

Your Guide to Dealing with Emergencies



Please keep this booklet in a safe place. It contains useful emergency contact numbers together with advice on what to do in an emergency.



Walsall Council



Sandwell
Metropolitan Borough Council

Let's get prepared

We can prepare for some things in life, but can we plan for the unknown?

The floods in Cumbria in November 2009 are a good example of how events can overtake us and disrupt our everyday life.

Millions of pounds worth of damage was caused, which affected thousands of people, causing misery and hardship.

Experience has shown that we can plan ahead to help minimise the impact that such emergencies can have on peoples everyday lives.

This booklet explains how the West Midlands Resilience Forum, a partnership made up of local councils, hospitals, emergency services, and the voluntary sector, works together to prepare for emergencies.

As a member of the community you have a key role in preparing yourself, your family, neighbourhood and friends for an emergency.

The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 requires that these partnerships exist and that they plan for different types of emergencies to enable the UK to be better prepared to face the risks of all types of serious situation or occurrence that happen unexpectedly and demand an immediate action.

For further information on the act please visit www.direct.gov.uk

An emergency can come in all shapes and sizes and is described in many ways, such as an incident, major incident or even a major emergency. They all mean the same thing and only the circumstances determine the level of response from our partners.

Please take a minute to read through this booklet to help you prepare. The advice contained in it could make all the difference to you and your family, should you be unfortunate enough to experience an emergency.



How can we plan?

Most emergencies are dealt with by the emergency services, but occasionally an incident is more serious which requires them to work with other organisations.

West Midlands Resilience Forum partners work together to plan how we would react to any emergency.

We have plans to manage the most likely risks to affect Sandwell/Walsall, which includes the following;

- Pandemic Flu
- Severe weather – flooding and heat waves
- Industrial accidents

Use this guide to learn about preparing for the affects of these risks and complete your own emergency plan.

Get ready – action

Step 1 – Prepare now but don't panic

You would be unlucky to be caught up in a major emergency but just in case, fill in the Household Emergency Plan in this booklet.

ICE – In Case of Emergency

Enter the word ICE in your mobile contact list and then the phone number of your emergency contact (next of kin or friend).

Your ICE contact should agree to this and know any important information about such medications, allergies, etc.

If you don't have a mobile phone, write this information on a card and put it in your wallet or purse.

Step 2 – Get your emergency pack together

In some cases you may have to leave your home quickly, so it is important to have your basic necessities to hand.

In some cases the emergency services may not be able to reach you straight away and you may have to support yourself and your family for some time.

An emergency pack, with essential items, stored in a safe, but accessible place, will help you whether you are stuck at home, or evacuated for your own safety.

Tick off the suggested items on the next page, as you put them into your emergency pack, along with a copy of this guide.

Emergency Pack Checklist Items	Tick Here
Waterproof backpack	
Wind up torch (possibly with radio and mobile phone charger integrated)	
Foil blankets – 1 per person	
Whistle	
Water purification tablets	
Hand Sanitizer	
Battery wind up mobile phone charger if not included in torch.	
Rubber gloves – 1 pair per person	
Box of waterproof matches	
Waterproof candles	
Disposable camera (for insurance purposes)	
Waterproof wallet for insurance documents and other important files	
Permanent marker pen	
Bivi bags (temporary sleeping bags) – 1 per person	
First Aid kit	
Toiletry bag, including:	
■ Toothbrushes – 1 per person	
■ Toothpaste	
■ Soap	
■ Flannel	
■ Comb	
Tissues	

Children

In an emergency you will naturally want to collect your children from school, nurseries etc. Sometimes it is not safe to do so, but don't worry. All schools have plans to cope with local emergencies.

Contact your local school or education establishment for more information on their arrangements in an emergency.

If possible also include these items	Tick Here
Warm clothes for each family member	
Non – perishable / long life food	
Water	
Mobile phone	
Prescribed medical supplies, anti-diarrhoea medicine, etc.	
Important documents including phone numbers for council, insurance company and Flood line (0845 988 1188).	
Batteries (lithium batteries have longer life than alkaline)	
Manual can opener	
Bin bags	
Toilet rolls and disposable nappies, if necessary	

Put a note in your diary or mark it on your calendar to ensure any perishable items such as food, water, etc, are replaced on a regular basis and check all information and items are up to date.

Step 3 – Keep informed

As well as being prepared, keeping yourself informed of what is happening will help you during an emergency.

If there is an emergency, there is an agreement with the BBC TV and radio companies to interrupt regular broadcasting to keep you informed of developments and give you advice.

Follow these steps in the case of an emergency:

Go In – to a safe building and close all windows and doors (unless there is a fire, or the emergency services advise you not to).

Stay In – remain calm and stay in until you are advised to do otherwise.

Tune In – to local radio or TV stations for further information or instructions. The following are local radio and TV stations:

BBC West Midlands	FM 95.6
BRMB	FM 96.4
Heart	FM 100.7
Beacon Radio	FM 97.2/103.17
The Wolf	FM 107.7
WABC	MW 990
Central News	ITV

Risks to Sandwell/Walsall

Pandemic and Seasonal Flu

What is seasonal flu?

Seasonal flu usually occurs during the winter months. It is more debilitating than a cold and the symptoms are high temperatures, headaches and muscular pain.

People with chronic medical conditions (e.g. asthma) and older people are most at risk of developing complications if they catch flu. This is why the seasonal flu vaccine is recommended to these groups of people within the community.

What is pandemic flu?

A pandemic occurs when a new influenza virus, which people have no immunity to, emerges and starts spreading as easily as normal influenza. Unlike seasonal flu, Pandemic flu can affect anyone. As we saw with the Swine Flu, it mainly affected the young.



CATCH IT

Germs spread easily. Always carry tissues and use them to catch your cough or sneeze.



BIN IT

Germs can live for several hours on tissues. Dispose of your tissue as soon as possible.



KILL IT

Hands can transfer germs to every surface you touch. Clean your hands as soon as you can.



NHS

How do you catch flu?

Flu viruses are made up of tiny particles that can be spread through droplets that come out of your nose and mouth when you cough and sneeze.

If you cough and sneeze into your hands, these droplets and the germs contained in them are easily spread from your hands to any hard surfaces that you touch.

If other people touch these surfaces and then touch their faces, they can then, become infected.

In order to avoid catching the virus, you should follow good hygiene practices;

Tune in to your local radio station to keep up to date with developments and advice in the event of an emergency.

Severe weather

Severe weather is not just rain or snow, it also includes storms, gale force winds, heat wave and dense fog – all can have a serious impact on our day to day life.

Flooding

Flooding can happen without warning.

The Environment Agency and local Authorities undertake a wide range of activities to reduce the risk of flooding to people and properties but it is still important for you to prepare yourself as much as possible. Sandwell/Walsall have prepared a Flood Plan, which is a multi-agency plan to help responders deal with flooding.

Be prepared – create a Personal Flood Plan

A flood plan will help you prepare for a flood before it happens, but can also help you respond quickly, should a flood occur.

Action:

Download your personal plan from:

www.environment-agency.gov.uk/homeandleisure/floods

Are you at risk and do you know what to do before, during and after flooding.

Find out if you are at risk of river flooding and what to do, at www.environment-agency.co.uk/flood or by calling Floodline on 0845 988 1188.

Flood updates are also available on Teletext Page 419 and Digital Ceefax Page 405 and on local weather and news bulletins.



Plan for any emergency

Make sure that you:

- Prepare an emergency pack of essential items
- Check your insurance – Does it cover flooding? Does it replace damaged items with new ones (i.e. new for old?) Does it have a limit on repairs?
- Know how to turn off your gas, electricity and water mains.
- Know what you can move to safety now, e.g. furniture and electrical items, and what you could move in a flood.

Remember that Insurance Companies expect policy holders to mitigate losses by removing property out of harms way, such in the case of flooding.

- Never enter floodwater – on foot, on a bicycle or in a vehicle. It may be contaminated; it could be deep and it could contain hidden dangers, e.g. open drains.

Think about buying flood protection products:

- Sandbags are held by the Local Authorities for the use of the Emergency Services only. You can buy sandbags at builder's merchants and most DIY centres, six bags are needed to keep a 20cm depth of water from entering a standard width doorway. Place bags in layers.

- Flood boards – These fix to frames around windows and doors.
- Plastic covers to seal airbricks – these should be fixed over the airbricks and other vents.
- Flood skirts – These are designed to wrap around a property to prevent flood water from entering.

Make a list of useful numbers

- Environment Agency Flood line 0845 988 1188
- Quick dial number for community's Flood Warning
- (Can be obtained from Flood line).
- Insurance company 24 hour number and policy number
- Family and neighbours
- Bank phone number and details
- Work phone numbers
- Doctor's surgery
- West Midlands Police Non Emergency Number 0345 113 5000

Household emergency plan

Many emergencies will affect the public services that you take for granted, and may even stop you from travelling and communicating with friends and family.

To make sure that you know what to do, get your family or household together and fill in this plan. Keep it safe so you can remind yourself.

Is there somewhere we can go to shelter if we are evacuated? Friends? Family?

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If we cannot contact each other, where should we meet and / or who should we leave a message with?

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If you are not involved in an accident but are close by to where it happened or believe you may be in danger, in most cases the advice is: Go in, stay in, tune in.

Should we be evacuated do we know how to turn the following off?

Who would be responsible for under taking this task?

Electricity.....

Water.....

Gas

Who will be responsible for picking the children up from school (if applicable)?

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Contingency / backup

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We should check our neighbours – they may need our help.

Neighbours to the left

Name

Address.....

Home no

Mobile no

Neighbours to our right

Name

Address.....

Home no

Mobile no

PREPARE AN EMERGENCY PACK AS PER THIS GUIDE

Ensure all the family members know where the Emergency Pack is and make sure that all the equipment and items stored in it, are up to date!

Household emergency plan

You should familiarise yourself with the following emergency contact details:

Emergency Services.....

NHS Direct

Local Police Station

Local Authority

Doctor

Work

School.....

Home Insurance

Local Radio Station

Frequency (see press for details).....

If you find yourself in the middle of an emergency, common sense and instincts will usually tell you what to do. However it is important to:

- Make sure that 999 has been called, if people are injured or if there is a threat to life.
- Do not put yourself or others in danger.
- Follow the advice of the Emergency Services.
- Try to remain calm and think before acting, and try to reassure others.
- Check for injuries – remember to look after yourself before attempting to look after others.

Consider getting some First Aid training and a First Aid kit.

Knowing what to do in an emergency is vitally important. Familiarise yourself with how to deal with some of the more common injuries. If someone is injured, the following steps will keep them as safe as possible until professional help arrives:

- If people are seriously injured call 999 immediately.
- Keep calm.
- Make sure that you and the injured person are not in danger
- Assess the condition of the injured person carefully and act on your findings, using basic First Aid.
- Monitor the injured person's condition until the arrival of the emergency services.

When you are told that it is safe to return home, open windows to provide fresh air before reconnecting gas, electricity and water supplies.

Severe weather – other hazards

Gale force winds or storms – may cause loss of power, disruption to transport and damage to property.

Before a gale – if a gale is predicted:

- Secure loose objects in your garden
- Secure doors, windows and garages
- Park vehicles in a garage or in a place clear of buildings, trees and fences.

During a gale, go in, stay in, tune in.

After a gale:

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



Snow and ice

Not only do snow and ice make driving conditions hazardous but low temperatures can also affect people in your community – check on any vulnerable neighbours.

Use main roads when planning your journeys; these are likely to have been gritted.

Don't travel unless you really have to, if you do have to travel inform a family member or friend of your journey and expected arrival time.

Wear several layers of clothing to keep warm. Remember to wear a hat – up to half of your body heat is lost through your head.

If you were to get stranded in your car due to severe weather, it is a good

idea to carry an emergency kit in your vehicle. This should include:

- A mobile phone and car charger kit
- A personal emergency contact list
- A First aid kit
- A Waterproof coat, warm clothes and footwear
- A blanket
- Food and water.

You may wish to carry a shovel with you in case you get stranded in heavy snow.

Check the Highways Agency website for more information:
www.highways.gov.uk



Dense fog

Dense Fog can hide hidden dangers – to drivers and pedestrians.

If you have to drive, do so very slowly, with dipped headlights, keep an eye on your speed, use fog lights and don't hang on the tail lights of the car in front.

Watch out for freezing fog which is made up of droplets that freeze on contact with objects such as the pavement, road, car, etc. It can quickly form a layer of ice.



Heat wave

Most of us enjoy sunny weather, but extreme heat can seriously damage your health, you could get dehydrated and overheat, causing exhaustion or heatstroke.

Keep yourself cool to avoid this, drink regularly, and seek medical advice if you have any concerns. Keep an eye on vulnerable neighbours, particularly the elderly. 0845 4647 or visit their website: www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk



Ring NHS Direct –

24hours a day, 365 days a year
on 0845 4647 or visit their website
www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk

Industrial accidents

If you live close to a hazardous site, you will regularly receive information from industries in your area reminding you to **Go in, Stay in and Tune in**, should an accident occur.

If you hear a warning siren or radio announcement, go into a house or building straight away.

- Close all external doors, turn off all ventilation and central heating systems.
- Close all windows and curtains.
- Stay in a room furthest away from the industrial area, preferably upstairs.
- Tune in to your local radio station to receive information and instructions.
- Do not ring the emergency services, unless you have a medical emergency, as their phone lines

need to be kept clear. You can get general medical advice from NHS Direct on 0845 4647.

- Stay indoors until you hear the all clear message (either on the radio or via a long single blast of siren) or you receive instructions from the emergency services.
- On receiving the all clear, doors and windows can then be opened and ventilation restored.

Remember

- If you have to be evacuated, do not eat any food which was left uncovered.
- Do not eat any vegetables from the garden until they have been thoroughly scrubbed and peeled.
- If any laundry was left outside on the washing line please ensure that you re-wash it.



Terrorism

The threat from terrorism is very real.

Terrorists and extremists work to damage communities, and we all need to work together to tackle the problem. It's everyone's responsibility to work to make communities safer and protect everyone's rights.

Our approach to dealing with terrorism and domestic extremism

Police and partners work together to protect our communities and keep them safe through the national Counter Terrorism Strategy (CONTEST).

The aim of CONTEST is to reduce the risk from terrorism and domestic extremism so that everybody in Sandwell / Walsall can go about their everyday lives freely and with confidence.

We need you

If you suspect any illegal activity, such as a criminal or anti social act or you have any information which you feel may be of use to us, please tell us.

You should also report any attempts to encourage extreme practices and beliefs, or threats of violence that could disrupt everyday life and cause tension in the community.

You could do this by:

- Ringing the West Midlands Police on 0345 113 5000
- Ringing the national confidential terrorism hotline on 0800 789 321
- Ringing CRIME STOPPERS free on 0800 555 111
- Ringing 999 in an emergency
- Talking to your local Police Officers and attending local police meetings
- See www.homeoffice.gov.uk/counter-terrorism/current-threat-level for the latest terrorism Threat Level.



First aid

More accidents happen at home than anywhere else. Falls are the most common accidents, followed by accidental poisoning.

Think about

- Enrolling on a first aid course both St. John Ambulance and the British Red Cross run first aid courses.
- Keep a first aid kit in your home and car.

Some basic first aid advice

Sprains and strains

Follow RICE – Rest, Ice, Compress, Elevate. Apply a cold compress for 10 minutes, re-assess the injury, then re-apply. If after 30 minutes the swelling has started to go down, advise the person to rest the affected limb. If it has not, seek medical advice.



Poisoning

It's important to first identify what the person has ingested e.g. berries, medicines or tablets.

Call for an ambulance and try to give details of what poison was involved and the amount taken. Keep any evidence of the poison to give paramedics, reassure the casualty and keep them calm. Do not try to make them vomit. Check their breathing and wait for help to arrive.

Insect stings

Some people can have an immediate allergic reaction to being stung, and sometimes this can be very dangerous. Seek emergency medical treatment. If, immediately after being stung, you have swelling or itching anywhere else on your body, have a bad headache, nausea, a fast heart rate, dizziness or feel faint, or have difficulty in swallowing.

Treatment

If you have been stung by an insect and there is a sting left in the skin, remove it as soon as possible. You could use the blunt edge of a knife or a credit card for instance. Don't use tweezers as you risk squeezing more poison into the wound.

Some people can have an immediate allergic reaction to being stung, and this is known as Anaphylactic Shock, which in some cases, unless treated immediately can result in death.

Keeping your business in business

What is Business Continuity Management ?

Business Continuity Management (BCM) is about identifying those parts of your organisation that you can't afford to lose – such as information, stock, premises, staff, equipment, utilities and cash flow – and planning how to maintain these, if an incident occurs.

BCM is simpler than you might think. To implement BCM you will need to consider the following questions:

- What are your organisation's key products and services?
- What are the critical activities and resources required to deliver them?
- What are the risks to these critical activities?
- Is there anything that you can put into place to minimise these risk?
- How will you maintain these critical activities in the event of an incident (loss of access to premises, loss of utilities etc)?

Useful numbers

Emergency Numbers

Police / Fire / Ambulance / Search & Rescue	999 / 112
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Non-Emergency Numbers

West Midlands Police	0345 113 5000
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West Midlands Fire & Rescue Service	0845 5000 900
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Crime Stoppers	0800 555 111
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NHS Direct	0845 46 47
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Sandwell Hospital	0121 553 1831
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Walsall Manor Hospital	01922 721172
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RSPCA	0300 123 4999
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Insurance Company	
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Central Networks (Electric)	0800 328 1111
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Scottish Power – Man web (Electric)	0845 272 2424
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National Gas Emergency Service	0800 111 999
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Severn Trent Water	0800 783 4444
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South Staffordshire Water	0800 38 91 011
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Environmental Agency Flood line	0845 988 1188
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British Red Cross	0870 170 9110
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St. John Ambulance	08700 10 49 50
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Sandwell MBC.	0845 358 2200
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Walsall Council	01922 650000
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Notes



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