

# Filling and using sandbags

**Heavy rainfall in areas results in surface flooding. When large high tides or 'king tides' occur, only a small-to-moderate storm surge is needed to flood some areas, caused by strong winds and ocean swells.**

A simple way to protect your property is to place sandbags in places that will divert water from your house.

However, sandbags are unlikely to stop water from moving in or breaking through under a house or other access points. Water seeps through sandbags, even when well stacked and set into place. Water protection can be improved by using them in conjunction with sheets of PVC.



## Filling sandbags

Fill bags with heavy or sandy soil, or with sand. Don't use gravelly or rocky soils as they will let the water through. Only fill bags to half or two-thirds full – this gives the soil or sand room to expand as it absorbs the water. Don't tie or seal the bag – when you put it in place, fold the flap into a triangle and tuck it under the bag.

## Building a sandbag wall

Place your first row of sandbags lengthwise and flat to the ground, butting each end to the next, folding the open end of the sandbag underneath. Place the second row of sandbags on top, staggering the joints, compacting each sandbag as you go. This can be done to a height of three layers. If further height is required, place sandbags behind to add strength to your wall.

## Drying sandbags before re-use

When the water has receded, separate your sandbags, lay them out or stand them up and let them dry out thoroughly. Once dry, store them for use again. Wet sandbags will rot or deteriorate quickly.

## Disposing of sandbags

To dispose of sandbags, scatter the sand in your garden. Do not leave bags on the kerbside – they will not be collected and may clog up the drains.

For more information on what to do in an emergency, visit:  
[www.getready.govt.nz](http://www.getready.govt.nz) or [www.bopcivildefence.govt.nz](http://www.bopcivildefence.govt.nz)



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