



# Let's get ready

Some things in life we can plan for - like birthdays and weddings - but life isn't always that predictable.

Emergencies can significantly disrupt our daily lives and whilst we can't prevent the happening, we can plan ahead to minimise the impact.

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This booklet explains how your local council prepares for the unexpected. Also the measures you can take so you know what to do in an emergency, to help keep you and your family safe.

This guide outlines simple steps to help you prepare. A few minutes thinking about it now could make a big difference to the outcome for you and your family.

**Don't wait for the unexpected to happen – prepare now!**



# Planning for emergencies

Emergencies are happening somewhere almost every minute of every day. Most are dealt with by the police, fire, and ambulance services as part of their day to day work.

Sometimes an incident is more serious and needs to involve other agencies - such as local councils, the Environment Agency, the Maritime and Coastguard Agency, and the National Health Service, amongst others.

All of these agencies work together continuously to plan how we would react and manage any major emergency.

**We have plans in place to protect people, communities and the environment in a range of situations such as:**

- Industrial accidents
- Environmental pollution
- Major transport accidents
- Technical failure, e.g. major loss of power
- Pandemic influenza outbreak
- Flooding
- Severe weather

Plans are regularly reviewed, and staff from the emergency services and other agencies take part in simulated emergency exercises and training.

In the first stages of an emergency, the priority will be to protect life and property wherever we can, and then to help communities recover as quickly as possible.

Sometimes a major emergency will only affect one area of the community, at other times it could affect a wider region. Whatever the extent, we will work closely with the media to get information out to you quickly, so that you can assess any likely impact on you and your family.



## Step 1 – Insurance advice

Being prepared for an emergency starts with having adequate insurance. You should take out insurance to protect your contents and if you are a house owner you should make sure you have cover for your buildings. If you have a mortgage you may find it is a condition of the mortgage that buildings insurance is taken out and might be available through your mortgage provider. You might find it better to have both contents and buildings insurance with the same provider but compare the costs. If you are a tenant you should tell your insurance company and ask them about Tenants' Insurance. This will give you better cover for your responsibilities as a tenant.

If you do not understand the cover you have, talk to your insurer. Alternatively you can always talk to an insurance broker who will be able to explain cover and help to obtain other quotes for you. When taking out insurance you may be required to notify your insurers of previous claims or losses and if you fail to tell them about something important then they may not settle a claim.

Keep your insurance documents in a safe place so that you know who to contact in the event of an emergency. If you do suffer damage to your home you should contact your insurer before you organise any repairs as they may wish to inspect damage or require more than one estimate. Some insurers may be able to organise repairs through their own repair network and you need to be aware of any options available.

If you need to make a claim for valuables you may need to produce evidence so:

- Take photos of your valuables and keep receipts.
- If these are electronic records on your laptop or computer, keep a back up of the records in case your laptop or PC is damaged or stolen.
- If you suffer major loss like a flood then take photos of damaged items such as furniture, this can be used to help support your claim to the insurance company.



## Step 2 – Household emergency plan

Don't panic! The chances of you being caught up in a major emergency are low but, just in case this happens, you and your family need to be ready. One way of doing this is to prepare a **household emergency plan**.

**Here are a few things to think about:**

- Discuss the kind of emergencies that could happen e.g. a major power failure.
- Have a battery operated radio, to listen in to important announcements.
- Keep supplies of tinned food, bottled water, candles and matches, in case you are unable to leave your home.
- Do you, your family or neighbours need extra help due to vulnerability or disability? Think now about who could help.
- Identify possible exit routes from each room in your home.
- Agree a couple of alternative meeting points for you and your family if you can't meet back at home.
- Create your check list for a 'go bag' (see step 5) in case you need to evacuate your home quickly.
- Make sure you know where to turn off the electricity, gas and water supply.
- Ensure that you have adequate and up to date insurance. (see step1)
- Think about arrangements for family pets should you need to leave your home.
- Find out about the emergency plans for your workplace and children's schools.
- Develop your own emergency contact list (see step 3) and remember to include a family member or friend who lives out of town, and is unlikely to be affected by the same emergency.
- Remember to share your plan with your family and, twice a year, read, review and discuss it!



## Step 3 – Personal emergency contact list

ICE (in case of an emergency)

You may not have heard of this, but it's an easy way for the emergency services to quickly find the contact details of your next of kin, if you are injured and unable to tell them who to contact on your behalf.

This simple idea of storing the word ICE in your mobile phone address book, before the name and number of the person you would want to be contacted, could be invaluable.

### Make sure that:

- The person whose name and number you are using has agreed to be your ICE partner.
- Your ICE partner has a list of people they should contact on your behalf and knows any important medical information.
- If your ICE contact is deaf – type ICETEXT – then the name of your contact before saving the number.
- If you want more than one ICE partner, simply save them as ICE1, ICE2 etc.

### Don't have a mobile?

Don't worry. You can keep the same information in your wallet or purse.



## Step 4 – Think about fire safety

**Precautions** – Over half of all fires in the home are caused by cooking accidents, but there are important precautions you can take to keep you and your family safe when busy in the kitchen:

- Always take extra care with hot oil.
- Avoid leaving children alone in the kitchen when cooking.
- Make sure you keep matches and saucepan handles out of their reach to keep them safe.
- Never leave cooking unattended even for a short period of time.
- Make a fire action plan so that everyone in your home knows how to escape if there is a fire.
- Fit smoke alarms on each level in your home. Keep them free from dust and test them once a week.
- Consider using a carbon monoxide detector.

**Preventions** – Other common fires in the home can be prevented by following these steps:

- Make sure that candles are in secure holders and never leave them unattended.
- Do not overload electrical sockets.
- Put cigarettes out properly



## Step 5 – Go bag

In an emergency situation you may need to move quickly, so it's important to have all your basic necessities to hand.

Ideally prepare a small, easy-to-carry bag with essentials and store it in an accessible place ready to go

At the very least, have an up to date check list for your "go bag".

Think about including things such as:

- Key documents (such as passport, driving licence, your personal emergency contact list and insurance details).
- First aid kit including any medication.
- Wet wipes and/or antibacterial hand gel.
- Battery operated radio with spare batteries or wind up radio.
- Notebook and pencil/pen.
- Mobile phone/charger.
- Glasses/contact lenses.
- Toiletries (including nappies/sanitary supplies).
- Any special items for babies, children, elderly and disabled people.
- Spare set of keys (home/car/office).
- Bottled water/energy bars.
- Coins/cash (small denominations) and credit/debit cards.
- Change of clothes and blankets and sensible footwear (if necessary, waterproofs).
- A torch and batteries or a wind up torch.
- This pocket guide.





## Step 6 – Know how to respond

In an emergency, unless directed otherwise, your initial response should be to go inside, stay in and tune in to your local radio station and listen for further instructions and updates.

### Stay where you are

#### Go in

- Wait inside until the all clear is given by the emergency services.

#### Stay in

- Close and stay away from all windows and doors.
- Remain calm and wait for further advice.
- We know that you'll want to collect your children from school, but it might not be safe to do so. Remember that all schools have emergency plans and teachers will look after the pupils in their care.

#### Tune in

- To your local radio station for further information or instructions, including updates on schools.



## If you are told to evacuate

- Always listen and follow instructions from the emergency services.
- Safeguard your valuables and property.
- Think about arrangements for family pets should you need to leave your home.
- Remember to take necessary medicines with you.
- Rest centre facilities may be provided for initial safety and shelter.
- If you choose to make your own arrangements, please remember to let someone know you are safe.
- Follow your household emergency plan.
- Collect your 'go bag'.
- Gather family members and prepare to leave your home – in a calm and organised way. Remember to lock all doors and windows before you leave.
- If you are at work, follow your company's evacuation procedures.



# Household Emergency Plan

## Evacuation

In certain very unlikely situations you may be asked to leave your home by the emergency services. If this happens, leave as quickly and calmly as possible. If you have time:

- Grab 'Go bag' and check contents.
- Turn off electricity, gas and water supplies.
- Take your mobile phone and charger.
- Take some spare clothes.
- Unplug appliances.
- Take with you any prescribed medication.
- Take cash and credit cards.
- Lock all doors and windows.
- If you leave by car, take bottled water, a duvet or blankets and tune into your local radio for emergency advice and instructions.

### Location of main gas valve, water stop-cock and master electrical supply switch:

Gas

Water

Electricity



**Neighbour**

.....

Telephone

.....

Mobile

.....

**ICE 1 contact  
(in case of emergency)**

.....

Telephone

.....

Mobile

.....

**Neighbour**

.....

Telephone

.....

Mobile

.....

**ICE 2 contact  
(in case of emergency)**

.....

Telephone

.....

Mobile

.....

**Important contacts**

Local hospital

Doctor

School/college

Work

Insurance (buildings)

Insurance (contents)

Vet

Childminder/carer

## Key contacts:

### Environment Agency

[www.environment-agency.gov.uk](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk)

### Floodline

0845 988 1188

### Met Office

[www.metoffice.gov.uk](http://www.metoffice.gov.uk)

### Electricity (24 hour emergency service and supply failures only)

Tel:

### Gas (24 hour emergency service and gas escapes)

Tel:

### Water (24 hour emergency service)

Tel:

### Fire and Rescue (non emergency)

Web:

Tel:

### Maritime and Coastguard Agency

Web:

Tel:

### Police (non emergency)

Web:

Tel:

### NHS Direct (24 hour confidential health advice and information)

[www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk](http://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk)

0845 4647

### Local Authority

Web:

Tel:

### Government website

[www.preparingforemergencies.gov.uk](http://www.preparingforemergencies.gov.uk)

### Local Radio

Frequency:

Web:

### Public Services

[www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk)



Remember, **999** should **only** be used in an emergency



**To find out if you and your family are ready for an emergency, try out our 'get ready' test.**

1. Do you have a household emergency plan? Yes  No
2. Have you discussed your plan with family and friends? Yes  No
3. Do you know the emergency plan for your children's school/ nursery/ college? Yes  No
4. Do you know the emergency plan for your place of work? Yes  No
5. Have you completed a personal emergency contact list? Yes  No
6. Have you prepared a check list for your 'go bag', or packed it ready to go? Yes  No
7. Do you have ICE contact(s) in your phone, wallet or purse? Yes  No
8. Do you have a contact person – someone unlikely to be affected by the same emergency - who can keep family and friends informed?  
Yes  No
9. Do you have a wind up or battery-operated portable FM/AM radio?  
Yes  No
10. Do you have alternative, agreed meeting points? Yes  No
11. Do you have working smoke alarms in your home? Yes  No
12. Do you have adequate contents and buildings insurance? Yes  No
13. Do you have copies of your most important documents stored somewhere other than at home? Yes  No
14. Do you have a written list of your valuables, plus photographs or DVD/video? Yes  No
15. Have you undertaken a basic first aid course? Yes  No
16. Have you checked if your property is in a flood risk area? Yes  No
17. Have you thought about arrangements for pets if you need to leave your home? Yes  No
18. Have you identified possible exit routes from every room in your home?  
Yes  No

**If you answered YES to 12** or more questions – your preparations are going well, congratulations! Just make sure you keep all your plans and information up to date.

**Scored between 8 and 12** – it's great that you've started work on your emergency preparations – however there's a lot more you can do.

**Less than 8** – you've not made enough preparations. Perhaps because you don't like thinking about the subject. Remember, the more prepared you are – the better you will cope in an emergency.

## Some risks to consider

### Industrial accidents

If you live close to a large chemical site, you might receive information from the site(s) in your area advising you of the actions to take in the event of an accident.

Generally, the advice in a chemical incident is to 'Go in, stay in and tune in'.

- Go into a house or building straight away and stay indoors until you hear an all-clear message.
- Close all external doors, turn off all ventilation and central heating systems.
- Close all windows and curtains.
- Tune into your local radio station to receive information and instructions.
- Do not ring the emergency services unless you have a medical emergency, as their telephone lines need to be kept clear.
- Please co-operate with any instructions given by the emergency services.
- After the all-clear, doors and windows can be opened and ventilation restored.

### If you are evacuated following a chemical incident, on your return home you will need to:

- Open all windows and doors to ventilate your home fully for as long as possible, preferably for several hours.
- Don't eat any food which was left uncovered prior to evacuation.
- Don't eat vegetables from the garden until they have been thoroughly scrubbed and peeled.
- Clean all surfaces in the home thoroughly.
- Re-wash any laundry which was left outside on a washing line.



# Seasonal and pandemic influenza

## What is influenza (flu)?

Seasonal flu normally occurs during the winter months. It's a much more serious illness than a cold and it usually results in having to go to bed for several days, feeling very poorly with a high temperature and aching limbs. Older people and people with chronic medical conditions (such as asthma) are most at risk of developing complications if they catch flu. This is why the seasonal flu vaccination is recommended to these groups of people each year.

## What is pandemic flu?

A pandemic happens when a completely new strain of flu virus develops which no-one has built up any immunity against. As a result, the new flu strain spreads very rapidly around the world and affects many people. A pandemic could start at any time of the year. Existing vaccines will not protect against the new strain and new vaccines take time to develop, and so are not available immediately. The symptoms of a pandemic flu strain are likely to be similar to seasonal flu but may be more severe and cause more complications.

Historically, pandemic flu outbreaks have happened every few decades.

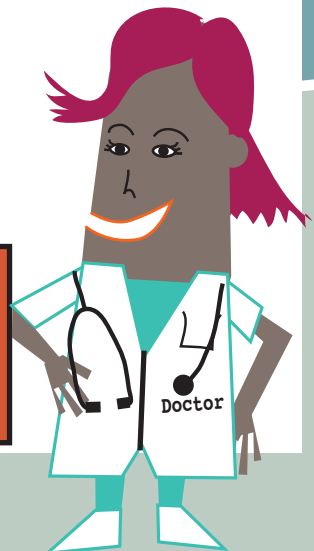
International health experts believe another flu pandemic is both inevitable and imminent. However, health organisations in the UK and around the world are closely monitoring flu viruses to anticipate a pandemic, and very detailed plans are in place to help people to respond if and when a pandemic happens.

## Signs and symptoms of seasonal flu

- High temperature (38.5c).
- Headache.
- Tiredness.
- Chills.
- Aching muscles.
- Sore throat.
- Loss of appetite.

### Top tip

Consider what you would do for childcare if your children's nursery or school is closed.





The incubation period (time between contact with the virus and the onset of symptoms) ranges from one to four days. Most people will feel ill for around a week and will probably feel “washed out” for a few days afterwards.

For most people, flu is just an unpleasant experience but it can lead to serious illnesses, like bronchitis and pneumonia, which can be life threatening.

### **How do you catch flu?**

Flu is mostly caught by breathing in air containing the virus. The virus is passed into the air when an infected person coughs or sneezes and others can then breathe it in. Flu is highly infectious and can spread very rapidly from person to person. People are most infectious soon after they develop symptoms, though they can continue to spread the virus for around five days – and longer in children.

### **What you should do if you develop flu-like symptoms:**

- If at work go home immediately (after informing your manager/supervisor).
- Stay at home and do not go to work or school until you are fully recovered.
- Take medicines, such as paracetamol, to relieve the symptoms – always follow the instructions on the medicines.
- Drink plenty of fluids.
- For advice on treatment, contact NHS Direct on 0845 4647.
- Only see your doctor if you get complications (e.g. chest infection) or a worsening of any existing chronic condition.

### **What you can do to protect yourself and others from flu:**

- Use a tissue to cover your nose and mouth when coughing and/or sneezing.
- Dispose of the tissue promptly, by bagging and binning it, and then wash your hands.
- Clean hands frequently with soap and water, especially after coughing, sneezing and using tissues. An alcohol handrub could be used as an alternative for cleaning hands, if water is not available.
- Avoid touching your mouth, eyes and nose, unless you have recently cleaned your hands.
- Use normal household detergent and water to clean surfaces frequently touched by hands.

#### **Top tip**

Identify your ‘**flu friend**’ - friends or relatives who can help you if you fall ill. **Remember:- CATCH IT, BIN IT, KILL IT**

- Wash your hands when arriving back from outside activities, before and after direct contact with contaminated surfaces, after contact with bodily secretions, before handling food, before eating or smoking.
- Make sure all members of your family follow this advice.

The latest advice is available on the NHS website [www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk](http://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk) and calling 08457 4647.

## Severe weather

When we think of severe weather, we usually imagine rain or snow, but significant disruption can be caused by dense fog, gale force winds and soaring temperatures.

**Gale force winds** – can cause widespread damage to your property and also injuries caused by flying debris and falling trees. Sometimes gales can result in loss of power if lines are down, or disruption to transport systems.

### If gale force winds are predicted:

- Secure loose objects such as ladders and garden furniture, which can be blown around and cause damage.
- Close and securely fasten doors and windows, including garages.
- Park vehicles in a garage or in a place clear of buildings, trees and fences.

### During gale force winds:

- Stay indoors.
- If you need to go outside, do not walk or shelter close to buildings or trees.
- Don't carry out repairs whilst the storm is in progress.
- Do not drive unless your journey is essential and avoid exposed routes.

### After a severe gale:

- Do not touch electric/telephone cables which may have been blown down.
- Check on vulnerable neighbours and relatives.
- Make arrangements for any structural repairs and check on general household maintenance.



**Heat waves** – most people in the UK are unused to extreme high temperatures and our bodies do not cope well with intense heat.

- Try and plan your day to stay out of the heat, keep rooms shaded and, where possible, use a fan.
- If you must go out, stay in the shade, wear a hat and loose fitting, cotton clothing.
- Drink plenty of fluids.
- Take care with those at greater risk – older people, babies and young children, and those with health problems, such as diabetes, high blood pressure and heart complaints.
- Don't leave animals unattended in cars in warm weather.
- Seek medical help if you suffer heat exhaustion or heat stroke (headaches, dizziness, nausea and vomiting, muscle cramps, high temperature and confusion). Remain somewhere cool, sponge yourself with cold water and drink plenty of fluids.
- Check [www.metoffice.gov.uk](http://www.metoffice.gov.uk) for heat health watch updates.

**Dense fog** – presents a number of hidden dangers to both drivers and pedestrians, as it can drift rapidly and be unexpectedly patchy.

#### **When driving:**

- Avoid travel where possible.
- Drive slowly, as fog can cause familiar landmarks and road markings to be obscured.
- Drive with dipped headlights, as full beam lights reflect off the fog causing a 'white wall' effect.
- Use fog lights if visibility is seriously reduced, but remember to turn them off when conditions improve.
- Take note of illuminated signs warning of fog ahead.

#### **When walking:**

- Remember that you may not be visible to traffic, so take care when crossing roads.
- Use reflective clothing, particularly for children.



**Snow and ice** – not only make driving conditions hazardous but the associated low temperatures put older people at risk from heart attacks and respiratory problems.

The council is on standby 24 hours a day from late autumn until late spring, and can respond quickly to carry out salting of main roads. This period is extended if wintry conditions persist.

- Carry a car kit in your vehicle – mobile phone and car charger kit your personal emergency contact list, first aid kit, warm waterproof clothes and footwear, blanket, food, water, torch (with spare batteries) a spade – in case you are stranded in heavy snow.
- Inform a family member or friend of your intended travel arrangements and expected arrival time.
- Plan your journey around main routes, which are more likely to have been gritted.
- It is better to wear several layers of clothing to maintain body heat, rather than one thick layer.
- Wear a hat – up to half of your body heat is lost through your head.
- Check on older friends and neighbours, ensuring they are warm and safe.
- Watch out for signs of hypothermia – uncontrollable shivering, slow or slurred speech, drowsiness and memory lapse. If needed call a doctor or ambulance.

**In difficult conditions:**

- Don't drive unless you absolutely need to:

**If you are driving and get stuck in snow:**

- Switch on your hazard warning lights.
- Do not leave your vehicle unless it is safe to do so.
- Let help come to you.



## Flooding

Floods happen quickly and often without warning. There is nothing you can do to prevent a flood, and scientists warn that an effect of climate change will be more frequent flash flooding in the future.

### Flooding facts

- Just 150mm (six inches) of fast flowing water can knock an adult off their feet.
- Electric currents can pass along downed power lines in flood waters.
- A car can float in just 600mm (two feet) of water.
- Flash floods can cause walls of water 10 to 20 feet high.
- Around 5 million people in the UK live in areas at risk of flooding.

### Driving on flooded roads:

- Stay in first gear and drive slowly as the wash from your car could flood properties.
- Slip the clutch to keep the engine speed higher than normal avoiding a stall.
- Where possible drive towards the middle of the road to avoid the deeper water.

### Safeguarding your home

- Long term preparation can help protect your home and possessions against flooding.
- Boarding your loft gives you more space to move possessions above the flood water levels. This is especially useful if you live in a bungalow.
- You can buy portable flood barrier products from builders' merchants which can be fitted for the duration of the flood risk period.
- Check that there are no cracks around the sealants on window and door frames.
- Keep an eye open for any gaps on the brickwork and cracks around the windows, doors and piping.
- Make sure your gutters are cleaned out regularly and do not deposit oil, building materials etc. down gullies.
- If you are adding an extension or other building work make sure that you or your builder consult building and planning regulations for advice on flood prevention measures.

- New electrical sockets should be installed as high as possible above anticipated water levels, and it is advisable to put new boilers and/or other heating units on the first floor.
- Keep any watercourses, such as ditches or culverts, which run across or border your garden, free from blockages and check for bank erosion. Never be tempted to fill them in, to create an extra patch of garden.

### **Gully and drain cleaning**

- Keeping gullies clear is critical to making sure water can drain away.
- Gullies on a public highway will be cleaned by the council. We will also clear those serving council tenants' homes, as part of our regular gully cleaning programme.
- If you own your home or rent from a private landlord, the home owner is responsible for keeping these gullies clean – including drains on unadopted roads such as tenfoots.

### **What to do if there's a flood on the way**

To try and stop water entering your home, here are a few simple measures which can help keep you safe and minimise damage to your property.

- Listen to your local radio and TV weather forecasts for advice from the emergency services.
- Alert your neighbours, particularly the elderly.
- Move your car to higher ground.
- Roll up carpets and rugs and move them out of harm's way.
- Empty furniture drawers and cupboards. Place the contents and any furniture you can move upstairs.
- Any furniture you can't move could be raised on bricks and pulled away from the wall. Weigh down any furniture which is too heavy to move, to stop it from floating and damaging walls and windows.
- Fasten plastic bags around the legs of wooden furniture to help minimise absorption of water.
- If possible, take the curtains down or wrap them round the curtain pole.
- Move computer and other electrical equipment upstairs or above the anticipated water level.
- Turn off mains gas and electricity.
- Put plugs in sinks and weigh them down with something heavy to prevent backflow from the drains. Weigh down the loo seat too.

- Disconnect electrical appliances.
- Check food and water supplies and take upstairs.
- Bring caged outdoor pets inside, and move all pets with food, water, bedding and litter trays upstairs.
- Get into the habit of storing valuable or sentimental items and important documents upstairs or in a high place.
- If you have any flood protection equipment, such as floodboards or sandbags, put them in place.
- Do as much as you can in daylight. Doing anything in the dark will be a lot harder, especially if the electricity fails.

### Insurance issues after flooding

Following flood damage to your home insurers will only carry out repairs once they are sure the property has fully dried out. Depending on the type of construction and extent of flooding it can take many months before the work can be carried out. If it is done too quickly then it is likely that further problems with damp can occur months later. Some insurance policies offer cover for the cost of renting alternative accommodation during this period if your home is not habitable following an insured event such as flood. If you need to use this cover make sure you know the maximum amount the insurer will pay. Most policies restrict this to a maximum amount and for a maximum time period. You may also be able to claim for other extra costs such as travelling to and from work or school if your alternative home is further away or cost in electricity to power dehumidifiers.

If you suffer serious damage or make a high value claim then it is likely that your insurers will appoint a loss adjuster to manage the claim for them. They should organise repairs and replacement items for you. If there is a major incident affecting numerous properties, there can be delays as items such as dehumidifiers will be in short supply.

**Top tip**  
For flooding advice see  
[www.environment-agency.gov.uk/flood](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/flood)



Sandbags are relatively ineffective when compared to purpose-designed flood protection products. The Environment Agency strongly encourages people to use purpose made flood protection products.

### **National flood forum (registered charity no. 1121642)**

The National Flood Forum (NFF) provides support and advice to communities and individuals that have been flooded or are at risk of flooding. The NFF produce the Blue Pages Directory which contains information about flood protection products, the document can be found on their website [www.floodforum.org.uk](http://www.floodforum.org.uk) or you may wish to request a copy is posted to you by calling (01299) 403055.

### **Important flood safety advice**

- REMEMBER flood water will probably contain sewage, which can cause disease. Always wash your hands / arms / legs after coming into contact with floodwater with hot water and soap. Keep contaminated footwear and clothing away from children.
- DO NOT allow children to play in floodwater, as well as the risk of disease manhole covers may have dislodged under the pressure of floodwater creating a drowning risk.

If you need to walk through floodwater consider using a pole (brush handle) to test the ground in front of you.

#### **Top tip**

Find out if you can register for Floodline Warnings Direct, a free service that provides flood warnings direct to you by telephone, mobile, fax or pager. You'll also get practical advice on preparing for a flood, and what to do if one happens.

**Phone Floodline 0845 988 1188**









# Prepare NOW!

To prepare for an emergency you should take time NOW to:

- Ask your town or parish council if they have a community emergency plan.
- Speak to the clerk about getting involved.
- Familiarise yourself with the emergency procedures for your children at school.
- Familiarise yourself with the emergency procedures at your workplace.
- Agree how your family will stay in contact in the event of an emergency.
- Find out if you have any elderly or vulnerable neighbours that may need your help in an emergency.
- Find out if you are in a flood risk area. Check NOW by calling 0845 9881 188 or by visiting [www.environment-agency.gov.uk](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk)
- If you are in a flood risk area you should sign-up to the free warning service offered by the Environment Agency. They will also be able to give you lots of useful information such as how to protect your property from a flood.
- Make sure that you have a complete first aid kit. Think about taking a first aid course.
- Carry out regular maintenance checks on your home, any outbuildings and your car, and make sure that you keep up to date with repairs.
- Teach your children to stay away from potential dangers including open water, electricity pylons and railway lines.
- Think about arrangements for family pets should you need to leave your home

Produced by  
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## General safety tips..

- In the first phases of an emergency, there may be some confusion which leads to panic - try to remain calm, tune in, get the facts and follow instructions.
- Teach your children how and when to call the emergency services (999).
- Install smoke detectors in your home, especially near bedrooms, and regularly check the batteries are working. Also consider using a carbon monoxide detector.
- Make sure that you have a complete first aid kit. Think about taking a first aid course.
- Carry out regular maintenance checks on your home, any outbuildings and your car, and make sure that you keep up to date with repairs.
- If you smell gas, turn off at the main valve. Open all windows and report the fault.
- Always keep medication and hazardous cleaning products locked safely away from children.
- Teach your children to stay away from potential dangers including open water, electricity pylons and railway lines.

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