Our Household at a Glance

This is the page to grab first. If someone arrives to help, or if you are too rattled to think, everything essential is here. Fill it in tonight, in pencil, and keep it up to date.

Our home

Address and postcode

What3words or nearest landmark (optional)

Type of home (house, flat, floor number, lift?)

Landlord or managing agent, if renting

Home insurance company and policy number

Who lives here

Name	Date of birth	Mobile number	Needs to know (allergies, conditions, mobility)	Usual medicines? (see Health, Hygiene and Medicines)

Pets and assistance animals

Name	Type	Microchip number	Vet's name and number

The three numbers we would ring first

Who	Relationship	Phone number	Lives where?

Where things are

What	Where it is in our home	Checked on (date)
Water stopcock (inside)		
Gas meter and valve		
Electricity fuse box or consumer unit		
Torch and spare batteries		
Battery or wind-up radio		
First aid kit		
Grab bag		
This workbook's spare copy		

Our meeting points

If we cannot go home, we meet at (near home)

If we cannot reach our area, we meet at (further away)

If we cannot contact each other, the person everyone calls is

Tip. Photograph this page and the phone numbers in Money, Documents and Phone Numbers, and send the photos to one trusted person who does not live with you. If your home becomes inaccessible, they can read your plan back to you.

Money, Documents and Phone Numbers

Cash

If card payments or cash machines stop working, a little cash goes a long way. Keep a mix of coins and notes. The right amount depends on your family's needs for essentials. Keep your bank cards too.

Where we keep emergency cash

Amount we aim to keep

Checked on (date)

Copies of documents

Keep printed copies of important documents in a plastic wallet, ready to take with you.

- ☐ Passports or photo ID
- ☐ Birth certificates
- ☐ Driving licences
- ☐ Insurance policies (home, contents, car, travel) and policy numbers
- ☐ Tenancy agreement or mortgage details
- ☐ Instructions for any medical equipment
- ☐ A list of regular medicines and doses (see Health, Hygiene and Medicines)
- ☐ Pet vaccination and microchip records
- ☐ Recent photos of children and pets

Important numbers

Write them on paper and keep this page where you can find it in a power cut. The numbers below are national UK numbers, correct when this book went to print; check them during your six-month review.

Who	Number	Notes
Emergency services (police, fire, ambulance, coastguard)	999	Or 112
Deaf, hard of hearing or speech-impaired: 999 via Relay UK	18000	Register for emergencySMS first by texting "register" to 999

Who	Number	Notes
NHS 111 (urgent but not an emergency)	111	England, Scotland and Wales
Power cut (England, Scotland and Wales)	105	
Power cut (Northern Ireland)	03457 64364 3	
Gas emergency (Great Britain)	0800 111 999	Free, 24 hours
Gas emergency (Northern Ireland)	0800 002 001	
Floodline (England, Scotland and Wales)	0345 988 1188	Textphone 0345 602 6340
Police non-emergency	101	
Our water company		
Our GP surgery		
Our pharmacy		
Our home insurer's claims line		
Our landlord or managing agent		
Our council		
Our vet		
Children's school or nursery		
Employer or work contact		

ICE on your phone. Add emergency contacts and medical information to your phone's emergency or Medical ID settings, so the emergency services can see them without unlocking it. Remember that anyone holding your phone could see this information, and tell the person you have listed.

Water

Water matters most, and it is the easiest thing to get right. The Be Ready checklist recommends **3 litres per person per day for drinking**, for three days. You will need more for cooking and washing.

How much do we need?

Fill in the table. Count every person, including babies, plus pets.

Who	Number	Litres per day	Days	Total litres
Adults and children (drinking)		3	3	
Extra for cooking and washing (our estimate)				
Pets (ask your vet how much they drink)				
Our total				

Example. A household of two adults and two children needs 4 × 3 litres × 3 days = **36 litres** for drinking alone. That is six of the 6-litre bottles sold in most supermarkets.

Storing it

- Buy bottled water, keep it sealed, and store it somewhere cool and dark, away from chemicals and direct sunlight.
- Note the date you bought it and rotate it: use the oldest bottles in normal life and replace them.
- If you have a baby, the advice is to keep **ready-to-feed formula**, because you may not be able to boil water to make up powdered formula safely.

If the water is off

If your water company tells you not to use tap water, follow its instructions; it may tell you where to collect bottled water. In a long, widespread power cut, the UK's Chief Medical Officers advise that while water is in short supply you use it only for **drinking, washing your hands and preparing food**, and that everyone tries to drink **at least 2 litres of fluid a day** (about 8 cups). Bottled water, soft drinks and juice from tinned fruit all count. If you hear official advice on the radio about making other water safer to drink, follow it exactly as broadcast. This workbook does not give treatment instructions or doses.

Our water store

Date bought	Amount (litres)	Where stored	Use by or replace by

Food

You need enough food for three days that does **not** need a fridge or cooking. That is the key point: in a power cut you may have neither. The official advice is to buy food your household normally eats, so nothing goes to waste when you rotate it.

Good choices

- Tinned meat, fish, beans and vegetables (with ring pulls, or keep a manual tin opener)
- Tinned fruit in juice
- Dried fruit, nuts and seeds (check allergies)
- Crackers, oatcakes, rice cakes and breakfast cereals
- Peanut butter and other spreads
- Long-life milk or plant milk in small cartons
- Ready-to-eat pouches of rice, grains or pulses that do not need refrigeration
- Cereal bars and biscuits
- Food for special diets, babies and anyone with allergies

A three-day menu that needs no cooking

Planning meals is the best way to check you really have enough. Fill in what you would eat.

Day	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Snacks
Day 1				
Day 2				
Day 3				

What to eat first in a power cut

The Chief Medical Officers' advice for a long power cut is to eat food in this order:

1 **Chilled food and anything defrosting from the freezer first**, because it goes off fastest.

2 **Then fresh food that does not live in the fridge** but has a short shelf life: bread, fresh whole fruit and vegetables, eggs.

3 **Keep the long-life cupboard food until last.**

The Food Standards Agency says a fridge should stay cold for about **4 hours** with the door kept shut, and a **full freezer for up to 48 hours** (about 24 hours if half full). These are estimates and depend on the appliance, so keep the doors closed as much as possible. Babies, young children, pregnant women, older people and anyone with a weakened immune system should not eat

chilled ready-to-eat food, such as pre-packed sandwiches, salads and leftovers, once the power has been off for more than 4 hours.

Never use a camping stove, barbecue or fuel generator indoors, not even with the windows open. They produce carbon monoxide, which can kill. If you cook in an emergency, do it outside, and make sure food is steaming hot all the way through.

Our food store

Item	Quantity	Where stored	Best before	Replace by

Light, Warmth and Power

When the power goes, the house gets dark and, in winter, cold very quickly. A few simple things make the difference between an adventure and a miserable night.

Light

- **Torches, not candles.** The official advice is that torches are safer than candles. Keep one torch per person, plus a head torch for hands-free jobs.
- **Spare batteries** in the right sizes. Write the sizes on the checklist below so you buy the right ones.
- **Glow sticks** are safe for children's rooms.

Warmth

Homes can become cold very quickly when the heating goes off. Keep blankets, sleeping bags and warm clothing where you can find them in the dark. The Chief Medical Officers' advice for very cold weather includes:

- wearing several thin layers rather than one thick one;
- keeping your feet raised when sitting, because the air near the floor is colder;
- getting up to move and stretch at least once an hour;
- gathering everyone in one room to share warmth, closing the doors of the rooms you are not using;
- putting a towel or sheet along the bottom of doors to stop draughts;
- closing curtains and blinds when it gets dark, or hanging blankets over windows if you have none.

Babies, young children, pregnant women, older people and people who need care are most at risk from the cold. If you are worried about someone's health, call NHS 111, or 999 in an emergency.

Power

- **A charged power bank** keeps a phone, and some medical devices, running. Charge it every time you do your six-month review.
- **A battery or wind-up FM radio** for news (see Staying Informed).
- **In-car phone charger** for when you can use the car safely.

> **Carbon monoxide.** Never use a camping stove, barbecue, patio heater or petrol or diesel generator indoors, in a garage or in a tent attached to the house. Make sure you have a working carbon monoxide alarm that **sounds**; the colour-changing "black spot" detectors do not give an audible warning.

Our checklist

- ☐ Torch for each person: _____
- ☐ Head torch
- ☐ Spare batteries, sizes: _____
- ☐ Battery or wind-up FM radio
- ☐ Power bank, charged on: _____
- ☐ Blankets, sleeping bags or duvets
- ☐ Hats, gloves, thick socks and warm layers for everyone
- ☐ Hot-water bottles (fill only if you can heat water safely)
- ☐ Working smoke alarm, tested on: _____
- ☐ Working carbon monoxide alarm, tested on: _____

Health, Hygiene and Medicines

This chapter is about having the right things to hand. It is not a substitute for first aid training, and it is not medical advice. The official guidance encourages everyone to learn some basic first aid. Check online for free workshops, or ask your employer whether it will pay for a course.

A first aid kit

The Be Ready checklist suggests including:

- ☐ Waterproof plasters
- ☐ Bandages
- ☐ Sterile dressings
- ☐ Medical tape for dressings
- ☐ Disposable gloves
- ☐ Antiseptic
- ☐ Eyewash solution
- ☐ Thermometer
- ☐ Tweezers
- ☐ Anything else our family uses: _____

Medicines

The most common emergency problem is simply running out of a regular medicine. The official advice is to request repeat prescriptions **up to 5 working days before you need them**, so you are less likely to run out. Keep medicines in their original packaging, together, in a waterproof container if you can.

Person	Medicine and strength	Dose and when	Prescribed by	Repeat due

Medical devices. If anyone relies on equipment that needs electricity, such as an oxygen concentrator, a powered wheelchair or a stairlift, make a plan now with your care provider or clinical team for what to do in a power cut. People Who Need Extra Help covers this in more detail.

Hygiene

- ☐ Hand sanitiser
- ☐ Wet wipes
- ☐ Toilet roll
- ☐ Soap
- ☐ Sanitary products
- ☐ Nappies and wipes, if needed
- ☐ Bin bags and strong sealable bags
- ☐ Washing-up bowl (see below)

In a long, widespread power cut where water and sewage systems stop working, the Chief Medical Officers advise:

- washing hands with soap and water in a shared bowl, which is better than hand sanitiser;
- keeping a separate bowl for anyone with diarrhoea;
- not flushing the toilet if the sewage system is not working: waste goes into sealed plastic bags with your household rubbish, ideally in an outside bin.

Only follow the no-flushing advice if you are told the sewage system is down.

The Grab Bag and the Car Kit

The grab bag

If you have to leave home quickly, because of a fire, a flood or an evacuation, you will not have time to think. The official guidance suggests keeping essential items in a spare bag, often called a **grab bag**. Keep it somewhere easy to reach, near the front door or under the stairs, and tell everyone where it is.

- ☐ Copies of documents in a waterproof wallet
- ☐ Cash and a bank card
- ☐ Medicines for a few days, and a list of all medicines and doses
- ☐ Phone charger and a charged power bank
- ☐ Torch and spare batteries
- ☐ Bottled water and snacks
- ☐ Basic first aid items
- ☐ Toiletries, sanitary products, glasses or contact lenses
- ☐ A change of clothes, warm layers and waterproofs
- ☐ A copy of the phone numbers page and this workbook's key pages
- ☐ Spare keys for home and car
- ☐ Baby and pet essentials, if needed
- ☐ Notebook and pen

Where our grab bag is kept

Last checked on

Person responsible for checking it

The car kit for winter

Getting stuck on a snowy road is one of the most common emergencies in the UK. The official advice is to keep a few essentials in the boot:

- ☐ Torch
- ☐ In-car phone charger
- ☐ Warm clothes and blankets
- ☐ High-visibility clothing
- ☐ Jump leads

- [ ] Food and drink
- [ ] A shovel for snow
- [ ] A first aid kit
- [ ] Ice scraper and de-icer
- [ ] A printed map of your area

Contacts and Meeting Points

If the phone networks are busy or down, families get separated by the simple fact of being in different places: at work, at school, on the bus. A plan agreed in advance means nobody has to guess.

Our emergency contacts

Name	Relationship	Mobile	Landline	Address

One person outside the area

Choose one relative or friend who lives somewhere else, perhaps in another part of the country. If you cannot reach each other, everyone in the household calls or messages **this person** to say where they are and that they are safe. A distant line is often easier to get through on than a local one.

Our out-of-area contact

Their phone number

Their address

Meeting points

The official advice is to choose places that are easy to find and open to the public in your community, or a family member's home if it is safe to go there.

Meeting point 1, right outside our home (for a fire)

Meeting point 2, nearby but away from our street

Meeting point 3, further away, if our area is closed off

Escape routes

Work out the best way out of your home if there is a fire, and what you would do if your home floods. If you live with others, especially children, walk through it together.



Draw a simple plan of your home in the grid: mark every door and window you could use to get out, the stairs, and your meeting point outside.

Main way out

Second way out

Where the keys to doors and windows are kept

Who helps the children, older people or pets

Your Home: Shut-Offs and Safety Checks

The official guidance asks you to know how to turn off your gas, electricity and water. You would need to if you had to leave your home because of flooding, or if there were a leak. Find them now, in daylight, with no pressure.

Supply	Where the shut-off is	How to turn it off	Tested on (date)
Water stopcock (inside)			
Outside water valve (if known)			
Gas emergency control valve (by the meter)			
Electricity consumer unit or fuse box			
Oil or LPG supply (if any)			

If you smell gas, do not use light switches, matches or anything that could make a spark. Open doors and windows, turn off the gas at the meter if you can do so safely, leave the building and call the gas emergency number: 0800 111 999 in Great Britain, 0800 002 001 in Northern Ireland.

Safety checks

- ☐ Smoke alarms on every floor, tested monthly (the Fire Kills campaign advises testing at least once a month)
- ☐ Carbon monoxide alarm near any fuel-burning appliance
- ☐ Online home fire safety check completed (search "online home fire safety check")
- ☐ Home insurance checked, including flood cover if we are at risk
- ☐ Flood risk checked for our postcode
- ☐ Torches by the bed and by the front door

Our smoke alarm log

Month	Tested by	Working? (yes / no)	Battery changed?

Neighbours and Community

In most emergencies, the first help comes from the people next door. The official advice is to swap contact details with neighbours and consider a messaging group for your street or building.

Our street or building

Name	House or flat number	Phone	Might need help with	Could help with

Things we could share

Item	Who has it
Camping stove (outdoor use only)	
Generator (outdoor use only)	
Spare torch or radio	
Car with a full tank	
First aid training	
Ladder or tools	
Spare room	
Other:	

☐ We have a street or building messaging group

- [ ] We know which neighbours live alone or might need extra help
- [ ] We have agreed to check on them if the power goes out

Talking to Children

Children do not need to be frightened to be prepared. Most of them like knowing the plan, and they love having a job. The official advice is to talk to children about what to do in an emergency, including how and when to call 999, and to help them learn their home address and a parent's or carer's mobile number. Practise these regularly.

Keep it simple and positive: "If the lights go out, we have a plan, and you are part of it."

Fill this page in together

My name

My address

My grown-up's phone number

Another grown-up I can call

Where we meet if there is a fire

Where my torch lives

My emergency job is

When do I call 999?

Call 999 if someone is badly hurt or very unwell and not waking up, if there is a fire, or if someone is in danger right now. Tell the operator:

1 which service you need: police, fire or ambulance;

2 where you are, your address or what you can see;

3 what has happened.

Then listen and do what they tell you. Do not hang up until they say so.

For grown-ups. The StayWise website, led by the National Fire Chiefs Council with the UK's fire and rescue services, has free resources about emergencies aimed at children. Also check that your child's school or nursery has your current contact numbers, and ask what its plans are for severe weather, loss of utilities and fire.

Emergency jobs children can do

- [ ] Fetch the torches
- [ ] Find the radio and turn it on
- [ ] Check on the pet
- [ ] Count the bottles of water
- [ ] Keep a younger brother or sister busy with a game
- [ ] Write down what the radio says
- [ ] Remind everyone not to open the freezer

Quick-Reference Cards

One card per emergency, with only the essentials. Copy them, photograph them, or keep the book open at this page by the fridge when bad weather is forecast.

Power cut

- ☐ Check whether it is just you: look at the neighbours and your fuse box.
- ☐ Call 105 (England, Scotland, Wales) or 03457 643643 (Northern Ireland).
- ☐ Torches, not candles. Radio on.
- ☐ Keep the fridge and freezer doors shut.
- ☐ Switch off appliances, leave one light on.
- ☐ Check on people who live alone or use medical equipment.
- ☐ Never cook indoors with a camping stove or barbecue.

Water off

- ☐ Check the water company's updates.
- ☐ Use stored bottled water for drinking first.
- ☐ Use water only for drinking, washing hands and preparing food.
- ☐ Set up a hand-washing bowl with soap.
- ☐ Follow any boil water or do not drink notice exactly.
- ☐ Only stop flushing if told the sewage system is down.

Storm

- ☐ Check Met Office warnings.
- ☐ Secure bins and garden furniture before it starts.
- ☐ Charge phones and power banks.
- ☐ Avoid travel during the worst of it.
- ☐ Stay away from fallen power lines: call 105, or 999 if there is danger to life.

Flood

- ☐ Check flood warnings: Floodline 0345 988 1188.
- ☐ Move documents, medicines and valuables up high.
- ☐ Get the grab bag ready.
- ☐ Turn off gas, electricity and water only if safe and if told to.
- ☐ Never walk or drive through flood water.
- ☐ If told to leave, go.

Gas smell

- [ ] No light switches, no flames, no sparks.
- [ ] Open doors and windows.
- [ ] Turn off the gas at the meter, if safe.
- [ ] Leave the building.
- [ ] Call 0800 111 999 (Great Britain) or 0800 002 001 (Northern Ireland).

Phones and cards down

- [ ] Use emergency cash.
- [ ] Use the paper phone list.
- [ ] Contact the out-of-area person.
- [ ] Listen to the radio.
- [ ] Beware of scam calls and messages.
- [ ] Check on people who rely on telecare.

Told to stay in

- ☐ Go in, stay in, tune in.
- ☐ Close all doors and windows, block draughts.
- ☐ Bring pets inside.
- ☐ Radio on, and keep listening.
- ☐ Do not collect children unless told to.
- ☐ Not if the building you are in is on fire.

Told to leave

- ☐ Grab bag, medicines, phones, chargers.
- ☐ Children and pets.
- ☐ Turn off supplies if told to and safe.
- ☐ Lock up.
- ☐ Tell the out-of-area person where you are going.
- ☐ Follow the route you are given.

The Six-Month Review

The official advice is to set a reminder every six months to check expiry dates, swap out items that need replacing and update your kit if your household's needs have changed. Many families tie it to the clocks changing in March and October, which makes it easy to remember.

Review checklist

- ☐ Water: still in date? Enough for everyone?
- ☐ Food: anything near its best-before date to use up and replace?
- ☐ Medicines and first aid items: in date and enough?
- ☐ Torches, radio and spare batteries: working?
- ☐ Power bank: charged?
- ☐ Smoke and carbon monoxide alarms: tested?
- ☐ Cash: still there?
- ☐ Document copies: up to date?
- ☐ Phone numbers and contacts: still correct?
- ☐ Household changes: new baby, new pet, new medicine, someone moved in or out?
- ☐ Grab bag and car kit: checked?
- ☐ Children: still remember the address, the phone number and the meeting point?

Review log

Date	Done by	What we changed	Next review due

Expiry Tracker

Use this to keep track of anything with a date on it: water, food, medicines, batteries, first aid items, baby formula.

Item	Where stored	Expiry date	Replace in (month)	Done