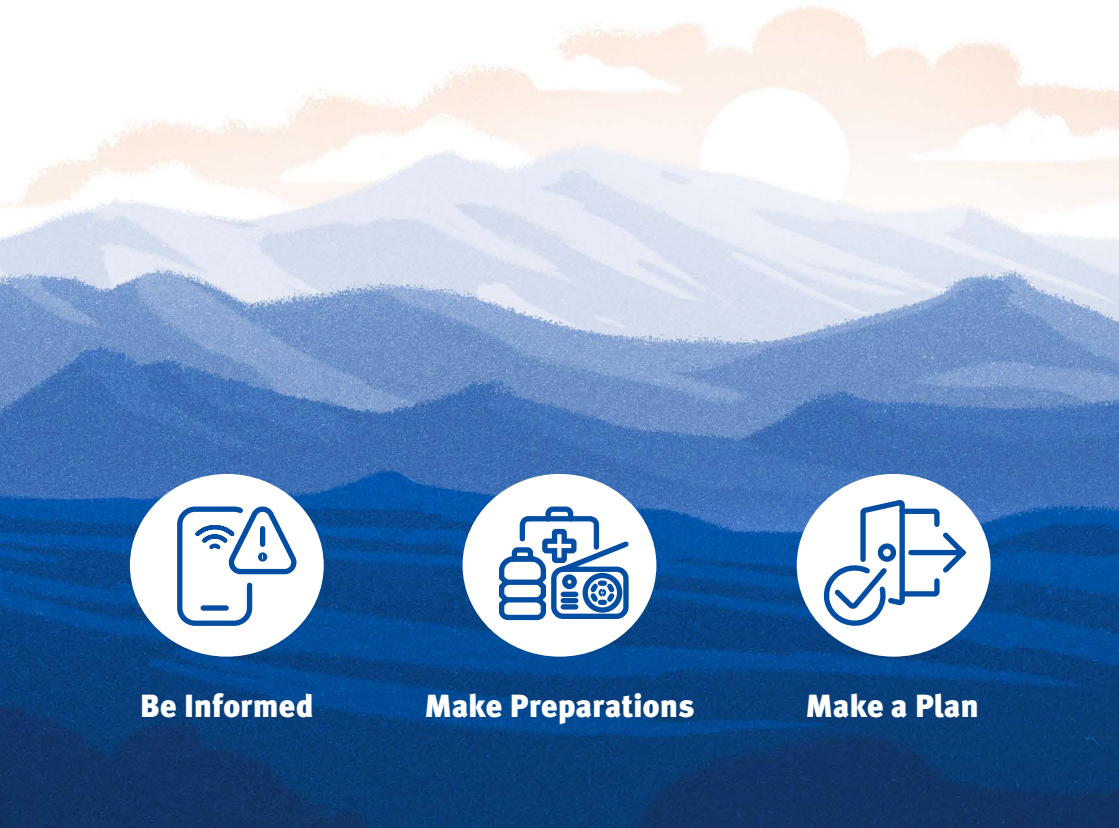
Be Prepared

The community's safety and welfare is our shared responsibility



Be Informed

Make Preparations

Make a Plan

The Community's Safety and Welfare Is our Shared Responsibility

The purpose of this booklet is to guide you on how to prepare for serious incidents or disruptions to essential services that can affect daily life.

Iceland is a safe country with an efficient civil protection system. Recent years have seen us facing both natural disasters and a global pandemic. At the same time, the security environment has changed, bringing new challenges. International tensions and armed conflicts in Europe and beyond can have an effect in Iceland.

Modern societies are becoming more fragile. We are increasingly reliant on electrical power, telecommunications, and imported necessities. Loss of electricity or telecommunications can disrupt essential services. Access to necessities may then become limited and pressure on emergency responders may increase.

With good preparation, you can meet your household's basic needs for a while and support the people around you. It is important to make a plan and have enough water, food, and necessities for at least three days. This booklet will come in handy when you are making these preparations. When more people are well prepared, emergency responders are better able to help those most in need of assistance. By being prepared, we increase both our own safety and the community's level of disaster resilience.



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The Community's Disaster Resilience

The community's safety and welfare is our shared responsibility



The civil protection system is designed to protect the community in times of danger. The authorities are mostly responsible for planning and coordination, but safety is only achieved when we all take part – individuals, families, companies, businesses, organisations, and institutions.

Disaster resilience is a system or community's ability to avoid, mitigate, or overcome a crisis through preventive actions and responses.

Preparation is everything

The community's disaster resilience lies in our ability to keep operations running as widely as possible when disasters strike; to respond quickly and correctly, to do our best to provide essential services, and to create the conditions for recovery. Strong disaster resilience is built on clear organisation, robust systems, and cooperation, but above all on being prepared and willing to play our part.



Planning reduces uncertainty

Not all crises can be prevented. That is why planning is essential. Plans clarify roles, shorten response times, and reduce uncertainty when it matters most. They enable emergency responders to protect critical operations, support vulnerable groups, and prioritise resources based on people's needs.

You can use this booklet to prepare a simple plan for your household. It is important to base the plan on your own needs.

Be Informed

It is important to have the right information

Timely and accurate information can make all the difference during an emergency. In times of danger, the public needs access to accurate information about what is happening, the risks involved, and the best measures to protect themselves and their loved ones.

By keeping up to date with information from the authorities and the instructions they issue, we can make informed decisions, respond more quickly, and reduce risk. Information in times of emergency is a vital part of both response and prevention.

Information disorder is part of our daily reality and can have a direct impact on our attitudes, behaviour, and decisions. That is why critical thinking is important.

During an emergency, information can often be misleading, unclear, or even incorrect. Information can spread fast, particularly on social media. There is a risk of widespread dissemination of unverified information.

An emergency can become even more serious if people follow incorrect information. Incorrect information can cause unnecessary fear and misunderstanding, or lead people to make the wrong decisions.



Keep the following in mind

If the internet and/or phone connections are down and the power has gone out, it is important to have a radio that works without mains electricity.

How do we get information without electricity or internet?

What is the origin of the information we receive?

Look at the date and the context. Old information may appear to be new.

Be wary of anything that elicits strong emotions or sounds unusual. Look more deeply into the matter.

Don't share information unless you know it to be true.



Make Preparations

Better preparedness, a stronger community

When serious incidents occur, emergency responders must pay particular attention to those in vulnerable situations who are most in need of assistance. The more people prepare themselves, the better emergency responders can handle the situation, thereby strengthening the community's overall disaster resilience.

We should make arrangements to ensure that we can meet our basic needs for at least three days. That way, we ensure that assistance reaches those who need it most in times of danger and ease the burden on emergency responders.

Whether we live alone or with a family, a simple plan for the household can help us respond correctly and increase our ability to cope with the consequences of serious events. It is important to consider your own circumstances and how they might be affected by a widespread and prolonged loss of electricity and telecommunications or significant disruptions to other essential services.

Preparedness is not about expecting the worst but about being ready.

Prepare for loss of electricity. Expect to have limited information. Preparation is crucial for the household if there is a power outage.



Electricity

Prolonged loss of electricity caused by, for example, natural disasters, severe weather, sabotage, accidents, or systems failures can have far-reaching effects on daily life and essential services, particularly if measures have not been taken to ensure backup power.

We must be prepared to be without electricity. It is important to be prepared for limited information, reduced means of communication, more difficult conditions for cooking, and the possibility that hot water may be in short supply or even entirely unavailable. Preparedness means being able to keep your household running and reducing uncertainty when it matters most.

To reduce the impact of a power outage, it is important to consider lighting, cooking, charging devices, and heating your home. Take the initiative in talking to the people around you, and prepare for prolonged loss of electricity.

Charge phones, computers, and power banks in times of danger, and keep a radio and spare batteries in a safe place.

- **Have a flashlight and enough batteries at home, or other lighting that works without mains electricity.**
- **See whether you can make arrangements to cook without mains electricity.**
- **Keep a power bank on hand for charging electronic devices.**

Domestic heating



If domestic heating fails, the indoor temperature can drop fast, particularly during the coldest months. Most homes rely on hot water for heating, so any disruption to the district heating system can have a significant impact within the home.

The response focuses on reducing heat loss, retaining as much heat as possible, and looking after the health of household members. It is important to know how to keep one part of your home warm and what to do if it is cold indoors for an extended period of time.

Preparedness is also about showing solidarity with those who are unable to ensure their own safety, and offering them assistance.

- **Keep warm clothing, blankets, and necessary equipment on hand.**
- **Reduce heat loss and close off spaces if necessary.**
- **Determine where to seek shelter if domestic heating fails for a prolonged period.**

Food and drinking water



It is important for every household to keep supplies of food and drinking water, and to be able to cook without electricity. You should make sure your household has enough supplies for at least three days.

It is advisable to choose preservable and energy-rich food that requires little or no cooking, such as tinned goods and dried food. Such food should be stored in a cool, dry, and dark place, and the supplies should be renewed regularly.

Share supplies with neighbours, family, and friends if you have any to spare.



Be mindful of the needs of all groups, such as infants and people who require a special diet.

It is important to know what to do if you have to cook without mains electricity. If refrigerators and freezers are not working, use food from the fridge first and then from the freezer while it is still cold. Be hygienic and don't consume food that may be spoiled.

Water for drinking and cooking

You should plan on having enough water for both drinking and cooking to last the whole household at least three days. Store the water in closed containers in a cool, dry place. It is recommended to renew the water supplies regularly.

Money and payment systems

Although payment systems in Iceland are generally safe and efficient, cyberattacks, human error, systems failures, or power outages may cause temporary disruptions. Such disruptions may affect card payments, contactless payments, and internet banking.

Financial preparedness means being able to buy necessities and meet your payments even when digital services are down. It is important to have cash at home. The amount depends on the number of people in the household and which goods need to be purchased for the household or its members.

You should assume that you may not be able to pay electronically for some time.

- **Ensure that you have more than one means of payment.**
- **Keep cash on hand for purchases.**
- **Keep payment cards and PINs on hand in case contactless payments do not work during a power outage.**

Communications and transport

Disruption to telecommunications and transport systems can significantly affect communication, the dissemination of information, and the ability to seek or call for assistance. Disruptions can occur due to natural disasters, accidents, cyberattacks, or power outages.

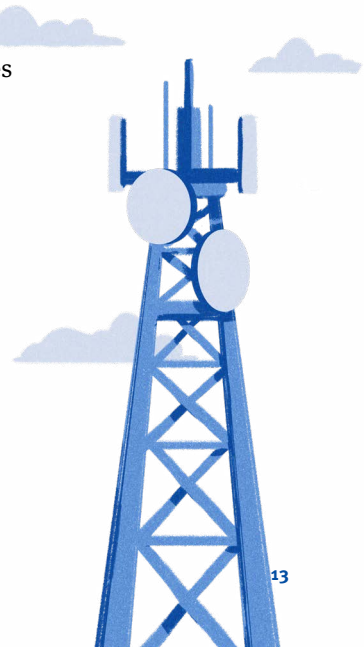
Disruption to communication systems and transport

Preparedness means ensuring access to information, being able to contact your loved ones and knowing how to get where you need to go when circumstances change. It is a good idea to keep printed information on hand, such as important phone numbers and directions. It is also important to have access to a battery-powered radio. RÚV's emergency channel is Rás 2, where messages from the authorities to the public will be broadcast in times of emergency.

Decide on a meeting place

If communications are disrupted, it can be helpful to agree in advance on a meeting place and on who will take responsibility for children or others who need assistance. It is also important to consider which modes of transport and routes are reliable, particularly if you live in a remote area or need assistance from others.

- **Ensure that you have access to information without electricity or internet, including by radio and printed materials.**
- **Decide on a meeting place and divide responsibilities within your family and immediate circle.**
- **Review transport options and other alternatives if the usual routes are closed.**





Make a Plan

Planning is the foundation of good preparation. It allows us to see what obstacles we need to overcome, make joint decisions on important steps, and respond appropriately in the event of an emergency. Your personal circumstances, health, and residence will then determine what kind of preparation suits you best.

By making a plan, we are better equipped to deal with emergencies, reduce uncertainty and hold out longer in difficult circumstances. Preparations can take many forms. We can all do something. The most important thing is to begin preparing. You don't have to do everything at once. If preparing seems daunting, you can take it one step at a time.

Plan for the household

The plan for your household should cover supplies and equipment to last for at least three days, including the special needs of household members and pets, such as medicine, assistive devices, baby food, animal feed, and other items requiring preparation.

It is a good idea to keep a printed copy of the plan in a location known to everyone in the household. For clarification, the plan for the household could answer a few key questions:

- **What could happen?**
- **How can we reduce the risk of accidents and damages?**
- **How can we prepare ourselves and respond in the event of a disaster?**

Equipment and emergency supplies do not need to be kept in one place. Most importantly, ensure that everything is accessible and that everyone in the household knows where it is. You must inform members of the household, especially children, about the plan, discuss it regularly, and review its key points.

It is recommended to draw up a list of irreplaceable items – either valuable items or items of sentimental value – so that you know what to take with you if the home needs to be evacuated.



Checklist of Necessities

Here is a list of the necessities a household needs to get by for at least three days, for example during a power or water outage or when it is not possible to get to the shops. How much of each necessity is needed depends on the number of household members and their particular needs. It is important that these necessities are easy to find, accessible, and checked regularly.

Supplies and necessities

- [ ] Water
- [ ] Tinned food
- [ ] Dried food
- [ ] Tin opener
- [ ] Blankets
- [ ] Cash, payment cards, and passports
- [ ] Medicine

Toiletries

- [ ] Toothbrush
- [ ] Toothpaste
- [ ] Soap
- [ ] Menstrual products
- [ ] Nappies
- [ ] Wet wipes
- [ ] Toilet paper

Safety, lights and power

- [ ] First aid kit
- [ ] Multi-tool
- [ ] Duct tape
- [ ] Camping stove or gas barbecue
- [ ] Gas canister
- [ ] Candles
- [ ] A lighter or matches
- [ ] Flashlight
- [ ] Batteries
- [ ] Battery-powered radio
- [ ] Power bank
- [ ] Charger
- [ ] Printed list of important phone numbers

Further information can be found on the Red Cross website, 3dagar.is



Follow Instructions

The appropriate safe place depends on the circumstances at the moment

In certain circumstances, for example due to severe weather, pollution, or other hazardous events, it may be safest to stay indoors. In such cases, it is important to be prepared to stay at home for some time and to rely on the household's supplies.

Ensure that you have enough food, water, medicine, and other necessities to last for a few days. Monitor official announcements in the media, and do not go outside unless it has been explicitly stated that it is safe to do so.

Before you leave your home



Close all windows and lock all doors.



Make sure that the house is heated and turn off electrical appliances if there is time.



It is a good idea to leave the lights on in the entrance and by the front door.



Place an evacuation notice on a door or in a window once the home has been evacuated.

Evacuations

Evacuations are carried out to protect the public when circumstances require. By following instructions from the authorities, we ensure our own safety and that of others.

Preparations are important if the home has to be evacuated. It is good to have printed versions of the list of necessities and plan for the household. In the chaos of an emergency situation, important things may be overlooked. It is a good idea to keep the essential items you need to take with you in an evacuation in a designated place, ready to go.

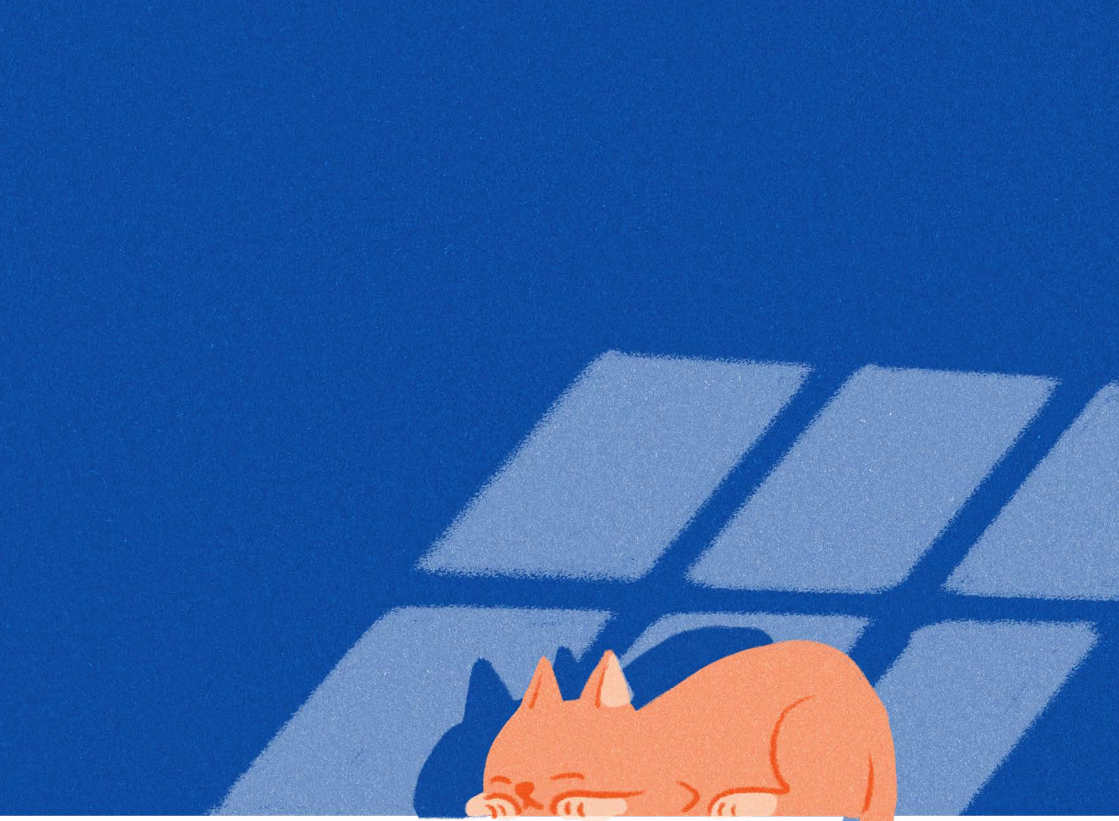
One of the greatest stress factors in an emergency is being separated from your loved ones. The family should therefore agree on a meeting place before anything happens. In the event of an evacuation, it is important to know where to go and how you can contact your loved ones.

Animals

If staying indoors is the safest option, it is important to have enough feed, water, and essential supplies for the animals to last several days. You should also consider medication, hygiene, and other needs of the animals.

If your home needs to be evacuated, it is important to have a plan for your animals and to include them in your plan for the household.

If you are staying at a mass care centre or other public location, it is important to have the appropriate accessories, for example a cage, collar, lead, or anything else that ensures the safety of the animals and others.



Mass care centres

Mass care centres can be opened and operated at short notice to offer safety and shelter to those affected by natural disasters or other serious events. There, people are provided with essential basic necessities, such as food, shelter, and clothing, as needed, as well as additional services such as first aid, psychological support, counselling, and information.

Mass care centres are usually located in schools or other suitable premises, depending on the circumstances.

Information on the location of mass care centres can be found on the Red Cross website.

Vulnerable Groups

Think of your fellow human beings

Emergencies affect people in different ways, and some groups are more vulnerable than others. For example, children, older people, people with disabilities, people of foreign origin who have recently moved to the country, and people with underlying health conditions are particularly vulnerable during disasters. It is important that individuals who receive daily assistance continue to receive the support they need during a state of emergency.

It is important to discuss with family, friends, neighbours, carers, or caseworkers what assistance may be needed in the event of an emergency, whether you need to stay indoors or leave your home for a safer place.

Children

Be present

Spend time with your family doing something enjoyable to take your minds off things and help ease fear and anxiety.

Children may feel frightened and insecure if they experience serious events in their immediate surroundings. The reactions and attitudes of those closest to them can help them cope with difficult circumstances or make matters worse if care is not taken. Children of different ages express their feelings in different ways. It is important to be there for them and watch for signs of stress or anxiety.

Explain to the children

Explain what has happened to the children in a way that is appropriate to their age and maturity. It is important to be frank and truthful. This increases their understanding and prevents needless fear and distress. Try to maintain as much normality as possible in the children's daily lives. Try to keep mealtimes, bedtimes, school attendance, and leisure activities as regular as possible.



Well-being

Consider your own well-being



It is normal to experience fear, anxiety, insecurity, negative thoughts, and even feelings of hopelessness in difficult circumstances. Some of us are more vulnerable than others. We can do many things to improve our well-being.

Focus on the things you can influence and choose activities that help you stay focused and calm. Try to maintain daily routines as much as possible, such as regular mealtimes.

Look after one another

Stay in contact with friends, family, and neighbours. Spending time together strengthens us and reminds us that we're not alone.

Stress and uncertainty can have a significant impact on well-being, whether events are caused by nature or by human actions. Love and solidarity can make all the difference in difficult times.

If you or your loved ones feel unwell or need help, contact the Helpline, 1717. You can also contact health-care services, tel. 1700 or the Pieta organisation, tel. 1799.

Service Centres Following a Disaster

Collective strength when the community comes together

Part of the civil protection system involves setting up service centres in the aftermath of disasters, where support is provided for people in need of temporary assistance. The service centres are intended for residents of disaster-affected areas, providing a central point where they can access information, advice, and various other forms of assistance.

At the service centres, access to services is simplified, assistance is coordinated, and people are supported in getting their lives back on track. The aim of the service centres is to help people and communities recover after a crisis.

Solidarity and cooperation are vital when serious events occur. For communities to regain their footing, individuals, institutions, and local organisations need to work together. Restoration, reconstruction, and renovation must also include efforts to help people feel safe again.

With strong disaster resilience, collective strength, solidarity, and targeted support, society will recover more quickly following a major crisis.

112

112 – The Emergency Line

Call or use the online chat at 112.is in cases of emergency. Say where you are and what happened, and follow instructions.

1717

Icelandic Red Cross Helpline

Free support is available around the clock by phone or at raudikrossinn.is

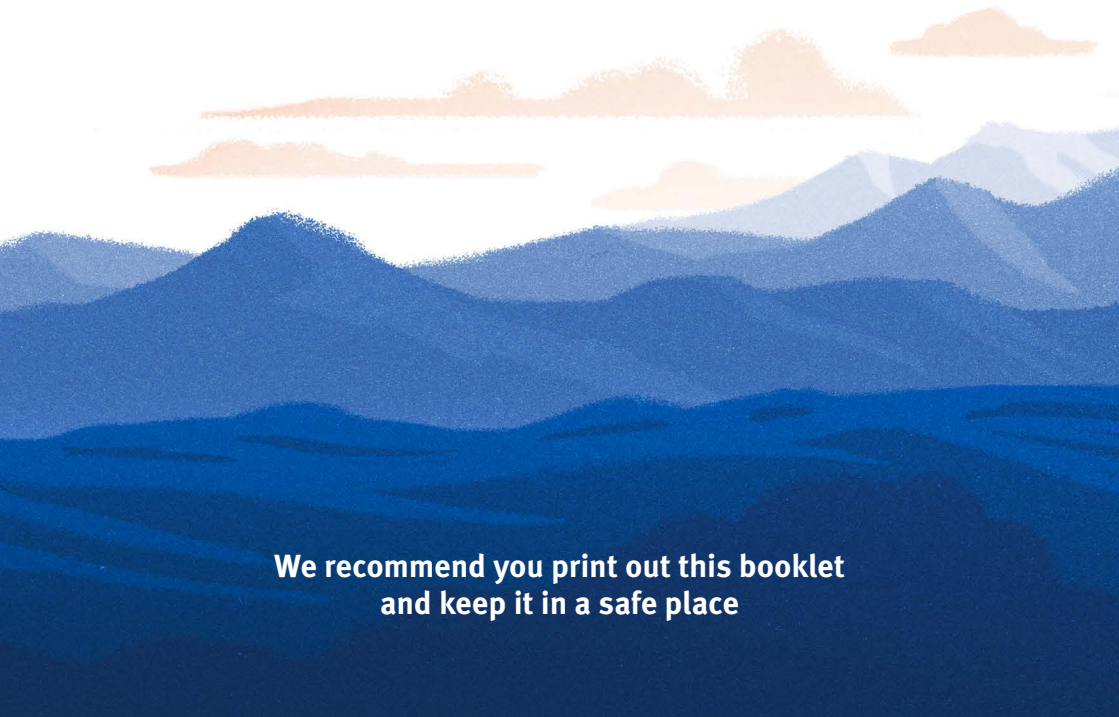
1700

Primary Healthcare Urgent Care Service

Advice and guidance for urgent medical concerns by phone or through the Heilsuvera online chat service.

Scan the QR code for a digital version with information in Icelandic, Polish or Icelandic Sign Language.

Further information can be found at verumvidbuin.is



We recommend you print out this booklet and keep it in a safe place