

The Preparedness Blueprint

A plan, written down. Not a personality.

Preparedness is paperwork you do once and then maintain: what you have, where it is, who does what, and what happens when the power is off and the shops are shut. This is that paperwork, in order, with the arguing already done.

prepperblueprint.com · This is an organising and planning resource. It is not medical, legal or professional emergency-management advice and is not a substitute for any of them. In an emergency, contact the emergency services and follow the instructions of your local authorities.

Contents

Part 1 The household audit — what you have and where it is

Part 2 Water — supply, storage, rotation

Part 3 Food — what keeps, and a rotation that survives real life

Part 4 Power, heat and light — the shutdown order

Part 5 Stay or go — deciding in daylight

Part 6 The document folder

Part 7 The household communications plan

Part 8 The maintenance calendar

Sheets Nine printable pages — fill these in by hand

How to use this guide

Read it once, then work it once

The parts are short on purpose. Read the whole thing in an evening to see the shape of it, then come back and do the sheets. Trying to do each sheet as you first read it turns an evening into a fortnight and most people stop.

The sheets are the product

Nine printable pages at the back. The prose explains why; the sheets are what you keep. Print them, fill them in by hand in pencil, and put them in the document folder from Part 6.

Do Parts 1 and 8 even if you do nothing else

The audit tells you where you actually stand. The maintenance calendar is what stops it decaying. Everything between those two is refinement.

What is deliberately not here

No medical guidance, no dosages, no water treatment instructions, no weapons, and no predictions about what is going to happen or when. Each of those is either somebody else's qualified job or nobody's.

The household audit

You almost certainly own more than you think and can find less of it than you think. Before buying anything, write down what is already here.

Why the audit comes first

Every preparedness list on the internet is a shopping list, because a shopping list is easy to write and flattering to read. The problem is that it assumes you are starting from zero, and you are not. Most households already hold several days of food, some water, at least one torch and a mess of batteries of unknown age. The gap is not supply. The gap is that nobody knows what there is or where it lives.

How to do it

Go room by room with Worksheet 1 and write down what you find in four columns: what it is, where it is, how much, and the date it stops being useful. Do not tidy as you go — that turns a one-hour job into a weekend and you will stop halfway. Record first, reorganise later.

The four questions each item has to answer

Can I find it in the dark? Does it work right now? Does everyone in the house know it exists? Will I remember to check it again? Anything that fails the last question is not preparedness, it is clutter with good intentions.

The audit is also the only honest way to decide what to buy. A list written from your own gaps is short and specific. A list written from somebody else's article is long, generic, and mostly duplicates what is already in the cupboard.

Where this goes wrong

The audit gets started, the cupboard gets tidied instead, and three hours later there is a clean cupboard and no list. Record first. The other failure is auditing only the obvious places — the kitchen gets done, the loft and the car never do, and those are where the torches and the spare water usually turn out to be.

A worked example

A two-adult household did this in fifty minutes and found: eleven days of tinned food nobody had counted, four torches of which one worked, a first aid kit four years out of date, and no water at all beyond what was in the pipes. Their shopping list afterwards was water, batteries and a restock of the kit. Three items, because they counted first.

Keep the audit on paper. A document on a phone with a flat battery is a thought experiment.

DO THIS BEFORE THE NEXT PART

- Complete Worksheet 1 for every room. One hour, no tidying.
- Mark anything you could not find within two minutes.

- Write one date in your calendar, three months out, to repeat it.

Water

Water is first because it is the one thing with no substitute and the shortest clock. It is also the easiest to get wrong by overthinking.

Know where yours comes from

Mains, a tank, a well, a shared supply. Write down which, and what happens to it when the power goes off — a surprising number of supplies depend on an electric pump somewhere, and the people on them often do not know it. One phone call to your supplier answers this.

Storage, plainly

Store water in containers meant for water, keep them out of sunlight, off bare concrete, and somewhere you can actually lift them from. A container you cannot carry when full is a container you will not use. Label every one with the date you filled it.

Rotation is the whole job

Stored water that is never rotated becomes a problem rather than a supply. Pick a fixed interval, put it on the maintenance calendar in Part 8, and empty-and-refill on that date whether or not it looks fine. The looking-fine test is not a test.

What this guide will not tell you

It will not tell you what is safe to drink, how to treat water, or what any purification product does. That is a clinical and technical question with real consequences, your water authority publishes guidance for your specific area, and their information about your area is better than any book's.

Where this goes wrong

Containers stored somewhere they cannot be carried from, and rotation that never happens because no date was ever written down. Both are logistics failures rather than knowledge failures, which is why the sheet matters more than the reading.

A worked example

A household on a private supply discovered their pump was electric when they wrote down the answer to one question in Part 2. That single line changed their whole plan: their water problem was actually a power problem, and they had been storing for the wrong failure.

Plan for the household you have, including anyone who needs more — infants, anyone unwell, and pets, who are forgotten in almost every plan ever written.

DO THIS BEFORE THE NEXT PART

- Write down your supply type and whether it needs power.
- Fill in Worksheet 2 with what you store and where.
- Set your rotation interval and put the first date in the calendar.

Food

The goal is not a wall of tins. It is a few extra days of food you actually eat, rotating through the kitchen without anybody noticing.

Store what you eat

The failure mode of food storage is a shelf of things nobody likes, bought once, found years later, thrown away. If your household does not eat it in a normal week, it will not get eaten in a bad one either, and a bad week is the worst possible time to introduce unfamiliar food to a tired family.

Depth, not variety

Pick the ten or so things you genuinely cook with that keep well, and buy one extra of each on a normal shop. That is it. Depth in a few staples beats one of everything, costs nothing extra in a single week, and builds a buffer you will actually turn over.

The rotation that works

New stock goes to the back. Cooking comes off the front. That is the entire system and it fails only when the shelf is too full to reach the back, which is a storage problem rather than a discipline problem.

Cooking when the power is off

Write down, now, how you would heat food with no electricity, and whether that method is safe to use indoors. If it is not — and several common ones are not — the plan is 'outside', and knowing that in advance is the point of writing it down.

Where this goes wrong

Buying a month of food in one afternoon. It arrives together, it expires together, and it gets thrown away together eighteen months later. Depth built one extra item at a time over a normal month costs the same and rotates itself.

A worked example

Ten staples, one extra of each added across four normal shops. No special trip, no bulk order, and at the end of the month the household had a buffer of food they eat every week — which means it turns over without anyone managing it.

Note every dietary requirement and allergy in the house on the sheet. A plan that ignores one is worse than no plan, because it will be trusted.

DO THIS BEFORE THE NEXT PART

- List your ten staples on Worksheet 3 with quantities.
- Add one extra of each to your next normal shop.
- Write down your no-power cooking method and where it can be used.

Power, heat and light

You will not replace the grid. What you can do is know the order things fail in, and have light within reach before you need it.

The shutdown order

List what runs on electricity, then number it by what you lose first and what matters most. Freezer, heating, hot water, router, phones, medical equipment. The list is specific to your house and takes ten minutes to write, which is nine minutes and fifty seconds more than it gets.

Light first

Light is the cheapest thing on this list and the one that changes a bad evening most. One torch per person, kept where that person sleeps, tested on the maintenance calendar. Head torches beat hand torches because they leave both hands free, which matters more than it sounds.

Heat, honestly

Keeping one room warm is achievable. Heating the house is not. Decide now which room it would be — small, south-facing if you have one, away from the worst draughts — and what you would close off to do it.

Anything that burns

If a heat source burns fuel, it needs ventilation and it needs the manufacturer's instructions followed exactly. This guide gives no guidance on operating them, because that is a safety matter specific to the appliance and getting it wrong is dangerous. Read the manual that came with it, and if you do not have it, find it before you need it.

Where this goes wrong

Torches stored centrally in a drawer, which is the one place nobody can reach in the dark from bed. Distribute them to where people sleep. The other common one is a charge bank bought, never charged, and discovered flat at the moment it was needed.

A worked example

Writing the shutdown order took one household ten minutes and surfaced that their freezer and their home working setup were on the same circuit. They had never noticed. Knowing it changed what they would unplug first and in what order.

Charge banks are useful and are not a power supply. Know what yours actually runs and for how long, by testing it once on a normal day.

DO THIS BEFORE THE NEXT PART

- Write your shutdown order on Worksheet 4.
- Put one torch where each person sleeps. Test them all tonight.

- Name the one room you would heat, and what you would close off.

Stay or go

The worst time to make this decision is at 2am in the dark with everyone frightened. So make it now, in daylight, and write down the answer.

Decide the trigger, not the event

You cannot list every scenario and you will waste an evening trying. Instead write the conditions under which you would leave: an official instruction, the house becoming unsafe, a medical need you cannot meet where you are. Triggers are short, general, and actually usable.

Staying is usually right

Home has your supplies, your documents and your beds. The default is staying, and the plan exists so that leaving is a decision rather than a panic. Say that out loud to the household so nobody is improvising.

If you go

Where, by which route, and what goes in the car. Worksheet 5 is the packing list and it should fit on one page. A list that does not fit on one page will not be followed by somebody in a hurry.

The twenty-minute version

Assume you have twenty minutes and one carload. Write that list. Then assume five minutes and what you can carry, and write that one too. Both are shorter than people expect, and writing them is the only way to find out what you would actually regret leaving.

Where this goes wrong

Writing scenarios instead of triggers. A list of twenty disasters is an evening wasted and still misses the one that happens. Three or four conditions covers all of them.

A worked example

The five-minute list, written honestly, came to: document folder, medication, phone and charger, keys, one bag of clothes. It fit in one trip. The twenty-minute list added the water, the food box and the photographs. Writing both is what revealed the first list was already almost everything that mattered.

Tell somebody outside the household where you would go. If local phones are down, a person two counties away is the easiest place for separated people to converge information.

DO THIS BEFORE THE NEXT PART

- Write your leave-triggers — three or four lines, no scenarios.
- Complete Worksheet 5: the twenty-minute list and the five-minute list.
- Name your out-of-area contact and tell them.

The document folder

This is the highest-value hour in the whole guide and the least exciting. It turns an insurance claim or a border crossing from a nightmare into an afternoon.

What goes in

Copies of identity documents, insurance policies with policy numbers, property and tenancy paperwork, medical information including a written list of prescriptions, vehicle documents, and contact details for everyone who matters written on paper.

Two copies, two places

One physical folder you can pick up and carry. One encrypted copy somewhere not in the house. Both get updated on the same day each year, which goes on the maintenance calendar like everything else.

The prescriptions page

A written list of what each household member takes, in what strength, and the prescribing practice's details. This guide holds no medical guidance of any kind — the list exists so a qualified person can read it quickly, which is the entire point of it.

Photograph the house

Room by room, including inside cupboards, once a year. It takes fifteen minutes and it is the difference between an insurance claim you can evidence and one you argue about from memory.

Where this goes wrong

The folder gets built and then never updated, so by year three the insurance policy in it has lapsed and two of the phone numbers are dead. An out-of-date folder is more dangerous than none, because it is trusted at the moment there is no time to check it.

A worked example

Photographing every room including inside cupboards took one household fifteen minutes. When they later made an unrelated contents claim, the photographs settled in one email a question that would otherwise have been an argument from memory.

Keep the folder where you would grab it on the way out, not filed neatly in the room furthest from the door.

DO THIS BEFORE THE NEXT PART

- Build the physical folder this week using Worksheet 6 as the index.
- Make the off-site copy and check you can actually open it.
- Photograph every room, including inside cupboards.

The household communications plan

Phones fail locally and work regionally. Almost every plan assumes the opposite, which is why so many of them fall apart in the first hour.

The out-of-area contact

Pick one person well outside your area. Everyone in the household knows the number by heart or carries it written down. When local networks are congested, everyone reports in to that one person, who becomes the switchboard. This single arrangement solves most of the problem.

Meeting points

Two: one just outside the house for something immediate, one outside the neighbourhood for something larger. Both named specifically — a building, not 'the end of the road'.

Who collects whom

If there are children, elderly relatives or anyone who needs collecting, write down exactly who goes where, and the backup if that person cannot. Ambiguity here is how two people drive to the same school and nobody goes to the other one.

Written, not stored

Numbers live in phones and phones die. Everyone carries the key numbers on paper in a wallet or a bag. Children too, if they are old enough to be away from you.

Where this goes wrong

Everyone assumes somebody else is collecting the child. Two cars go to the same place and nobody goes to the other. This is the single most common failure in household plans and it is solved by one line of writing.

A worked example

An out-of-area contact agreed in advance meant that when a local network was congested for an afternoon, three family members who could not reach each other could all reach her. She held the information and passed it on. Nothing else in the plan was needed that day.

Say the plan out loud to the whole household once. A plan nobody has heard is a document, not a plan.

DO THIS BEFORE THE NEXT PART

- Fill in Worksheet 7 and give everyone a paper copy.
- Confirm the out-of-area contact has agreed to the role.
- Walk to both meeting points so everyone has seen them.

The maintenance calendar

Everything above decays. This part is why the guide exists at all, and it is twenty minutes a quarter forever.

The quarterly twenty minutes

Water rotated. Torches and batteries tested. Food dates checked front to back. Any medication in the kit checked for date only — never for suitability, which is a question for a pharmacist. Put it in the calendar as a repeating appointment, not a good intention.

The annual hour

Documents refreshed, house photographed, the whole plan read aloud to the household, and contact details corrected. People move and numbers change; a plan more than a year old is partly fiction.

First aid

Own a kit, keep it stocked, and book a real first aid course with a qualified instructor. This guide contains no clinical guidance and should not — a trained human teaching you in person is not replaceable by a page in a PDF, and anyone who tells you otherwise is selling something.

When it slips

It will. The recovery is to do the next scheduled check rather than the ones you missed. Preparedness abandoned because you fell behind is the most common failure in this whole subject, and it is entirely avoidable by simply resuming.

Where this goes wrong

The quarterly check is set as an intention rather than a calendar entry, it slips once, and then it is abandoned entirely because catching up feels like too much. The recovery is always to do the next one, never the missed ones.

A worked example

Twenty minutes, four times a year, kept one household's torches working, their water rotated and their food in date for three years running. The total annual time was under an hour and a half. That is the entire ongoing cost of being prepared.

The maintenance is the product. The initial afternoon is just setup.

DO THIS BEFORE THE NEXT PART

- Put the quarterly check in your calendar as a repeating event.
- Put the annual review in, on a date you will not be away.
- Book a first aid course with a qualified instructor.

The nine sheets

Print these. Fill them in by hand, in pencil, and keep them in the document folder from Part 6. They are designed to be written on — a plan you have handwritten is a plan you remember, and paper works when nothing else in the house does.

WORKSHEET 1

The household audit

One line per item. Do not tidy while you do this.

[illegible]

WORKSHEET 2

Water

What you store, where, and when it was last rotated.

[illegible]

WORKSHEET 3

Food staples

The ten or so things you actually cook with that keep.

[illegible]

WORKSHEET 4

Shutdown order

What runs on power, in the order you lose or shut it down.

[illegible]

WORKSHEET 5

Stay or go

Top half: twenty minutes and a carload. Bottom half: five minutes and what you can carry.

[illegible]

Document folder index

Tick when the copy is in the folder and when the off-site copy is made.

[illegible]

Communications plan

Everyone gets a paper copy of this page.

[illegible]

Meeting points and contacts

Specific buildings, not street names.

[illegible]

Maintenance calendar

Quarterly on top, annual at the bottom. Dates, not intentions.

[illegible]

Medication and prescriptions

For a qualified person to read quickly. Names and strengths only — this guide gives no medical guidance and neither should this sheet.

[illegible]

Insurance and policy numbers

Policy numbers and the phone number you would actually ring.

[illegible]

Quarterly check log

Tick it each quarter. Four lines a year is the whole commitment.

[illegible]

Neighbours and local contacts

Households are not self-sufficient and this guide says so in Part 1. This is the sheet that follows from admitting it.

[illegible]

A short glossary

Plain definitions for the handful of terms this guide uses in a specific way.

The audit — The written record of what you already own and where it is. Part 1. Everything else depends on it.

Rotation — Using and replacing stored supplies on a fixed schedule so nothing sits long enough to go bad. The opposite of stockpiling.

Shutdown order — Your own list of what runs on electricity, ranked by what you lose first and what matters most.

Trigger — A condition that would make you leave, written in advance. Not a scenario — a condition.

Out-of-area contact — One person well outside your region who everyone reports in to when local networks are congested.

The document folder — One physical folder of copies you could pick up on the way out, plus one encrypted copy held elsewhere.

Meeting point — A specific named building, not a street or an area. Two of them: one near, one outside the neighbourhood.

The maintenance calendar — Twenty minutes a quarter and one hour a year, in the calendar as repeating appointments. This is the part that makes the rest real.

The first week

If the whole guide feels like a lot, this is the order. Nothing here needs a purchase and the whole week comes to about three hours.

Day one — the audit

One hour, room by room, Worksheet 1. Do not tidy. You are finding out where you actually stand, and most people are further along than they expected and worse organised than they feared.

Day two — light

Test every torch in the house. Put one where each person sleeps. This is the cheapest change in the guide and the one that most changes a bad evening.

Day three — water and food

Write down where your water comes from and whether it needs power. List your ten staples. Add one extra of each to the next normal shop — not a special trip.

Day four — the document folder

The highest-value hour in the guide. Copies, one folder, one off-site copy. Photograph every room while you are at it.

Day five — the plan

Stay-or-go triggers, meeting points, who collects whom, and the out-of-area contact. Then say it out loud to everyone in the house, because a plan nobody has heard is a document.

Day six — the calendar

Put the quarterly check and the annual review in as repeating appointments. Book a first aid course with a qualified instructor. You are done.

Last page

You now have a written plan. That is the whole deliverable and it is worth more than any amount of equipment bought in a hurry.

The single thing that determines whether this was worth your afternoon is whether the quarterly check is in your calendar as a repeating appointment. If it is not, stop reading and put it in now — it takes thirty seconds and it is the difference between a plan and a document.

Nothing in this guide is medical, legal or professional emergency-management advice. For first aid, take a course with a qualified instructor. For anything clinical, ask a doctor or a pharmacist. In an emergency, contact the emergency services and follow the instructions of your local authorities — their information about your area is better than any book's.