

# Major Emergencies

Practical ideas and advice for  
coping with an emergency event



CAUTION



# Major Emergencies

## Practical ideas and advice for coping with an emergency event

This guide aims to provide you with advice and guidance for coping in the unlikely event that you find yourself / your family caught up in an Emergency incident. There is also advice on being prepared for incidents and for coping in the aftermath.

A handy pull-out sheet can be found at the end of the guide, along with useful contact information and where to find any further information you may need.



# Be Prepared!

## Emergency supply kit

It's a good idea to have your own basic emergency kit (for your home and business) packed and kept accessible at home / in the car to see you through the initial phase of an emergency until further help is available to you.

The following list of suggested contents is a guide only; your kit should be kept in a suitable container/ bag that is easily transported.

- A copy of all important documents such as insurance details, passports, birth and marriage certificates, immunisation records etc.
- A list of emergency contacts (Family members, utilities, plumbers etc).
- Baby supplies such as nappies, wet wipes, etc if appropriate.
- First aid kit.
- Torch (with spare batteries)
- Battery/wind up radio
- Spare keys

**Following a notice to evacuate**, you may then wish to add:

- Food that can be consumed easily without too much preparation such as tuna, fruit and vegetables, carton juices, soup, biscuits etc.
- Any food that is required for babies or those on special diets.
- Bottled water.
- Personal hygiene items like soap, toothbrush and paste and feminine products.
- Medications that any family members may be taking.
- Warm clothing.
- Waterproof clothing.
- Blankets and sleeping bags



# In an Emergency...

## Warning and informing

During a major emergency, where possible, information and instructions will be passed through local radio stations; you are advised to tune in to one of the following North Somerset Stations:

- BBC Radio Bristol: 94.9, 103.6 and 104.6 fm, 1548am and DAB digital radio.
- Kiss: 101.0 fm.
- Star: 107.7 fm.
- GWR Bristol: 96.3 fm.

## Sheltering in your own home

Sheltering is often the best form of protection for incidents such as the release of hazardous gases. The advice you will receive will be to

### **GO IN – STAY IN – TUNE IN**

This means you need to **go in**, close all doors and windows and **stay in** until told otherwise by the emergency services.

Collect your emergency kit and go to a room furthest from the hazard, upstairs if possible.

**Tune in** to the radio or TV to receive advice and information from the emergency services.

## Evacuation

Evacuation is only carried out as a last resort. When asked to evacuate your home, and where time permits, turn off the electricity, gas and water supplies and lock all doors and windows. You will generally be sent to a rest centre, unless you are able to stay with relatives or friends. Take along your emergency kit.

It is a good idea to identify a close friend or relative as a “checkpoint.” This means that if separated, your family can all get in touch with this contact to let them know that they are ok and find out the whereabouts of other family members.





### After the storm

- Inform insurers of any damage that has occurred to your home.
- Inform the appropriate supplier if the water, gas or electricity is not working.
- Where possible without risking your own safety, rope off or protect damaged areas that may cause injuries to yourself or your family.

For more information visit [www.metoffice.gov.uk/index.html](http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/index.html)

## **Snow**

### Before Snow

- Ensure you have warm clothes, a blanket, food, water, boots, a torch, de-icer, plenty of fuel, a radio with spare batteries, a spade and a fully charged mobile phone in your car before setting off on any journeys.
- Let someone know when you expect to arrive at your destination
- Try and wait for roads to be gritted before travelling on them
- Put grit or cat litter on your drive and paths to reduce the chance of slipping on compacted snow.
- Check on vulnerable neighbours.

### During Snow

- Avoid unnecessary travel.
- If driving is absolutely necessary then adjust your driving to the conditions: slow down and allow extra room, use the highest gear possible and maneuver and brake gently. Where braking is needed pump the brakes rather than slamming them on.
- If you get stuck in your car, stay with it and tie something brightly coloured to the aerial so it's visible to a rescue truck or other motorists.
- If you're going outside then wear several layers of clothing and try to stay dry.
- Watch out for signs of hypothermia and frostbite. Keep your arms and legs moving to help circulate the blood.

### After snow

- Take care when walking on compacted snow as it may have turned to ice.
- Take care when shovelling snow or working outside in the cold. The cold air makes it harder to breathe and adds extra strain on the body.





## Heat waves

There are those that will be particularly vulnerable to the heat and will need protection (such as the elderly, very young or ill), as well as precautions that everyone will need to take.

### Stay out of the heat

- Avoid going outside between 11am and 3pm.
- Walk in the shade and wear a hat and sunscreen.
- Avoid extreme physical exertion.
- Wear light, loose fitting clothing.

### Cool yourself down

- Drink cold and icy drinks, avoiding caffeine and alcohol.
- Eat cold foods that have high water content, such as salads and fruit.
- Have cold showers, baths and washes throughout the day.
- Sprinkle cold water on your skin and clothing, or have a damp cloth on the back of your neck.

### Create a cool environment

- Keep sun exposed windows closed during the day and open at night.
- Consider external shading on outside windows.
- Look at insulating the loft and cavity walls. Insulation traps heat in during cold spells but expels heat during hot periods.
- Use pale, reflective external paints.
- Turn off unnecessary lights and electrical equipment.
- Have indoor plants and bowls of water in rooms to increase evaporation, which in turn cools temperatures.
- Try and sleep in cooler rooms.

### Look out for others

- Vulnerable people such as the elderly, very young, or ill, will not be able to cope as well with hot conditions. Check on neighbours and help them to cool their homes.

For the latest weather information and advice, go to:  
[www.metoffice.gov.uk/index.html](http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/index.html) and [www.dh.gov.uk](http://www.dh.gov.uk)





## **Fire in the home**

A fire is one of the biggest risks to your home, however, with some sensible thinking and precautions, that risk can be reduced.

For more information visit [www.avonfire.gov.uk/Avon/](http://www.avonfire.gov.uk/Avon/) or call them on 0117 926 2061.

## **Terrorism**

The latest threat level to the UK can be found on the government Preparing for Emergencies website:

[www.preparingforemergencies.gov.uk/](http://www.preparingforemergencies.gov.uk/)

Do your part to protect the public and be vigilant; reporting any suspicious behaviour, vehicles and packages or bags, along with anything else that may be significant to the police.

The Anti-Terrorist Hotline is 0800 789 321. Where there is an immediate threat to life call 999.



# After a disaster

Safety measures...

- Be aware of new hazards created by a disaster such as contaminated water and buildings, gas leaks, broken glass and damaged wires.
- Wear sturdy boots and work gloves when working with debris and regularly clean your hands thoroughly with soap and water when in contact with floodwater.
- Tell the local authority or emergency services about health and safety hazards like chemical releases, downed power lines, washed out roads, smouldering insulation, gas leaks or dead animals.
- Before re-entering your home, walk the perimeter and check for loose power lines, gas leaks and structural damage. If you smell gas then do not enter your house and leave immediately. Check for roof, chimney and wall cracks and if your home looks like it may collapse then leave immediately.
- If fire damaged, do not enter your home until the authorities say it is safe to do so.
- Use a torch to inspect your home for damage but turn it on outside as it may produce sparks that could set any leaking gas alight.
- If you turned off the gas before evacuating then it will need to be turned on and tested by a professional before you use it. Any wet electrical appliances also will need to be professionally checked before attempting to use them.
- Open windows and doors to allow ventilation and throw out any food or cosmetics that have been in contact with floodwater.
- Do not use any water until you have checked with your local authority or the water company as it may be contaminated.

## Coping with the event


Most people will recover from a disaster without any long-term problems; however what you have seen and heard may have an effect on you. Coming to terms with events can be difficult and each person's experiences and their feelings afterwards are unique. Powerful and upsetting feelings may be aroused, although they often settle in time without the need for professional help.

After a major incident it's normal to experience a number of stress reactions that may continue for a number of weeks. Immediately after the event you may feel shock or denial but over the next few hours or days this will fade and be replaced by other feelings.

Commonly experienced reactions in the weeks after a traumatic event include:

- Tearfulness and sadness
- Fear and anxiety
- Feeling numb or dreamlike
- Unpleasant thoughts and images of the event
- Nightmares
- Reluctance to discuss the event OR wanting to talk about it all the time
- Tiredness and difficulty sleeping
- Feeling helpless
- Feeling angry or irritable
- Avoiding people, places and activities that may remind you of the event.
- Feeling guilty or to blame for some aspect of the disaster
- Concentration or memory problems
- Headaches and body pain
- Children are often unsettled in their behaviour and may be more aggressive, fearful, demanding or clingy after a disaster and they may replay the incident in their play.

These reactions are normal and understandable and usually reduce gradually over time. It's important to take things slowly and establish a sense of safety and security.

- Be patient with yourself, it may take time to come to terms with events.
  - Try and establish your usual routine like going to work or school.
  - Spend time with family and friends who may be able to support you.
  - Children will need support and reassurance from trusted adults who make them feel safe.
  - It may be useful to spend time with others who have been through the same experience as you.
  - Take care of yourself by eating well, exercising, reducing alcohol and drug use and getting enough sleep to reduce stress and prevent illness.
  - When you feel ready, talk about the situation; it's ok to get upset or cry when you do this.
  - You are more likely to have an accident after suffering a trauma so be careful when around the home or driving.
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- If they are distressing you or your child, limit your exposure to images of the event.

Don't bottle up your feelings, it will make you feel worse. Let yourself talk about things when you are ready.

Avoid drugs and alcohol. Although it can numb your feelings it can stop you coming to terms with the situation.

Avoid life-changing decisions as your judgement may not be at its best and you may regret them later.

Most people who have suffered at the hands of a disaster find that their symptoms fade out over time.

Reaction and recovery times vary from person to person and if your symptoms do not improve after 4-6 weeks then it may be helpful to seek professional help.



## Useful contacts

### North Somerset Council

Main switchboard - 01934 888 888  
Mon-Thurs 8:45am – 5pm, Fri 8:45am – 4:30pm  
Emergency Contact Answering Service: 01934 622 669  
[www.n-somerset.gov.uk](http://www.n-somerset.gov.uk)

### Environment Agency

General Enquiries: 08708 506 506 (Mon-Fri 8am – 6pm)  
Floodline: 0845 988 1188 (24 hour number)  
[www.environment-agency.gov.uk](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk)

### The Met Office

Tel: 0870 900 0100  
[www.metoffice.gov.uk](http://www.metoffice.gov.uk)

### RSPCA

Tel: 0870 555 5999  
[www.rspca.org.uk](http://www.rspca.org.uk)

### Highways Agency

Tel: 08457 50 40 30 (24 hour number)  
[www.highways.gov.uk](http://www.highways.gov.uk)

### DEFRA (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs)

Tel: 08459 33 55 77 (8am – 6pm)  
[www.defra.gov.uk](http://www.defra.gov.uk)

### Food Standards Agency

[www.food.gov.uk](http://www.food.gov.uk)

### Health Protection Agency

[www.hpa.org.uk](http://www.hpa.org.uk)

### Department of Health

Tel: 0207 210 4850  
[www.dh.gov.uk](http://www.dh.gov.uk)

### NHS Direct

Tel: 0845 4647  
[www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

### UK Resilience

[www.ukresilience.gov.uk](http://www.ukresilience.gov.uk)

### Emergency Planning Society

Tel: 0845 600 9587  
[www.the-eps.org](http://www.the-eps.org)



Incident	Before the Incident /Preparations	During the Incident
<b>Storms</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secure outdoor items</li> <li>• Close windows and curtains</li> <li>• Park cars off road, away from trees</li> <li>• Keep up to date with weather reports</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stay on the ground floor</li> <li>• Keep up to date with weather reports</li> </ul>
<b>Snow</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check on vulnerable neighbours</li> <li>• Grit driveways and paths</li> <li>• Put supply kit in car if driving</li> <li>• Wait for roads to be gritted</li> <li>• Tell people your estimated arrival and departure times</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid unnecessary travel</li> <li>• Adjust driving to the conditions</li> <li>• Wear several layers and keep dry.</li> <li>• Watch for signs of hypothermia and frostbite</li> </ul>
<b>Flooding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Move valuables to a higher floor</li> <li>• Fill baths and buckets with water</li> <li>• Have plenty of food and water available</li> <li>• Weigh down sink plugs</li> <li>• Turn off utilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unplug and move electrical items</li> <li>• Check on vulnerable neighbours If trapped, alert emergency services and stay by a window</li> <li>• Check on neighbours where possible</li> </ul>
<b>Chemicals and Hazardous Materials Release</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Become familiar with information given to you regarding hazardous material release if you live near a risk site</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>GO IN - STAY IN - TUNE IN</b></li> <li>• Do not call the emergency services for anything other than a medical emergency</li> </ul>
<b>Fire</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fit fire alarms to each level of your home</li> <li>• Plan 2 escape routes</li> <li>• Do not leave candles unattended, smoke in bed or leave electrical devices on standby</li> <li>• Close all doors at night</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>GET OUT - STAY OUT - CALL OUT (999)</b></li> <li>• Check doors with the back of your hand</li> <li>• Do not use lifts</li> <li>• If you catch alight: <b>STOP DROP &amp; ROLL</b></li> </ul>

<b>After the Incident</b>	<b>Useful Contacts</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inform insurers of damage</li> <li>• Contact appropriate utility suppliers if supplies aren't working</li> <li>• Cordon off damaged areas</li> </ul>	<p><b>The Met Office</b> 0870 900 0100 <a href="http://www.metoffice.gov.uk">www.metoffice.gov.uk</a></p> <p><b>Highways Agency</b> 08457 50 40 30 <a href="http://www.highways.gov.uk">www.highways.gov.uk</a></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take care when walking</li> <li>• Be careful when working in the cold</li> </ul>	<p><b>The Met Office (See Storms)</b></p> <p><b>Highways Agency (See Storms)</b></p> <p><b>NHS Direct</b> 0845 4647 <a href="http://www.nhs.uk">www.nhs.uk</a></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not turn on utilities until they are checked by a professional</li> <li>• Throw away food that has been in contact with flood water</li> </ul>	<p><b>Environment Agency</b> General Enquiries 08708 506 506 FLOODLINE 0845 988 1188 <a href="http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk">www.environment-agency.gov.uk</a></p> <p><b>The Met Office (See Storms)</b></p> <p><b>NHS Direct (See Snow)</b></p> <p><b>Department of Health</b> 0207 210 4850 <a href="http://www.dh.gov.uk">www.dh.gov.uk</a></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open doors and windows.</li> <li>• Ventilation and heating systems can be turned on again</li> </ul>	<p><b>NHS Direct (See Snow)</b></p> <p><b>Department of Health (See Flooding)</b></p> <p><b>Health Protection Agency</b> <a href="http://www.hpa.gov.uk">www.hpa.gov.uk</a></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not return home unless told to do so by emergency services</li> <li>• Beware of structural damage</li> </ul>	<p><b>Avon Fire and Rescue Service</b> 0117 926 2061 <a href="http://www.avonfire.gov.uk/Avon">www.avonfire.gov.uk/Avon</a></p>

# Family Emergency Plan

Create a family emergency plan by sitting down together and deciding how you will stay in contact during an emergency and what you should all do; keep a copy in your emergency supply kit. Use the individual cards to keep an individual record of your family contacts in your wallet/purse.

## Designated Family Checkpoint

**Name**

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**Tel**

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**Mobile**

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**Name**

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Date of birth

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Important medical information

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**Name**

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Date of birth

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Important medical information

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**Name**

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Date of birth

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Important medical information

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**Name**

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Date of birth

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Important medical information

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**Name**

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Date of birth

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Important medical information

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## Locations (work, school, childcare etc)

**Name**

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Address

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Tel

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**Name**

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Address

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Tel

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**Name**

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Address

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Tel

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**Name**

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Address

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Tel

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**Name**

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Address

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Tel

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**Name**

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Address

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Tel

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## Family Doctor

**Name**

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Address

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Tel

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## Home Insurance

**Name**

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Policy No

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Tel

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## Other

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Major Emergencies **Family Emergency Plan**

**Other Tel nos and information**

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**Designated Family Checkpoint**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Tel \_\_\_\_\_

Mobile \_\_\_\_\_

**Other Tel nos and information**

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**Designated Family Checkpoint**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Tel \_\_\_\_\_

Mobile \_\_\_\_\_

**Other Tel nos and information**

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**Designated Family Checkpoint**

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Tel \_\_\_\_\_

Mobile \_\_\_\_\_

**Other Tel nos and information**

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**Designated Family Checkpoint**

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Tel \_\_\_\_\_

Mobile \_\_\_\_\_

**Other Tel nos and information**

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**Designated Family Checkpoint**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Tel \_\_\_\_\_

Mobile \_\_\_\_\_

**Other Tel nos and information**

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**Designated Family Checkpoint**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Tel \_\_\_\_\_

Mobile \_\_\_\_\_





Council documents can be made available in large print, audio, easy read and other formats. Documents on our website can also be emailed to you as plain text files.

Help is also available for people who require council information in languages other than English.

For more information contact:

01275 888 644 or  
kay.stabbins@  
n-somerset.gov.uk