

Handbook

# IN CASE OF EMERGENCY OR WAR



Center for Strategic  
Communication  
and Information  
Security

mkon

The following people worked on the handbook:  
Center for Strategic Communications  
and Information Security under the Ministry  
of Culture and Information Policy of Ukraine  
in cooperation with the State Emergency Service  
of Ukraine, the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine,  
the Office of the Commander-in-Chief Armed Forces  
of Ukraine, and public organizations.

Design and layout: Pavlo Konovalov.  
Illustrations: Alexander Grekhov.

Contact email:  
[stratcom@spravdi.gov.ua](mailto:stratcom@spravdi.gov.ua)

The digital version of the handbook:  
<https://dovidka.info/>

# Content

## 4 Preface

## 5 How to prepare for an emergency

- 6 How to prepare your own home.
- 7 How to prepare a water supply.
- 8 How to prepare a vehicle.
- 8 What products to stock up for home and a survival kit.
- 10 How to prepare a first aid kit.
- 12 What to put in a survival kit
- 14 How to agree with relatives and friends on an action plan.
- 15 How to take care of pets.

## 16 Communication and information retrieval

- 16 How to stay in touch and receive information.
- 17 How to use a walkie-talkie.
- 18 How to protect yourself from disinformation.
- 20 What sources of information can be trusted.

## 22 Shelter

- 22 What is a shelter?
- 24 What to do when you hear sirens.
- 25 Rules of stay in the shelter.

## 26 In the combat area

- 26 How to behave during shelling.
- 30 Rules of conduct in the combat area.
- 32 How to help the Ukrainian army in the war zone.

## Preface

Ukraine has been resisting Russian aggression since 2014. During this time, we have strengthened our defenses: the Armed Forces, the National Guard, the Security Service, and other paramilitary organizations totaling 500,000 people.

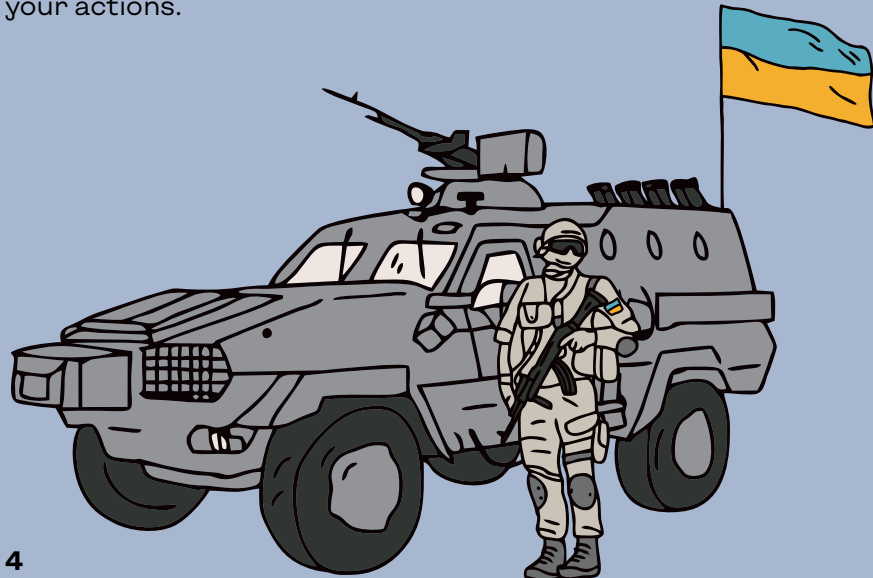
Our country receives regular military support from the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, many European countries, both in weapons and training.

However, Ukraine will be well prepared when its citizens are well prepared.

Therefore, it is important to know what each of us can do in an emergency, especially true when the police, ambulance, rescue services, and other services are forced to work in an emergency.

In this handbook, you will find practical advice on preparing for an emergency and how to act in such a case.

Read the brochure carefully, analyze it and think through your actions.



## How to prepare for an emergency



Many establishments, such as shops, pharmacies, and banks, may be closed in an emergency. Therefore make sure you have a supply of food, water, medicine, cash, and the things you need at home. For tips on this, see the sections “How to prepare a water supply,” “What food to stock up on for home and a survival kit,” “How to prepare a first aid kit.”

The supply of electricity, water, gas, heat, telephone, mobile, internet, ATMs and bank terminals, shops, and pharmacies may be entirely or partially blocked in the event of military actions.

## How to prepare your own home

Make sure you have:

- the stock of long-term storage products;
- drinking and technical water;
- first aid kit;
- cash;
- flashlights, spare batteries or accumulators for them, candles;
- gas burner with extra cylinders for cooking;
- fire extinguisher;
- warm blankets, sleeping bags, thermal underwear (in case of the cold season);
- survival kit in case of evacuation or transition to shelter;

If you live in a private house, equip the simplest shelter in your basement.

Offer older neighbors or people who cannot move on their own to help prepare a home and a survival kit and take them to the shelter if necessary.

## How to prepare a water supply

Calculate the stock for home use according to the number of members of your family. One adult needs per day:

- 3 liters of drinking water (including liquid consumed with food);
- 10-12 liters for hygiene and cooking.

Ensure that you have a water supply for yourself and your family for at least 72 hours.

If you are not sure about the quality of drinking water, we recommend having supplies for additional cleaning – filter jug for mechanical water purification or tablets for quick disinfection of water.



## How to prepare a vehicle

If you have a car, check in advance:

- its technical serviceability;
- whether the tank is full of fuel;
- the expiration date of the insurance policy;
- the presence of additional fuel in the canisters.

## What products to stock up for home and a survival kit

Take care of nutritious foods for long-term storage. If needed, you can take them with you to a shelter. In addition, these products should not require much water for cooking.

Also, think about what foods you and your family eat. Make a three-day food supply for the home.

Even in the absence of electricity, keep food in the refrigerator: it will retain cold for several hours after turning off. Try to open the door as little as possible. Eat perishable foods first.

If the temperature outside is low, you can keep food there.

### Products for a survival kit:

- sublimated products (porridges, soups, noodles);
- canned meat, fish, vegetables;
- bread and cookies;
- nuts;
- chocolate;
- dried fruits.



## How to prepare a first aid kit

Prepare two first aid kits – one for emergencies (for example, in case of injury), the other for your household needs (pain relief, elimination of symptoms of poisoning, elimination of allergic reactions, etc.).

### Emergency first aid kit:

- a valve with a film for artificial respiration;
- supplies to stop bleeding (tourniquet or hemostatic bandage with hemostatic agent);
- chlorhexidine or alcohol for wound disinfection;
- hand sanitizer, alcohol wipes;
- gauze napkins of different sizes, non-sterile gauze bandages;
- elastic bandages with the possibility of fixation;
- two pairs of rubber gloves;
- special atraumatic scissors for quick cutting of clothes on the victim;
- a large piece of cloth that can be used to fix the victim's limb;
- thermal blanket.

Do not put those drugs and medicines you do not know how to use in the first aid kit. If you still want to take them, learn how to use them properly in advance.

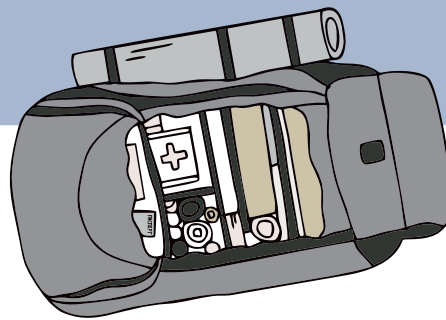
Keep prescriptions for your medications (follow the expiration date), as well as the names and phone numbers of your doctors.

### First aid kit for household needs:

- patches of different sizes;
- activated charcoal to treat intoxication;
- medicine to reduce fever;
- painkillers;
- antiallergic medicine;
- diarrhea medication;
- gastrointestinal infection medicine;
- drops in case of infectious and inflammatory eye diseases;
- the medicine you are taking (dosage for at least a week) with a description of the method of application and dose;
- the stock of masks.



## What to put in a survival kit



A survival kit is a capacious durable large comfortable backpack or bag. Put the necessary clothes, hygiene items, medicines, tools, and food. A survival kit is needed for a quick evacuation, not to waste time collecting things.

### Put in the survival kit:

- passport and copies of all necessary documents in plastic packaging;
- money (bank cards and cash; distribute banknotes to different places);
- the paper version of the COVID certificate;
- house and car keys;
- a map of the area, as well as information about the method of communication and the agreed meeting place of your family;
- chargers for mobile phones and power banks (portable chargers);
- small radio;
- flashlight, matches, lighter, candles;
- spare push-button telephone, set of walkie-talkies;
- compass, digital watch (preferably waterproof);

- spare batteries;
- multifunctional tool (multitool) with a knife blade, awl, screwdriver, scissors, etc;
- sharpened knife, ax;
- signal supplies: whistle, hand flare;
- garbage bags;
- a roll of wide tape;
- notebook, pen, pencil, or marker;
- water purification tablets;
- threads, needles;
- synthetic cord 4-5 mm thick, about 20 m long;
- first aid kit;
- warm clothes;
- underwear and socks;
- reliable, comfortable shoes, preferably waterproof;
- tent, sleeping mat, sleeping bag (if space allows);
- hygienic supplies;
- utensils (cast iron pot, flask, spoon, mug);
- two liters of drinking water per person (this amount should cover your minimum need for two days, and at the same time will not make your survival kit too heavy);
- food for two days;
- scanned archive of photos and documents.

Put a tag in your top or side pocket with your name and contacts if you lose your backpack. If possible, bring photos of family or friends with you – this will help you find them if the group splits.

After packing, try to lift your backpack and walk with it. If it is too heavy, optimize its contents: it is crucial to bring it to the shelter without problems.

Put a label with the child's name, year of birth, home address, planned destination, and information about the parents – names and contacts in the backpack and pocket of the child's clothes. Explain to your child when and how to use this note.

## How to agree with relatives and friends on an action plan

Discuss all possible scenarios with relatives and friends: if the whole family is at home together and if one of the family members is absent.

An emergency can happen when you are in different places. Therefore, agree in advance on the meeting place, routes, and general action plan. In addition, decide on how you will communicate if the connection is lost (prepare walkie-talkies, arrange a meeting point or a place to leave a note with information).

Make a list of important numbers for each family member: write them down or print them out. Then, arrange for each family member to carry it with them.

## How to take care of pets

- prepare a supply of dry food and water;
- prepare a carrier, leash, and muzzle;
- make sure the animal is vaccinated against rabies;
- put the animal's passport in the survival kit;
- hang a token with the name and contact of at least two people;
- animals' essential medications.

Please note that it is forbidden to take animals to shelter. If possible, arrange in advance with friends or family members who live in a safe place to hand over the animal.



# Communication and information retrieval



## How to stay in touch and receive information

There may be no mobile communication in an emergency. If it is, but it's weak, you can use light-weight versions of many applications (Facebook Lite, Messenger Lite, Google Go, Google Maps Go). As a result, they take up less space and run faster, even with poor Internet access.

You should also install the maps app on your smartphone, which does not need the network. For example, mapy.cz, or enable the appropriate feature on Google Maps. Note that applications do not automatically download the necessary maps - you must do so in advance.

Consider purchasing an additional spare push-button phone. It can work longer than a smartphone if you use it only for conversations.

## How to use a walkie-talkie

In the absence of mobile communication, a walkie-talkie can replace the phone. For example, when you need to move to a safe place, these devices will help a family communicate with each other.

Modern walkie-talkies are easy to use and have a built-in FM receiver. However, we recommend that you prepare a spare battery.

Do not turn on the walkie-talkie on the police or other services frequencies: this will interfere with their work.

## How to protect yourself from disinformation



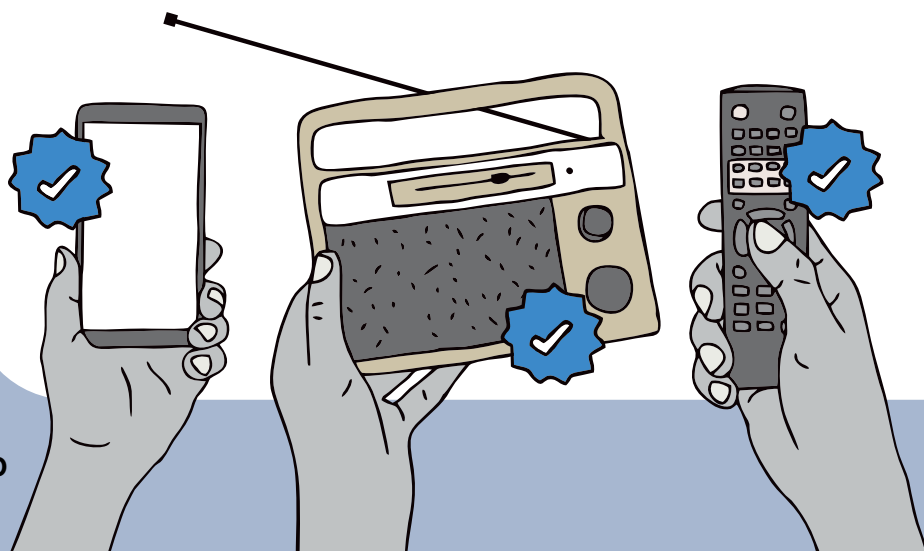
### Follow these tips:

- **Distribute information only from verified sources.** Reliable information comes from state bodies – on their official pages in social media or the Public Broadcasting Channel (UA: Pershyi, former UT-1).
- **Do not believe the message about the cessation of the struggle by the Ukrainian army.** Such information is a typical way to demoralize the population. Moreover, you have to remember that in the event of hostile aggression, the Ukrainian security forces will steadfastly resist.
- **If the Internet connection is interrupted** or the pages of state bodies are not available, contact the Public Broadcasting: UA: Pershyi and Ukrainian Radio for information. Tune the radio to the frequency of your city in advance; you can find out the frequency of the broadcast on the website [nrcu.gov.ua/maps](http://nrcu.gov.ua/maps). If you have a fixed radio station, use it.
- **Do not disseminate information about the movement of Ukrainian troops.** You can harm those who protect you.
- **Do not believe the reports of deliberate shelling of civilians by the Ukrainian military.** In this way, the aggressor wants to undermine your trust in the defenders.
- **Do not share unverified information about the course of hostilities.** Only the security and defense authorities of Ukraine have such data. Information from other sources or private pages on social media may not be true.
- **Check out patriotic-looking but questionable messages and appeals.** Slogans and Ukrainian symbols may cover the aggressor.

## What sources of information can be trusted

First of all, focus on the primary sources of government agencies. Follow the information from the SES, the army, and the government on the pages of their websites or social networks and the messages of the Public Broadcasting.

Below you will find a list of verified sources. Please note that verified (officially confirmed) accounts on social networks have a special mark next to the name - a blue tick. In this way, the social network ensures that this person or institution maintains this page. Not all official institutions in Ukraine have received it yet, so consider the accounts from the list.



### Public Broadcasting:

- TV Channel UA: Pershiy (Public Broadcasting) – [suspilne.media](https://www.suspilne.media)
- Radio Promin – [promin.fm](https://www.promin.fm)
- Ukrainian Radio – [ukr.radio](https://www.ukr.radio)

### Websites of public services:

State Service of Ukraine for Emergencies [dsns.gov.ua](https://dsns.gov.ua)

Armed Forces of Ukraine [zsu.gov.ua](https://zsu.gov.ua)

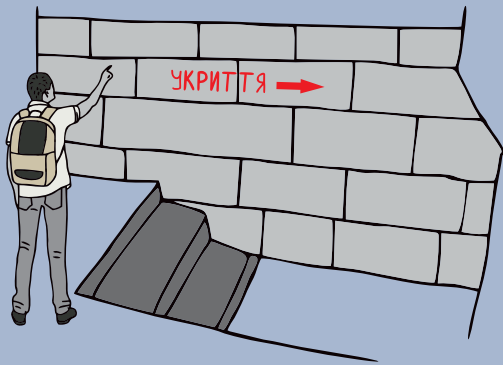
Ministry of Defence Ukraine [mil.gov.ua](https://mil.gov.ua)

Ministry of Internal Affairs [mvs.gov.ua](https://mvs.gov.ua)



[Additional links  
on the handbook website](#)

# Shelter



## What is shelter?

**The simplest shelters** are basements and semi-basements, underground parking lots, and underpasses. They can hide during short shelling. The safest of them are those with several exits (one of them outside the house).

Such premises are usually used as shops, gyms, warehouses, etc. Owners need to be aware of emergency appointments and be prepared to give people access if necessary. We recommend that you arrange contact with the owners in advance (get phone numbers). Residents of cities with subways can also hide on station platforms or underpasses.

Please note that **the subway** will primarily operate as public transport to get people to a safe place in the event of an emergency. Therefore, if you go to the station, do not expect to stay there:

you may be transported to another place.

**The shelter** is a sealed structure for an extended stay of people in case of emergency.

To find such premises look for “Shelter” or “Civil Protection Object” signs. There must also be a telephone number of the person who will open the shelter door in case of danger. If not, contact your local authority for information.

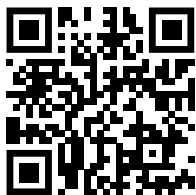
## To prepare, we recommend:

- Check the addresses of the nearest shelters by phone or on the official website of the local executive body;
- Write 2-3 addresses of the shelters closest to you in case the first shelter you come to is full;
- Study and pass the route to these buildings in advance;
- Personally check their readiness and inform the local authorities if the shelter needs repairs.

## What to do when you hear sirens

The **“Attention to all” signal** is a long siren sound or intermittent beeps. The beeps of factories and enterprises give the signal through loudspeakers on the streets and the beeps of vehicles (in particular, from SES vehicles equipped with loudspeakers).

- Turn on the TV or radio: the official message is transmitted within 5 minutes after the signal.
- From the message, you can find out the place and time of the emergency, its scale, probable duration, and procedure for security. After listening to the message, follow the instructions.
- Leave the TV or radio on – these channels may receive the following messages.
- If possible, pass the message to the neighbors.



The [“Attention to all”](#) signal sound.



## Rules of stay in the shelter

Before going to the shelter, shut off gas, electricity, and water at home, close windows and vents.

If you can't leave the room on your own, tell your neighbors about it.

### ✘ You can't take to the shelter:

- flammable substances;
- substances with a strong odor;
- bulky items;
- animals.

Persons with children are placed in separate compartments. People with ill health are placed in a medical room or near enclosing structures and closer to ventilation. Therefore, it is essential to equip a separate room for the toilet.

It is forbidden to smoke, make noise, light candles in the building without permission. Therefore, it is necessary to adhere to discipline and move as little as possible.

While in the shelter, watch the announcements on the radio, do not leave the shelter until the message that it is safe to go. You can leave the room earlier only if the shelter is damaged.

# In the combat area



## How to behave during shelling

If your home is located in an area of regular armed conflict, you need to strengthen the windows (for example, with adhesive film) – this will help avoid the scattering of broken glass. If possible, close the windows, for example, with sandbags or solid furniture.

1

## Small-arms attack

If you come under **small-arms attack**, i.e., pistols, submachine guns, rifles, machine guns:

You should hide in a protected room **at home** (for example, in the bathroom, on the stairwell) away from windows and doors. When this is not possible, you should lie down, covered with objects that can protect you from debris and bullets.

Lie down immediately and cover your head with your hands **in the open space**. Effective protection will be any ledge, even a sidewalk, a depression in the ground, or a ditch. A concrete rubbish bin or porch steps can also be a shelter. Do not hide behind cars or kiosks: they often become targets.

**Remember:** The body should be in the safest position. Team up and lie down in the embryo position. Turn your feet in the shooting direction, covering your head with your hands and opening your mouth.

**Wait until the shooting subsides and there are no shots for at least 5 minutes.**

2

## Mortar shelling

A loud whistling and explosion of a projectile can mean that you are in the area of **artillery shelling, mortar fire, or airstrikes**. In this situation, we recommend:

If you hear the whistling of a projectile, and in 2-3 seconds - an explosion, immediately fall to the ground. Cover your head with your hands or a bag. After the explosion of the first projectile, quickly find a place to hide. You need to find at least a slightly deep depression.

Underpasses, subways, shelters, ditches, trenches, pits, wide gutters under the road, high curbs, or maintenance holes are **suitable for hiding**.

If the shelling catches you on public transport, demand an immediate stop and get out. Run as far away from the road as possible and lie down on the ground. Cover your ears with your palms and open your mouth: this will save you from contusion.

It is **dangerous to hide** in porches, under arches, and on stairwells, in the basements of prefabricated houses, near vehicles and gas stations. Such objects are unstable; you may be trapped or injured.

**Do not** start to disassemble the ruins on your own; wait for demining specialists and representatives of the emergency rescue service.

3

## Shelling

If you hear a salvo of launch, see a smoky trace of a projectile in the air, or a flash at night, there is a possibility that you came under artillery fire from **salvo fire systems** (for example, BM-21 "Grad").

Immediately fall to the ground, cover your head with your hands or a bag.

Wait out the first shelling while lying down, and then hide in a safe deep room. Choose a place in the corner and near the exit to leave the house immediately in case of a projectile.

Remain in the shelter for at least 10 minutes after the shelling because there is a threat of its recovery.

## Behavior rules in the combat area

In times of crisis, many factors will act against you, including emotions. Therefore, remember that you need to stay organized and focused at a critical moment and don't react to possible provocations. Your safety will depend on it.

### We advise you to listen to the following tips:

- Always carry your ID with you. Keep money and documents in different places: you will have more chances to keep them.
- Keep a record of blood type and possible health problems (such as drug allergies, chronic illnesses) in a pocket of your clothes.
- Try to stay away from home and work as little as possible, reduce the number of trips for no good reason, avoid crowded places.
- If possible, avoid demonstrating patriotic symbols, which may provoke an aggressor.
- Remember shelters closest to your home, work, or places you often visit.

### ✘ What not to do:

- Don't share your plans with people with questionable reputations or strangers.
- Do not argue with strangers to avoid possible provocations.
- Avoid columns of equipment and do not stand near military vehicles.
- Do not take photos or videos in the presence of people in military uniform, do not try to record their actions, even if you think they are illegal.
- Do not watch the course of hostilities; hide as soon as you hear the shots.
- Do not carry weapons, do not show the military anything that may even resemble a weapon in shape.
- Do not pick up abandoned weapons or ammunition.
- Do not touch explosive or just suspicious objects, do not try to disassemble them or move them to another place: even ordinary household items can be mined. Instead, immediately notify the territorial bodies of the SES and the Ministry of Internal Affairs by calling 101 and 102.
- Do not wear army uniforms, camouflage, or chevron clothing. Choose clothes of dark colors that do not attract attention. Avoid any symbols, as they can cause an unpredictable reaction.



## How to help the Ukrainian army if you are in the war zone?

The best help for a civilian in a combat zone is not to interfere with the military's professional performance.

Another way to help effectively is to train and become part of the army or territorial defense forces.

Conditions for joining the Armed Forces of Ukraine:  
[zsu.gov.ua](https://zsu.gov.ua)

Details on joining the Territorial Defense Forces:  
[sprotyv.in.ua](https://sprotyv.in.ua)

If you do not plan to join The Armed Forces of Ukraine or territorial defense, consider supporting volunteer organizations that help the army.



## Telephones of rescue and emergency services

**112** – Unique call number of all emergency services. Call this number, and the dispatcher will call the team of the required service.

**101** – Fire Service

**102** – Police

**103** – Ambulance

**104** – Emergency service of the gas network

**0 800 501 482** – Security Service of Ukraine hotline