



Minister of Defence of the Republic of Latvia



Dear residents of Latvia,

As we all see, the start of the 21st century has been a turbulent one. In 2008, the world was hit by global economic and financial crisis, and Russia started a war in Georgia. In 2011, we witnessed a horrible accident at the Fukushima nuclear power plant. In 2014, Russia started another war and attacked Ukraine. And now we are faced with Covid-19 pandemic. Going through these turbulences, we have realised that something unexpected may come any day and turn everything upside down. Essential services like heat, electricity, water, communications and other vital everyday services may suddenly become unavailable.

These modern crises have shown that although we can rely on the established order and our membership in NATO and the European Union, security, first of all, begins at home. It begins with each and every one of us.

That is why I believe it is the right time to release this message. I, too, have been forced to drastically change my plans because of the current situation and have thus decided to hand this valuable guidance, 'How to act in case of emergency', over to you now. Although we initially planned to release the printed version of guidelines only in autumn, current circumstances and economic context are forcing us to speed up implementation of our plans and 'act outside the box'. We have decided to release the digital version of guidelines to you. We have decided to share this information because it may be useful to you and your families already now.

In 2014, following Russia's aggression in Ukraine, I noticed that the Cabinet of Ministers, government departments and various stakeholders, from schools up to biggest Latvian companies, shifted their focus and began active preparations for potential crisis. Covid-19 crisis is a test of our ability to take care of ourselves and the others at times when our usual patterns and normal life has been disrupted. This crisis has shown that without the support of the whole society and every one of us personally, if companies and government agencies fail to act responsibly towards themselves and the others, government alone will not be able to overcome a crisis. At the individual level, we must all think about what we can do now to prepare for a potential crisis and be ready to protect ourselves and our families.

A year ago, Ministry of Defence began rolling out a comprehensive national defence system. Its objective is to promote civic participation in crisis planning and management. 'How to act in case of emergency' is one of the elements of this system. It is based on internationally-accepted 72-hour or 3-day assessment approach. 72 hours is the minimum time that population must be able to take care of itself in case of emergency before official help arrives. Many other European countries have issued similar guidelines in response to current security challenges to make sure households know how to react.

I hope the recommendations provided in this leaflet will make you think about how to improve your current safety and safeguard yourself against future emergencies. The main aim of the leaflet is to give you basic advice on how to be better prepared for a crisis. You can make the initial critical response period a lot easier for responsible authorities if you prepare yourself and are ready to take care of your relatives. This will also help focus resources on the most urgent needs. It might be too late to start thinking about that once the crisis is here. It can also cause unnecessary panic.

Moreover, to strengthen our common security, I suggest everyone to visit the defence sector portal Sargs.lv to learn more about crisis preparedness. Portal is a source of reliable, verified and current information. It also provides diverse information on how to prepare for and overcome crisis, offering a lot of useful everyday tips.

This is a digital leaflet, so please make sure its contents are available to all your relatives, especially senior citizens who do not use digital technologies on day to day basis.

In conclusion, I would like to once again urge everyone to be very serious about their personal safety. Follow these guidelines to quickly and easily prepare yourself for any potential emergency and create your personal crisis response plan, as well as basic survival kit. These steps will ensure that you know how to act and face any unforeseen emergency. Follow them to be emotionally prepared and avoid major panic.

KNOWLEDGE IS SAFETY!

Deputy Prime Minister,
Minister for Defence

Dr. Artis Pabriks