

PREPARING FOR EMERGENCIES

This information has been put together by Aberdeenshire Council to give you and your family basic information about what to do if there is an emergency in your area.

Many different types of incident can be classed as an emergency, and they can happen at any time. What follows is designed to help you to take some simple steps to reduce the disruption that an emergency can cause.

Taking steps to minimise the impact of an emergency does not need any special knowledge, and it will take just a few minutes of your time to make preparations.

This guide will help you to:

- plan to protect your family
- prepare an emergency “grab bag”; and
- find further information.

What is an emergency and what plans are already in place?

A civil emergency can be declared by the police or fire services when the situation surrounding different types of incident escalates to involve large numbers of people or pose a major threat to many properties.

An emergency situation can arise from:

- fire
- extreme weather
- flooding
- utilities failure e.g. power cut or gas main leak
- chemical spill
- transport collision or
- a combination of these and other factors.

Aberdeenshire Council and its neighbouring local authorities, along with the police, fire service, ambulance service, marine and coastguard agency and voluntary organisations is involved in drawing up, testing and modifying civil contingency plans every day.

Civil contingency or emergency planning is about reducing the likelihood and impact of an emergency in Aberdeenshire.

What effect could an emergency have on your family?

If an emergency is declared in all or part of Aberdeenshire, it could affect your family in a number of different ways. While the cause of the situation might be different, the most likely impacts on people can be grouped together.

These include:

- loss of electricity, telephone, water or gas
- short-term evacuation
- temporary isolation
- damage to your home, community buildings or workplace; and
- injury or death of members of the family.

What can your family do to help protect itself?

If there is an emergency, dial 999 and speak to the appropriate service.

Police, fire, ambulance and coastguard personnel deal with hazardous and dangerous situations on a daily basis and they are best equipped to handle matters.

If you are not directly involved keep away from the area to enable emergency crews access to the scene.

Stay in your home or workplace while the incident is being dealt with. If an emergency is declared you will be notified by Grampian Police.

Up to date information on the situation, including advice on what you should do, a helpline telephone number and a Police Casualty Bureau telephone number will be broadcast on local radio and television channels, many of whom also offer an internet news service. Ensure that you have a battery powered radio to hand in case the power is cut.

Local radio stations covering the Aberdeenshire area include:

BBC
Northsound 1 and Northsound 2
Original FM
Waves Radio
Moray Firth Radio
NECR

Your Emergency “Grab Bag”

If you have to evacuate your home, it will make things a lot easier if you have prepared a ‘Grab Bag’ in advance containing a packing list to follow should you need to use it.

When putting together a “grab bag” you should include:

- Any medication that may be required for family members
- Glasses or contact lenses
- Essential keys including house and car
- Cash, credit and debit cards

- A change of clothing. Footwear and sleeping attire
- Washing, shaving and sanitary supplies
- Any special items for babies, children, elderly and disabled people.
- Mobile phone and charger.

How will your family contact each other?

In previous emergency situations across the world, telephone systems have become overloaded, particularly mobile phone networks. If you are using the telephone to contact members of your family, calls should be kept short, as the emergency services will need the lines for their own communication.

It is important to pre-arrange a meeting point where members of your family can gather in an emergency if access to your home or their homes is restricted. You could consider using the home of another relative or family friend or a prominent public building away from the immediate emergency location.

It is not advisable to go anywhere near an incident site looking for relatives or friends. The people involved will be evacuated before you get there. The Police Casualty Bureau will have the most up to date information concerning those involved in an incident.

What happens if there is an evacuation?

If the police, council or other emergency services, ask you to leave your home for your own safety and that of others, turn off the electricity and water supply at the main switch (be sure you know where these are located) and take your grab bag with you.

For many people, a pet is an important member of the household, and in an emergency it is useful to have thought through what your pet will need.

Aberdeenshire Council has contingency plans for providing shelter for its citizens on a temporary basis at emergency rest centres. When you get to the centre you will be asked to register, by giving your name, address and contact details.

This will help staff at the rest centre meet the needs of what could be large groups of frightened or vulnerable people and will help other members of your family to find you and verify your safety.

It may take a while to get the information needed, but it is vital that everyone at the rest centre is registered.

In its plans, Aberdeenshire Council has made every effort to ensure that the accommodation is comfortable, but it will be communal and may be crowded.

It may help you to think about friends and relatives that might be able to put you up on a temporary basis or if your home insurance covers temporary accommodation.

Contact Numbers

- To report an incident dial 999.
- Police Casualty Bureau telephone number will be broadcast by the media.
- Aberdeenshire Council helplines will be broadcast by the media.
- For emergency planning advice:
Aberdeenshire Council Risk & Business Continuity Team
Email: rm_businesscontinuity@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

Links:

The Scottish Government

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Justice/public-safety/emergencies>

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/News/Releases/2004/07/26110937/Booklet>

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2007/06/12094636/0>

National Severe Weather Warning Service (NSWWS)

<http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/publicsector/nswws/index.html>

Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) – Flooding Information

<http://www.sepa.org.uk/flooding.aspx>