Are you prepared for an emergency?

Five simple steps to help you and your family prepare for emergency situations.
Why should I prepare for emergencies?

Emergencies can happen anywhere at anytime and can often take people by surprise.

Fires, power cuts and severe weather, such as storms, snowfall and flooding, are frequent occurrences within the UK and have the potential to have a devastating impact on individuals, families and communities.

You, or someone you know, may already have experienced these types of emergency, which can lead to stress, inconvenience, expenditure, damage, injury or worse.

By following the five simple steps in this leaflet, you and your family can be better prepared should you be affected by an emergency.
Step 1. Know your risks!

The first step to being prepared is knowing what type of emergencies could affect you.

Your geographical location, type of dwelling and personal habits can all affect the type of risks you could be exposed to.

If you live close to the sea or a river you may be at risk of flooding; or if you live in an isolated location you may be at risk of being cut off in severe weather.

But make sure you consider all possibilities; some risks like surface water flooding can be unpredictable and could occur in places where it hasn’t occurred before.

How do I find out about risks in my area?

To find out of your property is at risk of flooding visit:

www.checkmyfloodrisk.co.uk

You can receive free flood warnings by phone, text or email from Flood Warnings Direct by visiting:

fwd.environment-agency.gov.uk

You can also contact your local District or Unitary Council Emergency Planning Officer who will be happy to assist you. See the Useful Contacts section at the back of this leaflet for contact details for local authorities in Essex. Just remember to ask for the Emergency Planning Officer.
Step 2. Create an emergency plan

A Household Emergency Plan should detail how you and your family will act in times of an emergency. Your plan should cover:

- How and when to call the emergency services
- How to evacuate your property - escape routes
- Where to safely meet if separated in an emergency
- How to switch off electricity, gas and water supplies
- How to make your home secure - locking doors & windows
- Who to call for assistance - list of key contacts
- How to alert your neighbours to a hazard
Stay in or get out?

If it is not safe to stay in your property because of fire, flood or another hazard, these are the steps you need to take:

**Get out**
- Leave your property quickly but safely

**Stay out**
- Once outside don’t go back inside

**Dial 999**
- Call the emergency services

Sometimes hazards outside your property, such as smoke from a nearby fire, may cause you to seek shelter inside. Here’s what you need to do:

**Go in**
- Go inside & close all windows & doors

**Stay in**
- Stay inside until told it is safe to come out

**Tune in**
- Tune in to radio, TV or internet to stay informed

Make sure your Household Emergency Plan says what to do if you have to leave or stay in your home during an emergency.
Step 3. Put together an emergency grab bag

An emergency grab bag is a small bag of essential items that you may require should you be stuck in your home, or need to leave in a hurry, due to an emergency.

Your grab bag should be small enough to carry and should contain important personal information and items that might help you in an emergency.

Keep your grab bag in a safe but easily accessible location and make sure everyone in the family knows where it is. Don’t forget to check it regularly to make sure everything works and is in-date. We advise that you check it at least once a year.

Key Grab Bag Items

- Household Emergency Plan
- Torch (wind-up/battery)
- Radio (wind-up/battery)
- Spare batteries
- First Aid Kit
- Basic toiletries
- Insurance details
- Bottle of Water
- Long-life snacks
- Spare house/car keys
- Mobile phone charger
- Small game for kids
- Notebook and pen/pencil
Step 4. ICE Numbers

ICE stands for ‘In Case of Emergency’ and is commonly recognised by the Police as a form of identifying important contacts and next of kin.

By putting ICE after your next of kin or other relatives’ contacts in your mobile phone, the emergency services will be able to more easily identify who they need to call if something happens to you.

If you have more than one key contact in your phone, you might want to add a number after ICE to identify the priority for each contact.

Example: Joe Bloggs ICE 1

**Did you know?**

If you password protect your phone you can download ICE apps that allow the emergency services to call your ICE contacts without having to know your password.

But don’t worry they can’t access any other part of your phone!
Step 5. Practice

Practice makes perfect, and it’s no different when preparing yourself and your family for an emergency.

Once you have prepared your Household Emergency Plan and your Emergency Grab Bag you can practice the following things:

1. Evacuating your home
2. Preparing your home for an emergency
3. Checking that your emergency contacts are correct
4. Knowing who to call in different emergency situations
5. Living out of your grab bag

By preparing yourself and your family for emergencies you not only have a better chance of staying safe but you could also be helping to save lives.
Useful Contacts

**Essex County Fire and Rescue Service**

- Phone: 01376 576000
- Website: www.essex-fire.gov.uk

**Essex Police**

- Phone: 01245 491491
- Website: www.essex.police.uk

**Essex County Council**

- Phone: 01245 430430
- Website: www.essex.gov.uk

**District & Unitary Councils**

**Basildon**

- Phone: 01268 533333
- Website: www.basildon.gov.uk

**Braintree**

- Phone: 01376 552525
- Website: www.braintree.gov.uk

**Brentwood**

- Phone: 01277 312500
- Website: www.brentwood.gov.uk
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<td>01268 882200</td>
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<td>Chelmsford</td>
<td>01245 606606</td>
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<td>Colchester</td>
<td>01206 282222</td>
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<td>Epping Forest</td>
<td>01992 564000</td>
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<td>01279 446655</td>
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<td>Maldon</td>
<td>01621 854477</td>
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Further Information

For further information on how you can prepare for emergencies why not visit:

www.essexprepared.co.uk

If you have children why not take some time to visit our interactive educational website full of fun games and activities that will help teach your kids how to be prepared for emergencies:

www.whatif-guidance.org.uk

Or, if you want to find out more about emergency planning and the Essex Civil Protection & Emergency Management team, visit:

www.ecpem.org
Essex Civil Protection & Emergency Management is a partnership between Essex County Fire & Rescue Service and Essex County Council.

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