

About this booklet

The aim of this booklet is to provide clear practical advice to help you prepare for and respond to an emergency. A lot of the information is common sense, but it has saved lives in the past.

It is important that you, your family, businesses and local communities are prepared.

You can significantly reduce the risks for you, your family, and your property by being informed and ready to respond to events.

All the responding agencies in the Thames Valley work hard to make sure that they are as prepared as they can be in the event of an emergency.

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.

This booklet is prepared by members of Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum which is made up of local Emergency Services, Health Agencies, Local Authorities, the Military and the Environment Agency. Contact information for these can be found on pages 24-25.

Contents

Content	Page
So are you ready for an emergency?	2
General advice	
Emergency first steps	2
Being prepared	2
“Get Ready” test	3
Household emergency plan	4
Emergency “grab bag”	5
What would I save?	6
Be a good neighbour	6
Have “emergency friends”	7
In Case of Emergency	8
Emergency information schemes	8
Health Advice - Choose well	9
Coping with an emergency	10
Fire	10
Building evacuation	11
Severe weather	11
Flooding	12-14
Heavy snow and extreme cold	15-16
High winds	16
Hot weather	16-17
Infectious diseases	17
Loss of power and water	18-20
Security incident	20-21
Household emergency plan	22-23
Emergency contact list	24
Further information	24-25

General advice

Emergency first steps

If you find yourself in an emergency, your common sense and instincts will usually tell you what to do, this would normally be:

- If people are injured or in danger, contact the emergency services by dialling 999 and follow their advice.
- Remain calm, reassure others and think before acting.
- Check for injuries - remember to help yourself before helping others.
- Stay informed by listening to local radio, watching local television stations and checking useful websites listed on page 24.

If you are not involved in the emergency, but are close by or believe you may be in danger, in most cases the advice is:



GO IN to a safe building.



STAY IN until you are advised to do otherwise.



TUNE IN to local TV or radio for more information.

Of course there are always going to be particular occasions when you should not 'go in' to a building for example if there was a fire. Otherwise GO IN, STAY IN, TUNE IN. Remove yourself and others from harms way.

Being prepared

There are some simple steps you can take now that might be of critical importance in an emergency:

- Try our 'Get Ready' test on page 3.
- Prepare a household emergency plan (see page 4).
- Prepare a basic emergency "grab bag" (see page 5).
- Know how to find and turn off water, gas and electricity supplies in your home, check these work regularly.
- Know which of your neighbours might be vulnerable and need assistance.
- Know how to tune into your local radio stations (see page 23).
- Know the emergency procedures for your school, workplace or the local industrial site near where you live.

These steps can help you to react quickly and effectively to an emergency.

“Get Ready” for an emergency.....

Before you read on, find out how ready you and your family are by taking the following 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 emergency “grab 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 an emergency friend - 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.

Household emergency plan

One of the most important things you can do to prepare for an emergency is to spend a few minutes putting together a household emergency plan and making sure all your family know about it.

There are many types of emergencies that could disrupt your daily life, some of which can leave you isolated from immediate help. Emergencies can come in many forms but could include:

- Severe Weather - snow, ice, flooding, heatwave, high winds.
- Infectious Diseases such as pandemic influenza or norovirus.
- Animal Diseases such as foot & mouth or avian flu.
- Transport accidents such as train or plane crashes.
- Industrial incidents - perhaps from a chemical factory, a fuel storage depot or even a fireworks store.

Having a household plan can help you deal quickly and effectively in a stressful situation. Involving your family in writing the plan can help them be prepared too. It doesn't need to be complicated, but you should consider what is around you:

where you live, work or visit, including schools, shops etc.

For example, do you live near a river, airport or factory? Ask yourself and your family the question, 'what if?'; then find the answers.

Think about emergency friends, important contacts and how people would know your needs in an emergency. Have a look at pages 24 & 25 to help you to do your plan.

You can fill in your own plan on page 22.



What would I save?

Apart from family members, what else in your home would you not want to lose?
This could be:

- Documents including insurance, birth and marriage certificates or passports.
- Photographs.
- A piece of furniture.
- A favourite toy or baby blanket.

By considering now what you would not like to lose, you can take prompt action to save or preserve it. You could:

- copy documents and photographs and ask someone to look after them.
- prepare to put furniture etc. upstairs or up high to prevent water damage.
- consider purchasing a fireproof/waterproof container for those special items.

REMEMBER: NO ITEM OF PROPERTY IS WORTH LOSING A LIFE OVER

Be a good neighbour

In many emergencies some members of the community may be more vulnerable than others, so it is good to know your neighbours.

For example, the elderly, very young or disabled are more vulnerable to extreme heat and cold.

You should always ensure you and your family are safe first. However, helping your friends and neighbours is also important and can save lives.

Just checking that someone is well, providing extra blankets, collecting supplies for them or even having a chat may make the world of difference.



'In Case of Emergency'

Find an 'ICE' partner, ICE stands for 'In Case of an Emergency'.

This is a quick and easy way for the emergency services to find the contact details of your next of kin if you are injured and unable to tell them who to contact.

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.

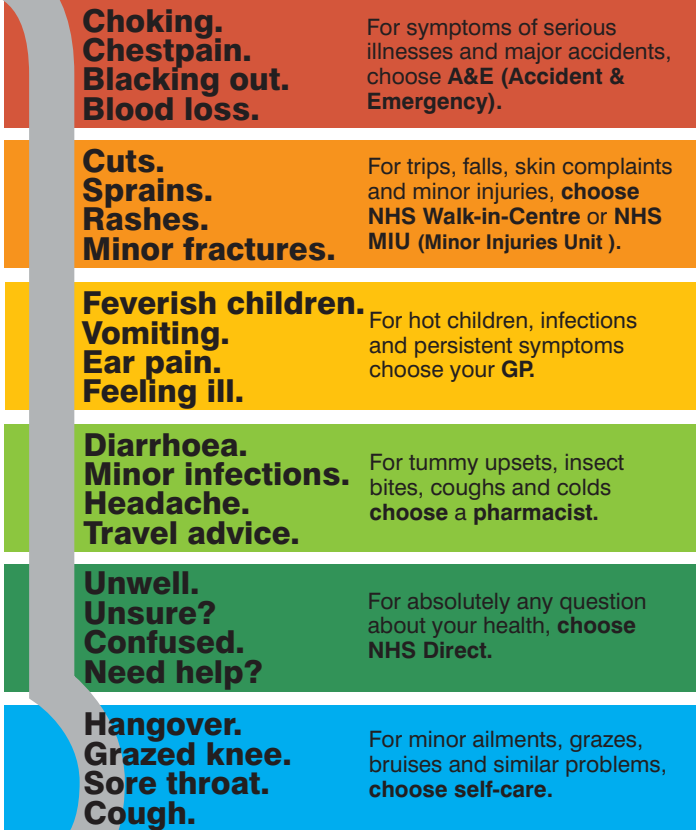
Emergency information schemes

There are several local schemes available to assist you to store important personal and medical information which would be useful to have available in an emergency. Coverage depends on location. Listed below are a couple of schemes, but many others are available:

- Message in a bottle - contact your local Lions Club for information.
- Talisman bracelets - available from retailers.

Health Advice - Choose well

If you become unwell or are injured a range of NHS services exist to help you get well. Choosing the right one will ensure you receive the best possible treatment.



Choking. Chestpain. Blacking out. Blood loss.	For symptoms of serious illnesses and major accidents, choose A&E (Accident & Emergency) .
Cuts. Sprains. Rashes. Minor fractures.	For trips, falls, skin complaints and minor injuries, choose NHS Walk-in-Centre or NHS MIU (Minor Injuries Unit) .
Feverish children. Vomiting. Ear pain. Feeling ill.	For hot children, infections and persistent symptoms choose your GP .
Diarrhoea. Minor infections. Headache. Travel advice.	For tummy upsets, insect bites, coughs and colds choose a pharmacist .
Unwell. Unsure? Confused. Need help?	For absolutely any question about your health, choose NHS Direct .
Hangover. Grazed knee. Sore throat. Cough.	For minor ailments, grazes, bruises and similar problems, choose self-care .

Get training

A simple first aid course can provide you with basic skills that could help you save the life of a family member or friend.

Local courses are provided by St. John Ambulance <http://www.sja.org.uk/sja/> or British Red Cross <http://www.redcrossfirstaidtraining.co.uk/>

Coping with an emergency

You are responsible for preparing and protecting your property so it's vital you take steps to insure and protect your home and possessions.

Look at your local council's website for information on their emergency plans and find out what they and other emergency responders do for the whole community.

The following sections give good advice about what you should do before, during and after an emergency to help you cope with it better.

Fire

- Reduce fire hazards in your home - contact your local fire service for more information and a free home fire risk check.
- Fit and maintain smoke alarms - at least one on every floor (check batteries every week).
- Plan an escape route should fire break out at night - most fire deaths occur while people are sleeping.
- Do not overload electricity sockets.
- If there is a fire, get out, stay out and call 999 and follow the advice of the Fire Service.
- DO NOT use a lift.
- If you are moving or trapped in smoke, stay close to the floor where the air is cleaner.
- Never re-enter your home until the Fire and Rescue Service has made it safe.
- Consider storing important documents in a fire-proof safe.



Building evacuation

If the emergency services tell you to evacuate your home you should do so. Refusing to leave on their advice will put you, your household and those trying to help you at risk.

Local authority resources may be limited and you should try to stay with an emergency friend. If you are stranded, however, the council will provide basic accommodation (in a rest centre). If you are evacuated this may be for some time (ranging from a few hours to several months), so you should bring the relevant items identified in the emergency “grab bag” list (see page 5).

If you have pets you should have a plan for where they can stay in the event that you are evacuated from your home. There will only be very basic facilities for pets in the rest centre.

The people who run rest centres are trained to give you support and advice. They will help you through the stress of an evacuation and prepare you for what to do afterwards.

Severe weather

There is a lot you can do to reduce the effect and potential cost of damage caused by severe weather.

If you are concerned about severe weather affecting your area then you should check local and national weather forecasts on local television, radio or on the Meteorological Office website - www.metoffice.gov.uk.

The following pages contain information on:

- Flooding.
- Heavy snow and extreme cold.
- High winds.
- Hot weather.
- Infectious disease.
- Loss of power & water.
- Security incident



Flooding

One in six properties in the UK are at risk of flooding. Flooding can come from several sources: rivers, coastal waters, groundwater, surface water or sewage surcharges. There are a number of things you can do in advance to prepare for flooding and to minimise its effects.



Environment
Agency

Preparing for a flood:

- Ensure that you know your property's risk to flooding and what type. To assess your risk from river flooding visit: www.environment-agency.gov.uk/ or call Floodline on 0845 988 1188.
- If you are at risk you may be able to register for the Environment Agency's free flood warnings service, via the website or by telephone. Ensure you keep the Floodline number and your quick dial code handy to get the latest information.
- Get to know the flood warning codes and what they mean from the Environment Agency's website.
- Check your buildings and contents insurance policy to confirm you are covered for flooding and to check you haven't underestimated the value of your home contents.

- Do not touch sources of electricity when standing in flood water.
- Never drive through flood water. Eighty per cent of flood deaths occur in vehicles.
- If there is raw sewage in your property you should not enter your property at all and you should seek alternative accommodation until it has been cleansed.
- If a flood is likely, put plugs in sinks and baths and weigh them down.

After a flood:

- Find out if it is safe to return to your property by monitoring the media and local authority website - check falling river levels via Floodline and the Environment Agency's website.
- Ring your insurance company as soon as possible and follow their advice. If you can access your property, take photographs for evidence.
- To protect against contamination always wear waterproof outerwear, Wellingtons and gloves.
- Get your local electricity supply checked before switching back on and have your gas or oil central heating checked by a qualified person.
- Your local council may help provide skips for clearing flood-damaged household items.

Check the Environment Agency's website for more advice on what to do before, during and after a flood.



Heavy snow and extreme cold

Preparing for severe winters

Home Preparations:

- Ensure you have enough insulation around your water tank(s), loft and external water pipes.
- Check you have de-icer, salt/grit and the necessary tools to keep your home safe and clear of snow.

Walking considerations:

- If you are going outside, wear several layers to avoid losing heat and cover your head. Keep moving your arms and legs to help the blood circulate.
- Wear practical footwear that is warm and has good grip for the conditions.
- Consider using a walking stick to aid balance.

Travel considerations:

- Consider whether you really need to make the journey.
- If you are travelling when snow or ice is forecast, make sure that you and your car are fully prepared for the trip and that:
 - You have warm clothes, food, water, fully charged mobile phone, torch, spade and possibly a reflective jacket.
 - Tell somebody when you expect to arrive and the route you plan to take.
 - Make sure there is enough screenwash in the windscreen washers, and have some spare to top up if needed.
- Try to wait for the roads to be treated/gritted before travelling - note it may be that only the major roads are treated.
- If you must drive, check the Highway Code for advice on driving on ice and snow. The main points are:
 - Slow down. Allow extra room - it can take 10 times as long to stop in these conditions.
 - If you start to skid, ease gently off the accelerator and avoid braking. If braking is necessary pump the brakes, don't slam them on.
 - If you get stuck, stay with your car and tie something brightly coloured to the aerial.

Other snow considerations:

- Keeping the paths around your property clear of snow.
- Knock down any icicles that form to prevent them falling onto someone.
- Check to see if your gutters are being affected by the weight of snow.
- Put salt or grit on paths and driveways.
- Consider getting together with neighbours to clear footpaths and community areas.

High winds

Preparing for high winds

- Secure or store loose objects outside that could blow into windows.
- Close and fasten doors and windows securely.
- Park vehicles in a garage or well away from trees, buildings, walls and fences.

During high winds

- Stay indoors as much as possible - do NOT go outside to repair damage whilst the storm is in progress.
- Find shelter in a substantial, permanent, enclosed building.
- Slow down if driving on exposed routes, such as over bridges, and find alternative routes if possible. Take particular care of side winds if driving a high-sided vehicle or if you are towing another vehicle or container.
- Do not touch electrical or phone cables that have been blown down or are still hanging.

Hot weather

During extended periods of hot weather, people and animals are at risk from the effects of heat. To reduce the risks then the following should be considered:

- Apply high-factor sun-screen regularly during the day.
- Try to keep your house cool; closing blinds and curtains can help.
- At night, keep your sleeping area well ventilated.
- Take cool (not cold) showers or baths or sprinkle yourself with water throughout the day.

- Wear lightweight, loose, light-coloured clothing and a wide-brimmed hat.
- Drink plenty of cold fluids, but not alcohol or caffeine, which dehydrate the body.
- If driving, keep your vehicle ventilated to avoid drowsiness. Take regular breaks and have plenty of water in the vehicle.
- Try to avoid going out during the hottest part of the day (11.00am - 3.00pm).
- Avoid being in the sun for long periods of time.
- The elderly and very young are most at risk. If you have elderly neighbours check on them daily.
- Avoid excessive physical activity (it can cause heat stroke or heat exhaustion), or do it in the cooler ends of the day.
- Ensure that babies, children, elderly people or animals are not left alone in stationary cars.
- Be alert and call the health services if someone is unwell or further help is needed.

Infectious diseases

There are a number of infectious diseases that may lead to localised, national or even international outbreaks if they are not rapidly controlled. Some of these diseases include Pandemic Influenza, Norovirus (sickness and diarrhoea), Measles and Tuberculosis. Many diseases are not common due to previous vaccination programmes but there is a risk that they may return or a new disease may develop. As a result everyone needs to be prepared to listen to medical advice and take the appropriate action.

You can reduce the risk of catching or spreading any infectious disease by:

- Covering your nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing - use a tissue.
- Disposing of dirty tissues promptly and carefully - bag and bin them.
- Maintaining good basic hygiene, for example washing your hands frequently with soap and water to reduce the spread of the virus from your hands to your face or to other people.
- Cleaning hard surfaces (e.g. kitchen worktops, door handles) frequently, using a normal cleaning product.

If you are worried about any illness then, unless otherwise directed, you should contact your GP or NHS Direct on 0845 4647 or go to the NHS Choices website at www.nhs.uk.

Loss of power & water

Disruptions to power and water supplies may be rare, and are often linked to severe weather events.

These simple steps will help you to stay safe and as comfortable as possible throughout any disruption.

- Check if your neighbours have also lost services; knowing if others are affected will make a difference to what you should do.
- If you have a pre-pay meter, check you still have credit.
- Contact your supplier to report the fault and ask for information.
- If you lose power for a prolonged period, take precautions to stay safe:
 - Take care using candles, naked flames and even portable heating. Never leave lit candles in unoccupied rooms or with unsupervised children or animals.
 - Make sure your home is well insulated. A well insulated house can stay warm for 12 hours or longer.
- Register with your utility providers if you consider yourself to be vulnerable.

Electricity failure

If you have an electricity failure and only you have lost power then:

- Check your trip switch (a circuit breaker fuse system - it will be near your electricity meter). If the trip switch is still on, call your suppliers' emergency line for your area.
- If the trip switch is off, switch it back on.
- If it switches back off, one of your appliances may be faulty so unplug all appliances and reset the trip.
- If only part of your supply has failed and the trip won't reset, there may be a fault with your wiring so contact a registered electrician.

If electricity is lost for a prolonged period over a wide area, being prepared can make a difficult situation easier.

- Have at least one standard landline phone in the house as cordless phones will not work in a power cut.
- Do not open fridges for any longer than is necessary - they will normally stay cold for many hours.

Loss of water supply

When safe drinking water is unavailable, it is more than just an inconvenience - it can become a health emergency.

If the whole area has lost water supply your water supplier has a duty to provide you with alternative water sources. This could be bottled water, stand-pipes or water tankers. If you are unable to go out to collect water make sure you have an emergency friend that can collect water for you.

Make sure you have an emergency water supply. Everyone's needs will differ, but the Food Standards Agency advises that the average adult should take in 1½ to 2 litres of water in a typical day, (6-8 250ml glasses).

Security incident

Whilst it is important that we all go about our daily business normally, it's also sensible to remain alert to danger and to report any suspicious activity you see or hear.

Always report suspicious activities, you may have vital information. If you hear, see or come across anything that may be linked with terrorist activity, please tell the Police. They want to hear from you.

To report suspicious activity:

- Call 999, in an emergency, or for non-emergency calls to Thames Valley Police, call: 0845 8 505 505
- Call the anti-terrorist hotline on 0800 789 321
- Crimestoppers - a national organisation independent of the Police. You can talk confidentially on: 0800 555 111

Remember, terrorists need...

- A place to live: Are you suspicious about any tenants or guests?
- To Plan: Have you seen anyone pay an unusual amount of attention to security measures at any location?
- Money: individuals may set up bogus bank accounts, copy credit cards, return goods for large cash refunds.
- Equipment: If you are a retailer, do you have any cause to be suspicious about anything being bought?

Household emergency plan

Where we will meet if we can't get into, or stay in our home?

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Who will collect children from school if we are unable to get there?

Who	Contact no.

Neighbours we will check on.

Who	Contact no.

Where we turn off:

gas

water

electricity

Emergency contact list

You should fill in and store these contact details.

Name	Number
Work	
Doctor	
School(s)	
Water supplier	
Electricity supplier	
Gas supplier	
Telephone supplier	
Home insurance company	
Home breakdown services	
Emergency friend	
Floodline quick dial number	

Further Information

Organisation	Website and Phone Number
Emergency Services	999
Non emergency police	0845 8 505 505
NHS Direct	www.nhs.uk 0845 4647
Anti-Terrorism Hotline	0800 789 321
Environment Agency	www.environment-agency.gov.uk/
General Enquiries	08708 506 506
Floodline	0845 988 1188
Incident Reporting	0800 80 70 60
DirectGov – Preparing	www.direct.gov.uk/en/Governmentcitizensandrights/Dealingwithemergencies/Preparingforemergencies/index.htm
Local Resilience Forum	http://thamesvalleylrf.org.uk/
UK Resilience	www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/ukresilience
Met Office	www.metoffice.gov.uk

Organisation	Office hours	Out of hours
Berkshire		
Bracknell Forest Council	01344 352000	01344 786500
Reading Borough Council	0118 9373737 - 24/7	
Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead Council	01628 683800	01753 853517
Slough Borough Council	01753 475111	01753 553717
West Berkshire Council	01635 42400	01635 42161
Wokingham Borough Council	0118 974 6000	0800 212 111
NHS Berkshire East	01753 860441 - 24/7	
NHS Berkshire West	01189 503094 - 24/7	
Royal Berkshire Hospital (A&E)	01183 225111 - 24/7	
Wexham Park Hospital (A&E)	01753 633000 - 24/7	
Berkshire Fire & Rescue Service	01189 452888 - non emergency	
Buckinghamshire		
Buckinghamshire County Council	0845 3708090 - 24/7	
Aylesbury Vale District Council	01296 585858 - 24/7	
Chiltern District Council	01494 729000 - 24/7	
South Buckinghamshire District Council	01895 837200 - 24/7	
Wycombe District Council	01494 461000 - 24/7	
Stoke Mandeville Hospital (A&E)	01296 315000 - 24/7	
NHS Buckinghamshire	01494 552200 - 24/7	
Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service	01296 744400 - non emergency	
Milton Keynes		
Milton Keynes Council	01908 252967	01908 226699
NHS Milton Keynes	01908 278660 - 24/7	
Milton Keynes Hospital Foundation Trust (A&E)	01908 660033 - 24/7	
Oxfordshire		
Oxfordshire County Council	01865 792422 24/7	
Cherwell District Council	01295 221572	
Oxford City Council	01865 249811 - 24/7	
South Oxfordshire District Council	01491 823000	
Vale of White Horse District Council	01235 520202	
West Oxfordshire District Council	01993 861000	
John Radcliffe Hospital (A&E)	01865 741166 - 24/7	
Horton Banbury Hospital (A&E)	01295 275500 - 24/7	
NHS Oxfordshire	01865 336800 - 24/7	
Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service	01865 842999 - 24/7	

