

HOME EMERGENCY SUPPLY KIT

HOW WILL YOU, YOUR FAMILY AND LOVED ONES COPE DURING DISRUPTIONS IN SOCIETY?

DO YOU HAVE an action plan in case there is a power outage or disruption in the distribution of heating or water?

DO YOU HAVE a first aid and medicine kit at home in view of a sudden illness or accident?

DO YOU GO to the store every day or can you manage on your own using the supplies in your pantry for some time, say, for three days or a week?

HOW WILL YOU stay in touch with your loved ones if the mobile phone network or other communications are down?

A home emergency supply kit does not only entail food and drink, it also includes other daily supplies. The kit is part of wider home preparedness which also includes acquiring the skills and knowledge needed for difficult times. Everyone can learn valuable

skills with a view to disruptions, such as how to extinguish fires or administer first aid. It is also useful to make contingency plans for drawn-out power outages, for example. Preparedness is all about teamwork and lending a hand.

When do you need a home emergency supply kit?

- A situation where you might not be able to make it to the store can arise all of a sudden for many reasons. Persons living alone can become so ill that they are unable to go shopping, or a family member may become sick. Society is also vulnerable; strikes, transport disruptions or widespread power outages can interfere with everyday life. Furthermore, large accidents may close stores or prevent anyone from going out. In addition, disruptions in the distribution chain can

stop the transport of goods to stores, or the selling of goods.

- A storm can quickly create difficulties for familiar everyday routines. It may block traffic for an extensive period and cause a blackout which lasts for days.
- You should also help your neighbours and, especially, regularly check that elderly people are doing OK.



WATER

WHAT WILL YOU DO if suddenly there's no water or if it is contaminated?

DO YOU HAVE enough large and clean containers with lids in which you can store and transport water?

Finns, on average, use approximately 130 litres of water per day per person. Buckets with lids and juice canisters make good emergency water containers, just be sure to store them in a clean place. Shops run out of bottled water very quickly.

In addition, clean water is also needed for food preparation, hygiene and flushing the toilet.

The minimum requirement for water is approximately 1-2 buckets of water per person per day. If the disruption drags on, the need for water will increase respectively.

**RESERVE AT
LEAST 2 L
OF CLEAN WATER
PER DAY
PER PERSON.**

When there is no water

Contaminated water

- Boil all water to be used for cooking and drinking for at least 5 minutes. It is not sufficient to bring water to the boil with an electric kettle or coffee maker. The local water service will issue a directive to boil water when it is necessary.
- Do not use water when the water pipes are being chlorinated (shock chlorination). The water service will provide detailed instructions on a case-by-case basis.

If there is no running water:

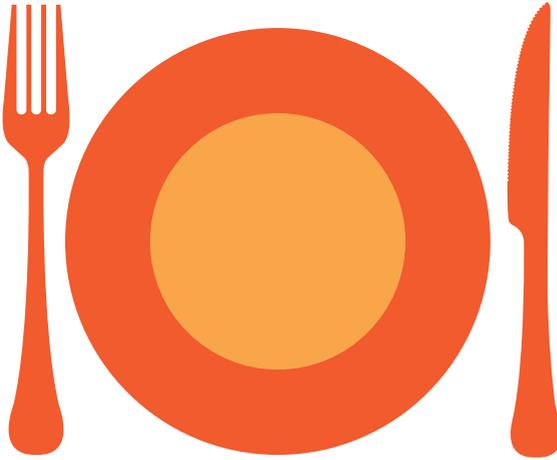
- Information about ongoing water distribution problems can be obtained by calling the water service's fault reporting service. In all water service-related disruptions contact the caretaker of your residence. If needed, please inform your neighbours of the situation.
- If you live in a house (houses or semi-detached residences), please contact the water service's fault reporting service.

If the water supply cut lasts longer than 24 hours the water service will organise emergency water distribution.

Ways to organise emergency water distribution:

- Water distribution points.
- Piping water into residences by temporary means, such as tank lorries or by routing water through pipes that are still in working order.
- Transport and distribution of potable water by water tank lorries.
- Distribution of bottled water.

Monitor the information provided by the water service and the authorities.



FOOD

DO YOU HAVE enough food at home if you cannot make it to the store?

The home emergency supply kit is not a separate emergency stockpile; rather, the goods should be continually used and replaced. “Best before” is a good guide to follow. Assemble the kit from the kinds of foods that you use on a regular basis. Also, make plans for how to prepare food during a power outage.

Security of supply in Finland

Security of supply is part of society’s preparedness for serious disruptions. It secures the livelihood of the population as well as production, services and infrastructure critical to the economy and national defence. The emergency stockpiles of cereals, fuels and other critical products are calculated in such a manner that, should imports suddenly end, civil society would not grind to a halt, food production would continue, the trans-

port system would keep operating and medicines would still be available. However, in a serious crisis society cannot look after the entire population. Hence, everyone’s share is needed. Through home emergency preparedness households participate in society’s preparedness. By means of home emergency supply kits, and other means, it is possible to create the preconditions for the public to weather even serious crises.

When a power outage occurs

- According to tests done by the Work Efficiency Institute TTS, it can take up to several days for products in a freezer to thaw from -18 degrees to zero Celsius. A chest freezer will remain colder for a longer time than an upright freezer. At home, frozen products can still be refrozen when they are at -9 degrees, so long as their quality can be monitored. If food products have already thawed to zero degrees, they can be used as food or cooked before refreezing.
- Portable stoves and grills are convenient when it comes to cooking outdoors so long as the fire is carefully managed and extinguishers are at hand.
- First use the products from the refrigerator.
- During the cold time of the year store perishable goods outdoors and well covered.
- Avoid opening the freezer door. By covering the freezer with blankets or rugs you can slow down the thawing process by some hours.
- Protect the floor under the freezer from melt water

When power is restored:

- Use the thawed supplies from the freezer. Refrigerator-cold products are still completely usable.
- Check that the cooktop is not on.
- Remove any extra padding from around the freezer.



COMMUNICATIONS

DO YOU OWN a battery-operated radio and spare batteries?

Telephone networks are designed to operate on battery power for at least 3-12 hours during blackouts. If needed, the networks can keep operating for days on emergency power, but how long will your own mobile phone last? It is possible to prepare for a drawn-out power outage by acquiring a spare battery or a car/battery charger. The need for information and psychological resilience are accentuated in exceptional circumstances.

Emergency warning

The authorities issue emergency warnings when it is necessary to alert the public. The emergency warning system may also be used to issue an all-clear when the danger has passed. When necessary the warning will include instructions on how to proceed, such as how to protect oneself from the danger and its consequences, and how to avoid the danger.

An emergency warning can be issued when the occurrence causes:

- Danger to life and limb.
- Significant danger to property.

The emergency warning will be issued on YLE radio channels and on the channels of other radio stations with long-term broadcasting licences. The emergency warning can also be broadcast on television, the TV's teletext pages and YLE's web pages.

General alarm signal

The general alarm signal is a one minute-long, continuously ascending and descending tone sounded by public warning sirens. It alerts people outdoors of a present danger. The first, and usually sufficient, means of self-protection is to go indoors and follow the authorities' instruc-

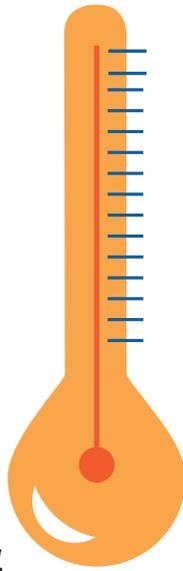
tions for the situation.

When you hear the general alarm signal, do this:

- Go indoors. Stay indoors.
- Close all doors, windows and vents and turn off ventilation systems.
- Turn on the radio and patiently wait for instructions.
- Avoid using the telephone so that the

telephone lines are not overloaded.

- Texting causes less load on the network than calling.
- Do not leave the area unless the authorities tell you to do so, or else you might end up in a dangerous situation on the way.



HEATING

HOW WILL YOU stay warm when there is no electricity?

Except for fireplaces all heating requires electricity. All water and air pump units, boilers, furnaces as well as thermal and district heating systems require electricity to function. In cold weather the inside temperature in wooden houses drops down to +10 degrees in less than 24 hours. Prefabricated blocks of flats will get cold in approximately two days and solid, stone-built blocks of flats in three days. Once power is restored, it takes time to regain the proper inside temperatures.

Source: *Pahasti poikki* ("Severe Outage") 2008.

**HAVING ENOUGH
WARM CLOTHES AND
BLANKETS FOR THE ENTIRE
HOUSEHOLD WILL HELP YOU
MANAGE WHEN THE
DWELLING
GETS COLDER.**

When the temperature drops

A fireplace and dry firewood are a good source of extra heat. If you do not have an auxiliary source of heat, does an acquaintance living nearby or your neighbour have one?

However, if you have to stay in a dwelling which keeps getting colder, it is sensible to slow down the rate of cooling.

1. Close the windows and shut the front door. Heat escapes rapidly if the front door is repeatedly opened. Close the connecting doors to corridors, the entrance and the hallway and stop up all gaps.

2. Stop the ventilation. Plug all fresh air vents, such as the round vents on walls and the vents on window frames.

3. Build a fire in the fireplace. This way at least a part of your residence will remain warm.

If the indoors temperature has dropped to +15 degrees:

1. Try to maintain heat in one room. Close the connecting doors to peripheral and corner rooms and insulate any gaps with rugs or towels.

2. Cover the windows with heavy curtains or blankets. Put more rugs on the floor.

3. Dress in warm, breathable clothes preferably made of wool. Put more socks or shoes on. When necessary, wear a knitted cap and put your gloves on.

PREPAREDNESS TEST

Answer yes or no

	YES	NO
I have clean water buckets, furnished with lids, and water canisters for storing water.		
I know how to hygienically take care of my toilet needs on a temporary basis when there is no running water.		
I have one functioning fire alarm per every 60 square metres in my home.		
I have a fire blanket and/or fire extinguisher at home.		
I have recently updated my fire extinguishing skills.		
I have organised fire drills at home.		
I always carry cash money just in case.		
I recognise the general alarm signal and I know how to self-protect indoors as well as how to carry out the subsequent actions.		
I have recently updated my first aid skills.		
I have a forehead lamp or a torch and spare batteries.		
I have a battery-operated radio.		
I have enough food at home for at least three days.		
I am able to swim for at least 200 m.		
I know how to make an emergency call.		
I want to help others in an emergency.		

For every YES you get one point. Calculate the total points and check your score from the following table.

0-4	You are unprepared! Now is the perfect time to pick up a new hobby: individual home preparedness.
5-9	Your level of preparedness is satisfactory, but you still lack important skills and information.
10-13	You are well prepared. However, please correct all shortcomings.
14-15	You are superbly prepared and you contribute to the safety of your surroundings.

ANTICIPATE!

Be prepared to help yourself and others:

Put together your own home emergency supply kit

Learn how to administer first aid and how to extinguish fires

Take care of your neighbours



What is your personal level of preparedness?



Do you only think you can cope or do you know it?

Home emergency supply kit and other individual preparedness advice and instructions are provided by rescue departments, rescue associations, home economics associations and SPEK.



You can assess your personal level of preparedness with the NESA's (National Emergency Supply Agency) online test Omavarax



Additional information on a home emergency supply kit and individual preparedness:

www.varaudu.info

Pahasti poikki - Näin selviät pitkästä sähkökatkosta (in finnish)

<http://www.defmin.fi/files/1275/>

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