

# Important Telephone Numbers



Bundesamt  
für Bevölkerungsschutz  
und Katastrophenhilfe

## Important Telephone Numbers

Police	110
Fire Department	112
Medical Emergency Service	
Rescue Service	
Poisoning (emergencies)	
Pharmacy after-hours service	
Municipal Services	

### Emergency Report:

- ▶ Where did it happen?
- ▶ What happened?
- ▶ How many injured?
- ▶ What kind of injuries?
- ▶ Wait for questions!

### Fire Report:

- ▶ Where is the fire?
- ▶ What is on fire?
- ▶ What is the extent of the fire?
- ▶ What kind of danger (persons in danger, stored gas cylinders, etc.)?
- ▶ Wait for questions!

If possible, meet rescue personnel in the street to provide information, for example, if house numbers are hard to see or if rescuers need to be guided through a courtyard to a back part of the building.

## How to be Prepared for an Emergency

### Prevention and Self-Help in Emergency Situations





# Civil Protection

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## How to be Prepared for an Emergency

**Prevention and Self-Help in Emergency Situations**

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## Introduction



News of accidents and disasters is part of everyday life. Anybody can be affected by major fires, floods, accidents involving chemical substances, power failures or other unexpected hazards. A comprehensive disaster relief system has been established to deal with all kinds of hazards as they emerge. On a day-to-day basis, this is done by our fire departments and rescue services, while major disasters and the risks associated with high technology are dealt with by the disaster control assets maintained by the Laender (state-level) authorities in Germany. This integrated relief system is augmented and supplemented by Federal Government assets in case of wide-area hazards and crises. Federal assets include: additional vehicles; conscripts who have been exempted from military service in return for their services; rescue helicopters of the Civil Protection organization; and the Technisches Hilfswerk (Technical Relief Service). Federal, state and local authorities thus cooperate as partners to protect the population and to assist people in emergencies. It will take some time – valuable time – for helpers to arrive at the scene, though, and it may be just during these minutes that somebody loses his or her life or property. These are the minutes that count, during which each one of us may have to rely on his or her own abilities.

**Everyone should ask themselves: Am I prepared?  
Can I help myself, and others, in an emergency?**

## What is the Purpose of this Brochure?

Once an emergency has occurred, it is too late to take precautionary measures. You cannot learn how to respond to a fire or accident once there is a fire or somebody has been injured. You will be able to respond properly only if you are prepared for such an event. This brochure is intended to encourage you to make suggestions. For example, you can get prepared by attending a first aid course or by memorizing the information provided in this brochure. Some of it will sound familiar. It may take only little effort and time to lay a solid foundation for yourself and your family to deal with potential emergencies.

**Keeping this information in mind and taking regular first aid refresher courses will help to pave the way towards preparing for an emergency!**



## Prevention and Self-Help

All important consumer goods, especially food, are transported to the retailers through a well-functioning distribution system. This system ensures that the goods are always fresh, and it spares large and small stores the high cost of maintaining extra storage facilities. But that is what makes the system vulnerable, too. It may take no more than snow and icy roads to cut a small town off from food supplies. Flooding may even cut off whole regions, as was shown by the Elbe river flood disaster.

## Food and Drinking Water

Every household should keep a 1- or 2-week emergency stock of food and beverages. You should choose food that will not spoil for a prolonged period of time even if no cooling is available, and which – in case of a power failure – can be consumed without being heated. In a disaster situation, but especially in a state of defence, the supply of water may be temporarily disrupted or drinking water may even be contaminated. While human beings may go without food for as long as three weeks under certain conditions, they can take no more than four days without liquid intake. It is therefore imperative that every emergency stock include a sufficient quantity of liquids. Mineral water, fruit juices or other liquids which are storable for an extended period of time are suited to meet this requirement. Our checklist contains tables which show a human being's daily requirement of food and beverages. Please keep in mind that your emergency supplies may have to allow for special dietary needs of family members, for example diabetics or babies. Pet food may have to be included, too, to feed the animals in your household.

### Stockpiling Tips

- ▶ Only stockpile food and beverages which correspond to the normal eating habits of your family, and especially items which are storable for an indefinite or prolonged period of time.
- ▶ Store food items as cool and dry as possible, and protect them against light. Use airtight packaging.
- ▶ The labels on food items for storage of up to 18 months must indicate an expiry date. Food items which are storable for a long time may be sold unlabelled. In that case, write down the purchase date on the packaging material.
- ▶ Recently added food should be kept “behind” older food to ensure that the latter is used before its expiry date.
- ▶ Bearing the possibility of a power failure in mind, store food which can be consumed without heating, if need be.
- ▶ Make sure you have an alternative cooking source which you can use if power or gas supplies are disrupted. A number of alternatives such as camping gas cookers, etc. are commercially available.

**Check your preparations! You will find a checklist at the end of this brochure.**



## Hygiene

We have grown accustomed to regular daily hygiene. Taking a shower, brushing our teeth, washing our hands, etc. not only serve our well-being but also our health. This daily routine is facilitated by the comfort of having bathrooms and readily available cold and warm water. But what happens if this usual comfort is no longer available because of a power failure or a disrupted or reduced hot-water or cold-water supply?

## Water Supply



In case of a disaster, you have to expect such a situation. In an emergency, however, hygiene is particularly important in order to maintain physical resistance against diseases. This means that body care should be maintained even under aggravated conditions. Each household should therefore have sufficient stocks of soap, washing powder and toothpaste; and fresh water should be retained – also, if need be, for flushing the toilet.



### Hygiene-Related Tips

- ▶ In case of a disaster or another prolonged emergency situation, all available large containers, including bathtubs and washbasins, should be filled with water. Use water sparingly, and in case of an extended water shortage use one-way kitchenware and cutlery so that your water stocks need not be consumed for dishwashing.
- ▶ Stockpiled water can be kept storable for an extended period of time by adding water purification tablets, which are available at camping equipment stores.
- ▶ In case of a water shortage, a camping toilet will be useful, to include toilet paper and substitute liquid.
- ▶ Household gloves are suited for many purposes; using them means less water consumption, because you do not have to wash your hands that often. Household paper also helps to save on water and can be disposed of easily.
- ▶ Rubbish bags serve to quickly dispose of waste but can also be used to hold waste for an extended period of time, for example if refuse collection services are not provided.

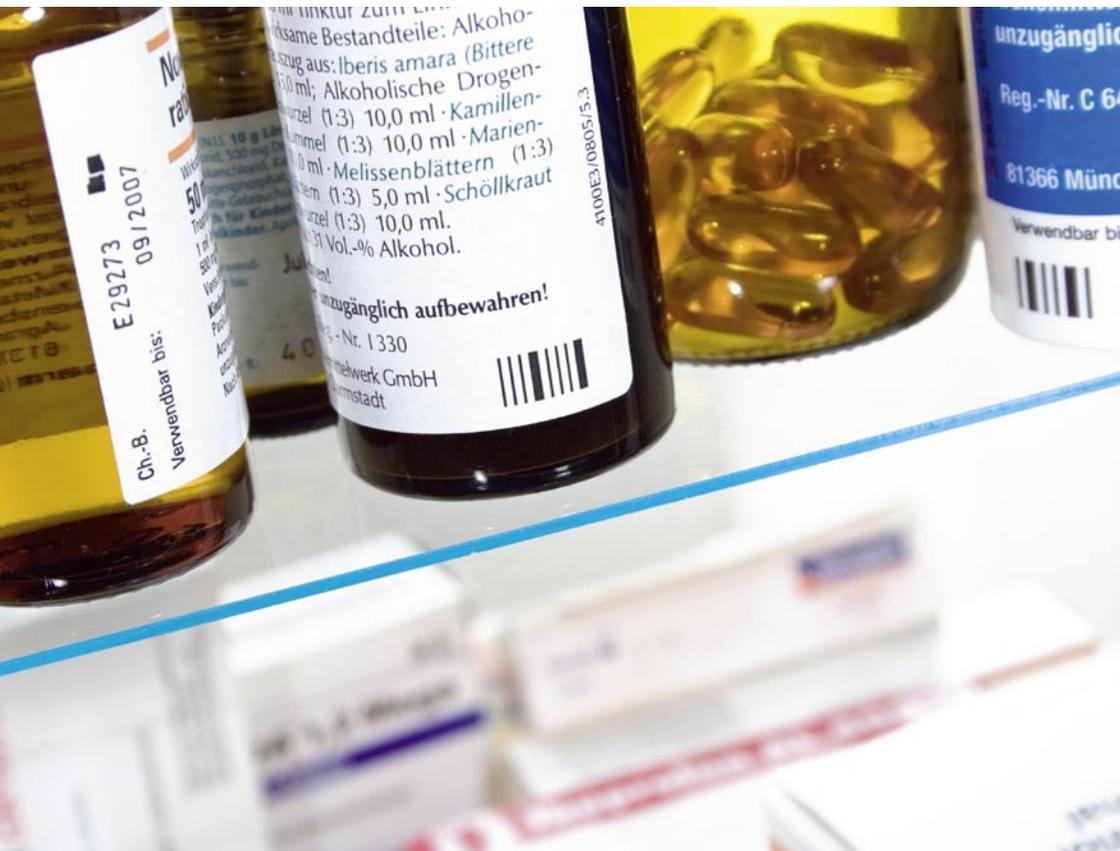
**Check your preparations! You will find a checklist at the end of this brochure.**

# Medicine Cabinet

Almost every household has a number of medicaments that have accumulated in the medicine cabinet over the years, making it look more like a hazardous-waste depot rather than an organized first-aid kit. The medicaments might have lost their effect or even become dangerous: once the expiry date has passed, a liquid medicine may decompose, tablets may fall apart, and ointments may become rancid. As a result, they are a hazard rather than a remedy, as they may develop novel but utterly unpredictable effects.

## Storage

Medicaments should be properly stored in a special cabinet which is placed sufficiently high so they are out of reach of small children. Ideally, this cabinet should have two compartments: one for wound dressing material, which is accessible for everyone, and a lockable medicine compartment – and some manufacturers do offer such two-compartment cabinets for installation in the bathroom. Be careful, though: a bathroom is not an ideal place since medicines should be kept in a place less heated and humid.



## Tips on Medicine Cabinets

- ▶ A standard first-aid box (in accordance with German industrial standard DIN 13164, sheet 2) includes everything that should be in your medicine cabinet: gauze swabs, bandage scissors, wound disinfectants, adhesive wound dressing, bandages and a triangular sling.
- ▶ Medicaments to be taken on a regular basis should be included, too. For all medicines, whether liquid or solid, it is important to keep the packaging material and the information leaflet provided by the manufacturer. Make sure you keep or write down your doctor's instructions as well.

The following items are recommended in addition:

- ▶ Flu / cold remedy
- ▶ Pain relievers
- ▶ Diarrhoea remedy
- ▶ Anti-insect ointment and anti-sunburn ointment
- ▶ Fever thermometer
- ▶ Splinter tweezers
- ▶ Skin disinfectants

It is important to pay attention to the expiry dates. Manufacturers are not obliged to indicate an expiry date if a medicament can be stored for more than five years. In such cases, the purchase date should be noted on the package.

**Check your preparations! You will find a checklist at the end of this brochure.**

## Power Failure

**All citizens of industrial nations today depend on various energy sources, including electricity, gas, oil, and long-distance heating, which are supplied to their homes through distribution networks. A simple power failure, however, is enough to show how much we depend on energy supply: When electricity fails, all mains-powered devices cease to function.**

These include: alarm clocks, water heaters, coffee machines, radios, lights, electric cookers, telephones, computers, elevators, cash dispensers and many other devices.

### Even heating systems...

Central heating systems – including oil heating systems – often depend on electricity because power is needed to pump the oil from the tank to the burner, and also to inject and ignite the oil. If at all possible, these functions can be controlled manually only after considerable and expensive structural modification.



### Energy Stockpiling Tips

In the event that the supply of oil, gas, long-distance heating or electricity is cut, each household should have alternative options available for such a state of emergency. Small meals can be prepared on an alcohol or white coal-fired cooking stove. Barbecue coal and charcoal may be useful as well.

In our climatic region, a heating failure can be compensated for – over a certain period of time – by putting on extra layers of warm clothing. Those who have the possibility of using coal, briquettes or wood for heating should stock these fuels for an emergency situation.

In case of an electric lighting failure you can use candles, flashlights or paraffin lamps, provided that you have stocks of candles, fuels, spare bulbs for flashlights, batteries, and igniters such as matches or lighters. Rechargeable batteries are less suited for an emergency stock, as they do not keep the stored electricity long enough and because they would need to be fully charged at the time a power failure occurs. Keep in mind that a power failure might go on for several weeks under adverse conditions. Sellers of leisure-time and camping articles offer a large variety of appliances that can be useful in such a situation.

**Check your preparations! You will find a checklist at the end of this brochure.**



## Radio Set

**A large-scale disaster – like a major flood, for example – may cut people off from the outside world. In this case, vital information can reach those in need only by radio, TV or other electronic media. Often, the power supply in a disaster area cannot be maintained, though, and all mains-powered devices will cease to function.**

Some mains-powered radio sets work with batteries, too. It is therefore very important for you to have a battery-powered radio set (for FM and medium-wave reception) to receive information in case of a power failure. Of course, you will need spare batteries as well.



## Warnings on the Internet

**Official hazard warnings by the Federal Government are also disseminated via the Internet.**

You may find a warning directly on the homepage of T-Online ([www.t-online.de](http://www.t-online.de)).

On the [www.mywelfare.de](http://www.mywelfare.de) website, the text of the warning will be shown directly in the ticker line.



## Radio Stockpiling Tips

- ▶ You need an AM/FM radio which is also suited for battery operation.
- ▶ The storage life of batteries is limited. The date of manufacture and the expiry date are indicated on the battery or on the package. Specialist shops will provide information on alternative options.
- ▶ Build up a sufficiently large stock of batteries (pay attention to the different battery sizes!). Take those batteries from the stock which you need, but always replenish the stock by purchasing new batteries.

**Check your preparations! You will find a checklist at the end of this brochure.**

## Emergency Pack

**The evacuation of individual buildings or even large areas for an extended period of time may become necessary in case of a disaster or any other emergency situation caused, for example, by a ruptured gas pipe or a fire in a nearby building.**

In a case like that you should be able to quickly assemble an emergency pack. This pack must be just as large and heavy as to allow you to carry it without help over an extended period of time. The most useful means of transport is a rucksack because both hands may be used freely. The emergency pack helps you to bridge the time until you can return to your apartment or house.

Notice: Prepare a neck bag or SOS capsule for toddlers with the child's name, birth date and parents' address. SOS capsules for children are available at medical organizations, department stores, mail-order companies, pharmacies and drugstores.

### Do not forget these items

- ▶ ID card / passport, money, valuables; for toddlers: neck bag or SOS capsule with the child's personal data
- ▶ Improvised protection clothing
  - ▶ Weather-protective clothing such as sailors' clothing (anorak, trousers) or long raincoat with hood
  - ▶ Heavy-duty high-legged shoes or rubber boots, with soles as thick as possible
  - ▶ If radioactive or chemical substances are present, use makeshift breathing devices such as do-it-yourself masks or wet tissues.

### Contents of an Emergency Pack

- ▶ First-aid material, personal medication
- ▶ AM / FM radio suited for battery operation; spare batteries
- ▶ Important personal documents (in watertight packaging). For more details, see "Safekeeping of Personal Documents"
- ▶ Rations for two days in a dustproof packaging
- ▶ Mess kit (including water bottle, knife, fork, spoon, plate, can opener, etc.)
- ▶ Flashlight with spare batteries
- ▶ Sleeping bag or blanket, possibly an insulating mat
- ▶ Clothing and hygienic articles

**Check your preparations! You will find a checklist at the end of this brochure.**



## Safekeeping of Personal Documents

Each household should keep a document folder containing all important documents (or certified copies/photocopies). In an emergency, every family member should know where the document folder is kept. Important papers which are lost may be difficult or even impossible to be replaced. Documentary proofs of your property, for example photos, may be helpful in substantiating your claims with an insurance company.



Also, you may consider leaving duplicates of important documents with friends, relatives or lawyers, or depositing them in a bank vault.

Keep in mind that you may need certified copies of some documents.



### Contents of the Document Folder

- ▶ Family certificates (birth / marriage / death certificates) or family register
- ▶ Pension approval certificates, income certificates
- ▶ Savings books, shares, vehicle registration document, etc.
- ▶ Insurance policies
- ▶ Receipts for insurance premium payments, especially into old-age pension plans
- ▶ School leaving certificates / letters of reference, contracts, abstracts of the land register, last will, etc.
- ▶ patient's will / power of attorney

**Check your preparations! You will find a checklist at the end of this brochure.**

# Emergency Call

**If persons have been injured, you need to take action quickly.**

**In rare cases only will rescue service or fire department personnel be immediately available at the scene of the accident. Usually they need to be alerted with an emergency call. Therefore, any organized help is based on a functioning and widely known emergency call and alarm system. You can contact the fire department or rescue service free of charge throughout Germany by calling the emergency number 112.**

**Please make sure you also have proper information on any other emergency call numbers that may apply in your local area.**



Until rescue personnel arrive, follow the rules of self-protection. Provide first aid and secure the accident site.

Make sure to indicate the right way to rescue personnel, if necessary, for example if house numbers are hard to see.



## What to Do in an Emergency

1. Secure the accident site, if necessary.
2. Take immediate life-saving measures.
3. Call for help by dialling 112 or any other emergency number.
4. An emergency caller must answer the following questions:
  - ▶ Where did it happen?
  - ▶ What happened?
  - ▶ How many people are injured?
  - ▶ What kind of injuries?
  - ▶ Wait for questions!
5. Render first aid until rescue personnel arrive. If a vehicle transporting hazardous material is involved in the accident, please tell the rescue service operator the numbers shown in the upper part of the vehicle's orange warning sign.

**33**

**1203**

# Flooding

**There are regions in Germany which are threatened by floods and climatic developments over the past years suggest that floods may occur to an increasing extent. While the Federal Government, the state governments and the local authorities are investing large amounts of money in preventive flood control, every individual must also contribute to limiting the damage by taking specific precautions. We wish to give you some advice in this respect.**

Notice: Contact your local authorities to obtain information on the critical high-water mark for the area you live in. The regular supply of electricity, foodstuffs and drinking water may be limited or even disrupted in case of flooding. This condition may persist for some time even if there is no more immediate danger, as infrastructure may have been damaged by the floods.



## Things to prepare:

- ▶ Store lining boards, waterproof plywood boards, and silicon to board up and seal doors and windows, as well as sandbags.
- ▶ Move hazardous substances (such as chemicals) to a safe storage place in time.
- ▶ Remove valuable furniture or equipment from at-risk rooms and take them to a safe storage place.
- ▶ Use water-resistant building material and sealants in at-risk rooms.
- ▶ Secure your heating-oil tank so that it will not turn or tip over if water in your flooded basement causes it to float (use a vertical-anchoring system or place ballast material on top, for example by covering the tank with earth if danger is imminent). If possible, use a tank whose design allows for “water pressure from outside”. Make sure pipes and lines can be shut off.

## Things you may need:

- ▶ A stock of food and drinking water
- ▶ A battery-powered radio set and a sufficient number of spare batteries
- ▶ Mains-independent emergency lighting
- ▶ A mains-independent cooking source
- ▶ Dry storage areas for wood and coal, if you have a wood or coal-burning stove available for use in an emergency
- ▶ A “substitute toilet”
- ▶ Please read the information on emergency packs and the safekeeping of documents included in this brochure.

## Just to be on the safe side:

- ▶ Make plans to take care of needy or sick people. Take precautions for them to be evacuated in time to stay with relatives or friends who live outside the danger zone.
- ▶ Make preparations to evacuate animals.
- ▶ In a hazard situation, the fixed telephone network and even the mobile phone network may break down. Talk to your neighbours and fire department personnel about distress signals and “danger” signs to communicate with them in an emergency situation.
- ▶ Inform each member of your family about the preparations you have made for dangerous events, how they should respond in such a situation, and what precautions you have taken personally: Talk about “role allocation” in an emergency, that is who will deal with the main switches and shutoff valves, who will save important personal documents, etc.

# Flooding

## When flooding is imminent:

- ▶ Be sure to closely follow the weather forecasts and flood warnings on your regional radio channels or the teletext service of your regional TV stations. Be sure to inform other people who live in your building as well.
- ▶ Check preventive measures once again and take extra precautions, if needed.
- ▶ Clear out those rooms that are at risk of being flooded.
- ▶ For at-risk rooms: seal doors, windows, drain holes, etc.
- ▶ Protect and /or switch off heating radiators and electric equipment in the danger area, for example the freezer in your basement. Even condensation water may be enough to cause an electric shock!
- ▶ Check house drainage systems and anti-backflow valves in your basement.
- ▶ Be sure to timely remove any vehicles parked in at-risk garages or parking lots.
- ▶ Inform the fire department if harmful substances have leaked or spilled over.

## Additional advice regarding motor vehicles:

- ▶ Do not drive on flooded roads. If water penetrates into the engine compartment, it might cause considerable damage. Also, the catalytic converter operates at a temperature of around 700°C (1,300°F); a sudden cooling-off may crack the ceramic head.
- ▶ If water reaches the vehicle's oil pan or reaches above the wheels, do not start the engine under any circumstances; have the vehicle towed to a garage for inspection.

## Saving lives:

- ▶ Saving people's lives has priority over saving material assets.
- ▶ Never try to rescue someone without protecting yourself. Call for help!
- ▶ If flooding is imminent: Take children away from the danger zone!
- ▶ Do not enter the river bank zone. River banks may be washed out by the water and may break off when you step on them! When driving, avoid flooded and partly flooded roads! Stay outside cordoned-off areas and follow the instructions by local authorities and emergency service personnel!
- ▶ Never use a private boat for a "joyride" on a flooded river or stream because waves may form, and there is a risk of dangerous obstacles which are hidden beneath the surface!

## Special flood-related hazards

are caused by floating debris and by washed out footpaths, bridges, dikes, etc. Health risks are caused by harmful substances that may have leaked, such as heating oil, cleansing agents, pesticides, human and animal faeces, and refuse. Drinking water may be polluted.

## After the flood

- ▶ Remove any remaining water and mud from the rooms; rooms should be pumped dry only once the floodwater has flown off and once the groundwater level has sufficiently dropped. Otherwise there is a danger that the floor basin of the building will be damaged. Pay attention to the information provided by your local authorities.
- ▶ Open and /or remove floor coverings and linings / panellings for examination.
- ▶ Affected areas should be dried as soon as possible to avoid structural damage, mould formation and pest infestation. You can speed up the drying process by using heating appliances, which may be borrowed or hired.
- ▶ Have damaged buildings / structures inspected (static stability).
- ▶ Do not use electrical appliances and systems until they have been inspected by an expert.
- ▶ Have heating-oil tanks inspected for damage.
- ▶ Inform the fire department if harmful substances such as pesticides, paint, varnish, cleansing agents or heating oil have leaked or spilled over. It may be necessary to contact specialized firms for proper disposal.
- ▶ Use oil absorption agents only after consulting your local fire department.
- ▶ Make sure the rooms you work in are sufficiently ventilated. Do not smoke and do not use open fire if harmful substances have leaked / spilled over.
- ▶ Properly dispose of contaminated furniture and food.
- ▶ Do not eat fruit, vegetables or lettuce that come from flooded areas.
- ▶ If gardens or fields are polluted with harmful substances (oil, for example), inform the Landratsamt (county councillor's office) or the Amt für Landwirtschaft (regional office responsible for agriculture).
- ▶ After the floodwater has receded, there may be an increase in the occurrence of insects such as mosquitos. You should include insect repellents in your emergency stock, or procure them at short notice as needed.

For more information on how to respond in case of flooding or another type of emergency, see the German emergency preparedness information system "deNIS" at [www.denis.bund.de](http://www.denis.bund.de). Please also consult your local authorities and fire department for more tips and information.

# Thunderstorms

**Thunderstorms may occur so suddenly that it is almost impossible to make preparations. They often announce themselves, however, and are predicted during weather forecasts by the German Meteorological Service, for example on the Internet at [www.dwd.de](http://www.dwd.de). Inform yourself in good time, if necessary.**

During thunderstorms, danger to life and limb is often caused by loose branches, broken trees or loose roof tiles. Avoid hazardous areas such as forests, if possible. In the event of rainstorms, roads may be flooded very quickly and manhole covers may be lifted and displaced by the water pressure in the sewage system. So be careful as a road user and be prepared to encounter obstacles at any time. Inform the fire department if you have noticed that hazardous substances such as heating oil have been released.

What to do during a thunderstorm

- ▶ Stay away from towering trees, masts, antennas and similar objects. Do not use umbrellas. Look for shelter in a building or try to find low ground and crouch down on the balls of your feet, keeping your feet close to each other.
- ▶ If you are in a vehicle, stay inside and do not touch any metal parts.
- ▶ Keep away from cross-country power lines (minimum distance: 50 metres / 165 feet).
- ▶ Lightning may cause power surges. Do not rely just on the lightning protection system of your house: Unplug sensitive electrical appliances or use a voltage surge suppressor. Such devices are available at specialist shops.
- ▶ A stroke of lightning may cause considerable damage (cracks or ruptures) in the walls of a building.

## Tips for Thunderstorms

**What should generally be ready to hand during a thunderstorm:**

- ▶ A battery-powered FM radio with sufficient batteries
- ▶ Mains-independent lighting sources, such as flashlights and candles
- ▶ Emergency packs with important documents, in case you must leave your home

Your emergency pack should contain documentary proofs of your property in the form of photos or similar records. If your property is damaged, these documents may be very helpful when settling claims with your insurance company.

Domestic animals and pets may be frightened considerably by a thunderstorm. Try to calm the animals down; make sure they cannot escape from the protected area.

**Please pay attention to thunderstorm warnings in the media.**



# Hazards Caused by Thunderstorms

## Help for Self-Help

Until the arrival of rescue personnel, everybody should be able to help himself / herself and other people. An emergency call and first aid are the basics of a number of measures complementing each other like links of a chain with the aim of rescuing the lives of injured or sick people. By attending a training course offered by an aid organization, you will be able to do the right thing and provide help at the scene of an accident until expert personnel arrive. If small children live in your household, you may be interested in special courses offered by medical organizations aimed at providing help to injured children.

It never hurts to take a refresher course! There are also aid organizations in your vicinity offering first aid courses.

## First Aid Can Be Learned

You will find the relevant point of contact in your local directory or on the Internet:

- ▶ Malteser (Order of Malta Relief Service)  
[www.malteser.de](http://www.malteser.de)



- ▶ Arbeiter-Samariter-Bund  
(Workingmen's Samaritan Federation)  
[www.asb.de](http://www.asb.de)



- ▶ Johanniter-Unfall-Hilfe  
(St. John's Ambulance Association)  
[www.juh.de](http://www.juh.de)



- ▶ Deutsches Rotes Kreuz (German Red Cross)  
[www.drk.de](http://www.drk.de)



- ▶ DLRG (German Lifesaving Society)  
[www.dlrg.de](http://www.dlrg.de)



Learn how to administer first aid at one of the aid agencies.

### Hail and Tornadoes

Additional hazards are posed by hailstones and debris or dirt sucked up by the heavily rotating hose of a tornado ("whirlwind").

Take additional precautions in a hailstorm or tornado:

- ▶ Close window shutters; stay away from any openings to the outside.
- ▶ Stay in a room below ground level (basement / cellar) or in an interior room of the building; vehicles, trailers and lightly built structures may not provide adequate protection.
- ▶ Do not stay in rooms with a large ceiling span, such as halls.
- ▶ Do not stay outside! Seek shelter in a sturdy building! If this is not possible, lie flat on the ground, keep your face down and cover your head and neck with your hands!

### What to do after a thunderstorm

- ▶ Check your environment for damage (incoming water, broken window panes, etc.)
- ▶ Use electrical appliances only if they have not come into contact with water.
- ▶ If someone has been injured, provide first aid and call the rescue service, if necessary.
- ▶ If a building is heavily damaged, leave that building and do not return until it has been inspected by experts.
- ▶ If the roof has been damaged in a storm, keep away from the building far enough to avoid being hit by falling debris. The width of the danger zone amounts to one third of the height of the building from the ground to the eaves gutters. Inform the fire department.

## Fire Prevention

**In 2004 alone, approximately 450 people died and more than 5,000 were injured by fire in Germany. In private households, material assets worth more than 1.3 billion Euros went up in flames. Often this is due to ignorance or negligence, for example by using spirit or other substances that make a fire more intense when having a barbecue.**

Legal fire prevention requirements ensure that in Germany buildings are extremely fireproof and that sufficient escape routes are available. Thus, affected house occupants can either leave the building on their own or safely be reached by the rescue personnel of the fire department.



Each individual can help to further reduce the residual risks caused by fires. As a preventive measure, only material should be used for building modification and extension work that counteracts the outbreak and spreading of fires – even though this is not enforced by the approval to be obtained from the competent construction agency. The same applies to renovation work. You should seek advice from an expert in any case.



### Fire Hazards

If a fire breaks out, you should notice it as early as possible. An inexpensive and functionally reliable option is to install smoke detectors. The next chapter will provide detailed information about this subject. Until the arrival of the alerted fire fighters you should be able to help yourself in an emergency, however, unless your life is in danger. In case of a small incipient fire, you might be able to prevent a spreading of the fire by using a fire extinguisher, a fire blanket or a water hose. Your local fire department will be happy to inform you about necessities and possibilities of self-help.

- ▶ Even if a fire extinguisher is not legally required – as in a car, for example – you should consider buying one as the records of the German automobile club ADAC show that 40,000 cars catch fire every year.
- ▶ A fire blanket made of wool or another appropriate material can help to extinguish burning clothes.
- ▶ Memorize the escape routes in hotels, discos, cinemas, etc. so that you are on the safe side if a fire breaks out possibly leading to panic.

## How to Get Prepared

Regardless of where you are, you should always be prepared for a possible outbreak of fire by obtaining the following information:

- ▶ How do you get to the nearest stairwell in a situation of danger (do not use elevators in case of a fire!)?
- ▶ Which measures may have been taken in preparation for the evacuation of physically handicapped people?
- ▶ What options are available to make an emergency call?
- ▶ Where are fire extinguishers, and how are they used?

### Please take care that ...

- ▶ corridors and stairwells are not obstructed or even completely blocked by any objects – it is imperative that escape routes are kept clear;
- ▶ doors along the escape / rescue route are closed (but never locked); this will keep the fire and smoke from spreading quickly;
- ▶ fire hydrants and fire fighting access routes are not blocked;
- ▶ the safety installations of the building are not damaged and that any damage is reported immediately;
- ▶ you never leave a burning candle or an open fire unattended;
- ▶ electrical installations and equipment are in perfect condition and are not tampered with;
- ▶ your most important documents and papers are kept readily available in case of an unexpected evacuation (for more information, see “Safekeeping of Documents”).

### Fire Prevention Tips

- ▶ Basement: Remove flammable material that is no longer needed!
- ▶ Attic: Clear out unnecessary items; remove flammable material from corners and angle spaces!
- ▶ Keep extinguishing equipment readily available for an emergency, for example fire extinguisher, water hose, fire blanket, etc.!
- ▶ Have fire extinguishers serviced and checked on a regular basis!
- ▶ Learn how to use fire-extinguishing equipment correctly!

## Smoke Detectors



Fires may be caused by faulty electric cables or appliances or people acting carelessly when performing household chores or handling open fire. The developing smoke may suffocate people in their sleep or obstruct escape routes.

A small device fitted to the ceiling of a room or corridor may help save lives. Smoke detectors are roughly hand-size devices which are easy to install and which set off an acoustic alarm. Deaf people may wish to install smoke detectors that start flashing or have a vibration feature

to alert them in case of fire. Smoke detectors should be installed at the highest point of a room or corridor as smoke rises to the ceiling. They should not be installed in the kitchen or the bathroom, however, as cooking or water vapours may set off a false alarm. Several smoke detectors can be connected to form a network so that detectors installed in the living area will also respond to an alarm initiated by a detector installed in the cellar / basement.

Smoke detectors of good quality have a low-battery indicator and a test button to check the device for function. For further information, consult a specialist shop.

### Installation Tips

Smoke detectors should be installed in those areas that are particularly at risk and along escape routes so as to give early warning in case of fire, especially in:

- ▶ corridors leading to bedrooms
- ▶ children's rooms
- ▶ stairwells
- ▶ basements

## In Case of Fire

Knowledge of proper fire response techniques may help you in moving yourself and others to safety. Remember: Saving lives always comes first. If you notice a fire, proceed as listed below:

1. If the fire has just broken out, take immediate action to “nip it in the bud”.
  - ▶ Try to extinguish the fire only if this is possible without putting yourself at risk!
  - ▶ Never use water to put out burning fat or other liquid combustibles!
  - ▶ To avoid electric shocks, switch off the power supply before you start to fight the fire!
  - ▶ Extinguish the fire by sweeping from base to top and from side to centre.
  - ▶ Never enter a room filled with smoke, as toxic fumes are lethal. Close the door and alert the fire department.
2. If you find it impossible to attempt to put out the fire yourself: Close the windows – provided this is possible without putting yourself at risk – and close the door of the room which is on fire to deprive the fire of oxygen.
3. Call the fire department!
4. Warn other people and help them move to safety (ask others to do so, if necessary).
5. Wait for fire fighters and give them the details.
6. Try to keep the fire from spreading until fire fighters arrive. Keep the door of the burning room wet to delay or prevent a burnout!
7. If you have to leave the building, apartment, floor, etc., take care that nobody stays behind. Doors of rooms which are not on fire should not be closed so fire fighters can quickly search for people, if necessary. Fire-resistant and fire-retarding doors must be kept closed, of course. Do not lock doors! If there are rooms or windows which can only be opened with keys, keep keys available to allow access for fire fighters.
8. Is everybody safe? Once outside the danger zone, you should check whether all building residents are safe because fire fighters will always assume that anybody unaccounted for is still at risk inside the building.

Whenever an exercise alarm is sounded, you should respond in the same way as you would with a real fire. Otherwise, you might one day mistake a “real” fire alarm for an exercise, which could put both you and the fire fighters at great risk. Saving lives has priority over all fire fighting measures! For more information, contact your local fire department!

## Fire-Extinguishing Equipment



While taking out a fire insurance policy may protect you against damage caused by fire, it will not prevent its outbreak. The law requires that fire extinguishers be installed at places of work, and in many private households, too. These red-coloured devices, which must be clearly visible and accessible for everybody, are well-suited for fighting fires. The size and content of a fire extinguisher may vary, depending on legal requirements and /or the potential fire hazard. Also, extinguishers may differ as to proper handling.

Fire extinguishers are designed to be used at the outbreak of a fire. Their effective spray time is limited. Specialist shops will provide more detailed information.

Other pieces of equipment may also be effectively used to extinguish a fire before it starts to spread, such as watering cans, spray cans with atomisers, or water hoses.

## Tips on Fire-Extinguishing Equipment

Get information on available fire-extinguishing equipment and how it should be used if a fire breaks out.

Fire-extinguishing equipment that is legally required must be checked for proper functioning on a regular basis.

**For further information, contact your local fire department or a fire insurance company.**

## CBRN-Hazards

**Hazardous substances are either of a chemical (C), biological (B), radiological (R) or nuclear (N) nature. We encounter them everywhere: as a source material or intermediate product in industrial processes, in laboratories, in medicine, and in research; as a combustible, for example in nuclear power plants; as storage items; as cargo on traffic routes of all types; in the household; and in many other places.**

As hazardous substances are to be found almost everywhere and as their release cannot be ruled out, the hazard prevention authorities have taken precautions to detect and identify them if necessary and to render them innocuous if possible. These tasks are usually the responsibility of the local fire department, which has the most up-to-date technical equipment for this purpose.



## How to Protect Yourself Against Hazardous Substances

### If you are outdoors:

- ▶ Go to the nearest occupied building.
- ▶ Try to move diagonally to the wind direction and breathe through a protective apparatus, if possible; otherwise, hold a handkerchief over your mouth.
- ▶ If you have come into contact with hazardous substances, change your top clothes and shoes before you enter a building and leave them outside the living area.
- ▶ Wash yourself thoroughly; wash your hands first, then your face and hair as well as your nose and ears.
- ▶ If biological substances have been released, you should disinfect your hands.

### If you are in a car:

- ▶ Switch off the ventilation and close the windows.
- ▶ Listen to the radio (regional programmes, FM band) and follow the instructions given by the authorities.
- ▶ Drive to the nearest occupied building. Get out of the vehicle and observe the instructions/information about what to do when you are outdoors.

### If you are in a building:

- ▶ Stay inside, if possible.
- ▶ Allow exposed passers-by to stay temporarily.
- ▶ Inform other occupants of the house, if necessary.
- ▶ Close the doors and windows.
- ▶ Switch off ventilators and the air conditioning system; seal the ventilation slots, including those of window frames.
- ▶ Seek shelter in the interior of a building, preferably in a room without any outside windows.
- ▶ Seek shelter in a room below ground level, if possible, in case radioactive substances have been released.
- ▶ Avoid unnecessary consumption of oxygen by candles or similar.
- ▶ Turn the radio on (regional programme, FM band) or watch TV to get up-to-date information.
- ▶ Pay attention to the announcements of local authorities.
- ▶ Use the telephone only in a case of emergency.
- ▶ If hazardous substances leak into your home, use those makeshift protective devices available to cover your mouth, for example a mask as used by do-it-yourselfers or a wet handkerchief.

## Hazardous CBRN-Substances

**German citizens enjoy the high standard of living offered by an industrial nation. The benefits of modern technology involve certain risks, however. Even with high safety standards, the accidental release of hazardous substances cannot be ruled out completely. This may happen during a production process or during transportation but also, if cleaning products are used carelessly, in the household.**

Hazardous substances can be gaseous, vaporous, liquid or solid. In general, non-professionals will not be able to assess whether a dangerous situation exists. You should therefore contact the respective rescue coordination centre (112) or poison control centre (see telephone directory), if need be, and in an incident listen to the announcements made by the authorities on the radio and via vehicle-mounted public-address systems.



## Properties of Hazardous CBRN-Substances

Chemical substances have a very broad spectrum of different effects. Many of these substances are flammable or even explosive, they may have a corrosive effect, or they are toxic. Sometimes they even have several effects at the same time. In most cases they produce their strongest effect when absorbed by the human body. This may happen by absorption through the skin, by ingestion or by inhalation. Particular care is imperative in handling gaseous substances. Since most gases and vapours are heavier than air, they may concentrate in depressions or basement rooms. Such locations must therefore be avoided if chemicals are released.

Biological agents include bacteria, viruses, fungi, parasites and toxins. They may cause serious illnesses in humans. The human body primarily absorbs these substances through the lung, the digestive tract and the skin (wounds). If there is a danger that such substances are taken in through the respiratory tracts, you should at least cover your mouth with a makeshift device such as a mask as used by do-it-yourselfers or a wet handkerchief.

Radioactive substances emit ionizing high-energy radiation. This radiation damages living cells and may kill them or cause cancer. Most radioactive substances are solid. The human body absorbs them through inhalation, ingestion and the skin (wounds). One portion of the ionizing radiation, namely the alpha radiation (particle radiation), poses a serious hazard in the form of tiny dust particles. A respiratory protective device will prevent them from getting into the lungs. The radiation itself loses some of its effect when penetrating matter. In basement rooms the effect of such radiation is particularly low as they are protected by the layer of earth and the higher-level floors above.

# Checklist

**An important thing to know is that a situation may occur due to a fire, an accident or a disaster for which you need to be prepared.**

**It is too late to learn how to provide first aid or to contain a fire if the incident has already happened. Stocks of drinking water can no longer be built up if the public water supply system has broken down.**

**Be prepared! Your local or municipal authorities will be available to answer all your questions related to self-help. Private aid organizations offer the possibility to get (re-)trained in first aid in good time.**

The following checklist gives an overview of the things you should have available in an emergency. Also complete the telephone list at the back of this brochure with the locally applicable emergency numbers. This will spare you a time-consuming search in case the need arises.



# Food and Beverages

The following recommendations by the Federal Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection, Wilhelmstrasse 54, 10117 Berlin, or Rochusstrasse 1, 53123 Bonn, homepage: [www.bmelv.de](http://www.bmelv.de) are also available on the internet at [www.ernaehrungsvorsorge.de](http://www.ernaehrungsvorsorge.de)

This example describes the 14-day basic stock required for one person; normally, this covers the total energy demand of 2200 kcal per day. Your personal food stocks may vary depending on preferences or dietary needs. In planning your food stocks you should consider, though, that certain emergencies may be accompanied by a power failure. This is why our proposal does not include frozen food as an option.

Two-Weeks Stocks		* drained weight	
Food category	Quantity	Example	
Cereals, Cereal products, Bread, potatoes	4,6 kg	Wholegrain bread	1000 g
		Rusk	250 g
		Crispbread	1000 g
		Pasta	400 g
		Rice	250 g
		Oats, cornflakes	750 g
		Potatoes	1000 g
		Vegetables, Legumes	5,6 kg
Erbsen / Möhren (Tin)	900 g*		
Red cabbage (tin / jar)	700 g*		
Asparagus (jar)	400 g*		
Sweet corn (jar)	400 g*		
Mushrooms (jar)	400 g*		
Pickled gherkins (jar)	400 g*		
Beetroots	400 g*		
Onions, fresh	500 g		
Fruit	3, 5 kg		
		Pears (tin)	250 g*
		Apricots (tin)	250 g*
		Tangerines (tin)	350 g*
		Pineapple (tin)	350 g*
		Raisins	200 g
		Hazelnuts	200 g
		Plums	250 g
		Fruit, fresh (apples, pears, bananas, citrus fruit)	1000 g

## Food and Beverages continued

Beverages <sup>1</sup>	24 Liter	Mineral water	12 l
		Still water	12 l
		Lemon juice	0,2 l
		Coffee	250 g
		Black tea	125 g
Milk, dairy products	3,7 kg	UHT milk	3 l
		Hard cheese	700 g
Fish, meat, eggs	1,7 kg	Tuna (tin)	150 g <sup>2</sup>
		Sardines in oil (tin)	100 g <sup>2</sup>
		Herrings (tin)	100 g <sup>2</sup>
		Bockwurst (jar, tin)	300 g <sup>2</sup>
		Corned Beef (Tin)	250 g
		Liver sausage (jar, tin)	100 g
		Salami	300 g
6 eggs <sup>2</sup>	360 g		
Fats, oils	0,5 kg	vegetable oil (cornseed olive, sunflower)	0,3 l
		margarine, butter	250 g
Miscellaneous, as desired, e.g.	0,25 kg	Sugar, sweetener, honey, jam, chocolate, iodized salt, convenience food (e.g. Ravioli, dried Tortellini, ready-to-eat soups), dry potato products (e.g. mashed potatoes), flour, instant meat broth, cocoa powder, crackers, pretzels/pretzel, sticks	

<sup>1</sup>The above recommendation includes, beyond the immediate drinking water requirement, additional quantities in order to have sufficient water available for the preparation of food items such as pasta, rice or potatoes regardless of public drinking water supplies.

<sup>2</sup>May be substituted by dried eggs which in some stores are offered in 1-litre packs as a liquefied substance.

## Radio

### Available in Your Home?

	Yes	No
AM / FM radio suited for battery operation		
Spare batteries		

## Medicine Cabinet

### Available in Your Home?

	Yes	No
Standard DIN first-aid kit		
Prescribed drugs		
Pain relievers		
Skin disinfectant		
Wound disinfectant		
Flu / cold remedy		
Fever thermometer		
Diarrhoea remedy		
Insect ointment; sunburn ointment		
Splinter tweezers		

## Hygienic Articles

### Available in Your Home?

	In Stock	To Buy
Soap (per item), Detergents (kg)		
Toothbrushes, toothpaste (per item)		
Disposable dishes and cutlery (per item)		
Household paper (rolls)		
Toilet paper (rolls)		
Rubbish bags (per item)		
Camping toilet, spare bags (per item)		
(a pair of) gloves		
Disinfectants, soft soap (per item)		
Household gloves		

## Fire Protection

### Available / Prepared?

	Yes	No
Basement and attic clear of rubbish		
Fire extinguisher		
Smoke detector		
Fire extinguishing blanket (or woollen blanket, to be used as a substitute)		
Water container for fire extinguishing purposes		
Water bucket		
Bucket sprayer or stirrup pump		
Garden hose or carwash hose		

## Safekeeping of Documents

### Have you made proper arrangements?

	Yes	No
Have you determined which documents are absolutely necessary?		
Are your documents properly arranged?		
Do you have copies of important documents (certified, if necessary)?		
Do you keep a document folder?		
Do you keep your document folder / important documents ready to hand?		

## Emergency Pack

### Available in Your Home?

	Yes	No
Personal medication		
Improvised protective clothing		
Sleeping bag or woollen blanket		
Underwear, long socks		
Rubber boots, sturdy shoes		
Mess kit, including thermos flask with cup		
Wound dressing material		
Can opener and pocket knife		
Durable, warm clothing		
Flashlight		
Headgear, protective helmet		
Protective mask or makeshift breathing apparatus		
Work gloves		

## Power Failure

### Available in Your Home?

	Yes	No
Candles, including tealight candles		
Matches, lighters		
Flashlight		
Spare batteries		
Camping stove / alcohol stove, including fuel		
Heating device		
Fuels		

## Personal Checklist

## Notes


## Information Service

### **Hazards and Protection Measures:**

The Federal Office for Civil Protection and Disaster Assistance has established the German emergency preparedness information system “deNIS” which deals with all questions related to potential hazards and protection measures. On the Internet website [www.denis.bund.de](http://www.denis.bund.de), the system provides information on, and links to, the various fields of private emergency preparedness. “deNIS” gives a summary of this information, processes it and makes it available, it provides advice on how to respond appropriately, and it offers support for searching the Internet.

### **Thunderstorms and Flood-Related Hazards:**

Up-to-date information on hazards is available from the German Meteorological Service ([www.dwd.de](http://www.dwd.de)), among others.

### **Food and Consumer Protection:**

For food-related questions, you may also visit the homepage of the Federal Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection at [www.bmelv.de](http://www.bmelv.de).

For further information, see [www.denis.bund.de](http://www.denis.bund.de)



Bundesamt  
für Bevölkerungsschutz  
und Katastrophenhilfe

With the Federal Office for Civil Protection and Disaster Response (BBK), you have a competent partner who will assist you in preparing yourself for emergency situations within the framework of civil protection. For further information on this topic and the other various tasks of the BBK, see [www.bbk.bund.de](http://www.bbk.bund.de).

**Bundesamt für Bevölkerungsschutz  
und Katastrophenhilfe (BBK)  
(Federal Office for Civil Protection and Disaster Assistance)**

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