

# ALTERNATIVE SANDBAGS

## Is there an alternative to traditional sandbags?

For many years, traditional sandbags using hessian sacks have often been the most popular method of preventing flood water from entering and inundating properties or an area of land. However, over time, alternative sandbags have now been developed and identified as a better substitute for traditional sandbags.



Even though traditional sandbags are cheap, and can prevent flood water from entering areas for short periods of time, there are some negative aspects of using them:

- They are relatively easy to obtain, but at the time of a flood event, demand for them may exceed availability at your local builder's merchants.
- Due to their weight (~13kg), they can be very difficult to handle.
- The hessian sacks are biodegradable and can rot if they are left in the same position for long periods of time.

## What are the alternatives and how do they work?



Gravitas International Ltd / Domestic flood control 2011 - water reactive sandbag / [CC BY-SA 3.0](#)

A range of alternative sandbags are now available to purchase in preparation for flooding. They have many advantages over traditional sandbags and have been found to be more effective at protecting against flooding.

Some alternative sandbags are filled with a gel substance which can mould to gaps and available space, creating a better seal than traditional sandbags. They can be applied in small strips and can act as a water tight seal around windows and door frames or laid out as barriers to divert flowing water during a flood.

They are lightweight and easy to store and deploy, so are very useful in a flash flood event. Once the alternative sandbags are put in the appropriate place, it is important to wet them which will activate them so that they are weighted down and can act as a barrier.

Some types of alternative sandbags can absorb approximately 20 litres of water. After the flood event has occurred, alternative sandbags can be re-used, as long as they are not contaminated with sewage water.



Gravitas International Ltd / Flood Doorway in Somerset / [CC BY-SA 3.0](#)

**It is important that you consider the full range of options that are available to you to make your home or business more flood resilient.**

**There are lots of flood resistant and flood resilient measures and products that may be suitable for you - this includes buying products to put in place when flooding happens to try and prevent water from entering your property, or making changes to the interior of your property so it can recover from the effects of flooding more efficiently.**