

Emergencies

What to do...



August 2021

There are things we can all do to help prepare for flooding, drought, high winds, heatwaves, snow and other emergency situations.

It is a sensible idea to put together an 'emergency grab bag' that is easily accessible to household members for use in all types of emergency. For further information see Chapter 4 and 5 of the Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum 'Are You Ready?' booklet.

If you, your family or your business are involved in an incident and believe you may be in danger always dial **999** to request the appropriate emergency assistance.

If you are not in danger but may be affected indirectly, you may be advised to **GO IN, STAY IN, TUNE IN**

Make a plan

Adverse
weather



Power
Outage



Flood



Fire



DENSE FOG

Travelling in thick fog can be extremely dangerous. Fog can drift rapidly and is often patchy. Warnings of dense fog are issued when visibility is expected to fall below 200 metres. Severe disruption to transport occurs when visibility falls below 50 metres. If your journey is essential, allow plenty of time.

Protection:

- Avoid travel if possible.
- Drive slowly using dipped headlights (full beam lights reflect off the fog causing a white wall effect).
- Use fog lights, but remember to turn them off when visibility improves.
- Don't hang on the tail-lights of the vehicle in front as rear lights can give a false sense of security.
- Watch out for freezing fog which is made of water droplets that freeze on contact with surfaces such as the pavement, road, car etc. It can quickly form a layer of ice.
- Listen to travel news on the car radio to avoid problem areas.
- Use the wipers and demister to keep the windscreen clear.
- Beware of other vehicles without lights.
- If visibility is poor, lower the window to listen for traffic sounds.
- If stopped in thick fog, use your hazard flashers to warn other drivers of a stationary vehicle. Turn flashers off if there are vehicles behind you who are aware of your presence.
- Be wary of the sleep inducing effect of dense fog - wind down the window, talk to passengers, take frequent breaks.

DROUGHT

A drought is a natural event, caused by insufficient rainfall placing stress on water resources and the environment.

Prepare:

- Use rain water wisely - collect in barrels and water butts for gardening

Act:

- Wash fruit and vegetables in a bowl rather than under a running tap. Use the leftover water for watering plants.
- Don't leave the tap running whilst brushing your teeth, shaving or washing your hands - this can waste up to 5 litres of water per minute.
- Replace worn tap washers to prevent drips that can waste up to 4 litres of water a day.
- Use a watering can rather than a hose in the garden. Garden sprinklers can use as much water in an hour as a family of four uses in a day.
- Regularly weed and hoe your garden to ensure that watering helps plants and not weeds.
- Lawns can survive long periods of dry weather if the grass is not cut too short.
- Water your garden in the cool of the early morning or evening - this will reduce the amount of water lost to evaporation.
- If you water plants and shrubs too frequently their roots will remain shallow, weakening the plant. Wait until they show signs of wilting before watering them.
- Use mulches such as wood chippings, bark and gravel to help prevent water evaporation and suppress weeds that compete for the water intended for your plants.
- Use the minimum amount of water required when you boil water.
- Wait until you have a full load before using dishwashers and washing machines as half load programmes use more than half the water of a full load.
- A 5-minute shower uses about a third of the water of a bath. However, power showers can use more water than a bath in less than 5 minutes.
- Place a brick or similar object in the toilet cistern.
- Use a bucket for washing the car - not a hosepipe.
- Additional information and advice on droughts can be found in the DEFRA drought webarchive and on the Met Office Website.

Further advice including "Staying safe at home", latest incidents, road safety advice and information on booking a free home safety test is available from [Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service](#) .

Act:

- 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.
- Stay out.
- Call **999**.
- Alert neighbours as they too may need to evacuate.
- If you cannot get out, stay together in one room near an open window. Push a blanket or something similar along the bottom of the door.

FLOODING

Although we will do all we can to assist, please note that it is the responsibility of owners and occupiers to protect their property in the event of flooding. We do not hold supplies such as water pumps or sandbags..

What to do in a flood emergency

- Use this handy [five step guide](#) to help you in the event of a flood emergency.
- Find out about flooding risk, receive river level information alerts and advice at the [GOV.UK flooding web-pages](#). The [Environment Agency](#) pages offer guidance on how to prepare for a flood and where to go to get help during and after flooding. You can find out if you are at risk, improve the protection of your property and get advice about insurance.

Reporting flooding

- If you need to report a blocked drain or waterway please use our Highways drainage report it form available on our [Mycouncil](#) website.

You can check your risk from flooding using the River Flooding Maps:

[Surface water maps](#)

[Reservoir maps](#)

- [Register to receive Flood Warnings](#) direct to your mobile phone or email from [GOVUK](#), or check the [Met Office website](#) for flood warnings.
- If you live in an area at risk of flooding you can create a [personal flood plan](#) to help prepare yourself in the eventuality that a flood should occur.
- Further advice and information on all aspects of Flooding is available from the [National Flood Forum](#).

HEATWAVE

A 'Heat-Health watch' system operates from 1 June to 15 September which, based on Met Office forecasts, will trigger levels of response from the Department of Health, the NHS, Social Services and other bodies. The heatwave threshold for the South East of England is 31oC day time and 16oC at night time. These temperatures could have a significant effect on health if reached on at least two consecutive days. For more detailed advice and information please see the [NHS Choices Heatwave Information web-pages](#) or the [Public Health England - Heatwave plan for England](#).

Protection:

- Pay attention to weather warnings issued by weather forecasts and Heatwave information is posted at Met Office Heat-Health.
- If you can, avoid going out in the hottest part of the day (11am-3pm).
- If you cannot avoid strenuous outdoor activity such as sport, DIY or gardening, do it during the cooler parts of the day like early morning.
- If you must go out, stay in the shade. Wear a hat and light, loose fitting clothes, preferably cotton.
- If you are outside for some time, take plenty of water with you.
- Keep windows closed whilst the room is cooler than it is outside. Open them when the temperature inside rises, and at night for ventilation. If you are worried about security, at least open windows on the first floor and above.
- Stay in the coolest rooms as much as possible and close the curtains in rooms that get a lot of sun.
- Take cool showers or baths, and splash yourself several times a day with cold water, particularly your face and the back of your neck.
- Drink water or fruit juices. Drink regularly, even if you do not feel thirsty.
- Eat as you normally would. Try to eat more cold food, particularly salads and fruit, which contain water.
- Contact your doctor, a pharmacist or NHS Direct if suffering from the effects of heatwave.
- **DO NOT be tempted to cool off in open water – this can be extremely dangerous and there have fatalities linked to this in Milton Keynes.**

Pets and Hot Weather:

- Follow seasonal advice from the [RSPCA](#) on keeping pets and animals safe.

HEAVY SNOW, ICY ROADS and EXTREME COLD

Stay safe over the winter with help and advice from the [Met Office Get Ready for Winter page](#).

More winter health information can be found on the [NHS Choices website](#) or by using the cold weather links on the [Age UK website](#). Find out about [Winter Cold Weather payments](#).

What is the truth about clearing snow from public paths? Find out on the [Met Office Snow Code page](#).

The council website has news on any [schools closures](#) in the borough. You can also subscribe to receive text alerts.

Prepare:

- Driving in extreme wintry conditions is fraught with inherent risk, so it should always be avoided, but if you have to venture out there are a few things you can do to stay as safe as possible. A wide range of safety advice is available from the AA, RAC, Green Flag, BBC and other internet sites, whilst the [Highway Code website](#) contains the rules for driving in adverse weather conditions, including wet weather, icy and snowy weather, windy weather, fog and hot weather.
- The [MKC Winter Maintenance page](#) has details on which roads are gritted and locations of salt bins in Milton Keynes.
- Advice on what to do in severe weather, including snow and ice, can be found on the [Met Office website](#).
- As extreme cold weather offers a range of hazards, a very wide range of advice and information is available from the following links:
 - [NHS choices](#)
 - [British Red Cross](#)
 - [Public Health England \(PHE\)](#)
 - [Age UK](#)
 - [Flu vaccine for children](#)
 - [Public Health England - Cold Weather Plan for England 15/16](#)

HIGH WINDS, STORMS and SEVERE GALES

For additional advice see the [Met Office severe weather warning pages](#)

Prepare:

- Secure loose objects such as ladders and garden furniture that could be blown into windows or cause other damage.
- Close and secure doors and windows of your home, garage and outbuildings.
- If possible, park vehicles in a garage. Otherwise park them clear of trees, walls or fences.
- If chimney stacks are in poor condition consider moving beds from areas directly beneath them.
- Keep a portable, battery powered radio handy.
- The lower levels of your home are safer than the upper levels because of damage that may be caused to the roof or chimneys.
- Consider your pets and animals and their welfare.
- Check whether schools are or will be closed because of the weather situation.
- Check that elderly friends, relatives and neighbours are aware of the weather problem.
- Be prepared for losing electricity during the storm - it could be some time before power is restored.
- Check and clear gutters and down spouts of leaves and debris to prevent overflow and flooding.

Act:

- Inspect your property soon after the storm for damage and effect repairs or consult your insurer.
- Check with friends, relatives and neighbours that they are safe and well.
- If you have lost electrical power, check if neighbours have also been cut off. If they have, **contact Central Networks on 0800 056 8090** as they may not be aware that you have lost supply.

THUNDERSTORMS and LIGHTNING

Stay safe over the winter with help and advice from the [Met Office Get Ready for Winter page](#). More winter health information can be found on the [NHS Choices website](#) or by using the cold weather links on the [Age UK website](#). Find out about [Winter Cold Weather payments](#).

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There are many myths surrounding lightning - such as lightning never strikes the same place twice or it always strikes the tallest object. Both are false, as lightning strikes the best conductor on the ground - whether it has been struck before or not.

Prepare

- Pay attention to Met Office severe weather warnings.
- Unplug all non-essential electrical appliances including the television, as lightning can cause damaging power surges.
- Seek shelter if possible. If you hear thunder you are already within range of where the next ground flash may occur - lightning can strike as far as 10 miles away from the centre of a storm.

Protect

- Avoid using the telephone as telephone lines can conduct electricity.
- Avoid using taps and sinks as metal pipes can conduct electricity.
- If outdoors, avoid water and find a low-lying open space that is a safe distance from trees, poles or metal objects.
- Avoid activities such as golf, rod fishing or boating on a lake.
- If playing golf, stop play immediately, do not use an umbrella or take shelter under trees.
- If you find yourself in an exposed location it may be advisable to squat close to the ground, with hands on knees and with head tucked between them. Try to touch as little of the ground with your body as possible, do not lie down on the ground.
- If you feel your hair stand on end, drop to the squat position **IMMEDIATELY**.

Recover

- Avoid downed power lines or broken cables.
- If someone is struck by lightning they often suffer severe burns. The strike also affects the heart so check that they have a pulse.
- Thunderstorms may result in widespread power loss. If you have lost electrical power, check if neighbours have also been cut off. If they have, contact **Central Networks on 0800 056 8090** as they may not be aware that you have lost supply.

Additional information and useful contacts

[Age UK cold weather advice](#)

[Anglian Water](#)

[Are You Ready? booklet](#)

[Environment Agency](#)

[Heat-health watch](#)

[Met Office](#)

[Met Office - Get ready for winter](#)

[NHS extreme weather advice](#)

[RSPCA - Look after your pets in hot weather](#)

[What to do in a flood emergency – 5 steps](#)

[Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service](#)

[Milton Keynes University Hospital](#)

[South Central Ambulance Service](#)

[Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum](#)

[Thames Valley Police](#)



Contact:

Emergency – T: 999

T: 01908 254555 (office hours)

T: 01908 311773 (out of office hours) ask for Duty Emergency Planning Response Officer (DEPRO)

E: emergencyplanning@milton-keynes.gov.uk

Civic, 1 Saxon Gate East, Milton Keynes MK9 3EJ