



Mainstay

Field Guide No. 01

The 72-Hour Prep Checklist

The exact supplies a household needs to be self-sufficient for three days — organized by category, nothing padded.



PACKED, LABELED, READY BY THE DOOR

MAINSTAY

MAINSTAY · STAY PREPARED, STAY ORGANIZED

[MAINSTAYKIT.COM](https://www.mainstaykit.com)

Why seventy-two hours

After a storm, an outage, or a local emergency, help and basic services usually return within three days — but those first 72 hours are on you. This checklist covers what it takes for your household to stay fed, safe, informed, and reasonably comfortable until things stabilize. It isn't a bunker. It's a baseline.

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| 01
Walk your home
Check off what you already have. Most households are further along than they think. | 02
Fill the gaps
Buy the unchecked items over a few normal shopping trips. No panic, no bulk run. | 03
Store it together
Keep it in one known place, with a grab-and-go portion by the door. |
|---|---|--|

01 Water *the first thing you run out of*

- Drinking & cooking water** 1 GAL / PERSON / DAY
Commercial bottled water is simplest. Store away from heat and light.

- Three-day supply, per person** 3 GAL / PERSON
A family of four needs roughly 12 gallons on hand.

- Water for pets** PER ANIMAL
Roughly one ounce per pound of body weight, per day.

- Backup: filter or purification tablets** 1 BACKUP
A way to make questionable water drinkable if the stored supply runs low.

02 Food *ready to eat, no cooking required*

- Canned meals, soups, vegetables, fruit** 3 DAYS
Foods that need no preparation, no refrigeration, little or no water.

- Protein — canned tuna or chicken, peanut butter, nuts** 3 DAYS

- Energy bars, granola, dried fruit, crackers** 3 DAYS

- A manual can opener** ESSENTIAL
The single most-forgotten item. A pantry of cans is useless without it.

- Infant formula & baby food** IF NEEDED
If your household includes an infant.

- Pet food** 3 DAYS

- One comfort food** 1 TREAT
Morale is a supply. Pack something everyone actually likes.

03 Light & Power

for when the grid is down

- Flashlight, ideally one per person** + SPARE BATTERIES

- Headlamp** 1+
Hands-free light is worth more than you'd expect.

- Battery or hand-crank lantern** 1+
Area light for a room.

- Charged power bank for phones** + CABLES
Keep it topped up. Pack the cables with it.

- Spare batteries in every size you use** STOCKED

- Glow sticks** OPTIONAL
Flameless, child-safe light.

04 First Aid & Medications

treat it before it's urgent

- Stocked first-aid kit** 1 KIT
Bandages, gauze, tape, antiseptic wipes, antibiotic ointment, tweezers, scissors, gloves, an instant cold pack.

- Over-the-counter basics** STOCKED
Pain reliever, anti-diarrheal, antihistamine.

- Prescription medications** 7-DAY SUPPLY
A week's supply, rotated so it never expires.

- Copies of prescriptions** WITH DOCUMENTS

- Spare eyeglasses or contacts & solution** IF NEEDED

- A basic first-aid manual** 1
Knowing what to do is part of the kit.

05 Tools & Safety

stay informed, stay handy

- Battery or hand-crank emergency radio** ESSENTIAL
A NOAA weather radio keeps you informed when the power and cell network are down.
- Multi-tool or a basic tool set** 1
- Work gloves & N95 dust masks** PER PERSON
- Whistle** PER PERSON
To signal for help without shouting yourself hoarse.
- Duct tape & plastic sheeting** 1 ROLL +
- Printed local maps** 1 SET
Navigation that doesn't need a charged phone or a signal.
- Know where your fire extinguisher is** LOCATED

06 Sanitation & Hygiene

keeps a bad situation healthy

- Hand sanitizer & soap** STOCKED
- Moist towelettes / wet wipes** 2+ PACKS
- Toilet paper** 3-DAY SUPPLY
- Heavy-duty garbage bags & ties** 1 BOX
For waste, and for an emergency toilet if plumbing fails.
- Feminine & personal hygiene supplies** AS NEEDED
- A bucket with a tight lid** 1
Doubles as storage and, lined with a bag, an emergency toilet.

07 Important Documents

copies, sealed and dry

- IDs, passports, birth certificates** COPIES
Copies — keep originals secured separately.
- Insurance policies, deeds or lease** COPIES
- Bank & financial account information** COPIES
- Medical records & a prescription list** COPIES
- A printed emergency contact list** 1
Phone numbers you'd lose if your phone died.
- Cash in small bills** SMALL BILLS
Card readers and ATMs go down with the power.

- | | |
|---|------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sturdy shoes & a change of clothes, per person | PER PERSON |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Blankets or sleeping bags; emergency mylar blankets | PER PERSON |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rain gear & warm layers
Matched to your climate and the season. | PER PERSON |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Infant supplies — diapers, wipes, formula | IF NEEDED |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Supplies for elderly or disabled household members
Mobility aids, hearing-aid batteries, specific medical needs. | AS NEEDED |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pet carrier, leash, food & medications | PER ANIMAL |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Something to do — cards, a book, a small game
Especially for children. Calm is easier to keep when there's a distraction. | MORALE |

Make it yours

Scale to your household

Every “per person” figure multiplies by the people under your roof. Count pets in too.

Keep it in one place

A single known shelf or closet — with a smaller grab-and-go portion staged by the door.

Check it twice a year

Rotate food, water, and batteries. Refresh medications and document copies.



Stop tracking it on paper.

Mainstay keeps this whole list current — counts, expiration dates, and what to restock — and tells you before anything lapses.

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