Your first week of prep

Start here, mostly free

- [ ] Fill clean 2-liter bottles or water jugs with tap water and date them
- [ ] Write important phone numbers on paper and keep a copy in your wallet
- [ ] Pick a meeting spot near home and one outside your neighborhood
- [ ] Sign up for your county or city emergency alerts
- [ ] Find your water shutoff valve and electrical panel
- [ ] Put a flashlight by every bed
- [ ] Buy one extra week of the food you already eat
- [ ] Keep your gas tank at least half full
- [ ] Do one practice night with the power off

72-hour go-bag (per person)

For evacuations

- [ ] 3 gallons of water, or 1 gallon plus a water filter
- [ ] 3 days of no-cook food: bars, nut butter, jerky, crackers
- [ ] Flashlight or headlamp with spare batteries
- [ ] Phone charging cable and a charged power bank
- [ ] Change of clothes, socks and a rain layer
- [ ] Prescription medications (at least 7 days) and a list of them
- [ ] Small first aid kit
- [ ] Copies of ID, insurance and important papers in a waterproof bag
- [ ] Cash in small bills
- [ ] Paper map of your area
- [ ] Hand sanitizer, wipes, toothbrush and toilet paper
- [ ] Whistle and a dust mask
- [ ] Comfort item for kids

Two weeks at home

Shelter in place

- [ ] 14 gallons of water per person
- [ ] Two weeks of no-cook food for everyone, including pets
- [ ] Manual can opener
- [ ] Flashlights or lanterns for every room you use
- [ ] Batteries that fit everything you own
- [ ] Hand-crank or battery NOAA weather radio
- [ ] Power banks, charged and rotated monthly
- [ ] First aid kit and 2+ weeks of any medications
- [ ] Toilet bags, heavy trash bags and kitty litter
- [ ] Wipes, hand sanitizer, paper plates
- [ ] Unscented bleach for treating water
- [ ] Warm blankets or sleeping bags for everyone
- [ ] Battery-powered carbon monoxide detector
- [ ] Cash in small bills

Power outage: the first hour

When the lights go out

- [ ] Grab flashlights, not candles, first
- [ ] Check on everyone in the house
- [ ] Keep the fridge and freezer closed
- [ ] Unplug electronics to protect them from surges
- [ ] Leave one lamp switched on so you know when power returns
- [ ] Turn on your weather radio or check alerts
- [ ] Switch phones to low power mode
- [ ] Fill a bathtub and pots with water if you're on a well or the outage may last
- [ ] Report the outage to your power company
- [ ] Check on neighbors who live alone

Winter storm prep

Cold climates

- [ ] Sleeping bags or heavy blankets for everyone
- [ ] Wool socks, hats and gloves
- [ ] Pick one room to keep warm and close the rest
- [ ] Battery-powered carbon monoxide detector with fresh batteries
- [ ] Hand warmers
- [ ] Know how to drip faucets and where your water shutoff is
- [ ] Snow shovel and ice melt or kitty litter
- [ ] Car kit: blanket, scraper, small shovel, snacks, water

Heat wave prep

Hot climates

- [ ] Double your water plan in hot weather
- [ ] Battery or USB fans and a power bank for each
- [ ] Cooling towels or washcloths
- [ ] Electrolyte packets or oral rehydration salts
- [ ] Light-colored sheets or foil to cover sunny windows
- [ ] Know your nearest cooling center
- [ ] Plan a check-in with older neighbors and relatives
- [ ] Never leave kids or pets in a car, even for a minute

Hurricane & flood prep

Coasts and flood zones

- [ ] Know your evacuation zone and two routes out
- [ ] Go-bag for everyone, packed and by the door
- [ ] Important papers in a waterproof bag
- [ ] Photos of your home and belongings for insurance
- [ ] Fill the car's gas tank when a storm is forecast
- [ ] Bring in or tie down outdoor furniture
- [ ] Fill bathtubs and containers with water before the storm
- [ ] Charge every phone and power bank
- [ ] Check whether you have flood insurance (most home policies don't cover floods)
- [ ] Never drive or walk through flood water

Car kit

Keep it in the trunk

- [ ] Water and a few bars or snacks
- [ ] Blanket and a warm layer
- [ ] Flashlight and phone charger
- [ ] Jumper cables
- [ ] Small first aid kit
- [ ] Seasonal items: ice scraper, small shovel, or sunshade
- [ ] Paper map

Pet kit

Dogs and cats

- [ ] Two weeks of food and water for each pet
- [ ] Leash, harness and carrier
- [ ] Copies of vaccination records
- [ ] A current photo of you with your pet
- [ ] Medications
- [ ] Litter and bags
- [ ] A familiar toy or blanket

Home apothecary

Herbalist's cupboard

- [ ] Raw, unpasteurized honey
- [ ] Raw apple cider vinegar with the mother
- [ ] Fresh garlic, ginger and a horseradish root in season
- [ ] Dried black elderberries
- [ ] Dried thyme, sage and oregano
- [ ] Dried chamomile, lemon balm and peppermint
- [ ] Dried mullein leaf and marshmallow root
- [ ] Dried calendula flowers
- [ ] Beeswax pellets
- [ ] Carrier oils: olive and coconut
- [ ] Oregano, lavender and peppermint essential oils
- [ ] Pure aloe vera gel
- [ ] Epsom salt and colloidal oatmeal
- [ ] Mason jars, amber dropper bottles and salve tins
- [ ] Cheesecloth, fine strainer and a double boiler
- [ ] Labels and a marker: name, date, ingredients

Everyday carry

In your pocket or purse

- [ ] Phone and a small power bank
- [ ] Flashlight or keychain light
- [ ] Multi-tool or small knife where legal
- [ ] Lighter
- [ ] A few bandages and pain reliever
- [ ] Cash
- [ ] Whistle
- [ ] Any daily medication

Get-home bag

In the car or at work

- [ ] Comfortable walking shoes and socks
- [ ] Water and a filter bottle
- [ ] A day or two of bars and snacks
- [ ] Rain poncho and warm layer
- [ ] Headlamp
- [ ] Paper map of the route home
- [ ] Small first aid kit
- [ ] Phone cable and power bank
- [ ] Cash
- [ ] Work gloves
- [ ] N95 mask

Fire kit

Keep one in every bag

- [ ] Two lighters
- [ ] Waterproof or stormproof matches
- [ ] Ferro rod and striker
- [ ] Cotton balls with petroleum jelly in a small bag
- [ ] Fatwood or commercial fire starters
- [ ] Small knife for shaving tinder
- [ ] Waterproof container

Off-grid cooking kit

For when the stove won't work

- [ ] Camp stove or grill you've practiced with
- [ ] At least a week of fuel, stored outdoors
- [ ] Lighter and matches
- [ ] Pot with a lid and a skillet
- [ ] Long-handled tongs and spatula
- [ ] Heat-proof gloves
- [ ] Fire extinguisher nearby
- [ ] Battery CO detector inside the house

Family communication plan

So nobody's lost

- [ ] Every phone has an In Case of Emergency contact
- [ ] An out-of-state contact everyone can text
- [ ] Paper contact cards in wallets and kids' bags
- [ ] Two meeting spots: near home and out of the neighborhood
- [ ] Two-way radios charged, with a family channel picked
- [ ] NOAA weather radio
- [ ] Everyone knows to text, not call, when lines are busy

Long-term food storage

Months, not days

- [ ] Food-grade buckets with gamma lids
- [ ] Mylar bags and oxygen absorbers
- [ ] White rice, dry beans and oats sealed for the long haul
- [ ] Salt, sugar and honey (they keep for years)
- [ ] A way to cook it: stove plus fuel
- [ ] A written inventory with dates
- [ ] Storage spot that's cool, dry and dark

Home safety check

Twice a year

- [ ] Test every smoke alarm
- [ ] Test every carbon monoxide alarm
- [ ] Change batteries when clocks change
- [ ] Fire extinguisher in the kitchen and garage, not expired
- [ ] Everyone knows two ways out of every room
- [ ] Practice your fire escape plan
- [ ] Know where the water, gas and power shutoffs are
- [ ] Keep a flashlight by every bed

Documents & money

Grab-and-go papers

- [ ] Copies of IDs, birth certificates and passports
- [ ] Insurance policies and agent phone numbers
- [ ] Medication lists and doctor contacts
- [ ] Pet vaccination records
- [ ] A video walk-through of your home for insurance
- [ ] Digital copies saved securely in the cloud
- [ ] Cash in small bills
- [ ] An emergency fund, even a small one

Long-haul milestones

3 months to a year

- [ ] 3 months of everyday pantry food you already eat, rotated
- [ ] 3 months of prescriptions and a long-term first aid kit
- [ ] Freeze-dried or bulk staples for 3 months, with water and fuel to cook them
- [ ] A renewable water source plan: rain catchment, well, or a nearby source plus a gravity filter
- [ ] Fuel stored safely and rotated: propane, stabilized gasoline or kerosene
- [ ] Solar or battery power for lights, radios and phones
- [ ] 6 months of food, including grains, beans, oil, salt, sugar and powdered milk
- [ ] A grain mill if you store whole grains
- [ ] Heirloom seeds and a garden you've actually grown in
- [ ] Canning, dehydrating or freeze-drying skills practiced
- [ ] Barter goods and skills you can trade
- [ ] A year of food storage, inventoried and dated
- [ ] Neighbors you know and trust

Barter & trade kit

Small, useful, always wanted

- [ ] Lighters and waterproof matches
- [ ] Salt, sugar, honey and spices
- [ ] Instant coffee and tea
- [ ] Toilet paper, soap and toothpaste
- [ ] Period products
- [ ] Over-the-counter pain relievers and anti-diarrhea medicine
- [ ] Bandages and first aid supplies
- [ ] AA and AAA batteries
- [ ] Candles and spare flashlight bulbs
- [ ] Heirloom seed packets
- [ ] Sewing kits, needles and thread
- [ ] Duct tape, zip ties and paracord
- [ ] Reading glasses in a few strengths
- [ ] Wool socks and work gloves
- [ ] Canning lids
- [ ] Fishing line and hooks
- [ ] Water purification tablets and bleach