INDEPENDENT UK HOUSEHOLD GUIDES

Survival guides for uncertain days

Ten short, practical guides for UK households, written for the Three Day Kit brand. They cover the situations in which a three-day store of water, food and simple equipment is most useful, and they go a little further where you may need to stay in, leave quickly, or manage a longer disruption. The advice is drawn from publicly available official sources. It is general guidance, not a government publication, and it is not a substitute for the emergency services or professional medical training.

01 Power cuts & blackouts
105, warmth, food safety and what to do when the lights go out.

02 Flooding
Floodline, warnings, staying out of the water, and going back safely.

03 Extreme cold, snow & heating failure
Keeping warm, carbon monoxide, hypothermia and travel in snow.

04 Water supply loss & contamination
Stored water, boil notices, do-not-drink notices and your water company.

05 Heatwaves
Cooling the home, checking on others, heat exhaustion and heatstroke.

06 Pandemic & staying home for 14 days
A two-week planning horizon, hygiene, medicines and official advice.

07 Fuel shortages & travel disruption
Essential journeys, no panic buying, delays and a kit for the car.

08 Cyber attack, bank, card & phone outage
Cash, paper contacts, official bank numbers and offline plans.

09 Evacuation, grab-bag & leaving home fast
Routes, a bag you can carry, utilities and coming home.

10 First aid basics & medical emergencies
When to call 999 or 111, CPR, bleeding, burns and choking.

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.

WHAT'S IN THE SERIES

NOVEMBER 2026

Each guide is four or five A4 pages: what to do before, during and after, a printable checklist, UK contacts, and a short note on what belongs in a three-day kit. Print the one you need, or keep the set together.

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105, warmth, food safety and what to do when the lights go out.

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When to call 999 or 111, CPR, bleeding, burns and choking.

THE THREE-DAY IDEA

UK official preparedness advice is that being ready for three days helps you manage while support reaches those most in need. A basic Three Day Kit follows that idea: 3 litres of bottled drinking water per person per day, food that does not need cooking, a torch and spare batteries, a charged power bank, a battery or wind-up radio, a little cash, copies of important documents, a first aid kit, essential medicines, and anything a baby or pet would need. Build it gradually, and check it every six months.

These guides are published by Three Day Kit at threedaykit.co.uk. They are not government publications and are not endorsed by the UK government or any official agency.

UK EMERGENCY GUIDE

Power cuts & blackouts

Most UK power cuts are short and local. A longer outage can also stop your heating, internet, some landlines and, sometimes, the mobile network. A few preparations at home will keep you warm, informed and able to eat and drink until the power is back.

IF YOU ONLY DO THREE THINGS

01 Call 105 free (England, Scotland and Wales) or 03457 643 643 in Northern Ireland to report a cut and get restoration updates — or use powercut105.com.

02 Keep a torch, a charged power bank, a battery or wind-up radio, bottled water and food that does not need cooking where you can find them in the dark.

03 Sign up to the Priority Services Register if you might need extra support, and write down 105 and key numbers on paper.

LIFE-THREATENING EMERGENCY

999

Or 112. Stay away from damaged power lines. Electricity can jump gaps.

REPORT A POWER CUT

105

Free in England, Scotland and Wales. Northern Ireland: 03457 643 643.

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BEFORE

GET READY AT HOME

You may already have most of what you need in the cupboard. Gather it in one place you can reach if the lights fail, and check it every six months.

01 **Keep light that does not rely on your phone**
A battery or wind-up torch (and spare batteries) is safer than candles and will not drain your mobile. Leave it somewhere obvious — by the door, in a kitchen drawer, or in your Three Day Kit.

02 **Store three days of water and no-cook food**
Official preparedness advice is 3 litres of bottled drinking water per person per day, for at least three days, plus more for cooking, washing, pets or formula. Keep tinned food, dried fruit and nuts, a tin opener, and ready-to-feed baby formula if you need it.

03 **Plan how you will get information**
Write down 105, family numbers and the FM frequencies of national and local radio stations you use for news. Keep a battery or wind-up FM radio and a charged power bank. A car radio can work, but in severe weather it is usually safer to stay inside.

04 **Find your network operator and load-block letter**
Enter your postcode at **powercut105.com** to find your local electricity network operator and, if listed, your load-block letter. In a rare national energy shortage, areas may be disconnected in rotation for around three hours at a time.

05 **Sign up for extra support if you need it**
The Priority Services Register (thepsr.co.uk) is free. It tells your electricity, gas and water companies that you may need extra help. Many households are eligible, including those with children under five. In Northern Ireland, ask about Customer Care Registers.

06 **Check phones, telecare and medical equipment**
Digital landlines and many internet-based phones will not work without power unless you have a back-up battery. If you use telecare, a personal alarm or powered medical equipment, ask the provider now what happens in a cut and agree a plan with your care team.

07 **Keep a little cash and know your trip switch**
Card machines and cash machines can fail in a wider outage. Keep a modest mix of coins and notes for essentials. If the lights fail in your home only, check the trip switch (consumer unit) first — and check whether neighbours still have power.

> **Never use barbecues, camping stoves or petrol generators indoors.** They produce carbon monoxide, which can kill. If you smell gas, get out and call the National Gas Emergency Service on 0800 111 999.

DURING

WHEN THE LIGHTS GO OUT

01 Report it and leave a light switched on
Report the cut online via your network operator or by calling 105 (or 03457 643 643 in Northern Ireland). Switch off irons, ovens, electric heaters and similar appliances, and unplug TVs and computers to protect them from a surge. Leave one light switched on so you know when power returns.

02 Stay away from damaged power lines
Keep well back and keep others away. High-voltage electricity can jump gaps with no warning. Call 105 to report damaged equipment. If anyone is in immediate danger, call 999.

03 Keep fridges and freezers shut
The Food Standards Agency says a closed fridge should stay cold for up to 4 hours. A full freezer can stay frozen for up to 48 hours, or about 24 hours if it is only half full. These are estimates — avoid opening the doors.

04 Keep warm and check on others
Layer clothing, use blankets, close doors of unused rooms and close curtains. Older people, babies and anyone with a long-term illness are most at risk from the cold. If you can, check on neighbours and share warmth, food or information.

05 If you cannot call 999 from a landline
Try a mobile. Emergency calls should automatically use any available network. You may pick up signal from a nearby area that still has power. Use devices sparingly to save battery.

AFTER

WHEN THE POWER RETURNS

01 Reset, restock and go easy on the supply
Wait a moment, then switch appliances back on gradually. Recharge power banks and medical-device batteries. Check smoke and carbon monoxide alarms. Restock water, batteries and any food you had to use.

02 Follow food-safety rules, not guesswork
If the fridge has been at 8°C or above, the FSA says food that must be kept chilled should be eaten within 4 hours or thrown away. Do not refreeze food that has fully thawed. When in doubt, throw it out — especially for children, older people and anyone pregnant or unwell.

WHAT TO HAVE IN YOUR KIT

A basic Three Day Kit covers the essentials of a blackout: bottled water, food that does not need cooking (and a tin opener), a torch and spare batteries, a charged power bank, a battery or wind-up FM radio, a little cash, warm layers or a blanket, and a paper list of numbers including 105.

Add any regular medicines, printed instructions for medical equipment, ready-to-feed formula, and pet food if you need them. Keep the kit where you can find it in the dark.

PRINTABLE CHECKLIST

TICK WHAT YOU HAVE DONE

- [ ] Torch and spare batteries (not just a phone torch)
- [ ] Charged power bank, plus spare batteries for any medical device
- [ ] No-cook food for 3 days, plus a tin opener
- [ ] Small amount of cash (coins and notes) and payment cards
- [ ] Signed up to the Priority Services Register if eligible (thepsr.co.uk)
- [ ] Checked whether my landline, telecare or medical kit works without power
- [ ] Ready-to-feed formula, nappies, pet food or extra water if needed
- [ ] Battery or wind-up FM radio, and station frequencies written down
- [ ] Bottled water: 3 litres per person per day, for 3 days
- [ ] Warm clothing, blankets or a sleeping bag
- [ ] Paper list of 105, family, neighbours, GP and utility numbers
- [ ] Found my network operator and load-block letter at powercut105.com
- [ ] Household knows where the trip switch is, and not to use stoves or generators indoors
- [ ] Checked expiry dates in the last six months

UK CONTACTS

WRITE THESE DOWN

EMERGENCY SERVICES
999 or 112
Immediate danger to life, or a damaged line with someone at risk.

POWER CUT (GB)
105
Free. Connects you to your local electricity network operator. Also powercut105.com.

POWER CUT (NORTHERN IRELAND)
03457 643 643
Northern Ireland Electricity Networks emergency line.

GAS EMERGENCY / CARBON MONOXIDE
0800 111 999
National Gas Emergency Service, 24 hours. Get into fresh air first if you suspect CO.

NHS NON-EMERGENCY
111
Urgent medical advice when it is not a 999 emergency. 111.nhs.uk

PRIORITY SERVICES REGISTER
thepsr.co.uk
Free extra support from energy and water companies.

OFFICIAL PREPAREDNESS ADVICE
gov.uk/prepare
Also beready.campaign.gov.uk. Follow official updates in a major incident.

WEATHER WARNINGS
metoffice.gov.uk
Met Office app and National Severe Weather Warnings.

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. Energy Networks Association, “What to do if you have a power cut” — energynetworks.org/customers/power-cut and powercut105.com
2. UK government Prepare / Be Ready, power cuts — prepare.campaign.gov.uk / beready.campaign.gov.uk
3. National Grid, power cuts — nationalgrid.com/power-cuts
4. Food Standards Agency, food safety in a power cut — gov.uk/government/publications/food-safety-in-a-power-cut-advice-for-consumers
5. NHS, carbon monoxide poisoning — nhs.uk/conditions/carbon-monoxide-poisoning

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UK EMERGENCY GUIDE

Flooding

Flooding can happen even if you do not live next to a river. Surface water, groundwater, overflowing drains and the sea can all put homes at risk. The aim is simple: get warnings early, move people and pets to safety, and never walk or drive through flood water.

IF YOU ONLY DO THREE THINGS

01 Check your risk and sign up for free flood warnings at gov.uk/check-flooding and gov.uk/get-flood-warnings, or call Floodline on 0345 988 1188.

02 If a flood warning is issued, move family, pets and essentials upstairs or to higher ground, and turn off gas, electricity and water only if it is safe — never if you are standing in water.

03 Do not walk, cycle or drive through flood water. It can hide open drains, be contaminated with sewage, and knock you off your feet. Call 999 if anyone is in immediate danger.

LIFE-THREATENING EMERGENCY

999

A severe flood warning means danger to life. Follow the emergency services.

FLOODLINE (24 HOURS)

0345 988 1188

Warnings, advice and sign-up. Textphone: 0345 602 6340.

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BEFORE

WARNINGS, PLAN AND PROTECTION

The Environment Agency uses three warning levels in England: Flood Alert (flooding is possible), Flood Warning (flooding is expected) and Severe Flood Warning (danger to life). Similar warnings are used in Scotland and Wales.

01 **Check your risk and sign up for warnings**
Use **gov.uk/check-flooding** for current warnings and the next five days, and **gov.uk/check-long-term-flood-risk** for rivers, the sea, surface water and reservoirs. Sign up for free messages at gov.uk/get-flood-warnings. Floodline can also register you. Surface-water ("flash") flooding is not always covered by those warnings, so watch Met Office rain warnings too.

02 **Know who covers your nation**
England: Environment Agency and gov.uk/check-flooding. Scotland: SEPA and Floodline. Wales: Natural Resources Wales. Northern Ireland: check flood maps and report flooding on roads or burst mains on 0300 200 0100 (call 999 if you are in danger).

03 **Make a simple flood plan**
Decide where you would go upstairs or to higher ground, how you would move children, pets and anyone who needs help, and where you would meet if you were separated. Know how to turn off electricity, gas and water — practise finding the stopcock, consumer unit and gas valve now, in the dry.

04 **Protect the property if you reasonably can**
Keep insurance documents somewhere safe and check that your policy covers flood. Air-brick covers, door guards, non-return valves and raised sockets help in at-risk homes. The National Flood Forum can advise. Move irreplaceable items and important documents upstairs as a habit, not only in a warning.

05 **Pack what you would take**
A grab bag or your Three Day Kit should be easy to carry: medicines, documents, chargers, cash, a change of clothes, water, a torch and pet supplies. Keep wellies or waterproofs handy if you live in a risk area.

06 **Talk to neighbours and the Priority Services Register**
Agree who will check on anyone who would struggle to move quickly. If you need extra help from utility companies, register at thepsr.co.uk.

> **Remember the warning times.** A flood alert is often issued hours ahead; a flood warning may come only 30 minutes to two hours before flooding. Have a plan you can start immediately.

DURING

FLOODING IS POSSIBLE, EXPECTED, OR SEVERE

01 **On a flood warning, act — do not wait to see water**
Move people, pets and valuables upstairs or to higher ground. Put flood products in place. Turn off gas, electricity and water only if you can do so safely and you are not standing in water. Only move a car to higher ground if it is safe; never drive through flood water.

02 **On a severe flood warning, treat it as danger to life**
Stay in a safe place and be ready to evacuate. Follow the emergency services. Call 999 if you or anyone else is in immediate danger. If you are caught in a flash flood, get to higher ground or an upper floor if that is safe.

03 **Stay out of the water**
Do not walk, cycle or drive through it. Flood water can be deeper and faster than it looks. It may hide wreckage, missing manhole covers and uneven ground, and it may contain sewage and chemicals. 150 mm (about six inches) of fast-moving water can knock you over; 600 mm can float a car.

04 **If you have to leave**
Take your grab bag, medicines, documents, chargers, cash and pets if you can do so without delay. Tell someone where you are going. If you cannot stay in your home, your local council can help with emergency accommodation.

AFTER

ONLY RETURN WHEN YOU ARE TOLD IT IS SAFE

01 **Do not switch utilities back on yourself**
Check with the emergency services before you go back. Do not turn water, gas or electricity back on until a utility company or qualified engineer says it is safe. Photograph damage and the water line before you move things, then call your insurer. If you rent, tell your landlord; if you have no insurance, contact the council.

02 **Protect your health while you clean up**
Wear gloves and sturdy footwear. Throw away food that has touched flood water, and follow fridge and freezer rules if the power was off. If tap water changes colour, taste or smell, stop using it and call your water company. Flooding is exhausting and stressful — Floodline, your GP and the Samaritans (116 123) can help.

WHAT TO HAVE IN YOUR KIT

Keep a Three Day Kit you can pick up and carry: bottled water, no-cook food, medicines, copies of insurance and ID in a waterproof bag, cash, a torch, a power bank, a battery radio, warm clothes and any pet or baby supplies. Add a torch you can use if the electrics are off, and a paper list of Floodline, 105, your insurer and family numbers.

PRINTABLE CHECKLIST

TICK WHAT YOU HAVE DONE

- [ ] Checked long-term flood risk for my address
- [ ] Saved Met Office weather warnings for my area
- [ ] I know where and how to turn off electricity, gas and water
- [ ] Important documents copied and kept in a waterproof folder
- [ ] Medicines, glasses, chargers, cash and pet supplies ready to take
- [ ] Neighbour or family plan for anyone who would need help to leave
- [ ] Insurer, landlord and council numbers written on paper
- [ ] Signed up for flood warnings (phone, text or email) or called Floodline
- [ ] Household flood plan: where we go, who we help, where we meet
- [ ] Insurance documents checked and stored somewhere dry and high
- [ ] Grab bag / Three Day Kit packed so it can be carried quickly
- [ ] Flood products (if we use them) are to hand and we know how to fit them
- [ ] Priority Services Register considered (thepsr.co.uk)
- [ ] After a flood: photos taken before clearing, utilities left off until checked

UK CONTACTS

WRITE THESE DOWN

EMERGENCY SERVICES
999
Immediate danger, or a severe flood warning with risk to life.

FLOODLINE
0345 988 1188
24 hours. Textphone 0345 602 6340. England, Scotland and Wales.

CHECK FLOODING / SIGN UP
gov.uk/check-flooding
Also gov.uk/get-flood-warnings and gov.uk/help-during-flood.

NI FLOODING (NON-EMERGENCY)
0300 200 0100
Roads, burst mains and blocked drains. Call 999 if you are in danger.

POWER CUT / ELECTRICAL HAZARD
105
Do not touch electrics if you are standing in water.

GAS EMERGENCY
0800 111 999
If you smell gas, or before utilities are turned back on after a flood.

YOUR WATER COMPANY
On your bill
Find your supplier at water.org.uk/customers/find-your-supplier. Report sewage overflow to them.

MET OFFICE & NHS
metoffice.gov.uk · 111
Weather warnings, and NHS 111 for urgent but non-life-threatening health advice.

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. GOV.UK, check for flooding, flood warnings, what to do before, during and after — gov.uk/check-flooding, gov.uk/get-flood-warnings, gov.uk/help-during-flood, gov.uk/after-flood, gov.uk/guidance/flood-alerts-and-warnings-what-they-are-and-what-to-do
2. Environment Agency / Floodline — 0345 988 1188
3. Met Office, what to do in a flood — weather.metoffice.gov.uk
4. British Red Cross and National Flood Forum advice for households
5. UK government Prepare / Be Ready — gov.uk/prepare

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UK EMERGENCY GUIDE

Extreme cold, snow & heating failure

UK homes can lose heat quickly when the boiler, heat pump or power fails in a cold snap. The priority is to keep people warm and well, avoid carbon monoxide, and only travel if you must. Hypothermia is a medical emergency — call 999 if you think someone has it.

IF YOU ONLY DO THREE THINGS

01 Try to keep the rooms you use at 18°C or above, wear several thin layers, close curtains and doors, and gather the household in one room if you cannot heat the whole home.

02 Never use barbecues, camping stoves or petrol generators indoors, and never use a gas cooker or oven to heat a room. Fit an audible carbon monoxide alarm to BS EN 50291.

03 If heating fails, contact your supplier or landlord. If someone is shivering, pale, confused or unusually sleepy, call 999 — do not use a hot bath or hot water bottle to warm them.

LIFE-THREATENING EMERGENCY

999

Hypothermia, collapse, or suspected severe carbon monoxide poisoning.

GAS EMERGENCY / CO

0800 111 999

Get everyone into fresh air first if you suspect carbon monoxide.

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BEFORE

WINTER-PROOF THE HOUSEHOLD

Watch Met Office National Severe Weather Warnings and UKHSA Cold Health Alerts, and act on them early. A little preparation is cheaper and safer than trying to fix things after the heating has failed.

01 **Service heating safely and fit a CO alarm**
Have gas appliances checked by a Gas Safe registered engineer. Fit an audible carbon monoxide alarm that meets British or European standards (BS Kitemark or EN 50291) and test it regularly. Know the signs of CO poisoning: headache, dizziness, nausea, flu-like symptoms, or several people and pets unwell at once.

02 **Keep heat in**
Draught-proof windows and doors, close curtains at dusk, and keep bedroom windows closed at night in a cold snap. If you cannot heat every room, plan to heat the living room by day and the bedroom before sleep. Official health advice is to aim for at least 18°C in the rooms you use, especially if anyone is 65 or over, has a health condition, or has limited mobility.

03 **Stock the house so you can stay in**
Keep three days of food and bottled water, any regular medicines (order repeat prescriptions at least five working days ahead), warm layers, hats, gloves, blankets or a sleeping bag, and a torch. If snow is forecast, check on anyone who may struggle to get to the shops.

04 **Prepare the car, but plan not to travel**
If you have to drive, pack a torch, warm clothes, a blanket, food and drink, a charger or power bank, a high-visibility layer, a shovel and a first aid kit. Check tyres, screenwash and fuel before you set off. Walking in ice needs shoes with a good grip.

05 **Register for support and know who to call**
The Priority Services Register (thepsr.co.uk) can help if you rely on energy for medical reasons or would struggle in a cut. Know your heating engineer, landlord, energy supplier and the 105 power-cut number. Frozen pipes are less likely if you know where the stopcock is and keep the home above freezing.

06 **Learn the signs of hypothermia**
It is a dangerous drop in body temperature below 35°C. Look for shivering, pale cold dry skin (on brown or black skin this may be clearer on the palms or soles), blue or grey lips, slurred speech, slow breathing, tiredness or confusion. A baby may be cold to touch, floppy, unusually quiet or sleepy, and may refuse to feed.

DURING

A COLD SNAP, SNOW, OR NO HEATING

01 Keep warm without taking risks

Wear several thin layers, keep your feet off a cold floor, and get up and move or stretch at least every hour. Close doors of unused rooms and block draughts with a towel at the foot of the door. Stay inside if you can. If the heating has failed, use blankets and gather in one room. Contact your energy supplier, heating engineer or landlord.

02 Do not create a carbon monoxide risk

Do not light a fire unless you have a proper appliance and a working chimney. Do not use camping stoves, barbecues or petrol generators indoors. A portable bottled-gas heater must be approved for indoor use and the room must be ventilated. If you suspect CO, get everyone out to fresh air and call 0800 111 999. Call 999 if anyone is severely unwell.

03 If you think someone has hypothermia

Call 999 or go to A&E — do not drive yourself. Move them somewhere sheltered, remove wet clothes, and wrap them in a dry blanket or sleeping bag, covering the head. If they are fully awake, give a warm non-alcoholic drink and some sugary food. Stay with them and keep them talking. Do not use a hot bath, hot water bottle or heat lamp, do not rub their skin, and do not give alcohol.

04 Travel only if you must

Check Met Office and National Highways or Traffic Scotland / Traffic Wales updates. Never drive through flood water from melt or rain on frozen ground. If you are stranded in a car, stay with the vehicle unless it is unsafe, keep a window slightly open, and run the engine only occasionally with the exhaust clear of snow.

AFTER

THAW, CHECK AND RECOVER

01 Check pipes, food and alarms

As the house warms, look for burst pipes and water stains. If a pipe has burst, turn off the stopcock and electricity if it is safe, and call a plumber. Follow Food Standards Agency rules if the fridge or freezer lost power. Test carbon monoxide and smoke alarms and restock your kit.

02 Watch health for a few days

Cold snaps increase heart attacks, strokes and breathing problems, sometimes after the coldest day has passed. Call NHS 111 or 999 if you are worried. Check again on neighbours who live alone.

WHAT TO HAVE IN YOUR KIT

Your Three Day Kit should already hold bottled water, no-cook food, a torch, a power bank, a radio, cash and medicines. For cold weather, add spare warm layers, hats, gloves, blankets or a sleeping bag, a charged phone, and any extra medication you might need if you cannot get out. Keep a carbon monoxide alarm fitted in the home, not loose in the bag.

PRINTABLE CHECKLIST

TICK WHAT YOU HAVE DONE

- [ ] Heating serviced by a suitably qualified engineer (Gas Safe for gas)
- [ ] Smoke alarms tested
- [ ] Warm layers, hats, gloves, blankets or a sleeping bag ready
- [ ] Torch, power bank and battery or wind-up radio
- [ ] Stopcock, trip switch and boiler controls located
- [ ] Car kit packed if we drive: blanket, torch, shovel, food, charger
- [ ] Hypothermia signs understood, and 999 agreed as the response
- [ ] Audible carbon monoxide alarm (BS EN 50291) fitted and tested
- [ ] Rooms we use can be kept at around 18°C, with curtains and draught-proofing
- [ ] Three days of food, water and regular medicines in the house
- [ ] Priority Services Register considered (thepsr.co.uk)
- [ ] Met Office and Cold Health Alerts watched in winter
- [ ] Household knows not to use stoves, barbecues or generators indoors
- [ ] Neighbour or family check-in plan for cold snaps

UK CONTACTS

WRITE THESE DOWN

EMERGENCY SERVICES
999
Hypothermia, collapse, or severe carbon monoxide symptoms.

GAS EMERGENCY / CO
0800 111 999
National Gas Emergency Service, 24 hours. Go into fresh air first.

NHS
111
Urgent medical advice, or 111.nhs.uk. Call 999 if life is at risk.

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

MET OFFICE WARNINGS
metoffice.gov.uk
National Severe Weather Warnings and the Met Office app.

PRIORITY SERVICES REGISTER
thepsr.co.uk
Extra support from energy and water companies.

GAS SAFE REGISTER
gassaferegister.co.uk
Find a registered engineer. 0800 408 5500.

OFFICIAL PREPAREDNESS ADVICE
gov.uk/prepare
Cold-weather pages on the Prepare / Be Ready campaign 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 / UKHSA, keeping warm and well, and Prepare cold weather, snow and ice — gov.uk and prepare.campaign.gov.uk
2. Met Office, keeping your home warm this winter — weather.metoffice.gov.uk
3. NHS, hypothermia and carbon monoxide poisoning — nhs.uk
4. Chief Medical Officers' public health advice for keeping warm in extreme weather / national power outage scripts — gov.uk
5. Energy Networks Association / 105 — powercut105.com

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UK EMERGENCY GUIDE

Water supply loss & contamination

A burst main, a power cut at a treatment works, or a rare contamination incident can leave taps dry or unsafe. Your water company is the first place to check. Bottled water, a boil-water plan, and knowing the difference between a boil notice and a do-not-drink notice will carry you through.

IF YOU ONLY DO THREE THINGS

01 Keep at least 3 litres of bottled drinking water per person per day, for three days, plus extra for pets, hygiene and any medical need.

02 If your company issues a boil-water notice, bring tap water to a rolling boil before drinking, brushing teeth, making ice, cooking or giving it to pets — then let it cool naturally.

03 If you are told “do not drink”, do not consume tap water at all, even if boiled. Use bottled water or the alternative supply your company provides, and follow their instructions exactly.

LIFE-THREATENING EMERGENCY

999

If someone is seriously unwell after drinking water you believe is contaminated.

YOUR WATER COMPANY

On your bill

Find them at water.org.uk/customers/find-your-supplier. PSR: thepsr.co.uk.

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

STORE WATER AND KNOW YOUR SUPPLIER

Most interruptions are short. Longer outages do happen, and they are much easier if you already have drinking water in the house and know who to call.

01 **Store bottled water for three days**
Official preparedness advice is 3 litres per person per day for drinking. You will need more for cooking, washing, pets, medical devices or making up feeds. Check dates and rotate the stock through normal use. Keep some in your Three Day Kit and some in a cool, dark cupboard.

02 **Find your water company now**
The name and emergency number are on your bill. You can also use **water.org.uk/customers/find-your-supplier**. In Scotland, use Scottish Water; in Northern Ireland, NI Water. Save the number on your phone and write it on paper.

03 **Sign up for support if you need more water**
The Priority Services Register (thepsr.co.uk) is free. If you use more water because of a medical condition, or you would struggle to collect bottled supplies, tell your company now. If you rely on a medical device that needs water, agree a plan with your care team.

04 **Know the two types of notice**
A **boil-water notice** means the tap water might contain harmful microbes. Boiling to a rolling boil makes it safe to drink once cooled. A **do-not-drink** (or do-not-use) notice means contamination may not be removed by boiling — do not consume the water, and follow the company's instructions for washing and cooking.

05 **Think about toilets, hygiene and formula**
If you have a garden butt, that water is not for drinking, but it can flush a toilet. Keep hand sanitiser and wet wipes for when taps are dry. Ready-to-feed formula is the safest option if you cannot boil water. Bottled water is not usually recommended for powdered formula, except in a rare emergency — if you must, the NHS says it should be still water with no more than 200 mg/l sodium and 250 mg/l sulphate, boiled and cooled for no more than 30 minutes.

06 **Private supplies need extra care**
If your water comes from a well, spring or private network, your local authority is involved. After flooding, do not use it until it has been checked. When in doubt, use bottled water.

DURING

NO WATER, OR WATER YOU HAVE BEEN TOLD TO TREAT

01 **Call your company and follow their notice, not social media rumours**
Check their website or app for your postcode and for bottled-water collection points. If you are on the Priority Services Register and have not had help, contact them again. Report discoloured, strange-tasting or smelly water — and keep a clean, labelled sample in the fridge if you can.

02 **If it is a boil-water notice**
Bring water to a rolling boil, take it off the heat and let it cool naturally. Store it in a clean container in the fridge and use it within 24 hours. Use boiled-and-cooled water for drinking, teeth, ice, food preparation, washing salads and pet bowls. You can usually still shower, bathe, wash clothes and flush toilets; keep water out of your mouth. Wash dishes in hot water and dry them thoroughly. Do not rely on a jug filter unless the company or manufacturer says it is effective.

03 **If it is a do-not-drink notice**
Do not drink tap water or use it in food, even if boiled. Use bottled water or the alternative supply provided. The company will tell you whether showering and flushing are still allowed. Wait for them to lift the notice.

04 **Ration what you have for drinking, hands and food first**
Use bottled or alternative water for drinking, handwashing and preparing food. Soft drinks in the cupboard are fine; do not drink milk or juice that may have spoiled. Fill a clean bowl with a little water and soap to wash hands, so you do not run tanks dry.

AFTER

WHEN THE SUPPLY RETURNS

01 **Run the cold tap and wait for official all-clear**
Discoloured water is common after an outage. Run the cold tap nearest the stopcock until it clears. If it does not, or if taste or smell is off, call your company. Only stop boiling or avoiding tap water when they say the notice is lifted. Replace any filter cartridges you used during the incident if advised.

02 **Restock and check you are owed an update or payment**
Replace bottled water you used. Ofwat and CCW set out what communication and, in some cases, payments water companies should provide after a supply failure. Keep notes of times and contact if you need to follow up.

WHAT TO HAVE IN YOUR KIT

The core of a Three Day Kit is water: 3 litres of bottled drinking water per person per day, for three days, with extra for pets and hygiene. Add no-cook food, a tin opener, hand sanitiser, wet wipes, a torch, a power bank, any medicines, and ready-to-feed formula if you need it. Write your water company's emergency number on the paper contacts list in the kit.

PRINTABLE CHECKLIST

TICK WHAT YOU HAVE DONE

- [ ] Bottled drinking water: 3 litres per person per day, for 3 days
- [ ] Water dates checked and stock rotated in the last six months
- [ ] Priority Services Register considered (thepsr.co.uk)
- [ ] Hand sanitiser and wet wipes in the house
- [ ] Household understands boil-water versus do-not-drink notices
- [ ] Private supply (if any) checked after flooding before use
- [ ] Neighbours who may need help collecting water identified
- [ ] Extra water allowed for pets, washing and any medical need
- [ ] Water company name and emergency number written down
- [ ] Stopcock located, and a plan for flushing the toilet if mains fail
- [ ] Ready-to-feed formula if anyone in the household needs it
- [ ] Jug filters not relied on unless the company says they are suitable
- [ ] Clean bottles or containers available to store boiled, cooled water
- [ ] Used water restocked after any outage

UK CONTACTS

WRITE THESE DOWN

EMERGENCY SERVICES / NHS
999 · 111
999 if someone is in immediate danger or severely unwell. 111 for urgent advice.

FIND YOUR WATER COMPANY
water.org.uk/customers/find-your-supplier
Emergency number is also on your bill. Scotland: Scottish Water. NI: NI Water.

PRIORITY SERVICES REGISTER
thepsr.co.uk
Free extra support, including alternative supplies during an outage.

DRINKING WATER INSPECTORATE
dwi.gov.uk
Advice on boil-water notices and discoloured water (England and Wales).

CCW (ENGLAND AND WALES)
ccw.org.uk
The voice for water consumers, including complaints after an outage.

POWER CUT (IF PUMPS HAVE FAILED)
105
A power cut can also interrupt water. NI: 03457 643 643.

FLOODING OF THE SUPPLY
0345 988 1188
Floodline, plus your water company if quality has changed.

OFFICIAL PREPAREDNESS ADVICE
gov.uk/prepare
Water-outage pages on the Prepare / Be Ready campaign 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, water supply interruptions or outages — beready.campaign.gov.uk / prepare.campaign.gov.uk
2. Drinking Water Inspectorate, receiving a boil-water notice, discoloured water and flooding — dwi.gov.uk
3. Water UK, find your supplier — water.org.uk/customers/find-your-supplier
4. NHS advice on making up infant formula, including bottled water in rare emergencies — nhs.uk
5. Ofwat and CCW information on company communication and customer rights during interruptions

General guidance only — not a substitute for the emergency services or professional medical training. Call 999 in an emergency. Independent brand, not a government publication.

UK EMERGENCY GUIDE

Heatwaves

Hot weather is pleasant until it is not. Heatwaves in the UK cause serious illness and extra deaths, especially among older people, very young children, pregnant people, and anyone with a heart, lung or other long-term condition. Cooling the person and the home is the priority.

IF YOU ONLY DO THREE THINGS

01 Stay out of the sun between 11am and 3pm if you can, wear light clothes and a hat, and use sunscreen. Drink water regularly and go easy on alcohol and caffeine.

02 Close curtains and windows on the sunny side during the day; open them at night when it is cooler outside. Electric fans can help if the room is below 35°C.

03 Heat exhaustion needs cooling and fluids. If someone is not better within 30 minutes, or shows signs of heatstroke (confusion, hot dry skin, a fit, or collapse), call 999.

HEATSTROKE — CALL NOW

999

Confusion, hot skin that may not be sweating, a seizure, or collapse.

URGENT MEDICAL ADVICE

111

Heat exhaustion that is not settling, or you need advice. 111.nhs.uk

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BEFORE

BEFORE THE HOT WEATHER SETTLES IN

Watch Met Office National Severe Weather Warnings and UKHSA Heat-Health Alerts. A little work on the house the day before a heatwave is more effective than trying to cool a baked room at midday.

01 **Plan how you will keep the home cool**
Identify the coolest room. Have curtains, blinds or a sheet ready for sun-facing windows. Check that windows can open safely at night. Turn off lamps and equipment that give off heat when a hot spell is due. If you rent and excess heat is affecting health, your council's environmental health team can inspect.

02 **Get water, shade and simple cooling kit together**
Keep bottled water in, and use your Three Day Kit as a reserve if shops run short or you should stay indoors. A spray bottle, a fan, light bedding and oral rehydration sachets or an isotonic drink are useful. Never leave children, pets or anyone who cannot get out in a parked car.

03 **Review medicines and who you should check on**
Some medicines make people more sensitive to heat. If you are unsure, ask a pharmacist before a heatwave, not during one. Make a short list of neighbours, relatives or colleagues who are older, live alone, are pregnant, or have a long-term condition, and agree how you will look in on them.

04 **Change the day's rhythm**
Move walks, exercise, DIY and school runs out of 11am–3pm where you can. If work is outdoors or physical, plan extra breaks, shade and water. If you have to travel, take water, ventilate the vehicle, and plan stops.

05 **Know heat exhaustion versus heatstroke**
Heat exhaustion: tiredness, dizziness, headache, feeling or being sick, pale clammy skin, cramps, thirst, irritability, a high temperature. Heatstroke is an emergency: a very high temperature, hot skin that may be dry and not sweating (this can be harder to see on brown or black skin), fast breathing or pulse, confusion, a seizure, or loss of consciousness.

06 **Look after pets and anyone outdoors**
Walk dogs when it is cooler, give them shade and water, and never leave them in a car. People who work outside, are homeless, or spend a long time on their feet need shade, water and a way to get help.

DURING

WHILE IT IS HOT

01 Keep yourself and the house cool

Stay in the shade, especially between 11am and 3pm. Wear light, loose clothing and a hat, and use sunscreen. Drink extra fluids; avoid alcohol, caffeine and hot drinks as your main fluid. Have a cool shower or put cool water on skin or clothes. Close sunny windows and curtains by day; ventilate when the air outside is cooler.

02 Check on people at higher risk

Look in on older people, babies and young children, pregnant people, anyone who lives alone, and people with heart, lung, kidney or other long-term conditions. Feel the temperature of the rooms they sleep in. Offer water and help them move to a cooler room if you can.

03 Treat heat exhaustion quickly

Move the person to a cool place, loosen or remove extra clothing, give water or an isotonic or rehydration drink, and cool the skin with water, fanning, or cold packs wrapped in cloth under the arms or on the neck. Stay with them. They should feel better within 30 minutes. If they are not, or you are unsure, call 111.

04 Call 999 for heatstroke

Call an ambulance if they are still unwell after 30 minutes of cooling, or if they have a very high temperature, hot skin that is not sweating, confusion, a seizure or loss of consciousness. Do not drive yourself to A&E. While you wait, wrap them in a cool wet sheet or sponge with cold water. If they become unresponsive, follow first-aid guidance: recovery position if they are breathing, CPR if they are not, and tell the ambulance service.

AFTER

WHEN TEMPERATURES FALL

01 Recover slowly and restock

Tiredness can linger. Keep drinking water and avoid intense exercise for a day or two if you were unwell. Replace bottled water and any rehydration supplies in your kit. If a power cut happened during the heat (for example from overloaded networks), follow the power-cut guide for food in fridges and freezers.

02 Review what you would do next time

Note which room stayed coolest, who needed a check-in, and whether medicines or working arrangements need a conversation with a pharmacist or employer before the next alert.

WHAT TO HAVE IN YOUR KIT

In a heatwave your Three Day Kit is mainly water, more water, and a way to stay informed: at least 3 litres of bottled drinking water per person per day for three days, no-cook food that is palatable cold, a torch and power bank (in case of a cut), a battery radio, and any regular medicines. Add oral rehydration sachets if you can, and keep the kit out of a hot loft or a sun-facing windowsill.

PRINTABLE CHECKLIST

TICK WHAT YOU HAVE DONE

- [ ] Met Office and UKHSA heat alerts set up (app or email)
- [ ] Bottled water in the house (3 litres per person per day, for 3 days)
- [ ] Fan available, with the NHS note that fans help most below 35°C
- [ ] List of people to check on, and a way to reach them
- [ ] Household knows never to leave children or pets in a parked car
- [ ] Heatstroke signs understood; 999 agreed as the response
- [ ] If renting, council environmental health number kept for excess-heat problems
- [ ] Coolest room identified; curtains or blinds ready for sunny windows
- [ ] Light clothing, hats, sunscreen and a way to cool skin (spray, flannel, shower)
- [ ] Regular medicines reviewed with a pharmacist if heat is a concern
- [ ] Plan to avoid strenuous activity between 11am and 3pm
- [ ] Heat exhaustion steps understood; 30-minute rule agreed
- [ ] Pet walking and watering plan for hot days
- [ ] Kit stored somewhere cool, not in a hot loft or car boot

UK CONTACTS

WRITE THESE DOWN

HEATSTROKE / EMERGENCY
999
Confusion, seizure, collapse, or no improvement after 30 minutes of cooling.

NHS URGENT ADVICE
111
Heat exhaustion you cannot settle, or you need medical advice. 111.nhs.uk

MET OFFICE WARNINGS
metoffice.gov.uk
National Severe Weather Warnings and the official app.

UKHSA / GOV.UK HEAT ADVICE
gov.uk
Heat-Health Alerts and the national heat health pages.

FIND YOUR LOCAL COUNCIL
gov.uk/find-local-council
Environmental health can inspect rented homes for excess heat.

POWER CUT (IF COOLING FAILS)
105
Free in England, Scotland and Wales. NI: 03457 643 643.

WATER COMPANY
On your bill
If the tap supply fails in a heatwave, use stored water and call your supplier.

OFFICIAL PREPAREDNESS ADVICE
gov.uk/prepare
Hot-weather pages on the Prepare / Be Ready campaign 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. NHS, heatwave: how to cope in hot weather — nhs.uk/live-well/seasonal-health/heatwave-how-to-cope-in-hot-weather
2. NHS, heat exhaustion and heatstroke — nhs.uk/conditions/heat-exhaustion-heatstroke
3. UK Health Security Agency, keeping cool and staying well in hot weather — ukhsa.blog.gov.uk and gov.uk heat pages
4. Met Office, staying safe in extreme heat — metoffice.gov.uk
5. UK government Prepare / Be Ready — gov.uk/prepare

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UK EMERGENCY GUIDE

Pandemic & staying home for 14 days

Official isolation rules change with the disease. What does not change is the value of being able to stay home if you are unwell, if you have been asked to isolate, or if movement is restricted. Treat 14 days as a practical planning horizon for food, medicine and contact, then follow NHS and UKHSA advice at the time.

IF YOU ONLY DO THREE THINGS

01 Follow current NHS and UKHSA guidance for that illness — isolation periods are not always 14 days. If you are unwell, stay home and avoid contact with other people unless you are told otherwise.

02 Build, gradually, enough food, prescriptions, hygiene supplies and pet food to stay in for up to two weeks, and agree who would drop shopping at the door.

03 Wash hands with soap and water for 20 seconds, ventilate rooms, clean shared surfaces, and get medical help early if you or someone at higher risk becomes more unwell.

LIFE-THREATENING EMERGENCY

999

Severe difficulty breathing, collapse, or another immediate danger.

NHS URGENT ADVICE

111

If you are worsening, or unsure. Use 111.nhs.uk first if you can.

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BEFORE

BUILD THE ABILITY TO STAY IN

You do not need to hoard. Add a little extra of what you already eat when you shop, keep prescriptions moving, and write down a stay-home plan. Official advice in an outbreak will come from the NHS, UKHSA and gov.uk — use those, not forwarded messages.

01 **Keep two weeks of the boring essentials**

A Three Day Kit covers a short outage. For a stay-home spell, stretch towards 14 days of food you actually eat, bottled water or a reliable tap supply, toiletries, soap, pain relief you already use, and pet food. Rotate stock so nothing expires unused. Ready-to-feed formula and nappies if you need them.

02 **Do not let medicines run to the last dose**

Request repeat prescriptions at least five working days before you need them. Keep a written list of names, doses and your GP surgery number. If you are clinically at higher risk for a particular disease, ask your GP or specialist now what you should do in an outbreak.

03 **Agree a doorstep support plan**

Decide who would collect shopping or prescriptions if you should not go out, and how they would leave it at the door. Set up online grocery or pharmacy accounts while you are well. Note neighbours who may need the same help from you.

04 **Stay up to date with routine vaccines**

Vaccination is still one of the most effective ways to prevent many infectious diseases. Use the NHS vaccination schedule, your GP or a pharmacist, and TravelHealthPro before trips abroad. In winter, take up flu or other seasonal vaccines you are offered.

05 **Practise the hygiene that actually works**

Soap and clean running water for 20 seconds, especially after the toilet, before food, after coughing or sneezing, and after contact with animals. Hand sanitiser helps when hands are not visibly dirty, but it does not deal well with everything (including norovirus) — use soap and water when you can. Teach children the same habits (UKHSA's e-Bug resources can help).

06 **Know who is usually at higher risk**

This varies by disease, but often includes older adults, babies and young children, pregnant people, and anyone with a weakened immune system or a long-term condition. Plan how you would keep them safer in the household if someone becomes unwell.

DURING

IF YOU ARE ASKED TO STAY HOME, OR YOU ARE UNWELL

01 **Follow the official advice for that disease**
Isolation length, testing, and whether household contacts must stay in will be set at the time. Read NHS and gov.uk pages, not screenshots. If you are unwell, stay home and avoid contact with others. Some illnesses have specific exclusion periods — the NHS lists these.

02 **Reduce spread inside the home**
Wash hands often. Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue and bin it. Clean surfaces people touch a lot, and toilets. Let fresh air in. If you can, sleep in a separate room and use a separate bathroom; if not, clean between uses and do not share towels, cups or cutlery. Avoid preparing food for others while you are infectious, if that is practical.

03 **Use the NHS the way they ask you to**
Start with 111.nhs.uk or NHS 111 unless it is an emergency. Say if you may have an infectious illness so they can tell you how to attend. Call 999 for severe difficulty breathing, collapse, a seizure, or another immediate danger. Continue regular medicines unless a clinician tells you to stop.

04 **Look after minds as well as bodies**
Two weeks at home is easier with a daily routine, daylight, movement, and planned calls or messages. If you are working or studying from home, agree expectations early. If mood, isolation or caring responsibilities become too much, use NHS mental health pages, your GP, or Samaritans on 116 123.

05 **Do not ignore other emergencies**
You can still have a power cut, a flood or a medical problem that is unrelated. Keep your Three Day Kit, torch, radio and paper contacts usable. If you must leave the home because it is unsafe, that comes first — tell the emergency services if you have been asked to isolate.

AFTER

WHEN YOU ARE WELL, OR RESTRICTIONS LIFT

01 **Return carefully and restock**
Follow official advice on when you can mix again. Rest, then replace food, medicines and hygiene supplies. Wash clothes and clean the rooms you used while unwell. If you had a confirmed infection and need a fit note, time off or benefits advice, use official NHS and gov.uk pages or Citizens Advice.

02 **Keep the useful habits**
Handwashing, ventilation, a small buffer of food and an up-to-date prescription habit are worth keeping between outbreaks. Note what you ran short of, and adjust the kit.

WHAT TO HAVE IN YOUR KIT

Start with a Three Day Kit — water, no-cook food, torch, radio, power bank, cash, medicines and a contacts list — then stretch the food, toiletries, soap, pain relief and pet supplies towards 14 days. Add a thermometer, any testers or masks officially recommended at the time, and ready-to-feed formula if needed. This is a household cupboard plan, not a reason to bulk-buy at other people's expense.

PRINTABLE CHECKLIST

TICK WHAT YOU HAVE DONE

- [ ] Food, toiletries and pet food that could last up to 14 days, built up gradually
- [ ] Repeat prescriptions requested at least 5 working days before they run out
- [ ] Doorstep plan: who would drop shopping or prescriptions
- [ ] Soap, cleaning supplies and (as a back-up) hand sanitiser in the house
- [ ] Routine and seasonal vaccines up to date, as offered by the NHS
- [ ] Plan to ventilate rooms and not share towels if someone is unwell
- [ ] Mental-health contacts saved (GP, NHS, Samaritans 116 123)
- [ ] Bottled water, or confidence in a reliable tap supply
- [ ] Written list of medicines, doses, GP and pharmacy numbers
- [ ] Online grocery or pharmacy accounts set up while well
- [ ] Thermometer and basic pain relief or fever relief already used by the household
- [ ] Household understands current official advice will come from NHS / UKHSA / gov.uk
- [ ] People at higher risk in or near the household noted, with a check-in plan
- [ ] Three Day Kit still ready for a power cut or other emergency during a stay-home spell

UK CONTACTS

WRITE THESE DOWN

EMERGENCY SERVICES
999
Severe difficulty breathing, collapse, or another immediate danger.

NHS 111
111
Urgent medical advice. Start at 111.nhs.uk if you can.

NHS HEALTH INFORMATION
nhs.uk
Symptoms, isolation, vaccines and exclusion periods for specific diseases.

UKHSA / GOV.UK
gov.uk
Official outbreak and public-health updates. Use these, not forwarded messages.

YOUR GP AND PHARMACY
On your records
Repeat prescriptions and clinical advice if you are at higher risk.

SAMARITANS
116 123
Free, 24-hour listening support.

PRIORITY SERVICES REGISTER
thepsr.co.uk
If a stay-home period coincides with a utility outage.

OFFICIAL PREPAREDNESS ADVICE
gov.uk/prepare
Infectious-disease pages on the Prepare / Be Ready campaign 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, infectious disease outbreaks — beready.campaign.gov.uk
2. UK Health Security Agency and NHS guidance on staying at home when unwell, vaccines, hand and respiratory hygiene — ukhsa.gov.uk and nhs.uk
3. NHS, repeat prescriptions and when to call 111 or 999 — nhs.uk
4. UKHSA e-Bug resources for teaching children about hygiene — e-bug.eu
5. TravelHealthPro and NHS travel vaccination guidance for trips abroad

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UK EMERGENCY GUIDE

Fuel shortages & travel disruption

A fuel shortage, storm, strike or closed road can stop normal travel very quickly. The calm approach is to keep everyday journeys flexible, avoid panic filling, and have a way to get home, get to work, or stay put without relying on a full tank or a perfect train timetable.

IF YOU ONLY DO THREE THINGS

01 Make only essential journeys, combine trips, and use walking, cycling or public transport where you can. Do not queue in a way that blocks roads or forecourts.

02 As a daily habit, avoid running the tank very low. During a shortage, do not rush to fill up "just in case" — panic buying is what empties the pumps for everyone, including essential services.

03 Before you travel, check National Rail, your bus or tram operator, National Highways or the traffic service for your nation, and Met Office warnings. Tell someone your route and when you should arrive.

LIFE-THREATENING EMERGENCY

999

Accident, medical emergency, or you are in immediate danger.

TRAVEL AND ROADS

nationalrail.co.uk

Also nationalhighways.co.uk, Traffic Scotland, Traffic Wales, and NI traffic.

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BEFORE

MAKE TRAVEL LESS FRAGILE

You cannot store your way out of a national fuel shortage, and it is not safe or lawful to keep large amounts of petrol at home. What you can do is reduce how often you truly need a car, and prepare for delays.

01 **Keep a sensible amount of fuel in the tank, in ordinary times**
A useful habit is not to let the tank fall below about a quarter full, so a diversion or closure does not strand you. That is a day-to-day habit, not an instruction to top up the moment you hear of a shortage. In a disruption, follow official advice: essential journeys only, and no panic filling.

02 **Do not store petrol or diesel unsafely at home**
Spare cans in a hallway or under the stairs are a fire risk. If you ever keep a small amount of petrol, it must be in a suitable approved container, in limited quantity, and stored as the law and fire service advise — never in the living space, never near flames or boilers, and never as a “stockpile”. Do not decant fuel from a vehicle.

03 **Plan other ways to make essential trips**
Know a walking or cycling route for local journeys, and a bus, rail or lift-share option for anything further. Download or print maps and a timetable you can use offline. If you depend on a car for work, caring or medical appointments, talk to your employer or clinic now about what would happen in a disruption.

04 **Pack a small kit for the car or bag**
Official preparedness advice includes a torch, phone charger or power bank, warm or waterproof clothes, a blanket, water and food, a first aid kit, high-visibility clothing, jump leads and, in winter, a shovel. Take extra water in hot weather. Never leave children or pets in a parked car.

05 **Save official travel sources, not rumours**
National Rail, your operator app, National Highways, Traffic Scotland, Traffic Wales, TrafficWatch NI, Traveline (0871 200 22 33) and the Met Office. In a major incident, follow transport staff and the emergency services. See it, say it, sorted: report anything that feels wrong to staff or British Transport Police on 61016.

06 **Think about heating oil, deliveries and work**
If you use heating oil, do not wait until the tank is nearly empty in winter — but do not overfill or hoard drums unsafely either. If your job or a caring role is designated as essential in a formal fuel emergency, you would be told through official channels, not social media.

DURING

SHORTAGE, DELAY, OR YOU ARE STRANDED

01 **Cut journeys to what is genuinely essential**
Combine remaining trips, share lifts if it is safe, work from home if you can, and use public transport, walking or cycling where that still runs. If pumps are open with a limit, take only what you need. Do not block the forecourt, the road or a junction — that delays tankers and emergency vehicles.

02 **If you must travel, prepare to be late**
Check official updates before you leave, allow extra time, and tell someone your destination and expected arrival. Take medicines, a charged phone, a power bank, water, food and suitable clothing. Follow staff instructions at stations and on the roads. If you are delayed, it is usually safer to stay where you are and wait for advice than to set off across country on a guess.

03 **Drive to the conditions, and never through flood water**
Check tyres, oil, screenwash and fuel before you set off. In heat, ventilate the car and plan stops. If you break down, get to a place of safety if you can and follow National Highways (or the equivalent in your nation) guidance. If you are stranded in snow, stay with the vehicle unless it is unsafe.

04 **If fuel is being formally prioritised**
In a severe national shortage the government has emergency plans that can include purchase limits, restricted hours, or priority for essential services and public transport. Follow instructions at the pump and in official announcements. Do not assume a neighbour's rumour is policy.

AFTER

WHEN MOVEMENT IS NORMAL AGAIN

01 **Return to a calm routine, not a binge fill-up**
When supplies recover, fill the tank as you usually would. Restock the water, snacks and torch in the car. If you missed work, a medical appointment or a caring visit, reschedule rather than driving tired.

02 **Adjust your plan**
Note which alternative route or mode actually worked, and whether you need an offline map, a different commute, or a conversation with your employer. Keep the tank-habit, not a collection of fuel cans.

WHAT TO HAVE IN YOUR KIT

Your Three Day Kit at home means you can stay put if travel is a bad idea: water, no-cook food, medicines, torch, radio, power bank and cash. In the car or a day bag, keep a smaller version — water, a snack, a charger, warm or waterproof layers, a first aid kit and a paper list of numbers — so a long delay does not become an emergency.

PRINTABLE CHECKLIST

TICK WHAT YOU HAVE DONE

- [ ] Everyday habit of not running the tank extremely low (not panic topping-up)
- [ ] At least one non-car option for essential local journeys
- [ ] National Rail / operator, roads and Met Office sources bookmarked
- [ ] Car or bag kit: torch, charger, water, food, layers, first aid kit
- [ ] Medicines taken on any essential journey
- [ ] Heating oil (if used) not left until the tank is almost empty in winter
- [ ] British Transport Police text number 61016 saved
- [ ] No unsafe petrol or diesel stored in the house or hallway
- [ ] Offline map, and a paper note of a usual and alternative route home
- [ ] Traveline number saved: 0871 200 22 33
- [ ] Winter extras if relevant: blanket, shovel, screenwash, high-visibility layer
- [ ] Employer or caring plan agreed if I could not travel
- [ ] Household agrees: essential journeys only during a shortage, no blocking pumps
- [ ] Three Day Kit at home so we can stay in if travel is unwise

UK CONTACTS

WRITE THESE DOWN

EMERGENCY SERVICES
999
Accident, medical emergency, or immediate danger.

NHS URGENT ADVICE
111
If you are unwell on a journey and it is not a 999 emergency.

NATIONAL RAIL
nationalrail.co.uk
Train times and disruption. Follow staff instructions at stations.

ROADS
nationalhighways.co.uk
Traffic Scotland, Traffic Wales and TrafficWatch NI in those nations.

TRAVELINE
0871 200 22 33
Public transport journey planning across Great Britain.

BRITISH TRANSPORT POLICE
61016
Text from a train or station if you see something that does not feel right.

MET OFFICE
metoffice.gov.uk
Weather warnings that affect roads and rail.

OFFICIAL PREPAREDNESS ADVICE
gov.uk/prepare
Travel-disruption pages on the Prepare / Be Ready campaign 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, transport disruption and delays — prepare.campaign.gov.uk/get-prepared-for-emergencies/travel-advice
2. GOV.UK, National Emergency Plan for Fuel (overview of national response tools) — gov.uk
3. National Highways severe-weather and breakdown guidance — nationalhighways.co.uk
4. Met Office seasonal travel advice — metoffice.gov.uk
5. THINK! vehicle safety checks — think.gov.uk

General guidance only — not a substitute for the emergency services or professional medical training. Call 999 in an emergency. Independent brand, not a government publication.

UK EMERGENCY GUIDE

Cyber attack, bank, card & phone outage

A cyber incident, a bank-system failure, a mobile-network outage or a power cut can all have the same effect at the till: cards, apps and cash machines stop working, and you may not be able to call or go online. The antidote is old-fashioned and effective — cash, paper, radio, and a plan that does not live only on your phone.

IF YOU ONLY DO THREE THINGS

01 Keep a modest mix of cash (coins and notes) for essentials, and at least one physical payment card. Do not rely only on a phone wallet.

02 Write down important numbers on paper: family, your bank's official number from the back of the card or a statement, 105, NHS 111, and a meeting place if you cannot call each other.

03 If your accounts look wrong, contact the bank on a number you already trust — never on a number from a text, email or pop-up — and report fraud through official channels.

LIFE-THREATENING EMERGENCY

999 or 112

Mobiles should try any available network. If you cannot get through, go to the nearest emergency station if safe.

REPORT BANK FRAUD

On your card

Use the official number on the back of your card or a statement. Action Fraud: 0300 123 2040.

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

OFFLINE BACK-UPS FOR A DIGITAL LIFE

Phone, broadband and bank outages are usually short. They are much harder if every contact, ticket, map and payment method lives only on one handset.

01 **Keep some cash, and more than one way to pay**

Official preparedness advice is to keep a small amount of cash — a mix of coins and notes — for essentials if electronic payments or ATMs fail. The right amount depends on your household. Keep a physical card as well as any phone wallet, and, if you can, a second card from a different provider. Do not carry or store large amounts of cash unsafely.

02 **Write down numbers and meeting places**

On paper, keep family and neighbour numbers, your GP, your bank's official phone number (copied from the card or a statement), 105, 111, your workplace or school, and insurance details. Agree a meeting point if you cannot call each other — a place that is easy to find and usually open, or a trusted relative's home.

03 **Prepare phones, landlines and telecare**

Keep a charged power bank. Download offline maps; GPS may still work without a signal, but map apps need the map saved in advance. The old analogue landline is being switched to digital — if you still rely on a landline or telecare, ask your provider about a free back-up battery if you are a vulnerable customer, so you can still call 999 in a power cut for a period of time.

04 **Keep a radio and a way to hear official news**

A battery or wind-up FM radio, with station frequencies written down, is how many people will get updates if mobile data and broadband are down. Follow official sources when they return: your bank, ncsc.gov.uk, gov.uk and your communications provider's status page — not a link in a panic text.

05 **Harden the easy cyber basics**

Use unique passwords or a password manager, switch on two-factor authentication, and keep phones and laptops updated. Tell your household: banks and HMRC will not ask you to move money, or to read out a one-time passcode, to "keep an account safe". Forward suspicious texts to 7726. If you use online banking, make sure you already know the official app and phone number.

06 **Plan for people who rely on connected care**

If someone uses a personal alarm, diabetes sensor or other connected device, ask the manufacturer how it behaves if the network or power is down. Agree who would go round in person if you could not get through.

DURING

WHEN CARDS, APPS OR NETWORKS FAIL

01 **Pay with cash, and stay calm at the till**

If cards and contactless are down, use cash for food, fuel and medicine. Shops may switch to cash-only or close briefly. Try another shop or a different card provider only if it is necessary — do not assume every ATM will work. Keep receipts.

02 **If it looks like fraud or a cyber incident on your account**

Contact the bank or card issuer on the official number you already have. Do not call a number in a text or email, and do not give a one-time passcode or remote access to your device. Stop using a compromised card. In England, Wales and Northern Ireland you can also report fraud to Action Fraud (0300 123 2040 or actionfraud.police.uk). In Scotland, report to Police Scotland on 101. The National Cyber Security Centre (ncsc.gov.uk) publishes advice during major incidents.

03 **If phones and broadband are down**

Try a mobile if the landline fails, and Wi-Fi calling if you still have internet. Emergency calls from mobiles should roam onto any available network. If you still cannot reach 999 or 112 and it is safe, go to the nearest police, fire or ambulance station or hospital. Relay UK, Emergency SMS and 999 BSL may also be affected in a wide outage. Use devices sparingly. Check on neighbours, especially anyone who lives alone or uses telecare.

04 **Use your meeting place and the radio**

If you cannot reach family, go to the place you agreed, when you agreed. Listen to the radio for official updates. Public Wi-Fi in a nearby area that is unaffected may still work. Moving a short distance sometimes finds another mobile network.

AFTER

WHEN SYSTEMS RETURN

01 **Check accounts and change what was exposed**

Look through statements and app login history. Report any payment you do not recognise. If you entered a password on a fake site, change it on the real site and anywhere else you used the same password. Keep a note of reference numbers from the bank or Action Fraud.

02 **Restock the analogue layer**

Replace cash you spent, recharge power banks, and check that the paper number list is still accurate. If a scam almost caught you, talk through it with the household so the next message is easier to spot.

WHAT TO HAVE IN YOUR KIT

A Three Day Kit is built for this kind of outage as much as for a storm: bottled water, no-cook food, a torch, a charged power bank, a battery or wind-up radio, a modest amount of cash, payment cards, copies of key documents, and a paper list of official phone numbers — including your bank, 105 and family. Keep it somewhere you can find it if the phone is dead.

PRINTABLE CHECKLIST

TICK WHAT YOU HAVE DONE

- [ ] Modest cash at home (coins and notes) for essentials, stored safely
- [ ] Bank's official phone number copied from the card or a statement, on paper
- [ ] Agreed meeting place if we cannot call each other
- [ ] Radio frequencies for news stations written down
- [ ] Landline / telecare provider asked about power-cut battery back-up if needed
- [ ] Household knows not to share one-time passcodes, and to report spam texts to 7726
- [ ] Plan to check in person on anyone who uses telecare or lives alone
- [ ] At least one physical payment card, not only a phone wallet
- [ ] Family, neighbour, GP, school, work and utility numbers written down
- [ ] Charged power bank and a battery or wind-up FM radio
- [ ] Offline maps downloaded; a paper route home if I travel often
- [ ] Unique passwords or a password manager, and two-factor authentication on email and banking
- [ ] Action Fraud (or Police Scotland 101) details saved
- [ ] Three Day Kit includes cash, paper contacts, radio, torch and a power bank

UK CONTACTS

WRITE THESE DOWN

EMERGENCY SERVICES
999 or 112
Try mobile and landline. If neither works and it is safe, go to the nearest emergency station.

YOUR BANK OR CARD ISSUER
On the card
Official number only — not a number from a text, email or pop-up.

ACTION FRAUD (E, W, NI)
0300 123 2040
actionfraud.police.uk. In Scotland report fraud to Police Scotland on 101.

SUSPICIOUS TEXTS
7726
Forward the text, free, to report phishing and smishing.

NATIONAL CYBER SECURITY CENTRE
ncsc.gov.uk
Advice for individuals and updates during major cyber incidents.

POWER CUT
105
A power cut can also take down phones, broadband and card machines. NI: 03457 643 643.

NHS 111
111
Urgent medical advice if you cannot use online services as usual.

OFFICIAL PREPAREDNESS ADVICE
gov.uk/prepare
Phone and broadband outage pages 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, phone and broadband outages, and power cuts — beready.campaign.gov.uk
2. National Cyber Security Centre, guidance for individuals and families — ncsc.gov.uk
3. Action Fraud — actionfraud.police.uk / 0300 123 2040 (England, Wales, Northern Ireland)
4. Ofcom consumer advice on mobile and broadband faults, and the digital phone switchover — ofcom.org.uk
5. Official 999/112 roaming and accessibility services (Relay UK, Emergency SMS, 999 BSL)

General guidance only — not a substitute for the emergency services or professional medical training. Call 999 in an emergency. Independent brand, not a government publication.

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.

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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

General guidance only — not a substitute for the emergency services or professional medical training. Call 999 in an emergency. Independent brand, not a government publication.

UK EMERGENCY GUIDE

First aid basics & medical emergencies

When ambulances are busy, good first aid at the scene still matters — and so does knowing when to call. This is a short reminder of official UK steps for a few common emergencies. It is not a training course and it is not a substitute for 999 or NHS 111. If in doubt, call.

IF YOU ONLY DO THREE THINGS

01 Call 999 or 112 for a life-threatening emergency: someone unresponsive, not breathing normally, bleeding heavily, having a suspected heart attack or stroke, or in severe difficulty breathing.

02 Call 111, or use 111.nhs.uk, for urgent but non-life-threatening problems, or if you are unsure. The call handler will tell you if you need 999 instead.

03 Learn CPR and first aid properly with St John Ambulance, the British Red Cross or another recognised provider, and keep their official first aid app on your phone.

LIFE-THREATENING EMERGENCY

999 or 112

Unresponsive, not breathing normally, severe bleeding, or another immediate danger.

URGENT MEDICAL ADVICE

111

When it is not a 999 emergency, or you need advice. 111.nhs.uk

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BEFORE

SKILLS, KIT AND WHEN TO CALL

The most useful first aid happens before an emergency: a short course, a stocked kit, medicines that have not run out, and the household knowing 999 and their address.

01 **Learn the skills for real, not only from a leaflet**

Book a first aid course with St John Ambulance, the British Red Cross or another recognised trainer, and include infant or child first aid if you care for children — the techniques are different. Download the official St John or Red Cross first aid app and practise looking things up. Many employers will fund a course.

02 **Keep a kit and the medicines you already need**

Official preparedness lists include waterproof plasters, bandages, a thermometer, antiseptic, eyewash, sterile dressings and gloves, medical tape and tweezers. Add any regular medication, a copy of doses, and spare batteries for medical devices. Request repeat prescriptions at least five working days before you run out. Check dates every six months.

03 **Make it possible for others to help you**

Add ICE or Medical ID on your phone so emergency services can see essential information without your passcode. Write medicines and emergency contacts on paper too. Make sure children who are old enough know their address and when to call 999. If you have a serious allergy, heart condition or epilepsy, wear a medical alert if you have been advised to.

04 **Know 999, 111 and 112**

Call 999 or 112 if someone is unresponsive, is not breathing normally, is bleeding heavily, has signs of a heart attack or stroke, has severe burns, a seizure that is new or not stopping, severe difficulty breathing, or another immediate danger to life. Do not drive yourself to A&E in those cases unless you are told to.

Call 111 for urgent problems that are not immediately life-threatening, or if you are unsure. If it becomes an emergency, they will direct you. For less urgent advice, a pharmacist or GP is often the right first step.

05 **Look after yourself at the scene**

Only approach if it is safe. Do not put yourself at risk in traffic, water, fire or near damaged power lines. Send someone for help, or put your phone on speaker and call 999 yourself so you can keep treating the person. The call handler will tell you what to do.

> **This guide cannot teach first aid on its own.** Steps below are a short adult-focused reminder from published St John Ambulance, British Red Cross and NHS advice. For babies and children, get trained — do not guess from adult steps.

DURING

UNRESPONSIVE, CPR AND THE RECOVERY POSITION

If someone has collapsed, make sure it is safe to approach. Gently shake their shoulders and ask loudly if they are all right. If they do not respond, shout for help and call 999 or 112 — use speakerphone if you are alone.

01 **Open the airway and check breathing**

Gently tilt the head back and lift the chin. Look, listen and feel for normal breathing for up to 10 seconds. Occasional, irregular gasps are not normal breathing — they are common in the early stages of cardiac arrest. If you are unsure, the ambulance call handler will tell you what to do.

02 **If they are not breathing normally, start CPR**

Ask a helper to fetch a defibrillator (AED) if one is nearby. If you are alone, do not leave the person to look for one. Kneel beside them on a firm surface. Put the heel of one hand in the centre of the chest, the other hand on top, and interlock your fingers. With straight arms, press down hard to a depth of about 5–6 cm, then release and let the chest come back up. Do this 100–120 times a minute. The call handler will help you keep the rhythm.

03 **Rescue breaths only if you are trained and willing**

If you have been trained, give 30 compressions then 2 rescue breaths (tilt the head, lift the chin, pinch the nose, seal your mouth over theirs and blow steadily for up to one second until the chest rises, twice). If you are untrained, unwilling or unable to give breaths, give continuous chest compressions. Keep going until help takes over, they start to breathe normally, you are too exhausted to continue (swap every one to two minutes if you have a helper), or a defibrillator tells you to stop while it analyses.

04 **Use a defibrillator as soon as it arrives**

Switch it on and follow the spoken instructions. It will tell you whether a shock is needed and when to restart CPR. You cannot make the situation worse by attaching a public defibrillator — it will only shock if it is required.

05 **If they are unresponsive but breathing normally**

Call 999. Place them in the recovery position so the airway stays clear: arm nearest you at a right angle, other arm across the chest, far leg bent, then roll them towards you onto their side, tilt the head back, and keep checking breathing until help arrives. If you suspect a spinal injury, only move them if they are in danger or their airway is at risk — the call handler will advise.

> **Stroke — act FAST.** Face drooping, Arm weakness, Speech difficulty, Time to call 999. Do not wait to see if it passes. For a suspected heart attack (central chest pain, sweating, feeling sick, pain in the jaw or arm), sit them comfortably and call 999.

DURING

BLEEDING, BURNS, CHOKING AND SHOCK

01 Severe bleeding

Press firmly on the wound with a clean cloth, dressing or your hand to slow the blood, and call 999. Keep pressure on until help arrives. If blood soaks through, replace with a fresh dressing and keep pressing. If something is embedded in the wound, do not pull it out — press either side of it. Do not wash a wound that is bleeding heavily. If the person looks pale, cold or dizzy, lie them down, raise their legs if you can, keep them warm, and keep pressure on the wound. Public bleed-control kits (sometimes next to defibrillators) have instructions; the 999 handler can talk you through them.

02 Burns and scalds

Cool the burn under cool running water for at least 20 minutes, or until the pain eases. If there is no water, cool milk or a canned drink can be used. Remove jewellery or clothing unless it is stuck. After cooling, loosely cover with cling film laid lengthways — do not wrap it tightly — or a clean plastic bag for a hand or foot. Do not use ice, creams or gels, and do not burst blisters. Seek medical advice. Call 999 for severe, large, deep, chemical or electrical burns, burns to the face, hands, feet or genitals, or burns on a child or a vulnerable person.

03 Choking (adult)

If they can cough, encourage them to cough. If they cannot cough, speak or breathe, call 999 and give up to five sharp back blows between the shoulder blades, checking after each one. If that fails, give up to five abdominal thrusts, then continue cycles of five back blows and five abdominal thrusts until the obstruction comes out or they become unresponsive — in which case start CPR. Infant and child choking is different; learn it on a course or from an official app. Abdominal thrusts are not used on infants.

04 Shock after injury, and hypothermia reminders

If someone is going into shock from blood loss, keep pressure on the wound, call 999, lie them down, raise the legs if it is safe, and keep them warm. For hypothermia, see the extreme-cold guide: call 999, get them dry and wrapped, cover the head, and do not use a hot bath or hot water bottle.

AFTER

HANDOVER, REST AND RESTOCK

01 Hand over clearly, then look after yourself

Tell the ambulance crew or A&E what happened, what you did, and any medicines or allergies you know about. First aid can be upsetting — talk to someone, and use NHS mental-health pages or Samaritans (116 123) if you need to. If you gave CPR or abdominal thrusts, say so, because the person should still be assessed.

02 Restock and book the training you postponed

Replace anything you used in the kit. Write down anything you wished you had known, and book a course or refresh your official app. Skills fade; a short refresher is more valuable than a long-unused certificate.

WHAT TO HAVE IN YOUR KIT

A Three Day Kit should always include a first aid kit and several days of essential medication, alongside water, no-cook food, a torch, a power bank, a radio and cash. In a period when health services are stretched, that combination — plus knowing 999 and 111, and having trained first aid in the house — is as useful as any piece of equipment.

PRINTABLE CHECKLIST

TICK WHAT YOU HAVE DONE

- [ ] First aid course booked or completed (infant/child training if relevant)
- [ ] First aid kit stocked: plasters, dressings, bandages, tape, gloves, tweezers, thermometer, antiseptic, eyewash
- [ ] ICE or Medical ID set on phones; paper contacts also kept
- [ ] Nearest public defibrillator location known (the 999 handler can also direct you)
- [ ] 111 saved for urgent but non-life-threatening problems
- [ ] Kit and medicines checked in the last six months
- [ ] A small first aid kit also kept in the car if you drive
- [ ] Official St John Ambulance or British Red Cross first aid app downloaded
- [ ] Regular medicines in date, with doses written down; repeats ordered 5 days ahead
- [ ] Children who are old enough know the home address and when to call 999
- [ ] Household agrees 999 for unresponsive, not breathing normally, or severe bleeding
- [ ] Allergy, asthma, heart or epilepsy plans (if anyone has one) kept with the kit
- [ ] Someone else in the household also knows where the kit is
- [ ] Three Day Kit includes the first aid kit, medicines, a torch and a written contacts list

UK CONTACTS

WRITE THESE DOWN

EMERGENCY SERVICES
999 or 112
Unresponsive, not breathing normally, severe bleeding, or other danger to life.

NHS 111
111
Urgent advice when it is not a 999 emergency. 111.nhs.uk

NHS HEALTH INFORMATION
nhs.uk
Conditions, 999 guidance, and local services.

ST JOHN AMBULANCE FIRST AID ADVICE
sja.org.uk
Online advice, courses and the official first aid app.

BRITISH RED CROSS FIRST AID
redcross.org.uk/first-aid
Online advice, courses and the official first aid app.

SAMARITANS
116 123
If you need to talk after a distressing incident.

NHS 111 MENTAL HEALTH
111
Urgent mental-health help, or use nhs.uk to find local crisis services.

OFFICIAL PREPAREDNESS ADVICE
gov.uk/prepare
Includes the recommendation to learn basic first aid.

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. St John Ambulance, CPR, burns and scalds, and first aid advice — sja.org.uk (CPR guidance clinically reviewed 18 September 2026; burns reviewed 28 April 2025)
2. British Red Cross, first aid for someone bleeding heavily — redcross.org.uk/first-aid/learn-first-aid/bleeding-heavily
3. NHS, when to call 999, 111, hypothermia, heatstroke, and first aid pages — nhs.uk
4. UK government Prepare / Be Ready, get prepared for emergencies (first aid skills and kit list) — gov.uk/prepare
5. Resuscitation Council UK guidance underpins UK CPR teaching delivered by recognised providers

General guidance only — not a substitute for the emergency services or professional medical training. Call 999 in an emergency. Independent brand, not a government publication. Infant and child first aid differs — learn it from a recognised course or official app.