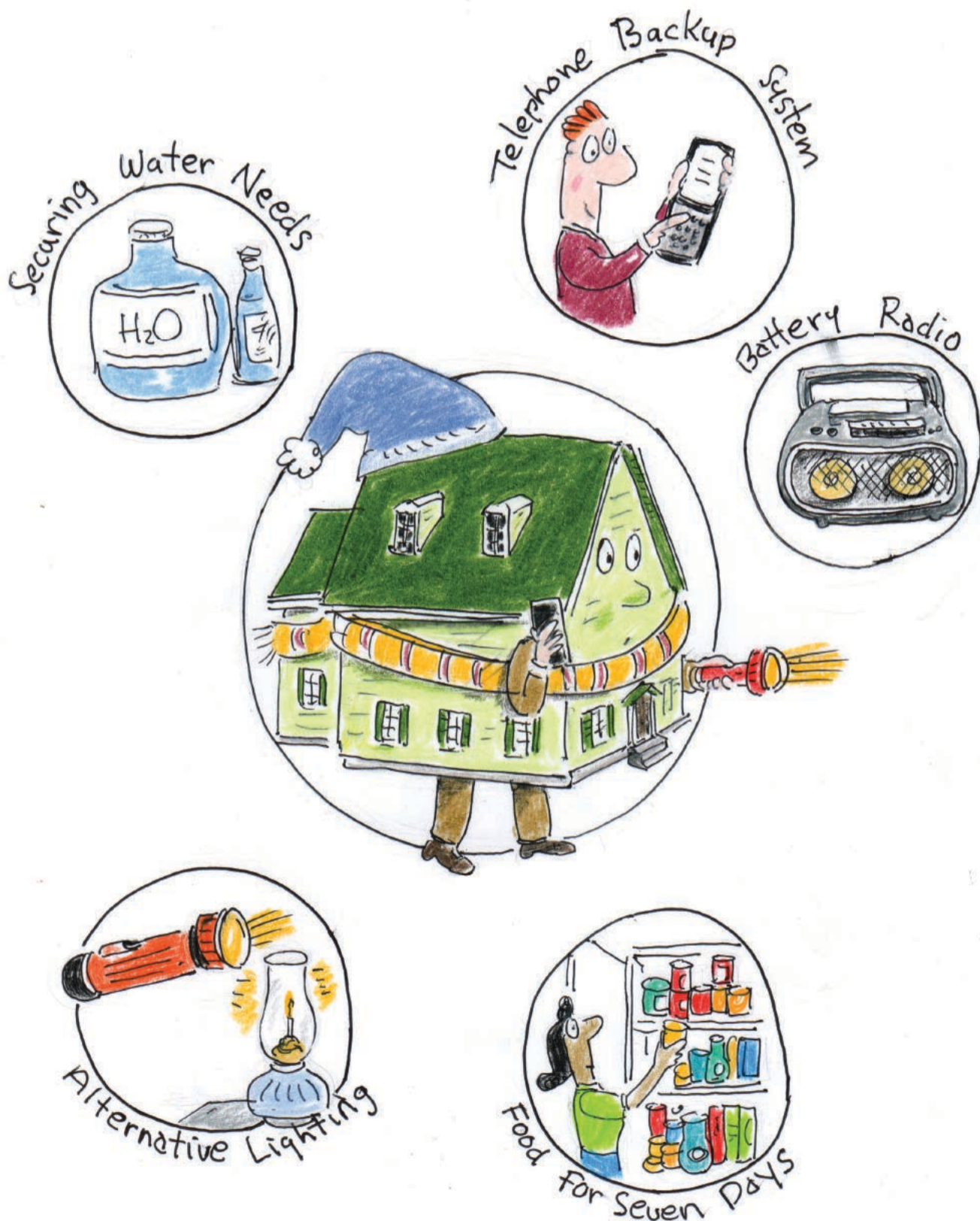


THE COOL BLOCK

Becoming Resilient

*A 30-Day Program to Prepare for
an Energy Disruption or Natural Disaster*



Becoming Resilient



This program is designed to help you take the necessary actions to become more resilient in the face of a possible energy disruption or natural disaster—without spending much time or money. Being prepared and knowing how to respond to specific emergencies can reduce the fear and anxiety that often accompany disasters.

Here's the good news: the steps that make the most sense in preparing for an emergency are a good idea, anyway. These actions involve restoring the kind of personal resiliency to our lives that we never intended to give up. Taking the individual actions recommended by *Becoming Resilient* will increase your self-reliance and peace of mind.

Getting Started...

The program is divided into two sections, each with a menu of preparedness actions. You are encouraged to complete the program in 30 days. This can easily be done if you stay focused and follow the prescribed steps. Otherwise your motivation is likely to diminish over time.

How the Program Works

1. Read all the actions in each section and decide which ones to take over a two-week period.
2. If you live with others, discuss your plan with them and get their ideas and participation. Working together will help keep everyone motivated.
3. Actions to achieve minimum emergency preparedness are identified under the title with the designation "priority action." It is highly recommended that your household complete these actions.
4. In the Action Plan enter the day and time you plan to do your chosen actions.
5. Do the actions!

That's it. Enjoy the self-reliance and peace of mind that comes from being prepared just in case...

Action Plan

Energy Disruptions

<i>Action</i>	<i>Action Plan</i>	<i>Action Done</i>
1. Food for a While <i>Preparing 7 days' food stores</i>	Day____Time____	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Drink It Up <i>Securing your basic water needs</i>	Day____Time____	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. House warming <i>Developing alternative heating sources</i>	Day____Time____	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Get Cooking <i>Developing an alternative cooking source</i>	Day____Time____	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Let There Be Light <i>Developing alternative lighting sources</i>	Day____Time____	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Tune In <i>Getting a radio for local emergency news</i>	Day____Time____	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Playing Telephone <i>Developing a telephone backup system</i>	Day____Time____	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Unplugged <i>Living without electricity for a period of time</i>	Day____Time____	<input type="checkbox"/>

Emergencies and Natural Disasters

<i>Action</i>	<i>Action Plan</i>	<i>Action Done</i>
9. Ready-Set-Go Bag <i>Creating an evacuation kit</i>	Day____Time____	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. To your Health <i>Preparing a first aid kit</i>	Day____Time____	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Ounce of Prevention <i>Preparing for your medical needs</i>	Day____Time____	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. Extra Care <i>Planning for special needs</i>	Day____Time____	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. On The Road <i>Developing a communication and evacuation plan</i>	Day____Time____	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. It's Alarming <i>Preparing for a fire</i>	Day____Time____	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. Just In Case <i>Sheltering in place</i>	Day____Time____	<input type="checkbox"/>

1. Food for a While

Preparing Seven Days' Food Stores (Priority Action)

Why Act?

The pace of life coupled with food marketing trends in recent years adds up, in many cases, to sparse cupboards. For some, hectic schedules result in regular dining out or the purchase of prepared food in supermarket deli sections. The Federal Emergency Management Agency and Red Cross have traditionally advised that every person have a minimum of three days of emergency provisions on hand. But with the spate of natural disasters now upon us, the new norm is to be prepared for seven days. So, in preparing for an emergency, stocking your cupboard is the logical starting place.

Action

- Step 1: Make a breakfast, lunch, and dinner menu for a minimum of 7 days for each household member. Emphasize preference, convenience, and food items not requiring refrigeration.
- Step 2: Convert this menu into a shopping list.
- Step 3: Inventory your cupboard to see what food you have on hand.
- Step 4: Buy the needed food items and necessary utensils, such as a manual can opener.
- Step 5: Write the purchase date on each item with a marker and use these foods before their shelf life expires.
- Step 6: If possible, keep these food supplies in an easily accessible, separate container or special cupboard. Tell your household that these supplies are to be used for emergency only. If space is limited, place new items in the back of your normal storage area and the older ones in front.

Time and Materials

2 hours to plan and shop, less if combined with regular grocery shopping.

A manual can opener. Canned soups, fruits, and vegetables, packaged cereals, grains, pastas, sauces, dried milk, crackers, and so on."



2. Drink It Up

Securing Your Basic Water Needs

(Priority Action)

Why Act?

The modern world makes countless luxurious and often wasteful uses of water, but water is no luxury. For basic health, normally active adults in moderate climates should drink at least 2 quarts per day. The more active you are, the more water you need. In an absolute emergency, plan on a gallon per person each day; 2 quarts for drinking, 2 quarts for cooking and minimal personal hygiene, not including sewage. A 7-day emergency supply for a family of four: 28 gallons.

Action

Step 1: Using the 1-gallon per person/day formula, determine the amount of water you should store to cover 7 days of preparedness. Include pets!

Step 2: Decide on the type of containers you want to use.

Option 1: Bottled water from the supermarket is an easy solution.

Option 2: Search your shelves to see if you have containers. Be sure to clean them in advance with baking soda and water. Used 1-gallon plastic milk jugs are not a good option because they can easily crack and leak. When purchasing empty plastic containers, be sure they're made of food-grade plastic; otherwise toxins could contaminate your water.

Step 3: Add these items to your shopping list: iodine tablets or other water purification tablets or grapefruit seed extract (for disinfecting water only if you are directed to do so by health officials).

Step 4: Keep this supply of water in a special area. Tell your household that this water is to be used for emergencies only.

Time and Materials

A few minutes to rinse containers to an hour to research and purchase larger containers; 15 minutes to an hour to fill and store containers.

A few gallon jugs and a few small-sized containers suitable for lifting.



3. House Warming

Developing Alternative Heating Sources

Why Act?

There are several ways to keep the chill off during a power outage or any loss of your heat source. Power can go out at any time, and having a Plan B for staying warm is essential for self-reliant living. The most important thing is, whatever you do, do it safely.

Action

Step 1: Assess your basic energy needs, considering the length of time for which you want backup and how much you wish to pay for it.

Step 2: Choose from among the following options the ones that best meet your needs.

Option 1: Insulate your home.

- Step 1: Hang curtains or bedspreads over windows.
- Step 2: Hang blankets over doorways to create smaller living spaces, which are easier to warm.
- Step 3: Insulate windows with plastic and install door draft stoppers.
- Step 4: As the previous action indicates, make sure you have warm clothing.

Note: In multifamily settings, meet with your neighbors to consider pooling resources to heat a single area that can be shared by many.

Option 2: Purchase an electric heater as a backup in case your home or building runs out of fuel.

- Step 1: Do the research to find a safe unit that best serves your emergency purposes.
- Step 2: Purchase the unit, read the safety regulations, and use it appropriately

Option 3: If you have a working fireplace in your home, it can become a welcome emergency heat source. Here are a few steps to increase fireplace safety.

- Step 1: Before using your fireplace, be sure the flue is open. You can check by looking up the chimney to see if you are able to see daylight. If there are any obstructions, remove them.
- Step 2: Burn safe logs or wood. Artificial logs made from wax and sawdust should only be used one at a time. Don't burn pressure-treated wood; it contain toxins that if burned could make you sick. Don't burn newspapers or other trash in a fireplace, because they burn too hot and can ignite a chimney fire.

- Step 3: Have a responsible person attend the fire. Never leave children or pets alone with open flames.

Note: Each year have your chimney inspected and cleaned by a professional to maintain safe use.

Option 4: If you have a single-family home, one of the most effective options is to purchase an electric generator.

- Step 1: Identify a professional to determine the size and type of generator you need.
- Step 2: Have it installed.
- Step 3: Maintain it.
- *Note:* For shorter power outages, you can purchase a small generator at your local hardware store.
- Option 5: If you have a single-family home, consider purchasing a wood stove if you wish to have this as a permanent source of heating.
- Step 1: Consult a professional to determine the size and type of wood stove you need.
- Step 2: Have it installed.
- Step 3: Maintain it.

Option 5: Go solar.

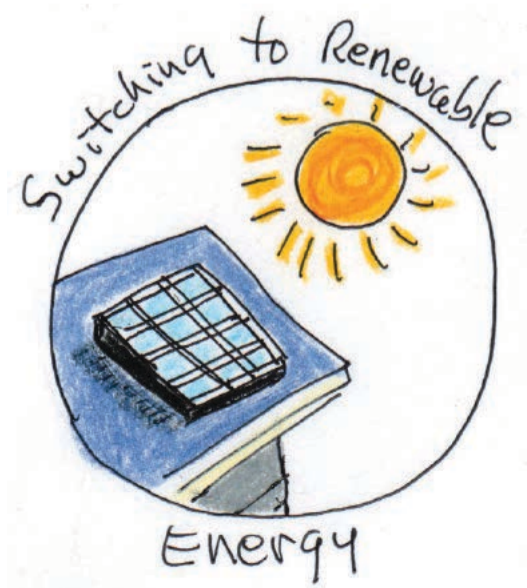
- While this option is not usually thought of as a solution for power outages, it is one more reason it is intelligent to go solar.

Step 3: Implement and practice the options you have chosen so you are prepared for an emergency.

Time and Materials

A few hours to several days.

Variable, depending on your needs and desires.



4. Get Cooking

Developing an Alternative Cooking Source

Why Act?

Meal preparation during a power outage takes a little thinking ahead, but it's surprisingly easy. With limited or no refrigeration, you can prepare many different types of foods. As you'll see, these meals can be as plain or fancy as you like.

Action

Step 1: Assess if the energy used for heating your home can also be used for cooking. The length of time you wish to have a backup for and how much you wish to spend will help you in deciding among the different options.

Step 2: Choose from among the following options those that best meet your needs.

Option 1: Don't cook! Have a good supply of ready-to-eat food in your emergency food cupboard (see Action 43). Use an insulated cooler for food storage.

Option 2: Sterno. Caterers use this to warm food. You can use it for cooking. Patience is required, as it will take some time.

Option 3: Natural gas. If you have a dependable natural gas source, consider using a gas stove.

Option 4: Gas grill. If you have an outdoor gas barbecue grill, store extra fuel. If you live in an apartment building check with your management to see if a grill is permitted anywhere on the building property. *Never grill indoors.*

Option 5: Fireplace. If you have a working fireplace, you can cook over the flame using cast iron cookware.

Option 6: Electric stove. If you have a generator, an electric stove can be used for cooking. Check to make sure your stove and generator have compliant voltage and amp specifications.

Step 3: Practice using your alternative system.

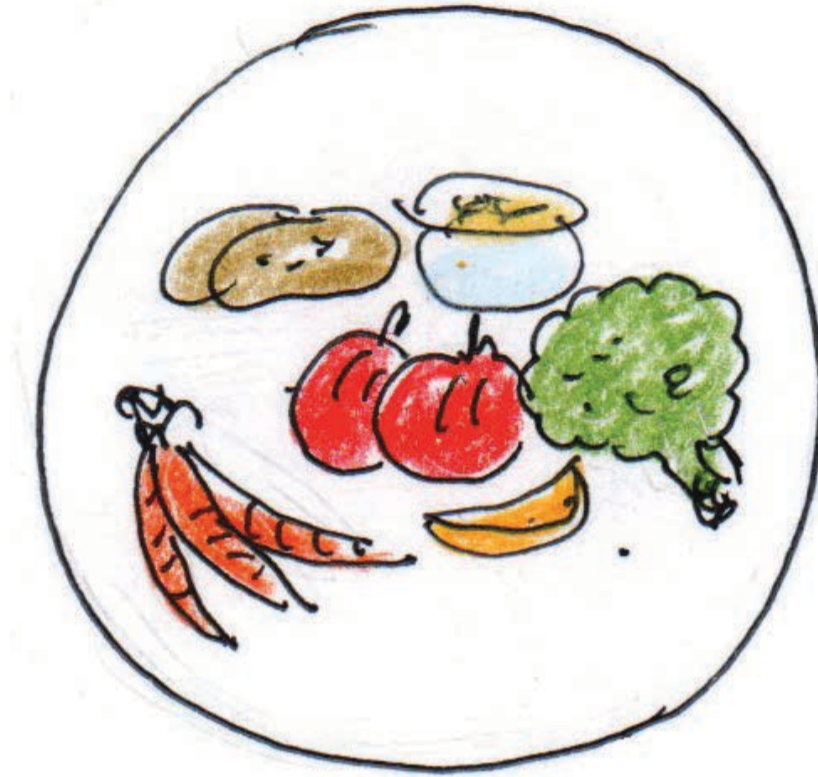
Step 4: When you're comfortable with your mastery level, select an amount of time for an off-the-grid practice session. There's no substitute for the lessons learned because they minimize the danger of injury while greatly building skill and confidence. See Action 54 on rehearsing for power outages.

Note: NEVER leave children or pets alone with open flames.

Time and Materials

30 to 60 minutes for research, more time for implementation

Variable, depending on your needs and desires.



5. Let There Be Light

Developing Alternative Lighting Sources

(Priority Action)

Why Act?

Light is important, not just for practical reasons but for emotional and psychological ones, too. Especially with children in the home, you'll want to be sure you can provide cheerful pools of warm light in the evening. Not only are alternative light sources abundant, inexpensive, and potentially resource-conserving, they can yield a pleasant ambience ranging from the restful to the festive to the romantic.

Action

Step 1: Assess your lighting needs and consider how heating and cooking fuels may be used for this purpose too. If you already heat or cook with propane or natural gas, you might want to consider installing lighting fixtures that work with those fuels. Obviously, if you have a generator, it can be used for this purpose too.

Step 2: Make a shopping list of lighting sources you want to purchase.

Options to consider:

Flashlights for all family members and a supply of batteries. A miner's headlamp is very useful as a hands-free flashlight.

You may wish to consider a wind-up lantern, which has a self-contained generator.

Consider getting a few olive oil lamps. (One of the most nutritious fat sources to have in your kitchen, olive oil is 99 percent pure, burns without smoke or odor, won't catch fire if tipped over, and casts a mellow light.) Use a hurricane shade to protect the flame.

It's not recommended, but if you must use candles, review the safety rules, in Action 52.

Step 3: Go shopping and bring home the light.

Note: If you live in an apartment building, be sure to check to see if there are building codes you must abide by in choosing alternative lighting sources.

Time and Materials

30 to 60 minutes to shop in your local hardware store, to several hours for more elaborate research and installation.

Flashlights, batteries, and wind-up lantern.



6. Tune In

Getting a Radio for Local Emergency News (Priority Action)

Why Act?

When a minor energy disruption occurs, the information sources you normally depend on probably won't be affected; however, that might not be the case if there is a prolonged electrical disruption. A radio is the best source of emergency news.

Action

Option 1: A battery-powered AM/FM radio.

Step 1: If you do not have a battery-powered radio, purchase one.

Step 2: Purchase replacement batteries to handle the emergency broadcast time you choose to plan for.

Option 2: A hand-cranked AM/FM radio capable of generating its own electricity.

Step 1: Research the retail and online stores that sell hand cranked radios.

Step 2: Purchase the radio.

Option 3: Share the airwaves.

Step 1: Discuss with your neighbors sharing the expense of a radio and backup batteries, and plan to get together regularly to listen to the news for emergency updates.

Time and Materials

An hour for research and shopping. Less if combined with other shopping.

Battery-powered or hand-cranked am/fm radio.



7. Playing Telephone

Developing a Telephone Backup System (Priority Action)

Why Act?

Should an emergency disrupt telephone service, loss of communication with family and emergency personnel are critical concerns. There are a few important things you can do to be prepared.

Action

Step 1: Identify at least one phone in your home that doesn't require electricity to work. Cell phones are the natural go-to resource but sometimes the service can be spotty. The more options you have available, the better prepared you'll be. (Note: Cordless phones require electricity.)

Option 1: A cell phone and an extra battery. Nonelectric charger.

Option 2: A nonelectric phone.

Option 3: A handheld radio system. Consider this type of system if you have a critical need to stay in touch with friends or family members nearby. Handheld radios are used by security guards and have ranges of up to a few miles.

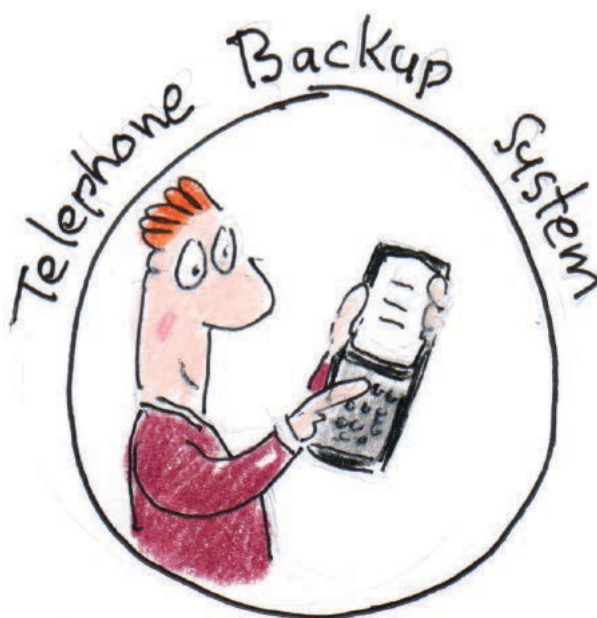
Step 2: Choose the options you wish to pursue and make the necessary purchases.

Step 3: Hold a practice session.

Time and Materials

Up to a few hours to research and purchase any needed communication equipment, if appropriate.

A nonelectric phone and your own radio communication system if you desire.



8. Unplugged

Living Without Electricity for a Period of Time

Why Act?

By far the best way to understand your energy dependency fast is just to unplug. Your perspective will shift; you'll instantly notice all the ways you count on energy to warm you, cook your food, and light your home. More important, you'll come up with creative ways to live with energy disruptions more quickly if you make a list of all the things energy does for you. To increase the benefit of this program, do one or more of these simple rehearsals. By taking it a step at a time you'll speed your adaptability.

Action

Getting Ready:

Step 1: In low-light conditions (for the sake of convenience, a weekend morning or afternoon is probably best), turn off the lights for a while. Take a tour of your home long enough to let the unplugged experience sink in.

Step 2: Write down the little things you notice, including your feelings. Make a list of all the things you'd need to comfortably extend this rehearsal period to 3 hours.

Step 3: Gather those supplies. Remember to set aside enough water for drinking, washing up, and so on.

Step 4: Schedule your three-hour rehearsal. If you want to have a friend over to rehearse with you, great! If you have kids, be sure to get their input and include them in the practice. To get young children in the mood, read them an inspiring story.

Beginning Practice—3 hours

Step 1: At the appointed time, unplug for 3 hours.

Step 2: Write down your experience. What supplies did you forget to set aside that you needed? (Don't cheat! You'll learn more by going without.) Is your clothing warm enough? If you're doing this with a friend, put your heads together and compare notes. Are you adequately entertained? Are the kids?

Intermediate Practice—6 hours

Step 1: If you wish to expand your preparation further, schedule a 6-hour rehearsal and make a list of the supplies you'll need. It might include preparing a meal with alternative cooking means, plus using a cooler if you need to keep anything refrigerated. Remember, you'll need more water, including enough to do dishes.

Step 2: You know the drill now. Pull the plug, savor the experience, take plenty of notes.

Advanced Practice—24 hours

Step 1: If you wish to get more extensive knowledge of the energy preparedness issues you might face, consider a 24-hour rehearsal. Schedule the date and assemble the necessary supplies for a day and a night of camping at home off the grid.

Step 2: Take full advantage of this time by making a list of what you'd need to do to extend the time even longer.

Note: When your electricity goes out, here are some dos and don'ts:

Call your local utility to report it.

Turn off appliances that turn on automatically when service is restored. Your electrical circuits may overload if several appliances start up at the same time.

Help your fridge keep its cool. To prevent food spoilage, keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible.

If you go outside, stay away from downed and dangling power lines. Treat all downed lines as if they are dangerous.

Do not use generators or burn charcoal indoors. Without proper ventilation they can create carbon monoxide, a dangerous, colorless, odorless gas.

Do not use your kitchen gas range, oven, or open fires to heat a room.

Time and Materials

A few hours for planning, gathering supplies. Several hours or a day to practice.

Adequate clothing, water storage containers, alternative means of cooking, easy-prep, nonperishable food, cooler (if desired), flashlights, batteries, battery-powered radio, and so on.

9. Ready-Set-Go Bag

Creating an Evacuation Kit

(Priority Action)

Why Act?

If you ever have to leave home in a hurry, it is critical to have some of your most essential needs planned for in advance. Preparing a “go bag” will give you peace of mind as you evacuate your home, and the resiliency to maintain your well-being while you are sheltering elsewhere. This action will ensure you have all your important papers and needed emergency items gathered in one place, ready to go out the door with you at a moment’s notice.

Action

Step 1: Scan your home for the items on the following list. Make a list of items that will need to be purchased. Make another list of items you will need to photocopy (e.g., birth certificates) or duplicate (e.g., keys). All household members should have their own go bag, so multiply some items on this list by the number of people in your household. A go bag consists of:

- The Bag. Choose a sturdy, easy-to-carry container (e.g., a backpack, duffel bag, or suitcase on wheels) that is large enough to hold all the items listed.
- Photocopies (not originals) of your important documents (reference cards, insurance cards, birth certificates, deeds, photo IDs, proof of address, etc.) in a waterproof and portable container.
- A local or regional map, the addresses and phone numbers of your agreed-on meeting places, and out-of-state contact person’s phone number. (See Action 56.)
- Extra set of car and house keys.
- Credit and ATM cards or traveler’s checks and cash—at least \$50-\$100, in small denominations.
- Bottled water and nonperishable food, such as energy or granola bars for at least 3 days.
- Battery-operated AM/FM radio and extra batteries, or a wind-up radio that does not require batteries.
- Medication for a minimum of 7 days and other essential personal items, and your doctor’s name and phone number. (See Action 59.) Be sure to refill medications before they expire. Include a list of the medications you take, why you take them, and their dosages.
- Travel sizes of essential personal grooming items: washcloth, towel, soap, lotion, toothpaste, toothbrush, dental floss, shampoo, deodorant, comb, brush, razor, shaving cream, mirror, feminine supplies, lip balm, sunscreen, contact lens solutions, spare contact lenses or eyeglasses.

- First aid kit. (See Action 57.)
- Flashlight.
- One complete change of clothing.
- Sturdy, comfortable shoes.
- Lightweight raingear.
- A mylar blanket.
- Childcare supplies.
- Other special care items, as needed.

Note: Ready-made go bags are available on line. If you purchase one, make sure it has all the items listed here.

Step 2: Fill out a communication plan. To assist you in organizing this information, download the FEMA “Family Communication Plan” in the “Further Information” section that follows. Make a copy for each household member’s go bag.

Step 3: When all the items have been gathered, schedule a go bag packing party with your household.

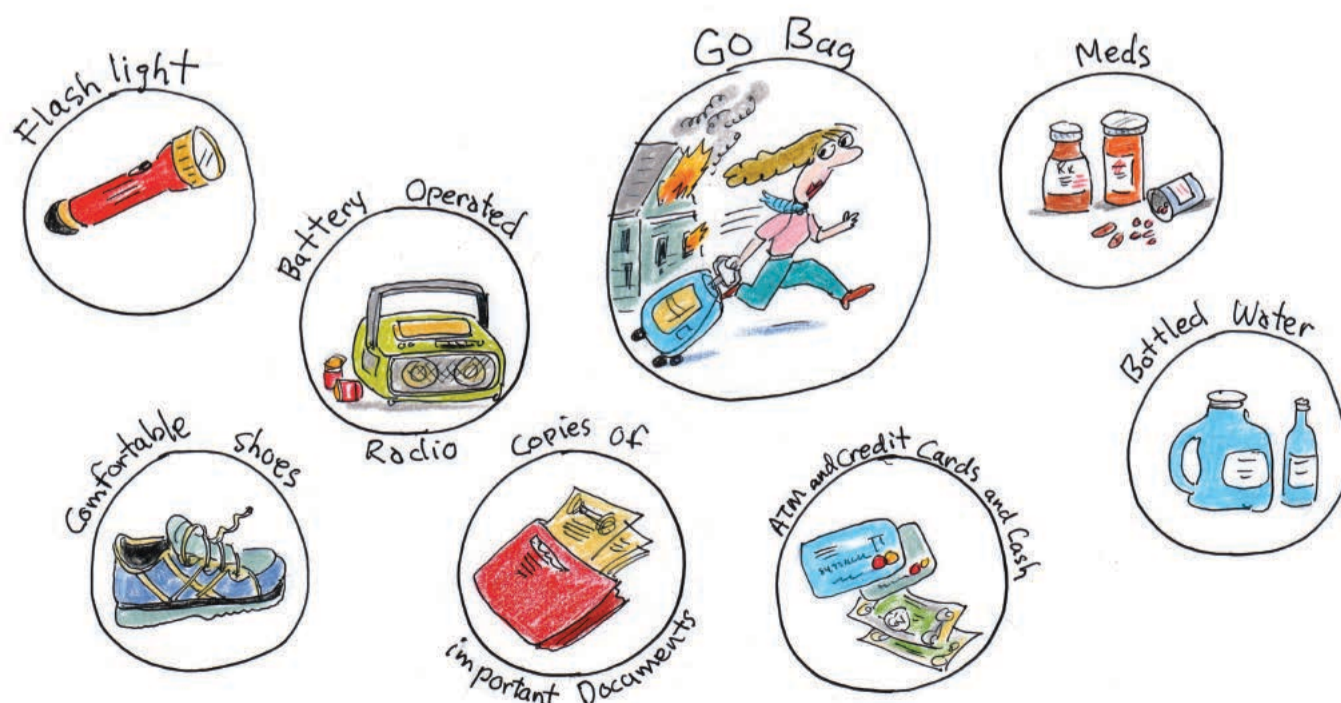
Step 4: Have household members pack their own go bags, so they are familiar with the contents and can add any other personal items they feel are essential.

Step 5: Stow your go bags. The go bags should be kept in a designated, easily accessible place and must be ready for a hasty exit. Make sure all household members know where their go bags are stored.

Time and Materials

A few hours.

All the items you need for a go bag that’s ready to go!



10. To Your Health

Preparing a First Aid Kit (Priority Action)

Why Act?

Emergencies shift the front lines of health care from hospitals and doctors' offices to a city's homes and neighborhoods. Therefore, it is essential for every family to have ready access to basic first aid supplies. While most of us have a few first aid supplies in the medicine cabinet, a more complete selection gathered in a single kit may be the only medical supplies available to you in an emergency situation.

Action

Step 1: Assemble a comprehensive first aid kit using the following list as a guideline, or purchase a kit from a pharmacy or online, which is usually more economical and certainly simpler. Include the following:

- Adhesive bandages and sterile dressing.
- Antibiotic ointment.
- Sterile cloths.
- Pain reliever.
- Alcohol pads.
- Tweezers.
- Scissors.
- Latex or other sterile gloves.
- Eyewash solution.

Step 2: If possible, keep this first aid kit separate from your daily first aid supplies. Tell your household this kit is for emergency use only.

Time and Materials

Negligible time, if you purchase a ready-made kit on a regular shopping trip; 30 to 40 minutes to handpick the items.

All of the items listed here in your first aid kit.



11. An Ounce of Prevention

Preparing for Your Medical Needs

Why Act?

If you or your family members have chronic health conditions requiring medication or in-home medical equipment, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. During an emergency, your pharmacy may be closed or supplies may be limited, so plan ahead.

Action

- Step 1: Make as a minimum a 7-day plan.
- Step 2: Make a list of the medications all members of your household take, why they take them, and their dosages, or make copies of all your prescription slips.
- Step 3: Purchase extra nonprescription drugs.
- Step 4: If possible, ask your doctor for reserve prescriptions of essential medications and fill them.
- Step 5: Pack these reserve medications and the list of medications in your go bag. (See Action 55).
- Step 6: Make a note on your calendar to replace all these medications before they expire.
- Step 7: Purchase a small cooler and store a block of blue ice in your freezer, if you rely on medications that require refrigeration, such as insulin.
- Step 8: Keep your in-home medical equipment well maintained and refer to the owner's manual for information about how to keep it in good condition.
- Step 9: Purchase and store the supplies or replacement parts the equipment may need.
- Step 10: If you rely on medical equipment that requires electric power, contact your medical supply company for information regarding a backup power source such as a battery. Follow the manufacturer's directions when installing the equipment and the battery backup. If you use a portable generator for emergency power, follow the manufacturer's directions for safe operation, and check with local fire and building officials for regulations governing generator and fuel use. Ask your utility company if the medical equipment qualifies you to be listed as a life-sustaining equipment customer.
- Step 11: If you receive dialysis or other medical treatments, find out your provider's emergency plan, including where your backup site is located.
- Step 12: If you rely on oxygen, talk to your vendor about emergency replacements.
- Step 13: Write down the style and serial number of medical devices (such as pacemakers) and usage instructions and include them in your go bag.

Time and Materials

A half-hour to several hours, depending on your needs and circumstances.

Critical medical supplies on which you depend.



12. Extra Care

Planning for Special Needs

Why Act?

Seniors and people with disabilities may need to take additional steps to prepare for emergencies. If you or someone in your household has special needs, include the following action when preparing your emergency plan.

Action

Step 1: Review your overall plan to ensure that you or your family's special needs are addressed.

Step 2: Evaluate your capabilities, limitations, and surroundings to determine the type of support you may need for each place you spend time—at home, work, school, and in the community. If you have a home-care attendant, include this person and any other support people in your network. Keep in mind elevators will not work during a power outage.

Step 3: Establish a support network of family, friends, and neighbors. (See Action 70.)

Step 4: Write down your current needs and special considerations, including:

- Phone numbers of your doctors and pharmacists.
- Medical conditions.
- Medications, why you take them, and dosages.
- Allergies.
- Physical limitations.
- Special equipment.
- Medical insurance.
- Personal contact numbers.

Step 5: Incorporate these special considerations into your emergency plan and give a copy to everyone in your support network who might need the information.

Step 6: Consider any special dietary needs when you set aside your emergency food supply.

Step 7: If you have a service animal, plan for his or her needs. (See Action 62.)

Time and Materials

A half-hour to a few hours.

Your special-needs plan.

13. On the Road

Developing a Communication and Evacuation Plan

(Priority Action)

Why Act?

Evacuation should be addressed as part of your emergency planning efforts for both your home and all places you spend time. City officials will tell you when to evacuate through the media and direct warnings. Evacuation is used as a last resort when a serious threat to public safety exists. If you must evacuate, whether for a local emergency such as a fire or a more widespread evacuation such as a hurricane, your first plan should always be to stay with friends or family. Disaster shelters may be set up in schools, municipal buildings, and places of worship.

Action

- Create your evacuation plan:
 - Step 1: Identify two places your household can reunite after an emergency—one right outside your home and another outside your neighborhood, such as a library, community center, or place of worship.
 - Step 2: Identify all possible evacuation routes from your home and neighborhood. Evacuation routes change based on the emergency, so stay tuned to the local news for the latest information.
 - Step 3: Designate an out-of-state friend or relative whom household members can call if they become separated during an emergency. If local circuits are busy, long-distance calls may be easier to make.
 - Step 4: Make a map of your evacuation routes; include the addresses and phone numbers of both of your agreed-on meeting places, and the out-of-state contact person's phone number.
 - Step 5: Make plans for your pet in case you need to evacuate. (See Action 62.)
 - Step 6: Ensure that all household members have a copy of this plan to keep in their wallet, backpacks, or go bags.

Note: To assist you in organizing this information, download the FEMA "Family Communication Plan" in the "Further Information" section that follows.
- Practice your plan: With your plan in place, choose a time when all family members are available and practice. Only with practice can you feel secure that in an emergency everyone really knows what to do.
 - Step 1: Set a date with your household to take the trip to your two meeting places.
 - Step 2: Secure your home before you leave: Close and lock windows and doors, and unplug appliances. Shut off your electricity, gas, and water at main switches or valves, if possible. Place the tools needed to do this (e.g., adjustable pipe and crescent wrenches) nearby. In cold weather, if you live in a house, drain water pipes to prevent damage.

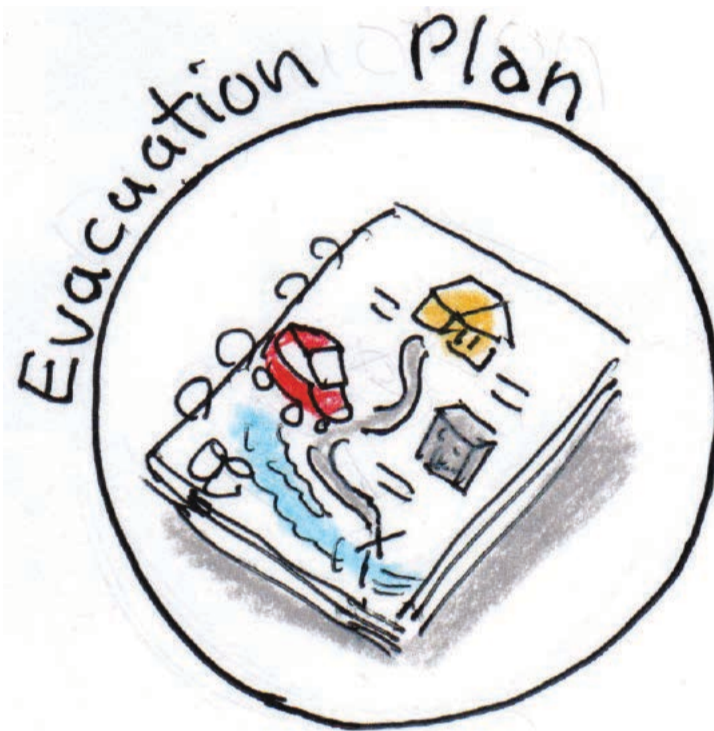
Step 3: Have each household member grab his or her go bag (see Action 55), and practice meeting at each of the designated meeting points. If you discover breakdowns during the practice, set up another time to practice again, and continue until it really works.

Note: Find out the evacuation plan for any place you spend time. If you have children, contact their schools and find out about their evacuation plans. If possible, always seek shelter with friends or family first.

Time and Materials

A few minutes to a few hours.

A plan and your go bag.



14. It's Alarming

Preparing for a Fire (Priority Action)

Why Act?

Fire is an emergency that can occur anytime, anywhere, and being prepared might make the difference between life and death. Fire can also be precipitated by a natural disaster, such as an earthquake, from gas power lines being severed. This action will prepare you for what to do in case of fire.

Action

- Prepare for a fire.
 - Step 1: If you live in an apartment building, find out if your building is fireproof or not, and learn the evacuation procedure.
 - Step 2: Take a tour of your home and make note of any of the following items you'll need to purchase.
 - Step 3: Find your fire extinguishers. Check to make sure they are fully charged, A-B-C type (which can be used to put out most fires). If not, replace them with new, fully charged extinguishers. Make sure they are located in plain sight and easily accessible.
 - Step 4: Install smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors with fresh batteries throughout your living area. Make sure they are appropriately located. Get in the habit of changing the batteries every spring and fall at the same time you change your clocks for daylight saving time.
 - Step 5: Check your home for fire hazards, such as frayed electrical wiring.
 - Step 6: Purchase any of these items that are needed.
 - Step 7: Familiarize every member of your household with the location and use of your fire extinguishers. Together, review which types of fires can be put out with your extinguishers. Fire extinguishers are intended for small fires. Stress that a small fire can very quickly get out of control. If this happens, evacuate and call 911.
 - Step 8: With the other members of your household, develop or review fire evacuation procedures. Include a map (if appropriate) of your home that shows all the rooms, doors, and windows, with arrows marking escape routes from each room. Designate a place outside your home for the household to meet.
 - Step 9: Make sure windows are not nailed or painted shut, and that security gratings on windows have a fire-safety-opening feature.
- Hold a fire drill for all members of your household and practice each of these elements:

Step 1: Teach children how to report a fire by calling 911.

Step 2: Practice escaping from each room, staying close to the floor.

Step 3: Teach family members how to escape through a closed door. Feel the door with the back of your hand before you open it. If the door is hot, find another way out.

Step 4: If you are unable to get out, stay near a window and close to the floor. Close the door and stuff the bottom with a towel to block the smoke. If possible, signal for help by waving a cloth or sheet outside the window.

Step 5: If your clothes catch on fire; *stop* where you are, *drop* to the ground, and *roll* over and over to smother the flames.

Step 6: If you are able to get out, close doors behind you. Do not stop to get anything.

Step 7: If you live in a fireproof building, and the fire is not in your apartment, stay where you are rather than entering a smoke-filled hallway.

Time and Materials

An hour to several hours to prepare your fire prevention equipment and practice your response.

Working smoke detectors, carbon monoxide detectors, and fire extinguishers.



15. Just in Case

Sheltering in Place

Why Act?

When evacuation is neither appropriate nor possible, you may be instructed to stay where you are. This could be as easy as remaining at home while officials clear hazards from a nearby area, or it could require more active measures during emergencies involving contaminated air.

Action

- Step 1: Identify the room in your home that has the fewest windows or doors. Ideally the room should allow at least 10 square feet per person. This will be your shelter-in-place space.
- Step 2: Schedule a practice session with the other members of your household.
- Step 3: Close all doors and windows in your home.
- Step 4: Turn off all ventilation systems such as furnace, air conditioner, and exhaust fans.
- Step 5: Have each household member grab his or her go bag (remember your pet's go bag, too), and go to the shelter-in place space.
- Step 6: Take turns listening for radio broadcasts.
- Step 7: Don't use your telephone unless you have an emergency.
- Step 8: Only seal doors and windows when instructed to do so by emergency officials.

Note: In an emergency, a radio announcement will be made when the emergency is over. Only then will it be safe for you to open doors and windows.

Time and Materials

30 minutes to review and practice the shelter-in-place steps with your family.

Your go bag and emergency supplies.