



## Fort Augustus and Glenmoriston Community Council

### Advice to the community on self-help Resilience planning

The advice given in this document is taken from the Resilience information published by HM Government for Electrical, Broadband, Phone and Water outages but also contains some local information. The original information can be [found here](#).

As a community we need to be conscious of the need to prepare for electrical and water outages that may affect us from time to time especially during storms. These have proven to occur throughout the year although the critical period is during the winter months when the temperature is colder and adds further risks.

To ensure that we can remain safer during these outages we have provided some information below as to how to prepare for an outage, what to do during an outage and any post-outage tasks. This is a self-help guide and we hope it achieves its aim, please feel free to use the hyperlinks that reference other useful information on the internet.

A separate Household Emergency Plan is available to download which can be used to support and tailor your own Resilience Planning.

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Emergencies happen every day in the UK and across the world. They can be caused by severe weather or other natural hazards, by deliberate actions, or as a result of accidents or infrastructure failure. They can be events that happen quickly and are over in a few hours, or they can develop and continue over the course of several days, months, or sometimes even longer.

Below are a few **simple and effective steps** that you should consider taking to prepare for emergencies and the disruption they cause.

Many of these activities can be helpful across a range of different types of emergencies. You might not be able to undertake all of these. There are lots of suggestions here that won't cost anything and just take a few minutes to do.

Remember to always call **999** if you or someone else is in immediate danger



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#### Be Informed

- Find out more about [risks in your local area \(Scotland\)](#) including checking your flood risk for areas [Scotland](#).
- Look at some of the specific pages on this site such as [flooding](#) and [power cuts](#) – find out what you can do before an emergency and what you should do if one happens.
- Sign up for [alerts and warnings](#).
- Learn some basic first aid skills. Check online to find free workshops or ask if your employer will pay for a course.
- Check if your workplace, or place that you volunteer, has a plan for what you should do if you cannot contact them during an emergency, for example in a power cut.

#### Find out if you are eligible to sign up to a Priority Services Register (PSR)

Visit [thepr.co.uk](https://thepr.co.uk) to find out if you are eligible to sign up to your gas, energy or water providers' Priority Service Registers – by signing up to the register, you can let your supplier know that you need additional support, including when there is an interruption to your supply.

You need to contact your supplier to be put on their register or to update your details. Use the [search tools provided by Ofgem](#) to find your gas and electricity provider or find your supplier's contact details on a recent energy bill – log in to your online account if you don't get paper bills.



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#### Make a plan

- Work out the best escape route from your home if there is a [fire](#) or what you should do if your home [floods](#) – if you live with others, discuss this with them.
- Decide on a meeting point for situations where you might not be able to return home – this could be a community hub if you have one nearby.
- Write down important phone numbers on paper and store them somewhere easy to find in a power cut. Include the phone number to report a power cut (105 in Scotland) phone numbers of anyone you would want to contact in an emergency, a list of your regular medication, frequencies of any local and national radio stations that you use for news updates, and insurance policy details and contact numbers.
- Use our downloadable and printable [household emergency plan](#) to record this information in one document. You could keep this with other important documents such as passports, birth certificates and insurance policies so it's easier to gather them quickly if you are asked to evacuate your house.
- Add emergency contacts or medical information to your mobile phone (often called 'ICE' or 'Medical ID' on smartphones) so that emergency services can access this information without having to unlock your phone with a passcode – consider the sensitivity of the information you are including (anyone could see it who has access to your mobile phone) and let the person you've selected as your emergency contact know.
- Talk to children about what to do in an emergency, including how and when to call the emergency services – the [Staywise](#) website includes information and resources on emergencies aimed at children. You can also help them to learn their home address and if possible, a parent/guardian's mobile phone number – practise these regularly.
- Check your child's school (or other childcare provider) has the correct contact numbers for you in case they need to contact you during an emergency. Your child's school should have plans and procedures in place to deal with different types of emergencies, for example for severe weather, loss of utilities and fire.



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#### Prepare your home

- Complete an [online home fire safety check](#) to help keep you and your home safe from fire.
- Set a reminder in your phone or make a note on your calendar to check your smoke alarms at least once a month – [find out more about fire prevention and fire safety](#) from Fire England.
- Know how to [turn off your gas, electricity and water](#) – you'll need to turn these off if you have to leave your home due to flooding or for other reasons such as if there's a leak.
- Check the right insurance is in place for your home (or business), for example, flood insurance.
- If you live in a flood risk area, [find out more actions you can take to prepare your property](#).
- Have a look at the [hot weather](#), [cold weather](#) and [storms](#) pages for more advice on how you can prepare your property.

#### Talk to others

- Talk about the advice on this website and pass on information about the support available – help your friends, family, neighbours and colleagues to undertake the simple actions on this website, if they can.
- Swap contact details with neighbours and consider creating an instant messaging group or other closed online social network for your street or building – these can be an important source of information and support during an emergency.
- Ask your neighbours if they might have additional support needs during an emergency – they may have additional medical needs, be new to the area, be digitally excluded, or not speak or read English well. Talk to them about the help available and how you can support them.
- Make a plan to check in on neighbours if an emergency happens, particularly if the power goes out.



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#### Get emergency supplies

- Consider what supplies you and your household might need during an emergency lasting a few days, such as a power cut or water outage, or situations where you are advised to stay at home or to leave your home (evacuate) for safety reasons.
- It can be helpful to keep these items in one place in your home and ideally somewhere easy to find if the lights aren't working – if you are escaping your house due to a fire you should not take anything with you at all. You could consider keeping items you might need to take with you if asked to leave your home quickly in a spare bag – you might hear some people call this a 'grab bag'.
- You should ensure you have enough of the medication you need to keep you going for several days.
- Pack a few essential items in your car boot to make sure you're ready in case of getting stuck in wintry weather – this can include a torch, in-car phone charger, warm clothes and blankets, high-visibility clothing, jump leads, food and drink, and a shovel for snow. It can also be helpful to keep a first aid kit in your car.



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#### Put together an emergency kit of items at home

This could include:

- **Battery or wind-up torch** – torches are safer than candles.
- **Portable power bank** for charging your mobile phone.
- **Battery or wind-up radio** to get updates during a power cut – a car radio can be used, however in severe weather it might be safer to stay inside.
- **Spare batteries** for torches and radio and a backup battery for any medical equipment you rely on.
- **A first aid kit (or some first aid items)** including items such as waterproof plasters, bandages, a thermometer, antiseptic, eyewash solution, sterile dressings and gloves, medical tape for dressings, and tweezers.
- **Hand sanitiser and wet wipes** for hygiene purposes when the water is off.
- **Bottled water** – there is no standard figure for this as emergencies can vary in duration and people use different amounts. A minimum of 2.5-3 litres of drinking water per person per day is recommended by the World Health Organisation for survival. 10 litres per person per day will make you more comfortable by also providing for basic cooking and hygiene needs. Additional water might be needed to make up baby formula, for medical devices and for pets.
- **Non-perishable food** that doesn't need cooking, such as ready-to-eat tinned meat, fruit or vegetables (and a tin opener). As with water, how much you need will vary based on your own circumstances. Don't forget food for pets.
- **Baby supplies** such as nappies and baby formula – ready made or 'ready-to-feed' formula is best as you may not be able to boil water or sterilise bottles.

Rather than buying all the items at once, you could just add to your emergency kit when you are able and build it up over time.



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#### POWER CUTS

Power cuts (or electricity outages) can have a number of causes including severe weather, which can lead to damaged infrastructure, or system faults.

The UK has a resilient electricity system. Most power cuts are short-lived and occur locally, but more widespread and longer outages can happen. These could potentially last several days with regional or, although unlikely, national impacts.

Gas boilers and hobs, heat pumps and your home internet won't work without power. Your mobile phone might stop working if your local mast is in the affected area. Mains water supply to your home could also be disrupted. Find out what to do in a [phone and broadband outage](#), or a [water outage](#).

#### Actions to take to prepare for a power cut

- Keep a battery or wind-up torch (and spare batteries) at home. You probably won't want to use the torch on your mobile phone as this will drain its batteries more quickly. It is not advised to use candles or any other naked flames to provide light, as these could pose a fire hazard.
- Consider keeping some bottled water and non-perishable food that doesn't need cooking such as ready-to-eat tinned meat, fruit or vegetables and a tin opener. You should also include ready-made baby formula and pet food if needed.
- Find out your power/load block letter. In the unlikely event of a national energy shortage, emergency power cuts could be scheduled on a rotating area-by-area basis. Each area in GB is assigned a 'load block letter' and would be scheduled to disconnect from the electricity grid for around three hours at a time. You can find which load block letter you are in by entering your postcode at [powercut105.com](http://powercut105.com), or some energy suppliers include it on electricity bills.
- If you're eligible, sign up to your energy supplier's [Priority Service Register](#) to let them know that you need additional support during a power cut.



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You would lose internet connection and possibly mobile signal during a power cut. To prepare for this:

- Write down the phone number to report a power cut – this is 105 in Scotland. You can also save the number in your mobile phone.
- Keep a battery or wind-up radio (and spare batteries) at home. There might be updates communicated by radio during a power cut. A car radio can be used, however in severe weather it might be safer to stay inside. Write down on paper the frequencies of any local or national radio stations you use for news updates. You could add these to your [household emergency plan](#).
- It can be helpful to keep these notes with other items you might have, such as a torch or radio, and in a place that's easy to find in the dark.
- If your only way of making emergency calls is through a landline phone, or if you have a telecare kit connected to your landline, contact your landline provider to understand whether your phone will work during a power cut. If your landline will not work during a power cut, your landline provider might offer you a free solution (such as a back-up battery unit), for a minimum of one hour, that would enable you to call the emergency services during a power cut if you needed to.
- If you have a personal alarm or diabetes sensor (also known as telecare devices) or other connected equipment monitoring your health (such as diabetes sensors), speak to your device provider/manufacturer to understand how they will function during a power cut.
- Download or print out offline versions of maps in case you do not have access to live map-based mobile applications. To provide location services, your mobile smart phone uses a GPS signal. This means your mobile may still be able to provide your location when not connected to the network. However, map-based mobile applications rely on internet connectivity to download the maps.



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#### Actions to take during a power cut

- Visit your local [network operator's website](#) to report a power cut and track updates when there's a problem. If you're unable to report the power cut online, call 105 for free in England, Wales and Scotland and 03457 643643 in Northern Ireland.
- Keep away from hazards such as power lines. Electricity at high voltages can jump gaps with no warning.
- Turn off items such as irons, ovens, electric fires and fryers. Unplug your TV and PC as they can be damaged if there is a surge when power goes back on.
- Keep warm by using blankets and layered clothing. Keep doors of unused rooms closed and close curtains to keep the heat in. Older adults, babies and young children, and people with long-term health problems are most likely to become ill if they get too cold.
- Check in on vulnerable neighbours and, if you are able, offer to share blankets, clothing or other supplies such as food. You can also pass on any important information you might have received about the power cut, such as when the power is expected to go back on. If you have a corded landline phone, this might still be working in a power cut.
- In a power cut your TV or internet might not be working. To get news updates use a battery or wind-up radio to search for stations that are still broadcasting. Try FM and digital modes. You can use the radio in your car, however in severe weather it might be safer to stay inside.
- If you have a power cut and you don't have back-up power to your landline phone (or have a corded landline) and have a life-threatening emergency, you should attempt to call 999 or 112 using a mobile. You might receive overlapping signal from a nearby area that is unaffected – emergency calls automatically 'roam' onto all available networks.
- Keep fridges and freezer doors closed, as this will ensure they stay cold for several hours. The Food Standards Agency provides advice on [food safety in a power cut](#).
- To prepare baby formula safely, you will need to be able to boil water and follow the normal safety procedures. If you are not able to boil water, please try to use ready-to-use baby formula. The [NHS provides advice on making up baby formula](#).



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#### Available support for those with additional needs

If you use medical equipment that requires a power supply, make a plan with your care provider and/or clinical care teams now about what will happen in a power cut. The plan should set out what action you, or someone you care for, needs to take and who to contact if there's a power outage. Ensure that your care provider, clinical care team and/or equipment supplier has supplied you with enough information so that you understand how the equipment works and what to do if there is a power disruption.

The energy networks can help if you have additional needs because of your medical or personal circumstances. The [Priority Services Register](#) (available to customers in [Scotland](#)), is a free service to help people who have additional needs. You can sign up by contacting your local network operator and energy supplier. Each keeps their own register. Wherever possible, you will receive advanced notice of scheduled power cuts. If you rely on your energy supply for medical reasons, your network operator can tell you about planned power cuts, for example, when they plan engineering work. You can also get priority support in an emergency.



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#### PHONE AND BROADBAND OUTAGES

Communication providers are required by law to make sure their networks and services are resilient. However, you could still lose access to communication services due to a power cut or a problem affecting your service provider. Depending on the event, the services of all or some providers could be impacted so people might be affected in different ways. In the most serious circumstances, your mobile phone, landline and broadband connection could all be down, meaning you would not be able to use the phone or access the internet. This means you may not be able to contact emergency services on 999 during this time.

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#### Who is most at risk?

Phone and broadband outages can affect anyone, but some people may face a higher risk of being impacted by an outage. Some of the groups who may be most at risk are:

- People who live alone and may be unable to care for themselves.
- People who rely on personal alarms (also known as telecare devices) or other connected health monitoring equipment, such as diabetes sensors.
- People who are reliant on their landline to make phone calls, including to 999.

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#### Actions to take before a phone and broadband outage

- If your only way of making emergency calls is through a landline phone, or if you have a telecare kit connected to your landline, contact your landline provider to understand whether your phone will work during a phone outage caused by a power cut. If your landline will not work, your landline provider might offer you a free solution (such as a back-up battery unit), for a minimum of one hour, that would enable you to call the emergency services during a power cut if you needed to.
- Think about how your neighbours and local community can help you in an emergency when there is a phone outage – for example, think about who could help drive you somewhere to get help if you need it urgently.
- Speak to your device provider/maker to understand how your personal alarm or diabetes sensor will function in the event that mobile or broadband connection was lost.



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- Download or print out offline versions of maps in case you do not have access to live map-based mobile applications. To provide location services, your mobile smart phone uses GPS signal. This means your mobile may still be able to provide your location when not connected to the network. However, map-based mobile applications rely on internet connectivity to download the maps.
- Keep a battery or wind-up radio (and spare batteries) at home. There might be updates communicated by radio during a power cut. A car radio will work, however in severe weather it might be safer to stay inside. Write down on paper the frequencies of any local or national radio stations you use for news updates. You could add these to your [household emergency plan](#).

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#### Actions to take during a phone and broadband outage

- Where you can, check in on vulnerable neighbours and make sure they are aware of the situation and see if you can offer any assistance.
- If you need to call the emergency services, you should try to use your mobile phone to call 999 or 112 if you have one. Even if there is a power cut or an issue with your mobile network, you might be able to receive overlapping signal from a nearby area or network that is unaffected – emergency calls automatically ‘roam’ onto all available networks. The 999 call handling system and the emergency authorities have the capability to continue operating throughout power cuts.



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#### WATER OUTAGES

We need water for many reasons: drinking, washing hands, food preparation (including preparing baby formula), bathing and showering, looking after pets, washing dishes and clothes, and flushing the toilet. Interruptions to water supply (or 'outages') occur for many reasons, ranging from scheduled maintenance to burst water mains. These events are usually over quickly with minimal impact, however longer water supply outages occasionally happen and can be disruptive and distressing. Your water company is the best source of information if this happens.

Who is most at risk?

We all could become unwell from lack of drinking water and dehydration, however some people may be more impacted by an interruption to their water supply. Some of the groups who may be most at risk are:

People who use more water due to a medical condition.

Babies and young children.

Older adults.

People with long term health conditions.

Actions to take to prepare for water outages

If you're eligible, sign up to your water supplier's Priority Service Register to let them know that you need additional support, including when there is an interruption to your supply. Ask anyone you provide care for if they are registered.

If you or a member of your household rely on a medical device that needs water to function, talk to your care team to make a plan for what to do if there is a water outage.

If you have an outside area, consider having a water/rain butt to collect water. Do not drink this water as it could contain bacteria or disease. This water can be used for flushing toilets or watering plants.



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Consider keeping some bottled water at home to meet your essential needs during an emergency. There is no standard figure for this as emergencies can vary in duration and people use different amounts. A minimum of 2.5 to 3 litres of drinking water per person per day is recommended by the World Health Organisation for survival. 10 litres per person per day will make you more comfortable by also providing for basic cooking and hygiene needs. Additional water might be needed to make up baby formula, for medical devices and for pets.

#### Actions to take during a water outage

Check your water provider's website regarding service in your area, and to see if you can pick up alternative sources of water. If you are on the Priority Services Register, your water company will arrange alternative supplies for you.

Whilst there is no water, use alternative water supplies such as bottled water solely for drinking, washing your hands, cooking and preparing baby formula. There are other fluids which are safe to drink including soft and fizzy drinks that can be stored a cupboard. However do not drink milk or fresh fruit juice that smells as though it has gone off.

To prepare baby formula safely, you will need to be able to boil water and follow the normal safety procedures. If you are not able to boil water, please try to use ready-to-use baby formula. The NHS provides advice on making up baby formula. To wash your hands, fill a large bowl like a washing up bowl with water and add some soap or a household disinfectant. Keeping water usage to a minimum will prolong alternative sources of water such as water tanks.

Check to see if others, particularly vulnerable members of your community, are also without water. If they are, you could offer to provide assistance such as collecting bottled water. You could also suggest they register as a priority user with your water company.

#### Actions to take after a water outage

After a water outage it is common to experience discoloured water. Try running the cold tap nearest to your stopcock (which is usually under your kitchen sink) for a while to see if it clears the discolouration. Contact your water provider if you continue to have problems with your water supply.