You can get started with recognizing your own risks by looking at the frequency of the most common and serious emergencies in Finland. The most common emergencies are caused by disorders in vital bodily functions affecting breathing, circulation and consciousness.

90 per cent of accidents requiring hospitalization or leading to death happen at home and during leisure, while 9 per cent happen in traffic and 1 per cent at the workplace. Annually accidents lead to about 2,500 deaths and more than 50,000 hospitalizations, and they cause more than one million physical traumas, with a total cost of 1.2–1.4 billion euros.

The most common accident requiring hospitalization or leading to death is falling. Falls cause nearly half of all accidental deaths, and they are the most common cause of hospitalization among the elderly. Accidents and accidental deaths happen markedly more frequently to boys and men than to girls and women. Accidents are the most common single cause of death among children and young people. The most common accidental deaths among children under 15 are caused by traffic accidents, suffocation and drowning; among 15- to 24-year-olds by traffic accidents and poisoning. Among the working-age population, 80 per cent of accidental deaths happen to men, and in two cases out of three substance abuse is involved. Of all accidental deaths, 36 per cent of the victims are under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Fires and traffic accidents carry a serious disaster risk, and therefore special attention should be paid to prevention. Properties can be seriously damaged by adverse natural conditions such as heavy rainfall, high winds, flooding and storm water, as well as by leaks in water and sewage systems and domestic appliances, so preparedness and prevention require special attention.

You should pay attention to the most common emergencies listed above when assessing our own risks. It is also important that you assess risks caused by your lifestyle, capacity to function and health. Think how to prevent them and how to be prepared for them.

All too often we face situations in our work where people have not recognized their risks or tried to prevent or to be prepared for them. Emergencies are frequent. We make nearly 200 emergency calls in Helsinki daily, related to various medical emergencies, accidents, damage to property or the environment and various hazards. But these are just the tip of the iceberg, as the number of potential emergencies is multiple compared with the real emergencies.

Safety is created by many different actors working together. The most important factor for the safety of yourself and your family, friends and neighbours is you. Only you can recognize your own risks, prevent them effectively and be adequately prepared for them. This is not difficult or complicated, and we – the authorities and civic organizations – are there to help you.

We now ask you to assess the safety of yourself and your family, friends and neighbours, and we ask you to make improvements. This publication gets you started. Our website contains more information, and our experts are ready to help you.

Join us to create safety – for yourself!

Simo Wecksten
Rescue Commander
SAFETY IS CREATED TOGETHER

PREVENT RISKS AND BE PREPARED FOR EMERGENCIES

A rescue plan is a key tool for risk management at home. The plan lists the main safety-related issues of a residential building and contains instructions for action. A residential building with three or more residential units is required to make a rescue plan, but every home should have one. A rescue plan is not produced for the authorities but to ensure the safety of every resident. You can read more about rescue plans on our website at http://www.hel.fi/www/pela/en.

The Rescue Department supervises the safety of residential buildings by a system of in-house control, by which the owners and managers of residential buildings assess safety and make reports to the Rescue Department. You can read more about in-house control on our website.

When assessing and controlling the risks of a residential building and your own risks, pay attention to the following:

▶ What safety risks are there in our building and in the immediate environment? What could happen here?

For example, a medical emergency, falling, a fire, water damage, a traffic accident, an electrical accident, an oil spill, exposure to hazardous substances, various disruptions and disasters.

▶ Which ones of the recognized risks are the most probable for us?

▶ Which ones of the recognized risks have the greatest impacts?

For example, risks affecting life and health, or risks that carry significant environmental and economic impacts.

▶ How can we prevent risks from being realized?

For example, by making a rescue plan, by in-house control, by removing factors causing risks of falling, by preventing slipperiness, by improving lighting, by improving traffic arrangements, by maintaining and by ensuring that the building technology is in good order, by the correct use and maintenance of fireplaces and flues, by ensuring that the exits work faultlessly, and by improving the residents’ safety awareness and skills.

▶ How can we mitigate the impacts of risks?

For example, with the help of safety devices such as smoke alarms, stoves with automatic turn-off mechanisms, water leak detectors and initial response firefighting and first aid equipment, as well as by securing that hallways and exits are accessible, locks operate faultlessly, keys are available in emergencies, signs are visible and emergency routes are marked.

▶ How can we be prepared for emergencies?

For example, by training residents in the proper behaviour in emergencies, by producing clear and up-to-date instructions and contact information for all residents, and by learning from dangerous situations.

▶ Assess your risks regularly and develop risk management continuously.

Accidents and medical emergencies

In case of a medical emergency, it is important to assess the victim’s condition, to call the emergency number 112 without delay and to take rescue action according to instructions from the emergency response centre. If possible, victims should call 112 by themselves, as they can best describe their symptoms. If you are not sure about the severity of the emergency, always call 112. However, do not call the emergency number if the situation does not threaten anybody’s life, health or safety. You can get answers to questions concerning non-urgent matters of health 24 hours from the City of Helsinki’s social services and health care telephone information service at 09 3101 0023.
HOW TO ACT IN AN EMERGENCY

Traffic accidents
A traffic accident can cause an injury that leads to loss of consciousness and lack or cessation of breathing. It can also cause additional damage, for example, in the form of further traffic collisions or a fire.

Secure the victim's breathing and circulation, and prevent further injury and damage.
Report the emergency to the emergency number 112.

If there are other people with you, distribute the following tasks among everybody, otherwise carry out the tasks in the following order:
1. Find out what has happened.
2. Take to rescue action if somebody is in danger of dying or being seriously injured.
3. Call the emergency number 112 without delay and be prepared to answer the following questions:
   - What has happened?
   - What is the street address and municipality?
   - Answer the questions, as they are helpful in dispatching help.
   - Do not hang up before allowed to do so.

FIRST RESPONSE IN AN EMERGENCY:

Secure the breathing of an unconscious victim who is sitting up: lift up the victim's head by pushing it up from the tip of the chin and by pressing your hand against the victim's forehead. Secure the breathing of an unconscious victim who is lying down by laying the victim on their side and by pushing their head backwards. Check the victim's breathing by feeling it on the back of your hand or on your cheek. If the victim is not breathing because the airways are blocked, remove the blockage by hand and lift up or push back the victim's head to open the airways.

Stop heavy bleeding by pressing the wound with your fingers.

Prevent further injury and damage by warning the traffic with hazard warning lights and a warning triangle.

Be prepared to put down a fire with a fire extinguisher.

Fire
In case of a fire at your home, put down the fire with a fire extinguisher or fire blanket without endangering yourself and others. If you are unable to put down the fire, make sure that everybody leaves the apartment immediately through a safe exit. The last one to leave the apartment must close the door to prevent smoke from spreading in the building endangering others.
Report the emergency to the emergency number 112.

Warn all others in the building about the fire.

Stop the fire from spreading by closing the doors, windows and ventilation.

If there is a fire in another apartment of the building, stay inside, and close the doors and windows. Do not go into a hallway filled with smoke, because smoke is poisonous. Call the emergency number 112 and report where you are. The Rescue Department will fetch you if necessary.

If the fire is strong, try to leave the area as fast as possible through the safest exit. Move by crawling low, because smoke and heat rise, so the air is cleanest and coolest at the floor.

If you are unable to exit a burning apartment through the door, exit through a window or balcony. Call the emergency number 112 and report where you are. The Rescue Department will fetch you if necessary.

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Emergency supply kit

Emergency supplies at home help us to control complications caused by various disruptions. Every home should store supplies that we cannot live without for very long. They include food supplies, clean water and closed containers suitable for storing it, medicines, iodine tablets, hygiene products, candles and matches, a battery-operated radio and a flashlight. An emergency supply kit should meet a one-week demand. Continuous replacement of food supplies and other perishable goods ensures that the supplies do not become expired.

Public alerts and warnings

The authorities continuously monitor factors that may cause disruptions. If any disruption is considered to cause harm, the public is warned about it as fast as possible. Public alerts and warnings are provided by the means of:

- Warning announcements on national (Yleisradio) and local radio channels
- Warning announcements on TV channels and on Text TV (page 112)
- Releases and announcements on official websites
- Warning signals sounded by outdoor warning sirens

In case the public should seek shelter indoors, the general warning signal is sounded with outdoor warning sirens.

Civic defence shelters

People’s primary shelter when in danger is indoors, and they should seek shelter in civic defence shelters only when specifically instructed to do so by the authorities. Your closest civic defence shelter may be located in your own housing complex, or it may be a larger joint shelter located near you. There are also general civic defence shelters meant for people living, working or staying in the neighbourhood.

The property owner or leaseholder is responsible for the maintenance, readiness, equipment and devices of the property’s civic defence shelter. Under normal conditions, civic defence shelters are in efficient other uses such as storage and leisure, and metro stations and swimming halls are also designated as civic defence shelters. A civic defence shelter in some other use must be usable as a civic defence shelter in 72 hours.

Emergency response centre or the Rescue Department about the situation. You can get the necessary information by radio and television. In case of an emergency, however, call the emergency response centre as normal by dialling 112.

Update your knowledge and skills

Make sure that your safety-related knowledge and skills are up to date. Among other providers, safety training is provided by the Helsinki rescue association Helsingin pelastusliitto https://rednet.punainenristi.fi/node/69 and the Helsinki and Uusimaa chapter of the Finnish Red Cross https://helsinginpuhelimetsastusliitto.org.

M. Food supplies suitable for the kit include canned products, crispbread, nuts, oils, dried fruit and cereals.

Adequate emergency food supplies are part of normal food supply.