

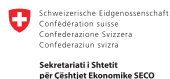


GUIDE BOOK

GOOD PRACTICES IN CIVIL PROTECTION



Supported by: RESEAL Project of UNDP in Albania





GUIDE BOOK

GOOD PRACTICES IN CIVIL PROTECTION

Together We Prepare, Together We Protect!

© 2025 – This material is published and is the intellectual property of the National Agency for Civil Protection (AKMC), with support from the RESEAL project

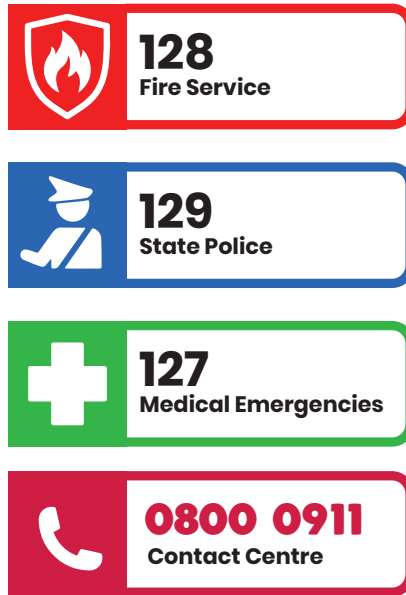
RESEAL project is implemented by UNDP Albania

Funded by the Swedish, Portuguese and Albanian governments the Resilience Strengthening in Albania (RESEAL) project was designed to help build a more robust and inclusive disaster risk management (DRM) system in Albania.

It aligns with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR), the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and Albania's aspirations for full membership in the EU Civil Protection Mechanism (EUCPM).

Supported by: RESEAL Project of UNDP in Albania





This guide aims to enhance citizens' awareness and preparedness to face natural hazards and disasters, contributing to a culture of prevention and resilience.

By following these guidelines and staying informed each citizen, can contribute to a safer and more prepared community.

For further assistance or to obtain additional materials, please do not hesitate to contact the local civil protection authorities or visit the official website of:

www.akmc.gov.al

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EARTHQUAKES



7

What should we know and what should we do?

FLOODS



10

What should we know and what should we do?

WILDFIRES



14

What should we know and what should we do?

LANDSLIDES



17

What should we know and what should we do?

AVALANCHES (SNOWFALL)



19

What should we know and what should we do?

TECHNOLOGICAL RISK



20

What should we know and what should we do?

BIOLOGICAL RISK



22

What should we know and what should we do?

DAM BREACH



24

Albania is exposed to numerous risks, including natural, biological, technological, and industrial hazards, as well as public-health and industrial emergencies, such as floods, earthquakes, wildfires, landslides, and avalanches.

These risks challenge our civil-protection system every day - a system comprised of institutions, professionals, volunteers, and communities that work together to prevent, as much as possible, the consequences of disasters and to prepare citizens.

The goal is shared, yet it can only be achieved if each of us, as an active part of this system, acts responsibly both in our daily lives and during emergencies. The national campaign "Civil Protection on Tour" addresses every citizen with the conviction that every small action in everyday life helps build a society that is better prepared and more resilient to risks.

If you know the risks in the area where you live, know where to obtain information, and how to organize yourself to face difficult situations, you can help not only yourself but also others.

Browse our materials to understand the risks around you better and learn what to do immediately when a warning is issued or during an emergency.

Share this information with your family, friends, and colleagues - civil protection begins with each of us.

EARTHQUAKES



Albania is a country with high seismic risk due to its geographic position between the African and Eurasian plates.

Although it is not possible to predict precisely when and where an earthquake will occur, historical records indicate the most vulnerable areas and the potential degree of damage that may follow.

Risk increases significantly due to illegal construction or low-standard buildings that often fail to meet basic seismic safety criteria.

Locating buildings in high-risk areas without a geological study poses a serious threat to life and property.



What you should know?

The zone where you live

Albania is a seismic country, but levels of hazard vary; for this reason, the territory is divided into zones.

Anyone who builds or modifies the structure of a house or business must comply with seismic codes to protect the lives of occupants. To determine which seismic zone your area falls under, please don't hesitate to contact the relevant local offices.

Safety of your home

It is essential to know when and how your home was built, on what type of soil, with which materials, and especially whether modifications were later made in compliance with seismic codes. If you have any doubts - or wish to learn more - consult a qualified professional.

What you should do?

With a professional's advice

Sometimes, it is sufficient to reinforce load-bearing walls or improve the connections between walls and floors. To make the right choice, consult a qualified professional.

Do it yourself - Right away

- Move heavy furniture away from beds and sofas.
- Anchor shelves, bookcases, and tall furniture to the wall; hang pictures and mirrors with hooks that prevent them from falling.
- Place heavy objects on the lower shelves of furniture; for upper shelves, consider using adhesive strips to secure items.
- In the kitchen, use latches that prevent cupboards containing glassware and dishes from opening during shaking.
- Learn how to close the gas and water valves and the main electrical switch.
- Prepare an emergency kit, e.g., copies of documents, first-aid supplies, a flashlight, a battery-powered radio, etc.
- Identify the safest places in your home to shelter during an earthquake.
- Get informed about your municipality's civil-protection plan.



What to do DURING an earthquake?

If you are indoors:

- Stay within a doorway set in a load-bearing wall (usually thicker), near a load-bearing wall or under a beam, or shelter under a sturdy bed or table.
- Avoid the centre of the room where falling objects, plaster fragments, suspended ceilings, or furniture may hit you. Do not rush outside - wait until the shaking stops
- Beware of possible secondary effects, such as bridge collapses, landslides, or gas leaks.

If you are outdoors:

- Stay away from buildings, trees, utility poles, and power lines; roof tiles, flowerpots, or other falling materials could strike you.

What to do AFTER an earthquake?

- Check the health status of people around you and, if needed, provide first aid.
- Before going out, turn off gas, water, and electricity, and put on shoes.
- Do not use the elevator and use caution on stairways that may be damaged.
- Once outside, act cautiously.
- Use the phone sparingly and only for essential calls.
- Do not use your car so as not to hinder emergency vehicles.
- Go to the assembly areas designated in your municipality's civil-protection plan.

FLOODS



Albania is particularly exposed to floods - one of the most common risks with wide-ranging territorial impacts. Intense rainfall can have substantial consequences for rivers, streams, canals, and sewer networks, with the most serious effects often in urban areas. In such places, not only is the concentration of people, buildings, and infrastructure greater, but human activity frequently modifies the territory and increases vulnerability.

Albania's hydrographic system comprises 11 main rivers with 152 large tributaries and streams. The territory of the Republic of Albania is divided into seven main administrative river basins, as follows:

- Drin–Buna River Basin (centre in Shkodër)
- Mat River Basin (centre in Lezhë)
- Ishëm River Basin (centre in Durrës)
- Erzen River Basin (centre in Tiranë)
- Shkumbin River Basin (centre in Elbasan)
- Seman River Basin (centre in Fier)
- Vjosa River Basin (centre in Vlorë)



What you should know?

Knowing whether your home, workplace, or area of stay is at risk of flooding helps you prevent and better handle emergencies. Keep in mind:

- It is crucial to understand the typical flood patterns of your territory.
- If floods have occurred in the past, they are likely to happen again.
- In some cases, it is difficult to determine precisely when and where floods will occur, and you may not have time to react.
- Know the meaning of the colour-coded alert system (green, yellow, orange, red).
- During a flood, water can rise very quickly - by one or two meters within minutes.
- Some places flood earlier than others. At home, the most at-risk areas are basements, semi-basements, and ground floors. Outdoors, underpasses, segments near dams and bridges, steep roads, and generally low-lying areas are more exposed.
- The force of water can severely damage buildings and infrastructure (bridges, dams, embankments); fragile structures can collapse suddenly.

What you should do?

With simple actions, you too can help reduce the risk of floods:

- Respect the environment and notify the municipality about bulky waste, blocked culverts, obstructed canals, etc.
- Get informed about your municipality's Civil-Protection Plan to learn about at-risk zones, evacuation routes, and safe areas in your city.
- If you or a family member requires special assistance (persons with disabilities, the elderly), inform the municipality.
- Stay informed about alerts issued by central and local units and about the measures undertaken by the municipality.
- Prepare an emergency kit, e.g., copies of documents, first-aid supplies, flashlight, battery-powered radio, water, etc.
- Avoid storing valuables in basements or semi-basements.



What to do DURING a warning?

At this stage, when a warning/alarm is issued, it is possible to take several preventive actions to reduce the risk:

- Stay informed about the forecast risk in your area and the measures adopted by your municipality.
- Do not sleep in basements or semi-basements and avoid staying in them.
- Protect ground-level premises and close doors to basements, garages, and semi-basements - only if doing so does not expose you to danger.
- If you must travel, assess your route in advance and avoid flood-prone areas.
- Think carefully before trying to protect your car or other objects: it can be dangerous to your life.
- Share what you know about these situations and the correct actions to take.
- Check whether your child's school has been informed about the warning and is prepared to implement its emergency plan.

What to do DURING a flood?

If you are outdoors:

- Stay away from flooded areas - due to the speed of flowing water, even a few centimetres can knock you down.
- Move quickly to a nearby higher area; avoid steep terrain or artificial embankments that may slide.
- Shelter on the upper floors of a building.
- Do not drive - just a few centimetres of water can cause you to lose control or stall your vehicle, leaving you trapped.
- Do not enter underpasses, dams, or bridges - staying or passing through these places can be very dangerous.
- Watch your step: there may be holes, cracks, or open manhole covers.



What to do AFTER a flood?

- Follow the authorities' guidance before taking any action, such as returning home, removing mud, or pumping water from basements.
- Check whether gas and electricity can be safely restored. If necessary, seek a professional.
- Before using wastewater systems, make sure sewer networks, septic tanks, and wells have not been damaged.
- Do not walk through flooded streets - there may be large holes, open manholes, or broken power cables. Water may also be contaminated by fuel or other substances.
- Use caution even where the water has receded: roadbeds may be weakened and could collapse.
- Before drinking tap water, make sure there are no bans or warnings from the authorities. If pipelines come into contact with floodwater, they may become contaminated.

WILDFIRES



Albania faces a high risk of wildfires due to Mediterranean climatic conditions and environmental factors that favour the spread of flames. In central and southern regions, where summers are dry and hot, fires occur mainly during the summer months. However, in northern regions and mountainous areas, the risk is also present during winter, especially when vegetation dries due to frost.

Wildfires pose a serious threat to natural resources, wildlife, agricultural assets, and economic property, including forests, pastures, olive groves, orchards, vineyards, and residential and infrastructure assets. Therefore, wildfire risk requires attention and joint action by institutions and citizens.

What you should know?

In most cases, wildfires are caused by human activities. It is therefore crucial to behave consciously and responsibly towards the environment and the territory where you live:

- Never light fires outside designated areas; if you need to burn pruning or



agricultural residues on your land, always follow municipal instructions.

- If you are in a picnic area where barbecues are allowed, exercise maximum caution and do not leave fires unattended.
- Before leaving, make sure the fire is entirely extinguished and take your waste with you - beyond harming the environment, it can serve as dangerous fuel for flames.

What you should do?

With simple actions, you too can be better prepared to face a possible emergency:

- Get informed about your municipality's Civil-Protection Plan to know what is foreseen for wildfires.
- Remember that rapid intervention is essential in case of a wildfire. If you see a fire - or even smoke - contact:
- Fire Service (128)
- Number of regional authorities for specific cases

Provide the municipality or other local institutions with accurate location details of the fire and other helpful information for precise localisation.

How to PREVENT a wildfire?

- Do not throw lit cigarettes or matches - they can ignite dry grass.
- Do not light fires in forests or outside suitable areas. Never leave a fire unattended and ensure it is extinguished before leaving.
- When parking your car, ensure the exhaust does not contact dry grass - it can ignite.
- Do not burn reeds, straw, or other agricultural residues without appropriate safety measures - a fire can get out of control within minutes.
- If it is windy, do not light any fire under any circumstances.
- Do not leave waste in forests or in unauthorised areas - it can be highly flammable.

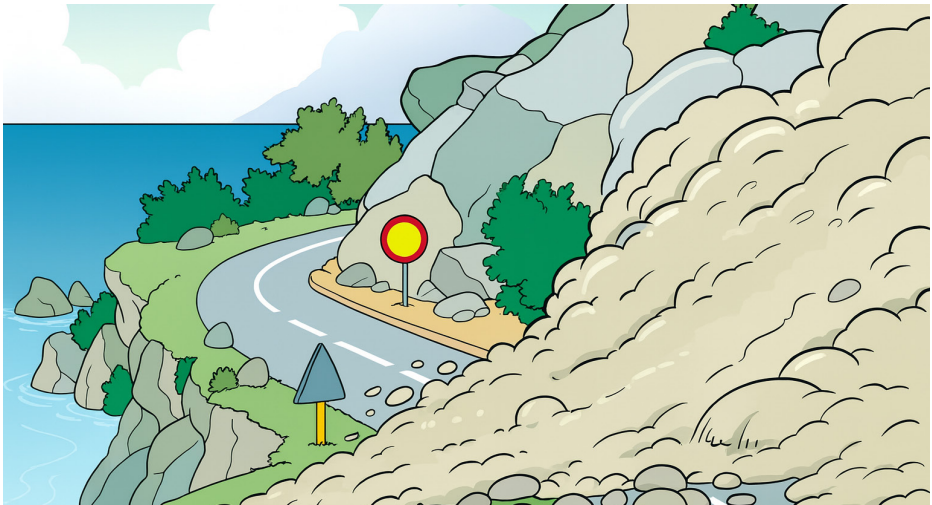
If you NOTICE a forest fire

- If you see flames - or even smoke - call the authorities and the fire service immediately.
- Do not assume someone else has already reported it.
- Provide precise information about the location of the fire.

If you are CAUGHT in a wildfire

- Look for a safe escape route: a roadway or a watercourse. Do not remain in areas downwind of the fire - you may become surrounded by flames.
- Lie on the ground in a spot without combustible vegetation. Smoke rises, so avoid deep inhalation.
- If there is no other solution, try to pass through the fire where the flame is least intense to reach the already-burned side - this takes you to a safer area.
- Do not stop along the fire-response route - you will hinder the passage of rescue teams.

LANDSLIDES



Landslides are gravitational hazards that occur on sloped terrain due to natural factors, such as heavy rainfall, erosion, earthquakes, or uncontrolled human intervention. They can happen suddenly and may include snow avalanches in mountainous areas.

Albania's rugged terrain and climate favour these phenomena; deforestation, unplanned construction, riverbed diversion, and quarrying markedly increase the risk.

How to PREVENT a landslide?

- Do not build on steep terrain or hillsides without permits and without geological studies and assessments.
- Plant trees in exposed areas - their roots help stabilise soil.
- Avoid dumping waste that blocks natural watercourses - stagnant water erodes subsurface layers.
- Watch for warning signs such as ground cracks, changes in slope, or movement of retaining walls.
- Respect safety distances from dams, embankments, streams, and high-risk roads.



What to do DURING a landslide?

Outdoors:

- Move immediately away from buildings, trees, poles, and power lines.
- Do not walk in an area where a landslide has just occurred - the soil mass can shift again.
- Do not stay at the foot of slopes or within the path of the slide.
- Do not drive on roads affected by a landslide - the risk of an accident is high.

Indoors:

- Stay inside and take cover under a sturdy table or near load-bearing columns.
- Keep away from windows and glass doors.
- Do not use the elevator - it may get stuck.
- Children should know the school's evacuation plan.

What to do AFTER a landslide:

- Do not return home immediately - seek an assessment from the authorities.
- Report any landslides to the authorities (municipality or civil-protection services).
- Do not use damaged roads - they may collapse.
- Check gas, water, and electricity lines before use.
- Assist children, the elderly, persons with disabilities, and neighbours in need, and follow rehabilitation guidance.

AVALANCHES (SNOWFALL)



Avalanches are rapid snow slides in mountainous areas that occur after heavy snowfall, strong winds, or sudden climate changes.

Albania is at risk of avalanches, particularly in the Albanian Alps and the south-eastern mountain regions. Each year, communities are isolated due to avalanches or heavy snow.

What to do BEFORE being blocked by snow:

- Follow weather forecasts and avoid avalanche-risk areas during winter.
- Secure communication, heating, and food supplies for several days of isolation.
- Ensure stocks of food, water, and firewood for at least 15 days.
- Insulate water pipes.
- Keep warm clothing, spare batteries, and a radio.

What to do DURING an avalanche or blockage:

- Stay indoors and maintain heating.
- Assist children, the elderly, and persons with disabilities.
- Stay informed through the media and cooperate with authorities.
- Keep internal walkways in and around the house clear and help your community.

What to do AFTER an avalanche:

- Clear heavy snow from roofs to prevent collapse.
- Check for road openings before travelling.
- Support neighbours; cooperate and engage with the authorities for rehabilitation and damage reporting.

TECHNOLOGICAL RISK



Technological risks are disasters and accidents caused by industrial activities or critical infrastructure (refineries, mines, gas depots, power-generation plants, etc.).

For the most part, technological risk is directly linked to activities involving essential infrastructure such as energy, transport, telecommunications, and water supply.

In Albania, technological risks generally have a significant potential impact, though the likelihood of occurrence is considered low to very low. Even if rare, their consequences are serious and require specialised intervention.

How to PREVENT:

- Identify and get informed if you live or work near areas with industrial risk.
- Comply with instructions and signage set by authorities or institutions.



What to do DURING a technological accident:

- Evacuate immediately according to the authorities' instructions.
- Close windows and ventilation systems if exposed to gases or suspicious substances.
- Stay calm and, if necessary, use masks or clothing to cover your face.

What to do AFTER the accident:

- Do not return to the area without official confirmation from the authorities and institutions.
- Do not consume water or food from the affected area until testing is completed.
- Cooperate with the authorities in measuring contamination and implementing recovery measures.

BIOLOGICAL RISK



Biological risks stem from viruses, bacteria, parasites, and diseases transmitted through water, air, insects, or animals to humans, including pandemics and epidemics (e.g., COVID-19, measles).

They may lead to emergencies and disasters, causing significant loss of life, affecting thousands, resulting in major economic losses through livestock and crop damage, and harming natural resources, including threatened fauna and flora.

How to PREVENT:

- Practice proper hand hygiene and ventilate indoor environments.
- Maintain physical distancing during outbreaks.
- Avoid non-essential travel to infected areas.
- Educate children on hygiene habits starting at school.



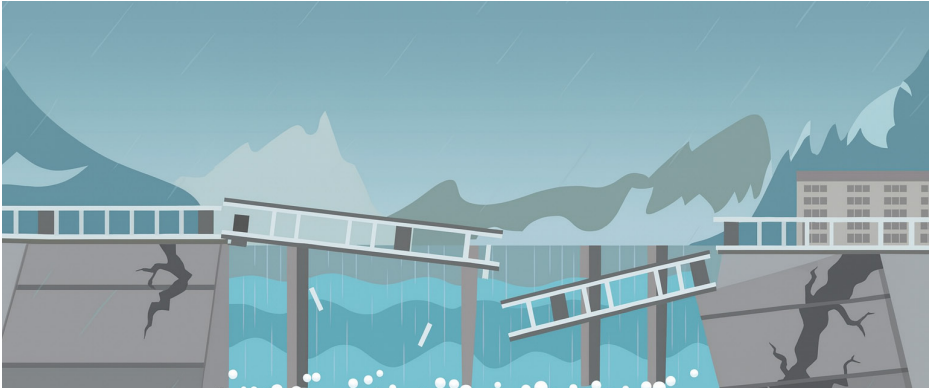
What to do DURING a biological outbreak:

- Follow the guidance of the authorities and the Ministry of Health.
- Use masks and wash and disinfect hands regularly.
- Do not spread panic - rely on verified information.
- Stay in contact with your physician regarding vaccination or treatment.
- Self-isolate if you are infected.
- Report symptoms and seek medical assistance.

What to do AFTER an epidemic:

- Monitor the health of your family and the surrounding community.
- Advocate for strengthening the local health-care system.
- Support continued public-education campaigns for prevention.

DAM BREACH



Dam failure is the sudden or gradual collapse of water-retaining structures (lakes, hydropower dams), which can cause immediate flooding.

A dam may fail due to structural failure, extreme flooding, or poor maintenance. Failure can occur without warning and cause hazardous, sudden flooding. Albania has many dams and reservoirs built since the 1960s.

How to PREVENT:

- Do not build homes, businesses, or infrastructure in downstream high-risk areas below a dam.
- Familiarise yourself with the community's evacuation plan in case of a breach.
- Request that authorities maintain and inspect dams in the territory.

What to do DURING a dam breach:

- Evacuate immediately to higher ground without waiting for outside assistance.
- Do not walk or drive through fast-moving water - it is extremely dangerous.
- Do not use bridges, tunnels, or roads in the path of the water.

What to do AFTER a dam breach:

- Do not return to the flooded area until safety is confirmed.
- Report any structural damage, especially to water, power, or sewer networks.
- Support and engage in community efforts for clean-up and rehabilitation.

VOLUNTEERING

- Join the civil-protection team in your area of residence.
- Receive training, guidance, and basic tools for assigned duties.
- Work in a team with local institutions.
- Pay special attention and provide additional protection to the most vulnerable groups.

- 1** Every citizen can contribute voluntarily to disaster management and to reducing its consequences.
- 2** Volunteers engage individually or in organised groups, in cooperation with central and local civil-protection institutions.
- 3** Participation in prevention, preparedness, and response during emergencies is determined by the situation and needs and is regulated by a decision of the Council of Ministers.

Register as a volunteer with your local authorities municipality and help make your community a safer place.

*Together we Prepare
Together we Protect*

Campaign is promoted and implemented by:



**In cooperation and with the support of
the RESEAL project of UNDP in Albania:**



Sweden
Sverige



Participating in the campaign
“CIVIL PROTECTION ON TOUR ”

representatives from public and governmental institutions at both central and local levels, national civil protection volunteer organisations, associations, and regional groups participate in the campaign.



CIVIL PROTECTION ON TOUR

It addresses everyone, with clear, distinctive, and inclusive messages that ensure no one is left behind, turning awareness into action every day of the year.

www.akmc.gov.al



www.akmc.gov.al



 Agjencia Kombëtare e Mbrojtjes Civile

 [agjencia_mbrojtjes_civile](https://www.instagram.com/agjencia_mbrojtjes_civile)

 Agjencia Kombetare e Mbrojtjes Civile



0800 0911
Qendra e Kontaktit