READY AT HOME · VOLUME 15

Other Emergencies

Radiation, chemicals, heat, illness, cut off

A radiation incident abroad, and what Ireland's plan says
Chemical smoke and fumes nearby, heatwaves, cut off by snow or flood
Caring for someone with an infectious illness at home



THE SERIES

0 Start Here
1 Just Add Water
2 Power Cuts & Storms
3 Water & Sanitation
4 Cooking & Warmth
5 First Aid
6 Symptoms & Home Care
7 Home Systems & Repairs
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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Contents

1. A nuclear or radiological incident abroad 3

2. Smoke or chemical fumes nearby 3

3. Heatwaves 3

4. Cut off by snow or flooding 4

5. Infectious illness at home 4

6. Where official information comes from 4

Emergency numbers & the series 5

The Ready At Home series 5

Most emergencies in Ireland are storms, floods and power cuts (Volumes 2-4). This volume covers the less likely ones calmly and briefly, so you know where to look and what official advice to expect.

1. A nuclear or radiological incident abroad



Ireland has no nuclear power stations. The concern is an accident at a plant in another country, with radioactive material carried here by the wind.

The Government's updated *National Plan for Nuclear and Radiological Emergency Exposures* (July 2026) states that no scenario is expected in which the public in Ireland would need to evacuate or shelter indoors, and that iodine tablets would not be necessary. The main protection is monitoring: the EPA and other agencies would test air, water, soil and food and, if needed, restrict certain foods.

What to do	Why
Follow RTÉ Radio 1, local radio, gov.ie and epa.ie	Official advice will tell you if any food or water precautions apply where you live
Don't buy or take iodine tablets from online sellers	They aren't advised under the plan and can cause side effects, particularly with thyroid conditions
Carry on with normal life unless told otherwise	The plan expects any effects in Ireland to be managed through food and water controls
Keep your usual stored food and water (Volumes 3 and 11)	Useful if any fresh produce is temporarily restricted

2. Smoke or chemical fumes nearby

A large fire at a factory, farm or warehouse, or a chemical leak from a lorry or train, can send smoke or fumes over nearby homes. The fire service or Gardaí will tell you what to do; usually it's to stay inside until it passes.

1. Go indoors and stay there unless you're told to leave.
2. Close windows and doors. Turn off extractor fans, ventilation systems and wood stoves.
3. Bring pets in. Don't go out to collect children from school: schools have their own plans.
4. Listen to local radio for updates.
5. If you're caught outside in smoke, move upwind and away from it.
6. If you feel unwell (sore eyes, coughing, breathlessness), call your GP or 112 if it's severe.

3. Heatwaves

Irish homes are built to keep heat in, so they can get uncomfortably hot in a heatwave. Older people, babies and people with heart or lung conditions feel it most.

Do	Watch for
Close curtains on sunny sides by day; open windows at night when it's cooler outside	Heat exhaustion: headache, dizziness, nausea, heavy sweating, cramps, fast pulse. Move somewhere cool, give water, loosen clothes
Drink water regularly, even if not thirsty; avoid alcohol in the heat	Heatstroke: hot dry skin, confusion, fainting, a temperature over 40°C. Call 112 and cool them while you wait
Avoid the sun between 11 am and 3 pm; use sunscreen, a hat and shade	
Check on older neighbours; never leave children or pets in a parked car	

4. Cut off by snow or flooding

Rural roads can be impassable for several days. With the stores in this series, being cut off is mostly a matter of patience.

☐ Fuel: oil tank above a quarter, logs or briquettes, gas cartridges	☐ Food for at least a week (Volume 11)
☐ Water stored, especially if you're on a well (Volume 3)	☐ Medicines: repeat prescriptions collected before the weather turns (Volume 6)
☐ Phones and power banks charged; a radio	☐ Grit or salt and a shovel
☐ A plan to check on neighbours by phone	☐ Pet food and animal feed, if you keep livestock

If someone needs medical help and roads are closed, call 112: the emergency services, Civil Defence and the Defence Forces have vehicles for these conditions.

5. Infectious illness at home

Flu, COVID-19, a stomach bug or another infection can spread through a household. These steps help protect everyone else while you care for the person who's ill.

Area	What helps
Room	Keep the sick person in one room if you can, door closed, window open a little. One carer where possible.
Hands	Wash with soap for 20 seconds after every contact; hand sanitiser by the door.
Surfaces	Clean handles, taps, toilets and phones daily with diluted bleach or a disinfectant.
Laundry and dishes	Wash at 60°C; dishwasher or hot soapy water.
Fluids	Small, frequent drinks; oral rehydration for vomiting and diarrhoea (Volume 6).
Masks	A well-fitting mask for the sick person and carer when in the same room.

When to get help

Use the red flags in Volume 6. Call 112 for difficulty breathing, chest pain, confusion, a rash that doesn't fade under a glass, or a person who is very hard to wake. Otherwise contact your GP or out-of-hours service.

6. Where official information comes from

Source	For
RTÉ Radio 1 and local radio	Live updates in any national or local emergency
gov.ie (Be Emergency Ready)	Government emergency advice, and the Be Emergency Ready booklet posted to every home in 2026
Met Éireann (met.ie)	Weather warnings
EPA (epa.ie)	Radiation monitoring, air quality, water
HSE (hse.ie)	Health advice and outbreaks
Your county council	Roads, flooding, local emergency centres
Mobile phone alerts	Ireland plans to begin emergency text alerts (cell broadcast) in 2027

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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