

THE FIRST 72 HOURS.

The grid is down. No power, no water pressure, no internet, no card payments, and nobody can tell you how long it lasts. This is what to do — in order — for the first three days.

DAY 1 • SECURE

DAY 2 • STABILISE

DAY 3 • EXTEND

PRINT IT AND KEEP IT OFFLINE

Most people lose the first day to disbelief. They wait for it to come back on. The households that do well in a long outage are the ones that act in the first six hours, while the taps still have pressure, the shops still have stock, and the phones still have charge.

Work top to bottom. Don't skip ahead — the early items are the ones that stop being possible later.

BEFORE ANYTHING ELSE

If anyone is hurt, or you smell gas, or there is fire or flooding: call emergency services first — **112** across Europe, **911** in North America — and follow what they tell you over anything written here.

01 DAY ONE – SECURE

THE FIRST SIX HOURS DECIDE THE NEXT THREE WEEKS

1. FILL EVERY CONTAINER WHILE THERE IS STILL PRESSURE

Mains water keeps flowing for a while on stored pressure and gravity, then stops. Pumped supplies and anything above the second floor go first. This is the single most time-critical thing you will do.

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Fill the bath

Rinse it first. This is washing and toilet-flushing water, not drinking water.

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Fill every pot, bottle, jug and clean bucket

Target 4 litres per person per day for drinking and cooking — three days is 12 litres each.

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Fill the washing machine drum and any clean bins

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Know your hidden water

Hot-water cylinder (often 100–200 L, drain from the bottom valve), the toilet *cistern* — never the bowl — and water in pipes, released by opening the lowest tap in the house.

DO NOT DRINK

Water from radiators, swimming pools, hot tubs or waterbeds. Pool water is chemically treated for contact, not for drinking, and boiling concentrates the chemicals rather than removing them.

2. GET EVERYONE TO ONE PLACE, AND AGREE THE MEETING POINT

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Account for every person in the household

Children at school, partners at work, elderly relatives living alone.

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Agree one meeting point near home and one outside the area

Somewhere you can both describe without a map: a named building, not a pin.

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Agree an out-of-area contact

Local networks fail first. A relative in another region can relay messages when you cannot reach each other directly.

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Write it on paper, one copy per adult

A plan that only exists on a phone stops existing when the phone dies.

3. BANK THE POWER YOU HAVE

Phone batteries will be your only light, clock and radio for a while. Treat the charge in the house as a fixed, non-renewable budget.

☐ **Charge everything now**

If the power is already out, charge from power banks, a laptop's battery or a car USB socket.

☐ **Put every phone on aeroplane mode, lowest brightness**

A phone hunting for a dead tower can flatten itself in three hours. Check for signal on one phone, on a schedule, not constantly.

☐ **Designate one "house phone"**

Everyone else's stays off. One device on, one in reserve, the rest dark.

☐ **Find your torches and headlamps before dark**

GENERATORS AND STOVES

Never run a generator, charcoal grill, camping stove or petrol engine indoors, in a garage, or near an open window — not even briefly, not even with the door open. Carbon monoxide is odourless and kills people in their sleep. Generators go **outside, at least 6 metres (20 feet) from any door, window or vent**. If you have a battery carbon monoxide alarm, put it where people sleep and test it now.

4. INVENTORY WHAT YOU ACTUALLY HAVE

Not what you think you have. Walk the house with paper and write it down — you will make better rationing decisions on Day 2 from a real list.

☐ **Drinking water, in litres**

☐ **Food that needs no cooking**

Count it in person-days: tins, nut butter, crackers, dried fruit, bars.

☐ **Medication**

Who needs what, how many days are left, and what is refrigerated.

☐ **Batteries, fuel, candles, matches, first-aid supplies**

☐ **Cash on hand**

Card terminals and ATMs go down together.

FOOD IN A DEAD FRIDGE

An unopened fridge holds food safely for about **4 hours**; a full freezer for about **48 hours**, half-full about **24**. Keep the doors shut and eat fridge food first, freezer second, shelf-

stable last. When in doubt, throw it out — a stomach illness with no clean water and no pharmacy is a serious problem.

5. KNOCK ON THE DOORS EITHER SIDE

This costs nothing on Day 1 and is worth more than any single item in your kit. It is also much easier now than on Day 3, when everyone is anxious.

☐ **Check on anyone elderly, disabled, or alone**

Especially anyone who depends on powered medical equipment.

☐ **Find out who has what**

A generator, a wood stove, a well, a radio, medical training.

☐ **Agree one way to check in daily**

02 DAY TWO – STABILISE

TURN A PANIC INTO A ROUTINE

1. RATION DELIBERATELY, STARTING NOW

Rationing on Day 2 is easy and effective. Rationing on Day 5, after three days of eating normally, is neither.

☐ **Divide what you have by twice the days you expect**

If you think it is a three-day outage, plan for six. Most people guess short.

☐ **Drinking water is not negotiable**

Roughly 2–3 litres per person per day for drinking alone, more in heat or for anyone ill, pregnant or breastfeeding. Cut washing water before drinking water.

☐ **Eat the food that is spoiling, in order**

☐ **One hot meal a day if you can do it safely**

Morale is a resource. Cook outdoors only.

2. PURIFY WATER PROPERLY BEFORE YOU NEED TO

Build the habit while you still have stored water, so you are not learning it thirsty.

☐ **Boiling is the most reliable method**

A rolling boil for 1 minute — 3 minutes above about 2,000 m altitude. Let it cool covered.

☐ **Filter first if the water is cloudy**

Through a clean cloth or coffee filter, then boil or treat. Chemicals work poorly in murky water.

☐ **Unscented household bleach as a backup**

Plain 5–6% sodium hypochlorite, nothing scented or "splashless": about 2 drops per litre (8 drops per gallon), stir, wait 30 minutes. It should smell faintly of chlorine; if not, repeat once. Double the dose for cloudy water.

☐ **Boiling does not remove chemical contamination**

If you suspect fuel or chemical pollution, do not drink it at all.

3. SET UP LIGHT AND POWER FOR THE LONG RUN

☐ **Headlamps beat torches**

Hands free matters when you are cooking or carrying water in the dark.

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- ☐ **Put solar lights and panels out at first light**
Garden solar lights charge on a windowsill and give you a free, fire-safe night light.
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- ☐ **Run the generator in windows, not continuously**
Charge everything at once during a scheduled run, then shut it down. Fuel is finite and noise attracts attention.
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- ☐ **Treat candles as a last resort**
Open flame in a house with no working fire service is a serious risk. Never leave one burning unattended or near children.
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4. GET REAL INFORMATION, NOT RUMOUR

- ☐ **Battery or hand-crank radio, on a schedule**
Listen at fixed times — top of the hour — rather than leaving it running and flattening the batteries.
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- ☐ **Write down what you learn, with the time**
A shared sheet on the wall stops the same rumour circulating five times.
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- ☐ **Note what official instructions actually say**
Boil-water notices, shelter-in-place orders, distribution points, curfews.
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- ☐ **Be sceptical of anything second-hand**
In an information vacuum, rumours travel faster and further than facts.
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5. WALK THE HOUSE AND MAKE IT SECURE AND WARM

- ☐ **Check doors, windows and ground-floor access**
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- ☐ **Keep valuables and supplies out of sight from the street**
A visible generator or a lit window in a dark street draws attention you do not want.
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- ☐ **Close down to one room for heat**
Pick the smallest room with the fewest external walls. Blankets over windows and under doors. Layer clothing rather than heating space.
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- ☐ **In freezing weather, protect the pipes**
If the heating is off and a hard freeze is coming, know where the stopcock is and how to drain the system.
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- ☐ **Set up the emergency toilet before you need one**
Lidded bucket, heavy liner, and something absorbent — sawdust, soil, cat litter. Seal and store waste away from living space and water.
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03 DAY THREE – EXTEND

STOP REACTING. START PLANNING FOR WEEK TWO.

1. RE-COUNT EVERYTHING, HONESTLY

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Recount water, food, fuel, batteries and medication

Compare against your Day 1 list. Your real burn rate is now measurable — that number, not your optimism, tells you how long you have.

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Work out your true days remaining

Supplies divided by daily use. Write the date you run out on the wall.

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Identify the first thing that runs out

That single item is your whole plan for the next 48 hours.

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Flag medication that will not last

Pharmacies may operate limited or emergency dispensing. Start that conversation early, not on the last tablet.

2. DECIDE: STAY OR GO

Make this decision deliberately, while you still have fuel in the car and daylight to travel in. The worst version is being forced into it at night, on empty.

REASONS TO STAY

Your home is intact, secure and warm enough. You have water and food beyond the immediate horizon. You have neighbours and a routine. Travel is uncertain or dangerous.

REASONS TO GO

No water source and none coming. The building is unsafe, or cannot be kept warm. Someone needs medical care you cannot provide. An official evacuation instruction. A definite, confirmed destination — not a hope.

- ☐ **If you go, go in daylight with a full tank and a written route**
Include a paper map and an alternative route. Tell your out-of-area contact where you are heading.
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- ☐ **Leave a note saying where you went and when**
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3. TURN NEIGHBOURS INTO A NETWORK

- ☐ **Pool what is scarce and share what is spare**
One working generator, one well, one wood stove, one first-aid kit goes much further shared than hoarded.
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- ☐ **Agree a daily check-in time and place**
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- ☐ **Split the work**
Water collection, cooking, childcare, watch. A rota beats five people each doing everything badly.
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- ☐ **Write down who has medical, electrical or mechanical skills**
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4. BUILD THE DAY 4-14 PLAN ON PAPER

- ☐ **Water: where the next 100 litres comes from**
And how you will purify it, repeatedly, not once.
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- ☐ **Food: what the last week of supplies looks like**
Plan the meals now, while you can think clearly.
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- ☐ **Sanitation: waste disposal for two more weeks**
This is what makes people ill after the first week.
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- ☐ **Information: when and how you will get updates**
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- ☐ **Morale: something to do**
Cards, books, a task list, a routine with fixed mealtimes. Three weeks of nothing is harder than most people expect.
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THE 72-HOUR DEBRIEF

Before this fades, write down the three things you wished you had, and the three you were glad you had. That list is worth more than any generic checklist, because it is yours. Then fix the top one this month.

WHERE THIS GUIDE RUNS OUT

Three days is the easy part. The questions that follow — how to treat that wound, wire that panel, preserve that food, fix that pump — are the ones you cannot look up when the internet is gone. That is exactly what GenesisBox is built for: calm, sourced answers with zero grid and zero internet.

See how GenesisBox works →

General preparedness guidance, not a substitute for professional, legal or medical advice. Always follow the instructions of your local emergency services. GenesisBox is a product of FINQUP Technology OOD, Sofia, Bulgaria.