The 7-72 Method

Family Survival Guide

How to protect your family for 72 hours when the essentials run out or a natural disaster strikes

Don't panic. Prepare in time.



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Start here



This guide is not here to scare you. It is here so that, if one day the power goes out, the water is cut off or you have to leave home, your family knows exactly what to do.

Knowing what to do at the right moment is priceless. And getting prepared is not as hard as it seems: you don't need a bunker, lots of money or any experience. You need a plan, a few things at home and a little time this week.

Getting informed today is looking after your loved ones tomorrow.

What you will have at the end

- A complete family plan, with each person's details.
- Meeting points and a way to reach each other if the phones go down.
- A kit for staying at home and a grab bag for leaving.
- A folder with your important documents.
- Cards that tell you what to do in each emergency, ready to print.

Why 72 hours

Many governments and civil protection agencies recommend that every household can look after itself for at least 72 hours.

The reason is practical. In a major emergency, the emergency services help those in the greatest danger first. If your family can manage on its own for three days, you help the help reach the people who need it most, and you

wait with more peace of mind.

How to use this guide

1. **Follow the 7-72 Method.** It is the simplest path: one step at a time, at your own pace.
2. **Fill in the forms.** You can do it on the computer or by hand.
3. **Print it.** In an emergency there may be no power, no battery and no signal. Paper always works.
4. **Keep it where you can see it.** Make sure the whole family knows where it is.

Before you start, look at the last page, "Useful information". It has the phone numbers, the alert system and the recommended amounts for your country.

If you only have 10 minutes today

Do these three things and you will already be better prepared than yesterday:

- [ ] Save the emergency number and write down three important phone numbers on paper.
- [ ] Find out where the water stopcock, the gas shut-off valve and the fuse box are.
- [ ] Leave a torch with batteries in a place the whole family knows.

The first decision: stay or go?

In most emergencies, the usual advice is to **stay at home**. Leaving without a reason can be more dangerous: busy roads, confusing information and fewer supplies to hand.

Stay	Go
If the authorities tell you to stay indoors	If the authorities order an evacuation
If your home is safe	If your home is no longer safe and you are in immediate danger
If you have no instructions yet	Always with your grab bag and by the routes you are given

The rule is simple: follow the authorities. Listen to their official messages, not to rumours.

The 7-72 Method: get everything ready in 7 steps

7 steps so your family can manage on its own for 72 hours. You can do one a day or go at your own pace: if you stop for a while, just pick up where you left off.

Step	What you do	Approximate time	Where
1	Get the family together and fill in each person's details	30 minutes	p. 7
2	Choose meeting points and how you will contact each other	30 minutes	p. 10
3	Work out and store your water supply	30 minutes	p. 21
4	Build your 3-day food store	45 minutes, plus shopping	p. 24
5	Get light, a radio and phone charging ready	20 minutes	p. 30
6	Check your first aid kit, medication, warm clothes and hygiene	40 minutes	p. 32
7	Put together your document folder and grab bag, and do a practice drill	45 minutes	p. 18

Each step has its own label in the section where you do it, so you never lose your place.

When you finish step 7, your family has its plan.

In Part 2 you will find the complete list of what not to forget when you go shopping.

An important note

This guide is for information only and does not replace instructions from the authorities, or the advice of your doctor, pharmacist or vet. In an emergency, always follow official instructions.

Part 1. Your family plan



In an emergency, nobody thinks clearly. That is why it is worth deciding now, calmly, the things you won't want to improvise later.

These forms are meant to be filled in as a family. It takes about 60 minutes in total.

Tip: do it with the children. Knowing what to do gives them confidence and takes away their fear.

Form 1. Who we are

Step 1

What it is for: so that anyone can help your family, even if you are not there.

Full name	Age	Mobile	Work or school	Phone number there

Home address: _____

Date of this form: ____ / ____ / _____

Form 2. Our health

Step 1

What it is for: to give the right information in seconds, even if the person affected cannot speak.

Name	Conditions	Medication	Allergies	GP and phone

Does anyone rely on an electrical medical device? ☐ No ☐ Yes: _____

Does anyone need help to move around? ☐ No ☐ Yes: _____

Does anyone use glasses, a hearing aid or another aid? ☐ No ☐ Yes: _____

If you answered yes to any of these, see Part 6.

Form 3. Our pets

Name	Species and breed	Colour	Microchip number	Vet

Pets are part of the plan too: include them in the grab bag and in your meeting points.

Form 4. Who to call

The general emergency numbers are on the last page. Write your own here.

Who	Name	Phone
Emergencies		
GP surgery or hospital		
Local police station		
Fire station		
Electricity supplier		
Water company		
Gas supplier		
Home insurance		
Trusted neighbour		

Form 5. Our contact in another town

Why it matters: in an emergency, calls inside the affected area can fail, and sometimes it is easier to get through to someone who is far away.

Choose a trusted person who lives in another town or city. If you get separated, everyone lets that person know how they are and where. That way the family finds each other without overloading the phone lines.

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Town or city: _____

☐ We have told them they are our contact.

Form 6. How we reach each other if the phones go down

Step 2

Decide this in advance:

- **Short messages.** A text message often gets through better than a call: “I'm OK. I'm at ___. Going to ___”.
- **Battery.** Turn the brightness down, switch on battery saver and only turn the phone on every so often.
- **A set time.** If the battery is low, agree to turn it on at set times: _____ and _____.
- **Paper note.** If you have to leave, leave a note where your family will see it, with the time, where you are going and how you are. For safety, leave it inside the house.
- **No phone at all.** If there is no way to communicate, go to the meeting point.

Form 7. Our meeting points

Step 2

Why it matters: if an emergency happens while you are apart, everyone will know where to go without needing to talk.

	Place	Address
Point 1: near home		
Point 2: outside the neighbourhood		

If we can't get there, we wait at _____ until _____.

Tips:

- Choose places that are easy to recognise and to reach on foot.
- Avoid low-lying areas, or places next to rivers or streams.
- Make sure even the children know how to get there.

Form 8. How we get out

Main way out of the house: _____

Alternative way out: _____

Route out of the neighbourhood: _____

Second route: _____

Where we would go if we had to leave the town:

_____

Walk or drive the routes once. Things you already know are easier to do when you are nervous.

Form 9. The plan of our home

Draw a simple plan of your home, seen from above, and mark:

- ☐ Exits
- ☐ Safest place in the house
- ☐ Water stopcock
- ☐ Gas shut-off valve
- ☐ Fuse box
- ☐ Torch
- ☐ Radio
- ☐ Chargers
- ☐ Emergency kit
- ☐ Grab bag
- ☐ Document folder

Make sure every adult and teenager knows how to turn off the water and gas, and switch off the electricity at the fuse box.

Form 10. What risks we face

Not every home faces the same risks. Tick yours and note what you could do to reduce them.

Risk	Does it affect us?	What we can do
Power cut	☐	
Water supply cut	☐	
Earthquake	☐	
Flooding	☐	
Wildfire	☐	
Extreme heat	☐	
Extreme cold or snow	☐	
Strong winds	☐	

Inside the house: tall furniture not fixed to the wall, heavy things on high shelves, overloaded sockets.

Outside the house: nearby rivers or streams, woodland or moorland, an underground car park, large trees.

Do you live in a block of flats? Without power, the lift, electric gates and, in some cases, the water supply to the upper floors can stop working. Find out how yours works.

Form 11. Who does what

Sharing out the jobs stops everyone doing the same thing while nobody does the rest. Give the children a job that suits their age.

Job	Who	Back-up
Check that everyone is OK		
Turn off water, gas and electricity, if needed		
Grab the bag and the folder		
Help older people or children		
Look after the pet		
Listen to the radio and the alerts		
Let our contact in another town know		

Form 12. If it happens at any time

Emergencies don't pick their moment. Decide what to do in each case.

If we are...	Who does what
All at home	
The adults at work	
The children at school	
At night	
Travelling or in the car	

Ask the school: what is their plan? Where would they take the children? Who can collect them?

People allowed to collect the children: _____

Form 13. Pocket card

One per person. Cut it out and keep it in your wallet or school bag.

NAME: _____

CONTACT 1: _____

CONTACT IN ANOTHER TOWN: _____

MEETING POINT 1: _____

MEETING POINT 2: _____

ALLERGIES AND MEDICATION: _____

Form 14. Fridge sheet

Print it and put it up where the whole family can see it.

If something happens, in this order

1. **Stay calm** and check that everyone is OK.
2. **If there is immediate danger,** call the emergency number.
3. **Get informed** through the radio and official channels.
4. **Follow the instructions:** stay or go.
5. **Let your contact know** with a short message.
6. **Save the battery** and only use the phone when you need to.

Emergencies: _____

Contact in another town: _____

Meeting point 1: _____

Meeting point 2: _____

The kit is in: _____

The grab bag is in: _____

Don't panic. Prepare in time.



Done

- [ ] We filled in the forms.
- [ ] We printed the plan.
- [ ] The whole family knows where it is.
- [ ] We went over the meeting points.
- [ ] We wrote down the date to review it: ____ / ____ / _____

Your family now has a plan. That alone puts you ahead of most people.

Part 2. Your kit



Your kit is what lets your family look after itself for 72 hours, without going out to the shops and without relying on electricity.

Here is exactly what to gather, how much, what it is for and how to store it.



Two kits, two situations

Step 7

	Kit for staying at home	Grab bag for leaving
What for	Power or water cut, being told to stay indoors, storms	Evacuation or leaving in a hurry
Where	A high, easy-to-reach, cool and dry place. Never in garages or cellars, which can flood	Near the door, ready to grab
How long it lasts	3 days or more	Enough to get out and get where you are going
Size	It can take up more space	The person carrying it must be able to manage it

What goes in each grab bag

Choose sturdy rucksacks that are waterproof or have a rain cover.

For each adult	For each child
2 one-litre bottles of water	1 small bottle of water
Food for one day	Biscuits, a cereal bar and dried fruit
Torch and batteries	Small torch
Power bank and cable	Their pocket card
A change of clothes, socks and a waterproof jacket	A change of clothes and a waterproof jacket
Medication, printed copies of documents and the “Useful information” page	A small toy or a book
Cash and keys	Whistle

If you are short of space, use the space under the bed, the top of the wardrobe for light things, or a storage trunk. Spread the water around several places instead of keeping it all in one pile.

When you go shopping, don't forget



This is the list of everything you need for **72 hours**. Take it with you when you go shopping, check first what you already have at home and tick what you are missing.

Supermarket

- [ ] Bottled water
- [ ] Ring-pull tins: fish, meat, beans and pulses, vegetables and fruit
- [ ] Crispbread, crackers, cereal and cereal bars
- [ ] UHT or powdered milk
- [ ] Nuts, dried fruit and chocolate
- [ ] Dried fruit and vegetables
- [ ] Instant soups and instant mash
- [ ] Hard or mature cheese
- [ ] Salt, sugar, oil, coffee or tea
- [ ] Reusable or disposable cutlery, cups and plates
- [ ] Toilet roll, soap, shower gel, wet wipes and bin bags
- [ ] Bleach, washing-up liquid, disinfectant, sponges, cloths and kitchen roll
- [ ] Period products and nappies, if needed
- [ ] Tissues, hand sanitiser, deodorant, dry shampoo, lip balm and hand cream
- [ ] Nail clippers, comb, razor and insect repellent
- [ ] Zip-lock bags
- [ ] Candles, matches and lighters
- [ ] Batteries

Pharmacy

- [ ] Saline solution, antiseptic and surgical spirit
- [ ] Cotton wool, gauze, bandages and medical tape
- [ ] Dressings or plasters
- [ ] Scissors, tweezers and a thermometer
- [ ] Disposable gloves and face masks
- [ ] Painkillers and fever reducers your doctor or pharmacist recommends
- [ ] Regular medication and a reserve agreed with your GP or pharmacist
- [ ] Sun cream

DIY or hardware shop

- [ ] Torches, a head torch, a wind-up torch and a battery lantern
- [ ] Battery or wind-up radio, with AM and FM
- [ ] Power banks and cables, plus a solar charger if you want to add one
- [ ] Multi-tool or penknife
- [ ] Adjustable spanner and screwdriver
- [ ] Strong tape, such as duct tape
- [ ] 10 to 15 metres of rope
- [ ] Cable ties
- [ ] Tarpaulin or heavy-duty plastic sheeting
- [ ] Work gloves
- [ ] Whistles
- [ ] Smoke, gas and carbon monoxide alarms
- [ ] Fire extinguisher
- [ ] Fireproof bag or box
- [ ] Manual tin opener
- [ ] Water containers and a bucket with a lid
- [ ] Camping stove and gas cartridges, for outdoor use only
- [ ] Flask to keep water hot

Clothes and warmth

- [ ] Foil emergency blankets
- [ ] Blankets and sleeping bags
- [ ] Spare clothes, hats, gloves and thick socks

- [ ] Waterproof jackets, closed shoes and wellies
- [ ] Spare underwear and small towels
- [ ] Rucksacks

Other

- [ ] Paper map of your area
- [ ] Pen and notebook
- [ ] Spare keys
- [ ] Waterproof phone pouch
- [ ] Earplugs, sewing kit and battery clock
- [ ] Pack of cards and a book
- [ ] Safety pins and elastic bands
- [ ] Fridge thermometer
- [ ] In-car phone charger
- [ ] Food, water and essentials for your pet



Water

Step 3



This is the first thing to sort out.

How much to store

Allow 3 litres per person per day, for drinking and cooking. The official minimum for your country is on the last page.

People	For 72 hours	In 1.5-litre bottles	In 5-litre bottles
1	9 litres	6 bottles	2 bottles
2	18 litres	12 bottles	4 bottles
3	27 litres	18 bottles	6 bottles
4	36 litres	24 bottles	8 bottles
5	45 litres	30 bottles	9 bottles

Add more if it is hot, if there are babies, older people, pregnant women or people who are ill, if you have pets, or if you will be making soups and dried meals.

For washing and flushing the toilet, keep a separate supply: a bucket or containers, or fill the bath if a water cut is announced.

How to store it

- **Easiest:** unopened bottled water.
- **Where:** somewhere cool and dark, away from sunlight and cleaning products.
- **If you use your own containers:** they must be food-safe, clean and close tightly. Never use containers that have held bleach or chemicals.
- **Label:** write the date you filled it on each container.
- **Rotation:** use the oldest first and replace it.

If a water cut or a storm is announced

- [ ] Fill clean bottles and containers.
- [ ] Fill the bath. That water is for washing and flushing, not for drinking.
- [ ] Charge phones and power banks.
- [ ] Freeze some bottles: they help keep things cold.



If you live in a block of flats: without power, the pumps can stop working and water may not reach the upper floors. Ask your building manager or landlord how yours works.

Can I use this water?

Situation	Can I use it?	What to do
Sealed bottled water	**Yes**	It is the first choice
Tap water with a boil water notice	**Yes, boiled**	Bring it to a rolling boil and let it cool
Cloudy water, with no other option	**Only if there is nothing else and it is not from a flooded area**	Let it settle, pour it through a clean cloth and boil it
Mains water after a flood	**Not for drinking**	Wait for the official notice that it is safe to drink
Water from a river, puddle or flood	**No**	Not even boiled, if it could be contaminated
Water that smells of fuel or chemicals	**No**	Boiling does not fix it. Don't use it
Water from radiators or the heating system	**Never**	It contains chemicals that make it dangerous
Bath or swimming pool	**Only for washing and flushing**	Don't drink it

Simple rule: if in doubt, don't drink it, and follow what the authorities say.

Last resort inside the house: according to US agencies, the water in your hot water cylinder and in the toilet cistern (never the bowl) can be used if it is clean and has no added products.

Filters and tablets: they are an extra and do not replace your supply. Check what each one removes: many portable filters do not remove bacteria or viruses.

Don't miss this

- [ ] Check the dates on your water every 6 months.
- [ ] Keep extra for babies and pets.
- [ ] Keep water in the grab bag and in the car.



Food

Step 4



Choose food that needs no fridge or cooking, and that your family will actually eat.

What to buy

Group	Specific examples
Tinned fish	Tuna, sardines, mackerel, mussels
Tinned meat	Chicken, corned beef, pâté
Ready-to-eat pulses	Chickpeas, lentils, beans, baked beans, in tins or jars

Group	Specific examples
Ready-to-eat vegetables	Sweetcorn, peas, green beans, carrots, tomatoes, peppers
Fruit	Tinned peaches or pineapple, fruit pouches, dried fruit
Bread and cereals	Crispbread, rusks, oatcakes, crackers and biscuits, rice cakes, cereal
Spreads	Peanut butter, jam, honey
Milk and cheese	UHT or powdered milk, hard or mature cheese kept somewhere cool
Snacks	Nuts, cereal bars, raisins, chocolate
With hot water	Instant soups, instant mash
Drinks	Juice cartons, instant coffee or tea
For flavour	Oil, salt, sugar, spices

Example shopping list for 1 person for 3 days

This is a guide. For your family, multiply by the number of people.

- ☐ 6 tins of fish or meat
- ☐ 3 tins or jars of beans or pulses
- ☐ 3 tins of vegetables
- ☐ 3 tins of fruit or 6 fruit pouches
- ☐ 1 packet of crispbread and 1 of biscuits
- ☐ 1 small box of cereal
- ☐ 2 litres of UHT milk
- ☐ 6 cereal bars
- ☐ 1 bag of nuts and 1 of dried fruit
- ☐ 1 bar of chocolate
- ☐ 3 instant soups

Get ready in advance



- **Easy-open tins with a ring pull.** You don't depend on a tin opener, which can get lost in an earthquake. Still keep one tied to the kit.
- **A store that doesn't depend on the fridge.** If your food depends on the cold, it depends on the electricity.
- **Buy small tins.** Without a fridge, whatever you open has to be eaten straight away.
- **Rotate your cupboard.** Put the oldest at the front and replace what you use.
- **Check the dates** once or twice a year.
- **A thermometer in the fridge,** so you know what temperature it is.
- **Frozen bottles,** to help keep things cold.
- **A safe way to heat food:** a camping stove is only for outdoor use and as the manufacturer says. Never indoors: carbon monoxide can kill.



18 easy no-cook meals

Breakfasts

1. Cereal with UHT milk
2. Crispbread with peanut butter and banana, if you still have fresh fruit
3. Crackers with mature cheese
4. Rice cakes with jam
5. Fruit pouch with nuts
6. Cereal bar with dried fruit and milk

Lunches

1. Tuna, sweetcorn and chickpea salad
2. Tinned lentils with tuna and oil
3. Beans with tinned vegetables and sardines
4. Tinned chicken with crispbread and peppers
5. Chickpeas with tomatoes and mackerel
6. Mussels with crackers and sweetcorn

Dinners and snacks

1. Sardines on crispbread with tomatoes
2. Pâté with crackers
3. Mature cheese with tinned fruit
4. Bean salad with peppers and oil

5. Rice cakes with tuna
6. Nuts, chocolate and dried fruit

3-day menu

	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Snack
Day 1	Cereal with milk	Tuna, sweetcorn and chickpea salad	Sardines on crispbread	Cereal bar and dried fruit
Day 2	Crispbread with peanut butter	Tinned lentils with tuna	Tinned chicken with peppers	Fruit pouch
Day 3	Crackers with mature cheese	Beans with vegetables and sardines	Pâté with crackers	Nuts and chocolate

If someone at home eats differently

Who	Examples to keep	Bear in mind
Babies	Ready-to-feed formula, if they use it; baby food jars; fruit pouches	Ask your health visitor or GP. Keep breastfeeding if you do. Have clean bottles and safe water
Young children	Biscuits, fruit pouches, UHT milk, cheese, cereal	Include something they already know and like
Older people	Fruit pouches, soups, purées, soft fish, pulses	Choose food that is easy to chew and to open
Coeliac disease	Rice cakes, pulses, fish, fruit, gluten-free nuts	Check every label
Diabetes	Pulses, fish, nuts, vegetables, and something to raise blood sugar	Agree it with your GP
High blood pressure	Low-salt pulses and fish, fruit, unsalted nuts	Rinse tinned pulses if you have enough water
Vegetarians	Pulses, nuts, peanut butter, cheese, cereal	Combine them for a more complete diet
Vegans	Pulses, rice cakes, peanut butter, long-life plant milk	Check labels
Allergies	What they already eat without problems	Avoid mixes and check labels

Don't miss this

- [ ] Try opening the tins without tools.
- [ ] Reusable or disposable spoons, forks, cups and plates.
- [ ] Bin bags.
- [ ] A treat to lift your spirits, like chocolate or coffee.

Light

Step 5



Get this ready beforehand, because when the power goes out you can't find anything.

- ☐ **One torch per person,** with spare batteries.
- ☐ **A head torch:** it keeps your hands free.
- ☐ **A wind-up torch:** it works without batteries.
- ☐ **A battery lantern** for the room.
- ☐ **Candles and matches or a lighter** as a back-up.

If you use candles: put them on a plate or a firm base, away from curtains, children and pets, and never leave them burning with nobody in the room. After an earthquake, or if you smell gas, don't light any: use a torch, because there could be a leak.



Battery and phone

Step 5

- [ ] **One charged power bank per person.**
- [ ] **A cable** for each phone.
- [ ] **An in-car charger.**
- [ ] **A good mobile plan:** check that you have good signal at home and at work, and enough data and calls.
- [ ] **Credit available,** if you are on pay-as-you-go.

Useful idea: if you can, don't have the whole family on the same network. If one network fails, the other might still work.

Get your phone ready: turn on battery saver mode and download your maps and documents so you can use them offline.

Don't miss this

- [ ] Recharge power banks every 3 months.
- [ ] Check batteries and torches when the seasons change.



Information

Step 5

- [ ] **Battery or wind-up radio, with AM and FM:** it works even if the networks go down.
- [ ] **Local radio stations written down:** _____
- [ ] **Emergency alerts turned on on your phone** (see the last page).
- [ ] **Contacts on paper.**
- [ ] **Whistle:** it lets you call for help without shouting.

Trust official sources and don't forward anything you haven't checked.



Warmth

Step 6



Without heating, the house gets cold. Without air conditioning or a fan, the heat is hard to bear. Get ready for both.

For the cold

- [ ] A change of warm clothes per person.
- [ ] A blanket and a foil blanket per person.
- [ ] A sleeping bag, if you have one.
- [ ] Hat, gloves and thick socks.
- [ ] Dry clothes in a waterproof bag.



Without heating: gather the family in one room, close the doors and block draughts. Dress in layers. Take off wet clothes as soon as possible. Never use barbecues, or wood, coal or gas heaters, in enclosed spaces.

For the heat

- [ ] Light clothes, a cap and sun cream.
- [ ] A hand fan or a battery fan.
- [ ] Extra water.



At home: close blinds, curtains and windows during the day, and let air in when it cools down.

Babies and older people feel the cold and the heat more. Check on them often.

Don't miss this

- [ ] Closed shoes next to the bed, in case you have to leave at night or there is broken glass on the floor.
- [ ] Every year, check the size of the children's clothes in the grab bag.



First aid kit and medication

Step 6



First aid supplies

What to have	What it is for
Saline solution	Rinsing wounds and eyes
Antiseptic	Cleaning wounds
Surgical spirit	Cleaning hands, tweezers and scissors, not open wounds
Cotton wool	Cleaning the skin. Avoid putting it directly on an open wound
Sterile gauze	Covering and cleaning wounds
Bandages	Holding gauze in place or protecting
Medical tape	Securing gauze and bandages
Dressings or plasters	Small cuts and grazes
Scissors and tweezers	Cutting gauze and removing splinters
Disposable gloves	Protecting yourself when treating someone else
Thermometer	Checking for a temperature
Face masks	Smoke, dust or illness
Foil blanket	Keeping warm

Medicines

- [ ] Each person's regular medication, in its box and with the leaflet.
- [ ] Painkillers and fever reducers, the ones your GP or pharmacist recommends.
- [ ] A list of medication and copies of prescriptions.
- [ ] Spare glasses or contact lenses, hearing aid batteries, a walking stick or other aids.

If you take long-term medication, talk to your GP or pharmacist today about keeping a reserve. A good aim is **up to a month,** always as they advise.

If a medicine needs to be kept cold, like insulin, ask in advance what to do in a power cut.

Keep a small first aid kit in the grab bag and another in the car. Part 3 tells you what is worth learning and where to learn it.

Don't miss this

- [ ] Check the first aid kit every 6 months and remove anything out of date.
- [ ] Take out-of-date medicines back to the pharmacy.
- [ ] Don't keep leftover antibiotics.
- [ ] Store it somewhere cool and dry, out of children's reach.



Hygiene

Step 6



What to have	How much, as a guide
Toilet roll	2 rolls per person
Soap and hand wash	1 of each
Wet wipes	2 packs
Period products	For at least 5 days
Nappies	For 3 days, if needed

What to have	How much, as a guide
Toothbrush and toothpaste	1 per person
Strong bin bags	1 roll
Tissues	2 packs
Hand sanitiser	1 small one for the grab bag and 1 for home
Spare underwear and socks	3 changes per person
Small towel	1 per person
Comb, nail clippers and razor	1 of each per family
Deodorant and dry shampoo or body wipes	1 of each
Lip balm and hand cream	1 of each
Insect repellent	1, if you need it where you live
Adult incontinence pads	For 3 days, if needed
Baby wipes and nappy cream	1 of each, if needed
Denture or contact lens cleaner	For 3 days, if needed
Contraceptives	The ones you usually use
Bucket with a lid and strong bags	In case the toilet doesn't work

No water in the toilet: use water from the bath or a bucket to flush. Wash your hands with soap or use hand sanitiser before eating and after going to the toilet.

Cleaning products

What to have	What it is for
Bleach	Disinfecting surfaces, always diluted and as the label says
Washing-up liquid	Washing plates and utensils
Surface disinfectant	Cleaning without using much water
Sponges and cloths	Cleaning and drying
Kitchen roll	Drying and soaking up spills
Rubber gloves	Protecting your hands
Bucket	Carrying water and cleaning

Never mix bleach with ammonia or with other cleaning products: it can be dangerous. Keep them away from food, water and children.



Tools



What to have	How many	What it is for
Multi-tool or penknife	1	Cutting, opening and small repairs

What to have	How many	What it is for
Adjustable spanner and screwdriver	1 of each	Tightening or turning off what you need to, depending on each installation
Strong tape, such as duct tape	1 roll	Sealing, repairing, fixing a tarpaulin or covering a broken window
Strong rope	1 roll of 10 to 15 metres	Tying loads, holding a tarpaulin, hanging washing
Cable ties	1 pack	Fixing things quickly
Tarpaulin or heavy-duty plastic sheeting	1, about 3 × 3 metres	Covering a broken window or protecting things from the rain
Work gloves	1 pair per adult	Moving rubble or glass
Lighter and matches	2 of each	Lighting candles or a stove outdoors
Zip-lock bags	1 pack	Protecting documents, phones and cash
Whistle	1 per person	Calling for help
Paper map of your area	1	Finding your way without a phone

Keep tools out of children's reach.

Small things people forget

What to have	What it is for
Pen and notebook	Writing down numbers, leaving notes and getting organised
Spare keys	In case you lose yours or leave in a hurry
Waterproof phone pouch	Protecting it from rain or water
Earplugs	Sleeping somewhere noisy
Sewing kit	Mending clothes or a bag
Battery clock	Knowing the time without a phone
Pack of cards and a book	Passing the time without screens
Bag for dirty or wet clothes	Keeping them apart from dry clothes
Safety pins and elastic bands	Holding things together quickly



Money



Without power or internet, cards and cash machines may not work.

How much: work out what your family spends on the basics over a few days and build it up little by little, as you can.

In what: small notes and some coins, because in an emergency there may be no change.

How to keep it

- **So it doesn't get wet:** in a zip-lock bag inside another zip-lock bag.
- **To protect it from fire:** in a fireproof document bag or box.
- **So you don't lose it all at once:** split it up. Some in the grab bag, some in the folder and some in your wallet.
- **So it is out of sight:** inside the kit, in a place only the adults know.



Documents

Step 7

Put your folder together using the checklist. The most important things:

- [ ] Copies of each person's ID (passport or driving licence).
- [ ] NHS numbers or health cards.
- [ ] Insurance policies.
- [ ] Home and car documents.
- [ ] A recent photo of each person and each pet.
- [ ] Printed family plan.
- [ ] Printed “Useful information” page.

How to keep them

- **Against water:** in a waterproof bag or a double zip-lock bag.
- **Against fire:** in a fireproof bag or box.
- **Digital copy:** on a protected USB stick or in the cloud.
- **Copy away from home:** leave one with a relative you trust.

Get your home ready



For an earthquake



- [ ] Fix shelves, wardrobes and TVs to the wall.
- [ ] Put heavy things low down and fragile things on low shelves.
- [ ] Don't leave heavy objects above the bed.
- [ ] Find the safest place in each room: under a sturdy table or next to an inside wall, away from windows.
- [ ] Teach the whole family to drop, cover and hold on.
- [ ] Make sure everyone knows how to turn off the water, gas and electricity.
- [ ] Keep a torch and closed shoes next to the bed.

For a house fire

- [ ] Fit smoke alarms and test them once a month.
- [ ] Have a fire extinguisher and read how to use it before you need it.
- [ ] Keep a lid or a fire blanket handy in the kitchen for a small fire.
- [ ] Don't overload sockets or leave appliances running unattended.

- [ ] Keep keys handy and exits clear.
- [ ] Agree on an escape route and a meeting point.
- [ ] Teach the family to go downstairs without using the lift.



For a wildfire



- [ ] If you live near woodland, moorland or heathland, keep the area around your home clear.
- [ ] Clear away dry leaves, firewood and anything that burns easily from near the walls.
- [ ] Know at least two ways out.
- [ ] Keep the grab bag ready in hot, dry weather.
- [ ] Keep face masks for smoke.

For a flood



- [ ] Find out whether your area can flood.
- [ ] Move important things up high: documents, electronics and valuables.
- [ ] If your garage floods, don't keep anything you need there.
- [ ] Find the nearest high ground.
- [ ] Keep wellies and a torch handy.

For gas and smoke

- [ ] Have your gas appliances checked as often as required.
- [ ] Consider a gas alarm and a carbon monoxide alarm.

- [ ] Ventilate well if you use heaters or boilers.



What to do in each case, before, during and after, is in Part 4.



Check your insurance



This is easy to forget and you only remember when it is too late.

- [ ] Do I have home insurance? Is it up to date?
- [ ] Does it cover fire? And water damage?
- [ ] What does it say about rain, wind, hail and other weather events?
- [ ] Are the contents of my home insured, as well as the building?
- [ ] Does my car insurance cover hail or flooding?
- [ ] Do I know which number to call and what I need to make a claim?

There are other policies and types of cover. Depending on where you live, think about whether it is worth adding any, for example for flooding or wildfire. Read the exclusions and ask your insurer or broker.

Take photos of your home and your belongings now. If you ever need to make a claim, they will help.



If you have a pet

- [ ] Food and water for 3 days.
- [ ] Lead, collar with an ID tag, and a pet carrier.
- [ ] Medication and vaccination record.
- [ ] A blanket or coat, and their favourite toy or bed.
- [ ] Poo bags and whatever they need for hygiene.

* **What if they get hurt or scared?** The basics: stay calm, talk to them softly and call your vet. More in **Pets to Safety: an emergency plan for the ones who are family too**.



Adapt the kit to your situation

If...	Add this
You live alone	A neighbour or relative who will call you if something happens, a spare key with someone you trust, and easy-to-open food
You live on a high floor	More stored water, a torch by the door, comfortable shoes for the stairs, and a plan in case the lift doesn't work
You live in a house	Know where the main shut-offs are, check the roof, gutters and nearby trees
You rent	Photos of your belongings, your landlord's contact details and contents insurance, if it suits you
You live in the countryside	More water and food, safely stored fuel and an alternative route

If...	Add this
You have babies	Nappies, milk, bottles, extra clothes, a blanket and a baby carrier
You have children	A recent photo, their pocket card, screen-free games and something that calms them
You care for an older person	Medication, glasses, hearing aid, batteries, comfortable clothes and a plan to move them
Someone has reduced mobility	An exit plan, help from neighbours and whatever they use every day
You work far from home	Comfortable shoes, water, a cereal bar, a power bank and cash at work
You drive a lot	A car kit, at least half a tank and a paper map

Common mistakes

Mistake	What to do
Putting the kit together and forgetting about it	Set a reminder every 6 months
Keeping food nobody eats	Buy what your family actually eats
Having tins and no way to open them	Choose ring-pull tins and keep a tin opener
Having a torch with no batteries	Keep new batteries and check them
Keeping everything in one place	Spread out water, cash and copies
Keeping the grab bag somewhere hard to reach	Leave it near the door
Packing a bag you can't carry	Try it on and walk with it
Forgetting someone	Check what each person and each pet needs
Relying only on your phone	Keep contacts, a map and the plan on paper
Not telling the family about the plan	Do the practice drill together



Expiry date tracker

Fill in this page and check it every 6 months.

Item	Quantity	Expires	Where it is
Water			
Tinned food			
Cereal bars and biscuits			
Milk			
Batteries			
First aid kit			
Medication			
Pet food			



Done

- [ ] I have water for 3 days.
- [ ] I have food for 3 days.
- [ ] I have light, power and a radio.
- [ ] I have warm clothes, a first aid kit and medication.
- [ ] My documents and cash are protected.
- [ ] I got my home ready.
- [ ] I checked my insurance.
- [ ] The whole family knows where the kit is.

You now have the most important things. If the power goes out one day, your family knows what to do.

Part 3. First aid kit and first aid

In an emergency, help can take time to arrive. Having a complete first aid kit and knowing the basics can make a big difference.

This part does not replace a course or a health professional. It tells you what to have, what is worth learning, where to learn it and how to ask for help properly.

Your three first aid kits

Step 6



Ideally, have one at home, a small one in the grab bag and another in the car.

What to pack	Home	Grab bag	Car
Single-use saline pods	10	3	3
Antiseptic	1	1 small	1 small
Surgical spirit	1	—	—
Cotton wool	1 pack	—	—
Sterile gauze	2 boxes	5 pieces	5 pieces
Bandages	3	1	1
Medical tape	1	1 small	1 small
Dressings or plasters	1 box	10	10

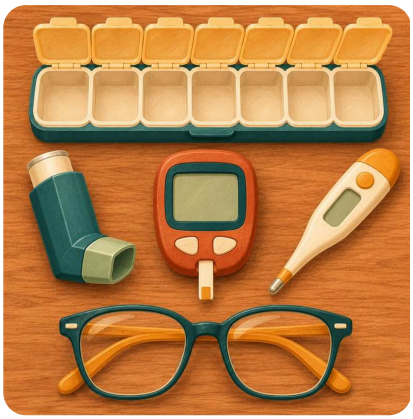
What to pack	Home	Grab bag	Car
Round-ended scissors	1	1 small	1 small
Tweezers	1	1	1
Thermometer	1	—	—
Disposable gloves	1 box	2 pairs	2 pairs
Face masks	1 box	3	3
Foil blanket	1 per person	1	1
Zip-lock bags	1 pack	2	2
Regular medication	Yes	For a few days	Only if it can be left in the car
Recommended painkillers and fever reducers	Yes	Yes	Check the storage conditions on the box

The amounts are a guide. Adjust them to the size of your family.

In the car, watch the heat: many medicines should not be left at high temperatures. Read how to store them or ask at the pharmacy.

Adapt the kit to your family

Ask your GP or pharmacist what is worth having in each case.



If someone at home has...	Ask about...
Babies and children	A children's thermometer, medication and doses by weight, and oral rehydration sachets
Older people	A pill organiser, a medication list and supplies for their care
Diabetes	Meter, test strips, needles, insulin and what to do without refrigeration
Asthma or breathing problems	Spare inhalers and what to do with smoke or dust
Severe allergies	An adrenaline auto-injector, if prescribed, and a card that explains it
Heart problems	Medication, and what to do if you can't get it
Pregnancy	Check-ups, medication and where to go
People who use electrical medical equipment	Spare batteries and an emergency plan

What is worth learning



These are the skills that help most in an emergency. You don't learn them by reading: you learn them by practising with an instructor.

What to learn	Why it matters
CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation)	It can save someone who is not breathing
Using a defibrillator	Many public places have one, and it is designed to be used by following its instructions
Choking	It can happen to anyone, at home or while eating
Choking in babies and children	The way to help is different from adults
Bleeding	Knowing how to stop bleeding can be life-saving
Wounds and dressings	It prevents infection when medical care is not close by
Burns	Knowing what to do first, and what not to do
Bumps, sprains and fractures	Knowing what to move and what not to
Heatstroke and extreme cold	They are common and can be serious
Smoke or carbon monoxide poisoning	Knowing how to recognise it and act fast

Where to learn

- **The British Red Cross, St John Ambulance** and similar organisations.
- **Your local fire and rescue service,** which sometimes runs talks or sessions.
- **GP surgeries and local councils.**
- **Your workplace:** ask whether they offer training.
- **Accredited training centres.**

Useful idea: do the course as a couple or as a family. It is one afternoon that can serve you for life.

Course I want to do: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

If something happens: the 3 Cs



This is the order taught in first aid. Three words that are easy to remember.

Letter	What it means	What you do
C	Check	Make sure you and the person are safe. Don't put yourself in danger
C	Call	Call the emergency number
C	Care	Help with what you know and what the call handler tells you

How to call the emergency services



Your country's emergency number is on the last page, “Useful information”.

When you call, a person guides you. What matters is giving the details in order, calmly.

1. **Where you are:** street, house number, floor, town, or a landmark.
2. **What happened:** accident, fire, someone has collapsed.
3. **How many people** are affected.
4. **How they are:** whether they respond, whether they are breathing, whether they are bleeding.
5. **Who you are** and your phone number.

Don't hang up until you are told to. The call handler can explain what to do while help is on its way.

Practise it with the children: make sure they can say their name, their address and what is happening.

When to call straight away

Call the emergency number (last page, “Useful information”) if someone:

- [ ] Doesn't respond or has fainted.
- [ ] Isn't breathing or is struggling to breathe.
- [ ] Has severe chest pain.
- [ ] Has bleeding that won't stop.
- [ ] Is choking.
- [ ] Has a large or serious burn.
- [ ] Has had a hard blow, especially to the head or back.
- [ ] Is having a seizure.
- [ ] Has sudden confusion, or trouble speaking or moving.
- [ ] Is very hot, confused and has stopped sweating after a lot of heat.
- [ ] Has breathed in smoke or gas, or several people feel ill at the same time in an enclosed space.



If in doubt, call. It is better to call when you don't need to.

If there is no signal

- Go somewhere higher or more open, and try sending a text.
- Ask a neighbour to call or to go and get help.
- Use the whistle or a torch to attract attention.
- Write down the time and what happened to the person.
- Keep trying: the signal may come back.



Get ready beforehand



- [ ] Fill in Form 2 with each person's medical details.
- [ ] Carry your pocket card with allergies and medication.
- [ ] Find your nearest hospital and GP surgery.
- [ ] Find out whether there is a defibrillator near your home or work.
- [ ] Save your GP's and your pharmacy's phone numbers.
- [ ] Teach the children how to ask for help.
- [ ] Book the first aid course.

Don't miss this

- [ ] Check with your GP surgery that your vaccinations are up to date.
- [ ] Check the first aid kit every 6 months.
- [ ] Take out-of-date medicines back to the pharmacy.
- [ ] Replace anything you have used.
- [ ] Ask before stocking up on long-term medication.



Done

- [ ] I have my three first aid kits ready.
- [ ] I adapted them to my family.
- [ ] I know how to call the emergency services.
- [ ] The whole family knows the 3 Cs.
- [ ] I know which course I want to do.

Knowing what to do is priceless. One afternoon on a course can change everything.

Part 4. What to do when...

One card for each situation, to print and keep to hand. Each one tells you what to do **before, during and after**.

If an alert or an official order comes through, always follow what you are told. Your country's emergency number and alert system are on the last page, “Useful information”.

The 12 cards



01 Power cut



02 Water supply cut



03 Earthquake



04 House fire



05 Wildfire



06 Flooding



07 Extreme heat



08 Extreme cold and snow



09 Storms and strong winds



10 Smell of gas or carbon monoxide



11 Staying indoors (shelter in place)



12 Evacuation

CARD 01

Power cut

PREPARATION	COST	DIFFICULTY
1 afternoon	Low	Easy





It can happen because of: a fault, a storm, a heatwave or a failure in the grid.

BEFORE

- [ ] Keep torches, batteries, a radio and charged power banks.
- [ ] Store water, food that needs no fridge, and cash.
- [ ] Freeze a few bottles of water.
- [ ] Make a plan if anyone relies on electrical medical equipment.
- [ ] Find out how to open your electric garage door or gate by hand.
- [ ] Keep at least half a tank of fuel in the car.

DURING

1. Check whether it is only your home: look at the fuse box and at your neighbours.
2. Use torches rather than candles.
3. Unplug appliances and leave one light switched on, so you know when the power comes back.
4. Keep the fridge and freezer closed.
5. Listen to the radio and follow official information.
6. Avoid travelling: traffic lights may not be working.

7 Keep calls short and save the battery.

If someone uses medical equipment at home, call the emergency number straight away.

If you get stuck in a lift: stay calm, press the alarm button and ask for help. Don't try to get out on your own.

AFTER

- [ ] Plug appliances back in a few at a time.
- [ ] Check that no heater or other appliance has been left on.
- [ ] **Food:** if the power was off for less than 4 hours and the fridge stayed closed, it is usually fine. If it was more than 4 hours, throw away meat, fish, eggs, fresh dairy and leftovers. Don't taste them to check.
- [ ] **Freezer:** kept closed, it usually holds for 24 to 48 hours. If a food is still hard, with ice crystals, it can be refrozen.
- [ ] **Medicines kept cold:** ask at the pharmacy before using them.
- [ ] Replace batteries, candles and water.

CARD 02

Water supply cut

PREPARATION	COST	DIFFICULTY
30 minutes	Low	Easy





It can happen because of: a burst main, a power cut, a drought or contamination.

BEFORE

- [ ] Have your water supply ready (Part 2).
- [ ] Have a bucket and clean containers.
- [ ] Find out how the water works in your building.
- [ ] Know where the main stopcock is.

DURING

1. Check for a notice from your water company or the authorities.
2. Use your supply for drinking and cooking first.
3. Make the water go further: wash only what you need, and use washing water to flush the toilet.
4. Use hand sanitiser and wet wipes.
5. Use disposable plates or wash up with very little water.
6. If you are told the water is not safe to drink, don't use it for drinking, cooking or brushing your teeth.

AFTER

- [ ] Run the tap until the water runs clear.
- [ ] Wait for the official notice if there was a water quality problem.
- [ ] Top up your supply.

CARD 03

Earthquake

PREPARATION	COST	DIFFICULTY
1 afternoon	Low	Medium





It can't be predicted. That is why being prepared is everything.

BEFORE

- [ ] Fix tall furniture and put heavy things low down.
- [ ] Find the safe spot in each room.
- [ ] Practise as a family: **drop, cover and hold on.**
- [ ] Teach everyone how to turn off the water, gas and electricity.
- [ ] Keep shoes and a torch next to the bed.

DURING

Inside a building

1. **Drop, cover and hold on:** under a sturdy table or next to an inside wall.
2. Protect your head and keep away from windows and things that could fall.
3. Don't go outside while it is shaking and don't use the lift.

In the street: move away from buildings, lamp posts and power lines.

In the car: stop somewhere safe, away from anything that could fall, and stay inside with your hazard lights on.

In a crowded place: don't run for the exit.

If you are trapped: don't shout, to save your strength; cover your nose and mouth, and tap on pipes or use a whistle.

AFTER

- [ ] Check that everyone is OK.
- [ ] Be ready for aftershocks.
- [ ] Put shoes on: there may be broken glass.
- [ ] Turn off the water, gas and electricity, and don't plug anything in.
- [ ] Don't light fires or candles.
- [ ] Leave the building carefully if it is damaged, without using the lift.
- [ ] Listen to the radio and follow the authorities.
- [ ] Only use the phone if you need to.
- [ ] Don't drink tap water until you know it is safe.
- [ ] If you are on the coast, move away from the sea and follow the warnings.

CARD 04

House fire

PREPARATION	COST	DIFFICULTY
1 afternoon	Medium	Easy





Smoke is the most dangerous part. That is why getting out fast and closing doors matters.

BEFORE

- [ ] Fit smoke alarms and test them every month.
- [ ] Have a fire extinguisher and learn how to use it.
- [ ] Agree on a way out and a meeting point.
- [ ] Keep keys handy and exits clear.
- [ ] Check sockets and appliances.

DURING

If it is a small fire in the kitchen: turn off the heat and cover it with a lid or a fire blanket. **Never use water.** If you can't control it straight away, get out.

If you can get out

1. Warn everyone in the house.
2. Get out and close the doors behind you.
3. Always go down. **Don't use the lift.**
4. Call the emergency number: don't assume someone else already has.
5. Don't go back in.

If there is smoke

- Keep low or crawl: there is less smoke near the floor.
- Before opening a door, touch it with the back of your hand. If it is hot, don't open it.

If there is smoke on the stairs

1. Don't go out.
2. Go to a room with a window onto the street, away from the fire.
3. Close the door and block the gaps with clothes or towels.
4. Call the emergency number and make yourself seen at the window.

If your clothes catch fire: don't run. Stop, drop and roll.

AFTER

- [ ] Don't go back in until you are allowed to.
- [ ] Take photos and tell your insurer.
- [ ] Get medical help if you breathed in smoke.

CARD 05

Wildfire

PREPARATION	COST	DIFFICULTY
1 weekend	Low	Medium





If you live near woodland, moorland or heathland, hot, dry spells are the time to be most alert.

BEFORE

- [ ] Keep the area around your home clear.
- [ ] Clear away leaves, firewood and anything that burns easily from near the walls.
- [ ] Know your ways out and at least two routes.
- [ ] Keep the grab bag and the car ready in hot, dry weather.

DURING

Always follow official orders. The usual advice is to stay indoors if you are told to, and to evacuate if you are ordered to.

If you are told to stay indoors

1. Stay inside.
2. Close doors and windows.
3. Block the gaps with damp cloths.
4. Have the grab bag and face masks ready.
5. Listen to the radio.

If you are ordered to evacuate

1. Take only the essentials: keys, phone, documents, money and medication.
2. Turn off the electricity and gas, and lock the house.
3. Follow the route you are given.
4. Don't stop to film.

If you are out in the countryside: move away to the sides of the fire, towards areas with less vegetation. A change in the wind can make it surround you.

AFTER

- [ ] Don't go back until you are allowed to.
- [ ] Check the house wearing gloves and sturdy shoes.
- [ ] Be careful with hot ashes.
- [ ] Take photos for your insurer.

CARD 06

Flooding

PREPARATION	COST	DIFFICULTY
1 afternoon	Low	Easy





Water rises fast. The rule is: go up, never down to the garage.

BEFORE

- [ ] Find out whether your area can flood.
- [ ] Find the nearest high ground.
- [ ] Move documents, electronics and valuables up high.
- [ ] If there is a warning, move the car away from areas that flood, while it is safe to do so.

DURING

1. **Go up high:** to an upper floor or to higher ground.
2. **Don't go down to the garage** or into cellars.
3. **Don't use the lift.**
4. Turn off the electricity, gas and water if you can do it safely.
5. Only use the car if you really have to.
6. **Never walk or drive through flood water.**
7. Keep away from streams, rivers and riverbanks.
8. If the water is rising and your car stops, leave it and go to higher ground.

AFTER

- [ ] Only go back when you are allowed to.
- [ ] Don't use tap water until you are told it is safe to drink.
- [ ] Throw away food that has touched flood water or mud, except sealed tins in perfect condition, which must be cleaned and disinfected first.
- [ ] Wash your hands often and cover any wounds.
- [ ] Clean up wearing gloves and closed shoes.
- [ ] Never mix bleach with ammonia.
- [ ] Take photos of the damage before cleaning, for your insurer.

CARD
07

Extreme heat

PREPARATION	COST	DIFFICULTY
30 minutes	Low	Easy





Babies, children, pregnant women, older people and people with long-term health conditions need extra care.

BEFORE

- [ ] Check the heat health alerts.
- [ ] Have water, light clothes and a cap.
- [ ] Get one room ready to stay cool.
- [ ] Find out whether there are cool, air-conditioned places nearby.
- [ ] Agree to call older people who live alone.
- [ ] Ask how to store your medicines in the heat.

DURING

1. Drink water even if you are not thirsty.
2. Cut down on caffeine, alcohol and very sugary drinks.
3. Avoid going out and exercising in the hottest part of the day.
4. Close blinds and curtains, and let air in when it cools down.
5. Find cool places.
6. Wear light clothes.
7. **Never leave anyone in a closed car.** Not your pet either.

Call the emergency number if someone has a very high temperature, is confused or faints. Take them somewhere cool while help is on its way.

If the symptoms last more than an hour, get medical advice (in the UK, call 111).

AFTER

- [ ] Keep drinking water.
- [ ] Call people who live alone.

CARD 08

Extreme cold and snow

PREPARATION	COST	DIFFICULTY
1 afternoon	Medium	Easy





BEFORE

- [ ] Have warm clothes, blankets, torches, a radio and food.
- [ ] Make sure you won't run out of medication.
- [ ] Lag exposed pipes and protect outdoor meters.
- [ ] Get the car ready: a full tank, good tyres, antifreeze, and a scraper and de-icer.
- [ ] Keep a blanket, water and food in the car.

DURING

At home

1. Dress in layers.
2. Stay in one room if the heating fails.
3. Never use barbecues, or wood, coal or gas heaters, in enclosed spaces.
4. Keep an eye on babies and older people.

Outside

- Only go out if you need to.
- Protect your head and face.
- Avoid driving at night.
- Tell someone your route.

If you get stuck in the car

1. Stay inside.
2. Tell someone where you are and wait for help.
3. Run the heater now and then, and let some fresh air in from time to time.
4. Make sure the exhaust pipe is not blocked by snow.

AFTER

- [ ] Check your pipes.
- [ ] Be careful on ice.
- [ ] Call people who live alone.

CARD
09

Storms and strong winds

PREPARATION	COST	DIFFICULTY
1 hour	Low	Easy





BEFORE

- [ ] Check the weather warnings.
- [ ] Secure doors, windows and things on balconies and in the garden.
- [ ] Bring in anything that could blow into the street.
- [ ] Check trees and roofs, if you have them.

DURING

1. Stay indoors and away from windows.
2. Outside, keep away from ledges, trees, walls, building sites and cranes.
3. On the coast, keep away from the sea and low-lying areas.
4. In the car, take care coming out of tunnels, on bridges and when overtaking.
5. If there is lightning, go inside a building or a car, and keep away from trees.

AFTER

- [ ] Keep away from fallen power lines and report them (in the UK, call 105).

- [ ] Check for damage and take photos.

CARD 10

Smell of gas or carbon monoxide

PREPARATION	COST	DIFFICULTY
1 hour	Medium	Easy





BEFORE

- [ ] Have your gas appliances checked as often as required.
- [ ] Consider a gas alarm and a carbon monoxide alarm.
- [ ] Teach everyone how to turn off the gas at the meter.
- [ ] Ventilate if you use heaters or boilers.

DURING: IF YOU SMELL GAS

1. **Don't touch light switches** or electrical appliances.
2. **Don't light** flames, candles, lighters or cigarettes.
3. **Open doors and windows.**
4. **Turn off** appliances and the gas at the meter.
5. **Get out** of the house.
6. **Call from outside** the emergency number or the gas emergency line.

DURING: IF YOU SUSPECT CARBON MONOXIDE

It can cause headaches, nausea, dizziness and tiredness, and you can't see it or smell it.

1. Open windows and doors.
2. Get out of the house.
3. Call the emergency number.

AFTER

- [ ] Don't turn the gas back on until it has been checked.

CARD 11

Staying indoors (shelter in place)

PREPARATION	COST	DIFFICULTY
30 minutes	Low	Easy





Stay at home, or in whatever building you are in, until the authorities tell you otherwise.

BEFORE

- [ ] Have your kit ready.
- [ ] Know which room is safest.
- [ ] Keep tape, plastic sheeting and a radio to hand.

DURING

1. Go in and stay in.
2. Close doors and windows.
3. Turn off fans or ventilation that bring in outside air, if you are told to.
4. Listen to the radio and follow the alerts.
5. Let your family know with short messages.
6. Don't go to collect the children from school if you are told not to go out: the school has its own plan too.

AFTER

- [ ] Only go out when you are allowed to.
- [ ] Air the house.

CARD 12

Evacuation

PREPARATION	COST	DIFFICULTY
1 afternoon	Low	Easy





If you are ordered to leave, do it quickly and calmly.

BEFORE

- [ ] Have the grab bag and the folder ready.
- [ ] Know your routes and your meeting points.
- [ ] Keep half a tank of fuel in the car.

DURING: 5-MINUTE LIST

1. Grab the bag, the folder, medication and keys.
2. Find the family and the pet.
3. Put on closed shoes and suitable clothes.
4. Turn off the water, gas and electricity, if you are told to or have time.
5. Close doors and windows.
6. Leave a note inside the house.
7. Follow the official route.
8. Let your contact know.

AFTER

- [ ] Register if you are asked to.
- [ ] Only go back when you are allowed to.
- [ ] Check the house before going in.



Done

- [ ] I printed these cards.
- [ ] I marked the ones that matter most where I live.
- [ ] We talked about each one as a family.
- [ ] I know where they are.

When you know what to do, you are less afraid. That is what these cards give you.

Part 5. If you have to leave: the car



Staying at home is the most common advice. But a flood, a fire or an evacuation order can force you to leave, even to another town.

People who leave without a plan often end up with no fuel, no direction and none of the basics. Planning it now takes very little time.

Have a destination before you need it

Decide now where you would go. Look for places in different directions: if one route is closed, you have another.



	Destination 1	Destination 2	Destination 3
Who or what place			
Address			
Phone			
Distance and time			
Main route			
Alternative route			
Do they accept pets?			

Tips:

- Talk to that relative or friend now. Check that you could go there.
- Also choose a destination far away, in case your whole area is affected.
- Write down two hotels or places to stay, and whether they accept pets.
- Print the maps or save them for offline use.
- Make the journey once, on a normal day.

Get the car ready

Checks

- ☐ Tyres, including the spare or the puncture repair kit.
- ☐ Battery, lights, brakes and windscreen wipers.

- [ ] Oil, screenwash and antifreeze.
- [ ] Car documents, MOT and insurance up to date.

Habits that help

- **Fuel:** don't let it drop below half a tank. Without power, petrol stations may not work.
- **Electric car:** keep enough charge and note down charging points along your routes. Without power, you may not be able to charge.
- **Keys:** have a spare set and make sure more than one adult knows where it is.
- **Where you park:** if there is a flood warning, don't leave it in an underground car park.



Car kit



Keep it in a box or a bag in the boot. Check it twice a year.

Group	What to take	What it is for
Safety	A warning triangle and a high-visibility vest (see the last page)	Warning others if you stop
Breakdowns	Jump leads, puncture repair kit, jack and wheel brace	Sorting out the basics

Group	What to take	What it is for
Tools	Multi-tool, strong tape, rope and gloves	Quick repairs
Light	Torch with batteries	Seeing at night, and signalling
Water	At least 2 litres per person, changed often	Drinking
Food	Cereal bars, nuts and biscuits	Keeping going for several hours
Health	First aid kit, medication and wet wipes	Small wounds and hygiene
Power	In-car charger, power bank and cable	Keeping your phone working
Warmth	Blankets, foil blankets, waterproof jacket, comfortable shoes	Cold, rain or walking
Finding your way	Paper map, contacts on paper, battery radio	Getting around without internet
Winter	Shovel, ice scraper, de-icer and snow brush	Snow and ice
Summer	Extra water, a cap and sun cream	Heat and waiting
Children	Nappies, milk, biscuits and a toy	The journey and waiting
Pets	Water, food, lead and pet carrier	Travelling safely

Watch out for the heat in the car: water and food need changing often, and many medicines should not be exposed to high temperatures.

Everyday bag



An emergency can also catch you at work, travelling or far from home. Always carry a handbag or small bag with the basics:

- ☐ Power bank and cable.
- ☐ Bottle of water.
- ☐ Cereal bar or nuts.
- ☐ Cash.
- ☐ Pocket card.
- ☐ Small torch.
- ☐ The day's medication.
- ☐ Face mask and hand sanitiser.
- ☐ Pen.
- ☐ Comfortable shoes, if you wear uncomfortable ones for work.

Before you close the door: 5-minute list

If you are ordered to leave, follow this order.

1. **People:** gather the family. Put on closed shoes and suitable clothes.
2. **Pets:** lead or pet carrier.
3. **Grab bags, folder, medication and cash.**
4. **Phones, chargers and power banks.**
5. **Water and food.**
6. **House and car keys.**
7. **House:** turn off the water, gas and electricity if you are told to or have time. Close doors and windows.

8. **Note:** leave the time, where you are going and how to reach you, inside the house.
9. **Message:** text your contact in another town.

If you don't have 5 minutes, don't waste time: leave with the essentials.

During the journey



- Follow the routes the authorities give. Shortcuts may be closed.
- Listen to the radio.
- Fill the tank if you can do it safely.
- Drive calmly, and avoid anywhere you are told is a danger area.
- **Never drive through flood water.**
- Make short stops if you have children, older people or pets with you.
- Never leave anyone, or your pet, in a closed car in the heat.
- Keep people updated on how you are, if you have signal.

If this happens in the car

Situation	What to do
Earthquake	Stop somewhere safe, away from anything that could fall. Stay inside with your hazard lights on
Rising water	Leave the car if it stops and go to higher ground
Snow	Stay inside, tell someone, let fresh air in now and then and make sure the exhaust doesn't get blocked
Smoke inside the car	Stop somewhere safe, turn off the engine, everyone gets out straight away, move away and call the emergency number. Don't stay inside
Strong winds	Slow down, and take care in tunnels, on bridges and when overtaking
Breakdown	Pull over, put out your warning triangle if it is safe to do so, put on your vest and call your breakdown cover
Out of fuel	Tell someone where you are. Stay somewhere safe and visible

If you don't have a car



Plan anyway.

- [ ] Ask a neighbour, relative or friend whether they could take you.
- [ ] Find out how to leave by public transport and on foot.
- [ ] Have comfortable shoes and a light rucksack.
- [ ] Know where your assembly point or rest centre is.
- [ ] Ask your local council how they would evacuate people without a car. Their details are on the last page, “Useful information”.
- [ ] Keep a printed copy of the “Useful information” page in your grab bag.

When you arrive

- [ ] Let the family and your contact know.
- [ ] Keep following official information.
- [ ] Tell people how you are, and don't go back until you are allowed to.
- [ ] Replace water, food and medication.
- [ ] Keep receipts, in case your insurance covers them.



Don't miss this

- [ ] Change the water in the car.
- [ ] Check the date on the puncture repair kit and the first aid kit.
- [ ] Keep a printed copy of your documents in the car, in a waterproof bag, and have a digital copy too.
- [ ] Keep a printed copy of the “Useful information” page in the car.
- [ ] Check your travel insurance or breakdown cover.



Done

- [ ] I have destinations and routes.
- [ ] The car has been checked.
- [ ] The car kit is ready.
- [ ] I keep at least half a tank.
- [ ] I carry my everyday bag.
- [ ] The whole family knows the 5-minute list.

Knowing where to go is part of being prepared too.

Part 6. Who needs more help

A plan is only complete when it works for everyone in your home. Babies, older people or people with a disability may need more time, more things and more support.

Find your situation here and add what applies to your plan. Always check anything medical with their GP or pharmacist.

Older people



Get ready beforehand

- [ ] Write down their medication, the prescribed dose, allergies and GP.
- [ ] Keep copies of prescriptions, spare glasses and hearing aid batteries.
- [ ] Get comfortable clothes, a warm coat, safe shoes and a blanket ready.
- [ ] Choose soft food that is easy to open and that they like.
- [ ] Leave a torch by the bed and another in the bathroom.
- [ ] Keep water in bottles that are easy to lift and open.
- [ ] Take their walking stick, walking frame and whatever they use every day.
- [ ] Decide who will help them if you have to leave.

In their grab bag, add

- [ ] A large-print card with their name, contact and medication.
- [ ] A pill organiser with the day's medication.
- [ ] Pads or incontinence pants, if they use them.
- [ ] Dentures and what they need to clean them.
- [ ] Something that comforts them: a photo, a book or a radio.

During

- Talk to them calmly and explain what is happening.
- Make sure they drink and eat, even if they don't feel like it.
- In hot or cold weather, check on them often.
- Never leave them alone during an evacuation.

Looking after your parents or grandparents if they live in another home

Many families look after an older relative from a distance. Don't wait for an emergency to talk about it.

- [ ] **Put their kit together with them,** in one afternoon.
- [ ] **Find a neighbour who can help** and pop round, and save their number.
- [ ] **Leave a spare set of their keys** with someone you trust.
- [ ] **Decide who will fetch them** if they have to leave, and who the back-up is.
- [ ] **Go over** their medication and phone numbers together.
- [ ] **Write the important numbers in large print** and leave them next to the phone.
- [ ] **Ask what services exist where they live:** a personal alarm (telecare), adult social care or their GP surgery. Also ask their energy and water suppliers to add them to the **Priority Services Register**.
- [ ] **Agree on a routine:** a call at the same time every day if there is a warning.

If they live alone and refuse to get prepared, start with the simple things: water, a torch, a radio and a phone number written in large print.

People who live alone



- [ ] Let a neighbour or relative know that you live alone.
- [ ] Leave a spare key with someone you trust.
- [ ] Agree on a daily check-in if there is an emergency: a message or a call.
- [ ] Keep your medical details visible on the fridge.
- [ ] Keep your phone and a whistle near the bed.

Babies



Get ready beforehand

- [ ] Nappies for 3 days, or more.
- [ ] Wipes and nappy cream.
- [ ] Ready-to-feed formula, if they use it, and clean bottles.
- [ ] Baby food jars and fruit pouches, depending on their age.
- [ ] Extra clothes, a blanket and a hat.
- [ ] Medication and a thermometer, checked with your GP or health visitor.
- [ ] A copy of their red book or vaccination record.
- [ ] A baby carrier, in case you can't use the pushchair.
- [ ] A recent photo of the baby with whoever looks after them.
- [ ] Extra safe water.

During

- If you breastfeed, carry on, also in emergencies, and look after yourself: drink and eat.
- Make up formula with safe water and use clean equipment.
- Make sure they are not too cold or too hot.
- Keep their routines as much as possible.

Children

Get ready beforehand

- [ ] A recent photo and their pocket card.
- [ ] Teach them their full name, address and phone number.
- [ ] Teach them how to call the emergency number. It is on the last page, “Useful information”.
- [ ] Show them what the kit is and where it is.
- [ ] Ask what the school's plan is.
- [ ] Do a practice drill as if it were a game.
- [ ] Let them pack their own bag.
- [ ] Include a toy, a notebook and pencils.

During

- Stay with them and talk to them calmly.
- Explain what is happening in simple words, without frightening details.
- Give them a small job: carrying the torch or looking after the pet.
- Let them ask questions and answer them truthfully.
- Keep to mealtimes and bedtimes.

Pregnant women



- [ ] Take your maternity notes and scan results.
- [ ] Have your GP's or midwife's number written down.
- [ ] Find out where to go if you have to leave.
- [ ] Add extra water and food.
- [ ] Get comfortable clothes and safe shoes ready.
- [ ] If you are near the end of your pregnancy, have your hospital bag ready.
- [ ] Decide who will go with you.

People with reduced mobility



- [ ] **Exit plan:** how will they get downstairs if the lift isn't working? Decide who helps them and how.
- [ ] **Support:** ask at least two neighbours for help.
- [ ] **Building:** talk to the building manager or landlord, so they know the person lives there.
- [ ] **Equipment:** take their stick, crutches or wheelchair, and spares.
- [ ] **Electric wheelchair:** keep the battery charged and have a plan if it runs out.
- [ ] **Room:** choose the one closest to the exit.
- [ ] **Car:** practise getting in and out.

Ask your local council whether they keep a register of people who need help in an evacuation. Their details are on the last page, “Useful information”.

People who use electrical medical equipment



This is the most urgent case in a power cut: oxygen, a ventilator, a suction machine, dialysis, a pump or an electric bed.

Get ready beforehand

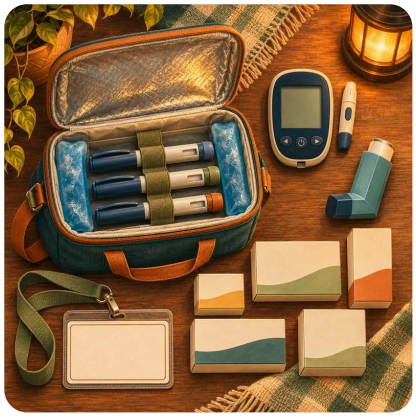
- [ ] **Talk to their doctor** and make a written plan.
- [ ] **Ask the equipment supplier** how long the battery lasts and what to do without power.
- [ ] **Ask your electricity supplier** to add them to the Priority Services Register, so you get priority support in a power cut.
- [ ] **Have batteries and spares,** as the manufacturer recommends.
- [ ] **Write down** where to go if the battery runs out.
- [ ] **Teach** the family how to use the equipment.

- [ ] **Keep a written note** of the equipment details and the person's details.

During

If they need equipment to stay alive and there is no power, call the emergency number straight away. Don't wait for the battery to run out.

People with diabetes, asthma or other long-term conditions



- [ ] Ask their GP how to build up a reserve.
- [ ] Have their card with their diagnosis, medication and contact.
- [ ] **Diabetes:** meter, test strips, needles, and what to do with insulin without refrigeration.
- [ ] **Asthma:** spare inhalers, and what to do with smoke or dust.
- [ ] **Severe allergies:** an adrenaline auto-injector if prescribed.
- [ ] **Dialysis or regular treatment:** ask what to do if you can't get there.
- [ ] Keep the minimum for several days in the grab bag.

People with hearing or sight loss



If they don't hear well

- [ ] Alerts with lights or vibration, if they use them.
- [ ] Hearing aid batteries.
- [ ] Paper and a pen, or written cards.
- [ ] A neighbour who will tell them about an alert.

If they don't see well

- [ ] Spare glasses.
- [ ] A white cane.
- [ ] The kit always in the same place.
- [ ] Raised or large-print labels.
- [ ] Practise the way out.

People with dementia, autism or a learning disability

- [ ] A card with their name, contact and how to help them.
- [ ] An ID bracelet or pendant, if it helps.
- [ ] Familiar objects that calm them.
- [ ] Earplugs or headphones, if noise bothers them.
- [ ] Routines and simple explanations.
- [ ] Repeated practice drills, calmly.
- [ ] Someone who never leaves them alone.



If you live in a country whose language you don't speak well

- [ ] Learn the key words used in an alert.
- [ ] Turn on official alerts.
- [ ] Save phrases to ask for help.
- [ ] Have the number of a friend who can help you translate.
- [ ] Carry your medical details translated.
- [ ] Check the last page: it has your country's information.



Support map

Write down who can help each person.

Person	What they need	Who helps them	Back-up	Phone

Don't miss this

- [ ] Get to know your neighbours: in an emergency, they are the closest people to you.
- [ ] Ask in your building who lives alone or needs help.
- [ ] Update your details if medication changes.
- [ ] Check clothes and nappy sizes as the children grow.



Done

- [ ] I checked what each person needs.
- [ ] I added what was needed to the kit.
- [ ] I talked to their GP or pharmacist.
- [ ] We decided who helps whom.
- [ ] My parents or relatives are covered.

Looking after your loved ones also means thinking about those who need you most.

Part 7. After the emergency



When the worst has passed, another difficult moment comes: going back, sorting things out, making claims and getting your calm back. Doing it in order saves you risks, mistakes and money.

The first few hours



1. **Check that everyone is OK.** If someone needs help, call the emergency number.
2. **Let your family and your contact in another town know** with a short message.
3. **Keep following official information.** The emergency may not be over.
4. **Drink water and eat something,** even if you don't feel like it.
5. **Take turns to rest,** if you can.
6. **Look after others:** older people, children, neighbours and pets.

Going back home

Only go back when the authorities say it is safe.

Before going in

- [ ] Wear closed shoes and gloves, and take a torch and a face mask.
- [ ] Look from outside for visible damage: cracks, a fallen roof, cables or leaning walls.
- [ ] If in doubt, don't go in, and ask a professional to check it.
- [ ] If you smell gas, don't go in. Move away and call from outside.

Going in

- [ ] Go in with a torch, not with candles or a flame.
- [ ] Open doors and windows to let air in.
- [ ] Check ceilings, walls and floors.
- [ ] Don't touch wet cables or sockets.
- [ ] Don't switch on appliances that got wet.
- [ ] Before turning the electricity, gas or water back on, make sure it is safe. If there was damage, have a professional check it.
- [ ] Watch out for glass, nails and animals that may have got in.

Water and food



- [ ] **Water:** don't use tap water if you have been told it is not safe to drink.
- [ ] **Food:** throw away anything that lost its cold or touched water, mud, smoke or ash.
- [ ] **Sealed tins in perfect condition:** if they were in contact with flood water, wash them with soap and water, put them in boiling water for 2 minutes and leave them to dry for 1 hour before opening.
- [ ] **Dented, rusty or swollen tins:** throw them away.
- [ ] **Medicines:** ask at the pharmacy if they got wet or lost their cold.
- [ ] **If in doubt:** throw it out. It is not worth the risk.

Cleaning up safely



- [ ] Before cleaning, take photos of everything.
- [ ] Wear gloves, closed shoes and a face mask.
- [ ] Wash your hands with soap and water, especially before eating.
- [ ] Cover wounds and wash them if they get wet.
- [ ] Ventilate well.
- [ ] Clean and disinfect surfaces with diluted bleach, as the label says.
- [ ] Don't mix bleach with ammonia.
- [ ] Wash clothes at 60 °C or above, if the label allows.
- [ ] Dry everything as soon as possible to prevent mould.
- [ ] Keep children and pets away from the area.

Photos, insurance and claims

Act quickly, but in order.

1. **Take photos and videos** of the damage before moving or cleaning anything.
2. **Write down** what was damaged, when, and what it was worth.
3. **Keep** damaged items until you are told you can throw them away.
4. **Call your insurer** and ask for a claim number.
5. **Keep** all receipts: repairs, hotel, food and transport.
6. **Check** whether there is official support where you live.
7. **Write down** names, dates and what you are told on each call.

If you are insured and the damage was caused by a disaster, some countries have special schemes that can help. See the last page, “Useful information”.

Damage record

What was damaged	When	Approximate value	Photo	Receipt
			☐	☐
			☐	☐
			☐	☐
			☐	☐
			☐	☐

Call log

Date	Who I spoke to	What they told me	Claim number

Watch out for scams



After a disaster, some people try to take advantage.

- **Repairs:** be wary of anyone who asks for money up front or turns up without you calling them. Ask for a written quote.
- **Fake officials:** always ask for ID.
- **Fake support offers:** never give your details or codes by phone, text message or links.
- **Donations:** only give to well-known organisations.
- **Rumours:** check before you share.

Documents and paperwork

- [ ] Tell your bank if you lost your cards.
- [ ] Ask for a replacement for anything you lost.
- [ ] Let your work and the school know.
- [ ] Tell your GP if you lost medication or prescriptions.
- [ ] Check your direct debits and standing orders.

How to talk to children



After a fright, children need to know they are safe.

- **Listen to them:** let them tell you what they felt and draw it.
- **Tell the truth in simple words:** “It was very scary, it's over now and we are together”.
- **Get back to routines:** meals, sleep and school.
- **Limit the news:** seeing the same images again and again frightens them.
- **Give them small jobs:** helping makes them feel better.
- **Be patient:** they may sleep badly, feel scared or behave differently.

If the changes last several weeks or worry you, talk to your GP or a professional.

How to look after yourself



It is normal to feel scared, sad, angry or tired, or to have trouble sleeping.

- Talk to someone you trust.
- Rest and eat, even if only a little.
- Cut down on news and social media.
- Get back to small routines.
- Do one thing at a time.
- Avoid using alcohol to calm down.
- Ask for help if you need it.

If the distress doesn't go away, or you feel you can't cope, get professional help.

Look after your community

- [ ] Call neighbours who are older or live alone.
- [ ] Share official information.
- [ ] Offer what you can: water, phone charging or company.
- [ ] Follow the guidance on how to help, so you don't put yourself in danger.



Pets after an emergency

- [ ] Check them for injuries.
- [ ] Keep them on a lead: smells change and they can get disorientated.
- [ ] Keep broken glass and spoiled food out of their reach.
- [ ] Give them safe water.
- [ ] Be patient if they are frightened.



* More in **Pets to Safety: an emergency plan for the ones who are family too**.

Restock and improve

When everything calms down, put what you learned to good use.

- [ ] Replace water, food, batteries and the first aid kit.
- [ ] Charge your power banks.
- [ ] Update your documents.
- [ ] Review your insurance.

What we learned

What worked well: _____

What we were missing: _____

What we are going to change: _____

Don't miss this

- [ ] Keep photos, receipts and correspondence until the claim is settled.
- [ ] Check your insurance deadlines.
- [ ] Thank the people who helped you: today they help, tomorrow you will.



Done

- [ ] I know how to go back home safely.
- [ ] I know what to do with water and food.
- [ ] I know how to record the damage.
- [ ] I know how to avoid scams.
- [ ] I know how to talk to the children.
- [ ] I know that asking for help is part of the plan too.

Even after an emergency, you can act calmly.

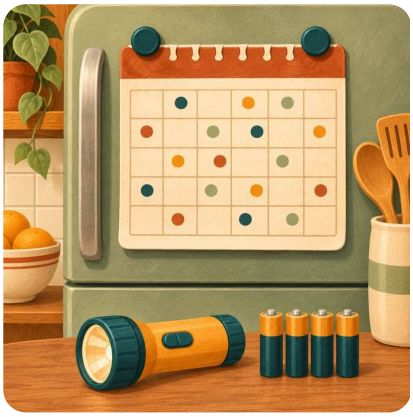
Part 8. Keeping it up to date

A forgotten plan is no use. Batteries run down, food goes out of date, children grow and phone numbers change.

The good news is that keeping it up to date takes very little time if you have a routine.

Your review calendar

Set reminders on your phone and write it on a paper calendar too.



Every month

- [ ] Test the smoke alarms.
- [ ] Check that the kit and the grab bag are still in their place.

Every 3 months

- [ ] Recharge the power banks.
- [ ] Test the torches and the radio.
- [ ] Change the water in the car.
- [ ] Check your phone credit and mobile plan.

Every 6 months

Choose two dates that are easy to remember, like when the clocks change, a birthday or the start of the school holidays.

- [ ] Check the dates on the water and food.
- [ ] Check the first aid kit and take anything out of date to the pharmacy.
- [ ] Check the batteries and replace any that need it.
- [ ] Use up whatever expires soon and replace it.
- [ ] Check the car kit.

- [ ] Check your pet's food and medication.
- [ ] Do a practice drill.

Every year

- [ ] Update the forms, phone numbers and photos.
- [ ] Check your document folder.
- [ ] Review your insurance and what it covers.
- [ ] Change the clothes in the grab bag for size and season.
- [ ] Review medication with your GP or pharmacist.
- [ ] Check the fire extinguisher, following its instructions.
- [ ] Check the expiry date on your alarms.
- [ ] Check your vaccinations.
- [ ] Go over your routes again.
- [ ] Reprint the plan and the “Useful information” page.

Checklist

Review	Planned date	Done	Who
Monthly		☐	
Every 3 months		☐	
Every 6 months, 1		☐	
Every 6 months, 2		☐	
Yearly		☐	

Before each season

Before winter

- [ ] Put warm clothes and a blanket in the grab bag.
- [ ] Have the heating checked and ventilate well if you use heaters.



- [ ] Check tyres, antifreeze, the ice scraper and de-icer.
- [ ] Check and lag exposed pipes.

Before summer

- [ ] Switch to light clothes, a cap and sun cream.
- [ ] Add water to your supply.
- [ ] Check how to store medicines in the heat.
- [ ] If you live near woodland or moorland, clear the area around your home.
- [ ] Check fans, blinds and curtains.

Before the rainy season

- [ ] Clear gutters, drains and balconies.
- [ ] Move important things up high if your area can flood.
- [ ] Check your route to high ground.

Before going on holiday

- [ ] Tell a neighbour and leave them a contact.
- [ ] Check what risks there are where you are going.
- [ ] Take your everyday bag and your documents.
- [ ] Find out the emergency number there.

If something changes in your life

Update your plan when:

- [ ] You move house, town or country.
- [ ] A baby is born or someone new moves in.
- [ ] A pet arrives.
- [ ] You change jobs or your children change school.
- [ ] A medication or a condition changes.

- [ ] You change car.
- [ ] Your contact in another town changes their number.
- [ ] An older relative needs more help.

If you moved: check the risks in your new area, meeting points, routes, exits and the last page.

15-minute family practice drill

Step 7



Practising is what makes sure nobody freezes when the moment comes. Do it twice a year. Choose a different situation each time.

Minute	What to do
0-2	Announce: “Today we're practising a power cut”. Switch off the lights
2-5	Everyone finds their torch and does their job
5-8	Find the kit, the radio and the folder
8-11	Practise sending a short message and locating the meeting points
11-13	Check whether the grab bag can be carried and whether it is complete
13-15	Talk about what went wrong and what to improve

Other drills:

- **Earthquake:** at the signal, drop, cover and hold on.

- **Fire:** get out by the agreed route to the meeting point.
- **Flood:** go up high, without going down to the garage.
- **Evacuation:** time yourselves doing the 5-minute list.
- **Night:** do everything in the dark, with torches.

With children, make it a game: a time to beat, a prize at the end and lots of calm. The aim is for them to feel capable, not scared.

Drill log

Date	Situation	Time	What to improve

News without panic

Being informed prepares you. Being glued to the news wears you out.



How to stay well informed

- ✓ Follow the official sources for your area.
- ✓ Turn on official alerts.
- ✓ Look for the date and the source of what you read.
- ✓ Compare with another news outlet.
- ✓ Choose one or two times a day to check the news.

Signs of a rumour

- ✗ It doesn't say where it comes from.
- ✗ It pressures you to share it right now.
- ✗ It uses capital letters and alarming phrases.

- ✗ It claims something “they don't want you to know”.
- ✗ It is an image with no date or place.

Before forwarding, ask yourself: do I know where it comes from? Does it help anyone? What if it's false?

Tips to make it easy

- **Use what you store:** if you rotate your food cupboard, you don't waste money.
- **Make it easy:** keep everything together, in labelled boxes.
- **Share the jobs:** each person is in charge of something.
- **Involve the children:** let them check the torches.
- **Combine jobs:** check the kit when you do your seasonal clear-out.

Don't miss this

- [ ] Set the reminders on your phone today.
- [ ] Write down the date of your next drill: ____ / ____ / _____
- [ ] Share this guide with the people you live with, so they know what to do.



Done

- [ ] I set reminders to check the kit.
- [ ] I have my checklist.
- [ ] I booked our practice drill.
- [ ] I know how to stay informed without falling for rumours.

You did it



If you have got this far, your family now knows what to do, where to go and who to call. You have water, food, light, documents and a plan.

We don't know if anything will happen. But you are no longer waiting for it to happen: **you are prepared.**

Knowing what to do at the right moment is priceless.

Getting informed today is looking after your loved ones tomorrow.

Don't panic. Prepare in time.

Useful information: United Kingdom

Print this page. Keep a copy in the grab bag, in the folder and in the car.

Checked in November 2026. Details can change: check them every year. Covers England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Emergency numbers

What for	Where
Police, fire, ambulance and coastguard, when life is at risk	**999** (112 also works)
Urgent medical help that is not an emergency	**111** in England, Scotland and Wales. In Northern Ireland, call your GP or the GP out-of-hours service
Police, when it is not an emergency	**101**
Power cut or fallen power lines	**105** in England, Scotland and Wales · **03457 643 643** in Northern Ireland
Smell of gas	**0800 111 999** in England, Scotland and Wales · **0800 002 001** in Northern Ireland
Flooding: warnings and reporting	**Floodline 0345 988 1188** in England, Scotland and Wales · **0300 2000 100** in Northern Ireland

If you can't speak or are deaf: register for the **emergencySMS** service by texting "register" to **999** before you need it. You can also use **999 BSL** (app or website) to call through a British Sign Language interpreter.

Alerts and official information

What	Where
Emergency Alerts	An official alert that reaches your mobile when there is a danger to life near you, with no app and no sign-up. It makes a loud siren-like sound, even on silent. Stay calm, read the whole message, tell the people around you and follow the instructions. Keep your phone updated. More at gov.uk/alerts
Be Ready (UK Government)	How to get your household ready: beready.campaign.gov.uk
Weather warnings	Met Office: metoffice.gov.uk and the Met Office app
Flood warnings	England: gov.uk/check-flooding · Scotland: SEPA (floodline.sepa.org.uk) · Wales: Natural Resources Wales (naturalresources.wales) · Northern Ireland: nidirect.gov.uk
Heat and cold health alerts	UK Health Security Agency, published with the Met Office
Your local council's emergency planning team	_____
Radio	BBC Radio and your BBC local radio station. Frequency where you live: _____

Figures for your plan

Item	Reference
UK Government recommendation	Have supplies to look after your household for **3 days**
Water: official minimum	**3 litres per person per day** for drinking, with more for cooking and washing (Be Ready, UK Government)
Water: what we recommend you plan for	3 litres per person per day for drinking and cooking, plus a separate supply for washing and flushing

Car

- **Recommended:** a warning triangle and a high-visibility vest. They are not compulsory in the UK, but they help you be seen.
- **On a motorway, never** put out a warning triangle: get out on the side away from traffic, go behind the barrier and call for help.

- **Breakdown on a motorway or major road in England:** if you can't reach your breakdown cover, call **National Highways on 0300 123 5000**. If you are in danger, call 999.
- **Before you travel:** check the traffic and road conditions, and write down your breakdown cover number.

Insurance

Flood cover and Flood Re

- In the UK, flood, storm and fire damage are **usually included** in standard buildings and contents insurance. Check that yours does not exclude them.
- If your home is at high risk of flooding and cover is hard to find, the **Flood Re** scheme helps insurers offer more affordable cover: floodre.co.uk.
- **Check today:** am I insured for both the building and the contents? What is the excess?
- **Keep to hand:** your insurer's name, your policy number and the claims phone number.
- **Act quickly:** the sooner you report it, the better.
- **If you disagree with your insurer:** the Financial Ombudsman Service is free: financial-ombudsman.org.uk.

Pets

- **Dogs** must be microchipped in all four UK nations from the age of 8 weeks.
- **Cats** must be microchipped in England by 20 weeks of age (law in force since June 2024).
- Keep your details up to date on the microchip database your pet is registered with.
- Rules can change, especially in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland: ask your vet.

First aid training

British Red Cross: redcross.org.uk · **St John Ambulance:** sja.org.uk · In Scotland, also **St Andrew's First Aid:** firstaid.org.uk

If you need someone to talk to: Samaritans, free and open 24 hours a day: **116 123**

My local numbers

Fill them in yourself.

Who	Phone
Local council	
Local police station	

Who	Phone
Fire station	
GP surgery	
Hospital	
Pharmacy	
Electricity supplier	
Water company	
Gas supplier	
Home insurance	
Car insurance	
Breakdown cover	
Vet	

Words you may hear

Word	What it means
Stay indoors / shelter in place	Stay at home, or inside a building, until you are told otherwise
Evacuation	You must leave the area
Emergency Alert	An official alert on your mobile
Flood alert / Flood warning / Severe flood warning	Flooding is possible / expected / there is a danger to life
Yellow, amber or red warning	Met Office weather warnings, from “be aware” to “take action now”
Priority Services Register	Free support from your energy and water suppliers if you need extra help: thepsr.co.uk

In an emergency, always follow the instructions of the authorities.



“Don’t panic.
Prepare in time.”