



Federal Office
of Civil Protection and
Disaster Assistance

Guide for Emergency Preparedness and Correct Action in Emergency Situations

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ALARM



About us

The Federal Office of Civil Protection and Disaster Assistance (BBK) was established in 2004 as a central organisational unit for civil security. It is part of the “New Strategy for Civil Protection in Germany”, which was adopted in 2002. The BBK considers all areas of preventive civil security across all disciplines and combines them to form a single effective system for the protection of the population and the resources which are the basis for its existence. The BBK is a specialist authority within the Federal Ministry of the Interior (BMI), which also provides other federal and Land authorities with competent advice and support for the performance of their tasks in the area of civil protection.

The BBK is your reliable partner for emergency preparedness and self-help. You can find further information on our website www.bbk.bund.de.





Disasters

Guide for
Emergency Preparedness and
Correct Action
in Emergency Situations

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Staying safe in spite of a disaster

What can you do for your safety in the event of a disaster?

In spring 2013, after weeks of rain, whole areas of southern, eastern and northern Germany were beset by catastrophic floods. Settlements vanished in the floods up to the roofs of the houses, tens of thousands of emergency personnel and volunteers struggled against the water with sandbags. Villages and parts of towns had to be evacuated, and the citizens were only able to take the essentials with them.

Disasters are part of life. Almost every day, we can read about disasters and large-scale emergencies in a variety of media and see the images of destruction and suffering. These are not just major disasters which affect large areas for a long time. Local torrential rain, a severe storm, an electric power breakdown resulting from such a storm, or a house fire can trigger a very personal disaster for each individual, each family, which has to be overcome. Take the time to contemplate your personal emergency planning. This brochure aims to help you to develop your personal preparedness plan.

GERMANY IS WELL-PREPARED ...

In Germany, there are a number of organisations which are standing by to avert hazards. The fire brigade, the police and the rescue services are there for everyday aid. The disaster management organisations and the Federal Agency for Technical Relief are available to provide assistance in the event of large-scale crises and disasters. They are supplemented in the event of an emergency by additional auxiliary personnel, e.g. by the Federal Police Force or the Federal Armed Forces.

...IF EVERYONE IS PREPARED.

So we in Germany are basically well-prepared for dealing with disasters. But even the best assistance is not always on the spot immediately. In the event of a large-scale and very serious disaster, the rescue workers cannot be everywhere. If you can help yourself and your neighbours, you are definitely at an advantage. It is up to each and every one of us.

Are you prepared?

Can you help yourself and others?

Do you know what has to be done?

IMPORTANT



In this brochure, you will find tips for how you can prepare for emergencies and how to behave correctly in an emergency situation. Read the recommendations for action and make the necessary preparations!

Personal Preparedness

Prepare for an emergency

Once an emergency has occurred, it is generally too late for precautionary measures. When it happens, you have to react immediately. If you and your family have to be evacuated, you cannot be just starting to pack your emergency pack. If the power supply is down for days, you should have a disaster supplies kit in the house.





So that the important things are not missing in an emergency

Normally, all the important consumer goods can be found in the shop around the corner. There is generally always fresh produce available there.

Drugs are also available in the pharmacy or can be obtained quickly. Drinking water comes from the tap, of course, and electric power from the power outlet. However, this may be disrupted or break down as a result of disasters.

Here, you will find information on all the important topics – from the stockpiling of food supplies to the emergency pack – so that you are personally prepared for an emergency.



Important for survival: stockpiling food and drink

© Heike Dreisbach/PIXELIO

This should be in the house

Can you imagine food and drinking water not being available at all times? What if a flood made the roads impassable? Avalanches cut off a village from the outside world? Heavy snowfall made it impossible for shops to be supplied? Or an electric power breakdown paralysed the public utilities?

With a supply of food and drink to last you 10 days, you are ready for this.



Also look at www.ernaehrungsvorsorge.de





If need be, a person can manage for three weeks without food, but only for four days without liquid.

- › Keep approx. 14 litres of liquid per person in stock for each week.
- › Suitable drinks are mineral water, fruit juices, drinks which can be kept for a long time.

DRINKING IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN EATING

- › No experiments. Your supplies should primarily consist of food and drinks that you and your family normally use.
- › No power?! Ensure that edibles can be stored for long periods even without refrigeration and that the majority of your supplies can also be eaten cold.
- › All the food should be able to be kept for long periods without refrigeration. Pay attention to the best before date. Mark food which doesn't have a label with the purchase date.
- › You should keep food in a cool, dry and dark place. Ensure that the packaging is airtight
- › Newly purchased supplies go to the "back" of the shelf. Use up the older food first.
- › The emergency supplies also include deep-frozen food. It can easily be consumed in the event of an electric power breakdown. Do not refreeze food that has been defrosted once.
- › Cooking without electric power and gas? There are a lot of alternatives on the market, such as camping stoves etc.
- › When stockpiling, also remember special food – e.g. for diabetics, allergy sufferers or babies.
- › Do you have any pets? Cover their needs!

TIPS FOR STOCKPILING



A person can only manage for 4 days without liquid

➤ Regularly check your supplies. You can find a checklist in the middle of the brochure!



Water supply for hygiene

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Cleanliness in times of need

Poor hygiene is the trigger for a number of epidemics and diseases throughout the world. This seems a long way from us. For having showers, cleaning our teeth and washing our hands every day is a matter of course for us. But what do you do when there is no more warm water, or when cold water is only available for a few hours at a time? In the event of disasters or extended emergencies, this may happen. And it is in precisely these situations that everything depends on hygiene. Even if water is scarce: hand washing is very important for hygiene and health, in spite of everything!

© Tatiana Popova/Shutterstock.com



You only notice what a luxury running water from the tap is when there is suddenly no more.



- › In the event of a prolonged disruption of the water supply, you should collect water in every available larger container: bathtub, washbasins, buckets, pans, water canisters etc. Also remember water for flushing the toilet.
- › Use the water sparingly. In the event of a longer water shortage, use disposable cutlery and crockery, so that water does not have to be used for washing up.
- › Make the water last for longer with sterilisation agents. You can obtain these in camping stores.

TIPS FOR EMERGENCY WATER SUPPLY

- › Keep a sufficient supply of soap, detergents, toothpaste, wet wipes and toilet paper.
- › If there is a shortage of water, a camping toilet with a substitute fluid is a good alternative.
- › Use household gloves.
- › Use hand disinfectants.
- › Use kitchen paper for wiping, instead of wiping things with a wet cloth.
- › Rubbish bags are good for quick waste disposal. They also help if the waste is not taken away for some time

TIPS FOR HYGIENE

You can find a checklist on the subject of hygiene in the middle of the brochure!

Remember to maintain sufficient hygiene even in the event of a water shortage!



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What the medicine cabinet should contain

© Comstock/Getty Images

This helps you to be well-prepared

Sometimes things have to happen quickly. An accident at home, an emergency situation, an injury when gardening. It is good if you have a medicine cabinet which contains all the essentials – and which is kept up-to-date.

In many households, however, the medicine cabinet is a collection of old and expired drugs. This may even be dangerous, as drugs that have passed their expiry date may not only lose their effect, but also become harmful.



OUR TIP:

Regularly check the drugs in your medicine cabinet. In the case of drugs without an expiry date, you should make a note of the purchase date. Expired medicines belong in the bin.



- › Keep your medicine cabinet in a lockable cupboard or box.
- › Ensure that is not accessible to children (put it high up or lock it).
- › Choose a sparingly heated, dry room. Note: the bathroom is the wrong place!
- › A small cupboard with a freely accessible first aid box and a lockable drug box would be ideal.

- › Personal drugs prescribed by a doctor
- › Cold remedies
- › Painkillers and antipyretic drugs
- › Remedies against diarrhoea, nausea, vomiting
- › Remedies for insect bites and sunburn
- › Electrolytes to compensate for a loss of fluid
- › Thermometer
- › Tweezers
- › Skin disinfectant
- › Wound disinfectant
- › Dressing materials. Everything that a DIN 13164 first aid kit (car first aid kit) contains:
 - Gauze compress
 - Bandage scissors
 - Sticking plasters and bandages
 - Triangle bandage

You can find a checklist for the medicine cabinet in the middle of the brochure!

TIPS FOR CORRECT STORAGE

IT MUST CONTAIN THESE THINGS





Electric power breakdown

© Thomas Frey/imago
Cooking without electric power

What to do when the power fails

Do you know how dependent you are on electric power, gas, oil or long-distance heating? What happens if it all fails? The telephone is dead, the heating doesn't come on, there is no warm water, the computer goes on strike, the coffee machine stays off, there is no light. You can extend the list as you want. You will soon notice how dependent you are on electric power.



OUR TIP:

You will find a checklist for an electric power breakdown in the middle of the brochure!



Electric power breakdowns are generally rectified in a few hours. However, in emergency situations, it may even be days before electric power is available again.



Correct behaviour in the event of a power failure

› Warm clothing can be used as a substitute for heating for a while. Anyone who has a fireplace or a stove should have a supply of coal, briquettes or wood in the house.

THE HEATING FAILS

› Keep a supply of candles and torches (e. g. a twist torch or solar and LED lights), as well as spare lamps, batteries, matches or lighters, candles etc. in the house.

THE LIGHTS ARE OFF

› You can prepare smaller meals on a camping stove.
› Use an outdoor barbecue or table-top grill, which is operated with charcoal or gas. Caution! Do not grill food in the apartment or house – there is a risk of suffocation!

NO COOKING CAN BE DONE IN THE KITCHEN

› Make sure that the batteries in computers, mobile telephones, telephones etc. are charged. Solar-powered battery chargers may help.
› Remember to have sufficient cash reserves in the house, as cash machines also no longer work during an electric power breakdown.
› Have a battery-powered radio ready. Refer to the section “Keep up-to-date in an emergency.”
› You can find further tips in the brochure “Electric power breakdown – preparedness and self-help” of the Federal Office of Civil Protection and Disaster Assistance at www.bbk.bund.de.

MORE TIPS





Have important documents ready to hand

© Birgit H/PIXELIO

Everything that's important in one place

There's a fire. Everyone has to leave the house quickly. The water is coming. Everyone is being evacuated. You do not know what will be damaged or destroyed.



OUR TIP:

Deposit duplicates of important documents with friends, relatives, notaries, solicitors or banks.

Think about what is important to you in good time. Put all the important documents together and store them in one place, in a briefcase that you can easily pick up and take with you. In the event of an emergency, all the members of your family should know the location of the briefcase.



The document folder should include:

- › Family documents (birth, marriage, death certificates) or family register

IN THE ORIGINAL

- › Savings books, account agreements, shares, bonds, insurance policies

IN THE ORIGINAL OR AS A CERTIFIED COPY

- › Pension and income statements, income tax returns
- › Evidence of qualifications: certificates (school certificates, university certificates, certificates of additional qualifications)
- › Contracts and amendment agreements, e.g. including rent agreements, lease agreements etc.
- › Will, living will and power of attorney

- › ID, passport, driving licence and vehicle documents

AS A SIMPLE COPY

- › Land register excerpts
- › All the amendment notices for benefits received
- › Payment receipts for insurance premiums, especially from the social insurance pension fund
- › Proof of registration with the employment offices, communications from the Employment Agency
- › Invoices which provide evidence of outstanding payment claims
- › Membership or subscription registers of associations, clubs or other organisations
- › International certificate of vaccination



You can find a checklist for document security in the middle of the brochure!



Emergency pack

© Jakob Schaefer/Getty Images

Pack practically

Something has happened and everyone has to get out of the house. An evacuation has been announced. The cause: a leak in the gas pipe, a fire in the house next door, ammunition from the World War II has been discovered. There are many conceivable emergency situations and, depending on the situation, it may be a long time before you are allowed back into your home.

You do not have long to think about what you are to take with you now. This is why you should think about your emergency pack and, as far as possible, keep it packed, so that it is easy to just pick up and take with you.

Well-planned. Well-packed!





- › The aim of the disaster supplies kit is to help you to cope for the first few days out of your house.

Basic rule: do not take more for each family member than fits into a rucksack. A rucksack is more practical than a suitcase, as you have both hands free.

THE PRACTICAL TIP

- › First aid materials, personal medication
- › Battery-powered radio, spare batteries
- › Briefcase (refer to the section “Have important documents ready to hand”)
- › Food for 2 days in dust-proof packaging
- › Water bottle, cutlery and crockery
- › Torch, sleeping bag or blanket
- › Clothing and hygiene products for a couple of days
- › Camera or camera phone

THE EMERGENCY RUCKSACK SHOULD CONTAIN THESE ITEMS

- › Waterproof clothing, such as a waterproof jacket and waterproof trousers or a long raincoat
- › Waterproof shoes or wellingtons
- › In the event of danger from radioactive or chemical substances, use a dust mask or damp cloths that you hold in front of your mouth.

THE CORRECT CLOTHING

- › Identity documents, money, valuables
- › For the children: neck pouch or an SOS capsule with name, date of birth and address. You can get SOS capsules in department stores, pharmacies and drugstores.

DO NOT FORGET!

Everything ready? You will find a checklist in the middle of the brochure!





Keep up-to-date in an emergency

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Take warnings seriously

Floods or heavy snowfall with avalanches may lead to parts of the population being cut off from the outside world. Information and warnings are important for survival.

Those who are trapped can often only be reached by radio, television or the Internet. However, the television and the Internet only work when there is electric power, which could fail. This leaves just the radio as the main warning device. Therefore, always keep a battery-powered radio with VHF and digital reception and spare batteries or a wind-up radio in the house.



› You can always also find official danger warnings from the Federation on the Internet. Look under www.bbk.bund.de or take advantage of the BBK's emergency information and news app (NINA) (see next page).

- › You need a battery-powered radio or a wind-up radio with VHF and digital reception. A solar-powered radio or car radio can also be used. There are also wind-up radios with a USB connection for charging mobiles.
- › Keep sufficient batteries on hand. Remember that batteries do not last indefinitely. Use the batteries up and replace them regularly.
- › Ensure that you have a supply of the right battery sizes.

WARNINGS ON THE INTERNET

TIPS ABOUT THE RADIO

You can find a checklist for the radio in the middle of the brochure!



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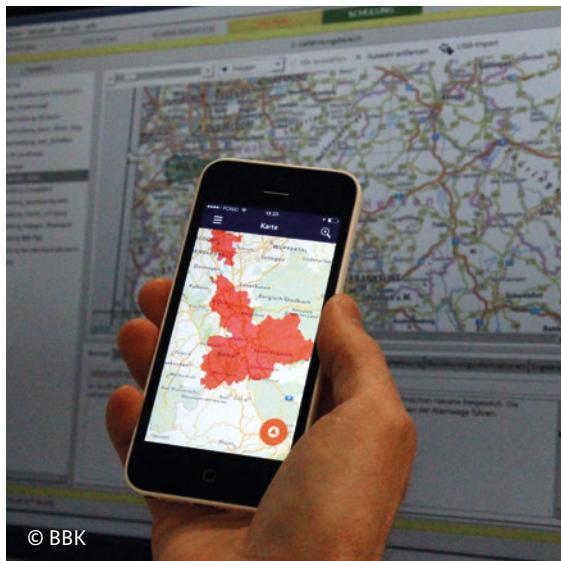
With a wind-up radio, you can receive warning messages, even during an electric power breakdown and when there are no batteries.

You can, of course, get information on a mobile phone. Please remember that during an electric power breakdown, mobile phones will only continue to work for a short time.

NINA

NINA is the Emergency Information and Warning App (**Notfall-Informations- und Nachrichten-App**) of the Federal Office of Civil Protection and Disaster Assistance. NINA warns users of emergencies and hazards all over Germany, such as severe weather, floods and other relevant events.

NINA is the first app for alerting the population for the whole of Germany and is fully integrated into the Modular Warning System (MoWaS), which is used by the Federal and State level. With NINA, users are always informed about hazards and dangers, as the push functionality calls their attention to current threats. Both incident-related advice and general emergency advice from experts help users prepare for and react to (potential) emergencies. This enables them to better protect themselves and help others.





Furthermore, NINA includes up-to-date information, e.g. from the German Meteorological Service (DWD) as well as the latest water levels from the



Federal Waterways and Shipping Authority (WSV). NINA is available for free via iTunes and the Google Play store. For other operating systems, a website is available at www.warnung.bund which has been optimised for mobile use and which also informs you about all the latest MoWaS warnings in Germany. The latest weather warnings from the German Meteorological Service (DWD) and the water levels from the Federal Waterways and Shipping Authority (WSV) are also published here.

Interested parties can follow the BBK on Twitter and find news and information on subjects of civil protection there – from personal preparedness to honorary posts – under @BBK_Bund.

Follow the BBK on Twitter:

http://twitter.com/BBK_Bund.

BBK on Twitter

Emergency Call 112

Get help! Help!



Do you immediately know what needs to be done when an emergency occurs? Do you feel well-prepared? The rescue service or the fire brigade are generally not on site immediately, but have to be alerted. What should you do with people who are injured? When was your last first aid course? There are still too few adults who know what they should do in an emergency – and do nothing at all out of fear. The emergency call 112 and basic first aid are life-saving measures. Prepare yourself and take part in a first aid course again. So that you know what needs to be done in an emergency.





In Germany and throughout Europe, you can reach the **fire brigade** and the **rescue service free of charge** by **calling 112**. You can also reach this number with a mobile telephone (with a SIM card) free of charge.

ONE NUMBER FOR EMERGENCY CALLS THROUGHOUT EUROPE

1. Secure the scene of the incident, if necessary.

2. Take the immediate life-saving measures.

3. Call help on 112.

4. You should mention the following:

- › Where is the site of the emergency?
- › What has happened?
- › Who is calling?
- › Wait for questions!

5. Perform first aid until the rescue service arrives.

Ensure that the rescue workers are directed if, for example, a house number is difficult to identify.

THIS IS WHAT YOU SHOULD DO!

➤ Each of us should be capable of helping another person with simple first aid measures in the event of accidents.

LEARN FIRST AID AT:



A number of relief organisations offer first aid courses near you. There, you will learn to perform immediate life-saving measures. You can find your contact in the telephone book or on the Internet at:



Malteser
Knights of Malta
www.malteser.de



German Life-Saving Association
www.dlrg.de



Deutsches
Rotes
Kreuz

German Red Cross
www.drk.de



DIE JOHANNITER
St. John's Ambulance Association
www.juh.de



ASB
Arbeiter-Samariter-Bund
www.asb.de

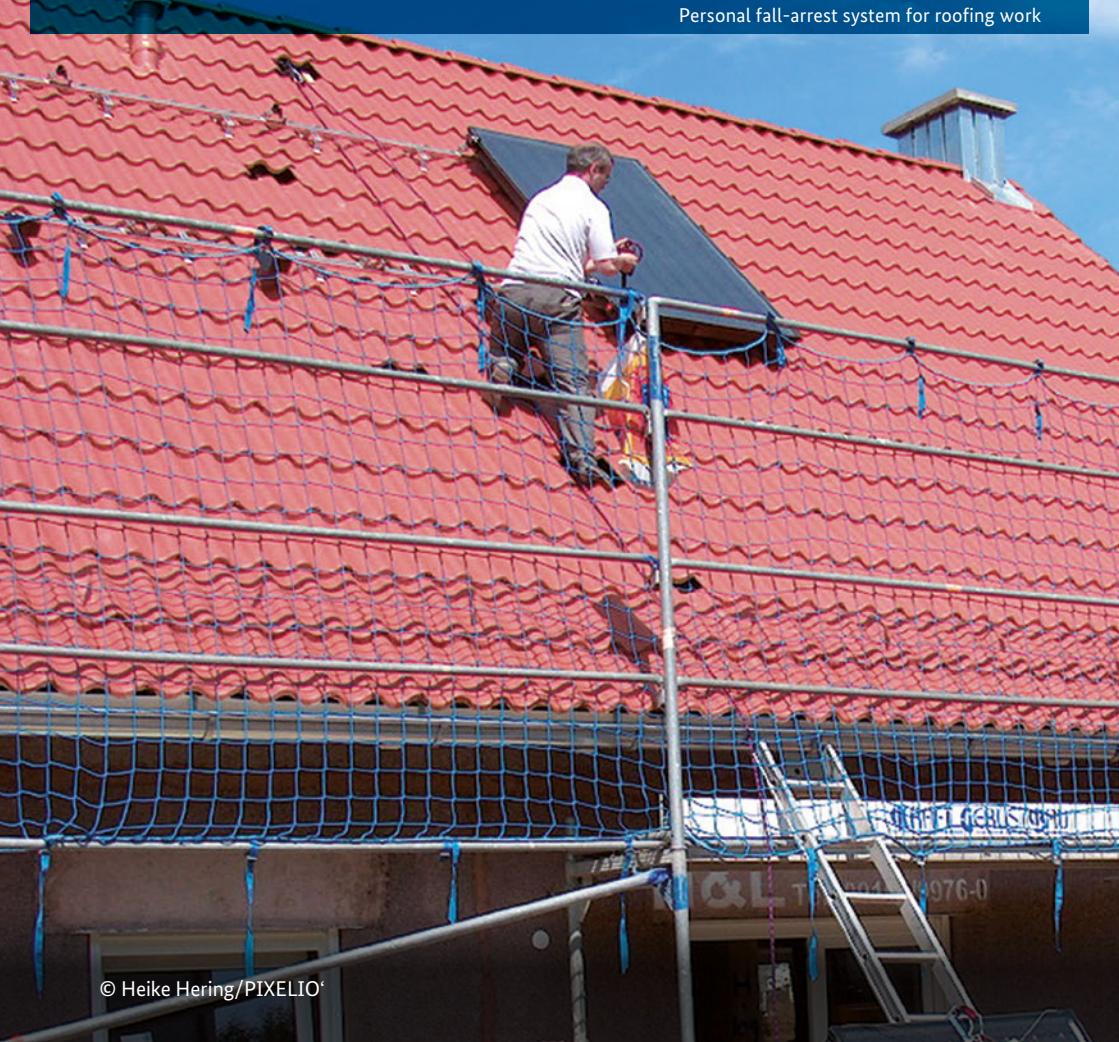
Structural Safety

Small measures, great effect



You feel comfortable in the house or the apartment in which you live? Do you also feel safe there? It is not just extreme weather conditions which can endanger safety in buildings. Electric power breakdowns or water supply, energy or telecommunications failures make life uncertain. You can do something about these. In many cases, minor structural measures are sufficient to significantly increase safety. Below, you will find a small selection of things that you can do or arrange.

Personal fall-arrest system for roofing work





More safety on the house

- › Have the roof covering secured with wind hooks and a sufficient supply of nails.
 - › Prevent roof avalanches with snow guards (duty of safeguarding traffic on pavements etc.).
 - › Flat roofs and wide-span ceilings are at particular risk of a snow load.
 - › Secure the roof truss and the roof cladding against being lifted off in the event of gale force winds with additional fortifications.
 - › In the event of inclined roofs, have wind braces installed in a crosswise arrangement.
-
- › With regard to the trees near the house, please remember the risk of wind damage.
 - › Secure awnings and canopies against storms.

THE ROOF

THE OUTDOOR AREA

THE SEWAGE

- › Install backwater valves in sewer pipes and regularly check that they are functioning correctly.
- › With a lifting unit, you can dispose of sewage from lower floors; these pipes must be guided significantly above the backflow level.
- › A powerful submersible pump, in conjunction with a sump, makes it possible to pump out any water that has got in. Sumps should be provided for in a number of places on floors that are at risk of flooding and near the exits.
- › Tiles and waterproof construction and insulation materials in the basement floors make an effective disposal of water and sludge residue possible if necessary.

ELECTRIC SUPPLY

- › Have the electrical system checked with respect to overvoltage protection and for residual current devices (RCD) and have them added if necessary.
- › Does your house have sufficient lightning protection?
- › For floors that are at risk, there should be completely separate power circuits, which can be switched off completely if required.
- › Set up meter cabinets, the domestic junction box etc. to be safe from flooding.
- › If you live in a floodplain, you should consider having a small, powerful emergency generator (submersible pump!)





- › Secure fuel tanks in the house and outside against floating away.
- › Also allow for the possibility of operating the entire heating system via emergency power.
- › The heating system itself should also be secured against floods.

THE HEATING

To what extent is your area at risk from flooding, earthquakes, fires or another emergency? If you live in a danger area, are you taking appropriate precautions?.

RISK OF DISASTERS

Leave nothing to chance when it comes to safety.

ADDITIONAL IMPORTANT TIPS...



...relating to structural safety measures and precautions can be found on the website of the Federal Office of Civil Protection and Disaster Assistance.



www.bbk.bund.de



Checklist

Prepare for emergencies



A fire, an accident or a disaster generally happens completely unexpectedly. When the water supply breaks down, you cannot create any more water reserves. When the electric power fails over a wide area, you cannot purchase any more supplies. So make provisions for these circumstances in advance!





Make provisions!

What do you need?

What do you have to think of at an early stage?

The following checklists will give you an overview of what you need in an emergency. Enter the local emergency telephone numbers in the telephone list on the back of this brochure.

Plan together! Sit down with your family and consider the following:

- › Where are the following located in the house: the emergency pack, the briefcase, the fire extinguisher, the supplies from the checklist.
- › Discuss escape routes, meeting points and their accessibility; it is possible that not all members of the family will be at home in the event of a disaster.
- › Keep this brochure together with the briefcase; thus, you will be able to read the most important information again in the event that a disaster is forecast.

OUR ADVICE



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Food & drink

In the event of a disaster such as a flood, electric power breakdown or a storm, there is a risk that food will be hard to come by. Therefore, ensure that you have a sufficient supply of food. Your goal must be to survive for 10 days without shopping. The solution is your responsibility. Whether and to what extent you make provisions for a disaster is a personal decision.

In the following overview, you will find an example of the basic supplies for one person for 10 days. This corresponds to approx. 2,200 kcal per day and thus generally covers the total energy requirements. Take personal tastes, dietary requirements and allergies into consideration in your planning.

DRINKS		10-DAY SUPPLY
FOOD GROUP	QUANTITY	REMARKS
Drinks	20 litres	An additional amount was added to the suggested supply of drinks, so that water is also available for the preparation of food such as pasta, rice or potatoes, independent of the public drinking water supply.

FOOD		10-DAY SUPPLY
FOOD GROUP	QUANTITY	
Cereals, cereal products, bread, potatoes, pasta, rice	3.5 kg	



FOOD

10-DAY SUPPLY

FOOD GROUP	QUANTITY	REMARKS
Vegetables, pulses	4.0 kg	Remember that vegetables and pulses in a jar or in cans have already been cooked and that water is also required for dried products.
Fruit, nuts	2.5 kg	Stock up on fruit in cans or jars and only use storable fruit as fresh fruit.
Milk, milk products	2.6 kg	
Fish, meat, eggs or whole egg powder	1.5 kg	Please note that fresh eggs can only be stored for a limited time; whole egg powder, on the other hand, keeps for several years
Fats, oils	0.357 kg	
Other as desired e.g.		Sugar, sweetener, honey, marmalade, chocolate, iodised salt, convenience foods (e.g. ravioli, dried tortellini, instant soups), dry potato products (e.g. mashed potato), flour, instant broth, cocoa powder, hard biscuits, pretzel sticks

FURTHER INFORMATION...



...can be obtained from the Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture at www.ernaehrungsvorsorge.de. On the website www.ernaehrungsvorsorge.de/de/private-vorsorge/notvorrat/vorratskalkulator/, you can calculate your personal requirements using a provisions calculator.

Checklist

Tick off items that are available, so that you have an overview!

RADIO

AVAILABLE

Radio with VHF and digital reception,
suitable for battery operation or a wind up radio

Spare batteries

MEDICINE CABINET

AVAILABLE

DIN first aid kit

Drugs prescribed by the doctor

Painkillers

Skin disinfectants

Wound disinfectants

Cold remedies

Thermometer

Remedies against diarrhoea

Cream for insect bites and sunburn

Tweezers



HYGIENE PRODUCTS

AVAILABLE

Soap (cakes), detergent (kg)Toothbrush (number), toothpaste (tubes)Sets of disposable cutlery and crockery (number)Kitchen paper (rolls)Toilet paper (rolls)Rubbish bags (number)Camping toilet, replacement bags (number)Household gloves (pairs)Disinfectants, soft soap (quantity)

POWER FAILURE

AVAILABLE

Candles, tea lightsMatches, lighterTorchSpare batteriesCamping, spirit stove with fuelHeaterFuel

DOCUMENT SECURITY

PREPARED

Have you established which documents are absolutely essential?Are your documents organised appropriately?Are copies available of important documents,
and are these certified if necessary?Have you created a document folder?Are the document folder or important documents ready to hand?**FIRE PROTECTION**

AVAILABLE / DONE

Clear out cellar and atticFire extinguisher, fire protectionExtinguishing spraySmoke alarmGarden or car washing hoseContainer for water for extinguishing firesWater bucketStirrup pump or bucket pump



© Rido/Shutterstock

If you have made the right provisions, you can lie back and relax.

EMERGENCY PACK

AVAILABLE

Personal medication

Provisional protective clothing

Woollen blanket, sleeping bag

Underwear, socks

Wellingtons, sturdy footwear

Cutlery and crockery, thermos flask, cups

Materials for treating wounds

Can opener and penknife

Hard-wearing, warm clothing

Torch

Head covering, protective helmet

Protective mask, provisional respiratory protection

Work gloves

Camera or camera phone



Severe Weather

In 2010, Cyclone Xynthia moved across Germany and Europe with devastating effect. Very high wind speeds and falling trees paralysed motorways and airports. Hurricanes, tornadoes, whirlwinds, violent thunderstorms, snow chaos or heavy rain are part of the course of the year at our latitude. As a result of climate change, the occurrence of severe weather has become more frequent. The damage is immense year after year. And not only from "storms of the century". Anyone can be affected.

The destruction that can be caused by a tornado in a large city. Photomontage





Residential area destroyed by a tornado
in Quirla, Thuringia, 2006



➤ Loose branches, toppling trees, falling roof tiles and window boxes – in severe weather, you should not stay outside. Avoid danger zones such as forests. The risk to life and limb is too high.

Well-prepared

Have candles, torches and, if applicable, a VHF radio with batteries ready.

- Prepare an emergency pack containing important documents, in case you have to leave your home.
- In the event of damage or loss, it is helpful if you have documented your property in the form of photos.
- Pay attention to the severe weather warnings in the media. You can see severe weather forecasts by the German Meteorological Service at any time online at www.dwd.de.



Correct behaviour during severe weather

OUTSIDE

- › Avoid unprotected places where you could be hit by hail or by objects carried along by the storm.
- › Seek shelter in a building, avoiding halls with large ceiling span widths in the event of severe storms.
- › If there is enough time, secure the outdoor movable objects, such as garden furniture, bicycles etc.
- › In the event of hail, lie down – if there is no shelter anywhere – with your face to the ground and protect your head and neck with your hands!

THUNDERSTORM

- › In the event of a thunderstorm, seek shelter in a building, or crouch on the balls of your feet, in a hollow if possible.
- › Avoid open country, mountain peaks, trees, towers, masts and antennae, and do not lean on fences.
- › Keep a minimum distance of 50 metres from power lines.
- › Avoid all objects with metal parts, such as umbrellas and bicycles.



Storm damage caused by Hurricane Kyrill in 2007



© Karl-Heinz Laube/PIXELIO*

Lightning strike in a big city

› In your car, you are safe from thunderstorms.
Therefore, stay in the vehicle and do not touch
any naked metal parts.

IN THE CAR

› In the event of hail and whirlwinds, close the windows, roller or folding shutters and keep away from unprotected openings.
› Seek out a low room, e.g. a cellar, or an internal room. Cars, caravans and lightweight buildings are not necessarily safe during a storm.
› Avoid rooms with a large ceiling span width, e.g. halls.
› Disconnect sensitive devices or use overvoltage protection. Corresponding devices are available on the market.

AT HOME

› Pets or livestock are frightened by severe weather. Try to calm your animals down and ensure that they are not able to leave the protected area.

PROTECTION FOR ANIMALS



© Thomas-Max Müller/PIXELIO

Snow drifts

Behaviour after the severe weather

- › Before tidying up, you should check and document precisely what has been damaged or destroyed, e.g. by the ingress of water or the breakage of glass.
- › If someone is injured, perform first aid and call the rescue service on 112, if necessary. Further information in the section “Emergency call”.
- › Attention! If fuel oil or other hazardous substances have been released as a result of flooding, e.g. in the cellar, call the fire brigade on 112.



- › Be careful when entering flooded cellars; there is a risk of an electric shock if the house junction box is accommodated in the cellar.
- › Only put electrical appliances into operation if they are not wet.
- › If the building is badly damaged, stay outside and only enter it again when this has been cleared by experts.
- › If the roof is badly damaged, stay sufficiently far away from the building. Call the fire brigade on 112.

Cyclone Xynthia caused dangerous gale force winds in Hesse, 2010



Fire



It is frightening and dangerous. Fire that gets out of control is always a disaster. There are a number of causes for a fire at home or in public buildings: faults in the electricity, work that constitutes a fire hazard, carelessness in the household work, negligence when barbecuing food, or the overheating of electrical appliances. Regardless of whether the result is an open fire or a smouldering fire, the consequences are frequently disastrous. You can take effective measures to prevent this, and you can protect yourself. Here, you can read what you should do.

Conflagration





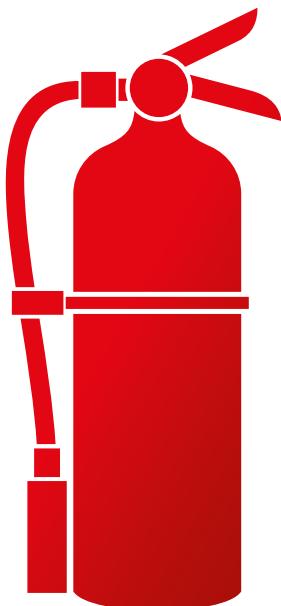
Before the fire

- › Install smoke alarms in all the rooms, apart from the kitchen and the bathroom. You can find more information on the next page.
- › Do you have a fire extinguisher in the house? Learn how to use it correctly and have it serviced regularly. Put a fire extinguisher in your car, but secure it well there. This is not prescribed by law, but the German Insurance Association (GDV) records 16,000 car fires (fire, explosion, heat damage) per year.
- › All important documents and papers should go in a briefcase so that they can easily be taken away with you. You can find more information in the section "Document security".

**LITTLE EFFORT,
GREAT IMPACT,
SAVES LIVES**

- › Never leave naked flames, such as candles or fire, unattended.
- › Remove highly flammable materials in the cellar.
- › Regularly clear out the attic and remove particularly flammable materials from the corners and pitches of the roof.
- › Ensure that the electrical appliances and installations in the house are in order. Replace defective appliances and old extension leads.

**MORE ATTENTION
FOR MORE SAFETY**



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Well-informed, better protected

Regardless of where you are, you should inform yourself about a few things in advance:

- › Find out how to reach the nearest staircase in the event of a fire. Do not use lifts!
- › Locate the fire extinguishers and find out how to use them.
- › Do you know how and where you can make an emergency call? Ask about it.
- › You have a disability or a companion who is disabled? Ask about support with evacuation.
- › Memorise the escape routes in hotels, clubs, cinemas etc. In the event of panic or a fire, this will save your life.

TIPS FOR AVOIDING DANGER

- › Hallways and staircases should not be restricted or blocked altogether by objects. The escape route must be free.
- › The main door of an apartment building should have a lock with a panic function so that the door can be opened from the inside at any time, in the event of an emergency.
- › Doors in escape routes must be kept closed – but never locked. This prevents the fire from spreading or the escape routes from filling with smoke.
- › Fire hydrants or fire brigade access routes may not be obstructed.
- › The building's safety facilities should be regularly checked and serviced.



What a safe house should have

There's no fire without smoke and poisonous gases. Escape routes then quickly become unusable, or the fire results in smoke poisoning or, in the worst case, in suffocation. Smoke alarms on the ceiling can save lives.

SMOKE ALARMS

Standard smoke alarms are as big as the palm of your hand and can be installed without any problems. They can be operated as individual smoke alarms or networked with one another by radio and have a penetrating, acoustic alarm signal. For deaf people, there are devices with a flashing light or a vibration alarm. During installation, attention must be paid to the VDS and DIN EN 14604 certification, as well as to the Q-label (higher quality).

Always fit the smoke alarm horizontally on the ceiling, as smoke rises. When fitting the smoke alarm, observe the manufacturer's instructions. A number of devices have a test button for checking the alarm. They indicate when the battery has to be replaced.

SMOKE ALARMS BELONG HERE:



- › Bedrooms
- › Children's rooms
- › Living and dining rooms
- › Halls and staircases
- › Cellars and attics

No smoke alarms in the bathroom and the kitchen!
Steam triggers a false alarm.



© Inga Nielsen/Shutterstock.com

You can obtain further information from the fire brigade and fire insurance institutions or at
www.rauchmelder-lebensretter.de

FIRE EXTINGUISHERS

Every company, and ideally every private household, should have fire-fighting equipment such as fire extinguishers and fire extinguishing spray. The size can vary depending on the legal requirements and the potential risk of fire. Ask your local fire brigade about this.

All fire-fighting equipment only helps in the development phase of a fire. After all, the discharge time of fire extinguishers is limited. Therefore, do not put yourself in danger when attempting to extinguish a fire. The specialist trade can give you information about operation and extinguishing capacity.

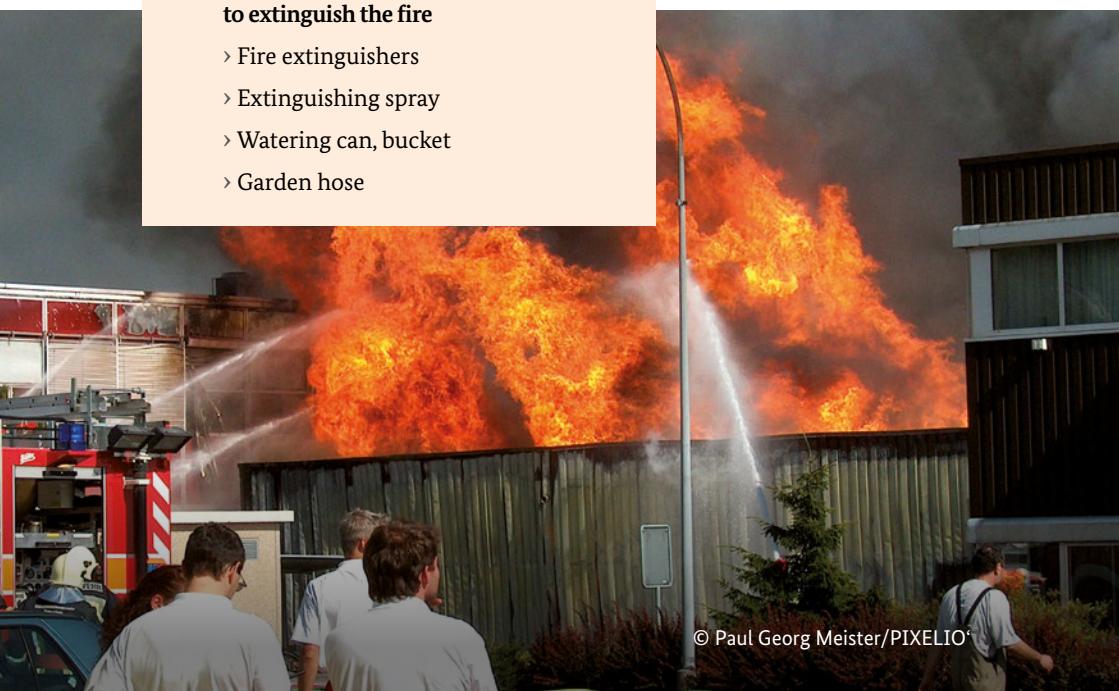


FIRE-FIGHTING EQUIPMENT

for small fires or initial attempts to extinguish the fire

- › Fire extinguishers
- › Extinguishing spray
- › Watering can, bucket
- › Garden hose

The rescue workers are standing by





What should you do if there's a fire?

A fire in the house is always an exceptional situation. Every second counts. But in spite of everything, you should not panic or do something ill-considered. As a basic rule: the safety of people always takes precedence over any fire-fighting measures!

You discover a fire? Proceed as follows:

Try to nip the source of the fire in the bud.

- › Only make an attempt to extinguish the fire if you are not in danger!
- › Never extinguish burning fat or other liquid fuels with water. This can result in a very high tongue of flame – this is life-threatening! If it is possible without endangering yourself, turn off the power source or take the pan off the hob. Put a lid on the pan to stifle the fire. Only use special fire extinguishers which are suitable for fat fires (Fire Class F).
- › Turn off the electric power in the danger zone before starting to extinguish the fire! Caution – risk of electric shock!
- › Always extinguish a fire from the bottom to the top and from the side to the middle!
- › Never enter rooms that are filled with smoke! Poisonous noxious fumes form there. If you are in a room filled with smoke, move forwards, crawling along the floor. Close the door from the outside and alert the fire brigade on 112.

1. THE FIRE IS JUST STARTING



One of the most frequent causes of a fire in the kitchen: a tea towel lying on a hot plate that has been left on.

2. FIRE EXTINGUISHING ATTEMPTS ARE NOT POSSIBLE

- › Close the windows of the room, but only if this is possible without putting yourself in danger. If not, leave the room immediately.
- › Close the door of the room where the fire is. This will deprive the fire of oxygen.

3. CALL THE FIRE BRIGADE

- › Call 112!
- › Say: where is the site of the emergency? What has happened? Who is calling?
- › Wait for questions!

4. WARN AND PROTECT PEOPLE

- › Warn other people in the apartment or house!
- › Take yourself and others to safety (if applicable, can also be done by other people).

5. WAIT FOR AND BRIEF FIRE BRIGADE

- › Describe the premises, people in danger or objects that may explode to the fire brigade.
- › You have to leave the building or the apartment, floor etc.? Ensure that no one is left behind.

You can obtain further information from your fire brigade!



› Close all the doors, but do not lock them to aid fast searching.

› Fire protection safety doors and fire doors are closed, of course.

› Keep the keys to rooms or windows which can only be opened with a key ready for the emergency personnel.

6. EVERYONE OUT

› After leaving the building, check whether everybody from the flat or the house is in safety. If someone is missing, the fire brigade must assume that they are still in the building and thus in danger.

7. EVERYONE IN SAFETY

TIP FOR PRACTICE ALARM!



Take a practice alarm seriously. If there is a “real” fire alarm one day, you should know what has to be done. So that you and the emergency personnel don’t get into danger.



Floods



No one will forget that in a hurry: weeks of heavy rain transformed large portions of southern, eastern and northern Germany into disaster areas through the summer floods of 2013. In such cases, little brooks can become raging torrents which present a danger to your home, property and life.

The old town of Passau was completely flooded in the unprecedented floods in June 2013





Well-prepared for floods

The water is rising and there is no end in sight.

There is still time to prepare.

- › Obtain sandbags, lining boards, water-resistant plywood boards and silicone for protection.
- › Make sure that hazardous materials or chemicals cannot be reached by the water.
- › Bring valuable furniture or devices such as computers etc. into the higher, flood-protected rooms.
- › Secure the fuel oil tank against being lifted up by the water by, for example, anchoring it to the wall or weighing it down with ballast.
- › Obtain sufficient food and drinking water, a battery-powered radio or a wind-up radio, a torch, a camping stove and a camping toilet.
Have your briefcase containing the most important documents ready. You will find more information in the sections "Emergency pack" and "Document security."
- › Remember insect repellent, in case mosquitoes and other pests come into the house after the flood waters fall.

INSIDE AND OUTSIDE

OUR TIP:



Find out the critical high-water mark for your residential area from your local authority. You can find information on the latest flood levels on the Internet at www.hochwasserzentralen.de.



VERY IMPORTANT!

Keep up-to-date! Follow the latest weather reports and flood warnings on the radio, Internet or by teletext.

Consider the following at an early stage:

- › The care of sick people or people in need of assistance. Can you evacuate these people from the danger zone on time? Where to?
- › The evacuation of pets.
- › The possibilities for communicating with neighbours or other people if the telephone and mobile network are down. Discuss distress and danger signals with neighbours.
- › The “distribution of roles” in an emergency. Who will do what?



© blickwinkel/imago

Protective walls of sandbags



© imagebroker/imago



© Xinhua/imago

Rescue workers
during the flood
in Halle, Saxony-
Anhalt, 2013

Correct action in the event of a flood

Remain calm. Check whether your precautions are sufficient.

INDOORS

- › Clear out the cellars into which the groundwater may penetrate or which may fill up with water.
- › Check backwater flap valves in the cellar before the water rises. Do not stay in the cellar during the flood, since you will be putting your life at risk.
- › Seal windows and doors, as well as drain openings.
- › Turn off electrical appliances and radiators in rooms which may fill up with water. Think of the risk of an electric shock. Turn off the electric power completely, if necessary (fuse off).

IN THE CAR

- › Drive your car out of endangered garages or away from parking spaces.
- › Warning! Basement garages can become death traps when there is danger of flooding.
- › Do not drive through flooded streets. Water in the engine compartment does a lot of damage. The catalytic convertor with an operating temperature of 700°C breaks when it is suddenly cooled down by water.
- › Have your vehicle towed if there is water up to above the wheels.

Flooding in the town



© BBK

SAVE LIVES

- › Help others, but don't put yourself in danger.
- › Bring children out of the floodplain into safety before entering the danger zone.
- › Because of the formation of waves and the risk of underwater obstacles, do not go for a "ride" unnecessarily in boats or other vehicles in flooding areas.
- › Do not enter any shore areas because of the risk of undercutting or erosion.
- Flooded or partially flooded streets may not be driven on.
- › Observe the instructions and barriers of the emergency personnel.



Flooding in
Königswinter am Rhein

© BBK

Behaviour after the flood

The water is draining away. Now it is time to take stock and tidy up.

- › Only start the pumping operations in the house when you are sure that the groundwater level has fallen sufficiently. Be careful: otherwise, you will damage the house's watertight tanking. Please pay attention to information provided by the municipality.



- › Take stock and photograph the damages for the insurance company.
- › Clear the residual water and silt out of the house.
- › Dry the rooms as quickly as possible, in order to avoid structural damages or mould. Use heaters for drying. They can be rented or loaned.
- › Have the electrics, the fuel oil tank and, in special cases, the building statics checked by an expert.
- › If hazardous substances, such as dyes, paint, pesticides, petrol, oil etc. have been released, call the fire brigade.
- › Dirty, broken furniture and spoiled food does not go in the household waste, but must be disposed of professionally.
- › Do not eat any fruit, vegetables and salad from flooded areas. Inform the County Commissioner's Office or the Office for Agriculture in the event of gardens or fields contaminated by hazardous substances (e.g. oil).



ALWAYS UP-TO-DATE

You can find more information at www.bbk.bund.de and www.hochwasserzentralen.de.

Clearing work after the
flood in the old town
of Grimma, Saxony, 2013



© Jörn Haufe/imago

CBRN Hazardous Substances



We live in an industrial society and benefit from the opportunities provided by modern technology. But there is no technology without risks. Thus, it is also a part of our lives that hazardous substances may be released – in spite of all the safety standards. For example, in the event an accident to a dangerous goods transport vehicle, a fire in a factory or a chemical products warehouse. However, the careless handling of household detergents at home can also be dangerous.

Firefighters in action because of a chemical accident on an industrial estate, 2006





What is a hazardous substance?

CBRN hazardous substances may occur in a gaseous or vaporous form, as aerosols, as liquids or as solids. A lay person cannot generally recognise the danger. Therefore: if something happens, report it to the **rescue coordination centre (Tel. 112)** or the **poison information centre** (ask for the number of the poison information centre near you and make a note of it on the back of this brochure). In the event of more serious incidents, pay attention to announcements on the radio or by loudspeaker vehicles.

Chemicals exhibit a very wide range of different effects. Many substances are combustible or even explosive; they may be corrosive or poisonous. Sometimes, they even have a number of effects at the same time. In most cases, they have their greatest impact when they are absorbed into the body. This can take place through the skin, by ingestion or by inhalation.

Particular care is required in the case of gaseous substances. As most gases and vapours are heavier than air, they may accumulate in depressions or cellars. When chemicals are released, such places should, therefore, be avoided.

➤ The range of hazardous substances is large. A distinction is made between **chemical (C), biological (B), radiological (R), and nuclear (N) hazardous substances**

**CHEMICAL
HAZARDOUS
SUBSTANCES**

Rauch
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Glas
© studiovin/Shutterstock.com





Firefighters during a simulation of a laboratory accident in the Office of Criminal Investigation of the Land in Mainz, Rhineland-Palatinate, 2003



BIOLOGICAL HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES

Biological hazardous substances include bacteria, viruses, fungi, parasites and toxins. They may trigger serious diseases in people. They are primarily absorbed into the body via mucous membranes (respiratory tracts, gastrointestinal tract, eyes) and the skin (wounds). In the event of the risk of absorption via the respiratory tracts, at least provisional respiratory protection should be used, e.g. dust mask.



RADIOACTIVE SUBSTANCES

Radiological (R) and nuclear (N) substances describe the different types of production of a radioactive contamination. Radioactive substances emit high-energy, ionising radiation. This radiation can damage living cells and kill them or cause cancer. A particular danger comes from the absorption of radioactive substances into the body. This can take place by inhalation, ingestion and through the skin (wounds). Alpha radiation (a type of ionising radiation), in particular represents a high risk potential. Here, respiratory protection helps you before you inhale it into your lungs. Ionising radiation is weakened when it passes through matter. In cellars, the weakening effect is particularly great due to the adjacent layer of earth and the higher floors.



Behaviour in the event of the release of hazardous substances

There are hazardous substances in the air or in the water? What should you do now?

Pay attention to announcements on the radio, television or from loudspeaker vehicles. Seek information on the Internet. And inform other occupants of the building.

Chemical accident



© Johner Images/Getty Images

- › Stay in the building.
- › Temporarily take in endangered passers-by.
- › Inform – if necessary – other occupants of the building.
- › Close windows and doors.
- › Turn off fans and air conditioning systems; close the ventilation slots in the window frames.
- › Seek out a protected internal room in your apartment, ideally one which has no outside windows.

indoors

INDOORS

- › In the event that radioactive substances are released, seek out a cellar from preference.
- › Avoid the unnecessary consumption of oxygen by candles or similar.
- › Turn the radio (VHF, regional stations) or the television on to get information.
- › Pay attention to the announcements by the authorities and the emergency personnel.
- › Only make telephone calls in emergencies.
- › In the event of the ingress of hazardous substances, use the available respiratory protective devices, if necessary an improvised face mask (surgical masks, cloths...).

OUTSIDE

- › Pay attention to announcements by the police and the fire brigade.
- › Move across the direction of the wind, if possible; breathe through a respiratory protection device, if possible, at least through a handkerchief.
- › Seek out the nearest closed building.
- › If you have already come into contact with hazardous substances, change your outer clothing and shoes.
- › Pack the contaminated outer clothing and shoes in plastic bags and place these outside the living area, outside the building, as far as this is possible.
- › First wash your hands thoroughly, then your face and hair, as well as your nose and ears, with soap and water.

**Every household
should have a respiratory
protection mask.**



© Jochen Tack/Imago

**Close all
windows and doors**



© quadshock/Shutterstock.com



© Dieter Sebastian/BBK

Serious accident of a dangerous goods HGV

- › In the event that biological substances are released, the disinfection of your hands is also recommended.
- › Follow the instructions for sheltering in buildings.

- › Switch off the ventilation and close the windows.
- › Listen to the radio (VHF, region stations) and follow the instructions of the authorities and emergency personnel.
- › Seek out the nearest closed building, request admission and observe the instructions for sheltering in buildings there.

IN THE CAR

Education for children on the subject of self-protection

www.max-und-flocke-helferland.de

© Michael Hüter



Max & Flocke accompany
the children in Helferland.

The BBK provides this website to familiarise children between the ages of 7 and 12 with the dangers of everyday life. Here, children can learn how to deal with everyday dangers through an adventure game, find stories and pictures for colouring in related to the topic of civil protection and find many other useful things to download.



Homepage of www.max-and-flocke-helferland.de

On the website, there are also great materials for parents, teachers and trainers at relief organisations, e.g. worksheets with didactic comments.

The worksheets can be used in lessons for classes 2 to 6 in a variety of subjects, as well as for project weeks, for example for a project on "First Aid" or "Fire Protection".

The following worksheets are available:

Soaking Wet – module on flooding and landslides

Extremely combustible – module on drought and forest fires

Shaky – module on earthquakes

Knife, fork, scissors, light – module on risks in the home

Safety has Right of Way – module on getting to school safely

Fired Up – module on fire protection education

Thunder and Lightning – module on the correct behaviour during thunderstorms

Helpfulness – module on the correct behaviour in an emergency

A Matter of Honour – on the topic of honorary posts

Willingness to Help – module on social interaction

Health – module on influenza and viruses

In addition, methodological-didactic comments are available for every module, including tips for the use of the worksheets. All the modules are only available in German and English and can be ordered from the BBK or downloaded from the website.



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IMPORTANT

TELEPHONE NUMBERS



IN AN EMERGENCY SAY:

- Where is the site of the emergency?
- What has happened?
- Who is calling?
- Wait for questions!

If possible, direct rescue workers on the street, e.g. if house numbers are difficult to identify or if they have to be conducted to a rear building.

Fire brigade, rescue service **112**

Police **110**

Telephone number for public authorities **115**

Medical emergency service

Ambulance service

Poison information centre

Standby pharmacy

Public utility company