



AXMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL



BE PREPARED FOR EMERGENCIES – SOME SIMPLE SELF-HELP ADVICE

In common with other parishes throughout the county, Axminster has to consider what steps can be taken within the parish itself should severe weather strike and the parish be cut off from outside help from the emergency services. Such periods are usually short-lived but can be made less difficult if each household has taken basic precautions such as:

1. Ensuring that all torches have new batteries and bulbs and that spares are in stock. Wind-up torches are worth considering as a fall-back. Lamp-style torches are helpful as they are free-standing and leave both hands available for other tasks, such as cooking, if necessary.
2. Having a battery-operated radio (with a supply of batteries) in the house in case of power cuts. Wind-up versions are available.
3. Buying a camping-gas stove (and make sure you have some matches or a lighter to light it) so that you can boil a kettle for hot drinks or a hot water bottle. A Thermos flask is also useful, especially those made to keep food warm.
4. Checking every October that your hot water bottle is not perished, if you think you may have to rely on it for warmth, or considering buying one or two for each member of the household. A ready supply of warm blankets is also useful, or some thermal underclothes.
5. Having ready a stock of in-date tinned food and dried or UHT milk and possibly bottled water.
6. Buying a mobile telephone, if you do not have one already. Really simple ones are available and it is always possible to get someone to show you how they work. It is important to keep such telephones charged and wind-up chargers are available as a fall back. Or have a very basic telephone with no need for electricity which can be plugged straight into the telephone socket instead of your answer machine if necessary during a power cut.
7. Keeping important documents and valuables such as insurance policies, birth certificates, qualifications, etc. in a water-tight deed box so that they can be moved upstairs easily if floods threaten. Likewise, items of sentimental value, such as photograph albums.
8. Having sand-bags (empty ones are available from the Guildhall) or supplies of salt grit prepared ready to hand if you think you are likely need them. Pillow cases or even carrier bags filled with sand or soil make a good alternative to sandbags in an emergency. When not in use, sand bags should be stored in a dry, dark shed to reduce the rate at which the cover deteriorates and it is sensible to check them on a regular basis. The Town Council (01297 32088) has a limited supply for emergencies.
9. By registering to have an automatic warning of possible flooding over the telephone or by email. To find out further details telephone Floodline on 0345 988 1188 and requesting their fact sheet pack, a flood directory about the warning service in your area and a hand guide on how to flood-proof your home. The Meteorological Office also provides warnings of severe weather on its website <https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/>.