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County Council



Westmeath  
County Council

# HOUSEHOLDERS GUIDE TO EMERGENCIES



**Midland Region Major Emergency Planning Group**  
Re-Issued 2010

## Dear Householder,

*This simple guide aims to help you and your household cope with an emergency. If you follow the advice given in the guide it will assist you and the emergency services to deal quickly and efficiently with such an event. While every effort has been made in the preparation of this document to ensure that it meets these aims, it is not intended to be exhaustive in terms of its content or treatment. This guide is issued on the basis that it is the responsibility of each person to decide whether or not to act on the suggested safety measures contained herein.*

*The information contained in this guide is also applicable to all occupied premises e.g. offices, shops, factories, hospitals, hotels, etc. The owners, occupiers and/or managers of such premises should ensure that the guidance and advice contained here are implemented where appropriate and relevant. Please note that while the Major Emergency Plans referred to in this guide are not distributed to the general public they are issued to all organisations and individuals who are involved in its implementation.*

*This guide has been prepared by the Midland Region Major Emergency Planning Group which comprises representatives of the following organisations;*



An Garda Síochána



Laois  
County Council



Longford  
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*The Group reviews the Major Emergency Plans in the Region and the co-ordination of all organisations and activities associated with emergency management, on an ongoing basis.*

*The Midland Region Major Emergency Planning Group is not responsible for any errors or omissions in the guide. Any person adopting such measures do so at their own risk and no liability will be accepted by the Group for any action or failure to act by any person on foot of this guide.*

***For further information, if required, please contact:***

Laois County Council	Tel No: (057) 8664009	<a href="http://www.laois.ie">www.laois.ie</a>
Longford County Council	Tel No: (043) 3346231	<a href="http://www.longfordcoco.ie">www.longfordcoco.ie</a>
Offaly County Council	Tel No: (057) 9346800	<a href="http://www.offaly.ie">www.offaly.ie</a>
Westmeath County Council	Tel No: (044) 9332000	<a href="http://www.westmeathcoco.ie">www.westmeathcoco.ie</a>
Health Service Executive Mid Leinster	Tel No: (057) 9357685	<a href="http://www.hse.ie">www.hse.ie</a>
Gardaí, Portlaoise	Tel No: (057) 8674100	<a href="http://www.garda.ie">www.garda.ie</a>
Gardaí, Mullingar	Tel No: (044) 9384000	<a href="http://www.garda.ie">www.garda.ie</a>
Gardaí, Athlone	Tel No: (090) 6498557	<a href="http://www.garda.ie">www.garda.ie</a>
Gardaí, Longford	Tel No: (043) 3350570	<a href="http://www.garda.ie">www.garda.ie</a>
Gardaí, Granard	Tel No: (043) 6687660	<a href="http://www.garda.ie">www.garda.ie</a>
Gardaí, Tullamore	Tel No: (057) 9321305	<a href="http://www.garda.ie">www.garda.ie</a>
Gardaí, Birr	Tel No: (057) 9169710	<a href="http://www.garda.ie">www.garda.ie</a>
Gardaí, Abbeyleix	Tel No: (057) 8730580	<a href="http://www.garda.ie">www.garda.ie</a>

*Your own preparedness and self help are essential elements of an emergency plan strategy for dealing with any emergency. Accordingly it is very important that you make yourself and the members of your household aware of the advice contained in this guide. You should print it in and retain in an accessible and safe place.*

***Midland Region Major Emergency Planning Group***

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## Emergency Arrangements

The one thing you can be sure of in an emergency situation is that it will probably be the last thing you expected. Floods, severe weather, major public health threat, terrorist attack, nuclear emergency, transport accidents (air, sea, road, rail) or incidents involving dangerous chemicals usually strike without warning.

This guide explains simple steps everyone can take to be ready when an emergency strikes. It explains easy safety measures, how to reduce damage to property and what to do if you have to shelter in your home or move out of your home until danger has passed. You are advised to prepare a household emergency plan so that all members of your household have a co-ordinated approach in dealing with the various types of emergency outlined in this guide.

Remember your own preparedness and self help are essential and critical factors in dealing with any emergency. This simple guide aims to help people cope with the unexpected and assist the emergency services in dealing quickly and efficiently with emergencies.



**Keep this guide  
in a safe place -  
one day  
it could prove vital!**

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## Dealing with an Emergency

Whatever the situation, it is important to be ready to follow instructions from Garda Síochána, Fire Brigade and other emergency services personnel. Planning for an emergency is never easy because no one can predict what might happen – e.g. a major road, train, air or river accident; a serious fire; violent storms; flooding; major public health threat; terrorist attack; or a dangerous incident. Whatever happens, it will almost certainly mean police, fire and ambulance services in the front line of a tough situation, operating in accordance with procedures set out in The Major Emergency Plan.

The various Emergency Service agencies are constantly updating plans for the maintaining of essential services in the event of any large scale emergency. These agencies may need to be mobilised quickly to cope with the situation. It might mean evacuating a whole community and finding emergency accommodation, or it could mean clearing blocked roads to allow emergency services through.

Rest centres may need to be set up, food and blankets provided, and information given to anxious relatives. Someone has to be ready to re-unite families who are parted by an emergency situation. Arranging all this is the job of the Garda Síochána, the Health Service Executive, and the County Councils of Laois, Longford, Offaly and Westmeath. It also involves the co-operation and support of many other public, private and voluntary organisations.



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## Coping with Emergencies

### Transport of Dangerous Substances

Dangerous substances (chemicals) are regularly transported by road and rail in Ireland.

The transport of such substances is strictly controlled by law and regulations which require that tanker drivers receive special training and that all vehicles and containers have warning labels.

Examples of warning labels are show on this page. Further details on the symbols are available on the Health & Safety Authority Website: [www.hsa.ie](http://www.hsa.ie). The transport of dangerous substances is a routine, safe and essential operation which is part of day to day life. However, despite all precautions, accidents can happen.

#### **If you come across a road traffic accident or other incident involving a dangerous substance:**

- Alert the Emergency Services (Garda, Fire, Ambulance) phone 112 or 999.
- Do not approach the incident, keep well away and advise others to do likewise. Do not attempt the rescue of injured or trapped persons.
- Do not touch or walk in any spilled liquid or solid.
- Keep up wind from any fumes or smoke - remember fumes and gases may be invisible and odourless.
- Follow the advice of the emergency services.



**REPORT AN ACCIDENT - 112 or 999**



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## **If a severe storm is threatened**

- Tie down loose items outside that cannot be brought in.
- Stay indoors - preferably downstairs - and keep pets in.
- Clear windowsills and close curtains to protect against flying glass.
- If gas, electricity or water is cut off, tell the relevant service.
- As soon as it is safe, rope off or protect damaged areas to prevent injury from falling masonry, broken glass or electric cables.

## **If there is a risk of flooding**

- Keep an emergency pack of torch, radio with batteries, candles, matches, camping gas cooker ring and bottled water.
- Protect doorways and low level air vents with sandbags or rubbish bags filled with earth, or special flood barriers.
- Turn off gas and electricity.
- Move as much as you can, including food, above ground floor level.
- If you are trapped by flooding, remain near a window to attract attention.
- Call 112 or 999, and inform the emergency services.



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## Chemical Accidents, Toxic Fumes & Smoke

- Stay indoors, shut all doors and windows and tune to your local radio station.
- Switch off air-conditioning or fans.
- If you are outside, go to the nearest public building, meeting point or shop. Check broadcasts including radio/TV announcements, website updates, emails or text messages and be ready to move if the area is evacuated.

## Nuclear Threat

It is important to know that practical and effective protection measures can limit your exposure to airborne radioactivity. Terrorist attack or nuclear accident could produce such a threat. Further information is available from the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government and the Radiological Protection Institute of Ireland and their respective websites [www.environ.ie](http://www.environ.ie) and [www.rpii.ie](http://www.rpii.ie). In the event of a nuclear emergency, information and advice on any measures to be taken will be issued primarily through radio and television.

## Other emergencies e.g., Rail, Air Crashes etc.

If you are first on the scene - raise the alarm, dial 112 or 999 and inform the Emergency Services giving relevant and accurate information. Unless you are directly involved, keep well away from the scene. Do not drive to the scene for sightseeing.



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## **In the event of a pandemic**

Every household in the country will receive a leaflet before the pandemic reaches Ireland, advising the measures that should be taken.

If you or members of your family have flu symptoms during a pandemic, it is essential that you stay away from others as much as possible.

This means staying at home while the symptoms are present, unless you receive other advice from the H.S.E. A telephone hotline will be established and this helpline will provide you with advice and support. If and when a pandemic is imminent, the hotline number will be made available to you and will be advertised.

### **What you should do;**

- Buy enough food and other supplies in advance of the pandemic to last you and your household for at least one week.
- Make sure you have a thermometer and a supply of paracetamol or ibuprofen.
- Be aware of hygienic measures to prevent infection. Information is available in the National Pandemic Influenza Plan.
- Listen to news updates.
- Make plans to care for vulnerable family members or neighbours, especially those who are isolated or living alone.
- You will be advised to begin these preparations if and when the World Health Organisation confirms that a pandemic is imminent.

**Further information can be obtained from [www.hse.ie](http://www.hse.ie)**

## Providing Information to the Public

In emergency situations it may be necessary to issue information warnings and advice to the public. Such messages would normally be broadcast on radio and TV Channels. Local Authorities will provide all relevant information on their own websites. See start of guide for website addresses. Remember to cater for power cuts - you should have a **battery operated radio** and know how to tune into local stations.

### National and Local Radio Stations

Name of Radio Station	Frequency	Band
RTE Radio 1	88-90.0 Mhz	FM
	252 KHz	LW
RTE 2 FM	90-92.2 Mhz	FM
Today FM	100 Mhz	FM
Lyric FM	96-99 Mhz	FM
Radio na Gaeltachta	92-94.0 Mhz	FM
Midlands Radio 3	103.5 Mhz	FM
Shannonside	104.1 Mhz	FM

### Television National and International

The National TV stations are; RTE 1, RTE 2, TV3, TG4

In certain circumstance international Satellite TV stations such as BBC 24/News and Sky News may also carry valuable information on major emergencies.

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## Emergency Evacuation

If the Garda Síochána or any other assisting personnel ask you to leave your home, please co-operate. Their prime responsibility is your safety and they will know the level of danger.

They will probably ask you to go to a reception centre - if you decide to go anywhere else, for example to relatives, let someone know so you can be accounted for.

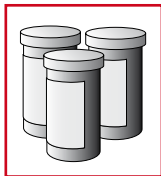
In the event that you are sick, frail or disabled - special arrangements will be made to reunite families.

If you have elderly or disabled neighbours, check that they are alright or inform the Emergency Services that they require assistance.

Before you leave - make sure fires are out, switch off gas and electricity, and lock up.

If there is time, take along:

- Medicines
- Warm Clothes
- Water and suitable food
- Mobile phone and a small radio



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## Power Cuts

### Loss of utility services - Electricity, Water, Gas, Telephone.

Severe weather can mean power cuts and possibly loss of other services over a wide area.

- Keep a small emergency pack and know where to find it even in the dark!
- The pack should contain a torch, radio (with batteries), candles, matches, and a camping gas cooker ring.
- Watch out for fire risks if you have to use candles.
- You may need to switch off supplies at the main - if you don't know how, check now with gas, electricity and water authorities.

Check fixed and mobile telephone networks to establish if either is still in service. If you need the police, fire or ambulance services, dial 112 or 999 and give the operator your details so that you can be traced if the service subsequently breaks down. If anyone is seriously hurt, you will obviously need the Ambulance Service. However, you may be able to deal with minor injuries yourself with some knowledge of First Aid.

**For more information on First Aid training contact the local branch of**



- Civil Defence

Irish Red Cross  Crois Dhearg na hÉireann

- The Red Cross Society

 **ORDER OF MALTA**

- The Order of Malta

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## **Damage to Property & Possessions**

Accidents, storms or flooding can leave a trail of destruction in their wake.

Tenants should know whom to contact for emergency repairs.

People with leasehold or privately rented homes should check agreements for property repairs with the landlord or agent.

If you need to arrange repairs at any time, use established firms with a good reputation.

If you can't find anyone suitable, ask a recognised trade association for advice.

Decide now which firms you would use in an emergency, and make a note of their telephone numbers together with details of your insurance and keep in a safe place.

**Remember:  
Always have property  
adequately insured**







## *Essential Services - Emergency Phone Numbers*

ESB:	1850 372999
Bord Gais:	1850 205050
Avian Influenza:	1890 252283
Water:	
Local Authority:	
Other Contacts:	

## *Emergency Services*

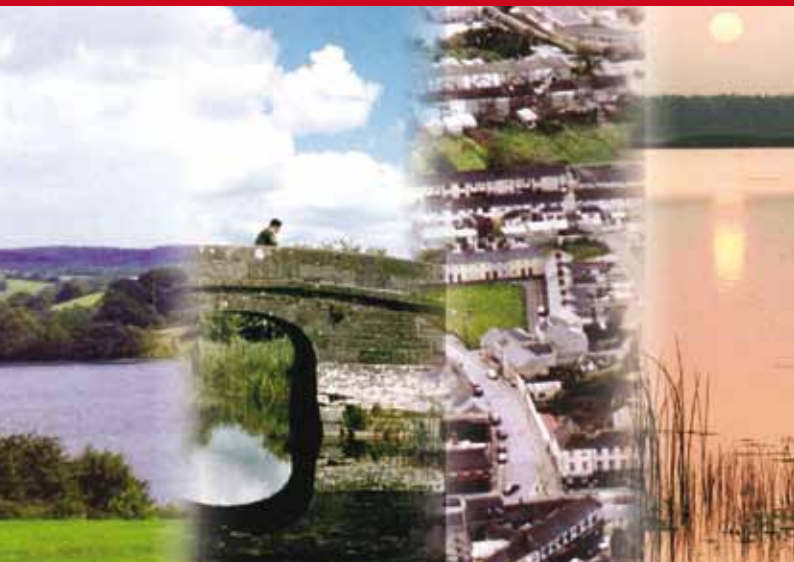
**Ambulance Service**  
**Coast Guard**  
**Garda Siochana**  
**Fire Service**

**Dial 112 or 999**





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