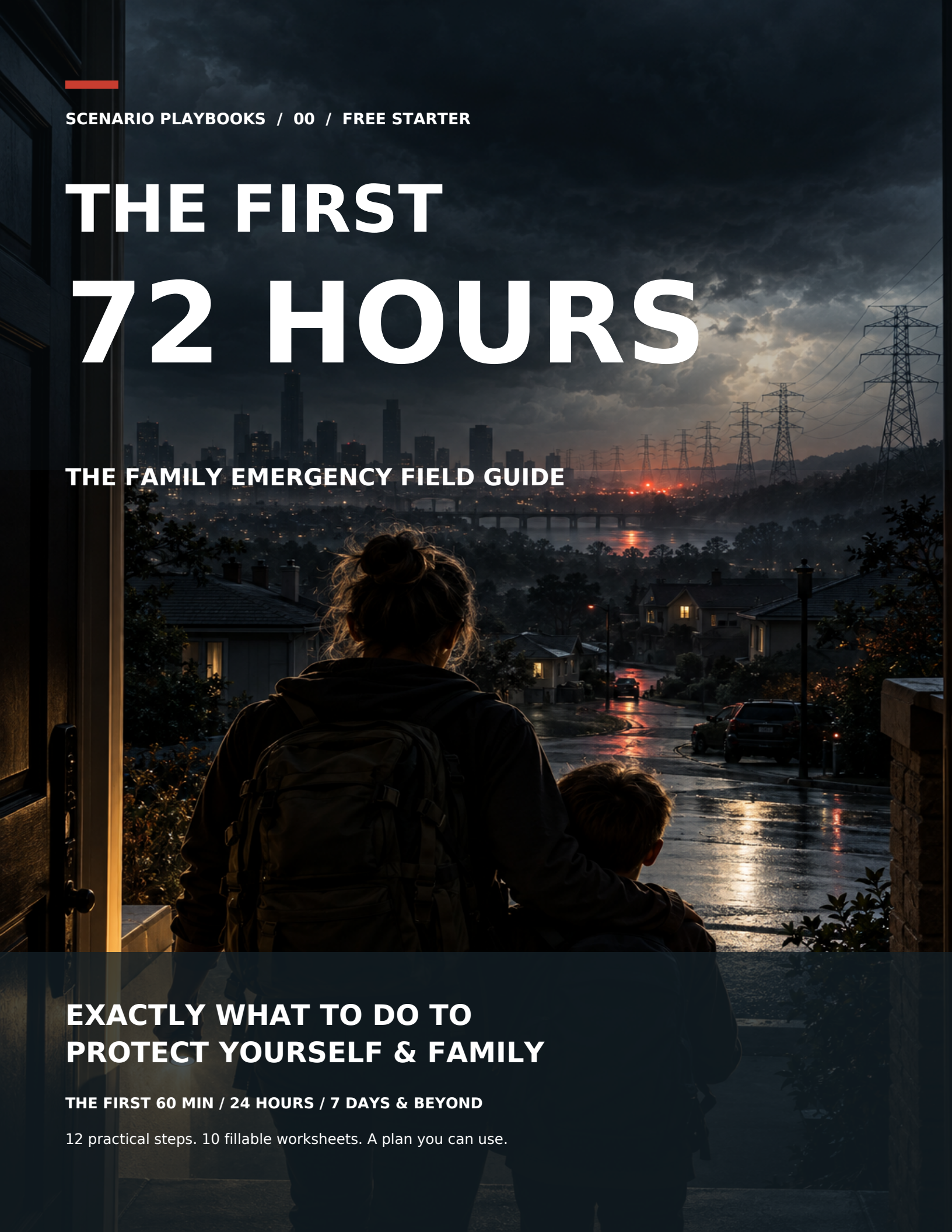


A woman with a backpack and a child are seen from behind, looking out at a city skyline at night. The woman is wearing a dark jacket and a large backpack. The child is standing next to her, also looking out. The city skyline is visible in the background, with lights reflecting on the water. The sky is dark and cloudy, with some light breaking through. The overall mood is somber and urgent.

SCENARIO PLAYBOOKS / 00 / FREE STARTER

THE FIRST 72 HOURS

THE FAMILY EMERGENCY FIELD GUIDE

**EXACTLY WHAT TO DO TO
PROTECT YOURSELF & FAMILY**

THE FIRST 60 MIN / 24 HOURS / 7 DAYS & BEYOND

12 practical steps. 10 fillable worksheets. A plan you can use.

A plan before the panic.

Use this guide to turn the supplies you own into a household that knows what to do.

IF THE EMERGENCY IS HAPPENING NOW

Go to the quick-action page, then the step that matches the immediate need. Do not read cover to cover while a hazard develops. Local emergency instructions and your care team take priority over a general guide.

IF YOU ARE PREPARING TODAY

Read the 12 steps, complete the worksheets, gather the missing essentials and run the practice drill. Save the PDF offline, then print the quick-action page and completed household sheets. Make sure another adult can find and use them.

WHAT THIS GUIDE COVERS

A practical U.S. household starting plan for interrupted power, water, shopping and communications. It does not assume that every emergency is a cyberattack or that a collapse is imminent. Nuclear fallout, chemical releases, wildfire, floods, pandemics and active violence need hazard-specific instructions. Do not apply an ordinary outage routine to those events without checking official guidance.

READ THE CLOCK CORRECTLY

The time bands organize priorities. They are not deadlines to wait for. A family with time-critical care needs may need to act before minute one. Three days of supplies is a first layer, not guaranteed rescue timing.

Interactive and printable. Fill the fields in a PDF reader, save a new copy and reopen it to check your entries. Paper copies still work when your device does not. Protect the completed sheets because they contain private information.

Find the page you need.

The 12 action steps each occupy one page. Worksheets are also supplied in a separate, low-ink file.

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People. Shelter. Essentials.

Print this page. Put it with your household decision sheet. Start with the current hazard, not the next box.

ACT NOW

Get clear of an immediate danger. Account for people. Follow evacuation or shelter instructions. For a life-threatening emergency in the U.S., call 911.

FIRST 60 MINUTES

Confirm alarms and a safe place. Check care needs. Send a useful update. Count safe water. Keep cold-food doors closed. Identify the first essential resource likely to fail.

FIRST 24 HOURS

Use the no-cook menu. Set the toilet and handwashing plan. Prioritize necessary power. Verify a safe temperature and sleeping arrangement. Confirm transport and the fallback destination.

HOURS 24-72

Record usable supplies and actual consumption. Verify resupply before traveling. Recheck official instructions. Move before essential care or safe shelter becomes unavailable.

DAY 4 AND BEYOND

Repeat the status review, expand the weakest system and follow the hazard-specific plan. Do not treat the original estimate of restoration as a guarantee.

FOUR QUESTIONS AT EVERY REVIEW

Is everyone safe here? Can we meet essential needs until the next review? What new instruction changes our plan? Who is doing the next task, and by when?

Establish what is happening

Separate an immediate threat from an inconvenience before you start moving supplies.

1. CHECK PEOPLE FIRST

Account for everyone who is present. Ask who is away, who needs help moving, and whether anyone has an urgent medical problem. In a U.S. life-threatening emergency, call 911. Assign one adult to children or dependent adults so the rest of the household is not trying to do everything at once.

2. FIND ONE RELIABLE INSTRUCTION

Check the local emergency-management agency, utility and weather service. Record the time, affected area and instruction. An outage map can describe power loss; it cannot prove that roads, tap water or your building are safe. A forwarded screenshot without a place and timestamp is not an action plan.

3. START A SHORT INCIDENT LOG

Write: event began / current location / people accounted for / immediate hazard / next check. Designate one person to collect updates and another to handle supplies. If you are alone, do the same tasks in sequence. A clear five-line record is more useful than a phone full of conflicting posts.

DO NOT MISS THIS

Fire, a CO alarm, dangerous fumes, rising water or a failing essential medical device can require immediate action. Do not delay for this workbook.

DONE WHEN: Everyone is accounted for or there is a specific, safe contact plan for the person who is missing.

Choose the safe place

Your shelter must match the actual hazard. There is no single room that is best for every emergency.

1. USE THE HAZARD, NOT HABIT

For a tornado warning, move promptly to a basement, safe room or interior room away from windows in a sturdy building. Flooding requires higher ground; do not choose a basement that is flooding. Follow current local instructions when hazards overlap. A general outage alone is not a reason to drive into a storm.

2. SET A RELOCATION TRIGGER

Name the conditions that would make your home unsuitable: an evacuation order, fire or structural damage, unsafe temperature, unavailable essential care, or no safe water with no dependable resupply. Choose a reachable destination that has confirmed capacity for your household, pets and accessibility needs.

3. PREPARE A SAFE DEPARTURE

Put shoes, keys, lights and essential medicines within reach. Keep exits clear. If you must leave, use official routes and current road information. Never walk or drive through floodwater or bypass a barricade. Tell your contact where you are going, but do not delay escape to make calls or collect property.

DO NOT MISS THIS

If travel is unsafe and you are trapped, contact emergency services and describe your exact location and hazards. A map route is not proof a road is usable.

DONE WHEN: A primary safe place, backup destination and clear trigger for moving are written on Worksheet 1.

Stop the secondary emergency

A blackout can become a poisoning or fire emergency if improvised equipment is used badly.

1. CONFIRM ALARMS AND LIGHT

Use working smoke and carbon monoxide alarms with battery power or backup. CPSC advises CO and smoke alarms on every level and outside sleeping areas, plus smoke alarms inside bedrooms. Test monthly and follow the model instructions for placement and replacement. Prefer battery lights to candles.

2. KEEP COMBUSTION OUTSIDE

Never use a portable generator in a home, garage, shed or other enclosed area, even with doors open. Place it outdoors at least 20 feet from buildings and more than 20 feet from windows, doors and vents; direct exhaust away. If that separation is impossible, choose a different power plan. Never bring charcoal grills or portable gas camp stoves indoors.

3. PROTECT ESCAPE ROUTES

Clear the route from sleeping areas to the exit. Put a light where it can be found in darkness. Check who needs physical assistance and who will provide it. Do not disable alarms, block doors with stored supplies or create a cooking area in a hallway. Keep fuel out of living spaces and follow storage rules and the equipment manual.

DO NOT MISS THIS

If a CO or smoke alarm sounds, get everyone outside immediately and call 911 from safety. Do not stay inside to troubleshoot.

DONE WHEN: Alarm locations and test dates are recorded; a light and usable exit are available to each person.

Protect care before comfort

The household member with the shortest safe interruption determines your timetable.

1. MAKE A CARE LIST

Write down each essential medicine, device, feeding need, mobility aid and caregiver task. Include allergies, pharmacy, prescriber and supplier contacts. Keep prescription labels and care instructions with the supplies. Secure sensitive records; share only what a helper needs.

2. VERIFY THE BACKUP WITH THE RIGHT PERSON

Ask the clinician or device supplier what power source is compatible, how long the actual setup lasts, what to do if treatment stops and when to relocate. Do not assume a phone power bank can operate a medical device. Record temperature requirements for medicines and supplies; ask a pharmacist how to handle an excursion rather than guessing.

3. CHOOSE A CARE-CAPABLE DESTINATION

A building with electricity is not automatically able to provide treatment. Confirm the equipment, consumables, transport and caregiver support you need. Begin arranging help before your verified backup is exhausted. Pack glasses, hearing-aid supplies, charging leads and mobility equipment with the medical items, not in a separate box nobody can find.

DO NOT MISS THIS

Do not stop, stretch, substitute or change prescribed treatment because supplies are low. Contact the treating team or emergency services as appropriate.

DONE WHEN: Each time-critical need has an owner, a confirmed backup and a written action trigger on Worksheet 4.

Send one useful message

Give your family information they can act on, then preserve a way to receive the next instruction.

1. CHOOSE A RELAY CONTACT

Agree on an out-of-area contact who can collect updates. Write numbers on paper. Establish a nearby meeting point and another outside the neighborhood for situations where returning home is unsafe. Check the school, workplace or care facility release plan before deciding who will collect someone.

2. USE A COMPLETE MESSAGE

Send: "We are at __. __ people are accounted for. We need __. Our plan is __. Next update at __." Include the date and time. If networks are congested, try a short text and avoid repeatedly redialing for routine updates. Do not assume silence means someone is safe or that a message was received.

3. MAKE THE FALLBACK SPECIFIC

Save maps and key instructions for offline access, but also keep paper contacts. Test a battery-powered radio at home before relying on it. A weather receiver gets broadcasts; it does not call rescuers. Assign check-in times that suit the situation. Keep emergency alerts enabled and avoid battery-saving choices that prevent needed calls or alerts.

DO NOT MISS THIS

Never delay a protective action while waiting for the whole group to agree online. Immediate official instructions take priority.

DONE WHEN: Your contact has the plan, and each person can find the paper contact card without your phone.

Secure safe water

Count water that is already safe and accessible, then close the gap.

1. CALCULATE YOUR STARTING STOCK

CDC recommends at least 1 gallon per person per day for 3 days; store more for additional needs and try for 2 weeks if possible. Four people therefore start at 12 gallons for 72 hours, before pets and extra care needs. This is a planning baseline, not a limit on drinking.

2. SEPARATE SUPPLY FROM TREATMENT

Prefer unopened commercially bottled water. For home-filled storage, use clean, sanitized food-grade containers, label the date and replace the water every 6 months. Keep it away from heat, sunlight and chemicals. Count bottles by volume; do not count a bathtub or an unknown source as ready-to-drink supply.

3. FOLLOW THE ACTUAL ADVISORY

For germ contamination, CDC advises bringing clear water to a rolling boil for 1 minute, or 3 minutes above 6,500 feet, then cooling and storing it safely. Prefilter cloudy water through a clean cloth or let it settle and draw off the clear water first. Boiling or disinfecting cannot make fuel-, toxic-chemical- or radioactive-contaminated water safe. Use an alternate source and public-health instructions.

DO NOT MISS THIS

A boil-water notice is different from a do-not-drink or do-not-use notice. Do not improvise bleach doses; print the linked CDC instructions before you need them.

DONE WHEN: Worksheet 2 lists your measured supply, shortfall and a verified resupply location.

Build meals that need no power

A familiar pantry is a useful first layer. Make sure it can become actual meals without a stove.

1. PLAN NINE MEAL OCCASIONS

Write breakfast, lunch and dinner for three days, plus snacks, for each person. Use shelf-stable foods the household already tolerates. Combine ready-to-eat proteins, grains, fruit or vegetables and suitable fats; check the actual labels for calories, portions and allergens. The menu on page 17 is an example to adapt, not a prescription.

2. COUNT THE WHOLE PREPARATION COST

Dry rice, dried beans and many dehydrated meals need safe water, fuel and time. Keep a no-cook layer for the opening days. Pack a manual can opener and easy-to-use utensils. Buy portions you can finish after opening when refrigeration is unavailable. Store food away from heat, pests and water damage; rotate it into normal meals.

3. INCLUDE DEPENDENT EATERS

Keep the appropriate foods for infants, texture-modified diets and medical diets. For formula-fed infants, ready-to-feed formula is the safest emergency option; follow handling and discard instructions. Do not dilute formula or use a homemade substitute. Include pet food and feeding instructions. Test a sample of any unfamiliar emergency meal before buying a large case.

DO NOT MISS THIS

Food exposed to floodwater needs special evaluation. Do not assume sealed-looking packaging or cooking will make contaminated food safe.

DONE WHEN: The three-day menu works with the water, opening tools and storage conditions you actually have.

FACT CHECK: S12, S15 | Linked source register at the end.

Make the cold-food decision

Write down the outage start time. Repeatedly opening the door uses up your remaining cold storage.

1. KEEP DOORS CLOSED

FoodSafety.gov gives about 4 hours for a closed refrigerator; a full closed freezer about 48 hours, or 24 hours when half full. These are estimates, not guarantees for every appliance or room temperature. Use appliance thermometers and the official food-by-food chart.

2. USE TEMPERATURE EVIDENCE

After 4 hours without power or another cold source, discard refrigerated perishables such as meat, fish, eggs and leftovers. Many perishables must also be discarded after more than 2 hours at 40 F or above. Frozen food may be refrozen if it still has ice crystals or is at 40 F or below, subject to the food-specific chart. Never taste-test safety.

3. RECORD WHAT YOU KNOW

Use Worksheet 6 to note the time, thermometer reading, food and decision. If moving food to an ice-filled cooler, verify the temperature rather than assuming ice somewhere inside is enough. Mark uncertain food so nobody eats it accidentally. A photograph and short inventory can support later insurance questions; do not save unsafe food as evidence.

DO NOT MISS THIS

Cooking is not a universal rescue for food held unsafely. If you cannot establish safety, discard it. Medicine storage requires its own pharmacist-approved plan.

DONE WHEN: Cold foods have a documented keep, move or discard decision; the no-cook menu is ready.

Power the essentials safely

Decide what must run before choosing what to plug in.

1. LIST LOADS IN PRIORITY ORDER

Start with clinician-approved medical needs, then communications and necessary lighting. Record each device, its compatible supply, power use, charging cable and required hours. A battery capacity is not the same as output power. A 300-watt-hour battery running a 30-watt load has a theoretical 10-hour ceiling before conversion losses, reserve and other limits; verify real runtime safely.

2. USE A TESTED CHARGING ROUTINE

Label cables, charge compatible batteries in advance and follow temperature and ventilation limits. Keep them dry and inspect for damage. Do not charge or use a swollen, damaged or recalled battery. Give one person responsibility for the charging station so the last available capacity is not spent on entertainment while a needed phone is flat.

3. TREAT ENGINE POWER AS A SEPARATE JOB

Read the complete generator manual before operation. Keep it dry using manufacturer-approved arrangements without enclosing exhaust. Never feed a wall outlet or improvise a connection to house wiring; use a qualified electrician for a code-compliant transfer arrangement. Shut down and let the generator cool before refueling. If you cannot operate it safely, relocate or use a different supply.

DO NOT MISS THIS

A generator, inverter or portable battery is not automatically compatible with medical equipment. Verify the exact device and backup combination.

DONE WHEN: Worksheet 5 shows the essential loads, tested runtime, recharge method and fallback.

FACT CHECK: S04, S05, S06, S17, S18 | Linked source register at the end.

Keep the household clean

A toilet plan and clean hands matter as much as another box of equipment.

1. FIND OUT WHETHER DRAINS WORK

Ask the sewer authority or follow its emergency notice. An outage does not always disable sewage, but flooding or a failed pump can. Stop flushing if told to do so or if sewage backs up. Keep children and pets away from contamination and do not enter water near energized electrical equipment.

2. SET UP A TEMPORARY OPTION

If the toilet cannot be used, follow local public-health instructions for a portable toilet or stable lined collection container. Stock compatible heavy-duty bags, absorbent material, toilet paper and a covered holding container. Keep waste separate from food and drinking water. Ask the local authority how sealed waste must be stored and collected; do not assume ordinary trash disposal is allowed.

3. MAKE HAND CLEANING EASY

Put soap, safe running water and paper towels beside the toilet area and near food preparation. A controlled-pour container over a catch basin can help manage water. When soap and water are unavailable, use sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. It does not remove all germs, visible dirt or many chemicals. Keep cleaning products labeled, follow directions and never mix cleaners.

DO NOT MISS THIS

Gloves do not replace handwashing. Do not empty human waste into a storm drain, yard or waterway.

DONE WHEN: Everyone knows the toilet rule, the handwashing location and who will manage waste.

Make the first night manageable

Finish the day with a shared plan, not a pile of unfinished tasks.

1. SET UP THE SLEEPING AREA

Choose a safe space with usable exits, alarms, suitable clothing and bedding. In dangerous heat or cold, arrange a location with safe cooling or heat instead of waiting for a universal indoor-temperature threshold. Infants, older adults and people with health conditions may need earlier action. Do not heat a home with an oven, grill or camp stove.

2. RUN A FIVE-MINUTE BRIEFING

Tell the household where to find water, lights and the toilet supplies. Review the next check-in time and the trigger for leaving. Give children a simple job and a clear explanation. Make sure the adult on duty knows which symptoms, alarms or official notices require immediate help. Preserve rest; exhausted people make poorer practical decisions.

3. CHECK OUTSIDE SUPPORT SAFELY

Contact a trusted neighbor or relative to exchange specific needs and offers. Keep doors secured while preserving escape. Verify a visitor before opening; avoid broadcasting inventories or leaving the house simply to investigate rumors. Record available help, not just promises: who can drive, who has accessible space, and when you will check again.

DO NOT MISS THIS

If someone becomes seriously unwell or a safety alarm activates, act immediately. A nighttime schedule is not a reason to wait until morning.

DONE WHEN: Before sleep, the family can explain where essentials are and what would make them leave.

Reassess before supplies run out

Seventy-two hours is a starting target, not a promise that services will return.

1. COUNT USABLE DAYS REMAINING

At each planned review, record safe water, complete meals, essential medicines, battery capacity and sanitary storage. Calculate using actual consumption. Eight usable gallons at a household use of 4 gallons per day is 2 days of coverage. If demand rises, the result changes. Never restrict necessary drinking to make the arithmetic look better.

2. MAKE RESUPPLY CONCRETE

Verify opening hours, available stock, route, payment method and transport before committing to a trip. Take a written list. Do not count a pending delivery or unopened distribution center as inventory. Keep enough flexibility to reach your safer destination before a critical resource is exhausted. Establish an earlier departure trigger for care-dependent people.

3. EXPAND THE WEAKEST SYSTEM

If the event continues, build from three days toward a longer reserve based on your household and local risks. Improve one measured weakness at a time: water volume, safe shelter, a compatible medical backup, a working radio or a tested route. Use the full playbooks for the relevant hazard and supply system. Longer duration changes the work; it does not make every disaster the same.

DO NOT MISS THIS

If the home can no longer meet essential needs, revise the plan. Do not remain solely to protect supplies or avoid feeling that the plan failed.

DONE WHEN: Worksheet 8 names the next action, its owner, the deadline and a fallback if it fails.

Three days, no stove.

Example for one person who can eat these foods. Scale actual quantities to each household member; substitute for allergies and medical diets.

Day	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
1	Shelf-stable cereal + single-serve milk alternative	Ready-to-eat bean pouch + tortillas + fruit cup	Ready-to-eat fish or chicken pouch + crackers + vegetables
2	Nut or seed butter + crackers + fruit	Ready-to-eat lentil or bean salad + flatbread	Canned ready-to-eat meal + vegetables + bread
3	Cereal + suitable shelf-stable drink + dried fruit	Protein pouch + crackers + fruit cup	Beans + tortillas + vegetables; add suitable fats/snacks

MAKE IT A REAL SHOPPING LIST

For four people, three meals a day for three days means 36 individual meal occasions, plus snacks. Read serving sizes and calories on the foods you choose. A small tin or pouch may be only part of one meal. Add familiar snacks and suitable spreads or oils to meet the household's needs; keep portions age-appropriate.

EXAMPLE ARITHMETIC, NOT A DIET TARGET

If one selected day of food totals 1,650 calories and a particular person's plan calls for 2,100, the gap is 450. Add suitable food to close it. Do this for actual packages, not the marketing phrase "three-day kit." A household of four does not necessarily have four identical calorie needs.

PACK TO SERVE

Include safe water, manual can opener, spoon, napkins and a waste bag. Choose packages you can finish safely after opening. Label each day's bin and keep a list of substitutions. Food preferences are worth testing before an emergency.

Own the essentials first.

This is a capability checklist. Exact quantities depend on household size, care needs, climate and whether you are staying or traveling.

Need	What to gather	Check before counting it
Safe water	Stored drinking water; clean dispensing containers	Measure volume and accessibility; plan extras.
Food	Three-day menu, snacks, opener and utensils	Can each meal be served with no power?
Alarms + light	Smoke/CO alarms with backup; headlamps or flashlights	Test alarms and lights; store correct batteries.
Care	Essential medicines, devices, glasses and first aid supplies	Confirm compatibility, storage and caregiver plan.
Information	Paper contacts, phone leads, charged battery, radio	Test reception, charging and emergency settings.
Sanitation	Soap, safe water, towels, toilet supplies, bags	Know drain status and local waste rules.
Shelter + clothing	Appropriate bedding, layers, sturdy footwear	Can you remain safe if heat or cooling fails?
Departure	Documents, keys, maps, practical cash, bag, pet supplies	Confirm destination, transport and carry weight.

Start with what you already own. On Worksheet 9, write HAVE or NEED, the quantity and the exact location. A product in an unopened shipping box does not count as a tested capability.

Good. Better. Best for you.

Spend on the next missing capability. Higher price does not guarantee a safer household.

GOOD / A COMPLETE FIRST LAYER

Gather the working items you own. Fill the water and no-cook-food gap, confirm alarms, put a light where each person can reach it, print contacts and arrange essential care. One grocery trip plus organizing existing supplies may solve more than a specialty survival bundle.

BETTER / FEWER SINGLE POINTS OF FAILURE

Add a second practical light, spare compatible batteries, independent broadcast reception, a tested phone-charging reserve and a portable set of essential documents and care items. Build a fallback for each resource that has only one way to work. Keep the home supply and portable bag separate enough to avoid taking the entire household reserve on one trip.

BEST / VERIFIED CAPACITY FOR YOUR REAL RISKS

Expand duration and accessibility. Pay for the necessary professional assessment of medical backup, safe installed power or home protection where appropriate. Verify runtime and resupply. A trained household with a modest kit can be better prepared than one with an expensive battery no one has tested.

SET A SPENDING LIMIT, THEN RANK THE GAPS

Write three missing capabilities and the maximum you can spend without sacrificing ordinary essentials. Price the actual items, tax, shipping, batteries and required accessories. Do not treat a planning allowance as the price of a complete family kit.

Purchase order: life-safety and care gaps first; water and workable meals next; communications and lighting; sanitation and shelter; then longer duration and convenience. Adjust immediately for your household's critical dependency.

Buy food you can actually use.

Direct starting points for online shopping. These supplier links are not a ranking or a substitute for checking the exact product.

START WITH YOUR ORDINARY GROCER

Use the grocer you already trust for bottled water, ready-to-eat canned or pouched foods, suitable snacks and hygiene supplies. Compare the delivered total and the package labels. Buy a small trial quantity of unfamiliar items. A familiar no-cook pantry belongs before bulk dry ingredients that need substantial water and fuel.

[Mountain House | Manufacturer preparation FAQs and shop](#)

Use for individually tested freeze-dried meals or a later reserve. Follow the current package preparation instructions and check allergens, calories and safe-water requirements. Do not assume a kit's "servings" equals the number of meals your household needs.

[REI | Reviewed Mountain House Beef Stroganoff listing](#)

This is a specific reviewed meal, not a recommendation for every product sold under the brand. The shortlist on page 22 gives the score, count, price snapshot and limitations.

WHAT ABOUT SEEDS?

Seeds can support a longer-term garden, but they cannot supply meals in the first 72 hours. Put your near-term food and water first. Use the Food and Seeds volume for climate, space, crop timing, storage and seed planning before spending heavily on a generic survival-seed bucket.

THE FOOD-BUCKET TEST

Before checkout, total the calories you can eat, days at your household's needs, water required, cooking requirements, allergens, storage conditions and delivery time. A large number on the label may count small servings rather than complete meals.

FACT CHECK: S15, S16; product evidence P03 | Linked source register at the end.

Reviewed equipment shortlist.

Research snapshot: October 26, 2026. These are well-reviewed candidates, not a marketwide "best" ranking.

LIGHTING / OPTIONAL MODEL

Black Diamond Astro 300

4.5 / 5 | 310 reviews / REI / \$24.95 observed

A simple hands-free light using 3 AAA cells; an optional rechargeable battery is separate. Test the controls with the person who will use it.

Check: The selected graphite color was sold out; the page displayed a membership purchase condition. A prominent critical review reports difficulty opening the battery compartment. Check the exact color and current terms.

[P01 Open exact listing and customer reviews](#)

INFORMATION / OPTIONAL MODEL

Midland ER310

4.7 / 5 | 140 reviews / Best Buy / \$79.99 observed

A weather-alert receiver with AM/FM and several power options. Useful when a charged phone cannot reach data services. Test local reception and the alert setting.

Check: Receive-only: it cannot transmit a distress call. Some reviews are incentivized. Do not plan on its small solar panel or hand crank replacing a proper household charging supply; follow the manual.

[P02 Open exact listing and customer reviews](#)

Selection screen: at least 4.5/5 and 100 published reviews on the cited listing, plus a plausible role in this starter. Ratings are customer reports, not safety certifications or independent durability tests. Recheck exact model, seller, recalls and return terms.

Food, alarms and the limits.

A strong star rating does not replace a suitability check.

FOOD / SAMPLE BEFORE BUYING

Mountain House Beef Stroganoff

4.6 / 5 | 196 reviews / REI / \$12.50 observed

A freeze-dried option to taste-test after your no-cook layer is covered. The listing shows 280 calories per serving and 2 servings: 560 calories per pouch.

Check: Contains milk, egg and wheat. A pouch is not a complete day of food. Add label-required safe water and preparation supplies. REI displayed a membership purchase condition. Match the package label to the current listing.

[P03 Open exact listing and customer reviews](#)

CARBON MONOXIDE ALARMS ARE AN ESSENTIAL CATEGORY

Buy a battery-operated or battery-backup model appropriate for your home and local requirements, from a reputable seller. Check its recognized safety listing, installation instructions, service life and current recall status. Follow placement requirements and test it. A smoke-only alarm does not detect CO.

No single CO-alarm model is ranked here: the retrieved retail aggregates for Kidde COBD10 disagreed across sellers, and its exact product page could not be fully rechecked. That evidence is not strong enough to call it the best-reviewed choice. The need for a working CO alarm is unchanged.

[CPSC | Recall search](#)

Prices exclude tax, shipping and any membership; availability and ratings change. Some retailer reviews may be incentivized, syndicated or pooled across variants. Links are ordinary source links, not affiliate links. No claim of personal ownership or hands-on testing is made.

FACT CHECK: S04, S05; product evidence P01-P03 | Linked source register at the end.

Run a 30-minute family drill.

A calm tabletop exercise. Keep utilities and medical equipment operating; do not practice with fire, fuel or hazardous water.

Time	Action	What a pass looks like
00-05	Announce: power and mobile data are unavailable.	Everyone names the safe location and their role.
05-10	Find a light and the printed contacts.	Nobody needs your phone or a password to find them.
10-15	Assemble one no-cook meal and locate water.	The meal has an opener, utensils and safe water.
15-20	Walk through the care and toilet plans.	The helper can explain both without improvising.
20-25	Locate departure essentials; check carry weight.	The bag is manageable; medicines/devices are accounted for.
25-30	Introduce one failure and assign a fix.	A specific person owns the fix and a retest date.

CHOOSE ONE COMPLICATION

Your usual driver is away. The first host cannot take pets. The flashlight batteries do not fit. The family member who wrote the plan is unavailable. The meal needs water that was never counted. Practice solving the most likely problem, not the most cinematic one.

DO NOT GRADE YOUR FAMILY

The drill is a test of the plan. Write down the three most important failures, fix the highest-risk one first and repeat only the failed portion. A useful discovery now is a problem you do not have to discover during an outage.

Household decision sheet

Complete before an emergency; update when conditions change.

Household / date / plan owner

People, pets and who helps each dependent

Immediate hazards and official instruction / source / time

Primary safe location and when it is appropriate

Backup destination / contact / accessibility confirmed

Leave trigger / transport / safe route / alternate route

Next reassessment time / person responsible

- ☐ Everyone knows the safe location.
- ☐ The backup destination has been contacted.

Water count and shortfall

Use U.S. gallons. Exclude sources whose safety is uncertain.

People ___ x 3 days x 1 gallon = baseline ___ gallons

Extra needs: pets / heat / care / food preparation

Our total target ___ ; safe water on hand ___ ; gap ___

Containers: number x volume / location / fill or expiry date

Resupply location / contact / hours / transport / backup

Advisory type / official source / time checked

- ☐ The water is accessible to the people who need it.
- ☐ I have printed the treatment instructions relevant to our plan.

Three-day food planner

Enter actual household quantities; match allergies and care instructions.

Day 1: breakfast / lunch / dinner / snacks / quantities

Day 2: breakfast / lunch / dinner / snacks / quantities

Day 3: breakfast / lunch / dinner / snacks / quantities

Special diets / infant and pet needs / safe substitutes

Water, fuel and opening tools needed; no-cook fallback

Shopping gap / owner / date to complete

- ☐ Every meal can be prepared with our available supplies.
- ☐ Package labels and portions were checked.

Care continuity plan

Keep private. Complete with the relevant clinician, pharmacist or supplier.

Person / essential care task / allergy or access need

Medicine or device / instructions / supplies / storage

Prescriber, pharmacy and supplier contacts

Verified backup / tested duration / source of confirmation

Action trigger before interruption / transport / destination

Caregiver / backup caregiver / review date

☐ The backup is suitable for the exact device or treatment.

☐ A care-capable destination and transport are confirmed.

Essential power plan

Do not test by interrupting life-support equipment. Use provider instructions.

Device / priority / compatible supply and connector

Power in watts / daily hours / daily watt-hours

Battery model / rated watt-hours / output limit / reserve

Measured safe runtime / conditions / date / person

Recharge source / duration / location / safe-use check

Fallback and action trigger if recharge fails

- ☐ Medical-device compatibility was checked with its provider.
- ☐ No improvised house-wiring connection is part of this plan.

Cold-food decision record

Use the food-by-food source linked in Step 8. Do not taste-test safety.

Outage start / last known temperature / thermometer location

Check 1: time / food / measured temperature / action

Check 2: time / food / measured temperature / action

Check 3: time / food / measured temperature / action

Cooler or alternate cold source / temperature checks

Discard list and replenishment priorities

- ☐ Food with uncertain safety is separated from usable food.
- ☐ Medicine storage decisions were handled separately.

Family contact and departure card

Carry a paper copy; keep sensitive personal data secure.

Out-of-area contact / phone / agreed update schedule

Local helper / school or care pickup contact / phone

Nearby meeting place / outside-neighborhood meeting place

Destination / host / phone / pet and access arrangements

Transport / driver / alternate / paper-map location

Grab last: medicines / devices / documents / pet supplies

- ☐ Each person can access contacts without the internet.
- ☐ We have practiced a check-in message and meeting plan.

72-hour status and resupply log

Update at planned reviews and whenever conditions materially change.

Time / people / location / official update

Safe water / complete meals / essential care coverage left

Power / sanitation / temperature / transport status

Next resource to fail / latest safe action time

Resupply: verified stock / hours / payment / route / owner

If resupply fails: fallback / departure trigger / contact

☐ Pending deliveries are not counted as supplies on hand.

☐ Our next decision has an owner and a time.

Inventory and buying list

Mark only items you can locate and use. Add quantities and locations.

Water and food: HAVE / NEED / QUANTITY / LOCATION

--

Alarms, lighting and communications: HAVE / NEED / LOCATION

--

Medicines, care, hygiene and sanitation: HAVE / NEED / LOCATION

--

Documents, money, clothing, transport and pets: HAVE / NEED

--

Top three gaps / spending limit / responsible person

--

Model, seller, recall check, warranty and test date

--

- ☐ The household has tried the food and operated the equipment.
- ☐ Safety essentials are covered before optional upgrades.

Practice drill and improvement record

Use the 30-minute tabletop drill. Keep all essential services operating.

Date / participants / scenario / accommodations

Time to find light, contact card and safe place

Can we prepare one meal without power? What was missing?

Can we locate and carry the departure essentials safely?

Three failures found / specific fixes / owner / deadline

Retest date / what passed / remaining gap

- ☐ We did not shut off medical equipment or practice hazardous operations.
- ☐ The next practice is scheduled after the highest-priority fix.

Go deeper where it matters.

Use the starter to identify your weakest system, then choose the matching full playbook.

Scenario playbooks	Supply systems
01 Grid Down - longer outages	08 Water - storage, treatment and resupply
02 EMP and Solar Storm - distinct mechanisms	09 Food and Seeds - pantry, preservation, growing
03 Nuclear and Fallout - hazard-specific shelter	10 Power and Heat - loads, backup, safe operation
04 War and Civil Unrest - safety and relocation	11 Medical and Sanitation - care and waste
05 Economic Collapse - payments and disruption	12 Security and Defense - home protection and egress
06 Severe Weather - separate storm decisions	13 Comms and Bug-Out - contacts, radios and movement
07 Pandemic and Quarantine - care and isolation	Each guide includes practical planning worksheets.

CHOOSE BY THE GAP YOU FOUND

If your water calculation came up short, start with Water. If a dependent person cannot tolerate a power interruption, prioritize the care and power plans. If your home faces flooding, learn the weather-specific decision rules before buying another backup battery.

YOUR NEXT ACTION

Complete one missing capability this week. Then repeat the drill. The full library expands the planning, but the steps in this free starter are yours to use now.

Find the matching full guide or complete library through the creator who supplied this free starter.

Checked sources / 1 of 3

Primary safety sources are linked below. Planning examples, worksheet structure and calculations are original editorial work.

S01 CDC | Emergency water storage

Water quantity, containers and rotation.

[Open source](#)

S02 CDC | Make water safe

Boiling, chemical-contamination limits and treatment instructions.

[Open source](#)

S03 FoodSafety.gov | Outage food chart

Refrigerator/freezer timing and food-specific discard decisions.

[Open source](#)

S04 CDC | Carbon monoxide basics

Generator separation and fuel-burning equipment hazards.

[Open source](#)

S05 CPSC | Generator, CO and fire hazards

Alarms, generator siting and emergency response.

[Open source](#)

S06 FDA | Medical-device outage workbook

Device-specific backup and clinician planning.

[Open source](#)

Research checked October 26, 2026. Use current local alerts during an event. Sources can change; print the instructions you intend to rely on. Reference labels identify the main supporting guidance rather than promising every circumstance is covered.

Checked sources / 2 of 3

Primary safety sources are linked below. Planning examples, worksheet structure and calculations are original editorial work.

S07 American Red Cross | Make a plan

Contacts, meeting places and household responsibilities.

[Open source](#)

S08 CDC | Hand sanitizer guidance

Hand cleaning and sanitizer limitations.

[Open source](#)

S09 National Weather Service | Tornado safety

Hazard-specific shelter.

[Open source](#)

S10 National Weather Service | Flood safety

Higher ground, flooded roads and electrical hazards.

[Open source](#)

S11 USFA | Home fire escape plans

Escape routes, household assistance and meeting points.

[Open source](#)

S12 CDC | Infant feeding in emergencies

Ready-to-feed formula and feeding safety.

[Open source](#)

Research checked October 26, 2026. Use current local alerts during an event. Sources can change; print the instructions you intend to rely on. Reference labels identify the main supporting guidance rather than promising every circumstance is covered.

Checked sources / 3 of 3

Primary safety sources are linked below. Planning examples, worksheet structure and calculations are original editorial work.

S13 King County Public Health | Emergency toilet

Temporary waste collection and handwashing.

[Open source](#)

S14 American Red Cross | Power outages

Heat/cold relocation and outage preparation.

[Open source](#)

S15 FoodSafety.gov | Disaster food safety

Food storage and flood-contaminated food.

[Open source](#)

S16 Mountain House | Preparation FAQs

Manufacturer preparation information; not independent product testing.

[Open source](#)

S17 Michigan emergency management | Generator safety

Refueling, connections and electrical safety.

[Open source](#)

S18 NFPA | Lithium-ion batteries

Charging and damaged-battery precautions.

[Open source](#)

Research checked October 26, 2026. Use current local alerts during an event. Sources can change; print the instructions you intend to rely on. Reference labels identify the main supporting guidance rather than promising every circumstance is covered.

Recommendations, not guarantees.

This guide is educational. It is not individualized medical, engineering or legal advice.

ACCURACY AND LIMITS

Safety guidance was checked against the linked primary sources. Product scores and counts were read from the cited retailer pages. No document can promise 100% accuracy in every emergency, and this edition has not been certified by a clinician, engineer or emergency-management agency. Follow current official instructions and the manuals for your exact equipment.

PRODUCT RECOMMENDATION DISCLOSURE

These are research-based recommendations unless an item is expressly identified as personally used. Not every model has been owned or tested. Third parties manufacture and sell the products; the publisher does not inspect, warrant or service them or guarantee defect-free operation. To the extent permitted by law, the publisher is not responsible for third-party product defects or failures. This does not remove rights that cannot legally be waived. Check suitability, recalls, warranty and return terms before buying.

ORIGINAL WORK AND IMAGERY

The instructions, examples and worksheets were written for this series rather than copied from the listed survival books. The cover is an AI-generated editorial illustration, not a photograph of an actual disaster. Product names identify the listed goods; no manufacturer endorsement is implied.

KEEP THE PLAN CURRENT

Review your plan when your household, care needs, equipment or local risks change. Verify links and instructions before using them. A completed worksheet is the beginning of preparation: practice finding and using the supplies, then fix the gaps you discover.

KEEP A WORKING COPY

Save completed worksheets under a new filename, reopen them and verify the entries. Keep a protected paper copy accessible to the household and review it when people, medicines, equipment or destinations change.