OFFLINE RESILIENCE GUIDE // UK EDITION

Emergency Cooking and Carbon Monoxide Safety

A clear rule for outage cooking: no-cook food first, outdoor combustion second. Understand why camping stoves, barbecues and generators do not belong indoors.

6 MIN | UPDATED 13 OCT 2026 | UK FOCUS

> PDF edition generated 13 October 2026 from the GPN website release v12.21.16. The individual guide editorial review dates appear below. This is a saved reference, not a live safety warning or a fresh independent source verification. When online, check current official advice.

LAYER 1 // ACT

FIRST ACTIONS

Start here. Then read the conditions and exceptions below.

1. Do not use a barbecue or camping stove indoors or inside a tent.
2. Do not run a generator in an enclosed space.
3. Keep food that can be eaten cold so you do not depend on combustion cooking.
4. If you safely boil water, a vacuum flask can reduce repeated fuel use.
5. If you suspect carbon monoxide poisoning, get everyone into fresh air and seek medical advice promptly. Call 999 for emergency symptoms.

> **IMPORTANT**
> This is practical preparedness information, not emergency instruction. During an incident, follow current advice from emergency services, your utility provider and relevant public authorities.

The safest emergency meal may be the one you do not cook

Power cuts create a temptation to improvise. A camping stove that is perfectly useful outdoors can become dangerous when moved into a kitchen, conservatory, garage or tent. The NHS warns that camping stoves and barbecues used indoors can cause carbon monoxide to build up.

That is why a preparedness food plan should start with food that can be eaten cold. Tins, pouches, crackers, nut butters and other familiar shelf-stable foods give you time to make safer decisions.

Carbon monoxide gives little warning

Carbon monoxide is produced by incomplete combustion and cannot be seen or smelled. Symptoms can resemble other illnesses. The NHS lists possible symptoms including headache, dizziness, nausea, weakness, tiredness, confusion and breathing problems.

If you suspect carbon monoxide exposure, stop using the suspected appliance if safe, get everyone into fresh air and seek medical advice promptly. Do not go back into the affected building until you have been advised it is safe. If someone exposed has trouble breathing, suddenly becomes confused, loses consciousness, feels weak, or has chest or muscle pain, call 999 or go to A&E; do not drive yourself. For suspected symptoms that are not immediately life-threatening, call the appropriate local urgent-health service, such as NHS 111 where available. This is a potentially serious exposure even when symptoms improve outdoors.

Outdoor cooking needs an outdoor plan

If you use a camping stove, use it in the environment the manufacturer specifies, away from enclosed or poorly ventilated spaces. Keep it stable and away from children, flammable materials and doorways where fumes can be drawn back into the house.

Do not treat a garage with the door cracked open as a safe kitchen. The simple house rule is easier to remember: appliances designed for outdoor combustion stay outdoors.

Use heat once

When you can boil water safely, an insulated flask can make that heat last. Boil what you need, fill the flask and use it for drinks or simple food preparation rather than repeatedly reheating small amounts.

This is not exciting equipment, but it is efficient and keeps fuel use predictable.

Keep alarms working

If your home has gas, oil, wood or other fuel-burning appliances, follow current guidance on carbon monoxide alarms and appliance servicing. A power cut is the wrong time to discover that an alarm battery is flat.

Useful kit for this plan

Equipment should support the plan, not replace it. The commercial catalogue is kept on a separate page.

KIT IS KEPT SEPARATE
Named products and Amazon UK affiliate links are kept on the dedicated KIT page so this guide remains editorial. Use the kit only after the plan identifies a genuine equipment gap.

OPEN KIT →

Sources checked for this guide

We use public sources for the factual backbone and write the guide in our own words. Source pages can change, so the links below are the place to check current official advice.

PRIMARY / AUTHORITATIVE SOURCE

NHS: Carbon monoxide poisoning

Carbon monoxide risks, symptoms and prevention, including camping stoves and barbecues indoors.

https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/carbon-monoxide-poisoning/

PRIMARY / AUTHORITATIVE SOURCE

UK Government Prepare: Power cuts

Practical actions before and during a power cut, including 105 and communications planning.

https://prepare.campaign.gov.uk/be-informed-about-hazards/power-cuts/

PRIMARY / AUTHORITATIVE SOURCE

UK Government Prepare: Get prepared for emergencies

Household planning, emergency supplies, paper contacts, water, food, torches, power banks and radios.

https://prepare.campaign.gov.uk/get-prepared-for-emergencies/

Editorial review date: 13 October 2026. Next scheduled review: 10 February 2027. Follow current official instructions if they differ.

INFORMATION CHECK✓ CURRENT REVIEW

REVIEWED	NEXT REVIEW DUE	OFFICIAL REFERENCES
13 Oct 2026	10 Feb 2027	3 sources

If an official source conflicts with this guide, follow the current official source.

GET PREPPED NOW // ORIGINAL GUIDE

Source page: https://getpreppednow.co.uk/guides/emergency-cooking-carbon-monoxide.html
Editorial update: 13 October 2026 · © 2026 Get Prepped Now
Personal household printing and offline saving are permitted. Keep this attribution and the guide's source/review information with the copy. Copyright & permitted use