

# PREPARING FOR EMERGENCIES IN WARWICKSHIRE

**This document explains how you can prepare yourself to deal with the major emergency situations that are most likely to affect you.**

It sets out:

- Which major emergencies are most likely to happen
- how you can prepare yourself to deal with them
- where you can find out more
- what we are doing to reduce the likelihood the emergencies will happen, and how we will respond if they do.

This document covers major emergencies that affect lots of people at the same time, making it difficult for the emergency services to respond on their own. It doesn't cover smaller scale emergencies that affect only a few people. Nor does it cover malicious threats such as terrorism or war.

## WHO WE ARE

The Warwickshire Local Resilience Forum (LRF) is a partnership between the emergency services, local councils and health services, and the utility companies, such as water and gas. Together we plan how we will respond to emergencies that affect Warwickshire. We work out which types of emergency are most likely to happen and prioritise our planning to protect the communities we serve.

## OUR COMMUNITIES

Around 550,000 people live in Warwickshire, with this number expected to reach about 625,000 by 2037. The main urban centres are in Nuneaton, Warwick, Leamington, Stratford and Rugby, with significant rural communities, especially in Stratford and North Warwickshire.

There is a good network of road and rail links, including the M6, M40, M42, M45 and A5, and the West Coast Main Line. There are two airfields, at Coventry Airport and at Wellesbourne, and four canals. The rivers Avon, Arrow, Alne, Dene, Leam and Stour all flow through Warwickshire.

We have used information about our communities, transport links and geographical features to decide which emergencies are most likely to happen, and how they might affect Warwickshire.

## THE EMERGENCIES

The emergency situations in this document are those that we think are most likely to affect our communities. This does not mean that we think that they will happen, or that you will be affected if they do. However, after following national guidelines on how to assess risk, we think that these are the emergency situations you should know about.

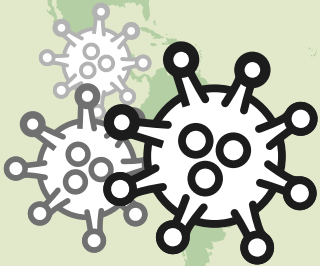
**PANDEMIC FLU**  
**FLOODING**  
**EXTREME COLD AND SNOW**  
**ANIMAL DISEASES**  
**HEATWAVE AND DROUGHT**  
**INDUSTRIAL ACCIDENTS**  
**WATER POLLUTION**  
**SERIOUS TRANSPORT DISRUPTION**  
**WIDESPREAD POWER CUTS**  
**SPACE WEATHER**

There is more information about these emergencies, and how you can prepare for them, later in this document.



# PANDEMIC FLU

Pandemic flu is the most serious emergency that you should know about. This is because of the large number of people who could become seriously ill or die, and because the emergency could last for several months.



Flu can become “pandemic” when a new flu virus appears and nobody has a natural immunity to it. This causes it to spread very quickly between people.

Seasonal flu normally affects people in the UK between October and May, but a pandemic can come at any time. It could start anywhere in the world but would arrive in Warwickshire very quickly.

Pandemics can occur in more than one wave, possibly months apart. Each wave is likely to last three to four months.

All age groups can be affected by pandemic flu, but different flu strains affect different age groups in different ways. We cannot know which age group will be worst affected until a pandemic happens. For most people, however, they will be back to normal after 7-10 days.



It can take up to six months to prepare a vaccine after a new flu virus is identified and isolated.



The 1918/19 ‘**Spanish Flu**’ mainly affected healthy young adults and there were **198,000** deaths in England and Wales.



The 1957/58 ‘**Asian Flu**’ pandemic mainly affected children and young adults with **37,500** deaths in England and Wales.

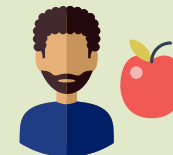
## PREPARING FOR PANDEMIC FLU

Be hygienic. Wash your hands properly with soap and hot water. Good hand hygiene reduces the spread of the flu virus. Keep away from large crowds, and wash your hands whenever you come into contact with someone who has flu symptoms.



# DEALING WITH PANDEMIC FLU

Be hygienic. Use disposable tissues to control coughs and sneezes and throw it away as soon as you’ve used it. Wash your hands properly. If you feel unwell or have flu symptoms stay at home. This will help stop the virus from spreading.



Ask someone to collect your medication, shopping and general supplies so that you can stay at home when you are ill.



Keep a small supply of flu remedies to help ease your symptoms.

## WHAT WE WILL DO

We will prepare plans for how we will deal with an outbreak of infectious diseases, including how we will cope with increased demand for health services.



We will issue advice and guidance aimed at reducing the spread of the virus, and helping communities recover.

## FINDING OUT MORE

Look out for advice from the health service, and make sure you follow it. In particular, follow any advice that will help reduce the spread of the virus.



Visit [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk) for more information on your local health services or call 111 - the free NHS helpline which directs you to the right local health service

# FLOODING



Flooding affects somewhere in the UK every year. In Warwickshire, significant flooding occurred in 1998, 2007 and, to a lesser extent, in 2016.

Thousands of homes and businesses in Warwickshire can be affected by flooding. The most serious flooding comes from rivers that over top their banks, but anywhere can be affected by surface water flooding.

Surface water causes floods when it rains so much that the water cannot drain away quickly enough. Surface water flooding is made worse when runoff from fields and roads adds to rainwater from other sources.

## PREPARING FOR FLOODING

Sign up to the free Floodline service to receive flood warnings by telephone, text or email.

You can register with Floodline online at [www.gov.uk/sign-up-for-flood-warnings](http://www.gov.uk/sign-up-for-flood-warnings) or by calling 0345 9881188



Plan where you would go if you had to leave your home or place of work quickly. How would you get there if the roads or railways are flooded?



Prepare a grab bag. What would you need if you had to leave in a hurry? What would your family or your pets need? See page 24.

## PROTECT YOUR PROPERTY

Protect your property. Water can enter a house through air bricks and drains as well as through doors and windows. Products such as door seals and valves for drains can help.

SEAL VENTS



SEAL DOORS



'NON-RETURN' VALVES



## DEALING WITH FLOODING WHEN IT HAPPENS

Put your plans into action. Prepare your flood defences and follow any advice given in flood warnings.

If your property is in imminent danger, move valuables and furniture upstairs and switch off the water, electricity and gas supplies. Take your grab bag and go to your chosen place of refuge.



Do not drive through floodwater. Just a few inches of water is enough to float your car and damage your engine. Most deaths caused by flooding happen when people are trapped in their car. A lot of properties are damaged unnecessarily when people drive through floodwater, creating large bow waves.



## WHAT WE WILL DO

We will help parish councils and other communities prepare their own plans for dealing with emergencies. We do this through regular meetings and events.

If large numbers of residents are affected we will set up evacuation centres in safe places near to affected communities.

We provide sand bags for parish councils to distribute. However, sand bags are time consuming to fill and difficult to use effectively. They are not a substitute for proper planning.



## FINDING OUT MORE

For more information on the steps you can take to prepare for flooding, visit [www.gov.uk/prepare-for-flooding](http://www.gov.uk/prepare-for-flooding)

## EXTREME COLD AND SNOW

Cold weather and snow can last for several days or even weeks, causing travel disruption, damage to power lines and water supplies, school closures, and risking the health of the elderly and vulnerable.

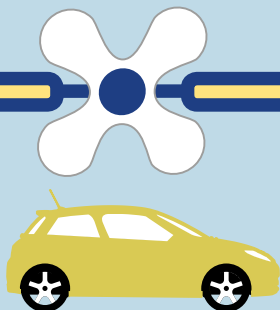
In March 2013 temperatures dropped below freezing for six consecutive days, and up to 75cm of snow fell in some areas.

## PREPARING FOR EXTREME COLD AND SNOW

Insulate pipes to stop them freezing. Know how to switch off your water supply if pipes should burst.



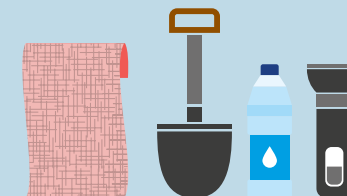
Keep a small stock of food, medicines and other supplies in case you can't get out for a few days. Check the use by dates each winter.



Make sure your car is winter ready. Check tyre treads and pressures, coolant and screen wash levels, battery condition and wiper blades.

## DEALING WITH COLD WEATHER AND SNOW

Avoid travelling if you can. If unavoidable, check your route before you leave. Stay on main routes if you can as these are more likely to have been gritted. Be aware of untreated stretches.



Keep emergency supplies in your car. Blankets, a torch, water, some food and a shovel are essential in case you get stuck.

## CHECK ON NEIGHBOURS AND RELATIVES.



## WHAT WE WILL DO

We will prepare plans to look after the most vulnerable communities, such as the homeless or residents of sheltered accommodation.



We will issue cold weather warnings, and relevant advice where appropriate.



We will make sure that health services are able to deal with increased demand.

## FINDING OUT MORE

Met Office: Get Ready For Winter:  
[metoffice.gov.uk/learning/get-ready-for-winter](https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/learning/get-ready-for-winter)

AgeUK:  
[ageuk.org.uk/health-wellbeing/keeping-your-body-healthy/winter-wrapped-up/preparing-for-winter](https://www.ageuk.org.uk/health-wellbeing/keeping-your-body-healthy/winter-wrapped-up/preparing-for-winter)

Highways England Weather Watch:  
[highways.gov.uk/traffic-information/traffic-information-services/weather-watch](https://www.highways.gov.uk/traffic-information/traffic-information-services/weather-watch)

Gritting:  
[warwickshire.gov.uk/gritting](https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/gritting)

## ANIMAL DISEASE

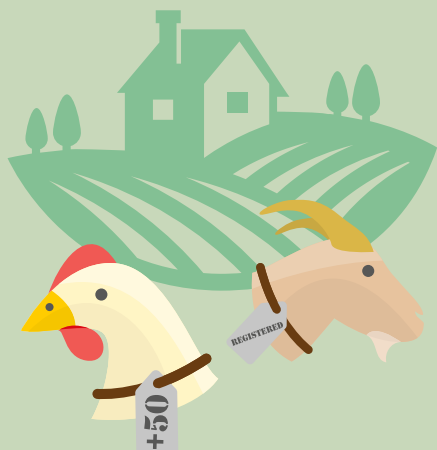
In 2015 there were outbreaks of Avian Influenza in the UK, Bluetongue, West Nile Fever and Rabies in France, Glanders in Germany, and Foot and Mouth Disease circulating in North Africa and the Middle East. Other animal diseases have been reported elsewhere in the world.



Animal diseases have a serious consequence for Warwickshire's farming industry and the food chain. Movement and travel restrictions brought in to reduce the spread of disease can damage rural industry and the wider economy.

## PREPARING FOR ANIMAL DISEASE

If you keep livestock, you must:



Register your land details with the rural payments agency. Register your livestock with the animal and plant health agency and the local authority. If you keep more than fifty birds, register with Defra.



Keep farm records accurate and up to date.



Unsure about stringent hygiene. Use Defra approved disinfectants.

## DEALING WITH ANIMAL DISEASE WHEN AN OUTBREAK OCCURS



Comply with any restrictions or instructions that are in place such as bio-security and disposal of animal by-products restrictions.



Immediately report any signs of exotic notifiable disease in your animals to APHA (telephone 03000 200 301).



Always follow the country code.

## WHAT WE WILL DO

We will prepare an emergency plan to reduce the spread of disease should an outbreak occur.



We will also work with farmers and livestock keepers to raise awareness of animal disease, promote good hygiene, advise on licensing conditions and enforce movement restrictions in affected areas.

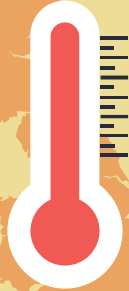
## FINDING OUT MORE

Visit the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs website – [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-environment-food-rural-affairs](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-environment-food-rural-affairs) - for information about animal disease prevention and the latest animal disease news updates.

Further advice can be found at Warwickshire County Council's website – [www.warwickshire.gov.uk/animal](http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/animal)

# HEATWAVE AND DROUGHT

A heatwave is when the daily maximum temperature exceeds 28 degrees C and the minimum temperature is higher than 15 degrees C for two weeks OR the daily maximum temperature exceeds 32 degrees C for five consecutive days.



There is a drought when there are periodic water interruptions for up to ten months.

The maximum daily temperature exceeded 32 degrees C for at least half of England during 1976. In August 2003 the highest ever temperature was recorded in the UK, at 38.5 degrees C.

## PREPARING FOR HEATWAVE AND DROUGHT

Install water saving devices in taps, shower heads and toilet cisterns.



Prepare cool rooms. Draw curtains or reflective blinds across windows to keep the inside of your home cool. If there is no security risk, open windows at night.



Heat can increase air pollution. Make sure that you have adequate supplies of inhalers or other medication that you may need.

## DEALING WITH HEATWAVE AND DROUGHT



Stay hydrated. Drink plenty of water and avoid alcohol if dehydration is a risk.



Keep inside during the hottest part of the day. 11am to 3pm is when the sun is highest.



Avoid sunburn. Wear loose clothing and use sun cream with a high sun protection factor on exposed skin.

## CHECK ON FRIENDS, NEIGHBOURS AND RELATIVES.

who may be less able to look after themselves.

## WHAT WE WILL DO

We will prepare local heatwave and drought plans to make sure that the transport network and other services are able to respond.



We will issue forecasts and relevant advice when appropriate.



We will create extra capacity in health services to deal with extra patients if necessary.

## FINDING OUT MORE

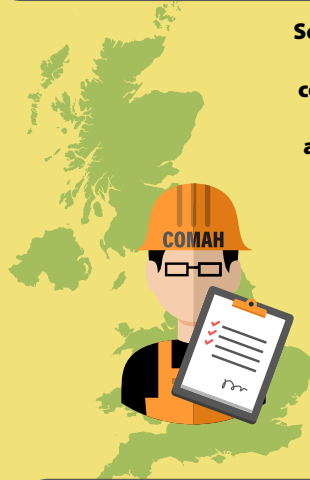
For the latest severe weather warnings from the Met Office, visit [www.metoffice.gov.uk/public/weather/warnings](http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/public/weather/warnings)  
For more information on the steps you can take to stay safe during severe weather conditions, visit [www.metoffice.gov.uk/guide/weather/severe-weather-advice](http://www.metoffice.gov.uk/guide/weather/severe-weather-advice)



# INDUSTRIAL ACCIDENTS

Several organisations in Warwickshire store or use potentially dangerous substances. These sites are regulated by the control of major accident hazard regulations (COMAH). These regulations are aimed at reducing the likelihood that an accident will happen. They also aim to reduce the severity of an emergency should an accident happen.

In December 2005 there was an explosion and fire at the Buncefield oil storage depot in Hertfordshire. The fire lasted five days and 2000 people were evacuated from their homes. More than 40 people were injured; fuel and fire water entered controlled waters and the incident had a massive impact on the local community. This was Britain's most costly industrial disaster.



## PREPARING IN CASE OF A INDUSTRIAL ACCIDENT

Pay attention to public information leaflets. The area surrounding COMAH regulated plants is known as the public information zone (PIZ). If you live within a PIZ you will receive flyers and other guidance telling you what to do should there be an accident.

Prepare a grab bag. What would you need if you had to leave in a hurry? What would your family or your pets need? See page 24.



## DEALING WITH THE AFTERMATH

**Go In, Stay In, Tune In.** If you are near an industrial plant when an accident happens you should go inside straight away. Once inside, stay where you are and tune into local radio stations for further information.



Follow guidance given. Listen to the news on local radio stations and follow any instructions that you are given. This guidance might be to leave or stay in your home, whether you can use your vehicle, and what arrangements are being put in place to look after you. If you have an internet connection, follow updates from your local council on their website or social media.



## WHAT WE WILL DO

We will work with COMAH site operators to develop plans on how they will help residents and businesses in the event of an accident.



We will issue information and guidance for the public.



We will practice our response to a major emergency so we know that our plans are the best that they can be. This will include on-site exercises so that we know the layout of the COMAH sites.



The fire service will carry out fire safety inspections and work with industrial sites to reduce the risk that an accident will happen and learn more about the site.

## FINDING OUT MORE

HSE COMAH information & locations:  
[hse.gov.uk/comah](https://www.hse.gov.uk/comah)

CSW Resilience:  
[cswprepared.org.uk/industrial-accident](https://www.cswprepared.org.uk/industrial-accident)

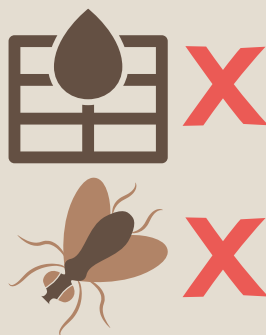
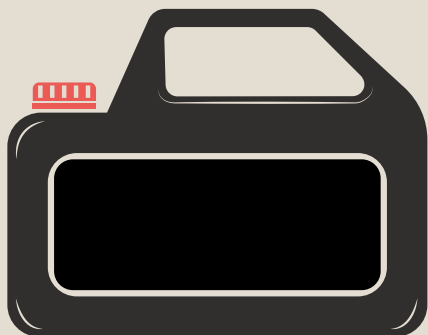
## WATER POLLUTION

As a landlocked county, Warwickshire is immune to the direct effects of coastal pollution, however the surface and groundwater is still at risk, especially around Leamington and Warwick, where the vast majority of the drinking water is provided by groundwater boreholes.

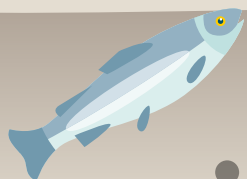
In December 2014 the river Yox in Suffolk turned dark brown. Slurry had been pumped from a storage lagoon into a ditch at Sibton. The slurry was grossly polluting and led to the farmers being prosecuted and fined.

## PREPARING FOR A WATER POLLUTION INCIDENT

Dispose of chemicals properly. Make sure any waste chemicals such as engine oil are correctly disposed of and not just poured down drains or buried. Fly tipping can also lead to groundwater pollution due to chemicals seeping into the ground.



## DEALING WITH WATER POLLUTION



If you suspect pollution, or see wildlife in distress (such as gasping fish) call the Environment Agency on their dedicated incident response line 24/7. The number is  
**0800 80 70 60**



In the event of pollution of water supplies, follow any instructions that may be issued. This may include boiling water before using it, using bottled water or a temporary water supply.

## WHAT WE WILL DO



The Environment Agency manages water pollution incidents. The Environment Agency also regulates industrial processes that may cause pollution, to try and prevent any accidental release of chemicals or other pollutants.



The water utility company is responsible for making sure that water supplies are safe. In an emergency they will make alternative arrangements for supplying safe water for affected areas.

## FINDING OUT MORE

Water Pollution Information:  
[water-pollution.org.uk](http://water-pollution.org.uk)

Environment Agency:  
[gov.uk/report-an-environmental-incident](http://gov.uk/report-an-environmental-incident)



## TRANSPORT DISRUPTION

Accidents, severe weather, flooding, strikes, and even volcanic eruptions can all disrupt the transport network.

The summer of 2015 saw transport disruption in the form of numerous rail strikes across the country. Fuel tanker protests in 2000 led to fuel shortages and panic buying, causing similar disruption.

In 2010, the eruption of Eyjafjallajökull and the subsequent ash cloud it created resulted in much of European airspace being closed entirely for several weeks of April, and then again in May. Hundreds of flights were cancelled, and many passengers left stranded.

## PREPARING FOR TRANSPORT DISRUPTION



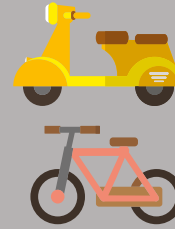
Ask a trusted friend or relative to collect or look after your child if you're stuck in traffic or can't travel due to disruption.

BUS  
STOP



Check that public transport links are still operating before you travel, particularly during periods of severe weather and only travel if you have to.

## DEALING WITH TRANSPORT DISRUPTION



Consider alternative methods of transport where appropriate.

Keep an in-car emergency kit. See the links below for some ideas as to what to include.

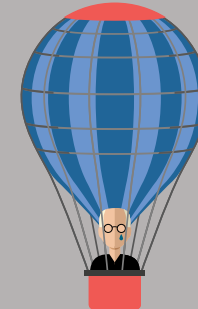


## WHAT WE WILL DO

We will create plans so that we can deal with all of these causes of transport disruption.



We will encourage individuals to be responsible for their own safe travel.



We will work with transport companies to look after people affected by transport incidents.



We will monitor weather forecasts and make sure we are well prepared to deal with any disruption when it happens.

## FINDING OUT MORE

Warwickshire buses:  
[warwickshire.gov.uk/buses](http://warwickshire.gov.uk/buses)

National Rail Enquiries:  
[nationalrail.co.uk](http://nationalrail.co.uk)

Highways England Weather Watch:  
[highways.gov.uk/traffic-information/traffic-information-services/weather-watch/](http://highways.gov.uk/traffic-information/traffic-information-services/weather-watch/)

CSW Resilience – Car Kits:  
[cswprepared.org.uk/winter-weather](http://cswprepared.org.uk/winter-weather)

## WIDESPREAD POWER CUTS

Western Power Distribution operates the power network in Warwickshire. With hundreds of miles of cable, small disruptions are inevitable. However, most power cuts are fixed within an hour or so.

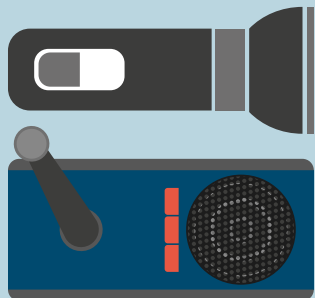
The UK's power network has never completely failed. However serious outages have occurred abroad, such as the 2003 Northeast blackout which affected 55 million people in 8 US states and 1 Canadian province. Most locations saw power out for over a day, and some rural areas were without power for as long as two weeks.



## PREPARING FOR POWER CUTS

If you or a member of your family would be particularly vulnerable during a power cut, such as having electrical medical equipment, learning difficulties, disabilities, or young children, register as a priority customer with Western Power.

Call **0845 724 0240** for more information.



A torch is a power cut essential, as is a wind-up radio to enable you to hear when the power cut is likely to end. You can now also get wind-up phone chargers.



It would also be good to have adequate supplies of non-perishable food.

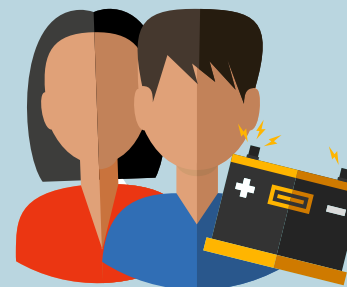
## DEALING WITH POWER CUTS

Keep warm. Wear multiple layers and keep internal doors closed to make the most of any warmth available.



## WHAT WE WILL DO

Western Power Distribution has well-developed plans to reconnect power supplies in the event of widespread power cuts.



We will work with Western Power Distribution to make sure that our most vulnerable residents have the support they need. We have also developed contingency plans so that we can continue to provide essential services.

## FINDING OUT MORE

Western Power—[westernpower.co.uk](http://westernpower.co.uk)

Register as a priority customer:  
[westernpower.co.uk/About-us/Priority-Services.aspx](http://westernpower.co.uk/About-us/Priority-Services.aspx)

For information on who to contact if you have a power cut, call 105, the free helpline which connects you to your electricity network operator.

For more information on the steps you should take in the event of a power cut, visit <http://www.powercut105.com/experience>

**POWER CUT?  
CALL 105**



## SPACE WEATHER

The sun is in constant flux and the impact of this solar activity is more apparent as people become more reliant on technology. Solar flares, coronal mass ejections (CMEs) and solar wind affect our technology and systems such as satellites, global positioning system (GPS), power grids and radio communications.

Solar flares can cause high-frequency radio and GPS systems to perform erratically, while extreme coronal mass ejections can cause widespread power cuts.

The 1859 'Carrington Event' was the most severe Solar Super Storm in recorded history. Telegraph lines across Europe and the US were seen to spark and equipment caught fire. Other severe solar storms were recorded in 1921, 1998 and 2003, when power networks failed. 6m people were affected for a total of nine hours.

## PREPARING FOR SPACE WEATHER

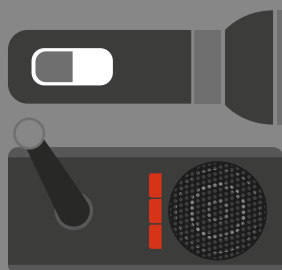


Make sure that you and your business are not completely reliant on technology. Think about how you would manage without working GPS, mobile telephone and computer systems.



If you or a member of your family would be particularly vulnerable during a power cut, such as having electrical medical equipment, learning difficulties, disabilities, or young children, register as a priority customer with Western Power.

Call **0845 724 0240** for more information



A torch is a power cut essential, as is a wind-up radio to enable you to hear when the power cut is likely to end. You can now also get wind-up phone chargers. It would also be good to have adequate supplies of non-perishable food.

## DEALING WITH SPACE WEATHER

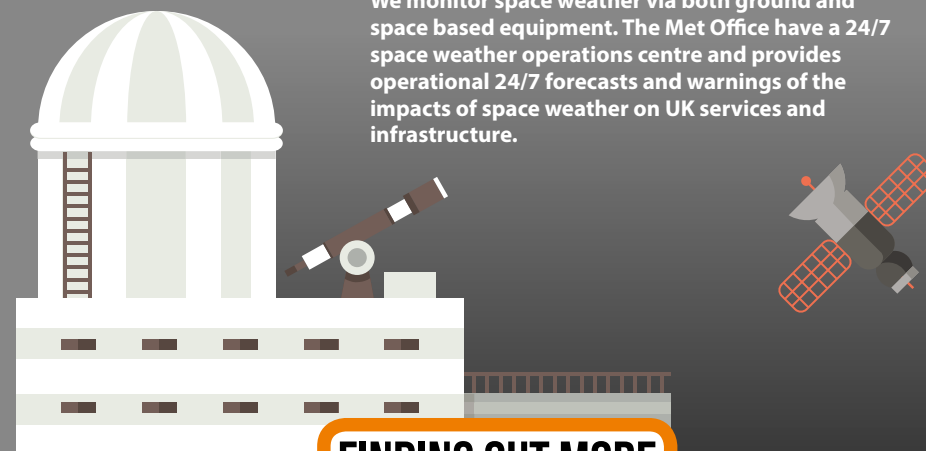
In the event of widespread power cuts due to space weather, make sure you keep warm. Wear multiple layers and keep internal doors closed to make the most of any warmth available.



## WHAT WE ARE DOING

We will develop plans in conjunction with our partners in the telecoms and electricity industry to understand how space weather might affect Warwickshire and how we can reduce the problems it may cause.

We monitor space weather via both ground and space based equipment. The Met Office have a 24/7 space weather operations centre and provides operational 24/7 forecasts and warnings of the impacts of space weather on UK services and infrastructure.



## FINDING OUT MORE

[metoffice.gov.uk/publicsector/emergencies/space-weather](https://metoffice.gov.uk/publicsector/emergencies/space-weather)

# PREPARING A GRAB BAG

In some circumstances you may have to leave home at short notice. Having a grab bag ready will mean that you can leave quickly.

Your grab bag should have everything you need to spend a few days away from home. It should be small enough to easily carry, and kept in a safe place where anyone in your family can get to it.



Items you put in the grab bag may change seasonally or be dependent on your needs as a household.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR YOUR GRAB BAG:

- toiletries and sanitary supplies;
- pet supplies;
- spare sets of keys;
- mobile phone and charger;
- anything else that might provide some comfort if you have to leave your home in a hurry.

## TO PREPARE FOR AN EMERGENCY, TAKE TIME TO FIND OUT:

- where and how to turn off water, gas and electricity supplies in your home;
- the emergency procedures for your children at school;
- the emergency procedures at your workplace;
- how your family will stay in contact in the event of an emergency;
- if any elderly or vulnerable neighbours might need your help.



**Check it regularly to make sure perishable items are still in date and all information is up to date.**

# GENERAL ADVICE

If you find yourself in the middle of a major emergency it is important to:

- **Call 999** if people are injured or if there is a threat to life;
- stay out of danger;
- follow any advice given by the emergency services;
- remain calm and think before acting. Reassure others;
- check for injuries - remember to help yourself before attempting to help others.

If you are not involved in the incident, but are close by or believe you may be in danger, go immediately to a place of safety. In most emergency situations this will be indoors.

**Go in.**

**Stay in.**

**Tune in** to local radio stations, which will broadcast information about the emergency.

**For general advice on preparing for emergencies and dealing with their aftermath visit**

**[www.cswprepared.org.uk](http://www.cswprepared.org.uk)**

## Acknowledgments

This document was produced by Rugby Borough Council on behalf of the Warwickshire Local Resilience Forum. It is based on the community risk register that was prepared collaboratively by LRF partners through the risk assessment sub group.

Particular thanks are due to partner representatives from: CSWResilience; RED; Warwickshire Police and West Mercia Police; Warwickshire Fire and Rescue; Public Health England; the Environment Agency; WCC Observatory; Rugby Borough Council and the WLRF Coordinator. Thank you for your help and support.

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