

How to sandbag your home



Sandbags placed in appropriate locations in and around your home can help minimise the impact of flooding.

While they will not stop the water completely, sandbags can help reduce the amount of water entering your home and damaging your property if they are used correctly.

While filling and laying sandbags is a straightforward process, filled sandbags can weigh between 15-20 kilograms so you may need at least two people to lay them safely.

You can buy sandbags from many hardware, landscaping or garden supply stores. Plastic shopping bags, grain and animal fodder bags may also be used in an emergency in place of sandbags.



How to fill a sandbag

- Sand is the best option to fill the sandbags. Use garden soil if sand is not readily available.

- ✗ Do not overfill sandbags.
- ✗ Do not tie the top of the bag.

- ✓ Only fill sandbags two-thirds full. This allows the sand to shift about inside the bag, lie flat, and mould to fill in any gaps.



- **Working safely should be your priority.**

Do not try to lift a sandbag that is too heavy for you. Wear work gloves as well as goggles or safety glasses to prevent sand blowing into your eyes.

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Where do I place the sandbags?

- Place sandbags over all wastewater drains, including toilets, showers and sinks, to prevent greywater entering your home. Wrapping these sandbags in a plastic bag before using them this way is also a good idea.
- Air vents at the bottom of your home's external wall may also need sandbags. You can cover smaller vents with waterproof tape or plastic.



- Build a small sandbag wall across external doorways. This includes sliding doors and garage roller doors. The height of the sandbag wall will depend on the expected height of the floodwater; however, it is generally around two sandbag rows high.



How do I lay sandbags?

- Lay sandbags as you would lay bricks, offsetting the rows so the gaps between the sandbags are staggered. It is best to offset each row by half a sandbag (See diagram at right).
- Start at one end and work through to the other end.
- Tuck the flap under each sandbag and at the end of the row.
- Flattening the top of the sandbag wall before adding the next row will help you to build a more stable sandbag wall.



- If available, use plastic sheeting under the sandbags and continue it up the surface you are protecting to reduce water seepage.



Disposal of used sandbags

- Wear sturdy gloves and goggles when handling used sandbags, particularly if they have been exposed to floodwater, which is often contaminated with human and animal waste, chemicals and other contaminants.
- Open the sandbags and scatter the contents on to a garden bed, lawn or other external areas where it will not wash into stormwater drains or waterways such as rivers and creeks.
- Most sandbags, including those supplied and used by the SES, are biodegradable. Once emptied, they can safely be disposed of in your household rubbish or buried in the ground where they will break down over time.



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