

A

Study this example situation:



Your car should have a spare wheel because it is possible you will have a puncture.

Your car should have a spare wheel **in case** you have a puncture.

In case you have a puncture = because it is possible you will have a puncture.

Some more examples of **in case**:

- ☐ I'll leave my mobile phone switched on **in case Jane calls**. (= because it is possible she will call)
- ☐ I'll draw a map for you **in case you have problems finding our house**. (= because it is possible you will have problems)
- ☐ I'll remind them about the meeting **in case they've forgotten**. (= because it is possible they have forgotten)

We use **just in case** for a smaller possibility:

- ☐ I don't think it will rain, but I'll take an umbrella **just in case**. (= **just in case** it rains)

Do not use **will** after **in case**. Use a present tense for the future (see Unit 25):

- ☐ I'll leave my phone switched on **in case Jane calls**. (*not in case Jane will call*)

B

In case is not the same as **if**. We use **in case** to say *why* somebody does (or doesn't do) something. You do something *now* **in case** something happens *later*.

Compare:

in case

- ☐ We'll buy some more food **in case** Tom comes.
(= Maybe Tom will come. We'll buy some more food now, whether he comes or not; then we'll *already* have the food *if* he comes.)
- ☐ I'll give you my phone number **in case** you need to contact me.
- ☐ You should insure your bike **in case** it is stolen.

if

- ☐ We'll buy some more food **if** Tom comes.
(= Maybe Tom will come. If he comes, we'll buy some more food; if he doesn't come, we won't buy any more food.)
- ☐ You can call me on this number **if** you need to contact me.
- ☐ You should inform the police **if** your bike is stolen.

C

You can use **in case** + *past* to say why somebody did something:

- ☐ I left my phone switched on **in case Jane called**. (= because it was possible that Jane would call)
- ☐ I drew a map for Sarah **in case she had problems finding the house**.
- ☐ We rang the doorbell again **in case they hadn't heard it the first time**.

D

In case of is not the same as **in case**. **In case of** ... = if there is ... (especially on notices etc.):

- ☐ **In case of fire**, please leave the building as quickly as possible. (= if there is a fire)
- ☐ **In case of emergency**, call this number. (= if there is an emergency)