UK EMERGENCY GUIDE

Evacuation, grab-bag & leaving home fast

You may be asked to leave home because of a fire, flood, gas leak, a nearby incident or a structural risk. The aim is to get people and pets out quickly and calmly, with medicines and a few essentials, and to follow the emergency services — not to pack the house.

IF YOU ONLY DO THREE THINGS

01 If you are told to evacuate, leave at once. Take people and pets, your grab bag, medicines and phones if you can pick them up without delay, and close the door behind you.

02 Know now how you would get out, where you would meet, and how to turn off electricity, gas and water if you are told to and it is safe.

03 Keep a grab bag you can carry in one hand: medicines, documents, cash, a charger, water, a warm layer, a torch and anything a child, pet or medical device needs.

LIFE-THREATENING EMERGENCY

999

Fire, gas, flood with danger to life, or you cannot get out.

GAS EMERGENCY

0800 111 999

If you smell gas: get out, don't use switches or phones inside, then call.

This guide is general public information for UK households. It is not a substitute for the emergency services, official local advice, or professional medical training. In an emergency, always call 999. Official warning and response advice can change — follow current guidance from the emergency services, the NHS and gov.uk/prepare. Three Day Kit (threedaykit.co.uk) is an independent brand and is not affiliated with, or endorsed by, the UK government or any official agency.

BEFORE

ROUTES, BAG AND A MEETING PLACE

A grab bag is simply a spare bag of things you would regret leaving behind if you had two minutes to go. Official preparedness advice suggests keeping it easy to find — not buried in a loft.

01 **Plan how you would get out**

Walk the best way out of the home, and a second way if the first is blocked. At night, think about keys, shoes and a torch by the bed. Include children and anyone who needs help to move. For fire, get out, stay out, and call 999 — do not go back for belongings. A free online home fire safety check and monthly smoke-alarm tests are worth doing.

02 **Agree a meeting place and a message plan**

Choose a point just outside (a neighbour's wall, a particular tree or sign) and a back-up further away if the street is closed. If the household might be separated, agree a person everyone would contact, and write numbers on paper. Tell your child's school or childminder who can collect them in an emergency.

03 **Know the utilities, if you would be asked to turn them off**

Find the electricity consumer unit, the gas valve and the water stopcock, and make sure another adult can find them too. Only turn them off if you are told to, or if it is part of your flood or gas plan, and only if it is safe. Never operate an electrical switch while standing in water. If you smell gas, do not turn switches on or off — get out and call 0800 111 999 from outside.

04 **Pack a grab bag you can lift with one hand**

Include essential medicines and a copy of the prescription, glasses or lenses, keys, a phone and charger or power bank, cash and cards, copies of ID, insurance and medical device instructions in a waterproof folder, a bottle of water and a snack, a warm or waterproof layer, a torch, a small first aid kit, and baby, period or pet supplies if you need them. In a flood risk area, keep it high up.

05 **Think about pets, neighbours and documents**

Pet carriers, leads, food and vaccination records should be easy to reach. Ask a neighbour whether they would need help, and offer the same. Photograph important documents and store the pictures somewhere secure, but still keep paper copies you can take.

06 **Check insurance and somewhere you could go**

Know who you would stay with for one night, and that your local council can help with emergency accommodation if you cannot return. Keep insurer and landlord numbers in the bag.

DURING

WHEN YOU HAVE TO LEAVE

01 **Follow the instruction you are given**
If the fire service, police or local authority tells you to leave, go. Do not wait to finish a job or find the perfect bag. Take people and pets first. Pick up the grab bag, medicines and phones only if that does not delay you. Close doors behind you. If you have time and it is part of your plan and safe, turn off utilities.

02 **Get out safely**
In a fire, crawl under smoke if you have to, and do not use a lift if fire or power is involved. In a flood, do not walk or drive through water; use your planned higher-ground route. If you cannot get out, call 999, go to a window, and follow the call handler's instructions.

03 **Go to the meeting place and stay in contact**
Tell the emergency services if anyone is still inside. If you are sent to a rest centre, sign in so you can be found. Take only what you are asked to take. Be cautious of people offering unofficial "help" with insurance or cash for damaged goods in the aftermath.

04 **If you are told to stay in instead**
Sometimes the advice is to stay indoors, close windows and wait — for example during a nearby incident. That is still an emergency instruction. Use your kit, listen to the radio or official channels, and do not go outside to "see what is happening".

AFTER

RETURNING AND RECOVERING

01 **Go back only when you are told it is safe**
Do not turn gas, electricity or water on until a qualified person says you can, especially after fire or flood. Photograph damage, call your insurer or landlord, and ask the council if you need emergency housing. If you cannot find someone, tell the police or the rest-centre staff.

02 **Give yourself time, then reset the bag**
Evacuation is a shock. Use friends, your GP, NHS mental-health pages or Samaritans (116 123) if you need to talk. Replace anything you used from the grab bag, and talk through with the household what you would do sooner next time.

WHAT TO HAVE IN YOUR KIT

Treat your Three Day Kit as the heart of the grab bag, packed so you can carry it: bottled water, no-cook food, medicines, documents in a waterproof sleeve, cash and cards, a torch, a power bank, a battery radio, a warm layer, a small first aid kit, and supplies for children or pets. Keep it by the door or another obvious place — not in the loft — and add house and car keys to the routine of grabbing it.

PRINTABLE CHECKLIST

TICK WHAT YOU HAVE DONE

- [ ] Two ways out of the home agreed, including at night (keys, shoes, torch)
- [ ] Meeting place just outside, plus a back-up further away
- [ ] School or childminder has the right emergency contacts
- [ ] Grab bag packed and light enough to carry, kept somewhere obvious
- [ ] Baby, period or pet supplies and a carrier or lead ready
- [ ] Neighbour who may need help identified, and a plan to assist if safe
- [ ] If told to stay in, we will stay in and follow official updates
- [ ] Smoke alarms tested monthly; home fire safety considered
- [ ] Out-of-household contact who everyone would message
- [ ] Electricity, gas and water isolation points found, and when not to touch them
- [ ] Medicines, glasses, chargers, cash, documents and a torch in the bag
- [ ] Insurer, landlord and council numbers on paper in the bag
- [ ] Household agrees: people and pets first, belongings only if there is time
- [ ] Bag checked every six months (medicines, water, batteries, documents)

UK CONTACTS

WRITE THESE DOWN

EMERGENCY SERVICES
999
Fire, medical emergency, danger to life, or you cannot get out.

GAS EMERGENCY
0800 111 999
Get out first. Do not use electrical switches or phones inside the property.

FLOODLINE
0345 988 1188
If flooding is the reason you may have to leave. Textphone 0345 602 6340.

POWER CUT
105
Free in England, Scotland and Wales. NI: 03457 643 643.

NHS 111
111
Urgent medical advice once you are in a safe place.

YOUR LOCAL COUNCIL
gov.uk/find-local-council
Emergency accommodation if you cannot return home.

SAMARITANS
116 123
Free, 24-hour listening support after a traumatic event.

OFFICIAL PREPAREDNESS ADVICE
gov.uk/prepare
Household emergency plans and grab-bag advice on the Prepare / Be Ready site.

SOURCES

Guidance in this booklet was checked against publicly available official advice in November 2026. Always follow the latest instructions from the emergency services and the links below.

1. UK government Prepare / Be Ready, get prepared for emergencies (including grab bags, utilities and meeting points) — gov.uk/prepare, prepare.campaign.gov.uk
2. GOV.UK personal flood plan and what to do before, during and after a flood — gov.uk
3. Fire Kills / home fire safety, and local fire service guidance: get out, stay out, call 999
4. National Gas Emergency Service — 0800 111 999
5. Local-authority emergency-planning advice on rest centres and emergency housing

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