



Hurricane Katrina laid siege to the city of New Orleans in 2005, leaving over 81 billion dollars' worth of damage in her wake. Hundreds of thousands of people were evacuated, left to the mercies of the federal government and the Red Cross. Many others were stranded in homes surrounded by high flood waters, with no power and no means of communication. The graceful old city became a home for vandals and looters as all vestiges of civilization vanished for weeks.

The government hurriedly set up temporary shelters in the Superdome and the New Orleans Convention Center for displaced residents. Thousands crowded into places without adequate sanitation facilities, food supplies, and water.

No one was ready for a disaster on such a grand scale - not the residents, not the responders and not the federal government. As a result, the government and the Red Cross came under fire for not responding quickly enough.

Because of flooded, impassable highways and disorganization on the part of the relief efforts, refugees who were crowded into the Superdome and the New Orleans Convention Center went for four days without supplies. People who had remained in their homes were without electricity, plumbing or running water and waited even longer for help.

We've seen many disasters over the years from the safety of our living rooms. The aftermath of Hurricane Katrina struck closer to home, and we saw how quickly we go can from civilized to the status of a third world country. Many of us made donations, did volunteer work and assisted the victims. For some, Katrina was a wake-up call. Our eyes became opened to the need to be more prepared. We became aware that help was not always a simple "9-1-1" call away and that government relief efforts might not arrive as quickly as we'd previously expected.

In a society filled with people waiting to be rescued, planning ahead can mean the difference between being together or separated, frightened or confident - even alive or dead. To begin to prepare for this short term disruption, you must begin with a plan. Consider this emergency plan as a map that will help you and your family navigate efficiently through a disaster. You will know what to expect from one another, know how to perform, and know how to get by.

PLAN FOR DISASTERS MOST LIKELY TO OCCUR IN YOUR LOCATION

Chaos and confusion can be as much of an enemy as any act of devastation. Together with your family, decide what to do before a disaster is imminent. Discuss the different threats that are more likely for your area. They could include:

- Winter storms
- Hurricanes
- Tornadoes
- Earthquakes
- Extended power outages
- Floods
- Mandatory evacuation
- Fires
- Epidemics
- Economic downturns

Once the emergency has happened, it's too late to plan. You are *reacting* instead of *acting*. As a family, sit down and discuss likely disaster scenarios that could occur. For instance, when I lived in Houston, TX, my family had to prepare for the likelihood of hurricanes occurring. Not only that, we had to prepare for tornados, chemical leaks from refineries, and flash flooding.

CREATING AN EMERGENCY PLAN

Prepare your children by allowing them to help create the plan. They will feel much more comfortable in a scary situation if they know what to do and what to expect.

Creating practice drills is another way to get family members to think and be focused and calm during an emergency.

As a family, discuss your emergency meeting places, contacts, and plans. Give your children the opportunity to express their feelings and to ask questions so they fully understand the disaster plan.

Ask these questions:

1.) How you will get in contact with one another?

Everyone in the family should know the “emergency job” of the other family members. Will Dad pick up the child at the elementary school while Mom picks up the teen at the high school? Are the kids to attempt to walk home or should they stay put and wait to be picked up?

Plan at least two routes to accomplish these things in case streets are closed due to the disaster.

2.) Who is an out-of-area person that could coordinate communication if you are separated?

Choose a close friend or family member outside the immediate vicinity. This person is less likely to be affected by the same disaster and can be a calm port of communication. In an emergency it is possible that a family member might not be able to get home safely.

Local communications may be inoperable due to a storm or natural disaster. An out-of-area contact can coordinate the locations of the family members and serve as Communications Central until the family can reunite. Every family member should carry the phone number and contact information for the out-of-area person.

3.) What will happen if the kids are in school?

Schools have their own disaster plans in response to evacuations, storms, or other emergencies. The school’s disaster plan must be taken into account when making your family preparedness plan. Mom and Dad should visit the school to get the specific details of the schools plan. Knowing what to expect can go a long way towards assuaging fear and panic.

GETTING ORGANIZED

Once you’ve created your basic plan, it’s time to get organized! Having an emergency binder with checklists and instructions has been a proven way to have all of the pertinent information -

plans, checklists, phone numbers, etc., in one easy-to-grab binder. This can help you stay organized during a disaster and minimize chaos and panic during emergencies.

Consider collecting the following information in your binder.

- Family ID information: Current photos, fingerprints from each family member, birth certificates, etc.
- Favorite emergency recipes
- Emergency protocols and evacuation plans and evacuation routes
- Survival instructions for the family members to turn to if an emergency occurs: first aid, constructing a shelter, filtering water, etc.
- Contact information for relatives and close friends
- Veterinary records for pets (you might have to prove they have been vaccinated during an evacuation scenario)
- Medical information for all family members: medications they are taking, medical conditions, allergies, blood types, etc.
- Important documents such as wills, social security cards, custody orders, car registration, marriage license, mortgage
- Maps of the area
- Insurance information: Home inventory (written and video inventory) insurance papers, policy and account numbers, property titles (homes, autos, boats)

SPECIAL DOCUMENTS

Disasters cause things to go awry very quickly, and in some cases, families can become separated. When a family member is separated from the others, providing pertinent information to medical personnel or first responders can be more challenging due to heightened emotions from the stressful situation.

To deal with these unintended separations, disaster organizations have suggested that every family have personal information for the other members of the family before a disaster occurs. Having this information will help responders and medical personnel render aid more quickly, as well as assist you in getting your loved one back safe and sound.

Make Personal I.D. Cards

The Center for Missing and Exploited Children has created a free print out for families to fill out for family members to have on hand. The cards provide a quick reference for phone numbers, personal information and even has a place for fingerprints to be documented. This document will easily fit inside of your emergency binder.

Personal I.D. Cards should include:

- Work and cell numbers for both parents
- The phone numbers for your out-of-area contact
- Doctor's phone number
- The location of your family's designated meeting place
- Any emergency medical needs

You can find printable identification cards for the family at this link:

http://www.take25.org/~media/Take25/ResourceDocuments/Child_ID_2013-EN.pdf

Creating contact information cards can give your children or vulnerable loved ones an extra layer of protection during any time you are unable to be with them. These cards can help loved ones to reconnect in the aftermath of a crisis.

Emergency documents provide vital information to first responders in case a loved one goes missing. They also provide an extra layer of preparedness for the family. These are especially important for children, the elderly, those with serious medical conditions, and those who are mentally disabled.

Likewise, when you are in an evacuation situation, carrying around a bunch of paperwork (along with all of your other gear) is the last thing on your mind. Thanks to the power of technology, you have options for storing and backing up pertinent data.

What Documents to Back Up

There are a few documents that you obviously should keep in a secured location (a fire safe or safe deposit box). That said, backups can be made by scanning them into computers and saved on other backup storage systems. Some of the information you should consider backing up are:

- Identifying information: Social Security card, driver's license, birth certificate, passport, Marriage certificate
- Financial accounts: Bank, investment, and credit card/loan accounts information, including institution names, phone numbers, and account numbers
- Health records: Immunization records, allergies, dietary restrictions, medications, medical/surgical treatments
- Pet information: Description of each pet, vet contact information, and any important medical notes
- Property: Car information, home purchase papers/deeds, and other home inventory items.
- Insurance documents (depending on the disaster you may need to make a claim before you can return to your home)
- Wills and medical directives
- Special sentimental items like photographs, certificates, jewelry or small heirlooms

Protect Your Identity

Emergency contacts, as well as information in your emergency binders, can also be stored online in case you forget your binders or they are lost.

Be aware that if you plan on storing these important documents online, they can be stolen, and your identity along with them. It's a good idea to encrypt the files after they have been scanned in and share them with only trusted sources. If you encrypt the digital files, use an encryption tool such as TrueCrypt.

Flash drives – USB Flash drives are miniature hard drives that you connect to your computer using a USB port. Typically, the capacity for a Flash drive is between 128MB to 1GB. Flash drives are portable, convenient, low cost and easily accessible. A 256-megabyte drive, which runs for \$20 or even less, gives you enough space for this type of storage. One of the best ways to prevent data theft and improve information security is to encrypt your data.

Mozy – This is a backup storage system you can use online. It works by syncing your files to the cloud and securely saving it. This eliminates that need to hold onto bulky hard drives or concerns about losing flash drives. This method can store up to 125 GB of data for \$120 per year. You could store all of your pertinent documents, family photos, and more with ample storage to spare.

Google Docs – After you have scanned your documents into your computer, simply upload them to Google Docs and share the files with your loved ones. Remember that you can encrypt documents to keep them safe.

Dropbox – This is a free service that lets you store your photos and documents and share them with others. An added incentive to this storage choice is that it gives you a few gigabytes of storage for free.

NAS Drives – If you'd rather store your data with someone you trust, buy two 2 TB network-attached storage (NAS) drives for about \$200 each and split them both into two equal partitions. Give one drive to a relative or trusted friend and then have the drives back up to each other over the Internet using rsync software. Both you and your relative/friend will get local backup and a mirrored remote backup.

PREPS TO BUY:

- 3 ring binder
- Flash drives
- Document protector sleeves
- Pens
- Labels
- Printer paper
- Photographs of family members

ACTION ITEMS:

1. Involve your children in your family preparedness efforts. Educate them on the different types of disasters and on your family's disaster plans. [Ready Kids¹](#) is a great website for fun methods and games to teach your children about what to do in the event of an emergency.
2. Ask your child's school and/or day care about their disaster plans. Here are a few questions that I asked our school: How will you communicate with a child's family during a crisis? Are you prepared for a shelter-in-place situation? If you have to evacuate, where will you go?
3. Find up-to-date pictures of each family member in case one of them gets separated from you during a disaster event, put the pictures in a waterproof or Ziploc bag, or sleeve for a three-ring binder and place it in your [emergency kit²](#).
4. Get organized, and create an emergency binder using the information provided above. Remember to include a [personal information card³](#) and a contact information card for each family member.
5. For family members who have special needs, ensure that those needs are accounted for in your emergency plan.

¹ <http://www.ready.gov/kids/>

² http://readynutrition.com/resources/are-you-ready-series-72-hour-kits_29082013/

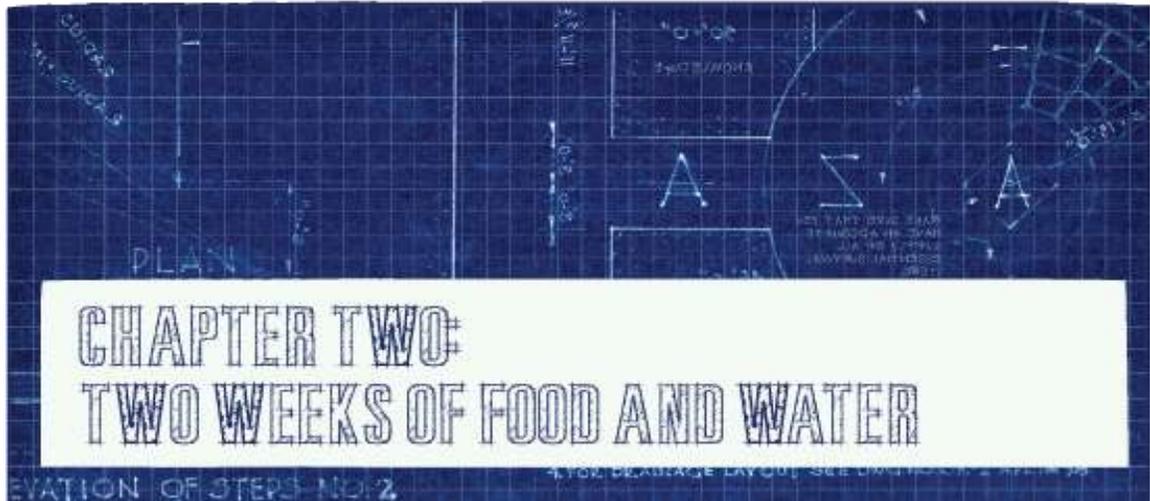
³ http://readynutrition.com/resources/keep-kids-safe-with-emergency-id-cards_29042011/

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Play it Safe

Protecting your personal information and your child's personal information is a must these days. Therefore, when creating emergency ID cards, provide the essential information only.

1. Never include any sensitive information or financial information, such as social security number,
2. Put the card in a place that is not easily seen by strangers, such as a wallet or inside of a back pack keeps the card holder safe.
3. If a child is the card holder, only print the initial of their first name. For example: J. Smith
4. There is no need to print the birth date of the child. Just state was year they were born to give first responders an idea of how old he/she is.
5. During an actual emergency, if a child is too young to carry a card, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children suggest writing only the necessary information (name, contact number and parents' names) directly on the back of the child with permanent marker.



For tens of thousands of east coast residents that worst case scenario is now playing out in real-time. No longer are images of starving people waiting for government handouts restricted to just the third-world. In the midst of crisis, once civilized societies will very rapidly descend into chaos when essential infrastructure systems collapse. Though the National Guard was deployed before the storm even hit, there is simply no way for the government to coordinate a response requiring millions of servings of food, water and medical supplies...

Limited electricity has made it possible for some to share their experiences:

Via Twitter:

- I was in chaos tonite tryin to get groceries...lines for shuttle buses, only to get to the no food left & closing early.
- I'm not sure what has shocked me more, all the communities around me destroyed, or the 5 hour lines for gas and food.
- Haven't slept or ate well in a few days. Hope things start getting better around here soon.
- These days a lot of people are impatient because they're used to fast things. Fast food, fast internet, fast lines and fast shipping etc.

Source: <http://www.SHTFplan.com>

FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) has begun to promote personal preparedness. In a press release the agency recommended that all homes be ready for emergencies with a supply of no less than two weeks of food and water.

If an earthquake, winter storm or other disaster strikes your community, you might not have access to food, water and electricity for days or even weeks. By taking some time now to store emergency food and water supplies, you can provide for your entire family.

Can you imagine having to buy an entire emergency supply of food as a disaster is occurring? Not only are you fighting a crowd of stressed-out people who want the same items as you, but your financial budget more than likely did not allot for this!

DISASTERS SHOULDN'T CRIPPLE YOU, BUT BE A MINOR INCONVENIENCE

Rather than having a disaster become a major set-back that cripples you financially, we want to ensure it is only a minor inconvenience. Our focus in this chapter is getting your family ready for a short term disaster. We can prepare for this by creating a family-based preparedness plan and setting up a basic two week supply of food and water. We must anticipate that help could be a two full weeks away and we must prepare accordingly. What do you and your family need to get by until then?

Plan for water shortages. Following a disaster, water is one of the first items that fly off the store shelves. You need water for consumption, food preparation and for sanitation. Plan accordingly and store an ample water supply. Emergency preparedness sites suggest 1 gallon of water per person per day. Take in mind this is for consumption only, you will need more.

Plan for no electricity. To further prepare your family, you must assume that you will be without power for a week or more. Therefore, create a foundation of preparedness supplies that do not require elaborate cooking methods. Food sources that only require the addition of water to prepare are the easiest meals to rely on during this stressful time.

Create an emergency menu. The best approach to beginning a food supply for your family is to sit down and create an emergency menu. This will help you stay organized for the disaster and to know what food items you need to stock up on.

Base your menus on foods that your family is familiar with – no one wants to experiment with food during a crisis situation.

These are all low cost items that can be stored without refrigeration, and preparation will use minimal fuel. Remember to keep preparation requirements of meals as simple as possible, while also keeping dietary needs in mind. Convenience can be a great gift during the aftermath

of a disaster. An added bonus to this method is you don't have to do kitchen clean-up and dishes when there is no electricity.

Consider adding these convenient supplies to your stockpile:

- Styrofoam plates
- Paper towels and napkins
- Plastic cutlery
- Baby wipes
- Disinfecting wipes
- Plastic cups

FOOD SAFETY

In the event of a grid-down disaster, begin by using your perishable items located in the refrigerator and freezer to ensure they do not go bad. If the electricity is out, remember to limit opening the door to your refrigerator and freezer. The more often the doors are opened, the less control you have over the temperature of your perishable foods.

If you have some hamburger meat or eggs that need to be cooked to prevent spoilage, prepare those first and save your non-perishable items until later.

CREATE A FOOD SUPPLY WITHOUT BREAKING THE BUDGET

Starting a food supply does not have to be a budget breaker. By slowly accumulating emergency supplies, you will not feel the financial "burn" like you would if you had to pay for everything all at once. To make the best choices for your family, keep these questions in mind:

- What type of emergencies are you planning for?
- Do any of your family members have dietary needs that must be addressed?
- How long do you need for your food supply to last?
- How many people will you be providing for?
- What off grid method could you use to heat food or boil water if the power goes out?

Before you head to the store with your wallet in hand, assess what you already have. Most of us have at least *some* canned foods and dry goods stashed away. Use the following checklist

Food Safety Tip

If the appliance thermometer stored in the freezer reads 40 °F or below, the food is safe and may be refrozen. If a thermometer has not been kept in the freezer, check each package of food to determine the safety. Remember you can't rely on appearance or odor. If the food still contains ice crystals or the temperature is 40 °F or below, it is safe to refreeze. Refrigerated food should be safe as long as power is out no more than 4 hours. Keep the door closed as much as possible. Discard any perishable foods (such as meat, poultry, fish, eggs, and leftovers) that have been above 40°F for 2 hours or longer.

Source: USDA

and see what items are already lingering in your cupboards. You may be pleasantly surprised to discover that you are more prepared than you expected!

Included in this list is water. Water is the most important item to have on hand during a disaster. Not only do you need water for consumption, but you will need water for food preparation as well.

Therefore, keep this in mind when you are making your two week food supply list and consider purchasing a water filter for added measure.

2 Week Supply List

For each person in your family or group:

- 1 gallon of water per day for each family member for each day you are expecting the emergency to last.
- 1 jar of peanut butter
- 2 cans of juice
- 2 cans of meat
- 2 cans of soup or stew
- 3 non-perishable items such as saltine crackers, graham crackers, etc.
- 1 box of cold cereal
- One box of quick oats
- 1 jar of applesauce
- 2 cans of fruits or vegetables
- Protein powder
- “Just-add-water meals” such as Ramen noodles, hamburger helper or other boxed foods
- Drink mixes such as tea, Tang or Kool-Aid
- Can opener

Once you’ve assessed what you already have, make a list of the items you need to acquire. When shopping for those remaining items, take the time to read the nutritional information on the back of the food source to make the best choices. If your family needs to use the stashed food supply, having foods that are high in vitamins, nutrients, and protein will provide their bodies with what they require. In addition to grocery items, you also want to think about any special needs items that your family may need. Choose high value foods that are shelf stable. Remember that you may not have electricity for cooking the foods or keeping cold items at a safe temperature.

Off Grid Cooking Sources

One of the main prepper sayings you need to remember is that it is essential to have back-ups for our back-ups. You don't want to rely on one single item to survive. Having backups for off grid cooking sources are no different. Because survival scenarios and their time frames, you want to prepare for these differences. For instance, you may be in a bug out situation where your outdoors and you need a lightweight stove, or find yourself in a situation similar to those who had to go through the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy living in an off grid scenario for months. So they needed a sturdier cooking tool.

The Solution:

The key to thriving in these types of events is proper planning and versatility with our preps. The theme of this preparedness guide is to show you that by layering your preparedness supplies with short and long term preparations, you will better adapt to the situations you are faced with.

When you are planning to cook off the grid, remember that you must have the proper equipment to prepare your food. Some of these stoves and cooking sources may require specific cookware, so look into that on your own.

Have ample lighting sources on hand as well - waterproof matches, several Bic lighters, magnesium fire starters, and fuel stored away.

The following are 10 of the most popular alternative cooking sources to use in an off grid environment. Some are for outdoor cooking and some for indoor cooking.

Keep what disasters you are planning for in mind when making the decision of which cooking source is right for you, and remember to store additional fuel sources. Further, do research and read reviews on these products before they are purchased.

10 Most Popular Alternative Cooking Sources

1. Fire pit
2. Charcoal and propane
BBQ pits
3. Stovetec/Rocket Stoves
4. Collapsible Stoves
5. Solar Ovens
6. Cob Oven
7. Hibachi cast iron stoves
8. Fireplace
9. Wood Stove
10. Wonderbox or insulated
cooker

Since most preppers are concerned about OPSEC (operational security) in the midst of a disaster, you may want to consider a level of discretion with your cooking source. Grilling up your food may attract hungry neighbors and if your mission is to feed only your family, then you may want to cook indoors to mask the smell. Here are some other ways to be discrete when preparing food following a disaster.

1. **Cook on the down low.** Plan to prepare and cook food in the early morning or late at night when a majority of people are sleeping.
2. **Stock up on MRE's.** These are self-contained meals that will not require long preparation times.
3. **Have meals with quick prep times.** Prepare meals ahead and can them for quick preparation such as beans, soups and stews. This will cut down on fuel and keep the smell of food down to a minimum.
4. **Go easy on the spices.** As much as we love to add spices to our meals, they will bring added aromas to your food and inevitably could be your worst enemy.
5. **Eat foods that are already prepared and are shelf stable.** Shelf stable foods are another solution to cut down on strong aromas.
6. **Use a thermal cooker.** This is an insulated crock pot that will allow you use minimal fuel to heat the food and also help insulate the aromas that the food gives off.

PREPS TO BUY:

- 1 gallon of water per person per day for a two week period.
- Peanut butter
- Cans of juice
- Cans of meat
- Cans of soup or stew
- Cans of fruits or vegetables
- 3 non-perishable items such as saltine crackers, graham crackers, etc.
- Cold cereal (1 box per family member)
- Pantry staples (flour, quick oats, baking powder, salt, sugar)
- Applesauce
- Protein powder
- Just-add-water meals (macaroni and cheese, Ramen noodles or other boxed foods)
- Powdered drink mixes (Tang or Kool-Aid)
- Baby supplies (diapers, wipes, formula, baby food)
- Protein/calorie drinks
- Prescription medications
- Additional toiletry items (toilet paper, feminine needs, etc.)
- 1 large container of dry pet food

ACTION ITEMS:

1. Inventory the supplies that you already have and shop to supply or resupply needed items.
2. Date perishable goods with a marker.
3. Make an emergency menu with the foods you intend to use and buy for a short term emergency food supply.
4. Organize your emergency supplies in one place so they are easy to access – consider Rubbermaid bins, 5 gallon buckets, etc.

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