

90-Day Household Preparedness Checklist

A practical sequence for a household that has only a few days to begin preparing. Complete the essentials first, then build toward a 90-day reserve by rotating supplies you already use.

Scenario note: This checklist treats the 90-day government requirement as part of a hypothetical. U.S. Ready.gov guidance describes a basic emergency kit with at least three days of food and water; CDC says to store at least three days of water and try for two weeks if possible. A 90-day reserve is a larger household goal, especially for water.

Start here: household count and needs

- ☐ People in household: _____ Adults: _____ Children: _____ Infants: _____ Older adults: _____
- ☐ Pets and daily water needs: _____
- ☐ Medical devices, mobility needs, refrigerated medicines, or special diets: _____
- Likely local hazards (check): power outage / winter storm / heat / flood / wildfire / water interruption / other: _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ Primary contact outside the area: _____ Phone: _____
- ☐ Meeting place near home: _____ Away from home: _____

First 24 hours: secure the basics

- Count what is already on hand: safe water, ready-to-eat food, medicines, lights, batteries, hygiene items, fuel, pet supplies.
- ☐ Charge phones, power banks, rechargeable lights, medical devices, and vehicle jump pack if available.
- Refill routine prescriptions where permitted; ask pharmacist or clinician about emergency refill rules and temperature-sensitive medicines.
- ☐ Set aside cash in small bills; keep vehicle fuel above half a tank if possible.
- ☐ Choose one shelf or lidded bin for emergency supplies; label it and keep it accessible.
- ☐ Tell household members where supplies are and who handles water, meals, medication, pets, and updates.

Set a realistic target

- ☐ First goal: 3 days of water, food, medicines, lighting, and sanitation.
- ☐ Next goal: 14 days of essentials; then extend food and household consumables toward 90 days.
- Use ordinary household consumption and safe storage limits to set quantities. Do not buy unfamiliar food or unsafe fuel equipment in a rush.
- ☐ unsafe fuel equipment in a rush.

Household planning rule: meet urgent needs first, then add one week of supplies at a time. Keep using and replacing what you store.

Water and sanitation

Water is heavy, space-consuming, and essential. Store a manageable reserve, protect it from contamination, and plan how you would replenish and treat additional water.

Planning baseline: 1 gallon per person per day is a minimum emergency planning figure. It may not cover all cooking, hygiene, hot-weather, illness, pregnancy, or pet needs. Ninety days at this baseline equals 90 gallons per person.

Water quantity worksheet

- ☐ People: ____ x 1 gallon x 3 days = ____ gallons for the first 3 days.
- ☐ People: ____ x 1 gallon x 14 days = ____ gallons for a two-week reserve.
- ☐ People: ____ x 1 gallon x 90 days = ____ gallons for the hypothetical 90-day baseline (before extra needs).
- ☐ Pets: type/number _____ daily water estimate _____ gallons 14-day total _____ gallons.

Household size	3 days	14 days	90 days
1 people	3 gal	14 gal	90 gal
2 people	6 gal	28 gal	180 gal
3 people	9 gal	42 gal	270 gal
4 people	12 gal	56 gal	360 gal
5 people	15 gal	70 gal	450 gal
6 people	18 gal	84 gal	540 gal

Store and protect water

- ☐ Use unopened commercial bottled water or food-grade water containers with tight lids.
For home-filled containers: clean and sanitize as directed by CDC/container maker; label “drinking water” and date.
- ☐ Keep water cool, out of direct sunlight, and away from gasoline, pesticides, and cleaners.
Replace home-filled water every 6 months. Use clean hands and a clean pour method; do not dip cups into stored water.
- ☐ Store containers where their full weight is supported; 5 gallons weighs about 42 pounds. Avoid placing heavy water on weak shelves.

Plan for more water and safe sanitation

- ☐ Identify a dependable source (municipal, well, or other) and know whether local advisories could affect it.
Keep a method to disinfect water and follow current public-health instructions for the source and contaminant involved. A filter alone does not remove every hazard.
- ☐ Store unscented household bleach only as labeled; do not mix it with other cleaners or use scented/splashless bleach to treat water.
- ☐ Add heavy trash bags, toilet paper, soap, hand sanitizer, disinfecting wipes, and a backup toilet plan for a water-service outage.

Food for 3, 14, and 90 days

Build a reserve from meals your household already eats. Prioritize food that stores safely, fits household diets, and can be prepared with the fuel and water you can realistically provide.

Do this before shopping: List seven days of normal meals. Mark which ingredients are shelf-stable, how much each person eats, what requires refrigeration, and what needs cooking water or fuel. Multiply weekly use by 2 for a 14-day goal and by about 13 for a 90-day goal, then subtract what is already stored.

Create a balanced pantry

- ☐ Ready-to-eat meals for at least 3 days: canned meals, nut/seed butter, crackers, shelf-stable protein, fruit cups, bars, and familiar snacks.
- ☐ Staples used in normal meals: rice, oats, pasta, flour or tortillas, beans/lentils, cereal, shelf-stable milk, and cooking oil.
- ☐ Protein: canned fish or meat, beans, lentils, nut/seed butter, shelf-stable tofu or other household-appropriate choices.
- ☐ Fruits and vegetables: canned or shelf-stable choices your household will eat; include a manual can opener.
- ☐ Flavor and morale: salt, spices, condiments, coffee/tea, comfort foods, and foods children or older adults will accept.
- ☐ Special needs: infant formula and feeding supplies, allergy-safe food, diabetic meal needs, religious/dietary requirements, and texture-modified foods.

Food inventory worksheet

- ☐ Normal meals for one week: breakfasts _____ lunches _____ dinners _____ snacks _____
- ☐ Food that needs no cooking: _____ Meals it covers: _____
- ☐ Food requiring water/fuel: _____ Water/fuel plan: _____
- ☐ Current pantry covers: _____ days 14-day shortfall: _____ 90-day shortfall: _____
- ☐ First-in / first-out shelf location: _____ Inventory review date: _____

Shop and store safely

- ☐ Buy foods with dates and packaging you can check; avoid dented, swollen, leaking, or badly rusted cans. Store dry goods cool, dry, pest-resistant, and off the floor. Keep foods in original packaging or food-safe sealed containers.
- ☐ Write purchase dates on containers; place older items in front and plan normal meals around them. Do not rely on a freezer as the only food reserve. Keep a thermometer in refrigerator/freezer; keep doors closed during outages.
- ☐ Keep a manual can opener, basic utensils, paper plates/cups if useful, and a way to wash dishes with limited water.

Weekly food build

- ☐ Days 1-3: ready-to-eat food and familiar meals.
- ☐ Days 4-14: add the ingredients for your actual two-week meal plan.
- ☐ Weeks 3-13: add one week of ordinary foods at a time; rotate each week into normal use.

Medicine, health, hygiene, and pets

Protect individual needs before buying general-purpose gear. A household reserve should reflect actual prescriptions, medical devices, disabilities, infant care, and animal care.

Medicines and medical support

- ☐ List each prescription, dose, prescribing clinician, pharmacy, refill date, and storage requirement. Keep the list with important documents.
- ☐ Ask the pharmacy/clinician how to request early refills, what to do if a medicine gets too warm/cold, and which medicines must not be interrupted.
- ☐ Keep medications in labeled original containers when possible; use a medication list for each person. Do not stockpile or alter doses without clinical direction.
- ☐ Plan backup power for CPAP, oxygen, mobility devices, refrigerated medicine, and other electricity-dependent equipment; ask the provider about safe options.
- ☐ Pack an appropriate first-aid kit, thermometer, gloves, wound-care supplies, basic pain/fever medicines, and copies of relevant instructions.
- ☐ Add spare eyeglasses, contact lens supplies, hearing-aid batteries, mobility aids, chargers, and assistive-device parts.

Hygiene and personal care

- ☐ Soap, toothbrushes, toothpaste, shampoo, deodorant, hand sanitizer, toilet paper, tissues, and moist towelettes.
- ☐ Menstrual supplies, incontinence products, diapers, wipes, formula, feeding bottles, and infant medicines as applicable.
- ☐ Cleaning and laundry supplies; heavy trash bags, ties, disposable gloves, and a lidded bin for waste.
- ☐ A modest supply of masks suited to household needs, plus any prescribed respiratory or allergy supplies.

Pets and service animals

- ☐ Food and treats for 14 days to start; extend by adding one week at a time and rotating before expiration.
- ☐ Water estimate and containers; bowls; leash/harness; carrier/crate; waste bags/litter; familiar bedding.
- ☐ Medication, vaccination records, microchip/contact details, vet contact, and a recent photo of each animal.
- ☐ Identify pet-friendly places to stay if evacuation is needed; keep animals with their supplies where possible.

Household health record card

- ☐ Emergency contact: _____ Clinician/pharmacy: _____
- ☐ Allergies / key conditions / communication needs: _____
- ☐ Medical device and backup-power plan: _____
- ☐ Pet veterinarian / medication / evacuation plan: _____

Power, lighting, cooking, and temperature

Plan around the services you can safely operate. A generator or stove is not useful if it is unfamiliar, lacks fuel, or creates a carbon-monoxide or fire risk.

Lighting, communications, and charging

- ☐ One flashlight or headlamp per person, plus spare batteries; test every light now.
- ☐ Battery-powered or hand-crank radio; learn how to receive local emergency alerts and weather warnings. Charged power banks and cables; mark which device each cable fits. Recharge power banks on a routine schedule.
- ☐ Written contact list, local maps, and meeting locations in case phones or internet fail. If cell service is available, agree on brief text messages and an out-of-area contact to relay household status.

Power and generator safety

- ☐ List what must run: medical equipment, refrigerator/freezer, communications, well pump, or other priority loads.
- ☐ Find the generator manual; identify its safe capacity, approved cords, fuel type, and start/stop procedure. Operate generators outdoors at least 20 feet from windows, doors, and other openings; never run one in a home, garage, basement, or enclosed porch.
- ☐ Install and test smoke and carbon-monoxide alarms with battery backup; keep alarms near sleeping areas and on each level.
- ☐ Use outdoor-rated extension cords sized for the load. Never backfeed a home outlet; have a transfer switch installed by a qualified electrician.
- ☐ Store fuel only in approved containers, away from living areas and ignition sources, following local fire rules and equipment instructions.

Cooking, heat, and cold

- ☐ Choose a cooking method rated for the location; use camp stoves, grills, and charcoal only outdoors, away from openings.
- ☐ Never use a gas oven, stovetop, grill, or dryer to heat the home. Keep cooking fuel and flames away from children and combustibles.
- ☐ Store meals requiring little or no fuel; keep a manual can opener and safe drinking/cooking water accessible.
- ☐ Cold-weather plan: warm layers, hats, blankets, sleeping bags, safe fireplace/wood-stove use, and a place to go if the home becomes unsafe.
- ☐ Hot-weather plan: identify cooling locations, shade, ventilation, hydration, and how to check on people vulnerable to heat.

Food safety during a power outage

- ☐ Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed; use appliance thermometers. FEMA guidance: a closed refrigerator keeps food cold for about 4 hours; a full freezer about 48 hours (about 24 hours if half full).
- ☐ Discard perishable food when it has been above 40 F for more than 4 hours, or if safety is uncertain. Do not taste food to test it.

Cash, documents, evacuation, and household plan

A home reserve supports sheltering in place only when conditions are safe. Include a plan to leave, receive alerts, and share responsibilities across the household.

Documents and finances

- ☐ Make paper and secure digital copies of IDs, insurance, prescriptions, medical contacts, deeds/leases, vehicle records, and emergency contacts.
- ☐ Protect copies from water; keep one set in a go-bag and one set with a trusted out-of-area contact or secure account.
- ☐ Keep cash in small bills, bank and insurance phone numbers, and a list of recurring bills or account access instructions.
- ☐ Photograph home contents and major equipment for insurance records; store copies somewhere other than the home.

Go-bag and vehicle kit

- ☐ Each person: water bottle, several days of food, change of clothes, sturdy shoes, medications, hygiene items, flashlight, charger, and copies of key contacts.
- ☐ Household: first aid, radio, maps, paper list of meeting places, basic tools, infant and pet supplies, and weather-appropriate layers.
- ☐ Vehicle: phone charger, flashlight, blanket, water, snacks, first aid, basic tools, reflective warning device, and current local maps.
- ☐ Keep bags light enough for each person to carry. Recheck seasonal clothing, medication dates, and child sizes.

Write down the household plan

- ☐ Local alert source: _____ County/city emergency page or radio: _____
- ☐ Primary shelter room/location: _____ Safe exit routes: _____
- ☐ Out-of-area contact: _____ Phone/text: _____
- ☐ Meeting place nearby: _____ Meeting place outside the area: _____
- ☐ If separated, children know: who to call, where to go, and which adults may pick them up.

Assign roles and practice

- ☐ Water lead: _____ Food lead: _____ Medicine/medical devices lead: _____
- ☐ Pets: _____ Alerts/contact: _____ Vehicle/go-bag: _____
- ☐ Show every capable household member how to locate water, shut off utilities if safe, use lights/radio, and contact help.
- ☐ Run a 20-minute practice: phone outage, power outage, or evacuation. Write down what was missing and fix it.

Build the 90-day reserve and review it

Use a steady purchasing and rotation routine. This page converts the first six checklists into a simple build schedule and a recurring inspection.

90-day rule: Extend ordinary food and consumables by calculating actual weekly household use x 13 weeks. Subtract what is already on hand. Water, medicine, fuel, and refrigerated foods need separate safety plans; do not assume a 90-day pantry solves those needs.

Few-days action plan

- ☐ Day 1: inventory household needs; secure available water; charge devices; check medicines; identify alerts and emergency contacts.
- ☐ Day 2: add ready-to-eat food, manual can opener, hygiene/sanitation supplies, lights, batteries, radio, and pet essentials.
- ☐ Day 3: fill water-storage gaps; confirm cooking and safe-power plans; assemble go-bags; check vehicle and documents.
- ☐ Before the week ends: agree on roles; practice one outage or evacuation scenario; note gaps and set the next purchase list.

13-week reserve tracker

- ☐ Current reserve covers: ____ days of food / ____ days of water / ____ days of medicine / ____ days of pet supplies.
- ☐ Week 1-2: reach a 14-day reserve for food, water, medicine, sanitation, lighting, and pet needs.
- ☐ Weeks 3-6: add 4 weekly meal plans and household consumables; rotate older items into regular use.
- ☐ Weeks 7-10: add 4 more weekly plans; confirm storage space, pests, fuel safety, and backup power needs.
- ☐ Weeks 11-13: complete the food and consumables target; review household-specific shortfalls and evacuation readiness.
- ☐ Water source/treatment plan reviewed on: _____ Generator/device plan tested on: _____

Monthly and seasonal review

- ☐ Check dates and package condition; use the oldest shelf-stable food first and replace what you use. Inspect water containers for leaks, dates, cleanliness, and safe placement. Replace home-filled water every 6 months.
- ☐ Test smoke/CO alarms, flashlights, radio, chargers, and generator according to manufacturer directions.
- ☐ Confirm prescriptions, infant needs, pet food, batteries, clothing sizes, and cash remain adequate. Update contact numbers, local alert sources, routes, and meeting places after any household move or change.

Sources and last check

- ☐ CDC, How to Create and Store an Emergency Water Supply: [cdc.gov/water-emergency/about/how-to-create-and-store-an-emergency-water-supply.html](https://www.cdc.gov/water-emergency/about/how-to-create-and-store-an-emergency-water-supply.html)
- ☐ Ready.gov, Emergency Supply Kit: [ready.gov/kit](https://www.ready.gov/kit)
- ☐ FEMA/Ready.gov, Power Outages safety guidance: [ready.gov/power-outages](https://www.ready.gov/power-outages)

This checklist is a planning aid. Follow current local emergency alerts and public-health advisories, and use product labels and qualified medical or electrical advice for household-specific safety.