

Kent Resilience Forum



PREPARING FOR EMERGENCIES IN KENT AND MEDWAY

What should I do in an emergency?

**A HANDBOOK THAT COULD
SAVE YOUR LIFE**

Version 2

So what's the emergency?

'It'll never happen to me.'

That's what everyone thinks. Until it does.

No matter how careful you are, there are some things you can't control. Any one of them could hit you and your family hard, damage your home severely or seriously harm your business.

Yet it's not hard to make sure you're properly prepared for an emergency. This booklet will tell you how. At the back you can create your own household emergency plan.

What kind of things are we talking about? Take a look at the event headings in the contents page opposite. They all occur more often than we'd like to think, but with the help of this booklet, you'll be ready.

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Flood

Be prepared

Visit the Environment Agency website on: www.environment-agency.gov.uk where you can:

- Assess your risk from river flooding.
- Learn about the flood warning codes and what they mean.
- Download a household flood plan template.
- Call the Agency's Floodline for advice on **0345 988 1188**

If flooding happens

- Tune in to your local radio station or call Floodline for updates.
- Report property flooding or river blockages to the Environment Agency on **0800 80 70 60**.
- If safe to do so, turn off gas, electricity and water mains before water enters your home.
- Put plugs in sinks and baths and weigh them down.
- Move your family and pets to a higher position with a means of escape. Remember to take your emergency 'grab bag' (see page 18).
- Don't touch sources of electricity when standing in water.
- Never drive through flood water. Eighty per cent of flood deaths occur in vehicles.
- If there's raw sewage in your property, keep out. See if you can stay elsewhere (see page 19) until it's been decontaminated.

After a flood

- Find out if it's safe to return to your property by checking the media and local authority website.
- Check falling river levels via Floodline and the Environment Agency website.
- Contact your insurance company as soon as possible and follow their advice.
- If you can get in to your property, take photographs for evidence.
- Protect yourself against contamination, always wear waterproof outerwear, wellingtons and gloves.
- Have your electricity supply checked by a certified electrician before switching it back on.
- Have your gas or oil central heating checked by a certified/qualified engineer.
- Your local council may provide help for clearing flood damaged household items and protecting against further flooding (i.e. sandbags).

For further advice on what to do before, during and after a flood, check the Environment Agency website: www.environment-agency.gov.uk



Fire

Be prepared

- Visit kent.fire-uk.org for advice home fire safety and how to reduce fire hazards. Contact Kent Fire and Rescue Service on **0800 9237000** for free home fire safety advice and services.
- Fit and maintain smoke alarms - at least one on every floor (Test your smoke alarms weekly).
- Make sure you have planned your escape route in case of fire breaking out and that everybody in the house knows what to do.
- Plan an escape route should fire break out at night (most fire deaths occur while people are sleeping).
- Consider storing important documents in a fire-proof safe.
- Don't overload electricity sockets.
- Never leave cooking or candles unattended.

If fire breaks out

- Get out.
- Stay out.
- DO NOT use a lift.
- Dial **999** and follow the advice of the Fire Service.

- If you're moving or trapped in smoke, stay close to the floor where the air is cleaner
- Never re-enter your home until the Fire and Rescue Service has made it safe.

High wind

Be prepared

- Secure or store loose objects outside so that they can not be blown and create a hazard.
- Close and fasten doors and windows securely.
- Park vehicles in a garage or well away from trees, buildings, walls and fences.

During high wind

- Stay indoors as much as possible - **don't** go outside to repair damage during a storm.
- Find shelter in a substantial, permanent and enclosed building.
- Slow down if driving on exposed routes, such as across bridges.
- Find alternative, less exposed routes if possible.
- Take particular care of side winds if driving a high-sided vehicle or if you're towing another vehicle or container.
- Don't touch electrical or phone cables that have blown down or are hanging loose.



Heavy snow and extreme cold

Be prepared

- Make sure you've got enough insulation around your water tank(s), loft and external water pipes.
- Check you have de-icer, salt/grit and the necessary tools to keep your home safe and clear of snow.
- Keep your heating to the right temperature e.g. 18°C/65°F bedroom and 21°C/70°F dayroom.
- To keep up to date with the latest forecast and for information about cold weather alerts visit [metoffice.gov.uk](https://www.metoffice.gov.uk).

When cold weather happens

Walking outdoors

- Wear several layers to avoid losing heat.
- Cover your head.
- Keep moving your arms and legs to help the blood circulate.
- Wear practical footwear that's warm and has a good grip.
- Consider using a walking stick to help your balance.

Travelling

- Consider whether you really need to make the journey.
 - If snow or ice is forecast, make sure you and your car are fully prepared for the trip:
 - Take warm clothes, food, water, fully charged mobile phone, torch, spade and possibly a reflective jacket.
 - Tell somebody when you expect to arrive and the route you plan to take.
 - Make sure there's enough screenwash in the washers and carry some spare for top-ups.
 - Try to wait for roads to be treated/gritted before setting off (remember, not all roads will be treated).
-
- Check the Highway Code for advice on driving on ice and snow. The main points are:
 - Slow down and allow extra room - it can take 10 times as long to stop in these conditions.
 - If you start to skid, ease gently off the accelerator and avoid braking.
 - If braking is necessary pump the brakes, don't slam them on.
 - If you get stuck, stay with your car and tie something brightly coloured to the aerial.

In and around your home

- Keep the paths around your property clear of snow by using salt or grit.
- Knock down any icicles to prevent them falling on passers-by.
- Consider getting together with neighbours to clear footpaths and community areas.
- Check for winter health advice and information at NHS Choices ([nhs.uk](https://www.nhs.uk))
- Check on elderly and vulnerable neighbours to make sure that they are OK.

Summer heatwave

When the temperature's high

During a heatwave people and animals are at risk from the effects of high temperatures. Here are some ways to reduce the risk:

- Apply high-factor sun-screen regularly during the day.
- Try to keep your house cool. Closing blinds and curtains can help.
- Keep your bedrooms well ventilated.
- Take cool (not cold) showers or baths, or sprinkle yourself with water throughout the day.
- Wear lightweight, loose and light-coloured clothing and a wide-brimmed hat.
- Drink plenty of fluids, but not alcohol or caffeine, which dehydrate the body.
- If you're driving, keep your vehicle ventilated to avoid drowsiness.
- Take regular breaks and keep plenty of water in the vehicle.
- Try to avoid going out during the hottest part of the day (11.00am - 3.00pm).
- Avoid being in the sun for long periods.
- Check on vulnerable neighbours daily.
- Avoid excessive physical activity (it can cause heat stroke or heat exhaustion).
- Restrict physical activity to the cooler periods at the start and end of the day.
- Make sure that babies, children, elderly people or animals are not left alone in stationary cars.
- Be alert and call the health services if someone is unwell or further help is needed.
- Contact your GP or the NHS by dialling **111**.
- To keep up to date with the latest forecast and for information about heatwave alerts visit **metoffice.gov.uk**.



Infectious disease

Be prepared

Infectious diseases such as swine flu can cause serious health issues. You can reduce the risks by observing good basic hygiene.

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing.
- Dispose of dirty tissues promptly and carefully - bag and bin them.
- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water or hand sanitizer.
- Clean hard surfaces such as worktops, door handles and handrails frequently.
- Make sure you and your family are up to date with recommended vaccinations.

If you're worried about infectious disease

- Contact your GP, or
- Contact the NHS by dialling **111**, or
- Visit the NHS Choices website **nhs.uk**
- **healthhelpnow-nhs.net**

For further advice and guidance from the Director of Public Health in Kent visit kent.gov.uk, from the Director of Public Health in Medway visit medway.gov.uk, and from Public Health England visit www.gov.uk and search Public Health England.

Loss of power and water

Failures in power and water supplies are rare and are often linked to severe weather events. These simple steps will help you to stay safe and as comfortable as possible throughout any disruption.

ELECTRICITY FAILURE

Be prepared

- Make sure your home is well insulated. It could stay warm for 12 hours or more in a power cut.
- Keep at least one standard landline phone - cordless phones won't work in a power cut.
- Don't open fridges for any longer than necessary. They'll normally stay cold for many hours.
- Register with your utility provider if you think you're vulnerable.

If you suffer a power cut

- Check if your neighbours have lost services too. If others are affected it makes a difference to what you should do.
- If it's a general power cut, contact your supplier to report the fault and ask for information.
- If your neighbours still have electricity and only you have lost power then:
 - If you have a pre-pay meter, check you still have credit.
 - Check your trip switch (a circuit breaker fuse system - it will be near your electricity meter). If the trip switch is still on, call your supplier's emergency line for your area.
 - If the trip switch is off, switch it back on.
 - If it switches back off, one appliance may be faulty. Unplug them all and reset the trip.
 - If only part of your supply has failed and the trip won't reset, there may be a fault with your wiring, so contact a registered electrician.
- If you lose power for a prolonged period, take precautions to stay safe:
 - Be wary using candles, naked flames and portable heating. Never leave lit candles in unoccupied rooms or with unsupervised children or animals.



GAS FAILURE

Be prepared

- Always have a source of alternative heating available.

If your gas fails

If you smell gas inside or outside your home:

- Call the free 24-hour national gas emergency line **0800 111 999**

You'll be asked a series of questions to identify the right safety advice for you, such as:

- Don't turn electrical switches on or off.
- Open doors and windows.
- Avoid using naked flames.

An engineer will be sent to make your property safe. Southern Gas Networks aims to attend all uncontrolled escapes within one hour and all controlled escapes within two hours. If the gas is lost for a long period, Southern Gas Networks will send you details about the incident (e.g. update on the situation, when they can safely restore supplies, alternative heating and cooking provisions etc). In these circumstances:

- Conserve existing heat in your home by using just one or two adjacent rooms. Isolate them by closing doors and/or hanging blankets over doorways. The kitchen and an adjoining room are usually good choices.
- If you're told you could be without power for several days, consider moving in with an emergency friend (see Page 19).



WATER SUPPLY FAILURE

Be prepared

When safe drinking water is unavailable, it's more than an inconvenience – it's a health hazard.

- Make sure you have an emergency water supply.
- If you can't get out to collect water make sure you have an emergency friend (see Page 19) who can do it for you.

If your water supply fails

- If your community has lost water for an extended period your supplier has a obligation to provide alternative sources. Ring your supplier's emergency line for more information.

Security incident

Be alert

While it's important to go about your daily business normally, it's sensible to be alert to anyone who might be endangering the public.

- Always report anyone acting suspiciously. Your information may be vital.
- If you come across anything that might be linked with terrorist activity, tell the police - they want to hear from you.
- Take note of odd or unusual behaviour by tenants or guests at a property - terrorists need somewhere to live.
- Take note of any unusual security measures at a home or business premises.
- If you're a retailer, note anything suspicious about equipment purchases.
- Make sure you know the security plans at your workplace, and what to do in an emergency.
- To report suspicious activity:
 - Dial 999 in an emergency.
 - Dial Kent Police on **101** for non-emergencies.
 - Dial the anti-terrorist hotline on **0800 789 321**.
 - Contact Crimestoppers - a national organisation independent of the police. You can talk confidentially on **0800 555 111**.

If there's a security incident

Follow the instructions of the emergency services.

- **Go in** to a safe building.
- **Stay in** until you're advised to do otherwise.
- **Tune in** to local radio or TV for more information.

If there's an explosion nearby

Unless you've been advised otherwise by the emergency services, in most cases you should:

- Move away from the immediate source of danger.
- Wait for the emergency services to arrive and examine you (if you leave unchecked you could contaminate others).
- If you've seen the explosion, stay in a safe place and tell the police what you saw.
- If the incident or explosion involves a chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear agent:
 - the emergency services will quickly decontaminate you on the spot if necessary (this involves showering and temporary clothing), so that other people and areas, including homes, are not contaminated.
 - you may also be assessed by health service experts.

If your building is evacuated

- If the emergency services tell you to evacuate your home you should do so. Refusing to leave will put you, your household and those trying to help you at risk.
- Local authority resources may be limited, so you should try to stay with an emergency friend (see page 19).
- If you're stranded the council will provide basic accommodation at a rest centre.
- Evacuation may be for some time, from a few hours to several months, so be sure to bring your emergency 'grab bag' (see page 18).
- If you have pets, plan where they can stay, as there will only be basic facilities at the rest centre.
- Rest centre staff are trained to give you support and advice. They'll help you through the stress of an evacuation and prepare you for what to do afterwards.

General Information

Tips and hints for all emergencies

- Keep calm, reassure others and think before you act.
- Help yourself before helping others.
- Check for injuries.
- If people are injured or in danger:
 - dial **999**, report the situation, follow the advice you're given.
 - stay informed via local radio and TV.

If you're not directly involved but think you could be at risk, remove yourself and others from danger.

- **GO IN** to a building not threatened by the emergency.
- **STAY IN** until you're advised to do otherwise.
- **TUNE IN** to local TV or radio for more information.

MAKE A HOUSEHOLD EMERGENCY PLAN

It'll only take a few minutes, but it could be a lifesaver.

Look at the types of emergency listed in this booklet. Any of them could disrupt your life and leave you isolated from immediate help.

But a household emergency plan can help you deal quickly and effectively with a stressful situation. Get your whole family involved in writing the plan so they're prepared too. To compose your plan, ask yourselves a list of key questions and record the answers.

Here's an example of what your plan could cover

- Where will we meet if we can't get into, or stay in, our home?
- Who'll collect the children from school if we can't get there?
- Which neighbours should we check on?
- How do we turn off the gas, water and electricity?
- Who can we stay with if we're evacuated?
- Who can be an 'Emergency Friend' (see page 19), ready to collect medicine and supplies and act for us if we can't get out?

- What essential items should we have ready in an emergency 'grab bag'?
- Who'll look after our pets if we can't?
- Do we know how to tune to local radio stations?
- What items would we not want to lose? e.g.
 - Documents including insurance, birth and marriage certificates or passports.
 - Photographs.
 - Furniture.
 - A favourite toy or baby blanket.
- How can we protect these items?
 - Keeping copies of documents with friends?
 - Moving things upstairs?
 - Storing items in waterproof or fireproof containers?

Fill in your own household emergency plan on page 28, and keep it handy for reference.

Remember - no item of property is worth risking your life for.

Pack an emergency 'grab bag'

In an emergency you may need to move quickly, so it's important to have necessities at hand. Ideally, you should pack an easy-to-carry bag with essentials and store it in an accessible place. At the very least, you should make an up-to-date list of things to put into your 'grab bag'. The contents will vary depending on your needs but may include:

- Essential/prescribed medication, plus asthma and respiratory aids
- Hearing aids
- Spectacles, contact lenses
- Useful phone numbers
- Mobile phone and charger
- House and car keys
- Money, credit cards
- First aid kit
- Basic toiletries e.g. toothbrush, toothpaste, sanitary towels
 - Baby and small children supplies
 - Food, formula, drink
 - Change of clothing
 - Nappies
 - Toys, books, activities

- Food
- Bottled drinking water
- Can opener
- Clothing & Equipment
 - Wind and rainproof clothing
 - Strong outdoors shoes
 - Waterproof torch, spare batteries (check regularly) *Consider a wind-up model.*
 - Radio, spare batteries (check regularly) *Consider a wind-up model.*
- Copies of insurance documents
- Anti-bacterial hand wipes/gel
- Blankets, sleeping bags
- Sun hats, sunscreen
- Toilet paper
- Rubbish bags
- Thermos flasks
- Pet supplies

Be a good neighbour

In an emergency some people are more vulnerable than others - the elderly, very young or disabled, for instance.

Always consider your family and yourself first. But it's also important to help your friends and neighbours where you can. Just checking that they're well, providing extra blankets, collecting supplies or even having a chat could make a world of difference.

Have 'emergency friends'

An easy way to prepare for emergencies is to identify 'emergency friends'.

Emergency friends are people you trust who can provide help when you really need it. You should identify at least one emergency friend who lives nearby and a second one who lives further away.

Here's how emergency friends can help you.

- Holding a spare house key. You never know when you might lock yourself out, or your pets need feeding if you're stranded away from home.
- Providing a place to stay if you're evacuated or your home's affected by flood, fire or utility failure.
- Looking after your children or picking them up from school.

- Collecting medication.
- Safeguarding copies of important documents or pictures.
- Acting as a contact point for family members who may be separated in an emergency.

Make sure all your family knows who your emergency friends are, and note them in your household emergency plan.

Don't forget - *you* can be someone's emergency friend, too. Have a chat to identify all the ways you can help each other.

Who should emergency services contact if you're injured?

Pick an 'ICE' - 'In Case of an Emergency' partner and store their contact info in your mobile phone address book. Just enter the word ICE before their name and number.

This means the emergency services can quickly and easily find someone to contact if you're injured and can't communicate. They simply search for ICE on your mobile.

Make sure that:

- the person whose name and number you are using has agreed to be your ICE partner.
- your ICE partner knows who to contact on your behalf, plus any important medical information.
- if your ICE contact is deaf, you type ICETEXT then their name before saving the number.
- if you want more than one ICE partner, simply save them as ICE1, ICE2 etc.
- if you haven't got a mobile, keep your ICE partner's contact info on paper in your wallet or purse.

Emergency information schemes

It can be vital to have medical and personal information accessible in an emergency. There are various ways of doing this. Here's a couple:

- Talisman bracelets - available from retailers.
- Message in a Bottle - contact your local Lions Club for more information.

HEALTH ADVICE

Get trained

A simple first aid course can give you basic skills that could help save a life. For local courses see St. John Ambulance sja.org.uk/sja or British Red Cross redcrossfirstaidtraining.co.uk

Unwell or injured? Choose the right NHS service for the right treatment.

- Chest pain; serious blood loss; serious breathing difficulties; serious injury.
 - Dial **999**.
- Cuts; sprains; minor burns, suspected fractures of arm, shoulder, lower leg.
 - Go to your local NHS Minor Injuries Unit, Walk in Centre or Urgent Care Centre. Or phone the new, free, helpline NHS 111. Just dial **111**.
- Feverish children; feeling unwell; injury over 24 hours old.
 - Contact your GP practice. Or phone NHS **111**.
- Minor infections; sore throats; colds.
 - Ask for advice from a pharmacist. Many local pharmacies are open late into the evening and on Sundays. There is always pharmacy cover on bank holidays, including Christmas Day.
- Need medical help fast but it's not an emergency?
 - Phone NHS **111**. For details of services, a symptom checker, and lots of health advice and ideas: visit nhs.uk

'Health help now' is a new app to help people in Kent and Medway find the service that can help them best. Look out for details at kentprepared.org.uk or visit healthhelpnow-nhs.net

Think 'Phone **111** before you go' - save A&E for when you really need it.

How ready are you?

Try this test to see how prepared you are for an emergency.

1. Do you have a household emergency plan? Yes No
2. Have you discussed your plan with family and friends? Yes No
3. Do you know the emergency plan for your children's school/nursery/college? Yes No
4. Do you know the emergency plan for your workplace? Yes No
5. Have you completed a personal emergency contact list? Yes No
6. Have you prepared a check list for an emergency 'grab bag', or packed it ready to go? Yes No
7. Do you have 'In Case of Emergency' (ICE) contact(s) in your phone, wallet or purse? Yes No
8. Do you have an emergency friend - unlikely to be affected by the same emergency - who can keep family and friends informed? Yes No
9. Do you have a wind-up or battery-operated portable FM/AM/DAB radio? Yes No
10. Do you have alternative, agreed meeting points? Yes No
11. Do you have working smoke alarms in your home? Yes No
12. Do you have adequate contents and buildings insurance? Yes No
13. Do you have copies of important documents stored somewhere other than at home? Yes No
14. Do you have a written list of your valuables, plus photographs or DVD/video? Yes No
15. Have you taken a basic first aid course? Yes No
16. Have you checked if you're in a flood risk area? Yes No
17. Have you thought about arrangements for pets if you need to leave your home? Yes No
18. Have you identified possible exit routes from every room in your home? Yes No

12 or more 'yesses'? Congratulations - your preparations are going well. Keep them up to date.

Between 8 and 12 'yesses'? You're making good progress, but there's a lot more you can do.

Fewer than 8 'yesses'? You seem under-prepared. Maybe you don't like thinking about the subject. Remember - the more prepared you are, the better you'll cope.

Local radio stations for Kent and Medway

Academy FM (Thanet)

community station
FM107.8 (Thanet, Kent)

Academy FM (Folkestone)

community station
FM105.9 (Folkestone, Kent)

AHBS

community station
FM107.1 (Ashford, Kent)

BBC Radio Kent

talk; news and sport; contemporary and oldies

FM96.7 (Maidstone, Kent)

FM97.6 (Folkestone)

FM104.2 (Dover)

AM774 (Canterbury)

AM1602 (Royal Tunbridge Wells, Kent)

also available on local DAB radio, in most parts of Kent. Listen to the latest news report from BBC Radio Kent on our audio pages

BRFM

community station
FM95.6 (Swale and Isle of Sheppey, Kent)

95.8 Capital FM

top 40 pop chart and R&B music available on local DAB radio in most parts of Kent. Listen live on our audio pages

Community Channel

public access radio
due to start on local DAB radio in most parts of Kent at a date to be confirmed

CSR

community station
FM97.4 (Canterbury, Kent)

Gold

oldies and classic hits
AM603 (Kent)
AM1242 (Maidstone, Kent and Medway)
Also available on local DAB radio in most parts of Kent. Listen live on our audio pages

Heart 103.1 & 102.8 (formerly known as Invicta FM)

contemporary
FM96.1 (Ashford, Kent)
FM97.0 (Dover & Folkestone)
FM95.9 (Thanet)
FM102.8 (Canterbury, Kent)

FM103.1 (Maidstone, Kent and Medway) also available on local DAB radio in most parts of Kent. Listen live on our audio pages.

KMFM

adult contemporary music and county news available on local DAB radio in most parts of Kent

KMFM 106

pop and contemporary music; news & talk
FM106.0 (Canterbury, Whitstable and Herne Bay, Kent)

KMFM for Ashford

pop and contemporary music; news & talk
FM107.6 (Ashford, Kent)

KMFM for Folkestone and Dover

contemporary and classic hit music
FM106.8 (Dover, Kent)
FM96.4 (Folkestone)

KMFM for Maidstone

music from the last forty years with news & local features
FM105.6 (Maidstone, Kent). Listen live on our audio pages

KMFM for Medway

contemporary and classic hit music
FM100.4 (Gillingham, Medway)
FM107.9 (Chatham and Rainham)

KMFM for Thanet

contemporary; news
FM107.2 (Thanet, Kent)

KMFM for West Kent

contemporary and classic hit music
FM96.2 (Tonbridge and Royal Tunbridge Wells, Kent)
101.6 (Sevenoaks)

Pop Up Radio

occasional service broadcasting during events & festivals available on local DAB radio in most parts of Kent

Radio Sunlight

community radio station
FM106.6 (Medway, Kent)

SFM

community radio station featuring Caesar the Geezer
FM106.9 (Sittingbourne, Kent)

TGR Sound

community licence returned to Ofcom (Bexley, Kent)

Xfm

new rock, alternative and indie available on local DAB radio in most parts of Kent. Listen live on our audio pages

Your emergency contact list

Work

Doctor

School(s)

Water supplier

Electricity supplier

Gas supplier

Telephone supplier

Home insurance company

Home breakdown services

Emergency friend

Floodline quick dial number

District Council

Quick reference emergency and information contacts Emergency Services 999

- Non emergency police **101**
- NHS 111, Dial **111nhs.uk**
- Anti-Terrorism Hotline **0800 789 321**
- Environment Agency **environment-agency.gov.uk/**
General Enquiries **03708 506 506**
- Floodline **0345 988 1188** Incident Reporting **0800 80 70 60**
- UK Powernet works **ukpowernetworks.co.uk**
General enquirers **0845 601 4516**
- Power cut **0800 31 63 105**
- Preparing for emergencies **gov.uk/local-planning-emergency-major-incident**
- Kent Resilience Forum **kentprepared.org.uk/**
- Met Office **metoffice.gov.uk**

Notes



Kent Resilience Forum



PREPARING FOR EMERGENCIES IN KENT AND MEDWAY

kentprepared.org.uk