

72 HOURS



How to Prepare for Crisis Situations and Overcome Them Together



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How to handle 72 hours without essential services? When electricity, water or shops temporarily stop working, it is an unpleasant experience. But with this guide, you will be prepared. It contains practical tips and checklists of useful items. Preparing takes just a few hours but it can save you a lot of trouble.

The Czech Republic has already experienced many emergencies and crisis situations, such as floods, tornadoes, or fires. The most challenging are usually the first three days — that is, 72 hours. During this period, we may encounter interruptions in water, heating, electricity, or internet services. Without these essential services, everyday life becomes much more difficult. Therefore, it is crucial to be prepared and to have emergency supplies at home that will help us and our family get through this period.

The 72-hour rule applies to events occurring during crisis situations — for example, when there is a power outage or water supply interruption. If we prepare in advance, we can handle these situations successfully on our own. By doing so, we also help others. Rescue services can then focus on assisting people who are in immediate danger.

i Important: *The 72-hour rule only applies to situations where we are not in immediate danger. When our life is at risk – such as in an accident, injury or acute health problem – help will arrive quickly.*

Thorough preparedness saves lives

When we are prepared, we can handle crisis situations better, with less stress, fewer health risks, and less property damage. We will feel calmer and more confident. We will know what to do, and we will also be able to help our loved ones and neighbours.

This guide explains how we can prepare for three days without essential services. It is based on experience from Czechia and abroad. It contains exactly the information and procedures that have proven most useful in practice.

More information is available at www.72h.gov.cz.

We can handle it together

In difficult times, we are able to help each other. When things are at their worst, we stand together. We are adaptable and resourceful.

The information in this guide strengthens what we already know. When we are prepared, we can protect not only ourselves but also our loved ones.

i Recommendation: *Read the guide, prepare the items listed, and keep it in an accessible place in case of a crisis situation.*

Would we be able to take care of ourselves and our loved ones for 72 hours?

During a crisis situation, it may happen that things we are used to will not function for some time. That is why it is good to prepare in advance and have emergency supplies ready at home for 72 hours.

What can change during a crisis situation?

- No running water from the tap.
- No electricity.
- Phones, television, and internet may stop working.
- No access to medication.
- Cooking and heating food becomes impossible.
- Heating stops working.
- Shops may be closed, or nothing may be available to buy.
- Card payments may not work.
- Toilet can only be flushed once.
- No fuel available at gas stations.
- Public transport may stop operating.

i When a crisis situation occurs, our family members may be in different places without the possibility to call each other. Therefore, it is advisable to agree in advance on where we will all meet or where to go if it becomes necessary to leave home. At the same time, it is desirable to decide who and how will take care of family members with various specific needs. We should also save all important phone numbers and copies of important documents in our phones.



Emergency supplies for 72 hours



What supplies are the most important?

- ☐ **Bottled drinking water**
In an emergency, an adult can manage with 2 litres of water per day.
- ☐ **Containers for water**
Canisters or other sealable containers
- ☐ **Stock of non-perishable food**
- ☐ **First aid kit and necessary medication for one week**
- ☐ **Battery-powered radio and flashlight**
- ☐ **Cash**
Coins and banknotes of various denominations

i For emergency supplies, we can use ordinary non-perishable food and items we already have at home. We just need to make sure they are enough for the entire household for 72 hours.

What else is important to have ready?

- ☐ **Charged power bank and spare batteries**
- ☐ **Copies of important documents**
- ☐ **Gas stove and matches**
- ☐ **Hand sanitizer**
- ☐ **Toilet paper and hygiene items**
- ☐ **Pet food**
- ☐ **Multi-purpose knife**
- ☐ **Fire extinguisher or fire blanket**
- ☐ **Strong adhesive tape**
- ☐ **Garbage bags**
- ☐ **A full fuel tank in our car (or a fully charged battery in an electric vehicle)**

Water

During a crisis situation, water may stop running. Minor outages are usually resolved within a few hours, but in the case of major disruptions, restoring the supply can take several days. That is why it is important to have a basic supply of drinking water at home and to know how to proceed in case of shortage.

How to prepare for water supply disruptions?

- ☐ Buy bottled drinking water to keep at home.
In an emergency, an adult can manage with 2 litres of water per day.
- ☐ Prepare containers for water – canisters or other sealable containers.
These are needed to collect water from tankers or distribution points if necessary.
- ☐ If we know about the water outage in advance, fill suitable containers with water.



Information on water supply

- Information on drinking water supply interruptions can be obtained from the water supplier, building manager, or property owner.
- If the water supply is interrupted for an extended period, follow the instructions from the water supplier.
- With some water suppliers, it is possible to sign up in advance to receive notifications about water supply interruptions (by SMS or email).

What to do when there is no water and no electricity?

Toilet

- The toilet can be flushed only once; after that, the tank will not refill.
- During a power outage and water supply interruption, use the toilet only if it is necessary.
- Use hand sanitizer to wash hands.

i *Emergency solution when the toilet is out of order: place a garbage bag inside the toilet bowl, add toilet paper, newspapers, or cat litter. After use, tie the bag carefully, place it inside two additional bags, and dispose of it with regular waste.*

Water

- Drink only bottled water or water supplied by tankers.
- Be cautious, during a power outage in buildings with district heating, hot water can become dangerously hot or even boiling.



Food

During emergencies, shops may be closed or offer only a limited range of goods. That's why we should prepare emergency food supplies that can support our household for at least 72 hours. These supplies can be stored together with regular groceries and gradually replenished during normal shopping. Let's not forget enough pet food.

i Remember that foods like rice and pasta require a lot of water and energy to prepare.

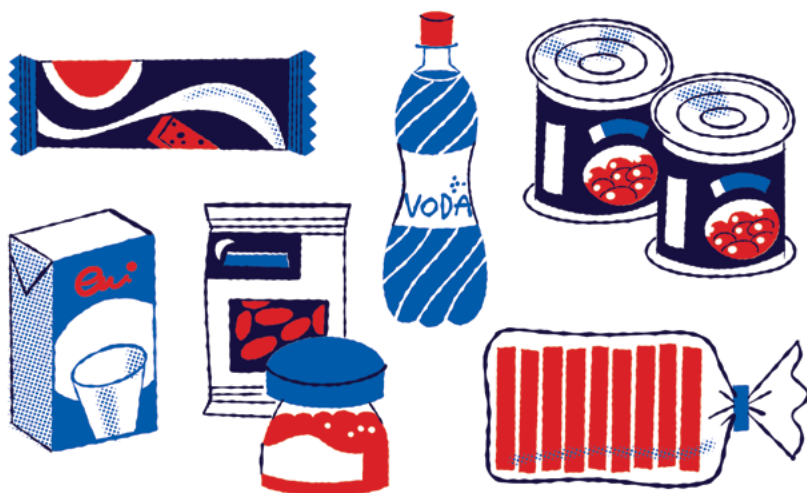
What to include in an emergency supply?

- The emergency household supply should mainly include food that has a long shelf life and can be easily consumed without cooking (canned food, long-life bread, dried meat, nuts, dried fruit, etc.).
- If we have, for example, a camping stove, we can also add instant meals and soups to our emergency supplies.

Emergency supplies of long-lasting food should mainly include:

- ☐ Bottled drinking water, syrups, juices
- ☐ Long-life milk
- ☐ Long-life bread
- ☐ Cereals, müsli, oats, nuts, and seeds
- ☐ Canned meat and beans
- ☐ Canned fruit and vegetables
- ☐ Jams, honey, and preserves
- ☐ Dried fruit and dried meat
- ☐ Energy and protein bars, biscuits, chocolate, and glucose tablets

i Always consider allergies, special diets, and the needs of all household members.



Information and communication

Accurate, reliable, timely, and verified information is crucial for managing emergency situations. It helps us make the right decisions and protect our health, lives, and property. We should therefore trust primarily those sources that are obligated to inform the public during emergencies. These include state institutions, regional and municipal authorities, the police, fire and rescue services, emergency medical services, and public media.

How to ensure access to information?

During emergencies when power supplies are disrupted, it can be difficult to obtain information about what is happening around us. Therefore, prepare:

- ☐ A battery-powered radio
- ☐ A fully charged mobile phone
Phone numbers of loved ones written on paper
- ☐ A charged power bank

i Remember to have spare batteries, chargers, and cables.

During a crisis situation, we should limit mobile phone use to essential communication only. Otherwise, we might overload the network and slow down or even block communication for emergency services. If there is a large-scale power outage, mobile phones and the internet will stop working because transmitters have only limited backup batteries.

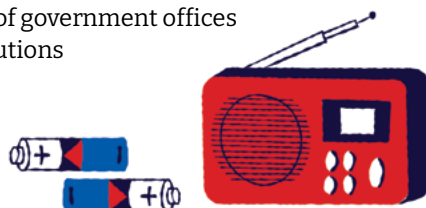
i During crises, unverified information and rumors often spread quickly. Such messages can increase uncertainty and fear, and complicate the work of emergency services.

How should we handle information?

- Verify information using multiple trusted sources.
- Rely primarily on official sources.
- Share only verified information that we are certain is true.

Official sources of information

- Public service media (Czech Radio, Czech Television) and regional media
- Municipal announcements and electronic sirens
- Messages from emergency services and responsible authorities
- Official notice boards of regional and municipal offices
- Websites of government offices and institutions





During a Power Outage

A power outage has far-reaching consequences during crises. Within a few hours, telecommunications networks will gradually stop working. Everyday activities, from cooking to flushing the toilet, will become complicated. Both public and private services will be significantly limited. That's why it is essential to know how to prepare for this situation, how to act during it, and what to avoid.

i Keep in mind that payment cards and ATMs do not work during a power outage. We should keep coins and banknotes of various denominations at home for such situations.

If the power goes out, it is necessary to unplug all electrical appliances. The easiest way is to turn off the main switch (circuit breaker). This protects appliances from damage when the electricity comes back on.

Food

How to work with emergency food supplies?

- In winter, some food can be stored outside. Store it in a way that protects it from animals, moisture, and direct sunlight.

How to handle the fridge and freezer?

- Keep fridge and freezer doors closed. Open them as little as possible so that food stays cold for as long as possible. To maintain a lower temperature in the fridge, move some items from the freezer into the fridge.
- Check the floor, as water may leak out during thawing.
- Eat thawed food as soon as possible or cook it before refreezing.

How to prepare food?

- Have supplies of food that do not need to be cooked.
- Some foods can be prepared by soaking in cold water — for example, couscous, instant porridge, or legumes can be soaked and left to soften.
- Food can be prepared outdoors on a camping stove or grill. Always handle fire safely.

How to stay warm?

- Have enough warm clothing, shoes, and blankets for everyone in the household.
- Eat regularly and rest enough.
- Keep windows and doors closed to prevent heat from escaping.

How to stay warm in a cold house or apartment?

- Keep the heat in just one room if possible and limit the use of other rooms.
- Close doors to unused rooms and seal any gaps.
Cover windows with curtains or blankets.
- Put multiple layers of blankets or rugs on the floor.
- Wear warm, breathable clothing. You can also use multiple layers.
- To preserve heat better, all household members should spend time and sleep in the same room.
- Move beds to the warmest spot in the room and use all available blankets and covers.

i *Alcohol only provides short-term warmth, and consuming it during an emergency can be dangerous because it reduces alertness and impairs judgment. It's best to completely avoid alcohol in such situations.*

How to use the toilet?

- A large-scale power outage may disrupt water supply.
The toilet can be flushed only once; after that, the tank will not refill.
- During a power outage and water supply interruption, use the toilet only if it is necessary.
- Use hand sanitizer to wash hands.

i *Emergency solution when the toilet is out of order: place a garbage bag inside the toilet bowl, add toilet paper, newspapers, or cat litter. After use, tie the bag carefully, place it inside two additional bags, and dispose of it with regular waste.*

Pay attention to information from your municipality about the possible deployment of backup power sources (diesel generators) near your home, where you can charge your mobile phone, batteries, power bank, or use other electronics.

How to use a mobile phone?

- During a power outage, the mobile network may be overloaded or unavailable.
We should use the phone only when absolutely necessary.
- We save the battery by limiting data downloads and avoiding unnecessary calls and messages.

What to do after the power supply is restored?

- Check all electrical appliances and lights in our home.
- Make sure the stove or other potentially dangerous devices are switched off.
- Check the condition of food stored in the fridge and freezer.

Sheltering

In certain emergency situations, the public is alerted by a warning signal called a “General Warning,” which has a fluctuating tone. When this signal sounds, it is most important to immediately find a safe place inside the nearest solid building and follow the instructions of emergency services and authorities. This simple action is usually enough to stay protected.

A safe indoor space can be our home, school, workplace, or another public building (such as a shopping mall or municipal office). A bus stop or the interior of a car are not suitable places for shelter.

What situations require sheltering?

- A severe storm or tornado
- A high concentration of toxic smoke caused by a fire
- A release of hazardous substances into the surroundings
- A risk of radiation leakage

i We should remember that when we hear a siren with a fluctuating tone lasting for 140 seconds, it is a warning signal. This signal is called a “General Warning” and indicates a general threat.



What to do when we hear a warning signal?

- Quickly take shelter in the nearest building.
- Close all doors and windows properly. Seal any gaps, turn off ventilation and air conditioning.
- Having a reliable source of information is an advantage. Television and radio play a key role during emergencies. In case of a power or internet outage, a battery-powered radio will help.
- Avoid using mobile networks unnecessarily to prevent overloading and disruption.
- Follow the instructions of rescue services and authorities. Stay safe in our shelter and wait for further instructions from emergency services or responsible authorities.

i We should remember that some dangerous substances can't be seen or smelled. In every case, we take warnings from authorities seriously.

Evacuation

In life-threatening situations (such as floods or industrial accidents), authorities may order an evacuation after careful assessment. Rescue services ensure that everyone is safely evacuated.

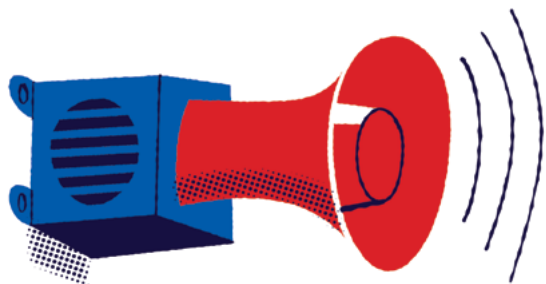
i Once an evacuation is ordered, we must follow instructions from the rescue services. By doing so, we protect not only ourselves but also the health and lives of emergency responders.

How will we be informed about evacuation?

We will be notified in one or more of the following ways:

- Public media (Czech Radio, Czech Television) and regional media
- Municipal announcements and electronic sirens
- Messages from rescue services or responsible authorities

In case of immediate danger, evacuation is ordered after the “General Warning” siren sounds.



What to do after an evacuation order?

Safety measures

- ☐ Extinguish any fires in stoves or heaters.
- ☐ Turn off electrical appliances (except freezers and fridges).
- ☐ Close windows and doors, turn off ventilation and air conditioning.
- ☐ Shut off water and gas.

What to take with us?

- ☐ Emergency bag.
Label it with the owner's name and phone number.

Protecting people

- ☐ Put a note with name, address, and contact details into children's or vulnerable persons' pockets.
- ☐ Inform neighbours about the evacuation and offer help.

Before leaving

- ☐ Lock the apartment or house.
- ☐ Place a note on the door with time and place of evacuation, names, and contact details.
This helps rescue teams when checking evacuated areas.
- ☐ If evacuating independently to relatives or friends, indicate their address.
This way, rescue services know where to find us if needed.

At the assembly point

- ☐ Go to the designated gathering place.
- ☐ If necessary, use respiratory protection and protect the surface of the body.
- ☐ Follow instructions from officials.
- ☐ If evacuating by car, consider the risks (weather, fuel supply).

What to pack in an evacuation bag?

Personal items

- ☐ Identity card, passport, health insurance card
- ☐ Copies of important documents
Birth certificate, marriage certificate, important contracts
- ☐ Keys
- ☐ Cash and payment cards
Coins and banknotes in various denominations

Health and hygiene

- ☐ First aid kit and a week's supply of regularly used medication
- ☐ Glasses, contact lenses
- ☐ Hand sanitizer
- ☐ Toilet paper and hygiene items
- ☐ Towel

Food and water

- ☐ Bottled drinking water
In an emergency, an adult can manage with 2 litres of water per day.
- ☐ A one-day supply of non-perishable food
- ☐ Mug, bowl, cutlery
- ☐ Multifunctional knife

Clothing and sleeping

- ☐ Sturdy shoes, raincoat
- ☐ Spare clothes and underwear
- ☐ Sleeping bag or blanket, sleeping mat

Electronics

- ☐ Phone with charger
Phone numbers of loved ones written on paper
- ☐ Battery-powered radio and flashlight
- ☐ Charged power bank, spare batteries, and cables

Pets

- ☐ Food, medicines, bowls
- ☐ Carrier, muzzle, leash

Entertainment

- ☐ Pencil and paper
- ☐ Book, magazine, board game
- ☐ Toys for children



Helping neighbours

Is there anyone nearby who might need help? It could be an elderly person, someone with small children, a person with a disability, someone who is ill, or a foreigner who does not understand Czech well. We should ask them if they need assistance. In crisis situations, mutual help is essential and can save lives. Together, we are stronger and can overcome even the toughest challenges.

People around us:

- They might need medical assistance.
- They could be running out of food or medicine.
- They might have trouble getting to a water distribution point.
- They may not understand why the electricity and water are not working.

How can we help?

- Call for help in urgent cases.
- Share supplies.
- Help with shopping or transport.
- Offer to share important information.



Communicating with children

In crisis situations, children need special attention. They should understand what is happening, feel supported, and know what to expect. This helps them cope better.

Basic principles

- Speak openly and honestly in an age-appropriate way.
- Give space to express worries.
- Share feelings together.
- Listen to questions and opinions.
- Be aware that children mirror emotions, so set a calm example.
- Involve them in daily and new activities suitable for their age.

Practical tips

- Explain the situation simply and clearly.
- Emphasise that professionals are managing the situation and safety measures are in place to protect them.
- Reassure them that they won't be left alone.
- Mention that you will get through it together and there are people ready to help.
- Maintain daily routines as much as possible.

i *In case of evacuation, prepare a note for the child with their address and a contact for a close relative. Also pack a small toy in the evacuation bag.*



Support during difficult times

In crisis situations, it is important to pay attention to mental well-being. Everyone experiences crises differently and may have specific needs.

What are the basic principles of psychological support?

- Communicate openly and respectfully, taking the other person's situation into account.
- Allow space for expressing worries and emotions.
- Listen without judgment.
- Maintain daily routines as much as possible.
- Involve the person in handling the situation in a way they can manage.

Where to find help?

- The website www.opatruj.se provides important contact details for crisis hotlines offering psychological assistance, as well as a range of useful information on mental health care.

i If we are caring for someone with specific needs (a senior, a person with a disability, or a person with a mental illness), detailed information about available support is provided at www.72h.gov.cz



Main principles of first aid

In case of injury, basic first aid knowledge can save lives. That's why it is important to know how to provide it and, above all, not to hesitate. Basic first aid steps can be performed by anyone who is willing to take responsibility and act.

i In situations threatening life or health, always call emergency line 155 first.

How to assess the severity of the condition?

- Speak to the person and gently shake their shoulders: "Can you hear me?"
- If there is no response, tilt the head back and lift the chin.
- Check if you can hear or feel breathing and see the chest or abdomen rising.
- Call 155.
- If there is no breathing, start chest compressions.

i Remember, our goal is to keep the injured person alive until emergency services arrive.

How to perform chest compressions?

- Place the hands on the center of the chest between the nipples.
- Compress the chest 100 to 120 times per minute, 5–6 cm deep.
- Continue until emergency services arrive or the person starts to respond.

How to stop severe bleeding?

- If possible, wear disposable gloves.
- Firmly press a bandage or clean cloth directly onto the wound.
- If bleeding cannot be stopped by direct pressure, consider using a tourniquet. Only apply it to the arm or thigh above the wound, closer to the heart. Never place it on joints.
- Note the time when the tourniquet was applied.

Contents of a home first aid kit

- ☐ Regularly used medication
Sufficient supply for one week, including instructions for use.
- ☐ Painkillers, fever and anti-diarrheal medication
- ☐ Bandages and plasters
- ☐ Disinfectant for wounds and hand sanitizer
- ☐ Disposable gloves
- ☐ Tourniquet
- ☐ Rescue (thermal) blanket
- ☐ Respirators
- ☐ Thermometer
- ☐ Tweezers and scissors
- ☐ Pencil and paper

Notes



In situations threatening life or health, call emergency lines

112

Common European
emergency number

150

Fire department

155

Ambulance

158


Police

 We can also request help via SMS or using the Záchranka mobile app

Information for the operator

- Where it happened (exact address).
- What happened.
- Who is calling (our name).

Never hang up first.

 If we don't know our exact location, we tell the operator the number on the nearest street lamp, the number on a railway crossing, or describe what we see around us (a shop, school, bridge, etc.).

If we or our loved ones need psychological support or someone to talk to during a difficult situation, we can call a crisis helpline:

- First Psychological Aid Line: **116 123** (nonstop, free)
- Safety Line for children and students up to 26 years old: **116 111** (nonstop, free)
- Senior Helpline: **800 157 157** (nonstop, free)

More contacts for other crisis helplines are available at www.linkyduvery.cz.



The guide was created in collaboration with experts in crisis management and communication. It is intended as a practical tool for managing crises and disasters. More information is available at www.72h.gov.cz.

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