

Plan for the

Unexpected



a co-operative
council



Telford & Wrekin
COUNCIL

Introduction

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 them happening, we can plan ahead to minimise their impact. This guide outlines some simple steps to help you prepare. A few minutes thinking about it now could make a big difference in helping you to keep you and your family safe.

**Don't wait for the unexpected to happen -
PREPARE NOW**



Planning for emergencies

Most emergencies will be managed by the emergency services in the first instance, but on occasions the emergency may be either too large in scale or too complex for the emergency services to deal with unassisted.

Sometimes an incident is more serious and needs to involve other agencies such as the local council, the Environment Agency, Public Health England and NHS England amongst others.

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

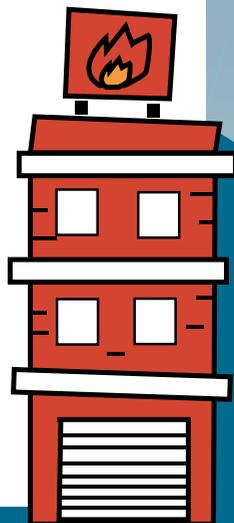
We have plans in place to protect people, communities and the environment in a range of situations such as:

- Flooding.
- Severe weather.
- Industrial accidents.
- Environmental pollution.
- Major Transport accidents.
- Technical failure, for example, major loss of power.
- Pandemic influenza outbreak.

Plans are reviewed, and staff from the emergency services and other agencies take part in regular 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 an emergency will only affect one part of the community, at other times it could affect a wider area. 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 any damage or require more than one estimate. Some insurers may be able to organise repairs through their own repair network.

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 backup of the records in case your laptop or PC is damaged or stolen.
- If you suffer a 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

Find an 'ICE' partner

ICE stands for '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 partner, simply save them as ICE1 ICE2 etc.

For security purposes, many mobile phone owners now lock their mobiles, requiring a passcode to be entered in order to access the device. This hinders the ability of first responders to access the ICE phone list entry. In response to this problem, many device manufacturers have provided a mechanism to specify some text to be displayed while the mobile is in the locked state. There are also smartphone "apps" (applications) that allow custom ICE and emergency information to be displayed as the "locked" screen.

Don't have a mobile?

Don't worry. You can keep the same information in your wallet or purse by filling out this card 



ICE (In case of an emergency) please contact:

Name: _____

Home: _____

Work: _____

Mobile: _____

Relationship: _____

Step 3

Grab Bag

Preparing a 'Grab Bag'

It is advisable to prepare in advance a 'grab bag' you and your family can use in an emergency. The grab bag should be small enough to carry and be stored in a secure place that everyone in your family can find. It should be maintained and checked regularly.

Why do I need a grab bag?

It holds vital personal information and items that might be useful in an emergency. It should be stored somewhere easy to access in an emergency and be portable so that you can take it with you if you need to evacuate your home.

What should be in the grab bag?

- ✓ Key documents such as passport, driving licence, your personal emergency contacts list, insurance details and pet vaccination certificate.
- ✓ First Aid Kit including any medication.
- ✓ Wet wipes and/or antibacterial hand gel.
- ✓ Battery powered radio, torch and extra spare batteries or wind-up radio.
- ✓ Notebook and pen/pencil.
- ✓ Mobile phone/charger.
- ✓ Glasses/contact lenses.
- ✓ Toiletries including nappies and 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.



Step 4

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 for you or them. Remember all schools have emergency plans and teachers will look after pupils in their care.

Tune In

- To your local radio station for further information and instructions including updates on schools.
- If you have access to the internet check key websites for up to date information.

Top tip

Teach your children how and when to call the emergency services (999).



Step 5

Preparing your pets for emergencies

Pet Welfare in an Emergency

In many instances for short term overnight evacuations it may be appropriate to leave certain pets safely indoors, but there will be instances when this is not an option. If you have to evacuate your home:

- Plan ahead to ensure that your pets will have a safe place to stay and ensure your 'grab bag' contains the items you will need to care for your pet.
- Check with friends and/or relatives living outside your immediate area to see if they are willing and able to shelter you and your animals, or just your animals, if necessary.
- If you have to evacuate, the council has a number of animal shelters identified who will ensure your pets are well cared for during this unfortunate period. For access to this service your pet will need appropriate vaccination certificates.

If you have to remain in your home

- Make sure your pets remain indoors with you where they are safe - remember pets can be frightened as well!
- Keep a supply of pet food and water inside watertight containers, along with other emergency supplies.



Indoor Pets

Do you have indoor pets such as birds, rodents, cats or dogs?

- ✓ Obtain a suitable secure pet carrier for your pet.
- ✓ Obtain a suitable harness/lead for your pet.
- ✓ Make sure your pet has a collar with name tag showing your contact details.
- ✓ Make sure your correct contact details are registered if your pet has been micro-chipped. If not, get your pet micro-chipped.
- ✓ Keep a recent photo of your pet showing any distinguishing marks.
- ✓ If your pet is on medications - make a list of them.
- ✓ Keep copies of pet vaccination certificates and other important pet documentations in your 'Grab Bag'.

Garden Pets

Do you have garden pets like rabbits or guinea pigs?

- ✓ Make sure that hutches are in good repair and are weather tight.
- ✓ Can you move hutches into a shed or garage to protect animals in poor weather.
- ✓ Always keep a stock of food and bedding in case you are unable to go shopping.
- ✓ Check your pet's drinking water as it may freeze in cold weather.
- ✓ Be sure to regularly check on the welfare of your garden pets.



Step 6

Preparing for evacuation

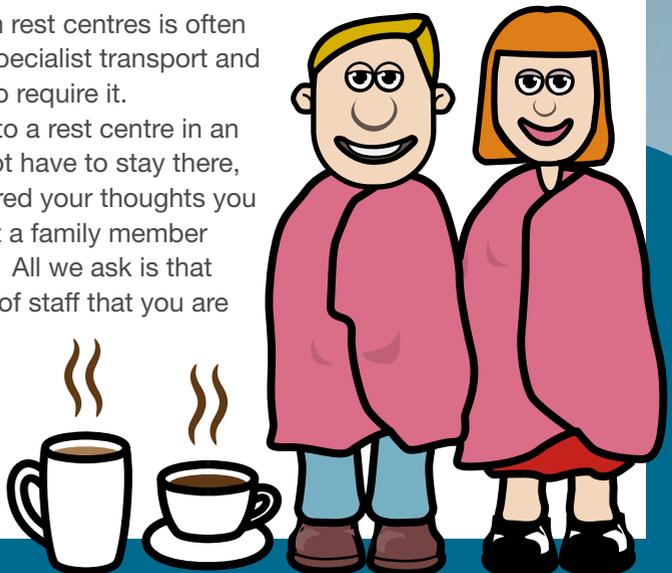
Evacuating your home

Often the message from the Emergency Services is to “Go In, Stay In, Tune In” but sometimes if there is a serious threat to human life or welfare (for example, a gas leak, explosion or flooding) then it may be necessary to evacuate.

If the Emergency Services tell you to evacuate your home you should do so. Refusing to leave on their advice will put you and those trying to help you at risk. Local Authorities have designated Emergency Rest Centres that can be opened if a large number of residents have to leave their homes, however resources may be limited and if possible you should try to stay with family or friends.

What is a Rest Centre?

- Emergency evacuation points such as schools, halls, community centres or even pubs can provide immediate shelter for people who have been evacuated.
- Pre-designated locations can be opened as rest centres which are staffed by volunteers and provide basic facilities for sleeping, feeding and other welfare needs.
- Transport to and from rest centres is often provided, including specialist transport and support for those who require it.
- If you are evacuated to a rest centre in an emergency you do not have to stay there, once you have gathered your thoughts you may prefer to contact a family member or friend to stay with. All we ask is that you notify a member of staff that you are leaving.



Evacuation advice

- Follow the instructions from Emergency Services or Local Authority.
- Remain calm and leave as quickly as possible - listen carefully to the messages from the Emergency Services, if you need specialist assistance, such as adapted transport or medical support you will be told how to obtain this.
- Check neighbours to ensure they know what is happening, offer help if needed.
- Gather family members and pets together and prepare to leave your home - plan somewhere to meet members of your household in case you are separated from one another - develop a Household Emergency Plan.
- Use the transport provided.
- If using your own vehicle, follow directions, do not enter restricted areas or closed roads and be aware that parking can be limited at some Emergency Rest Centres.

Take with you:

- ✓ Prescribed medicines, toiletries and everyday medicines.
- ✓ Your emergency 'Grab Bag'.
- ✓ Change of clothing.
- ✓ If appropriate, baby clothing, nappies and associated toiletries.
- ✓ Special dietary foods if relevant.
- ✓ Important documents and valuables.
- ✓ Important telephone numbers of friends and relatives.
- ✓ Baskets or cages and leads for pets.
- ✓ Personal items such as glasses, mobile telephone and charger, keys, cash or credit cards.
- ✓ Make sure fires are out and turn off gas, water and electricity supplies, if advised to do so. Allow adequate ventilation prior to turning them back on once it is safe to do so.
- ✓ Secure your property.
- ✓ Report to the allocated Emergency Rest Centre.
- ✓ Do not return home unless you are told it is safe to do so.

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 Parish 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 visiting <https://www.gov.uk/prepare-for-a-flood/find-out-if-youre-at-risk>. 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.
- Prepare your family grab bag.
- Think about arrangements for family pets should you need to leave your home.

Create your 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.
- 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.
- Make sure you know where to turn off the electricity, gas and water supply.
- Develop your own emergency contact list 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!

We've put together a number of other key contacts that may be useful in an emergency:

Environment Agency

www.gov.uk/government/organisations/environment-agency

Floodline

0345 988 1188

Met Office

www.metoffice.gov.uk

Electricity - Western Power

(24 hour emergency service and supply failures only)

0800 6783 105

0330 123 5008 - mobile users

Gas - National Grid

(24 hour emergency service and gas escapes)

0800 111 999

Severn Trent Water

(24 hour emergency service)

0800 783 4444

Fire and Rescue (non-emergency)

www.shropshirefire.gov.uk
(01743) 260200

Police (non-emergency)

www.westmercia.police.uk
101

NHS

(24 hour confidential health advice and information)

111

Telford & Wrekin Council

www.telford.gov.uk
01952 380000

Government website

www.gov.uk

BBC Radio Shropshire

www.bbc.co.uk/radioshropshire
Tune in to 96FM

Public Services

www.direct.gov.uk

Remember 999 should only be used in an emergency



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