



Preparing for Emergencies

Whitchurch Community Emergency Plan Working Group, July 2022 (v3)

This leaflet is to help you plan for a possible emergency. It covers:

* **Some steps you can take yourself to be better prepared.** These are taken from a 28-page *Are You Ready?* booklet written by experts from the emergency services and utilities.

* **Community-wide actions in Whitchurch that could help you.**
See the Whitchurch Community Emergency Plan for more information.

To read the whole *Are You Ready?* booklet or the Community Emergency Plan, see whitchurchonthames.com/links.

General steps you can take

- * **Prepare a household emergency plan.** Record on paper and your phone critical information including any medication you need, your insurer's and other phone numbers plus what you you'd need if you (and your pets) had to evacuate your home.
- * **Backup key documents** and data somewhere safe where you can easily find them (e.g. on Google Drive).
- * Have a **torch, candles** and perhaps a **store of food** not requiring heating in case there is a long power cut or loss of gas supply.
- * Know **how to turn off** your water, gas and electricity supplies. Check the taps/switches work!
- * Know the **emergency procedures** for your school or workplace.
- * Know which of your **neighbours** might need assistance.
- * Think **who could help you** in an emergency (see *Volunteers* below).

Power cuts

- * Cordless landline phones won't work and mobile phone battery life will become an issue, so keep a standard landline phone in the house.
- * Heating and cooking facilities may not work, and fridges/freezers may defrost (avoid opening the doors).
- * Prepare alternative lighting. Keep candles (and matches) handy and consider investing in rechargeable emergency LED lights.
- * If you are particularly vulnerable during a power cut (e.g. you use a dialysis machine), please register with **SEEN** by ringing **0800 2943259**.

Fire

- * Install smoke alarms and check them once a month.
- * Plan escape routes, and tell everyone in your household about them.
- * If there is a fire, get out, stay out and call **999**.
- * Oxfordshire County Council's Fire and Rescue Service offers free Safe and Well Visits. Firefighters can visit you at home to see what they can do to help you reduce the risk of fire. For more information, see livewell.oxfordshire.gov.uk/services/4307/safe-and-well-visits

Heart attack

- * If someone has collapsed, looks a funny colour or is unresponsive and not breathing, first call **999** then start CPR. The 999 call handler may tell you to use a defibrillator. There is one in the phone box at the Manor Road/High Street junction and another outside the cricket pavilion. Several people in the village are trained to use them, but **anyone** can.
- * If you want to learn how to use a defibrillator, see the Links page on the village website or contact **Jean Marc Grosfort** on **07881 312233** who arranges training from time to time.

Community Emergency Plan

Volunteers

* Volunteers – at least one per road in the village – are listed with their phone numbers on the village website (top section on the Links page). These volunteers (later joined by many others) provided support during the Covid lockdown.

* If, for instance, roads were cut off, volunteers would get food shopping, etc. The contact email is wotvolunteers@gmail.com

The Village Hall

* The Village Hall is a place of safety. The hall provides a telephone and wi-fi, both of which will continue to work during a power cut. The fibre broadband to the hall is high capacity – enough to support many people on Zoom calls, etc.

* There is a small emergency generator to charge phones and laptops, provide lighting and keep the boiler working.

* If people have to evacuate their homes due to a fire, flood or other reason they may need somewhere to stay with food and hot drinks. The hall has catering equipment and we are applying for a grant for sleeping bags, camp beds, etc.

River- and flash-flooding

- * The Environment Agency has maps to help you to understand your flood risk. Links to these can be found under 'Local Information' on the Links page of the village website (whitchurchonthames.com/links).
- * If you live in a vulnerable area you can register with the EA's Floodline to receive phone warnings. You can also check online at any time. With river-flooding, there should be one or two days of warning beforehand. The 24-hour Floodline number is 0345 988 1188.
- * The Flood Toolkit (oxfordshirefloodtoolkit.com) has useful information on ways to protect vulnerable properties, such as door barriers, air brick covers or pumps.
- * If you need sandbags to protect your house, you will need to obtain your own as the council no longer provides them.



*Looking over the toll bridge towards
Whitchurch in the 1894 flood*

Flash-flood mitigation

- * Roadside soakaways down Whitchurch Hill are regularly cleaned, as is the storm drain down the High Street to the river (last done by OCC, 2021)
- * Plans are progressing for emergency drainage of the 'Greyhound bowl' into the village culvert.
- * Hardwick Road and Swanston Field drain/soakaway clearance has been requested. Although recognised by OCC, no time has been set for this.