Slightly Anxious

Emergency prep done properly.

THE

Household Emergency Plan

Seven days. One household. One piece of paper.

Address	
Postcode	
Completed on	
Next review due	

You can type into every box on this form and then print it, or print it blank and fill it in by hand. Either works. What matters is that a printed copy ends up somewhere everyone in the house can find in the dark.

Turning any crisis into a manageable adventure.

Before you start

This is not a document to read. It is a document to fill in. Most of it is blank on purpose, because the useful part is not our advice, it is your answers.

Here is the honest position. In a real emergency nobody reads a forty page guide by torchlight. What actually helps is knowing four things without having to think: who you are ringing, where you are meeting, where the stopcock is, and whether there is enough water in the cupboard. Everything below is built to get those four things onto paper in about an hour.

How to use it

- Do it in one sitting if you can. An hour with a cup of tea is plenty.
- Anything you cannot answer is not a failure, it is your to do list. Come back to it.
- Three sections ask you to get up and physically go and look at something. Please actually go and look. Almost nobody knows where their stopcock is until the day they need it.
- Print it. A plan that only exists on a screen is a plan that stops existing when the battery dies.
- Put a review date in your calendar for twelve months from now. Phone numbers rot, children grow, medication changes.

Why seven days, and not three

Most preparedness advice tells you to plan for 72 hours. We think that is too short, and we are not alone. Estonia tells its households to be able to cope for at least seven days. Norway and Sweden both say one week. The reasoning is the same everywhere: in a genuine emergency official help goes first to the people who cannot manage without it, so if you can manage, you free up that help for somebody who cannot.

Seven days also matches how these things actually end. Storm damage to a distribution network, a burst main, a treatment works knocked out by flooding. These are rarely fixed in three days. Planning for a week costs very little extra and removes the worst of the scramble on day four.

> **The *Slightly Anxious* position**
>
> We plan for seven days, not three.
>
> We store 10 litres of water per person per day, not the two or three that covers drinking alone.
>
> We treat it as an indoor camping holiday, not a survival situation.

Part one: your people

1. Who lives here

Everyone who sleeps here regularly, and anyone who would come here in an emergency.

Name	Date of birth	Mobile	Usually where on a weekday

2. Your out-of-area contact

This is the most useful line in the whole plan. Pick one person who lives well away from you. If your household gets separated and local networks are congested, everybody rings this one person rather than each other, and they pass the messages on. Make sure they know they have been chosen, and that everyone old enough to use a phone has the number on paper.

Name	
Relationship	
Phone	
Second phone or email	

3. Where we meet

Two meeting points, because the first one might be the problem.

	Location	How we get there
Right outside the house (fire)		
Away from the street (cannot get home)		

A note on the first one. If you are leaving a burning house take nothing at all. Not this plan, not the grab bag, not the laptop. Go straight out and stay out. The meeting point exists so somebody can tell the fire service whether everyone is accounted for.

Read more: 'Slightly Anxious about approaching flames' at Slightly Anxious.

4. The numbers we would actually need

Write these on paper. Your phone contacts are no use to a neighbour, and no use at all when the battery is flat.

Who	Number	Notes
Emergency services	**999**	Or 112. You can text 999 if registered, see below
Non-emergency police	**101**	
NHS non-emergency	**111**	
Report a power cut	**105**	England, Scotland, Wales. NI: 03457 643643
If you smell gas	**0800 111 999**	Gas Emergency Service, 24 hours
Floodline	**0345 988 1188**	Textphone 0345 602 6340
Water supplier		Emergency number is on your bill
Electricity supplier		
GP surgery		
Pharmacy		
Home insurance claims line		
Buildings policy number		
Contents policy number		
Landlord or managing agent		
School or nursery		
Vet		
Neighbour we would check on		

Why the insurance lines are in here

If a flood or a fire makes your home uninhabitable you will be ringing your insurer from somebody else's kitchen, quite possibly the same evening, and the first thing they will ask for is the policy number sitting in a drawer in the house you have just walked out of.

Read more: 'It's all about the Kerching Kerching!' at Slightly Anxious.

5. Registers worth joining, all free

These take a few minutes each and most people have never heard of them. For the time they cost they are the highest value thing in this entire plan.

Priority Services Register

Run by your energy, gas and water suppliers. It flags your household for extra support when supply is interrupted. You may be eligible if anyone here is of state pension age, has a disability or long term condition, is pregnant or has young children, is recovering from illness or injury, or needs help with communication. You do not need to prove anything, and a carer can register on your behalf. Check eligibility at thepsr.co.uk, then contact each supplier separately. In Northern Ireland these are called Customer Care Registers.

- [ ] Registered with electricity supplier
- [ ] Registered with gas supplier
- [ ] Registered with water supplier

Flood warnings

Free from the Environment Agency by phone, text or email. Check your risk and sign up at gov.uk, or ring Floodline on 0345 988 1188. Worth doing even if you think you are not at risk, because surface water flooding turns up in places that have never flooded from a river.

- [ ] Checked our flood risk
- [ ] Signed up for flood warnings

Read more: ‘Slightly Anxious about rising water levels’ at Slightly Anxious.

Emergency SMS

If anyone here is deaf, hard of hearing or has a speech impairment they can text 999 instead of calling, but only if the phone is registered first. Text the word register to 999 and follow the reply. It takes a minute, and it does not work if you leave it until you need it.

- [ ] Relevant phones registered

Emergency Alerts and Medical ID

The government can send a siren-style alert straight to mobile phones when there is a danger to life nearby. It needs no sign-up and arrives even on silent, so do not switch it off, and tell anyone in the house who might be startled by the noise what it is. Separately, most phones let you add emergency contacts and medical information visible without unlocking, usually called ICE or Medical ID. Put in what a paramedic would need and nothing more, because anyone holding the phone can read it.

- [ ] Everyone knows what the alert sounds like
- [ ] Medical ID set up on each phone

Part two: your home

6. The three shut-offs

Walk to it

Go and find all three of these now, while the lights are on, and take a photo of each on your phone. If a valve is stiff, work it now rather than discovering it has seized when water is coming through the ceiling.

If a tool is needed, tape that tool next to the valve. Not in the shed.

	Exactly where it is	How to turn it off	Tool needed
Water stopcock			
Gas		Lever, a quarter turn	
Electricity		Main switch on the consumer unit	

One caution. Turn the gas off if you smell gas, then leave the property and ring 0800 111 999 from outside. Do not turn it back on yourself afterwards. That is a job for an engineer.

7. A ten minute walk round the house

Do this once a year. It is the cheapest preparedness there is.

- ☐ Smoke alarm on every floor, tested this month
- ☐ Everyone knows two ways out of the house
- ☐ Window and door lock keys kept where everyone can find them
- ☐ We know whether our boiler needs mains electricity to run
- ☐ Carbon monoxide alarm near any fuel-burning appliance
- ☐ Escape routes are not blocked by bikes, boxes or a locked gate
- ☐ Nothing important stored on the floor of a room that could flood
- ☐ Loft, garage and shed contents would not make a fire worse

The one most people get wrong

Your gas boiler almost certainly does not work in a power cut. Modern condensing boilers need mains electricity for the pump, the fan and the controls. Gas central heating is not a back-up for a blackout, it is a casualty of one.

So the honest question for the box below is this: if the power went off in February, what would actually keep this house warm?

If the power goes off in winter, our plan for staying warm is

Read more: ‘What to do when the heating stops’ at Slightly Anxious.

Part three: medical and dependants

8. Medication

Keep a copy of this page with the grab bag as well as here. If you end up in a rest centre or a relative’s spare room, handing somebody an accurate list saves a great deal of trouble.

Who	Medication	Dose and when	Days in stock	Fridge?

Try to keep several days of everything in hand rather than collecting a repeat prescription on the last day. Always read the label, and consult a pharmacist if unsure.

9. Anything that needs power

Stairlifts, hoists, oxygen concentrators, nebulisers, CPAP machines, powered wheelchairs, a fridge holding medicine. If anything appears below, the Priority Services Register is not optional for your household. Keep a paper copy of the instructions too, because manuals live online and online is the first thing to go.

Equipment	Who needs it	Back-up battery or plan	Supplier and number

10. People who would need a hand

Older relatives, a neighbour living alone, anyone who would not manage stairs in the dark, anyone who does not read English easily. Agree now who checks on whom, so that on the day nobody assumes somebody else has done it.

Name	Where	What they would need	Who checks on them

11. Pets

Pets are household members, and plans that ignore them fall apart at exactly the wrong moment. Most emergency rest centres cannot take animals other than assistance dogs, so if you might have to leave, they need somewhere to go.

Pet	Microchip number	Seven days of food and water	Where they would go

- ☐ Carrier or crate accessible, one per animal
- ☐ Recent printed photo of each animal
- ☐ Vaccination and microchip records with the documents

Read more: ‘Looking after your pets in an emergency’ at Slightly Anxious.

12. Water, and why we say 10 litres

The figure you will see quoted most often is two and a half to three litres per person per day. That is the World Health Organisation survival minimum, and it is exactly what it says it is: the amount that stops you becoming dangerously dehydrated. It covers drinking and nothing else.

We recommend 10 litres per person per day, which is also the figure the UK government’s own Prepare campaign uses, and it is the right one because it covers cooking and hygiene as well as drinking. The thing that makes a week without mains water genuinely miserable is not thirst, it is hygiene.

It is worth being honest about how tight even 10 litres is. A single toilet flush is six to nine litres, so one flush would eat most of a person’s daily allowance. In practice you will not be flushing freely, you will be making choices, and this is precisely why washing water and drinking water get separated in a real emergency. Water you have used for washing will still flush a toilet perfectly well.

Store what you can. If 10 litres a day for everyone is more than your flat can physically hold, store what fits and write down where you would go for more. Some is enormously better than none.

Our water sum	
People in the household	
Litres per person per day	**10**
Days we are planning for	**7**
Total target in litres (people x 10 x 7)	
What we actually have stored today	

Where our water is stored	How much	Date filled or bought

Read more: 'What to do when the water is turned off' at Slightly Anxious.

13. Food

The trick is not to buy special emergency food you will never eat. It is to keep a slightly deeper stock of the things you already eat, use the oldest first, and top up as you go. Nothing goes to waste and you are never really preparing, you are just shopping slightly ahead.

One thing genuinely worth checking. At least two days of it should be food you can eat with no cooking and no hot water at all, because the most likely scenario is a power cut, and a power cut takes your hob with it.

Food store check	Yes	Notes
Seven days of food for everyone in the house		
At least two days of it needs no cooking		
A tin opener that is not electric		
A way to heat food without mains power		
Allergies and special diets accounted for		
Something nice in there as well		Morale is a supply

A safety note. Camping stoves and barbecues are for outdoors and well ventilated spaces only. Every winter somebody brings one inside to keep warm, and carbon monoxide is silent, invisible and quick.

Read more: 'Kitchen in a crisis with Slightly Anxious' at Slightly Anxious.

14. The grab bag

One bag, packed, by the door or under the stairs. Its job is the case where you are told to leave with very little notice. Everyone should know where it is, and it should be light enough for whoever is most likely to be carrying it.

- [ ] A printed copy of this plan
- [ ] Power bank, charged
- [ ] First aid kit
- [ ] Cash in small notes and coins
- [ ] Wet wipes, hand sanitiser, toilet roll
- [ ] Spare glasses, hearing aid batteries, chargers
- [ ] Something for the children to do
- [ ] Wind-up or battery torch, spare batteries
- [ ] Wind-up or battery radio
- [ ] Medication list and several days of anything critical
- [ ] Water and food needing nothing doing to it
- [ ] A warm layer and a waterproof each
- [ ] Copies of key documents
- [ ] Pet essentials, lead, carrier

Grab bag lives here	Last checked	Next check due

Read more: 'Slightly Anxious says Get a Grab Bag' at Slightly Anxious.

15. Cash

Card machines need power and a network. So do cash machines. In the outages that have actually happened in Europe recently the first practical problem for most households was not food, it was that they could not pay for anything. Keep a modest amount at home in small denominations, because nobody in a shop with no till is going to change a fifty.

Cash	
Amount kept at home	
Where it is kept	
Last checked	

Read more: 'It's all about the Kerching Kerching!' at Slightly Anxious.

16. Light, power and staying informed

Torches, not candles. A candle is a house fire waiting for a tired person at two in the morning.

- [ ] A torch for each person, plus spare batteries
- [ ] Battery or wind-up radio not dependent on the internet
- [ ] Power bank charged, recharged monthly
- [ ] Car charger for phones, if you have a car

Radio stations we would listen to	Frequency

Radio stations we would listen to	Frequency

Write the frequencies down. Almost nobody knows them, because almost nobody tunes a radio any more.

Read more: ‘What to do when the lights go out’ at Slightly Anxious.

Part five: what we do if

Short, specific, and agreed in advance. Fill in the right hand column with what your household would actually do, in your actual home.

The power goes off

The general advice	What we do, in this house
Check whether it is just us or the whole street. Ring 105. Unplug sensitive appliances. Keep the fridge and freezer shut. Torches out. Check on the neighbour.	

The water goes off, or we are told to boil it

The general advice	What we do, in this house
Stop using the taps. Ring the water company. Start on stored water. Fill the bath if there is any warning. Follow boil notices exactly.	

The heating stops in winter

The general advice	What we do, in this house
Close doors, curtains and blinds. Move everyone into one room. Layers, hats, blankets. Hot drinks if we can make them. Consider going to family or friends.	

Flood water is on its way

The general advice	What we do, in this house
Move upstairs or move out, whichever we have been told. Turn off gas and electricity if it is safe. Move what we can upstairs. Never drive or walk through flood water.	

There is a fire

The general advice	What we do, in this house
Get out, stay out, ring 999. Take nothing at all. Meet at the point in section three.	

We are told to evacuate

The general advice	What we do, in this house
Grab bag, medication, phones and chargers, pets. Turn off utilities if instructed. Tell the out-of-area contact where we are going.	

We are told to stay indoors

The general advice	What we do, in this house
Close windows and doors, turn off ventilation, go to an internal room, follow the radio or the Emergency Alert instructions.	

Read more: ‘What to do when the power goes out’ at Slightly Anxious.

Part six: paperwork and money

Not urgent on day one. Very much the difference between a bad fortnight and a bad year by day thirty.

Document	Where the original is	Copy kept where
Passports		
Birth and marriage certificates		
Driving licences		
Buildings insurance policy		
Contents insurance policy		
Tenancy agreement or deeds		
Bank details		
Medical records and prescriptions		
Pet records		

Two small habits worth having

Photograph every room once a year, including inside cupboards. It takes five minutes and it is the best evidence you can hand an insurer.

Keep a copy of your key documents somewhere that is not your house. A fireproof box is no help if the house is under water.

Part seven: keeping it alive

A plan written once and never looked at again is worse than no plan, because it makes you feel prepared while quietly going out of date. Fifteen minutes a year is all it takes.

The annual fifteen minutes

- [ ] Phone numbers still correct
- [ ] Water rotated or replaced
- [ ] Batteries tested, power bank charged
- [ ] Grab bag repacked for the season
- [ ] Medication list still correct
- [ ] Food stock still in date
- [ ] Smoke and CO alarms tested
- [ ] Children still know the meeting point

Review log

Reviewed on	By	What changed

Sit down with everyone in the house for ten minutes and walk through it. Where we meet, who we ring, where the stopcock is. Children handle this far better than adults expect, provided it is presented as a plan rather than a warning. Then put it away and get on with your life, which is rather the point.

Where this came from

The structure of this plan is drawn from twenty-eight national and civil preparedness guides, including the UK government's Prepare campaign, Estonia's Be Prepared crisis guide, Norway's one-week preparedness advice, Sweden's In case of crisis or war, Canada's all-hazard preparedness workbook and the US FEMA Are You Ready handbook. Where they disagreed we followed the European ones, because their assumptions about flats, mains water and a country our size are closer to yours than a guide written for Colorado.

All UK numbers, registers and services named here were checked against UK government and agency sources in August 2026. They do change. If you are reading this much later, they are worth a two minute check.

The two numbers, and where they come from

Our position	Where it comes from	What we are arguing against
Plan for seven days	Estonia, Norway and Sweden all tell households to manage for one week	The 72 hour figure used in much international advice. Real utility outages frequently run past three days
Store 10 litres per person per day	The UK government's Prepare campaign uses the same figure, and we agree with it	The WHO survival minimum of 2.5 to 3 litres, which covers drinking only and leaves nothing for sanitation

This plan is general guidance for UK households and is not medical, legal or financial advice. Always read the label on any medication and consult a pharmacist if unsure. In an immediate emergency, ring 999.

You have just done the single most useful hour of preparedness there is. Everything after this is shopping.

Remember, keep calm and visit us at www.SlightlyAnxious.com