READY AT HOME · VOLUME 7

Home Systems & Repairs

Shut-offs, leaks, storm damage, floods

Find and use your water, gas and electricity shut-offs
Burst and frozen pipes, storm damage, broken windows
Flooding: before, during and after



THE SERIES

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8 Fire Safety & Security	9 Communications	10 Grab Bags & Kits	11 Pantry & Stockpile	12 Outdoor Skills	13 Kids, Morale & Wellbeing	14 Offline Knowledge &	15 Other Emergencies

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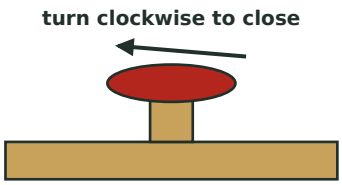
Emergency numbers & the series 7

The Ready At Home series 7

1. Know your house

In a burst pipe, gas leak or flood you have minutes. Find these now, label them with a tag, and fill in the map in Volume 0. Make sure every adult (and older children) knows where they are.

WATER STOPCOCK



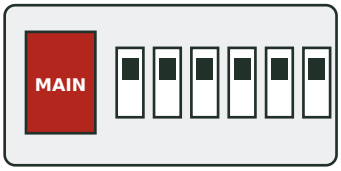
Usually under the kitchen sink. A second one is often outside at the boundary (a small cover in the footpath). If it's stiff, don't force it: try gently back and forth.

GAS METER VALVE



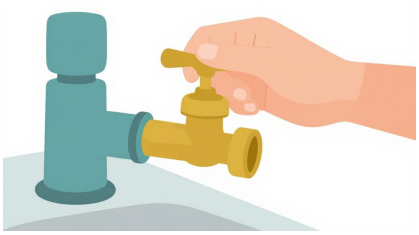
Handle in line with the pipe = ON. Turn it a quarter turn so it's across the pipe = OFF. Only turn back on if you can relight pilots safely; otherwise call a gas installer.

FUSE BOARD

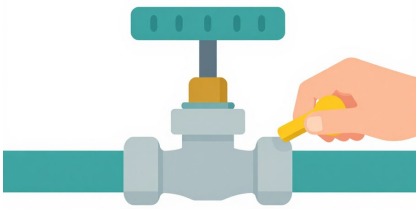


The main switch turns off everything. Trip switches (MCBs/RCDs) protect circuits. Dry hands, and stand on a dry floor. Never touch it if water is near the board.

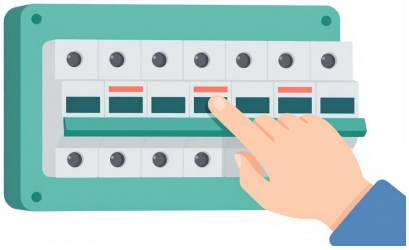
Figure 1. The three shut-offs every adult in the house should be able to use.



Water: turn the stopcock clockwise to close.



Gas: turn the lever a quarter turn so it's across the pipe.



Electricity: main switch down to OFF.

System	Where to look	Also know
Water	Under kitchen sink; where the pipe enters the house; outside boundary box	The attic tank's outlet valve; how to drain the system
Gas (mains)	Next to the meter (inside or in an outside box)	Gas Networks Ireland 1800 20 50 50
LPG / bottled gas	On top of the bottle or tank	Turn clockwise to close
Oil heating	Fire valve on the pipe from the tank	Check level before winter; theft risk
Electricity	Fuse board in hall, under stairs or utility room	ESB Networks 1800 372 999
Well pump	Pump house or under the house; pressure switch	Fuse/isolator for the pump
Septic tank	Garden	Don't overload it after a flood; get it checked

2. Leaks & burst pipes

1 Water off

Close the stopcock fully. If water's coming through a ceiling, also close the valve under the attic tank.

2 Electrics off

If water is near sockets, lights or the board, switch off at the main switch if it's dry to do so.

3 Drain down

Open all cold taps and flush toilets to empty the pipes. Turn off the boiler and immersion.

4 Contain it

Buckets, towels, move furniture. Pierce a bulging ceiling at the lowest point with a bucket under it.

5 Patch it

Pipe repair clamp or self-amalgamating tape over the split as a temporary fix.

6 Record & call

Photograph damage for the insurer. Call a plumber. Check the electrics are dry before use.

Figure 2. Burst pipe: first six steps.



A temporary pipe repair

1. Turn the water off and dry the pipe.
2. Wrap self-amalgamating tape tightly over the split, stretching it as you go, overlapping by half, 5 cm beyond each side.
3. Or fit a pipe repair clamp (15 mm or 22 mm, to match your pipe) centred on the split.
4. Turn the water back on slowly and check. Get a plumber to make a proper repair.

Preventing and thawing frozen pipes

DO

- Lag pipes in the attic, garage and outside walls
- Lag or cover outside taps
- Keep heating on low (about 12°C) if you're away in frost
- Open the attic hatch in a cold snap so some warmth gets up
- Thaw slowly with a hairdryer or hot-water towels, working from the tap end

DON'T

- Use a blowtorch or naked flame
- Leave a frozen pipe without turning off the water
- Pour boiling water on plastic pipes
- Ignore a tap with no flow in frost: it's often frozen

3. Storm damage

Problem	Temporary fix	Safety
Broken window	Tape cracked glass in an X. Board with plywood/OSB screwed into the frame, or heavy plastic sheeting and battens.	Thick gloves; sweep and vacuum glass; keep pets and children out
Slates or tiles off	Bucket any leaks inside. A tarp over the damaged area, weighted or battened.	Don't go on a roof in wind, rain or alone. Wait for a roofer if you're unsure
Fallen tree	Leave it if it's touching lines (ESB 1800 372 999). Small branches: clear by hand.	Chainsaws only with training and protective gear
Fence or shed down	Weigh down or tie loose panels so they can't blow about.	Wait until wind drops
Chimney damage	Don't light a fire until checked.	Keep clear of the area below
Water coming in	Find the source: roof, flashing, window, gutter. Clear blocked gutters when safe.	Turn off electrics in affected rooms



Boarding a broken window

1. Wear thick gloves and eye protection. Pick out loose glass from the frame, working from the top.
2. Cut plywood or OSB (12 mm or thicker) a little larger than the opening.
3. Screw it to the frame (not nails: screws come out without more damage) every 20-30 cm.
4. From inside, cover the gap with heavy plastic and tape to keep the draught out.

Tool and repair kit

☐ Adjustable spanner and pipe wrench	☐ Screwdrivers and a cordless drill + bits
☐ Pipe repair clamps (15 & 22 mm)	☐ Self-amalgamating tape
☐ Duct tape and gaffer tape	☐ Heavy tarp (4×6 m) and bungees
☐ Plywood/OSB sheets for windows	☐ Box of screws and nails
☐ Hammer, saw, utility knife	☐ Work gloves and safety glasses
☐ Buckets, mop, towels	☐ Stopcock key (for outside boundary box)
☐ Torch / headtorch	☐ Sandbags or flood sacks
☐ Wet & dry vacuum (if you have power)	☐ Contacts for plumber, electrician, roofer

4. Flooding

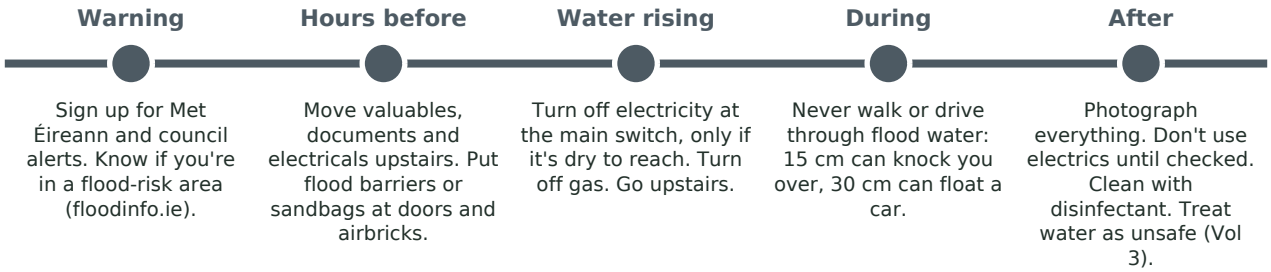
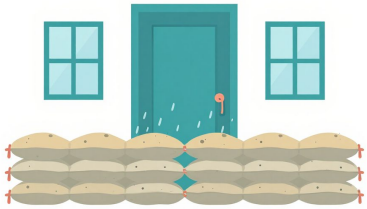


Figure 3. Flood timeline.



Keeping water out

- Sandbags (or self-inflating flood sacks, which store flat) across doorways, two layers, joints overlapping like bricks, with a plastic sheet behind them.
- Fit flood boards to doors and covers to airbricks if your house is at risk.
- Move valuables, documents and electricals upstairs early.
- Turn off electricity and gas before water reaches sockets or appliances.

Stay safe around flood water

- It can be contaminated with sewage, fuel and chemicals: wear gloves and boots, wash hands, cover cuts.
- Hidden hazards: open manholes, debris, live electrics.
- Don't let children play in it. Throw out food that's been touched by it, even sealed packets.

After a flood

1. Contact your insurer before throwing anything out. Photograph and list damaged items.
2. Have a registered electrician check the wiring before switching back on.
3. Get a gas installer to check boilers and appliances that were under water.
4. Pump out water gradually. Remove wet carpets, underlay and plasterboard.
5. Clean and disinfect all hard surfaces. Ventilate and use dehumidifiers to dry out (it can take weeks).
6. Watch for mould. Get help from your council's emergency line if you can't stay in the house.

5. Snow & ice

- Keep a bag of rock salt or grit and a snow shovel. Clear paths early, before snow is packed down.
- Don't use boiling water to clear steps: it refreezes as ice.
- Check gutters and roof valleys after heavy snow; large build-ups can damage gutters.
- Keep heating oil above a third in winter; deliveries may stop in bad weather.
- Stock up the pantry (Vol 11) when snow is forecast. Rural roads can be impassable for days.

Emergency numbers & the series

Service	Number	Use it for
Emergency services	**112 or 999**	Ambulance, Garda, fire, coast guard. Works from any phone, any network.
ESB Networks	1800 372 999	Power cuts, fallen or damaged lines (24/7)
Gas Networks Ireland	1800 20 50 50	Smell of gas (24/7). Call from outside the house.
Uisce Éireann (Irish Water)	1800 278 278	Water outages, burst mains, boil-water notices
HSELive	1800 700 700	Health service information
Public Poisons Line	01 809 2166	Advice if someone has swallowed or touched something harmful (8am-10pm daily)
Samaritans	116 123	Anyone struggling to cope (24/7)
Text About It	Text HELLO to 50808	Free text support (24/7)
Childline	1800 66 66 66	Children and young people up to 18 (24/7)
Your county council		Roads, flooding, local emergency centres
Met Éireann	met.ie / Met Éireann app	Weather warnings

Numbers checked November 2026. Write in your county council's number above, and your own local numbers (GP, out-of-hours doctor, pharmacy, vet, neighbours) in Volume 0.

The Ready At Home series

Vol	Title	What it covers
0	Start Here	Household plan & emergency numbers
1	Just Add Water	Home-dehydrated emergency meals
2	Power Cuts & Storms	Getting through long outages
3	Water & Sanitation	Storing, treating, toilets
4	Cooking & Warmth	Without mains power
5	First Aid	Step-by-step emergency care
6	Symptoms & Home Care	Red flags, minor illness, medicines
7	**Home Systems & Repairs**	Shut-offs, leaks, storm damage, floods
8	Fire Safety & Security	Alarms, escape plans, extinguishers
9	Communications	Family plan, radios, signals
10	Grab Bags & Kits	72-hour, car, child & pet kits
11	Pantry & Stockpile	A 30-day food store you rotate
12	Outdoor Skills	Fire, shelter, knots, navigation
13	Kids, Morale & Wellbeing	Keeping people okay
14	Offline Knowledge & Media	Libraries, maps & media without internet
15	Other Emergencies	Radiation, chemicals, heat, illness, cut off

This series gives general preparedness guidance. It is not a substitute for professional medical, electrical, gas or structural advice, or for a certified first-aid course. In an emergency, call 112 or 999 and follow the call-taker's instructions.

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