

How you can play your part in Norway's emergency preparedness

Advice on emergency preparedness



Important information from the Norwegian Directorate for Civil Protection (DSB)

Emergency preparedness for one week

How would you and your nearest family manage if the electricity supply was cut off for a longer period? What would you do if the water supply failed? What if you could not do any shopping for a week? Emergency preparedness means being ready to manage these types of situations.

The Norwegian authorities recommend that as many people as possible be prepared to be self-sustained for one week. This is because, in a crisis situation, municipalities and emergency agencies will have to prioritise those who cannot manage without help. If more of us can look after ourselves and our immediate families, Norway's overall defences will be strengthened, i.e. the sum of public resources for preventing and managing crises and war.

What could happen?

We live in an increasingly turbulent world – among other things due to climate change, war and digital threats. Even though in Norway most things generally function as they normally would, we must remain aware that extreme weather, pandemics, accidents, sabotage – and in the worst case acts of war – can impact us.

These types of crises can have huge consequences. For example, a failure in electricity supplies can mean that domestic water supplies, sewage systems, payment systems, the Internet, mobile telephones and food preparation do not function normally.

Improve your emergency preparedness!

Good emergency preparedness is an investment in the safety of yourself and your family. If you follow the advice in this brochure, you will be better able to manage situations - everything from minor disturbances in everyday life to more serious crises. In addition, you will assist the authorities in prioritising those who need help the most.

Remember – even a little preparedness is much better than none at all!



Image: Helitrans

Please take care of this brochure





Water

We need water for drinking, food preparation and hygiene. If you store around 20 litres of drinking water per person, this will cover the minimum requirements for one week in the event the domestic water supply fails. Some of our hydration needs can be covered by juice, soft drinks and other alcohol-free drinks.

We can of course purchase containers or bottles of water from a store. Another solution is to fill containers with water from the tap. This is what you should do:

1. Cleaning

- Wash the bottles or containers using dish soap and water, rinsing thoroughly.
- Fill the container with water and add two corks of bleach per 10 litres of water. Allow this to stand for a minimum of 30 minutes. Empty the container and rinse thoroughly.

2. Filling

Fill containers or bottles completely full with cold, running water from the tap.

3. Storage

- Store the water in a dark, cool place, away from direct sunlight.
- Clean water in clean containers can be stored for years, without becoming harmful to drink.

Difficult to find space to store water?

- It can be easier to find storage space for several smaller containers rather than fewer large ones.
- You can store water in cupboards, underneath the kitchen worktop or in other places in the home, wherever there is available space.
- Do you live in a building with common areas? Speak to the co-owner or housing association committee, to organise joint storage of water.



Heating and lighting

Most homes have electricity as their main source of heating. In many homes, electricity is the only heat source. In the event of a power failure in the winter, it can quickly become cold and dark indoors. Therefore you should have a plan to enable you to stay warm.

You should keep the following in your home:

- Warm clothing and blankets, duvets or sleeping bags.
- A store of candles and matches or a lighter.
- Torches or head lamps to help you see in the dark (remember to store extra batteries).

Alternative heating

- Ensure that your fireplace and chimney are approved and in good condition. Make sure you have enough firewood.
- A gas or paraffin heater designed for use indoors can be an alternative in the event of power failure.
- Emergency power, such as a generator or battery unit with a 230V outlet, can also be an alternative. In such case, you must make yourself thoroughly familiar with regulations and guidelines for safe use.

Help each other

- In the event of a long-term power failure, and you do not have alternative heating: make arrangements to stay with neighbours, family or friends.
- Do you have alternative heating, and know someone who does not? Consider asking them to stay with you in the event of a crisis.



How to reduce heat loss in the event of a power failure

- Close doors or hang up blankets between rooms.
- Hang up blankets or curtains in front of windows.



Food

In a crisis, it may be difficult to buy food. Therefore you should always have sufficient food for one week, for everyone in your household.

Think about how you would prepare food if electricity or water supplies should fail. Use food with a short shelf life first, such as chilled and frozen products.

- Keep a little extra of the kinds of food you eat regularly. If you stock up before you run out you will always have some in reserve.
- Keep a stock of foodstuffs with a long shelf life, that can be stored at room temperature. Good examples of these are crispbreads, oatmeal, canned pulses and beans, canned sandwich spreads, energy bars, dried fruit, chocolate, honey, biscuits and nuts.
- Examples of foodstuffs with a long shelf life that require heating: pasta, rice, instant soups, flour, canned meals and freeze-dried foods.
- If any members of your household depend on certain types of food or have food allergies, remember to plan for this.
- If you plan to prepare food on a camping stove, gas cooker or grill, you must check regularly that the equipment is in good condition.





Self-preparedness – payments

Payment systems in Norway are secure and effective. However, digital attacks, human error, system faults or power failure can cause the systems to malfunction.

If you can no longer pay as you normally do, it can be a good idea to ensure you have other ways to pay for goods or services.

- Hold several payment cards. These can be different payment cards (debit or credit cards) or bank cards issued by different banks.
- Keep some cash at home, preferably in varied and smaller values. The amount of cash will be relative to the number of persons in your household and the type of goods you will need to purchase.
- Keep accounts in several banks, in case of technical problems with one particular bank.



Self-preparedness – checklist

Below are examples of things it can be a good idea to keep at home. You should review your needs and update your stocks at regular intervals. Remember that families, friends and neighbours can cooperate regarding emergency preparedness.

Food and water

- Clean drinking water stored in containers or bottles.
- Food that can be stored for long periods at room temperature.
- Grill, solid fuel stove or camping stove.
- Extra gas bottles or fuel.
- Food and water for pets.
- Some cash and several bank cards.

Heating and lighting

- Warm clothes and blankets, duvets or sleeping bags.
- Matches and candles.
- Firewood, if you have a wood-burning stove or fireplace.
- A gas or paraffin heater, designed for use indoors.
- An agreement with family or friends for overnight accommodation.
- Battery-powered, solar or wind-up torches or head lamps.

Information

- Battery-powered, solar or wind-up DAB radio.
- Batteries and charged power banks.
- A paper-based list of important telephone numbers, e.g. emergency numbers, emergency clinic, veterinary clinics, family friends and neighbours.

Medicines and hygiene

- Medicines and first-aid equipment
- Iodine tablets (applies to children and adults under 40 years of age, pregnant or breastfeeding).
- Hygiene products such as wet wipes, hand sanitiser, nappies, toilet paper, sanitary towels and tampons.





Medicines and first aid

In a crisis, it may be difficult to get through on medical emergency numbers or to emergency clinics. Therefore it is important to know about basic first aid and to keep first aid equipment in your home

- If you can, learn basic first aid.
- Keep first aid equipment in your home. If you have a car, you should also have first aid equipment in the car.
- Keep a minimum of seven days extra supply of medicines and medical equipment that you use regularly. Establish a routine, and pick up new supplies no later than one week before they run out.
- Keep iodine tablets in your home (applies to children and adults under 40 years of age, pregnant or breastfeeding). The tablets can protect against radioactive iodine in the event of nuclear accidents and must only be taken on instruction from the authorities.



Basic first aid

- Ensure an open airway.
- Stop any external bleeding and keep the injured person warm.
- Monitor breathing.
- Monitor whether the injured person is conscious.
- Perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).
- Use a defibrillator.



Hygiene

Poor hygiene can lead to infection and illness. If there is no water, personal hygiene and cleanliness can become more of a challenge.

- Keep wet wipes, hand sanitiser and disposable gloves in your home.
- Keep extra toilet paper and waste bags.
- If anyone in the household uses nappies or sanitary products, keep an extra supply.

If the water supply is cut off for a longer period

- Pay special attention to personal hygiene after going to the toilet and before preparing food.
- Keep your home tidy and clean. Throw away waste products and food to avoid bacteria and vermin.
- If the toilet cannot be used, you can make an emergency toilet by placing a double carrier bag around the toilet seat or a bucket. Carrier bags can then be double-knotted and placed in regular waste containers.
- Water from the water heater in your home can be used in a crisis. Unplug the heater before you drain water from the drainage valve at the bottom of the heater. This water should not be used for drinking.
- You can collect water from roofs, rivers or fresh water sources to use for hygiene purposes. However, you must be aware that this water can be highly contaminated and unsuitable for use in the event of nuclear fallout or chemical discharges in your area. Seek information from the authorities before you use this type of water.



Information and communication

In a crisis, it is important that you receive information from public authorities about what is happening and what you should do. Be prepared for how you will receive information if power supplies, mobile telephone networks or the Internet should fail.

Seek information from public authority channels and editorially-controlled journalistic media governed by the Code of Ethics/Rights and Duties of the Editor. NRK P1 is the emergency channel that will ensure the broadcasting of public information, even if other news media and public websites are inaccessible.

- Have a DAB radio that will function even if the electricity supply fails. Various models are available that run on batteries, wind-up mechanisms or are rechargeable with a solar cell. Remember you can listen to the radio or charge your mobile phone in your car.
- Keep a power bank, and charge it regularly.
- Keep a paper list of important telephone numbers in case you have to borrow a telephone.
- Check with your municipality if there are muster stations or other public places where you can receive information if the electricity supply or telecommunications should fail.
- If you have access to the Internet, but the mobile telephone network is not functioning: check whether you can activate Wi-Fi calls on your mobile phone, and whether you have apps on your mobile that communicate via the Internet.
- Check whether anyone in your family or a neighbour has an alternative mobile telephone subscription, different to yours, that may be functioning.



Be critical of news sources

Crisis situations are confusing and false information can easily spread. This may be because the crisis itself creates confusion and misunderstandings. Hostile parties can knowingly spread false information, to destabilise society. The information you receive will affect the choices you make, so it is important that you check information sources, and consider the credibility of information you pass on to others.

- Obtain information from public authorities and editorially-controlled journalistic media.
- Be particularly sceptical if any information appears to be surprising, frightening or makes you angry.
- Check who is behind the information you receive. Some people knowingly spread incorrect information.
- Be aware that text, audio, images and video can be manipulated.
- Think about what type of information you share with others.

Emergency Alert System

The Emergency Alert System is a service operated by the Norwegian authorities. In a serious situation with an acute risk to life and health, you can receive an emergency alert on your mobile telephone. To receive alerts, you must have 4G or 5G coverage.

Public warning systems are located in larger cities and conurbations. When the warning sirens sound in three series with one minute in between each series, this means «Important notice – seek information». For example, listen to NRK P1. If the warning sirens sound in short intervals for approximately one minute this means «Danger, risk of attack – seek cover». When the warning sirens sound continuously for 30 seconds, this means that the danger is over.



Joint preparedness

Cooperation and collaboration are vital resources in the event of crises. Speak to those around you about what can happen and how you will manage the situation together.

Find your «preparedness buddy»

Find out who may need your help, and who you can get help from. With diverse skills and knowledge, family members, friends and neighbours can complement each other.

Here are some examples of how you can help each other:

- First aid if anyone is injured.
- Care and support.
- Accommodation and assistance if anyone needs to be evacuated from their home.
- Translation and explanation of information provided by public authorities.
- Practical help in using equipment and tools.
- Shopping, practical help and transport.
- Exchange and loaning of equipment and goods.
- Loan of a mobile telephone connected to a different network than your own.
- Community cooking/food preparation.

Voluntary organisations

Voluntary organisations and faith communities carry out many important tasks during emergencies. Have an overview of voluntary organisations and associations in your neighbourhood. Become engaged in voluntary preparedness.

Self-preparedness in co-ownership/housing association communities

Housing association committees or co-owners can consider whether joint self-preparedness stocks should be established. For example, it can be an idea to store drinking water in basements or other communal areas.



Mental health during crises

In crises and in uncertain times it is normal to experience concern, negative thoughts, poor sleep, anxiety and other strong emotions. Some people are more affected than others.

- Spend your time on things you can do something about, preferably something specific that can help you gather your thoughts and remain alert.
- Continue as much as possible with your normal routines; for example, regular mealtimes, personal hygiene etc.
- Make contact with other people. Contact friends, family and others if you can. Social contact helps us to share our thoughts and our experiences of dealing with things.



Where to go

The appropriate and safe place to go will depend on the nature of the emergency. The most important thing is to seek information and to follow the advice and guidance of the authorities.

In many cases, it is safest to remain at home. Other times it may be necessary to leave your home at short notice.

In the event of an act of war, you may be notified that you should seek shelter. If there are no emergency shelters in the immediate vicinity, you should seek cover in a basement or in a room in the centre of the building. Explosions may cause windows to shatter and glass can injure those nearby. Therefore you should keep away from windows.

If you have to leave your home

- Make a plan for where you can go and how you will get there. Perhaps you can go to stay with relatives, friends or at a recreational cabin. Evacuation and family contact centres are often established during major accidents and catastrophes.
- The most important thing to remember if you have to leave your home at short notice is that you must take warm clothes/blankets, a mobile telephone, bank cards and cash, some food and drink, ID documentation, medicines and other things you may need (e.g. spectacles, contact lenses, walking frames or hearing aids).
- Make sure you have enough fuel or electricity if you are using a vehicle. Be aware that transport during crises can be chaotic and take much longer.

A person wearing a dark jacket, dark pants, and a large black backpack is walking away from the camera through an open doorway. They are carrying a red duffel bag in their left hand and two large plastic water bottles in their right hand. The scene is brightly lit from the doorway, suggesting an outdoor setting with some foliage visible in the background.

Emergency shelters

- Emergency shelters are intended to protect the population from harm during acts of war.
- The authorities will notify you when you are required to seek cover in an emergency shelter.
- An overview of public emergency shelters is available at: <https://kart.dsb.no>.
- Many private buildings also have emergency shelters. These are intended for those who are present within the building. Examples of these are office buildings, schools, kindergartens, housing associations and hotels.



Emergency telephone numbers

110 Fire

112 Police (when immediate assistance is required)

113 Medical emergency telephone number
(in an emergency/life-threatening situation)

14 12 Emergency telephone number for the deaf and hard of hearing

Emergency Text Messaging is a service that helps those who are deaf, hard of hearing or speech impaired to contact emergency numbers via text message. To use the service you must first register your mobile number at: www.nodsms.no.

Your notes (important telephone numbers and other useful information):

Brochure in different languages: sikkerhverdag.no