

Household Emergency Preparedness Binder

"Prepared, not scared. Stay ready." · Emergency preparedness for EVERY body

Congratulations on taking a step toward preparing your household for an emergency. While there are items that everyone should consider, preparing should be customized to your specific set of circumstances. This binder helps you document, organize, and plan everything your household needs — so when something happens, you're ready.

You don't have to complete everything at once. Go as quickly as your schedule allows. What's most important is to start. We have organized this binder in priority order, so it will be most beneficial to work through it in the order presented.

Visit StayReadyPreps.com for product recommendations and more tools to keep building your readiness.

HOUSEHOLD NAME

ADDRESS

PRIMARY CONTACT

DATE UPDATED

What's Inside

SECTION 1	Household Information	Household roster, meeting places, out-of-area contact
SECTION 2	Emergency Contacts	Local services, neighbors, caregivers, relay contact
SECTION 3	Medical & Access Needs	Medications, equipment, assistive devices — one page per member
SECTION 4	Important Documents	What to grab and where it's stored
SECTION 5	3-Day Supply Planner	Water · Food · Medical · Power & Shelter · Go-Bag
SECTION 6	Shelter-in-Place Plan	When to stay, how to seal your space, what to keep inside
SECTION 7	Evacuation Plan	Routes, go-bag, transportation, rally points
SECTION 8	Special Situations	Renters · Mobility & disability · Infants · Pets · No vehicle
SECTION 9	Notes & Review Log	Review dates, updates, and household notes
SECTION 10	Acting on the Plan	Leaving early · first 24 hours · action cards · building over time

SECTION 1

Household Information

Use whatever terms fit your household. This binder belongs to everyone who lives here.

Our Household

Household name / nickname

Home address

City / State / ZIP

Home phone

Email address

Household Members

List everyone who lives here — family, housemates, chosen family, whoever calls this home.

Name / Nickname	Role	DOB	Special Notes

Meeting Place Plan

Meeting spot near home (front yard, sidewalk, neighbor's driveway)

Meeting spot away from neighborhood

Out-of-area contact everyone will check in with

Consider This: You don't need a special binder. A zip-lock bag with printed pages stored in a kitchen drawer works. What matters is that everyone in your household knows where it is.

SECTION 2

Emergency Contacts

List people and services you'd need to reach quickly.

Local Emergency Services

Police (non-emergency)	
Fire (non-emergency)	
Nearest hospital / urgent care	
Poison Control	1-800-222-1222
Utility company (gas / electric)	
Water utility	
Local emergency management office	
211 — local aid & disaster relief	Dial 2-1-1

Household Contacts

Neighbors, caregivers, co-parents, chosen family, and anyone who should know you're safe.

Name / Relationship	Phone	Location	Notes

Consider This: Local phone lines often overload during emergencies. An out-of-area contact serves as a relay — everyone checks in with them, and they track who is safe.

SECTION 3

Medical & Access Needs

Complete one copy per household member with medical needs or specialized equipment.

Print additional copies of this page as needed — one per household member.

Member Medical Profile

Name

Primary care provider / Phone

Specialist / therapist / Phone

Insurance / Medi-Cal / Medicare #

Medications

Medication	Dose	Frequency	Provider	Pharmacy

Equipment & Access Needs

Check everything that applies to this household member:

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Wheelchair or mobility device | ☐ Hearing aids or cochlear implant |
| ☐ Power-dependent medical equipment | ☐ Vision supports or low vision needs |
| ☐ Service or support animal | ☐ Cognitive or memory supports |
| ☐ Refrigerated medications | ☐ Infant or child care equipment |
| ☐ Mental health / sensory supports | |

Power-dependent equipment details

Backup power plan (generator, battery, neighbor)

Service animal name and needs

Consider This: Most utility companies offer a Medical Baseline or life-support registry — which can prioritize your household during outages. Search "[your utility name] medical baseline program" to enroll. It's free.

SECTION 4

Important Documents

In an evacuation you may have minutes. Know where these are before you need them.

Certified copies or phone photos work for most purposes. Store digital copies in a secure cloud folder your household can access from any device.

Identity & Legal Documents

- | | |
|--|-----------------|
| ☐ Government-issued ID / driver's license | Location: _____ |
| ☐ Passport (each member) | Location: _____ |
| ☐ Birth certificate (each member) | Location: _____ |
| ☐ Social Security card | Location: _____ |
| ☐ Immigration documents / green card / visa | Location: _____ |
| ☐ Power of attorney / guardianship papers | Location: _____ |
| ☐ Marriage / divorce certificate | Location: _____ |
| ☐ Military discharge papers (DD-214) | Location: _____ |

Medical Documents

- | | |
|--|-----------------|
| ☐ Insurance cards (all members) | Location: _____ |
| ☐ Vaccination records | Location: _____ |
| ☐ Prescription list with dosages | Location: _____ |
| ☐ Advance directive / living will | Location: _____ |
| ☐ Medical equipment documentation | Location: _____ |
| ☐ Vet records (pets) | Location: _____ |

Financial & Housing Documents

- | | |
|--|-----------------|
| ☐ Lease agreement or mortgage documents | Location: _____ |
| ☐ Renter's or homeowner's insurance policy | Location: _____ |
| ☐ Vehicle registration and insurance | Location: _____ |
| ☐ Bank / credit union account info (last 4 digits only) | Location: _____ |
| ☐ EBT / SNAP / benefits documentation | Location: _____ |
| ☐ Vehicle title | Location: _____ |

Other Important Items

- | | |
|---|-----------------|
| ☐ Emergency cash in small bills | Location: _____ |
| ☐ USB drive with digital document copies | Location: _____ |
| ☐ Household photos (for identification) | Location: _____ |
| ☐ Children's school and care records | Location: _____ |
| ☐ Pet license and ID tag info | Location: _____ |

Consider This: A waterproof document pouch or fireproof safe is ideal for originals. Keep a second set of copies at a trusted person's home or in a safe deposit box.

SECTION 5

3-Day Supply Planner

Customize your supply plan to your household's actual needs.

This section walks through each category of emergency supplies. Use the calculators and checklists to build a plan sized for your specific household — the number of people, their ages, health needs, and any pets.

Water

Water is your #1 priority. FEMA recommends 1 gallon per person per day, and 0.5 gallons per small pet — that's the floor, and it's what this calculator uses. If you have the space and budget, 2 gallons per person covers drinking, cooking, and basic hygiene more comfortably. Double your estimate for hot climates, physical activity, nursing, or illness.

PEOPLE			
Number of people	Gallons/day	Days	Total gallons
	× 1 gallon	× 3	

PETS			
Number of pets	Gallons/day	Days	Total gallons
	× 0.5 gal (small) × 1 gal (large)	× 3	

GRAND TOTAL (People + Pets):	_____ gallons
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STORAGE TIPS

- ☐ **Store in food-grade containers, if you can** — BPA-free jugs or sealed barrels. Never reuse milk jugs.
- ☐ **Have a water filter** — If you're not certain the water is 100% safe, filter it! You can also boil it (1 minute rolling boil) or treat it with unscented bleach — 8 drops per gallon.
- ☐ **Replace water every 6–12 months** — Label with date stored. Rotate like food.
- ☐ **Tap water is fine unsealed for 6 months** — Commercially sealed water: 1–2 years.
- ☐ **Keep water accessible** — Store where you can reach it quickly — not buried in a closet.

Water Storage Notes

Where will you store water?

Storage container type / size

SECTION 5

3-Day Supply Planner — Food

Non-perishable foods your household will actually eat.

Food: 3-Day Supply

Plan for roughly 2,000 calories per person per day. The total amount depends on your household size — figure that out below. Focus on shelf-stable foods that need little or no cooking.

My household has _____ people. I need food for _____ × 3 days = _____ person-days.

☐ **Calorie-dense snacks**

Nut butters, jerky, granola bars, trail mix, dried fruit, seeds

☐ **Canned goods**

Beans, tuna, chicken, soups, veggies, fruit — pack a manual can opener

☐ **Ready-to-eat meals**

Freeze-dried pouches, MREs, RTD protein shakes, instant oatmeal

☐ **Comfort foods**

Crackers, cookies, hot cocoa packets, instant coffee, hard candies

☐ **Baby / infant food (if applicable)**

Formula, pouches, jars — age-appropriate, no-cook versions

☐ **Pet food (if applicable)**

Dry or canned; 3-day supply per pet

☐ **Kitchen tools**

Manual can opener, utensils, plates, cups — disposable if water is limited

Consider This: You should check food expiration dates every 6 months. If you have foods that are about to expire and you will not eat, donate them to your local food bank or pantry.

3-Day Supply Planner — Health & Medical

Your kit should keep you going without access to a pharmacy or doctor for 3 days.

Health & Medical

- ☐ **Prescription medications**
7+ day supply; rotate regularly
- ☐ **Over-the-counter pain relievers**
Ibuprofen, acetaminophen
- ☐ **Antidiarrheal & antacid medications**
Digestive stress is common in emergencies
- ☐ **Antidotes & poisoning treatment**
Activated charcoal — keep on hand; follow poison control guidance
- ☐ **Emergency mylar blanket**
Also useful for treating shock — keeps body heat in
- ☐ **First aid kit**
Bandages, gauze, antiseptic, tape, scissors
- ☐ **Thermometer**
Digital preferred
- ☐ **Medical equipment + backup power**
CPAP, nebulizer, glucose meter, etc.
- ☐ **List of all medications & dosages**
Stored with documents
- ☐ **Doctor/pharmacy contact info**
Written down, not just in your phone

Consider This: Keep a running "medical needs" list on paper and store it with your kit documents. If you or a family member has chronic health needs, plan for 2x the minimum.

Household-Specific Medical Supplies

List any additional medical supplies your household specifically needs:

Item / Medication	Person	Quantity Needed	Location in Kit

SECTION 5

3-Day Supply Planner — Light & Power

Keep your household informed, visible, and powered.

Light & Power

☐ Headlamps

(1 per person) — hands-free lighting; especially important with kids or medical needs

☐ Flashlights

Size and lumen strength can vary. Choose what's best for your individual needs.

☐ Lantern

Can be hand crank, battery powered, rechargeable — or all three

☐ Portable power bank

Electronics can be powered by batteries, solar, hand-crank, or all three. Having more than one way to power your device is helpful — if one method fails (like a power bank you forgot to charge), you have backup. If using battery-operated devices, store the batteries outside of the device to avoid corrosion if the batteries go bad.

☐ Extra batteries in correct sizes

Check AA, AAA, C, D for your devices. Store them outside of devices.

Consider This: *If you have sensitive beings in your household, consider warm-colored lanterns over harsh white LEDs. There are even color-changing lanterns that can help calm the environment. String lights can make a space feel cozy and decorated rather than stark and emergency-like — a small thing that makes a real difference in morale.*

SECTION 5

3-Day Supply Planner — Shelter & Climate Control

Control the climate of your home or shelter for health and comfort.

Shelter and Climate Control

Controlling the climate of your home or shelter is important for your physical health as well as your mental and emotional comfort. Based on the climate in your area, store the appropriate clothing and tools to keep warm, dry, and/or cool.

☐ Layered clothing

Dressing in appropriate layers is your first best defense against unfavorable climates. Besides underwear and socks, prepare three layers: base, mid, and top. In colder climates, wool or synthetic moisture-wicking materials keep perspiration away from skin — avoid cotton. In warmer climates, wear breathable materials. In rainy climates, store the appropriate outer layers — like an umbrella, rain jacket, and waterproof shoes or boots.

☐ Temperature control items

Fans (handheld or battery-powered), chemical ice packs, propane heaters, and hand warmers can provide relief and help you maintain healthy temperatures.

☐ Emergency mylar blankets

1–2 per person; retain 90% body heat — also useful for treating shock

☐ Sleeping bags rated for your area

Check overnight lows in your area

☐ Plastic sheeting + duct tape

Can seal a room or create a windbreak

☐ Gloves

Keeping your hands warm and protected are important in emergencies.

☐ Shoes

Protecting our feet can be the difference between surviving an emergency or not. Protect our feet from weather, water, and debris. Make sure shoes are fit for walking long distances if necessary. Don't forget socks!

Consider This: For our friends with tactile sensitivities, materials that feel good against the skin matter. Wool can feel scratchy — consider soft synthetic materials instead. A weighted blanket or weighted toy can also be a great comfort during times of distress.

SECTION 5

3-Day Supply Planner — Communication

When cell towers fail or power goes out, you need a backup plan.

Communication

When cell towers fail or power goes out, you need a backup communication plan. Know the alerts, know where to go, and know who to call.

☐ **Battery-powered or hand-crank NOAA weather radio**

Receives emergency broadcasts without cell signal

☐ **Whistle (1 per person)**

Signal for help if trapped; louder than shouting

☐ **Written contact list**

Names, phones, addresses of family/friends outside area

☐ **Out-of-area contact person designated**

Local lines jam in disasters; out-of-area calls often work

☐ **Know your local alert system**

Sign up for county/city emergency alerts NOW

☐ **Two-way radios (walkie-talkies)**

Good for families splitting up during evacuation

☐ **Physical maps of your area**

GPS and phones may not work

Consider This: Our friends who are sensitive to noise might not like the sound of radios and whistles. Foam earplugs or noise-canceling headsets can make a real difference in how well everyone functions during a stressful event.

SECTION 5

3-Day Supply Planner — Hygiene & Sanitation

Hygiene keeps you healthy. Plan for it.

Hygiene & Sanitation

Functioning at baseline during an emergency takes more than food and water. Hygiene keeps you healthy. Sensory tools keep anxiety manageable. Mobility planning keeps everyone moving.

☐ **Hand sanitizer (60%+ alcohol)**

If water is limited, this is critical

☐ **Moist towelettes / baby wipes**

Full-body cleaning without water

☐ **Toilet paper (3-day supply)**

Don't forget extra if water is off

☐ **Portable toilet or 5-gallon bucket with lid**

If sewage lines fail or you can't leave

☐ **Heavy-duty garbage bags**

Line portable toilet; also waste disposal

☐ **Feminine hygiene products**

For anyone who needs them

☐ **Soap, toothbrush, toothpaste**

Morale matters

☐ **Bleach (unscented) + dropper**

8 drops per gallon to purify water if needed, and to dilute with water as a cleaner

☐ **Nitrile gloves**

Sanitation and first aid — nitrile only (latex-free)

Consider This: Many folks are sensitive to or even allergic to scents. Where possible, consider using unscented products without artificial coloring. During an emergency is a bad time to discover someone in your household has an allergy to Red #5.

SECTION 5

3-Day Supply Planner — Sensory Calm & Mobility

Emotional well-being and movement matter in an emergency.

Sensory & Calm

Emergencies are loud, unpredictable, and disorienting. Having comfort items ready reduces distress for everyone — especially children, neurodivergent family members, and anyone with anxiety.

- ☐ **Comfort items for children**
Small stuffed animal, familiar toy, book
- ☐ **Noise-canceling headphones or foam earplugs**
Especially valuable for sensory-sensitive individuals
- ☐ **Fidget tools or stress-relief objects**
Fidget rings, stress balls, putty
- ☐ **Familiar scents or items**
A worn t-shirt, a small familiar object
- ☐ **Printed visual schedule or emergency routine**
Reduces uncertainty for kids and neurodivergent adults
- ☐ **Card games, dice, or small activities**
Long waits are hard; low-tech entertainment helps
- ☐ **Sunglasses / extra glasses**
Bright light, debris, and vision needs

Mobility

If you or anyone in your household has mobility limitations, plan specifically for how you will move during an evacuation.

- ☐ **Mobility aids accessible (wheelchair, walker, cane)**
Keep near bed or exit
- ☐ **Backup wheelchair battery or manual backup**
Power outages affect powered chairs
- ☐ **Evacuation chair if in a multi-story building**
Can't always use elevators
- ☐ **Neighbor / building buddy agreement**
Someone who knows and will check on you
- ☐ **Pre-identified accessible evacuation routes**
Walk them now, not during the emergency
- ☐ **Medical alert info on person**
ID bracelet, card in wallet

SECTION 5

3-Day Supply Planner — Go-Bag & Documents

A ready-to-grab bag you can walk out with fast.

The Go-Bag Essentials

A go-bag is a ready-to-grab bag with everything you need to walk out fast. Ten minutes is a good planning number, but the real answer is however long first responders give you — and you should not wait for an evacuation order to go. See Section 10.

Store it wherever you would pass on your way out — a hall closet, the garage beside the car, whatever fits how you actually leave. Match the spot to whoever has to carry it: waist height, easy to reach, nothing to gather on the way.

☐ Backpack or duffle bag (one per person is ideal)

Water-resistant preferred

☐ Water (at least 1 liter per person for first 24 hrs)

Collapsible bottles save space

☐ 3-day food supply (grab-and-go format)

Bars, pouches, trail mix

☐ First aid kit

Compact version for the bag

☐ Phone charger + power bank

Fully charged before any event

☐ Flashlight + headlamp

With extra batteries

☐ Emergency mylar blanket (1 per person)

Compact, lightweight

☐ Change of clothes + sturdy shoes

Per person

☐ Personal hygiene and diaper supplies

Toothbrush, wipes, feminine products, diapers — whatever your household needs

☐ Comfort items

Photos of loved ones, a favorite toy or a worry stone. Whatever small item can bring comfort.

☐ Rain poncho or light jacket

☐ Cash in small bills

ATMs and card readers may be down

☐ Copies of important documents

See Section 4

☐ Medications (3–7 days)

In original labeled containers

☐ N95 masks

Wildfire smoke, dust, airborne hazards

☐ Whistle

Signal for help

☐ Local maps (paper)

Can't rely on GPS

My Go-Bag Notes:

Bag location

Last updated

SECTION 6

Shelter-in-Place Plan

When to stay inside and how to seal your space.

When to Shelter in Place

- ☐ Air quality index (AQI) is 150+ or authorities announce shelter-in-place
- ☐ Wildfire smoke or ash is visible or smellable outdoors
- ☐ Chemical spill or hazardous materials incident nearby
- ☐ Severe weather — tornado watch, extreme wind

Our Safe Room

Choose an interior room with the fewest windows and doors. An interior bathroom or hallway often works well.

Safe room location in home

Why this room (fewest windows, central, etc.)

Alternate safe room

Sealing the Room — Supplies to Keep Inside

- ☐ Plastic sheeting (pre-cut to fit windows and doors)
- ☐ Duct tape
- ☐ Damp towels or rags (seal door gaps)
- ☐ Water (at least 1 gallon per person)
- ☐ Food and snacks
- ☐ Medications
- ☐ Phone chargers + power bank
- ☐ Flashlight
- ☐ Battery-powered radio
- ☐ Activities for children or comfort items

Consider This: Plastic sheeting and duct tape are inexpensive and removable. Renters can do this too — talk to your landlord about adding weatherstripping, which also helps with energy bills.

SECTION 7

Evacuation Plan

Routes, rally points, and go-bag — know this before you need it.

Evacuation Routes

Primary route out of neighborhood

Alternate route (if primary is blocked)

Second alternate route

Destination — where will we go?

Backup destination

Transportation Plan

Primary vehicle (make / model / license plate)

Backup transportation (carpool, transit, rideshare)

Neighbor who can help with transportation

Consider This: No vehicle? Many counties have emergency transportation programs for residents who need assistance evacuating. Search "[your county] emergency transportation assistance" to register before you need it.

Pet Evacuation Plan

Most emergency shelters do not accept pets. Plan ahead.

Pet-friendly shelter or hotel

Out-of-area friend / family who can take pets

Boarding facility emergency contact

Evacuation Checklist — Before You Leave

- ☐ Grab go-bag (see Section 5)
- ☐ Bring all household members and pets
- ☐ Lock doors and windows
- ☐ Turn off gas at the main shutoff (if instructed)
- ☐ Leave a note with your destination if others may look for you
- ☐ Take medications (3–7 day supply)
- ☐ Bring phone, charger, and power bank
- ☐ Bring printed maps if relying on GPS is a risk

Consider This: Walk your evacuation routes with your household at least once a year. Children, elders, and people with disabilities especially benefit from knowing the plan in their body — not just on paper.

SECTION 8

Special Situations

Emergency planning looks different for different households.

For Renters

- ☐ Know your lease terms around emergency access and temporary relocation
- ☐ Get renter's insurance — often under \$20/month, covers displacement
- ☐ Identify your property manager's emergency contact
- ☐ Know your building's evacuation routes and exits
- ☐ Ask about your building's shelter-in-place procedures
- ☐ Connect with neighbors — community is a survival resource

For Households with Mobility or Physical Disabilities

- ☐ Identify helpers — neighbors or contacts who know your needs
- ☐ Pre-plan accessible evacuation routes from your home
- ☐ Register with your utility's medical baseline program
- ☐ Register with your local emergency management office
- ☐ Keep a backup manual wheelchair if possible
- ☐ Store backup batteries for power-dependent devices
- ☐ Prepare a medical summary card for first responders

For Households with Infants or Young Children

- ☐ 3-day supply of formula, baby food, and diapers
- ☐ Infant medication (fever reducer, etc.)
- ☐ Comfort items — favorite toy, blanket, pacifier
- ☐ Car seat and portable carrier or sling
- ☐ Copies of pediatric records and immunizations
- ☐ Entertainment and activities for young children

For Households with Neurodivergent Members

- ☐ Prepare a sensory kit (headphones, sunglasses, fidgets, comfort object)
- ☐ Practice the emergency plan calmly in advance — repetition builds safety
- ☐ Create a visual emergency plan if helpful
- ☐ Identify a calm anchor person for your household member
- ☐ Stock preferred comfort foods and familiar items
- ☐ Communicate with school, care providers, or support workers about your plan

For Households with Pets

- ☐ 3-day pet food and water supply per animal
- ☐ Pet carrier or crate — properly sized and labeled
- ☐ Vaccination and vet records — many shelters require these
- ☐ Medications with clear instructions
- ☐ Identify pet-friendly evacuation shelters in advance

- ☐ ID tag on collar with a current phone number
- ☐ Comfort items for pets (favorite toy, familiar blanket)

For Households Without a Vehicle

- ☐ Identify neighbors who can provide transportation
- ☐ Register with your county's emergency transportation program
- ☐ Keep transit maps and schedules printed in your binder
- ☐ Map out walking evacuation routes from your home
- ☐ Know the location of your nearest emergency shelter

Consider This: Every household has unique needs. Use the space in Section 9 to note anything specific to your situation that isn't covered here.

Notes & Review Log

Review Log

[illegible]

Acting on the Plan

Leaving early · the first 24 hours · staying clear-headed · building over time

A plan only helps if you act on it in time. This section covers the decisions that happen under pressure — when to go, what to do first, and how to stay clear enough to follow your own plan.

Leave Before the Order

An evacuation order is the last safe moment to go, not the right one. When the order arrives, everyone on your street receives the same alert at the same second. The roads fill. The one route out becomes the only route out, and it stops moving.

And almost nobody is only packing for themselves. You may be packing your own bag, then a visiting parent's medications and belongings, then driving across town to get a relative ready. That is two or three departures, not one, and each takes far longer than expected. If you start when the order comes, you will not finish.

Go early if any of these are true

- ☐ You can see or smell smoke, or conditions are visibly changing near you.
- ☐ You are in a warning or watch zone, not yet under an order.
- ☐ Someone in your care needs extra time — an elder, a child, someone with a disability.
- ☐ You would need more than one trip, or you are getting more than one household out.
- ☐ You do not drive, and depend on someone else or on transit.
- ☐ Your gut says go. That counts. Trust it.

CONSIDER THIS

Leaving early costs you an inconvenient afternoon. Leaving late can cost far more. If it turns out to be nothing, you have had a strange day out and you drive home. Nobody regrets an evacuation that turned out to be unnecessary.

Our Departure Order

Decide this now, while nothing is happening. Who do you get first? Who can be ready on their own? Who needs someone physically there?

1. First we get _____

2. Then we get _____

3. Then we get _____

Who can be ready on their own _____

Who needs someone to come to them _____

CONSIDER THIS

Ask your gas and water utilities to show you where your shutoffs are and how they work. It is free, and they know your specific meter. Only shut the gas off if you smell gas, hear hissing, or see damage — never as a precaution — and never turn it back on yourself. Only the utility can safely restore service and relight appliances.

Your First 24 Hours

The steps to follow when you cannot think straight.

PRIMARY OUT-OF-AREA CONTACT

The one person everyone in this household calls or texts first. Choose someone far enough away that they will not be affected by the same event. Text before you call — texts get through when calls do not.

Name _____ Phone _____
 City / State _____ Second choice + phone _____

The First 24 Hours — Action Sequence

The first hours are the most disorienting. A written sequence means you do not have to think — you just follow the steps, one line at a time.

- | | | | |
|-----------|---------------------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| 01 | Check on household members | Everyone accounted for? Say each name out loud. | ☐ |
| 02 | Grab your go-bag if evacuating | Already packed — grab and go. Do not repack. | ☐ |
| 03 | Locate and check on pets | Secure them before opening any doors. | ☐ |
| 04 | Follow the evacuation order if issued | Or leave before it, if the signs above apply. | ☐ |
| 05 | Assess the safety of your home | Gas leaks, structural damage, fire. | ☐ |
| 06 | Get information | Cell phone or battery-powered radio. Official sources only. | ☐ |
| 07 | Contact your out-of-area person | Text, do not call. Tell them where you are. | ☐ |
| 08 | Locate your water supply | Know how many gallons you have and divide by people. | ☐ |
| 09 | Check medications | Enough for a week? Note now what needs resupply. | ☐ |
| 10 | Document damage with photos | For insurance claims — once you are safe. | ☐ |

Staying Clear-Headed

You can own every item in this binder and still freeze.

Under real stress your heart rate climbs, your hearing narrows, your hands shake, and your memory stops being reliable. This is normal and it happens to trained responders too. The difference is that they plan for it — they do not rely on remembering anything.

Slow the body down first

Breathe in for four counts, hold for four, out for four, hold for four. Four rounds, about a minute, before you make any decision that matters. This is not a wellness suggestion — controlled breathing physically lowers your heart rate, and a lower heart rate is what gives you back your judgment. If holding feels like too much, breathe in for four and out for six instead.

Do not trust your memory. Trust the card.

The next two pages are printable action cards — one for your stay-home supplies, one for your go-bag. Print them, cut them out, fill in the blanks, and put them where you will actually reach for them. Not on your phone: your phone may be dead, or you may be too rattled to navigate it.

One task at a time

The plan is a sequence, not a list to do all at once. Read line one. Do line one. Then read line two. When people freeze, it is almost always because they are trying to hold the whole emergency in their head at the same time.

Plan for how each person actually copes

Calm looks different for different people. Some need quiet and dark; some need company and something to do. Children take their cues from the adults around them, so your steadiness is doing more work than anything you say. Pack for the mind the way you pack for the body: headphones, sunglasses, a familiar object, a deck of cards, something to fidget with. In an emergency these are not luxuries — they are what keeps a person able to follow the plan.

What helps each person in our household

Sounds, lights, or textures to avoid _____

What calms them down _____

Comfort items packed, and where _____

Early signs they are overwhelmed _____

Who they respond to best in a crisis _____

CONSIDER THIS

Read the action cards out loud with your household once a year. Familiar actions hold up under stress far better than new ones — that is the entire reason drills exist.

Action Card — Staying Home

Print this page · cut it out · keep it with your stay-home supplies

First: breathe. Four counts each.

In 4 · Hold 4 · Out 4 · Hold 4. Four rounds before you do anything else.

A racing heart makes bad decisions. One minute here buys back your judgment.

THEN WORK THIS LIST — ONE LINE AT A TIME. DO NOT SKIP AHEAD.

- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| 01 Everyone accounted for? Check each person by name. | ☐ |
| 02 Pets secure. Before you open any door. | ☐ |
| 03 Check the house. Gas smell, hissing, damage, fire. | ☐ |
| 04 Radio on. Official information only. Skip the rumors. | ☐ |
| 05 Text your out-of-area contact. Text, do not call. | ☐ |
| 06 Count your water. Gallons on hand + people = days. | ☐ |
| 07 Check medicines. Enough for a week? Note what is short. | ☐ |
| 08 Photograph any damage. For the insurance claim, once safe. | ☐ |

FILL THIS IN NOW — BEFORE YOU NEED IT

Out-of-area contact _____	Their phone _____
Gas shutoff is located _____	Gas utility phone _____
Water shutoff is located _____	Water utility phone _____

CONSIDER THIS

Only shut off the gas if you smell gas, hear hissing, or see damage — never as a precaution, and never turn it back on yourself. Call the utility. Keep this card where you will see it: taped to the water bin, or on top of your supplies.

Action Card — Leaving Now

Print this page · cut it out · keep it in your go-bag

First: breathe. Four counts each.

In 4 · Hold 4 · Out 4 · Hold 4. Four rounds before you do anything else.

A racing heart makes bad decisions. One minute here buys back your judgment.

THEN WORK THIS LIST — ONE LINE AT A TIME. DO NOT SKIP AHEAD.

- 01** Grab the bags. One per person. Do not repack. ☐
- 02** Every person. Count out loud. Say each name. ☐
- 03** Pets and carriers. Leash, crate, records. ☐
- 04** Medicines. Plus the written list of doses. ☐
- 05** Documents pouch. And the USB drive. ☐
- 06** Phone, charger, power bank. Cables too. ☐
- 07** Grab bags, if you have time. Only if minutes allow. ☐
- 08** Lock up. Leave a note. Where you are going, and when. ☐
- 09** Text your out-of-area contact. Say where you are headed. ☐

FILL THIS IN NOW — BEFORE YOU NEED IT

Out-of-area contact _____	Their phone _____
Where we will go _____	Backup destination _____
Meeting spot away from home _____	Pet-friendly shelter / hotel _____

CONSIDER THIS

Keep this in the top pocket of your go-bag, where you can reach it without unpacking anything. Remember: you do not have to wait for an evacuation order to use it.

Grab Bags for What Cannot Be Replaced

Insurance replaces the couch. It does not replace your mother's photographs.

Keep two or three sturdy bags folded in the closet where your irreplaceable things already live. Two features matter, and only two.

A zipper — not an open tote. You will be moving fast, probably in the dark, possibly down stairs. An open bag spills, and stopping to repack scattered photographs costs minutes you may not have.

Real handles or a shoulder strap. You can carry two zippered bags in one hand and still hold a child's hand or a leash with the other.

What goes in them

Label the bags, and tape this list inside the closet door so nobody has to think it through under pressure.

- ☐ Photo albums, loose photos, and boxes of letters
- ☐ Family heirlooms — jewelry, a watch, a quilt, small keepsakes
- ☐ Children's baby books, artwork, and school records
- ☐ Religious or cultural items that matter to your family
- ☐ Anything that would break your heart to lose

CONSIDER THIS

Your USB drive is not on this list on purpose. The drive with your scanned documents and photos belongs in your go-bag, packed already — it is not something to think about on the way out the door.

How this works in real life

Evacuations are rarely exactly ten minutes. Sometimes you get an hour of warning, sometimes a whole day. If time is short you take the go-bags and go, no hesitating. If you have longer, the grab bags mean you are not standing in a hallway deciding what matters while the clock runs. That decision is already made.

The best version of this is the one you never have to open: scan the photos and letters now, and keep a copy in the cloud and on the USB drive in your go-bag. Then even the worst day only costs you things.

Our grab bags

Where the bags are stored _____

What is in bag 1 _____

What is in bag 2 _____

Scanned to cloud? Where _____

Three Days Is the Floor

Build to three days first. Then keep going, as budget and space allow.

Three days without water or power is the worst case most households will face, and if you are ready for that you are ready for nearly every stay-home emergency there is. But three days is a minimum, not a target.

Emergency managers recommend two weeks of supplies for sheltering at home, because that is closer to how long service can take to return after a serious regional event. Build to three days first, then add more as your budget and your storage space allow — an extra case of water this month, a few more cans the next. There is no prize for finishing fast, and every day you add is real cushion.

CONSIDER THIS

One more thing worth knowing: sometimes the tap runs and the water still is not safe. A main breaks, pressure drops, and untreated groundwater can seep into the pipes — that is what a boil-water notice is for. And if the power is out, you probably cannot boil anything. Keep at least one way to treat water that needs no electricity: a pump or gravity filter, purification tablets, or unscented bleach with the dosing written on the bottle.

One Is None, Two Is One

Many of the items in Section 5 also belong in your go-bag. Where your budget allows, buy two of the critical ones — a second headlamp, a spare first aid kit. Redundancy is what saves you when one thing breaks, runs out, or turns out to be in the car.

Just as important: do not let both of them run on the same fuel. Two headlamps that each take AAA batteries are one dead pack away from useless. Make the second one rechargeable, hand-crank, or solar. The same goes for lanterns, radios, and phone chargers — redundancy in the item is step one, redundancy in how it gets powered is what actually keeps the lights on.

And if you can only afford one of something, that is fine. Keep it in your go-bag so it is ready to grab, and use it at home when the power is out. One set can do both jobs. Rotate items every few months to avoid spoilage and to keep up with growing children's sizes.

Budget Your Kit Build

You do not have to do this all at once.

Start with the highest-priority items and add one thing per week. Tick them off as you go — this page is a running record, not a shopping trip.

PRIORITY	CATEGORY	HAVE IT?
1 — Critical	Water (containers + supply)	☐
1 — Critical	Food (3-day shelf stable)	☐
1 — Critical	Medication & first aid	☐
1 — Critical	Flashlight + headlamp + batteries	☐
2 — Important	Go-bag + packed supplies	☐
2 — Important	NOAA weather radio	☐
2 — Important	Documents (waterproof envelope)	☐
2 — Important	Emergency blankets	☐
3 — Add over time	Portable toilet / sanitation supplies	☐
3 — Add over time	Cash reserve (\$100–\$300)	☐
3 — Add over time	Backup power bank / solar charger	☐
3 — Add over time	Special needs items (pets, infants, etc.)	☐

“Prepared, not scared.”

You have done the work. Your household is more prepared than most. Review this binder every 6 to 12 months — rotate food and water, update documents, recharge power banks, and read the action cards out loud together. Stay ready.

Thank you for being prepared. Preparedness is an act of care — for yourself, your household, and your neighbors. Share what you've learned. Check on someone who might need help getting ready. Visit [StayReadyPreps.com](https://stayreadypreps.com) for free tips, product recommendations, and more tools to keep building your readiness. **Prepared, not scared.**