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## Environment Agency launches UK's largest flood product test centre

### PRESS RELEASE

2 February 2010

#### Replica house flooded by 196,000 gallons of water to test flood protection products

A cutting-edge simulator that recreates the devastating effects of a flood has been created to test products designed to defend homes, businesses and people from flooding.

The new test facility in Oxfordshire has been developed by the Environment Agency and HR Wallingford to test flood defence products against a new industry standard. It features a replica living room inside a massive tank, the size of an Olympic swimming pool.

During the simulation, the replica building is fitted with the flood products and the tank is then flooded with thousands of gallons of water to simulate a severe flood. If successful, the products will be awarded the BSI Kitemark, giving householders, organisations and businesses greater confidence in the flood products they use to protect their property.

Robert Runcie, the Environment Agency's Director of Flood and Coastal Risk Management, said: *"The new testing facility and industry standard will help those at risk make informed choices and have confidence in the flood products they buy, as well as encouraging new product development."*

*"The Environment Agency is working hard across the country to reduce the risk of flooding and has already completed 106 new defences since summer 2007, however one in six homes in England and Wales are already at risk of flooding – and this number is likely to increase due to the effects of climate change. We want to encourage individuals and businesses to help themselves by making their property more resistant to flooding."*

Defra's £5m property-level flood protection grant scheme helps those in high flood-risk areas that do not benefit from community-level defences, enabling them to purchase flood protection products for individual houses, such as those being tested in the new centre. The Environment Agency is urging the local authorities receiving this grant money to ensure that the products they purchase to protect people and property are tested and bear the BSI Kitemark.

The opening of this new facility supports the introduction of a new industry standard (PAS 1188) and will help ensure that new products entering the market are robust and reliable. This will result in a wider range of options for consumers in the future.

David Ford, Executive Director, Healthcare and Testing Services, BSI said: *"The new facility and Kitemark scheme will directly benefit consumers affected by flooding. They will now be able to help protect their homes or businesses by choosing products which have been rigorously and consistently tested to the requirements of an industry standard, PAS 1188. Manufacturers will have the benefit of being able to show that their flood defence product offers a high level of protection, and will be able to display the Kitemark, a recognised symbol of trust."*

Andy Tagg, Floods Group Manager, HR Wallingford, said:

*"HR Wallingford is very pleased to continue our co-operation with the Environment Agency and BSI by hosting the new flood product test centre in our extensive hydraulic laboratory at Wallingford. To streamline the test procedures, HR Wallingford have designed two state-of-the-art test rigs that will be used to test flood protection products for the BSI Kitemark."*

- ENDS -

#### Notes to Editors

##### Free flood warning service

The Environment Agency's free service provides flood warnings direct to homes at risk of sea or river flooding by telephone, mobile, email, SMS text message, fax or pager. As well as signing up for warnings, you can get simple advice on what to do before, during and after a flood. Call 0845 988 1188 to find out if you are at risk. Information on what to do before, during and after a flood can be found at <http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/homeandleisure/floods/31624.aspx>

**About BSI**

BSI is a global independent business services organization that inspires confidence and delivers assurance to over 80,000 customers with standards-based solutions. Originating as the world's first national standards body, BSI has over 2,300 staff operating in over 120 countries through more than 50 global offices. BSI's key offerings are:

- The development and sale of private, national and international standards and supporting information that promote and share best practice
- Second and third-party management systems assessment and certification in all critical areas of management disciplines
- Testing and certification of services and products for Kitemark and CE marking to UK, European and International standards. BSI is a Notified Body for 15 New Approach EU Directives
- Certification of high-risk, complex medical devices
- Performance management software solutions
- Training services in support of standards implementation and business best practice.

For further information please visit:

[www.bsigroup.com/flood](http://www.bsigroup.com/flood)

[www.kitemark.com/flood](http://www.kitemark.com/flood)

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