



Be Prepared !!

Useful Emergency Contact Numbers

Police	Emergency calls	999 or 112
	Non-Emergency calls	101
Power Cut Helpline		0800 7 838 838
National Gas Emergency Service		0800 111999

Some tips and suggestions to help you keep safe, prepare you for Winter and be ready for emergencies

Contact Numbers

1. Keep a list of useful contact 'phone' numbers in an easily seen and accessible place including the number of:-

your doctor
a close family member(s)
friends and helpful neighbours
your local plumber.

2. A 'hands-free' phone set will not work if there is a power cut. Keep an 'old-style' phone which can be plugged into your phone socket if the power fails.
3. ICE (In case of Emergency) – enter ICE as a 'Name' in both your home phone memory and mobile together with your chosen contact telephone number. The emergency services, or anyone trying to assist you, then have immediate access to a number to call.

Power Cuts and Light

1. Buy a wind-up torch for emergency use. These give excellent light during a power failure and the light source is easily powered by winding the handle. Wind-up torches are much safer than candles. (Wilkinsons Stores sell a Uni-com wind-up torch Dynamo 3LED for £4.00 which is excellent value)
2. Know where your electricity meter is situated and how to reset a tripped fuse.

3. Keep a spare light bulb in your home.

Staying Safe

1. Have a chain and spyhole fitted to your front door and always check who is there before opening the door.
2. Make sure that you have a smoke alarm and check that it is working, on a regular basis. Never smoke in bed. The Fire Brigade will visit you to advise on making your home safer.

Food

1. It is wise to keep some essential stocks of food for emergencies such as bad weather or if you are unwell. Items should include long-life milk, some tins of soup, and some freezer foods which could see you through if you are unable to go out, as well as tea, coffee and basic provisions.
2. It is a good idea to reduce the content of your freezer during early Autumn, defrost it and then restock with fresh products in preparation for Winter. A supply of bread and rolls is useful in a freezer.
3. Please don't forget your pet if you have one as they will also appreciate a stock of food!!

Water

1. Make sure you know where the mains water stop-cock is and check this can be turned easily. Often these get jammed because they are not turned regularly. As an 'aide-memoire' it is worth turning the stop-cock twice a year when the clocks go forward and back. If it is difficult for you to do this perhaps a kind neighbour could help. It is only a five-minute job, but can save a lot of stress if you have a frozen pipe or need to turn the mains water off quickly.
2. In very cold weather, it is worth keeping a container of fresh drinking water available at all times so that if the water supply to your home has to be turned off outside, you always have access to fresh water.

3. The tank and pipes in your loft should be lagged. If they are not, you may be entitled to have this done free of charge through an energy preservation scheme.

Avoiding Frozen Pipes

1. Lag any water pipes running along an external wall with pipe foam wrap available from any DIY store. This is easily cut to size and can be wrapped around pipes which potentially might freeze.
2. At night when the temperature is likely to drop to its lowest point leave kitchen cupboard doors open if there are water pipes at the back of the cupboard. This helps to circulate warmer air around the pipe and prevents freezing.

Heating

1. Be prepared in case your boiler breaks down or your heating system fails. Try and have it serviced before the winter arrives and if you have gas central heating, it may be worth buying a small fan heater for emergencies.
2. Keep a fleece blanket to hand as these are inexpensive to buy and are an excellent means of keeping warm. Think about your clothing should the weather turn very cold.

Pets

1. Put the number of your vet on your list of telephone numbers.
2. If your pet is taking medication, make sure you have a necessary stock and keep a record of when a new prescription will be required.
3. Keep a sufficient stock of food. Know who you could contact if you were ill and needed help with their care. Keep a brief note on how to care for your pet, what they eat, where their basket/carrier is kept, so that in an emergency any helper would know what to do. Leaving this card in a plastic folder on the back of the front door, next to your 'message in a bottle sticker', is a good place.

Contingency Plans

1. Try to give some thought to how you would manage in an emergency, in very cold weather, or if you were unwell.
2. Who would you contact? Do you have a kind neighbour who could help? What are your special needs- foods, medication? Could you live for a few days without going out and could you keep warm and feed yourself? Do you have a radio which runs on batteries? This would keep you in touch with your local radio station if there were a power cut.
3. Money – whilst we would not recommend keeping large amounts of money in your home, it is worth ensuring you have a small amount of ready cash so that you could ask someone to do a little shopping, buy a newspaper etc.

Medication

1. Make sure that you always have sufficient medication supplies which are prescribed by your doctor; especially before Christmas, Easter and Bank Holidays.
2. Make a note on your calendar as a reminder when your next prescription renewal is due.
3. Keep a basic first aid/ medical kit in case of emergencies to include some paracetamol, plasters, throat sweets, moisturizing cream and tissues. Make sure that any 'bought over the counter' medicines are compatible with your prescribed medication - your pharmacist will advise you. Never exceed the stated dose and check you are not taking two medicines both containing paracetamol.

Message in a Bottle

This is an excellent scheme devised and provided by the Lions International, whereby they supply free of charge a small white plastic bottle which is kept in the fridge. Two emergency green stickers, one for the door of the fridge and one for the inside of your front door are also supplied. Inside the bottle is a form to complete with all your important details e.g. name, age, medication taken, next of kin etc. The emergency services then know where to look for your details which can speed up the help which you may need. If more than one person lives at an address, a passport photograph attached to each form enables easy identification.

These 'Message in a Bottles' are available from Carers in Herts and also many pharmacies.