

In Case of Danger - Citizens' Handbook

In life we can witness situations that we call emergencies because they come without warning and endanger lives and health. They can cause huge property and environmental damage and can originate from the ill effects of human activities, from natural causes, or from a combination of these. Such emergencies can include floods, tornados, industrial failures resulting in toxic leaks, big road accidents, large fires, and terrorist attacks.

This handbook provides general instructions and recommendations to be followed when we find ourselves in a kind of threat to life and health, property or environment in consequence of an emergency. They are not intended to be (and cannot be) comprehensive because each kind of emergency requires a different approach.

DO NOT FORGET: PREPARED IS LUCKY!

IMPORTANT EMERGENCY CALL NUMBERS

If you discover an exceptional situation (fire, accident with toxic chemical release...) that endangers persons, property or environment, immediately call telephone number **150 - Fire Rescue Service of the Czech Republic.**

The assistance of medical rescue service is required in all states threatening life. The Medical Rescue Service is called by dialling telephone number **155 - Medical Rescue Service.**

If you witness a road accident or criminal offence call telephone number **158 - Police of the Czech Republic** or **156 - Municipal Police.**

112 - The pan-European emergency number is designated in particular for foreigners and for emergency calls in major emergencies.

On forwarding the message to the emergency numbers you should tell:

- what has happened,
- where it has happened,

- your name and the telephone number that you are calling from

After you finish the phone call, wait the operator to return your call. This is to verify your announcement.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- **RESPECT** and seek information from official sources (radio, television, public address system, municipal public notice, instructions of employer etc.).
- **DO NOT DISSEMINATE** false or unverified alarms.
- **WARN** persons within range and do not ignore the deaf.
- **DO NOT TELEPHONE** unnecessarily. Telephone networks get overloaded in emergencies.
- **DO NOT UNDERESTIMATE** the hazards.
- **HELP** your neighbours, especially when they are old, ill or handicapped.
- **REALIZE** that human life and health is of the greatest value and saving property is of lesser importance.
- **FOLLOW** the instructions of the rescue unit's operators.

WARNING SIGNAL

In case of danger or the occurrence of an emergency, population is mainly warned by a GENERAL WARNING alarm signal. This signal is an oscillating siren which lasts for a period of 140 seconds and which may be broadcast three times at approximately three-minute intervals. The population is subsequently informed about what has happened and what should be done by radio, television, municipal public notice, oral announcement, integrated rescue system vehicles, or by other means.

- Tone of siren - Oscillating
- Length of tone - 140 seconds
- Name of alarm signal - General warning

In the Czech Republic, as well as the “ General warning“ alarm there is also a “ **Fire alarm**“ signal. This signal is an interrupted siren tone lasting a period of 1 minute (25 seconds of steady tone, 10 seconds break, 25 seconds of steady tone). It is used to summon fire brigade units. The “ Fire alarm” signal, broadcast by an electronic horn, simulates the trumpet tone “ FI-RE” , “ FI-RE” ...for a 1minute period.

Verification of the warning system's functionality is practised generally on the first Wednesday of every month at 12 o'clock; this involves sounding the alarm (uninterrupted siren tone for a period of 140 seconds). The population is informed of this via the mass media.

WHEN YOU HEAR THE SIREN

The instructions below are only valid if there is no apparent flooding or earthquake.

1) HIDE IMMEDIATELY

Find shelter in the nearest building. This may be factory, bureau, office, store, public building, or private house. If you travel in a car and hear the alarm signal, park your car and take shelter in the nearest building.

2) CLOSE DOORS AND WINDOWS

When you are inside the building close doors and windows. The siren is likely to announce the release of toxic agents, gas, radioactive materials, and poisons. By closing the space you reduce the possibility of contamination.

3) SWITCH ON YOUR RADIO OR TV SET

Emergency broadcasts will inform you about what has happened and why the siren has been used, and the population will be warned what to do next. In the case of power failure use a portable radio with a battery supply. Information is also broadcast by local wire broadcasting and, if appropriate, by electronic sirens.

WHAT TO DO WHEN EVACUATION IS ORDERED

- Follow evacuation instructions, take your evacuation luggage and get to the appointed place in time.
- Follow the instructions of the authorities who provide evacuation even if you are using your own vehicle.

GUIDE FOR LEAVING AN APARTMENT OR FAMILY HOUSE IN CASE OF EVACUATION

- Extinguish open fires and heaters.
- Switch off electrical appliances (except for refrigerators and freezers).
- Close water and gas mains.
- Make sure that the neighbours know they are supposed to leave their apartment
- Put cards with your name and address in your children's pockets
- Take dogs and cats with you.
- Leave other pets including exotic animals at home providing them with a sufficient stock of water and food.
- Take your evacuation luggage, lock the apartment and get to the appointed evacuation place.

EVACUATION LUGGAGE

Evacuation luggage is prepared for leaving the apartment as a result of emergency or ordered evacuation. A backpack, travelling bag or suitcase may serve as an evacuation luggage. Label your luggage with your name and address.

Evacuation luggage should comprise:

- Basic non-perishable foods, ideally canned, well packed bread and-especially important-drinking water.
- Small stores, a small bowl and cutlery.
- Identification cards, money, insurance policies and valuables.
- Portable radio with spare batteries.
- Toilet articles and cosmetics.
- Medicaments, torch.
- Spare underwear, clothes, shoes, plastic raincoat, sleeping bag or blanket.
- Pocketknife, matches, sewing kit and other oddments.

FLOOD PROTECTION

Before flooding:

- Inquire at the municipal office about how and where you are going to evacuate to in case of flood.
- Use sandbags, flexible damp coursing, insulating boards, and other construction materials to close low doors and windows.
- Ensure the sewer system and WC outlet are plugged.
- Prepare medicaments, papers, appropriate clothes, food and drinking water for 2-3 days.
- If you own a car get it ready for immediate use in evacuation.

- Prepare your evacuation luggage, remove valuable and danger chemicals to higher floor, fasten anything which could be washed away and get ready to evacuate all animals.

During flooding:

- Following the instructions of the municipal flood authorities and police and rescuers, leave the endangered area. In case of evacuation follow the apartment or house leaving instructions.
- If there is a lack of time move immediately to a place which is not going to be flooded.

After flooding:

- Have the condition of your home (static disruption, is it habitable?), power supply (gas, electricity etc.), conditions of drainage and water piping checked.
- Dispose of dead animals, food and crops affected by water. Follow instructions given by the public health officer. Get experts to check any wells.
- Make inquiries about humanitarian aid points and emergency funds, drinking water, food, warm cloth, toilet articles and detergents, necessary tools for flood damage liquidation and other essentials.
- Contact your insurance company to get damages compensation (declare the incident, make out a list of damage).

DISASTER IN A CHEMICAL FACTORY WITH RELEASE OF HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Necessary recommendations:

- Quickly leave the endangered place.
- Hide as soon as possible in a closed room.
- Close and seal windows and doors and other holes.

- Switch off the ventilation.
- Watch the news via the mass media.
- Prepare extempore protection.
- Prepare your evacuation luggage.
- Leave the building only upon instruction.

DISASTER IN A NUCLEAR FACILITY WITH THE RELEASE INTO THE ENVIRONMENT OF RADIOACTIVE MATERIALS

Necessary recommendation:

- Hide as soon as possible in a closed room (ideally in a basement), if possible on the on the side of the building facing away from the nuclear facility.
- Close and seal windows and doors.
- Switch off the ventilation and seal other holes.
- Watch news in mass media.
- Prepare extempore protection means.
- Prepare your evacuation luggage.
- Iodine preparation (pills) and individual means of protection should only be taken and used on the basis of public call.
- Leave the building only upon instruction.

In case of disaster in the Dukovany and Temelin nuclear power plants people living in the disaster-planning zone must follow the instructions given by the nuclear power plant operators and state and local authorities.

BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS

Biological weapons can be airbourne (germs, viruses, toxins) or carried by insects (lice, fleas, flies, ticks) or contaminated water, food, or objects. Human senses cannot detect biological contamination. Its presence is detected by special equipment and testing of samplings.

How to protect oneself against penetration or introduction of infection into organism:

- Do not use water from unknown or undetected sources.
- Prepare water using chemical disinfectants or boiling.
- Do not eat food that is not protected by hard packaging or verified safe.
- Keep your body clean even under unfavourable conditions.
- Do not touch or examine suspicious objects if not essential.
- If you feel symptoms of disease seek medical assistance immediately.

Follow the instructions of medical personnel and public health officers.

CHEMICAL WEAPONS

Chemical weapons can be in liquid or gaseous state. Their impact on the organism can vary: they can harm the central nerve system, breathing organs, and digestive system, or disrupt the metabolism; others have a vesicant effect.

How to protect oneself against the effects of chemical weapons:

- As fast as possible use means of extempore protection.
- Take shelter in the nearest building.

EXTEMPORE PROTECTION MEANS FOR PERSONS IN ENVIRONMENTS POLLUTED BY RADIOACTIVE, CHEMICAL OR BIOLOGICAL AGENTS

Extempore protection means protecting the air passage and the body surface while forced to remain stay in a radioactive-, chemical-, or biological-agent polluted environment.

- To protect air passages use a wet mask (folded handkerchief, towel, wiper) to cover the nose and mouth. Fasten the mask at the back of the neck using a shawl or a scarf.
- Protect your head with a cap, hat, scarf or helmet so that your hair is completely covered and your forehead, ears and neck are protected.
- Protect your eyes with goggles - ski, swimming or motorcycling goggles - with any vents closed with scotch tape. If you do not have such goggles available, protect your eyes by pulling a transparent plastic bag over your head and fastening it by a shoestring or rubber band at cheek bone level.
- Protect surface of your body with overalls, trousers, raincoat, and/or nylon jogging suit. Seal at the neck, sleeve and leg areas
- High boots or rubber boots are the best protection of legs, rubber or leather gloves are the best protection of hands.

Upon escape from the contaminated area, take off all outer clothes, put them in a plastic bag and bind it. If possible, take a shower carefully and wipe yourself dry and put on clean clothes.

ANONYMOUS ANNOUNCEMENTS (bomb threats, dangerous substance alerts etc.)

Anonymous announcements of the placing of bombs, explosives, or dangerous substances generally target crowded places. In most such cases the aim is to provoke panic. However, we know threats are not always empty it is necessary to suppose such threats to be real. Without speculating whether a psychopath or fun is concerned, we have to take the situation seriously.

- First of all announce the event at the emergency number 158 (police of the Czech Republic) or at 150 (Fire Rescue Brigade of the Czech Republic).
- If the anonymous announcement of placing bomb or explosive concerned the building you are in, leave the building and get as far away as possible.
- In no case stay close to the possible threat even if curious about what will happen next.

RECEIPT OF A SUSPICIOUS CONSIGNMENT (letter, parcel)

- Do not open nor shake the suspicious object.
- Put the object into a plastic bag or similarly appropriate wrapper.
- Leave the room, wash your hands with water and soap, and call the emergency number 158 (Police of the Czech Republic) or 150 (Fire Rescue Service of the Czech Republic). The Police of the Czech Republic or Fire Rescue Service of the Czech Republic will remove the object for testing.

Before calling an emergency line carefully consider the facts which lead you to suspect the consignment. These could be for instance an unexpected anonymous delivery with suspicious handwriting or threatening wording on the object, a stinking object, visible wires, or a strange ticking. On opening the packet, cause for concern could include suspicious loose material or any suspicious object.

INTEGRATED RESCUE SYSTEM

The Integrated Rescue System is a coordinated policy for dealing with emergencies and when conducting rescue and clean up operations.

Basic components:

- Fire Rescue Service of the Czech Republic
- Fire Rescue Service units included in the district area coverage by Fire Rescue Service units

- Medical Rescue Service
- Police of the Czech Republic

Other components:

- Determined units and equipments of army forces
- Other armed security forces
- Other rescue forces
- Public health authorities
- Accident, emergency, expertise and other services
- Civil protection facilities
- Non-profit organisations and citizen associations that can be used for rescue and clean up operations

Where you can find information

Citizens can find information about the nature of possible threat, rescue and clean up operations and protection of population prepared for case of emergency at the appropriate local authority.

Employees can get information about the nature of possible threat, rescue and clean up operations and protection of population in case of emergency in the workplace from their employer (relevant corporation or self-employed individual).

Corporation or self-employed individual can find the information about the nature of possible threat, crisis arrangements prepared and their implementation models at the appropriate local authority.

Title: IN CASE OF DANGER Citizens' handbook

- *Compiler: Ministry of Interior - Fire Rescue Service of the Czech Republic, general Directory Civil Protection Department*
- *Executive editor: pplk. PhDr. Alena Snášelová*
- *Published by Ministry of Interior - Fire rescue Service of the Czech Republic, general Directory Civil Protection Department*
- *Print and distribution: Existenciália, Krosenská 533, 181 00 Prague 8*
- *Edition: third, corrected*
- *Published in 2003*
- *Number of copies 30 000*
- *ISBN 80-86640-18-3*
- *© MV-generální ředitelství Hasičského záchranného sboru ČR*