

# Storm Safe: Staying Safe and Dry

Climate change is bringing more intense bursts of rainfall. In SDCC, we face risks from rivers like the Camac, Dodder, Griffeen, Liffey, Poddle, Whitechurch and "pluvial" flooding, which happens when heavy rain overwhelms our drains and gutters. SDCC is progressing at various stages Flood Alleviation Schemes for the Poddle & Camac rivers and Whitechurch stream.

## What you can do:

- Check the Map: Visit the Council's website <https://www.sdcc.ie> or <https://www.floodinfo.ie> to see if your area is at risk of flooding.
- SDCC's "A Householder's Guide – To Sustainable Drainage (SuDS)" outlines practical measures for residents to manage surface water, reduce flood risk, and enhance local biodiversity. Key recommendations include installing water butts, creating rain gardens or planters, implementing permeable paving to replace hard surfaces and using green roofs. For the full guide and to learn more about implementing these solutions, visit <https://www.sdcc.ie/en/services/environment/>
- Clear the Way: Help the water flow. Ensure the gullies and drains outside your house are clear of leaves, plastic bottles and debris. If a drain is blocked, report it to the Council by either emailing [info@sdublincoco.ie](mailto:info@sdublincoco.ie) or phoning 01 4149000 from 9am to 5pm Monday to Thursday and 9am - 4.30pm on Fridays.
- Be Winter Ready: A general winter preparedness document, prepared by the Irish Government, which complements this document, is available here: <https://www.winterready.ie/en>
- SDCC has a Severe Weather Response Team to manage an efficient response to incidents. Residents can report incidents to SDCC at the above contacts.

## The "Urban Heat Island" Effect

- Have you noticed that on a summer evening, it feels much warmer in the middle of built-up areas than it does in open green spaces? This is the Urban Heat Island (UHI) effect.
- Buildings, roads and pavements are usually dark and dense. They soak up the sun's energy all day and re-radiate it as heat all night. In contrast, trees and grass 'sweat' water, which naturally cools the air.

## How we can mitigate it together:

- Green Your Space: Every leaf helps. If you have a garden, try to keep some grass or plants rather than paving the whole area. If you have a balcony, a few potted plants can help cool the immediate air. And to help nature, always try to plant native species, following the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan guidelines: <https://pollinators.ie/gardens/>
- Plant a Tree: Trees are the ultimate air conditioners. SDCC has an active tree-planting program - support local greening initiatives in your neighbourhood.
- De-pave: If you are renovating your driveway, consider 'permeable' options like gravel or honeycomb paving that allows grass to grow through. This allows the ground to cool down and soak up rainwater, reducing both heat and flood risk.
- SDCC has document to help with Sustainable Urban Drainage (SuDS) actions, here: <https://www.sdcc.ie/en/services/environment/environmental-health/natural-water/sustainable-drainage-systems/>

SDCC is a vibrant mix of bustling town centres like Tallaght, Clondalkin, Lucan, Rathfarnham and the beautiful foothills of the Dublin Mountains. However, our climate is changing. We are seeing wetter winters, drier and hotter summers and more unpredictable storms and flood events.

These changes don't just affect the environment, they affect our health. By understanding how our changing weather impacts our homes and our bodies, we can take simple, empowering steps to protect ourselves and our neighbours. This leaflet is your toolkit for staying healthy, safe and comfortable in a changing SDCC.

## Empowered for the Future

Climate action isn't just about saving the planet - it's about making our homes more comfortable, our air cleaner and our families healthier. By taking these small steps, the citizens of SDCC are building a resilient community that can thrive whatever the weather brings.

For more information on what SDCC is doing and what you can do for climate action, visit: [www.sdcc.ie/climatechange](http://www.sdcc.ie/climatechange)

# A Public Health Guide for Climate Action



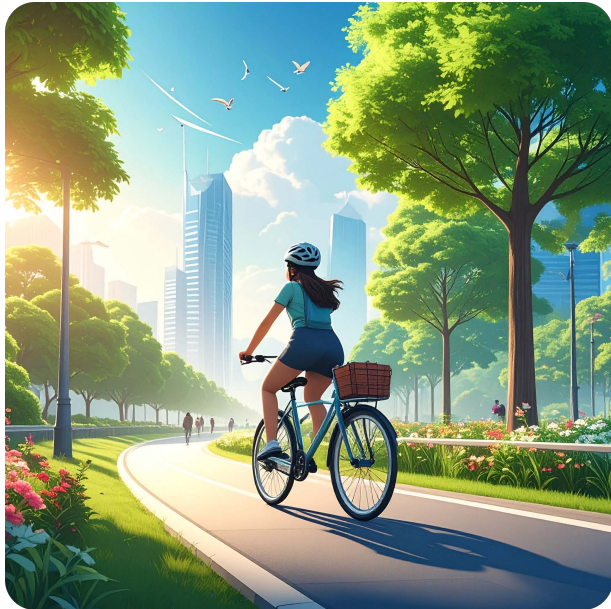
**Our Home, Our Health:  
A Guide to Climate  
Resilience in SDCC**

# Breathing Easy: Tackling Mould and Damp

As our winters become milder and wetter, the air holds more moisture. When this moist air hits cold surfaces in our homes - like windows or external walls - it turns into condensation. If left alone, this leads to mould. Mould releases tiny spores into the air that can trigger asthma, irritate your eyes and skin or cause persistent coughs.

## What you can do:

- The 10-Minute Air Flush: Even in winter, open your windows wide for 10 minutes every morning. This replaces damp, stale air with fresh, dry air without losing too much heat from your furniture and walls.
- Contain the Steam: When cooking, keep lids on pans and close the kitchen door. When showering, keep the bathroom door shut and leave the fan on or the bathroom window open for 20 minutes afterwards.
- Dry Clothes Smartly: If you must dry clothes indoors (outdoors is preferable whenever possible), use a drying rack in a room with a closed door and an open window. Avoid putting wet clothes directly on radiators, as this sends moisture straight into the air.
- Wipe it Away: If you see "tears" on your windows in the morning, wipe them with a cloth. Preventing the water from sitting there is the best way to stop mould before it starts.



# Keeping Your Cool: Coping with Warm Weather

While we all enjoy a sunny day at our local SDCC park, extreme heat is a serious health risk. 'Heat stress' happens when the body can't cool itself down fast enough. This can lead to exhaustion, headaches and in severe cases, heatstroke.

## What you can do:

- The 'Mediterranean' Method: During the hottest part of the day, keep your windows and curtains closed on the sunny side of the house. This keeps the heat out. Open them again in the evening when the outside air is cooler than the inside.
- Hydrate Early and Often: Don't wait until you are thirsty to drink water. Carry a reusable bottle with you.
- Cool the Body, Not Just the Room: If you feel overheated, apply a cool, damp cloth to your neck or wrists, or take a lukewarm (not freezing cold) shower.
- Check on the Vulnerable: Older neighbours or those with underlying health conditions may not feel the heat until they are already dehydrated. A friendly "How are you?" can be a lifesaver.

# Food Safety: Don't Let the Heat Spoil the Fun

When temperatures rise, bacteria in food can double every 20 minutes. Food poisoning cases often spike during Irish 'heatwaves' because we aren't used to managing food in high temperatures.

## What you can do:

- Keep high risk foods out of The Danger Zone (between 5°C and 63°C). Bacteria thrive in this temperature range. Keep your fridge set at between 0 to 5°C. To check your fridge temperature, you can borrow for free a Home Energy Saving Kit (HESK) from your local library, which includes a fridge thermometer. More details on the HESK here: <https://www.codema.ie/our-work/home-energy-saving-kit/>
- The 2-Hour Rule: High risk food (meat, dairy, cooked rice, salads with mayo) should never sit out for more than two hours. This time should be reduced in hot weather. Warm temperatures encourage the growth of bacteria.

- Defrost in the Fridge: Avoid defrosting meats at warm temperatures. Defrost in the fridge where possible to control the growth of bacteria.
- BBQ Basics: When cooking outdoors, ensure meat is piping hot all the way through (75°C for pork, poultry and mince products). Use separate plates and tongs for raw and cooked meats to avoid cross-contamination. Protect foods from animals and insects, especially flies.
- Wash your hands! Always wash your hands thoroughly before handling foods and always after handling raw meat.

# Clearing the Air: Improving South Dublin's Air Quality

The air quality in SDCC is generally good, but on cold, still winter nights, smoke from solid fuel fires can create smog in our housing estates. This fine particulate matter (PM2.5) is so small it can enter our bloodstream, affecting heart and lung health.

Car exhaust is the primary source of air pollution in Dublin, causing significantly elevated levels of nitrogen dioxide (NO2) and particulate matter (PM). High traffic volumes, particularly diesel vehicles, create severe pollution "hotspots".

## What you can do:

- Burn Cleaner: If you have an open fire or stove, only use dried, seasoned wood or "smokeless" fuels. Do not burn household waste and avoid burning "wet" wood, which creates huge amounts of health-damaging smoke.
- Choose Active Travel: Many of our journeys in SDCC are less than 3km. By walking or cycling to the shops or school, you reduce the nitrogen dioxide (NO2) levels in your local street, improving local air quality.
- No Idling: If you are waiting to pick up kids at the school gate, turn your engine off. Idling engines create 'hotspots' of poor air quality, exactly where children - whose lungs are still developing - are breathing.