

# **2 GENERAL PREPAREDNESS & RISK ASSESSMENT**

## **ADAPTING TO A CHANGING CLIMATE**

Preparedness means understanding how changes manifest locally where you live and adapting daily life accordingly, whether through heat-proofing homes, installing solar panels, water conservation, or backup energy systems.

All households are encouraged to take responsibility for their own safety and wellbeing, rather than relying solely on public emergency services. Adaptation also involves behavioral shifts: being less wasteful, planning ahead, and strengthening social ties to create resilient support networks.

The sooner you adapt, the more options you have. During a crisis, choices narrow quickly and hesitation can lead to poorer outcomes.

## **ASSESSING LOCAL RISKS & WEAKNESSES**

Each location has different vulnerabilities: coastal and river towns face flooding, mountain villages risk landslides, and urban centers depend heavily on centralized systems. Fire is now a risk both in urban and rural areas. Extreme heat, tornadoes, and hurricanes are also concerns.

Start by mapping your environment: What hazards are common? How resilient is the power grid, water supply, and food delivery system where you live? Reach out to your municipal government and find out what their emergency preparedness looks like. Do they have resources for the community?

Consider your personal vulnerabilities too: Do you rely on medication? Live alone? Have children or elderly dependents?

Imagine being cut off from power, water, and/or the internet for 72 hours. What would you need? Where could you go? Could you shelter in place? How would you contact friends and family? Do you know your neighbours?

Local risk awareness empowers you to make better decisions in the moment and prevent panic.

## EMERGENCY KITS & CLIMATE-RESILIENT GEAR

Every household needs 3 things:

- 🕒 A simple **Emergency Plan** that everyone knows by heart
- 🎒 A portable **Go Bag** in the event that you must leave your home
- 🏠 A **Stay Shelf** which assumes you need to shelter in place but that many of the regular systems you rely on (electricity, water, food and communications) have been compromised

It's recommended that every household stores enough essentials to stay self-reliant for at least 72 hours (ideally longer). Customize your kit for climate-related risks in your area. Once a year review your plan (update if any circumstances have changed), check expiry dates and review the contents of your Go Bag and Stay Shelf. Check and replace batteries (consider using rechargeable batteries and swapping them regularly). Remember, resilience is a habit, not a one-time task.

## EMERGENCY PLAN

It will take you about 20 minutes to make a household emergency plan. Then make sure everyone understands the plan. In a crisis, you may need to leave your home quickly. Planning in advance saves time and reduces panic.

- ☐ Know the evacuation plan, the safe exits and routes from home: by car, on foot, and alternative paths in case roads are blocked or damaged.
- ☐ Agree on a meeting point to reunite with family or housemates (have a location A and a location B if A is compromised). The locations should be accessible by foot and on high ground.
- ☐ If you live alone, make a plan with a friend or neighbour.
- ☐ If you have children, plan who will pick them up from school/daycare and a second option if the first person can't.
- ☐ Know the location of your fire extinguisher, water valve, electrical panel, gas valve and floor drain.
- ☐ Each person in the family should know how to turn off the utilities, especially gas if you have it.
- ☐ Each person should have key contacts on their phones and at least one payment card on their phone in the event that you cannot return home at all.
- ☐ Everyone should know where the Go Bag is (ideally easily accessible near a door) and where the Stay Shelf is.

## GO BAG (ALL CLIMATES – PORTABLE BASE PACK)

You can make your own Go Bag or buy one but make sure you go through each item in a bought bag. Make sure the bag (ideally an easy-to-carry knapsack) is sturdy and that you would actually be able to carry the bag long distances. Store your Go Bag in a location near the door that is known to everyone in the household.

- ☐ Food: 2,000–2,500 kcal/day of non-perishable food (dry, canned, energy-dense)
- ☐ Manual can opener
- ☐ Water purification tablets/filter (filter straws)
- ☐ Water-carrying container (collapsible jug or bottle)
- ☐ Electrolyte powder/salt
- ☐ Flashlight/headlamp + extra batteries
- ☐ First aid kit with basic meds + personal prescriptions (see page 14)
- ☐ Portable radio (battery, solar-powered or crank-powered; write key info stations on the radio)
- ☐ Power bank
- ☐ Solar phone charger
- ☐ Knife
- ☐ Multitool
- ☐ Matches, lighters, fire starters (in a waterproof bag)
- ☐ Identification and copies of essential documents (printed and digital)
- ☐ Local map (make sure everyone knows how to read a paper map)
- ☐ Emergency whistle
- ☐ Compass
- ☐ Duct tape
- ☐ Notebook and pencil
- ☐ Cash
- ☐ Mobile phone + backup communication plan
- ☐ Trash bags
- ☐ Toothbrush, toothpaste, soap, hand sanitizer
- ☐ Menstrual and hygiene products including toilet paper
- ☐ Wet wipes or waterless cleaning cloths
- ☐ Spare underwear and socks
- ☐ Face masks
- ☐ UV sunglasses
- ☐ Towel or microfiber cloth
- ☐ Essential baby food/diapers if needed
- ☐ Deck of cards

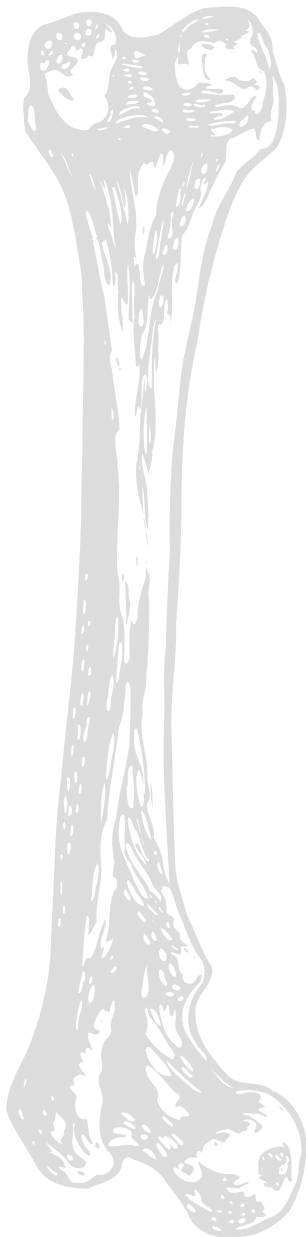


## GO BAG (COLD ENVIRONMENT ADD-ONS)

- ☐ Extra layers (wool or synthetic):  
Base layers, thermal shirt and pants
- ☐ Insulated jacket  
(preferably windproof/waterproof)
- ☐ Wool socks (2–3 pairs)
- ☐ Hat (covers ears)
- ☐ Neck gaiter
- ☐ Gloves or mittens  
(2 pairs: thin liner + insulated outer layer)
- ☐ Blanket  
(wool or survival/emergency foil blanket)
- ☐ Sleeping bag  
(rated for sub-zero temperatures)
- ☐ Hand/foot warmers
- ☐ Snow shovel (collapsible)
- ☐ Ice grips or crampons
- ☐ Extra tarps or insulated groundsheet
- ☐ Thermal tent liner or bivy bag
- ☐ Mylar tent reflectors or emergency space blanket layer
- ☐ Candle lantern or tent-safe heater
- ☐ Additional food

## GO BAG (HOT ENVIRONMENT ADD-ONS)

- ☐ Wide-brim hat or head scarf
- ☐ Sunscreen (SPF 30+)
- ☐ Cooling towel or cloth
- ☐ Shade cloth or tarp for sun shelter
- ☐ Dust mask or cloth for sand/smoke protection  
(N95/FFP2 masks or better protect against fine particles, smoke, and airborne diseases)
- ☐ Hand fan (manual or battery-powered)
- ☐ Additional water



## STAY SHELF

Your Stay Shelf should ideally be a cool, dry shelf. The focus is on food and hydration for your entire household for a minimum of 3 days and ideally a week. The food needs to be non-perishable (does not need refrigeration) and ideally can be eaten without needing to be cooked. Food that contains liquid helps hydration. Keep a manual can opener in your kit, and **rotate food stocks regularly** to avoid spoilage. Use the "First In, First Out" system to make sure you use the oldest stocks first. Preservation methods like dehydration, vacuum sealing, fermenting, and pickling can extend food life without electricity. Label everything with purchase or expiration dates, and make sure your stock includes some comfort food. It can be emotionally grounding in a crisis.

- ☐ Drinking water  
(minimum 3 liters/day per adult)
- ☐ Canned food: for example,  
tomatoes, corn, green beans, baked beans, chickpeas,  
tuna in oil, canned peaches, canned pineapple
- ☐ Energy bars or granola bars
- ☐ Peanut butter and other nut butters
- ☐ Crackers, chips/crisps
- ☐ Dried fruits
- ☐ Nuts
- ☐ Powdered milk  
(assuming water is available)
- ☐ UST milk and juice  
(swap out expired containers regularly)
- ☐ Oatmeal or cereal
- ☐ Jams
- ☐ Baby supplies if needed
- ☐ Pet food if needed
- ☐ Honey
- ☐ Sugar
- ☐ Chocolate
- ☐ Salt and pepper and condiments
- ☐ Additional prescription and general medication  
(acetaminophen, ibuprofen, anti-itch, bug repellent)
- ☐ Additional cleaning supplies assuming  
there is no water: plastic bags, wipes, toilet paper
- ☐ Water purification system and collection system  
(rain barrel or even a bucket)
- ☐ Additional food



## SUSTAINABLE LIVING & EVERYDAY RESILIENCE

Preparedness is not just about surviving a disaster, it's about living in a way that builds long-term resilience. Reducing dependence on centralized systems (energy, water, food) and embracing local or off-grid alternatives increases your ability to adapt. Skills like gardening, basic repair, water harvesting, knowing how to read a paper map, and cooking from scratch are not outdated; they are survival tools that can save lives.

Build relationships with neighbors and community networks. Mutual support is one of the strongest buffers against disruption.

