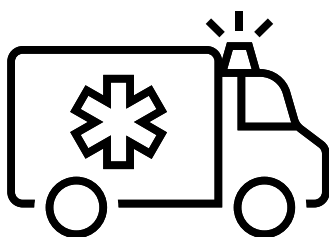




Multicultural Information Centre

2024

English



Health and Safety

Information for people who have just been granted the status of refugees in Iceland

1. The Emergency Line (*Neyðarlínan*) 112

- The telephone number in emergencies is 112. You use the same number in emergencies to contact the police, the fire brigade, an ambulance, search and rescue teams, the civil defence, child welfare committees and the Coast Guard.
- Neyðarlínan will try to provide an interpreter who speaks your language if this is considered urgently necessary. You should practise saying what language you speak, in Icelandic or English (for example, 'Ég tala arabísku'; 'I speak Arabic') so that the right interpreter can be found.
- If you phone using a mobile phone with an Icelandic card, Neyðarlínan will be able to locate your position, but not the floor or room where you are inside a building. You should practise saying your address and giving details of where you are living.
- Everyone, including children, must know how to phone 112.
- People in Iceland can trust the police. There is no reason to be afraid of asking the police for help when you need it.
- For further information see: www.112.is

2. Fire safety

- Smoke detectors (*reykskynjarar*) are cheap, and they can save your life. There should be smoke detectors in every home.
- On smoke detectors there is a small light that flashes regularly. It should do so: this shows that the battery has power, and the detector is working properly.
- When the battery in a smoke detector loses power, the detector will start to 'cheep' (loud, short sounds every few minutes). This means you should replace the battery and set it up again.
- You can buy smoke detectors with batteries that last up to 10 years.
- You can buy smoke detectors in electrical shops, hardware shops, Öryggismiðstöðin, Securitas and online.
- Do not use water to put out fires on an electric stove. You should use a fire blanket and spread it over the fire. It is best to keep a fire blanket on the wall in your kitchen, but not too close to the stove.

3. Traffic safety

- By law, everyone travelling in a passenger car must wear a seat belt or other safety equipment.
- Children under 36 kg (or less than 135 cm tall) should use special car safety equipment and sit in a car chair or on a car cushion with a back, with the safety belt fastened. Make sure you use safety equipment that suits the child's size and weight, and that chairs for infants (under 1 year old) face the right way.

- Children under 150 cm tall may not sit in the front seat facing an activated air bag.
- Children under 16 must use safety helmets when riding bicycles. Helmets must be the right size and properly adjusted.
- It is recommended that adults also use safety helmets. They give valuable protection, and it is important that adults should set their children a good example.
- Cyclists must use lights and studded tyres during the winter.
- Car owners must either use all-year tyres or change to winter tyres for winter driving.

4. Icelandic winters

- Iceland lies at a northerly latitude. This gives it bright summer evenings but long periods of darkness in winter. Around the winter solstice on 21 December the sun is only above the horizon for a few hours.
- In the dark winter months it is important to wear reflectors (*endurskinsmerki*) on your clothes when you walk (this applies especially to children). You can also buy small lights for children to have on their school bags so they will be visible when they are walking to or from school.
- The weather in Iceland changes very quickly; winters are cold. It is important to dress properly for spending time outside and be prepared for cold wind and rain or snow.
- A woollen hat, mittens (knitted gloves), a warm sweater, a wind-proof outer jacket with a hood, warm boots with thick soles, and sometimes ice cleats (*mannbroddar*, spikes attached underneath shoes) – these are the things you will need to face Icelandic winter weather, with wind, rain, snow and ice.
- On bright, calm days in winter and spring, it often looks like nice weather outside, but when you go out you find it is very cold. This is sometimes called *gluggaveður* ('window weather') and it is important not to be fooled by appearances. Make sure you and your children are really well dressed before going out.

5. Vitamin D

- Because of how few sunny days we can expect in Iceland, the Directorate of Public Health advises everyone to take vitamin D supplements, either in tablet form or by taking cod-liver oil (*lýsi*). NB that omega 3 and shark-liver oil tablets do not normally contain vitamin D unless the manufacturer specifically mentions it in the product description.
- Recommended daily consumption of *lýsi* is as follows:

Infants over 6 months old: 1 teaspoon

Children aged 6 years and older: 1 tablespoon

- Recommended daily consumption of Vitamin D is as follows:

0 to 9 years: 10 µg (400 AE) per day

10 to 70 years: 15 µg (600 AE) per day

71 years and older: 20 µg (800 AE) per day

	µg	AE
Ungbörn* og börn 1–9 ára	10	400
10 ára–70 ára	15	600
71 árs og eldri	20	800

6. Weather alerts (warnings)

- On its website, <https://www.vedur.is/> the Icelandic Meteorological Office (*Veðurstofa Íslands*) publishes forecasts and warnings about the weather, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions and avalanches. You can also see there if the Northern Lights (*aurora borealis*) are expected to shine.
- The National Roads Administration (*Vegagerðin*) published information on the condition of roads all over Iceland. You can download an app from Vegagerðin, open the website <http://www.vegagerdin.is/> or phone 1777 for up-to-date information before setting out on a trip to another part of the country.
- Parents of children in pre-schools (kindergarten) and junior schools (to age 16) should check weather alerts carefully and follow messages from the schools. When the Met Office issues a Yellow Warning, you must decide whether you should accompany (go with) your children to or from school or after-school activities. Please remember that after-school activities may be cancelled or end early because of the weather. A Red Warning means that no one should be moving about unless it is absolutely necessary; ordinary schools are closed, but pre-schools and junior schools stay open with minimum staff levels so that people involved in essential work (emergency services, the police, the fire brigade and search-and-rescue teams) can leave children in their care and go to work.

7. Earthquakes and volcanic eruptions

- Iceland lies on the boundary between tectonic plates and is above a 'hot spot'. As a result, earthquakes (tremors) and volcanic eruptions are relatively common.
- Many earth tremors are detected every day in many parts of Iceland, but most are so small that people do not notice them. Buildings in Iceland are designed and built to withstand earth tremors, and most of the larger earthquakes occur far from population centres, so it is very rare that they result in damage or injury.
- Instructions for how to respond can be found here: <https://www.almannavarnir.is/natturuva/jardskjalftar/vidbrogd-vid-jardskjalfta/>
- There have been 46 volcanic eruptions in Iceland since 1902. The best-known eruptions that many people still remember were the ones in Eyjafjallajökull in 2010 and in the Vestmannaeyjar islands in 1973.
- The Met Office publishes *a survey map showing the current status of known volcanos in Iceland* [Viðvörðunarkort með núverandi ástandi eldstöðvakerfa á landinu](#), which is updated from day to day. Eruptions can result in lava flows, pumice and ash-falls with toxins (poisonous chemicals) in the ash, poison gas, lightning, glacial floods (when the volcano is under ice) and tidal waves (tsunamis). Eruptions have not often caused casualties or damage to property.

- When eruptions take place, it may be necessary to evacuate people from danger areas and keep roads open. This calls for a quick response by the civil defence authorities. In such a case, you must act responsibly and obey instructions from the civil defence authorities.

8. Domestic violence

Violence is illegal in Iceland, both in the home and outside it. **All violence in a home where there are children also counts as violence against children.**

For advice in cases of domestic violence, you can contact:

- The Social Services (*Félagsþjónustan*) in each municipal area.
- Bjarkarhlíð. <https://www.bjarkarhlid.is/>
- The Women's Refuge (*Kvennaathvarf*) <https://www.kvennaathvarf.is/>

If you have received international protection through family reunification, but divorced your husband/wife on grounds of violent treatment, the Directorate of Immigration (*Útlendingastofnun*, UTL) can help you make a new application for a residence permit.

9. Violence against children

Everyone in Iceland has an obligation by law to notify the child protection authorities if they have reason to believe:

- that children are living in unsatisfactory conditions for their growth and development
- that children are exposed to violence or other degrading treatment
- that children's health and development is being seriously endangered.

Everyone also has a duty, by law, to tell the child protection authorities if there is reason to suspect that the life of an unborn child is in danger, e.g. if the mother is abusing alcohol or taking drugs or if she is suffering violent treatment.

There is a list of the child welfare committees on the homepage of the The National Agency for Children and Families (Barna- og fjölskyldustofa): . <https://www.bvs.is/radgjof-og-upplysingar/listiyfir-barnaverndarnefndir/>

You can also contact a social worker in the local Social Service centre (*félagsþjónusta*).

In emergency cases, phone the Emergency Line (*Neyðarlínan*), **112**.

10. Emergency Reception for Victims of Sexual Violence (*Neyðarmóttaka fyrir þolendur kynferðisofbeldis*)

- [Neyðarmóttaka fyrir þolendur kynferðisofbeldis](#) The Emergency Reception Unit for Victims of Sexual Violence is open to everyone, without a referral from a doctor.

- If you want to go to the reception unit, it is best to phone first. The unit is in the hospital Landspítalinn in Fossvogur (off Bústaðarvegur). Phone 543-2000 and ask for the Neyðarmóttaka (Sexual Violence Unit).
- Medical (including gynaecological) examination and treatment
- Forensic medical examination; evidence is preserved for possible legal action (prosecution)
- Services are free of charge
- Confidentiality: Your name, and any information you give, will not be made public at any stage
- It is important to come to the unit as quickly as possible after the incident (rape or other attack). Do not wash before being examined and do not throw away, or wash, clothing or any other evidence at the scene of the crime.

11. The Women's Refuge (*Kvennaathvarfið*)

Kvennaathvarfið is a refuge (a safe place) for women. It has facilities in Reykjavík and Akureyri.

- For women and their children when it is no longer safe for them to live at home because of violence, usually on the part of the husband/father or another family member.
- *Kvennaathvarfið* is also for women who have been raped or been trafficked (forced to travel to Iceland and engage in sex work) or exploited sexually.
- <https://www.kvennaathvarf.is/>

Emergency response telephone

Victims of violence/trafficking/rape and people acting for them can contact *Kvennaathvarfið* for support and/or advice at 561 1205 (Reykjavík) or 561 1206 (Akureyri). This service is open 24 hours a day.

Living at the refuge

When it becomes impossible, or dangerous, to go on living in their homes because of physical violence or mental cruelty and persecution, women and their children can stay, free of charge, at *Kvennaathvarfið*.

Interviews and advice

Women and others acting on their behalf can come to the refuge for free support, advice and information without actually coming to stay there. You can book an appointment (meeting; interview) by phone at 561 1205.

12. Bjarkarhlíð

Bjarkarhlíð is a centre for the victims of violence. It is on Bústaðarvegur in Reykjavík.

- Counselling (advice), support and information for victims of violence

- Coordinated services, all in one place
- Individual interviews
- Legal advice
- Social counselling
- Assistance (help) for victims of human trafficking
- All services at Bjarkarhlíð are free of charge

The telephone number of Bjarkarhlíð is **553-3000**

It is open **8:30-16:30** Mondays-Fridays

You can book an appointment at <http://bjarkarhlid.is>

You can also send an e-mail to bjarkarhlid@bjarkarhlid.is