



SEVERE WEATHER

**What to do when the weather
is at its worst**

When Severe Weather Strikes

Severe weather always has the potential to significantly disrupt our daily lives. Snow, floods, gales, dense fog and widespread ice all bring their own unique problems. Severe weather has the potential to cause damage to property, local services and of course injury and possibly even death to those affected. A greater awareness of how to be prepared can greatly reduce the problems in such weather Warwickshire County Council has a major role to play in such situations along with many other agencies. The County Council provides a wide range of services, to help return the situation to normal as quickly and efficiently as circumstances permit.

Individuals also have a vital role to play. In such weather it is more important than ever to be a good neighbour and to be especially aware of those who are vulnerable and may need your help.

This leaflet gives you information on specific services provided by the County Council, indicates some useful contact numbers and provide some handy hints to reduce discomfort and perhaps even save lives.

Co-ordination of Resources

Co-ordination of services and the efficient use of resources is vital in any emergency and severe weather events are no different.

Success in helping people will depend upon action from many services: Warwickshire County Council, the emergency services, local health services, district and parish councils, gas, electricity and water companies, the armed services and voluntary organisations - all will play a vital role.

Planning for an efficient and effective response is co-ordinated by the County Council's Emergency Planning Unit (EPU).

Roads and Accessibility

During severe weather such as heavy snow or gales, roads can quickly become hazardous, blocked and inaccessible. Clear roads are vital in emergencies. Ambulances, fire engines and delivery vehicles must be able to reach people. Warwickshire County Council co-ordinates the clearing of roads in order of priority based on importance and need and tries to keep the primary route network open. Minor and residential roads may remain difficult to negotiate so always drive with care.

Snow clearing is slowed down by abandoned vehicles. If advised to leave vehicles at home, then please do so. Police advice is broadcast regularly on local radio. If stuck in snow, drivers should stay with their vehicle for as long as it is safe to do so. If a car has to be abandoned the driver should tell the local police and leave a contact number prominently displayed on the vehicle - but remember, abandoned vehicles obstruct snow clearance.

Heavy snow and ice can cause a variety of additional problems - skidding lorries may shed their loads, street lighting may be damaged and not working and road signs may be covered in snow so you may miss warnings of hazards.

If severe weather is prolonged, local helplines will be set up. Listen to your local radio - they will give out Emergency helpline numbers.

School Closures

When schools have to close through severe weather, lack of power or accessibility, they have been advised to inform all local radio stations in and around Warwickshire. To avoid an unnecessary journey parents, children and staff should tune in to find out if local schools are open or not - **do not telephone the school.**

Free Text Message Alerts

You can sign up for free school closures text alerts to your mobile phone. For more information visit the Warwickshire website

Emergency Food and Rest Centres

The Emergency Planning Unit (EPU) may, in extreme conditions, set up Rest Centres. These will be schools or other premises which can be opened up to ensure local communities have access to warmth, shelter and food. Such Rest Centres may be set up for example for elderly residents without power or if large numbers of motorists become trapped on major roads and motorways.

Information and contact numbers for these Rest Centres will be publicised through:

- Local radio
- Local television
- Local press
- In Libraries
- The Emergency Planning Unit website

Adult, Health and Community Services

Warwickshire County Council's Adult, Health and Community Services directorate will continue to provide normal services to those who receive home care, day care, etc for as long as conditions allow. For further information visit the Warwickshire County Council website.

Power Failures

High winds or heavy snow and ice can lead to problems with power supply or cuts in service. If power supplies are affected for long periods then many in the community will be vulnerable and the things we take for granted such as cooking a hot meal and warming our house may not be possible. **Traffic signals and other warning signs may also not be working.**

Your electricity supplier will not be the Company responsible for the network that delivers your electricity. The wires and cables feeding your property will be owned and managed by Central Networks (part of E-ON). Their emergency details are given in the contacts section later in this leaflet.

Flooding

The physical devastation that accompanies a flood is enormous causing extensive damage to local services and to people's homes and livelihoods. Property owners are encouraged to join the Environment Agency's Flood Warnings Direct which gives people in areas at risk advance warning of possible flooding (see the contact sections for further details).

It is logistically very difficult for agencies to provide individual households with resources such as sandbags during flood emergencies, and responding to such requests will not usually be possible. Resources will be prioritised and only delivered to major areas of concern where widespread and significant risk to life or property has been assessed by the emergency services. If you think you may be at risk of flooding make sure you have some empty sandbags and a supply of sand readily available now or see the extensive advice and guidance on preparing for and responding to flood events which can be found on the Emergency Planning Unit web pages – details in the contacts section. If you don't have access to a computer you can use one for free at any of Warwickshire County Council's main libraries.

Insurance

Property owners should be in possession of adequate insurance cover for their home and contents NOW - it is too late after the event!!!

Where to get Information

Warwickshire County Council can provide a wealth of information through its website and its many libraries. All libraries will stay open as normal unless loss of power or inability of staff to reach the Library prevents this. It may be that they can only open for part of their normal hours - telephone ahead before setting out. All Library telephone numbers are listed in the phone book under Warwickshire County Council or visit the Warwickshire County Council website.

The EPU will provide regular updates on developing severe weather emergencies to Libraries and this information will be displayed for the public. Local press, radio and television can help to keep you informed of power cuts, open bus routes, blocked roads and school or Library closures. They also provide emergency contact numbers.

Local radio stations

BBC Coventry & Warwickshire	94.8 & 103.7 (FM)
BBC WM	95.6 (FM)
Heart FM.....	100.7 (FM)
Mercia FM.....	97 & 102.9 (FM)
Fox FM.....	97.4 & 102.6 (FM)
BRMB	96.4 (FM)
Touch FM	102 (FM)
Wyvern FM	97.6 & 102.8 (FM)
Rugby FM.....	107.1 (FM)

Useful Telephone Numbers

Weathercall (Met Office).....09068 500 411

Gas (National Grid)0800 111 999

Electricity (Central Networks)

Switchboard.....0800 096 3080

Power Loss (Eastern Region).....0800 056 8090

Power Loss (Western Region).....0800 328 1111

County Council.....01926 410410

Environment Agency Floodline0845 988 1188

Useful websites for information

www.warwickshire.gov.uk

Advice and Information on Warwickshire County Council services

www.warwickshire.gov.uk/epu

Advice on Emergency preparedness

www.warwickshire.gov.uk/libraries

Information on Library opening times etc.

www.environment-agency.gov.uk

Floodline, Flood warnings

www.metoffice.gov.uk

Severe weather warnings

Be Prepared – Some Hints to Help You

To help you prepare for severe weather these items may help you:

For the car

- Ample fuel
- De-icer
- A shovel
- A radio and spare batteries
- A torch
- A blanket
- Spare warm clothing
- Water or a warm drink
- Your mobile phone with a fully charged battery

For the home

- An easily accessible supply of candles, matches, batteries and a torch
- A battery operated radio tuned to your local radio station
- A stock of food and bottled water
- A list of useful telephone numbers - police, library etc.
- Portable camping gas cooker if you rely solely on electricity.

Remember

- Heed the advice when told not to travel.
- If high winds are predicted stow away garden furniture and remove loose articles from outside.
- Make sure your emergency equipment is at hand
- If you have elderly, infirm or disabled neighbours, tell them to contact you if they need help - and keep an eye on them
- If you rely on one source of energy for heating, lighting or are operating essential equipment -make sure you have adequate standby arrangements.