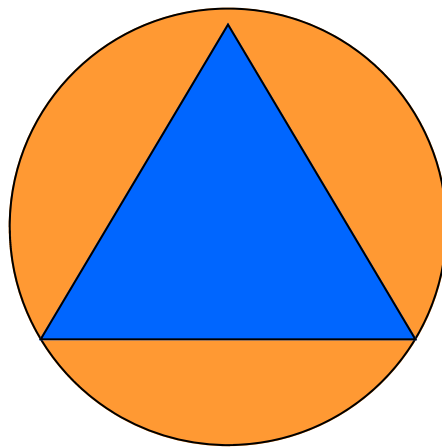


Planning for Emergencies



**An Individual and Family Guide to
Resilience in an Emergency**

September 2009

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INTRODUCTION

Over the last few years there have been a number of emergencies throughout the country and in Buckinghamshire. The emergency services and many other public and voluntary sector organisations have responded to these.

However, there is always one constant factor in every emergency – people. Without the impact that an incident (whether man-made or natural) has on people, the incident would just be an event - the involvement of people make an event an emergency.

With that in mind, it is only common sense to ensure that people – individuals & families, communities and businesses - are as prepared and as resilient as possible to manage the impacts of emergencies, whatever their causes. This booklet is intended to do just that. It makes suggestions on how to prepare for an emergency affecting you and your community. It describes how the public sector and voluntary organisations look after you during an emergency. It also gives practical advice on personal emergencies, fire safety and community safety.

Emergencies can and do happen, but by preparing yourself and your family for an emergency you will be looking after their best interests and making Buckinghamshire a safer, stronger and more resilient community.

This booklet is designed to be small enough to be kept to hand – just in case. Sources of further information are included.

Chris M Williams, Chief Executive
Buckinghamshire County Council

WHAT IS AN EMERGENCY?

Emergencies are many things to many people. In this leaflet, we are talking mainly about community emergencies – those incidents that have an impact on the community as a whole,

whether it be a number of houses on a street, a village or town. There are many examples of emergencies that can affect the community. You – or your family - may be directly or indirectly affected. The table below shows some recent examples.

- Extreme weather e.g. snow in February 2009. Storm and subsequent floods of July 2007
- Utility shortages e.g. power outages in Chiltern and Aylesbury Vale Districts in October 2008
- Fuel crisis e.g. the fuel shortage in 2000 and the tanker drivers' strikes in 2008
- Terrorism e.g. the London bombs of 7th July 2005
- Fire, explosion e.g. Buncefield, December 2005
- A serious transport incident – a plane crash for example, could close roads, train lines, and damage pylons, cutting phone lines, electricity, water and gas supplies
- Human infectious diseases – e.g. pandemic flu, 2009
- Animal Infectious diseases - e.g. foot and mouth, 2000 and 2007; avian flu, 2007

The Thames Valley Community Risk Register is published by the Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum and outlines a number of hazards that might threaten Buckinghamshire. Emergency responders will ensure they have plans to minimize the impacts of such hazards. (www.thamesvalleylrf.org.uk/riskregister).

HOW THE AUTHORITIES RESPOND TO EMERGENCIES

Emergency responders will work together to provide a co-ordinated response to the emergency. Cordons may be placed around the scene to protect you - the public - and the responders – if your house, business or property lies within the inner cordon (the danger area) you will be asked to evacuate.

It's best (and probably more comfortable) to go to family or friends, but if you can't, then you and your pets, will be guided first to a safe location outside the cordons, from where you will be collected and taken to an Emergency Rest Centre (ERC) run by the District Councils and supported by Voluntary Organisations such as the British Red Cross.

For those remaining in the area, or where no evacuation is required, the responders will ensure that the local radio stations have the latest information about the situation. We will also keep our web pages up to date for those with access to the Internet.

In most emergencies, you will be left with two options – to shelter or to evacuate. Evacuations are required when it is assessed to be safer to leave your home (or business, school etc) than stay there. Sheltering is when the opposite applies.

Generic advice is:

- ***In the event of fire – “Get out and stay out!”***
- ***Otherwise – “Go in, Stay in, Tune in!”***

INDIVIDUAL AND FAMILY RESILIENCE - PREPARATION

The purpose of individual & family resilience is to ensure that you and your family are prepared to respond to an emergency. There are a number of things you can do to prepare yourself for an emergency.

Prepare:

- A plan in the event of a fire in your home (page 24)
- A household shelter plan and emergency kit in the event of an emergency in the community which requires you to shelter in your home (page 8)
- A household evacuation plan and grab bag in the event of an emergency in the community that requires you to evacuate from your home (page 10)
- A vehicle kit for your car (page 7)
- A list of key telephone numbers and keep a copy in your grab bag and in your emergency box
- Ensure someone (family / friend) has your contact details and knows about your plan
- Get appropriate insurance for home and contents
- Store your important documents safely—possibly in fire proof containers

Consider:

- The needs of all members of your family (the elderly, babies, pets)
- Attending a recognised first aid course
- Your neighbours – are they vulnerable or old and may need some help?

INDIVIDUAL & FAMILY RESILIENCE - PREPARATION

Know:

- How to turn off the electricity, gas and water for your home

Register:

- If you consider yourself to be vulnerable – register with your utility companies
- “Message in a bottle” – bottle containing your emergency contact details and relevant medical information / medication. More information on this is available from the County Council’s Community Safety team

Make sure your family know and understand what to do in an emergency.

Vehicle Kit to include:

- First Aid kit
- Snack food and water
- Wellington boots; waterproofs
- Warm clothes
- Car charger for your mobile phone
- Torch and spare batteries
- Insurance company contact information
- De-icer (for winter); scraper; shovel

HOUSEHOLD SHELTER PLAN

Household Shelter Plan:

- Family to go inside and stay inside
- Tune in to the local radio station to try and find out more. Follow the advice given on the radio. (Radio stations at the end of this booklet)
- Continually consider your safety (assess the risks to yourself)
- Check you know where your emergency box and grab bag are
- Inform your family's emergency contact of the situation
- If possible, contact your neighbours to ensure they are also sheltering and are safe
- Inform absent members of the household and school (if appropriate)
- Stay away from windows

Emergency Box to include:

- Bottled water
- Tinned food and tin opener
- Torch / spare batteries
- Extra medication / prescriptions
- First aid kit and manual
- Radio & batteries; mains lead; or wind up radio
- Spare essential items for babies, if appropriate
- Spare essential items for pets, if appropriate
- Analogue phone (plugs into the main telephone socket – so if the electricity goes you will still have a working telephone)

EVACUATIONS

If you are to be evacuated, a police or fire officer will usually come door to door to inform you.

- You can expect to be told:
 - What is the hazard
 - Where you are to evacuate to – the initial “place of safety”
 - The route to use when you evacuate
 - Whether you can use your vehicle to evacuate to a destination of your own choice
- Follow the instructions of the officer
- Inform the officer if you have any neighbours who may be vulnerable
- Follow your household evacuation plan (see next page)

The place of safety will provide basic shelter, but essentially it is a safe location away from the hazard.

While you are being evacuated, the Local Authority will be working on:

- Identifying the most suitable location to use as an Emergency Rest Centre (ERC) and staff to work there
- Requesting support from the Voluntary Organisations (for example, British Red Cross Society)
- Arranging transportation from the place of safety to the ERC
- Arranging for a Social Care team – to deploy members to the ERC to identify those who are particularly vulnerable and who need special arrangements
- The Local Authority will also be supporting the emergency services who are responding directly to the hazard

HOUSEHOLD EVACUATION PLAN

To be used when you have to evacuate your home

- Collect people and pets
- Collect your grab bag and essential items
- Switch off appliances and utilities, if appropriate
- Close and lock windows and doors
- Evacuate to friends, family, designated 'place of safety' or emergency rest centre (page 11), as appropriate
- Inform the emergency services of vulnerable / elderly neighbours
- Inform your family's emergency contact
- Inform absent members of the household / school

Grab bag to include:

- Emergency contacts list
- Mobile phone and charger; car charger
- Medication / Prescriptions; Small first aid kit
- Personal items (e.g. spare glasses; contact lenses)
- Change of clothes
- Book; playing cards; games; notebook and pen
- Snacks; bottled water
- Cash / credit cards; extra car keys
- Torch & batteries or wind-up torch
- Spare essential items for babies, if appropriate
- Spare essential items for pets, if appropriate

EMERGENCY REST CENTRES

Those who remain at the place of safety will be provided with transport to take them to the Emergency Rest Centre (ERC).

An ERC is a place where those who are made temporarily homeless can be provided with a basic level of shelter, food, washing facilities and information. They are often located in leisure centres, community halls or sports halls. They are staffed by the District Council, supported by voluntary organisations.

On arrival at the ERC, the names of all attendees will be taken and you will receive further instructions. Later, once everyone is inside, there will be a formal registration process to make sure that we know who is inside, from where, whether you have any special requirements etc.

Chairs, basic food and soft drinks will be available. The County Council holds a number of camp beds and sleeping bags if required.

Arrangements for pets will be made if required, though this may not be in the ERC itself.

ERC staff will do their best to keep you up to date with the situation. If you have any problems or questions, you should ask the ERC staff.

When the emergency has been removed from the area around your home, you will be allowed to return home. Transportation will be provided. Again, you should contact your family emergency contact and inform them.

ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS - OVERVIEW

Many of the hazards that face a community are related to the environment. Scientists assess that these environmental hazards will become more extreme with the onset of climate change. Hazards include:

- Severe weather, gales and storms can cause damage to property and infrastructure and can be dangerous to those in the open. Indirect impacts include power outages and telephone lines being brought down.
- Heavy rain can cause flooding; when combined with cold temperatures, snow can cause damage to the infrastructure and make movement outside difficult and dangerous.
- Flooding - torrential rainfall can cause surface water or “flash” flooding anywhere, as the weight of rain exceeds the capacity of the drainage where it falls.
- Heavy rain anywhere can cause rivers to burst their banks as the natural drainage system of streams and rivers exceed their capacity.
- Heavy rain over a period of months can also cause groundwater levels to rise and eventually break through the surface, such as happened in a number of places in the Chilterns in 2001. Springs will feed streams and rivers that may also burst their banks.
- Prolonged periods without significant rainfall can cause a drought. This is usually more extreme in the heat of summer, but droughts can continue through the winter. The last drought was in 2006, following nearly 2 years of below average rainfall.
- Extremes of temperature can cause health and social problems. Extreme heat can be fatal with the onset of heat exhaustion. Cold weather can similarly be fatal to vulnerable members of the community. Outside, ice will make travelling dangerous and difficult and could lead to cars and people getting stuck. The cold can also indirectly cause power and telephone outages.

FLOOD RISK

Do you know if you live in an area prone to river flooding?

If you contact the Environment Agency Floodline Warnings Direct (0845 988 1188) with your postcode, they will be able to tell you if you live in a flood risk area.

If you do, they can provide advice on how to prepare to try and protect your property, home or business should a flood arise. If you live in a flood risk area, keep flood defences at the ready. It is your property – insure it and protect it.

If your property is under threat of flooding:

- Move as many possessions upstairs as possible, including supplies like food, water and important documents
- Be aware that external items e.g. dustbins and garden furniture may move during flooding. Put them in a safe place where possible to prevent them from damaging properties
- If possible, move your car to higher ground
- Be prepared to evacuate your property, following this guidance

For more information on how to protect your home and to register with the Environment Agency Floodline Warnings Direct:

www.environment-agency.gov.uk/homeandleisure/floods

Your Responsibilities:

- Your property is your responsibility - it is up to you to protect it
- If your property has a stream or river flowing through it or next to it, you may have responsibilities as a riparian land owner. To find out more about these duties, visit the Environment Agency website
- If you have gullies or ditches running through your property or land (such as next to a road) you need to keep these clear to allow rainwater to drain freely

SEVERE WEATHER AND GALES

Severe weather such as gales and storms can cause damage to the community and can be dangerous to people in the open. Possible impacts could include loss of power or telephone lines, roads blocked, poor visibility if driving and damage to private and public property.

Surface water flooding could occur due to torrential downpours and rivers may burst their banks (consider the advice under “Flood Risk” on page 13). In the winter, severe weather may also bring cold, snow and ice - advice on page 15.

In the event of severe gales and storms:

Beforehand:

- Secure outdoor items - put them away where possible
- Bring pets indoors
- Close doors and windows; draw curtains in case of flying glass
- Check on vulnerable neighbours
- Monitor radio weather warnings (unplug external TV aerial during thunderstorms)
- Get home insurance
- Don't drive if the journey is not essential

During / After:

- Stay indoors until storm passes
- Check for damage, make safe if possible
- Beware fallen cables, weakened trees, loose masonry etc

COLD WEATHER, SNOW & ICE

Periods of cold weather can have a significant impact on the community. The vulnerable may not be able to heat their homes sufficiently and they may have difficulty going to the shops. Schools may be forced to close either due to lack of access or because of infrastructure damage (e.g. broken boilers). Power outages may occur and telephone lines may be brought down - such as happened in October 2008 in parts of the Chilterns.

Travelling brings its own problems - poor road conditions mean that there could be substantial delays and even the best prepared vehicle may be stuck behind those who are less prepared.

If you are travelling by car:

- Consider whether your journey is essential - if not, don't go
- Make sure your vehicle is roadworthy
- Prepare a vehicle kit for your car (see page 7)
- Try to wait for the roads to be cleared and / or gritted before travelling. Note - not all roads will be gritted
- Drive sensibly - read the Highway Code for advice on travelling on ice or snow conditions
- If you get stuck, or breakdown, stay with your car and phone for assistance where possible

HEAT WAVE

During a heat wave, remember the following:

Keep Cool!!

- Stay out of the heat, especially between 11.00am and 3.00pm
- If you have to go out in the heat, walk in the shade, apply sunscreen and wear a hat and light scarf
- Avoid extreme physical exertion
- Wear light, loose fitting clothes

Cool yourself down:

- Have plenty of cold drinks. Avoid caffeine and alcohol which dehydrate you
- Eat cold foods e.g. salads and fruit with high water contents
- Take cool showers, cool baths or cool body washes
- Sprinkle water over the skin or clothing, or keep a damp cloth on the back of your neck

Around you:

- Keep a thermometer in your front room to monitor the temperature
- Keep windows that are exposed to the sun closed during the day. Open windows at night when the temperature has dropped
- Metal blinds and dark curtains absorb heat – consider replacing them or putting reflective material in-between them and the window
- Consider putting up external shading outside windows
- Have your loft and cavity walls insulated – this helps keep the heat in when it is cold and out when it is hot

HEAT WAVE (CONTINUED)

- Turn off non essential lights and electrical equipment - they generate heat
- Keep indoor plants and bowls of water in the house as evaporation helps cool the air
- If possible, move to a cooler room, especially for sleeping
- Keep pets indoors where it is cool – they can be affected by the sun too. Make sure that there is plenty of cool, clean drinking water available for pets

Look out for others:

- Keep an eye on isolated, elderly, ill or very young people and make sure they are able to keep cool
- Ensure that babies, children or elderly people are not left alone in stationary cars
- Check on elderly or sick neighbours, family or friends every day during a heatwave
- Be alert and call a doctor or social services if someone is unwell or if further help is needed

FLU PANDEMIC

The most effective measure to counter flu - whether it is seasonal flu or an epidemic or pandemic - is the application of basic hygiene principles.

“Catch it; Kill it; Bin it”

Preventative hygiene measures:

- Wash hands frequently and thoroughly using soap and water (particularly after contact with people who are ill)
- Cover mouth and nose with a tissue while sneezing or coughing
- Dispose of used tissues promptly and carefully – bag and bin them
- Ensure your children follow this advice
- Clean surfaces regularly with soap and water
- Use an alcohol gel if you are away from water

Consider:

- Where possible utilise the seasonal flu jab if offered by your GP
- Keep a good thermometer and an up to date supply of ‘over the counter’ medication e.g. Paracetamol
- Identify friends / relatives who could collect medicine / go shopping on your behalf - “flu friends”
- Offer the same to your friends / family and consider any vulnerable neighbours

FLU PANDEMIC (CONTINUED)

Flu symptoms:

- a sudden fever (a high body temperature of 38°C / 100.4°F or above), and
- a sudden cough

Other symptoms may include:

- headache
- tiredness
- chills
- aching muscles
- limb or joint pain

During a flu epidemic or pandemic, follow any instructions - written or given over the Media - from the NHS.

If you develop flu symptoms

- Contact your GP, NHS Direct or other service as advised by the NHS
- Follow the instructions from the NHS professionals
- Stay at home if you are diagnosed with flu
- Take medicines to reduce fever, aches and pains - as directed
- Drink plenty of fluids
- If required, contact your flu friend to collect your medication etc

ANIMAL DISEASES

Often, animal diseases do not directly affect humans. It can, however, seriously affect the farming community, product availability and prices. It is important that, if ever there is any outbreak of an animal disease, DEFRA guidelines are scrupulously followed to help stop the spread.

Response:

- The likely response to an outbreak of an animal disease would be to establish a series of cordons around the outbreak. Bio-security measures will be put in place at and within the cordons.
- Whilst an outbreak is suspected a Temporary Control Zone will be set up - the extent of this depends on the situation.
- On confirmation of an outbreak, a Protection Zone will be set up around the outbreak premises / location. Around this, a Surveillance Zone will be set up. Within both these zones, differing levels of bio-security measures will be established.
- DEFRA may announce restrictions on the movement of animals and further measures deemed necessary to limit the spread of the disease.

Information on any current animal health threats can be found on the DEFRA website at:

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalhealth>

Always wash your hands after contact with animals.

SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY - TERRORISM

Always report suspicious activities

While it is important that we all go about our daily business normally, it's also sensible to remain alert to danger and to report any suspicious activity you see or hear.

To report suspicious activity:

- In an emergency, call **999**
- Suspicious activity? Call the anti-terrorist hotline on
0800 789 321
- Crimestoppers - a national organisation independent of the Police. You can talk confidentiality on:
0800 555 111
- For non-emergency calls to Thames Valley Police, call:
0845 8 505 505

“Countering terrorism is MI5’s highest priority. Working closely with our law enforcement and intelligence partners, we strive to keep the UK safe and make it difficult for terrorists to operate here. But public vigilance, good sense and co-operation are just as important and essential components of the UK’s response as a whole”

Paraphrased from the former Director general of the Security Service MI5

SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY - TERRORISM

You may have vital information. If you hear, see or come across anything that may be linked with terrorist activity, please tell the Police. They want to hear from you.

Terrorists need...

- **A place to live:** Are you suspicious about any tenants or guests?
- **To Plan:** Have you seen anyone pay unusual amount of attention to security measures at any location?
- **Money:** individuals may set up bogus bank accounts, copy credit cards, return goods for large cash refunds.
- **Equipment:** If you are a retailer, do you have any cause to be suspicious about anything being bought?

Terrorist bomb attacks mostly happen in public places, especially where people gather or travel

- **Be vigilant**
- **Look out** for suspicious behaviour, vehicles or packages
- **Do not hesitate** to tell the Police

Stay Alert

BUSINESS RESILIENCE - BUSINESS CONTINUITY MANAGEMENT

Fire, flood, severe weather, fraud or loss of a key employee (among other things) can all challenge your business's **resilience**. Your clients, employees, suppliers and the community need you to stay in business.

Business Continuity Management will help you reduce the impact of a critical incident affecting your business and provide the framework to allow you to continue your critical activities in the event of an emergency.

Advantages of Business Continuity Management may also include:

- An increased understanding of your organisation and its critical elements
- Protecting reputation, brand and increase credibility
- Maintaining an ability to manage un - insurable risks
- Gaining a competitive advantage when tendering for new contracts
- Enhanced staff morale
- Development of a Business Continuity Plan to help you continue to operate critical parts of your business during an incident and hasten the full recovery of your business after an incident
- The ability to communicate with customers during an emergency
- Seizing the business advantage from competition in the event of an emergency

Free Business Continuity Management advice is available from Buckinghamshire County Council.

No matter how large or small your company, Business Continuity Management is essential.

HOME FIRE SAFETY ADVICE

Take steps to avoid a fire starting in your home:

- Install and maintain a smoke alarm
- Close inside doors at night to stop a fire spreading
- Turn off and unplug electrical appliances unless they are designed to be left on - like your freezer
- Check your cooker is turned off
- Don't leave your washing machine on
- Turn heaters off and put up fireguards
- Put candles and cigarettes out properly
- Make sure exits are kept clear
- Keep door and windows keys where everyone can find them
- **PREPARE A FIRE EVACUATION PLAN - TELL YOUR FAMILY ABOUT IT**

In the event of a fire in your property...

- Alert your household
- Get all members of the household together and get out. (If there is a lot of smoke, crawl along the floor where the air is clearer)
- Get out and stay out
- Call 999
- Alert neighbors - they may need to evacuate as well
- If you cannot get out, stay together in one room near a window. To help stop smoke getting into the room, push a blanket against the base of the closed door

COMMUNITY SAFETY ADVICE

Burglary messages

- Don't make your home an easy target for burglars
- Keep valuables out of sight
- Lock all doors and windows whilst out
- Postcode your property
- Keep car keys and valuables out of a burglar's reach
- “Lock, Stop, Chain, Check” - against distraction burglaries / bogus callers

Vehicle Crime messages:

- Is your vehicle secure? - check before you go!
- Always lock all car doors and windows
- Don't leave valuable items on display - don't tempt the thief!
- “Keep it Safe, Keep it Hidden, Keep it Locked!”
- “Thieves Like to Window Shop Too!”

Robbery/Theft from person:

- “Be Aware of Your Surroundings - Stay Alert!”

FURTHER INFORMATION

Radio lists - In the event of an emergency, safety information will be broadcast over the radio

BBC 3 Counties	94.7, 98.0 and 104.5 FM
BBC radio 94.6 FM	Berkshire
BBC radio 95.4 FM	South Bucks
Heart 102.6 FM	West Bucks
Mix 96.2 FM	Aylesbury Vale
Time 106.6 FM	Berkshire and South Bucks
Mix 107.4 FM	High Wycombe
Chiltern 97.6 FM	The Chilterns

Useful websites include:

- www.buckscc.gov.uk
- www.thamesvalleylrf.org.uk
- www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/resilience.aspx
- www.londonprepared.gov.uk
- www.bucksfire.gov.uk
- www.metoffice.gov.uk
- www.environment-agency.gov.uk/homeandleisure/floods/
- www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk
- www.dh.gov.uk
- www.buckspct.nhs.uk/

EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBERS

Emergency Services: 999

Gas emergency: 0800 111 999

Anti-terrorist hotline: 0800 789 321

NHS Direct: 0845 46 47

Buckinghamshire County Council Highways on-call:

08452 302882

Social Care Emergency Duty Team: 01494 675 802

Police (Non emergency): 0845 8505 505

Crimestoppers: 0800 555 111

Environment Agency Floodline Warnings Direct: 0845 988 1188

Buckinghamshire County Council: 0845 3708090

Aylesbury Vale District Council: 01296 585858

Chiltern District Council: 01494 729000

Wycombe District Council: 01494 461000

South Bucks District Council: 01895 837200