

Speaker notes

About 90 seconds a slide, 20 minutes in all. Read them as written, or in your own words. Numbers are official; the source is on each slide.

1. Be Ready in 20 minutes

Welcome everyone. This is a short, calm talk: no scare stories. By the end you'll have a few small jobs to do at home, and a free card to take away. Introduce yourself and say you're not an expert, just someone who has read the official advice and put it into plain words.

2. Why now?

The Be Ready campaign was launched by the government this autumn. It's not a warning about anything in particular: it's general advice, like checking your smoke alarm. The aim is that every household could manage for three days if something stopped working.

Source: GOV.UK Be Ready — beready.campaign.gov.uk (read 29–30 Oct 2026)

3. What usually happens

Ask the room: who's had a power cut in the last year? Most were over in an hour or two. That's the normal case, and it's what we plan for first.

Source: GOV.UK Be Ready, power cuts page; Met Office warnings guide (read 29–30 Oct 2026)

4. Water for 3 days

Three litres a person a day covers drinking and basic washing. For two people for three days that's 18 litres: about nine 2-litre bottles. You don't need special containers; normal bottled water with a date on it is fine.

Source: GOV.UK Be Ready checklist (read 29–30 Oct 2026)

5. The Be Ready kit

Most homes already have more than half of this. The point is to know where it is and to put it in one place. Add an item or two on normal shopping trips; nobody needs to buy it all at once.

Source: GOV.UK Be Ready emergency kit checklist (read 29–30 Oct 2026)

6. If the power goes off

105 puts you through to the company that runs your local power lines. Write it on paper, because a flat phone can't look it up. The fridge and freezer times are the Food Standards Agency's, if you keep the doors shut.

Source: Ofgem (105); NIE Networks; Be Ready; Food Standards Agency (read 29–30 Oct 2026)

7. Storms and floods

The colour combines how bad the weather could be with how likely it is. At amber, the Met Office suggests thinking about family and neighbours. Signing up for flood warnings is free on GOV.UK.

Source: Met Office warnings guide; GOV.UK flood warnings (read 29–30 Oct 2026)

8. Gas and carbon monoxide

The Chief Medical Officers are clear that camping stoves and barbecues must never be used indoors, because of carbon monoxide. That's the one thing people sometimes get wrong in a long power cut.

Source: National Gas; UK Chief Medical Officers (GOV.UK) (read 29–30 Oct 2026)

9. Extra help is free

This is the most useful thing many older people can do, and it's free. Ask your energy supplier and your water company to put you on it. If you help a relative, you can ask on their behalf with their permission.

Source: Ofgem — Priority Services Register; CCW (read 29–30 Oct 2026)

Speaker notes (continued)

10. Neighbours and our group

Be Ready says groups can help by building networks before, during and after an emergency, and also asks people not to turn up at the scene. A group like ours is already a network: who here would like a knock if there's an amber warning?

Source: Met Office warnings guide; GOV.UK Be Ready, play your part in your community (read 29–30 Oct 2026)

11. Your 10-minute plan

This is the homework. Ten minutes tonight with whoever you live with. The free plan builder on our website prints it on one page, but a pencil and the back of an envelope work just as well.

Source: Based on GOV.UK Be Ready, make a plan (read 29–30 Oct 2026)

12. Take this home

Point to the QR code on the handout. The card is free. Thank everyone, and pass round the sign-in sheet if your group uses one: it stays with the group.

Source: Free Power Cut Card: civiliansurvivalhandbook.com/free/ · Talk kit free to use: civiliansurvivalhandbook.com/talks/