the surface water flooding data derived as part of the first National Flood Risk Assessment (NFRA) in 2011 and provides higher resolution outputs and sewer flooding information where available.

3.2 Data

The data used to produce the surface water flood map is listed in Table 1 (Appendix), alongside a description of the data, how it was used and the quality review process.

3.3 Methodology

The surface water flood map incorporates data from three separate studies:

- National surface water study developed for, and extended from the National Flood Risk Assessment (NFRA) 2011;
- Regional surface water study with increased resolution from the national study for selected areas;
- Scottish Water sewer flooding assessment.

The surface water flood map provides:

- Flood extents and depths for seven return periods, including two climate change scenarios, for the entire country;
- Velocity and hazard outputs for seven return periods in those areas covered by the regional studies.

Table 2 (Appendix) shows the return periods for which surface water flood extents, depth and velocities (where available) were derived.

3.3.1 National dataset from the NFRA

This was the first national assessment of surface water flooding with the aim of identifying areas at the greatest risk to its impacts. A simplified rapid flood spreading model was used for the national surface water output. Rainfall is spread across the ground model, flooding depressions in the land surface. Where the depression fills up and spills over, the neighbouring depression is filled. Due to the simplified nature of the rapid flood spreading model, this output does not account for flow pathways or velocities, only depths and extents are derived. Models were run for sub-catchment-units (SCU's) across the country, producing approximately 4000 models.

NEXTMap data was used for the Digital Terrain Model (DTM) as it was the only nationally available DTM. Ground levels were dropped by 0.1m in roads and raised by 0.3m at buildings to account for the 5m resolution of the DTM used and better represent these features.

Rainfall inputs to the model were provided by the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology (CEH). Rainfall events for all 7 return periods were routed into the model, with rainfall losses due to drainage networks and runoff applied depending on whether the area was urban or rural as shown in Table 2 (below)

	Urban Environment	Rural Environment
Storm Duration	1 hour	3 hour
Percentage Runoff	70%	55%
Losses to drainage	12mm/hr	0mm/hr

Table 2: Drainage and runoff losses applied in the national modelling process

3.3.3 High resolution regional dataset

78 of the catchments at the greatest risk from surface water flooding identified in the NFRA 2011 were modelled at a higher resolution, forming the regional surface water dataset. This dataset predominantly focuses on urban centres, with models being run for 5km tiles

A 2D hydraulic model was used for the regional dataset, which improves on the national dataset by considering flow pathways and producing velocity and hazard rating outputs as well as depths and extents.

LiDAR data constituted the majority of the DTM used; however, some small areas of catchments are not covered by LiDAR and therefore NEXTMap data was used in these areas. Ground levels were raised by 0.3m at buildings to represent the threshold at which flooding of buildings could occur, however unlike the national model ground levels were not dropped at roads due to the

improved DTM resolution and the consideration of flow pathways in the model. The use of LiDAR data has improved the quality of the ground model from that used in the national study.

Similar to the national dataset, rainfall inputs to the model were provided by CEH and rainfall losses applied to account for differences in drainage and runoff between urban and rural areas as shown in table 3 (below).

	Urban Environment	Rural Environment
Storm Duration	1 hour & 3 hour	1 hour & 3 hour
Percentage Runoff	70%	55%
Losses to drainage	equivalent to 5-year rainfall event for catchment	0mm/hr

Table 2: Drainage and runoff losses applied in the regional modelling process

Roughness values (a measure of resistance to flood flows required for 2D models) were derived for the modelled catchments using the CEH Land Cover Map 2007

3.3.4 Scottish Water sewer flooding assessment

Under the FRM Act, Scottish Water is responsible for assessing the impacts of sewerage flooding in consultation with SEPA. In April 2012, SEPA consulted with responsible authorities on the assessment of flood risk from sewerage systems as required by section 16 of the FRM Act. This consultation contributed to Scottish Water’s sewer flooding assessment. Through dialogue and agreement with SEPA, Scottish Water has carried out an assessment on 64 catchments to date and will ultimately assess 206 catchments in total following a period of inspection and survey work on their infrastructure. Rainfall inputs were provided by Scottish Water having been derived using industry standard methods.

1D sewer models were used to determine the locations of where a flood is likely to originate from a sewer system and the volumes of sewerage / water which released from the sewer system in the event of a flood. Once the volumes were estimated, they were spread across the ground surface from the locations determined by the 1D model using a 2D model. The DTM used for the regional dataset was also used for the sewer flooding assessment with the addition of NEXTMap data in those areas not covered by the regional output.

Only depths and extents were provided for the sewer flooding assessment, in line with the requirements of Section 16 of the FRM Act.

3.3.4 Climate Change

The estimation of future changes in convective rainfall events (localised, high intensity events known to cause most surface water flooding) is difficult at a regional or local scale and therefore a national increase in rainfall of 20% was applied to represent climate change. This was in line with the available DEFRA guidance (2006) on increases in rainfall intensity for the 2080s. The uplift was applied to the following scenarios: 30-year return period and 200-year return period.

A future surface water flood map has not been published at the current time. We intend to publish a future surface water flood map in later releases of SEPA's flood maps. This will use new information that is currently in development on how climate change may affect short duration rainfall events typically responsible for surface water flooding.

The published present-day low likelihood surface water flood hazard maps used the medium likelihood flood event rainfall intensity increased by 20% nationally based on the DEFRA (2006) guidance for the 2080s. This layer may provide a first indication of those areas potentially at risk in the future, however due to projected changes in rainfall intensity it may not show all locations that may be affected in the future.

3.3.5 Flood defences and structures

Defended and undefended model runs are not considered in the surface water map as defences in Scottish Flood Defence Asset Database (SFDAD) are not formally built for surface water flood events. Defences that have been picked up in the DTMs will influence flood extents and modelling strategies developed.

False blockages were identified and removed from the DTMs by cross referencing structures datasets prior to model runs and by looking at the flood extent for the 200-year event once models had been run.

3.3.6 Combining outputs

For each return period the national, regional and sewer assessments were combined to provide a single surface water flood map. The 3-hour storm duration was used in all instances of data combination to provide consistency with the development of NFRA 2011 and the Flood Risk Management Strategies 2015.

The higher resolution regional dataset has been shown where available and the national dataset shown outside these areas. The Scottish Water sewer assessment was then merged with these datasets; however it should be noted that these sources are considered independently of one another and the maps do not reflect an interaction of the drainage systems.

Velocity data is only shown in those areas covered by the higher resolution regional dataset.

Areas with flood depths of less than 0.1m were removed due to the relatively low risk these depths pose, and the underlying accuracy of the DTM.

4. Validation and quality review

A robust validation and review process was undertaken for the surface water flood map data:

- **Peer contribution** – The Scottish Advisory and Implementation Forum for Flooding (SAIFF) Modelling Appraisal Strategy Group provided peer contribution in developing the approach for surface water flood mapping. This group includes industry representatives, academia, representation from the Society of Chief Officers of Transportation in Scotland (SCOTS), Scottish Water and Scottish Government.
- **Internal review**- Internal review included:
 - Checks of the datasets used as inputs are referenced in Table 1 (Appendix).
 - Checks on the surface water flood map were carried out on extents, depths and velocities:
 - Manual reviews were undertaken on model outputs on aspects such as extreme depths and velocities to ensure they were within acceptable modelling error bands, roughness values and DTM changes were correct, outputs seemed logical in comparison to existing surface water models and reports and that depths, velocities and extents seemed reasonable.
 - An automated review was undertaken to ensure that flood extents, depths and velocities increased with return period and to identify any extreme depths.
 - A review of public records was carried out to identify areas with a history of surface water flooding and these compared to mapped outputs as a sense-check.
- **Local authority review** - Local authorities reviewed flood extents for high, medium and low likelihood scenarios. SEPA hosted workshops and drop-in sessions to review the maps in partnership with local authorities and has acted on comments and feedback where there is data available to do so.

5. Interpretation

The surface water map has been developed using nationally applied methodologies. It is a tool to help raise public awareness and understanding of flood risk, support flood risk management and land use planning decisions.

The map is of a strategic nature to support flood risk management planning at a community level. It is not appropriate for property level assessment. This is due to the necessary assumptions and inherent uncertainty in the application of a nationally consistent methodology to provide Scotland-wide surface water flood mapping.

As the national source of flood hazard information in Scotland, the flood map forms a key basis for Flood Risk Management Planning and to support the development of the National Flood Risk Assessment, National and Local Flood Risk Management Strategies Plans.

5.1 Confidence

Flood hazard mapping and the assessment of the sources and impacts of flooding is a complex process. Due to assumptions that are necessary to allow us to reflect complex natural processes, there are uncertainties associated with developing any assessment or modelling methodology. Assumptions may be applied at each stage of the process and from a range of sources. For example, sources of uncertainty in flood hazard mapping include:

- The data going into the assessment such as design rainfall;
- The resolution of topographical information;
- The method or model used;
- Future changes e.g. climate change and land use changes.

The consideration of model/map confidence enables us to make informed decisions by providing understanding the confidence in the data and the final mapped outputs. It also identifies where resources can be focused for further development.

5.2 Limitations

The surface water flood map has been produced at the national scale using national datasets and standard methodologies. This map is a strategic product to support Flood Risk Management Planning at a community level and should not be used at the individual property level without further guidance.

5.2.1 Method Limitations

The key limitations of the strategic modelling approach taken for surface water mapping are as follows:

- Rainfall inputs are based on defined durations of 1 hour and 3 hours, rather than the most intense or critical storm duration;
- Ground models are varied in their resolution between national and regional investigation and each contain inherent limitations such as landscape artefacts and historic changes in ground levels due to development;
- Roughness values for land cover in the regional study are based on broad land-use categories from Land Cover Map 2007 so may not represent variability of all local environments;
- The actual volumes of rainfall lost to drainage systems or simple runoff is highly locally variable and is dependent on infrastructure capacity and management practices. Applying national or regionalised loss values may under- or over-estimate reality;
- Antecedent conditions (such as initial catchment wetness) and other local effects on infiltration are not directly considered (other than through the use of nationally applicable percentage runoff values for urban and rural land-use);
- The national study does not identify flow pathways and therefore surface water flooding associated with pathway flooding may not be represented;
- Velocities are only provided for those areas covered by the regional study.

5.2.2 Caveats

- The surface water map does not consider the interaction of pluvial and sewerage flood sources. These sources have been considered independently.

6. Data Availability

The published flood hazard maps as shown on the SEPA website are available for third party use under [Open Government Licence](#). The datasets and supporting documentation are available for download on our [Data Publication page](#). Please note that the availability of these datasets under Open Government Licence, does not provide access to the data or models underpinning the SEPA Flood Maps.

Appendix

Table 1: Data as an input to surface water flood map

Data	Description	How the data was used	Quality check
National Study Digital Terrain Model (DTM)	Intermap's NEXTMap DTM with a horizontal resolution of 5m was used in the national study.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To develop the national surface water flood model. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manual quality checks to ensure blockages were removed from river channels, such as bridges and vegetation. Manual check of the 200 year flood extent to identify any remaining false
Regional Study DTM	The DTM used in the regional study comprises LiDAR and Intermap's NEXTMap DTM with a horizontal resolution of 2m or 5m depending on the catchment being modelled.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To develop the regional surface water flood model. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manual quality checks to ensure blockages were removed from river channels, such as bridges and vegetation. Manual check of the 200 year flood extent to identify any remaining false blockages Checks were also undertaken at the boundary of NEXTMap and LiDAR data to ensure there were no jumps in ground level.
Sewer Modelling DTM	The regional study DTM with NEXTMap data added for those areas not covered by the regional study and for which sewer modelling is required.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To develop the sewer flood model. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manual quality checks to ensure blockages were removed from river channels, such as bridges and vegetation. Manual check of the 200 year flood extent to identify any remaining false blockages Checks were also undertaken at the boundary of NEXTMap and LiDAR data to ensure there were no jumps in ground level.

Ordnance Survey MasterMap Topography layer	Dataset containing geographic features such as roads, properties and topography.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Used to identify possible false blockages in the DTMs Used to identify buildings for the regional output in order to raise DTM heights by 0.3m Used to determine urban/rural areas for alterations to model inflows in the regional study 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is a published dataset from Ordnance Survey and therefore checks on this were not undertaken.
Ordnance Survey VectorMap Layers	Dataset containing geographic features such as roads, properties and topography.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Used to identify buildings for the national output in order to raise DTM heights by 0.3m 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is a published dataset from Ordnance Survey and therefore checks on this were not undertaken.
Scottish Government Urban/Rural Classification (2010)	Dataset identifying urban and rural areas based on population and accessibility.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Used to determine urban/rural areas for alterations to model inflows in the national study 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is a published dataset and therefore checks on this were not undertaken.
National & Regional Rainfall values	<p>1 km resolution grids holding rainfall inputs for the 7 return periods being modelled</p> <p>Alterations were made to these tiles to account for losses to drains and losses to runoff.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To develop the national and regional models. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rainfall values were provided by the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology (CEH) this is commercially available dataset and therefore checks on this were not undertaken.
Land Cover Map (LCM) 2007	<p>LCM2007 has been derived from satellite images and digital cartography and gives land cover information for the entire UK on a 25m grid. Land cover classes are based on UK Biodiversity Action Plan Broad Habitats, for example coniferous forest or saltmarsh. LCM2007 is produced by the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology (CEH)</p> <p>(http://www.ceh.ac.uk/landcovermap2007.html).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Used to define roughness values (a measure of resistance to flood flow) for areas in the regional study 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is a published dataset and therefore checks on this were not undertaken.
DEFRA	<i>Flood and Coastal Defence Appraisal Guidance FCDPAG3 Economic Appraisal Supplementary Note to Operating Authorities - Climate Change Impacts.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Used to define rainfall uplifts for climate change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is published guidance, which was considered suitable for application to Scotland.

Table 2: Return periods for which surface water outputs were derived

Return Period	Flood Extents	Flood Depths	Flood Velocities²	Hazard Rating²
10	✓	✓	✓	✓
30	✓	✓	✓	✓
30 + climate change	✓	✓	✓	✓
50	✓	✓	✓	✓
100	✓	✓	✓	✓
200	✓	✓	✓	✓
200 + climate change	✓	✓	✓	✓

² Dataset only available for those locations where the regional study was undertaken