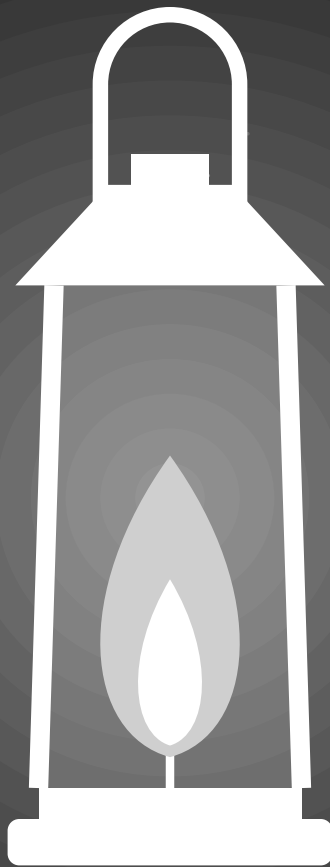


FREE STARTER GUIDE

Lantern

Your first steps to a prepared home.



YOUR FIRST 30 MINUTES • KNOW YOUR RISKS • BASIC SUPPLY CHECKLIST

FROM LANTERN: THE COMPLETE HOUSEHOLD EMERGENCY HANDBOOK

Welcome

Thank you for downloading the Lantern Starter Guide.

Getting ready for an emergency can feel like a lot. It doesn't have to be. This free guide gives you the first steps: what matters most, how to spend your first 30 minutes, which emergencies are most likely where you live, and the basic supplies every home should have.

It contains **Chapters 1 and 2** of *Lantern: The Complete Household Emergency Handbook*, plus its **Basic Emergency Supply Kit** checklist. When you see a reference to another chapter, that chapter is in the full printed handbook.

Print This Guide

When the power or internet is out, a file on your computer won't help you. Print these pages and keep them with your emergency supplies. The checklists are made to be written on.

Important

This guide provides general emergency-preparedness information for U.S. households. It is not a substitute for professional advice or the instructions of local officials. **In a life-threatening emergency, call 911.** Guidance is drawn from public sources such as FEMA (Ready.gov), the National Weather Service, and the CDC, listed at the end of each chapter.

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Start Here: Using This Book



You don't have to read this whole book today. You don't have to buy anything today either. This chapter shows you how the book is put together, what to do in your first 30 minutes, and a simple four-week plan that gets your household ready one small step at a time.

In This Chapter

- If an emergency is happening right now
- How this book is organized
- Your first 30 minutes
- The five things that matter most in almost any emergency
- A simple four-week starter plan
- Bringing in family and neighbors
- Keeping the book up to date

If an Emergency Is Happening Right Now

- ☐ **Life in danger? Call 911.** Do this before anything else.
- ☐ **Turn to the Quick-Find page** at the very front of this book. It lists the most urgent topics, such as CPR, bleeding, tornado, and evacuation, with a page number for each.
- ☐ **Follow the Quick Action Card** in that section. Action cards are boxed lists that put the most important steps first. Don't try to read the whole chapter while things are happening.
- ☐ **Listen to local officials** on a battery radio, TV, or your phone. Their instructions come first, because they know conditions where you are.

How This Book Is Organized

Lantern has eight parts, plus appendices at the back. Read straight through, or jump to the part that matters most to you. **Start with Part I.** It is the foundation for everything else.

Part	What it covers
I. Get Ready	Your risks, family plan, water, food, supplies, go-bags, staying or going (Ch. 1–6).
II. Natural Disasters	Earthquakes, hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, wildfire, winter storms, heat, pandemics (Ch. 7–8).
III. When Systems Fail	Power outages, phone and internet outages, money in a crisis (Ch. 9–11).
IV. Threats & Conflict	Terrorism, chemical and nuclear emergencies, long disruptions, home security (Ch. 12–15).
V. Health & Skills	First aid, medicines, food and water, gardening, sanitation, practical skills (Ch. 16–21).

Part	What it covers
VI. Technology	Radios, solar power, and devices that work without the internet (Ch. 22).
VII. People	Neighbors, older adults, caregivers, grandchildren, pets, staying steady (Ch. 23–25).
VIII. Afterward	Recovery, insurance, avoiding scams, legal and estate readiness (Ch. 26–27).
Appendices	A: Master Checklists. B: Fill-In Family Emergency Plan. C: Resource Directory. D: Glossary.

Inside each chapter, look for **Quick Action Cards** (what to do first), **warning boxes** (life-safety rules; read these even if you skip everything else), **checklists** to tick off, and **fill-in pages** for your own numbers and plans. Write on them in pen. Sources are listed at the end of each chapter.

Keep It Where You Can Find It

Keep this book in a binder with your emergency supplies or next to your flashlight. Tell everyone in your home where it is. Put sticky tabs on the pages that matter most to you, such as your biggest risks and any medical topics.

Your First 30 Minutes

These five small steps make a real difference, and none of them cost money.

1**Find your flashlight**

Check that it works. Keep it with this book, where you could find it in the dark.

2**Check your phone's emergency alerts**

Wireless Emergency Alerts are free and need no sign-up, but make sure they are turned on in your settings. Chapter 2 explains how.

3

Write down three phone numbers on paper

A nearby family member or friend, an out-of-area contact, and your doctor or pharmacy. Keep the paper with this book.

4

List your medicines

Name, strength, and how often you take each one, plus allergies. Keep one copy here and one in your wallet.

5

Pick a meeting place

One spot right outside your home, such as a mailbox or a neighbor's driveway, where everyone meets if you have to get out fast.

The Five Things That Matter Most

Every emergency is different, but nearly all come down to the same five needs. If you are ever unsure what to do next, work down this list in order.

1. **Immediate safety.** Get away from fire, smoke, floodwater, gas, or a damaged building. Call 911 for any life-threatening emergency.
2. **Water.** Store at least one gallon per person per day, enough for 2 weeks. People survive far longer without food than without water.
3. **Medicines and health needs.** Extra prescriptions, glasses, hearing aid batteries, and backup power for medical devices. Keep at least a 7-day supply in your go-bag, and work toward the 30-day supply the Red Cross suggests for older adults, as your doctor, pharmacist, and insurance refill rules allow.
4. **Information.** Know what is happening and what officials want you to do. Keep a battery or hand-crank radio.
5. **Staying together.** Know how you will reach family and where you will meet. Text instead of calling when networks are busy.

A Simple Four-Week Starter Plan

Do one row each week. Check the box when you're done.

Week	What to do
1 Know & plan	Read Chapters 2 and 3. Sign up for local alerts. Fill in contacts and meeting places in Appendix B. [] Done
2 Water & light	Store water for everyone, including pets. Gather flashlights, batteries, and a radio (Chapter 4). [] Done
3 Health & papers	Ask your pharmacist about refilling prescriptions early. Copy important documents into a waterproof bag (Chapter 3). [] Done
4 Go-bag & practice	Pack a basic go-bag (Chapter 5). Walk through your plan with your household and practice getting out. [] Done

After that, keep going at your own pace. The Master Checklists in Appendix A show what is left.

Bring in Family & Neighbors

- **Share your plan** with family, including those far away. Give your out-of-area contact a copy.
- **Pick a check-in buddy** next door. Agree to check on each other after a storm or outage.
- **Make it a family project.** Grandchildren can help test flashlights or pack a go-bag.
- **Tell someone about your medical needs** so they can speak up for you if you can't.
- **Look for a local group**, such as CERT (Community Emergency Response Team). See Chapter 23 (Community & Mutual Aid).

Keep This Book Up to Date

FEMA advises reviewing your family communication plan at least once a year. The Red Cross suggests older adults review their plan, supplies, and documents every six months. Pick easy dates to remember, such as your birthday.

Review Checklist

- ☐ Update phone numbers, doctors, and medicines on your fill-in pages.
- ☐ Check expiration dates on food, water, medicines, and batteries.
- ☐ Test flashlights, radios, smoke alarms, and carbon monoxide alarms.
- ☐ Practice your plan with everyone in your home.
- ☐ Date of last review: _____

Where this information comes from: FEMA, Ready.gov: Make a Plan; Build a Kit • FEMA: Family Emergency Communication Plan • FEMA: Know Your Alerts and Warnings (fact sheet) • American Red Cross: Disaster and Emergency Preparedness for Older Adults • National Weather Service: Wireless Emergency Alerts

2

Know Your Risks



You can't prepare for everything, and you don't need to. Most households face a handful of likely hazards. This chapter helps you find yours, set up alerts so you hear about danger early, and understand what weather alerts really mean.

In This Chapter

- Do these three things first
- Common hazards by region
- Hazards that affect everyone
- Looking up your own risk
- Signing up for emergency alerts
- Watch, warning, or advisory: what they mean
- Your fill-in Risk Worksheet

Quick Action Card: Know Your Risks

- ☐ **Make sure emergency alerts are on** in your cell phone’s settings. They are free and need no sign-up.
- ☐ **Sign up for your county or city alerts.** Search the name of your county plus “emergency alerts,” or call your local emergency management office. Ask a family member to help if needed.
- ☐ **Fill in the Risk Worksheet** at the end of this chapter, and put tabs on the chapters for your top risks.

Knowing your risks tells you where to spend your time and money. Someone on the Gulf Coast needs a hurricane plan. Someone in the Rockies needs a winter storm and wildfire plan. Everyone needs a plan for power outages and house fires.

Common Hazards by Region

This table is a general guide. Hazards don’t follow state lines, and your county may differ. Use it as a starting point, then look up your own address (see “Look Up Your Own Risk” below).

Region	Hazards to plan for
Atlantic & Gulf Coasts	Hurricanes and tropical storms, storm surge, coastal and inland flooding, tornadoes, extreme heat. Winter storms and nor’easters in the Northeast.
Northeast & Great Lakes	Winter storms, ice storms, extreme cold, flooding, heat waves. Earthquakes are less common but possible.
Southeast	Hurricanes, tornadoes (especially in the cooler months and spring), flooding, extreme heat, severe storms, drought, wildfire.
Midwest & Great Plains	Tornadoes, severe thunderstorms and hail, flooding, blizzards, extreme cold and heat, drought. Earthquake risk near the central Mississippi Valley.

Region	Hazards to plan for
Mountain West & Southwest	Wildfire, drought, extreme heat, flash floods, winter storms in the mountains, dust storms. Earthquakes in some areas.
West Coast	Earthquakes, wildfire, landslides and mudflows after heavy rain, flooding, drought, extreme heat. Tsunamis along the coast.
Alaska & Hawaii	Earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanic activity, extreme cold (Alaska), hurricanes and flooding (Hawaii).

Surprises Happen Everywhere

Tornadoes have been reported in all 50 states. Floods are the most common and costliest natural disaster in the nation and affect every state. The U.S. Geological Survey estimates that nearly 75% of the country could experience damaging earthquake shaking. So don't skip a hazard just because it seems rare where you live.

Hazards That Affect Everyone

Hazard	Why it matters	Read
Power outages	Storms, heat, equipment failure, or attacks on the grid can cut power for days. Medical equipment, heat, cooling, and food safety are all affected.	Ch. 9
House fire	The Red Cross calls home fires the single most common disaster in the nation. You may have less than two minutes to escape.	Ch. 3, 16
Severe storms	Thunderstorms, lightning, high winds, and hail happen in every state.	Ch. 7, 8
Pandemics & outbreaks	Disease can close stores, clinics, and services, and is more dangerous for older adults.	Ch. 8, 17

Hazard	Why it matters	Read
Infrastructure & cyber disruptions	FEMA warns that cyberattacks can disrupt power, transportation, and banking, and lead to fraud and identity theft.	Ch. 10, 11
Medical emergencies	The most likely “disaster” for many households is a fall, heart attack, or stroke.	Ch. 16

Look Up Your Own Risk

FEMA’s free **National Risk Index** is an online map that shows how at risk each U.S. county and Census tract is from **18 natural hazards**, including flooding, hurricanes, tornadoes, earthquakes, wildfire, heat waves, cold waves, winter weather, ice storms, hail, lightning, strong wind, drought, landslides, and tsunamis.

1 Find it

Search online for “FEMA National Risk Index.” Use a computer or tablet if you can; the map is easier to read on a larger screen.

2 Search your community

Type your county or address into the map’s search box.

3 Look at the hazard list

It ranks each hazard for your area. Note the ones rated highest.

4 Write them down

Copy your top hazards onto the Risk Worksheet at the end of this chapter.

You can also ask your county or city **emergency management office** (many publish a local hazard plan), your **insurance agent** about flood risk, and long-time neighbors who remember past floods, fires, and storms.

Sign Up for Emergency Alerts

Early warning gives you time to act. Use more than one way to get alerts, because any single one can fail. A phone can die, and a radio can be off.

1. Wireless Emergency Alerts (on your cell phone)

These are short emergency messages sent by officials to cell phones in the affected area. They are **free** and you **do not need to sign up**. They look like a text but arrive with a loud, special sound and vibration. The National Weather Service uses them for its most dangerous warnings, such as tornado, hurricane, tsunami, and extreme wind warnings.

- **iPhone:** Settings, then Notifications. Scroll to the bottom. Under Government Alerts, turn on the alerts you want.
- **Android:** Search your Settings for “Wireless emergency alerts” and turn on the alerts you want. Menus vary by phone.
- Not sure your phone gets them? Ask your cell phone company.

2. Local Alerts From Your County or City

Many counties and cities send their own alerts by text, phone call, or email about local evacuations, boil-water notices, and road closures. These are **opt-in**: you must sign up. Search online for your county or city name plus “alerts,” or call your local emergency management office. Sign up your landline too if they offer it.

3. NOAA Weather Radio

A special radio that receives National Weather Service warnings, watches, and forecasts 24 hours a day, plus some non-weather emergencies such as chemical releases. It works when the internet and cell networks don't. Buy one with **battery backup** and the **SAME** feature, which lets you program your county so it sounds an alarm only for warnings near you. It can wake you at night.

4. The FEMA App

A free smartphone app in English and Spanish. It can send National Weather Service alerts for up to **five locations**, which is handy for keeping an eye on family in other states. It also shows open shelters and has safety tips and checklists.

Also: the Emergency Alert System interrupts radio and TV broadcasts with warnings.

Don't wait for an alert. Alerts can arrive late, or not at all if networks are down. If you see rising water, smell smoke, or hear a roaring storm, act right away. If officials say evacuate, go.

Watch, Warning, or Advisory?

The National Weather Service uses these words in a specific way. Knowing the difference tells you how fast to act.

Term	What it means	What you do
WATCH	Conditions are favorable for the hazard. It may happen. Watches can be issued up to a few days ahead.	Get ready. Review your plan, charge phones, check supplies, and keep listening.
WARNING	The hazard is happening or about to happen and is a threat to life and property.	Act now. Take shelter or follow official instructions right away.
ADVISORY	The hazard is happening or about to happen, but is expected to cause inconvenience rather than serious danger.	Be careful. Take precautions, especially if you are frail or must travel.

An Easy Way to Remember

A **watch** means the ingredients are there: watch the sky and get ready. A **warning** means it's here or about to be: take action now. For a tornado warning, go to your safe room immediately (see Chapter 7).

My Risk Worksheet

Check each hazard that could affect you. Rate how likely it is: **H** (high), **M** (medium), or **L** (low). Then put a tab on the chapter to read.

	Hazard	Likely? H / M / L	Read
☐	Flood or flash flood		Ch. 7
☐	Hurricane or tropical storm		Ch. 7
☐	Tornado		Ch. 7
☐	Earthquake		Ch. 7
☐	Wildfire or smoke		Ch. 8
☐	Winter storm, extreme cold, or extreme heat		Ch. 8
☐	Pandemic or outbreak		Ch. 8
☐	Power outage (several days)		Ch. 9
☐	Chemical spill or nuclear plant nearby		Ch. 13
☐	House fire		Ch. 3, 16
☐	Other:		

Where this information comes from: FEMA, Ready.gov: Make a Plan; Floods; Cyberattacks (FEMA P-2143) • FEMA: National Risk Index (Learn More; Risk Communication Fact Sheet) • FEMA: Know Your Alerts and Warnings (fact sheet) • NOAA National Weather Service: Wireless Emergency Alerts; NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards; Watch, Warning, and Advisory Definitions • NOAA National Severe Storms Laboratory: Severe Weather 101, Tornadoes • U.S. Geological Survey: 2023 National Seismic Hazard Model news release • American Red Cross: Home Fire Safety • NOAA NSSL: Severe Weather 101, Hail; NWS: Nor'easters, Ground Blizzards, Dust Storm Safety; NOAA: Hurricane Hazards • EPA: State and Regional Climate Change Connections; USGS: Volcanoes, New Madrid Seismic Zone; Ready.gov: Tsunamis • Apple Support: Government, Emergency and Enhanced Safety Alerts on iPhone; Android: Emergency alerts on Android

Your Basic Emergency Supply Kit

This is FEMA's basic kit for your home. Store it in one or two easy-to-carry bins or a duffel bag. Store **at least 1 gallon of water per person per day**, enough for 2 weeks if you have room. Go slowly: a few items a week adds up. Date this page when you finish.

The Basics

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ Water: 1 gallon per person per day | ☐ Dust masks |
| ☐ Non-perishable food, several days | ☐ Plastic sheeting, scissors, duct tape |
| ☐ Battery or hand-crank radio | ☐ Wet wipes, garbage bags, plastic ties |
| ☐ NOAA Weather Radio with tone alert | ☐ Wrench or pliers for utilities |
| ☐ Flashlight | ☐ Manual can opener |
| ☐ First aid kit | ☐ Local paper maps |
| ☐ Extra batteries | ☐ Cell phone, chargers, backup battery |
| ☐ Whistle to signal for help | ☐ Copy of your family plan |

Additional Supplies

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Soap, hand sanitizer, wipes | ☐ Clothes and sturdy shoes |
| ☐ Prescription medicines | ☐ Fire extinguisher |
| ☐ Pain relievers, stomach medicines | ☐ Matches in waterproof case |
| ☐ Glasses, contact lens solution | ☐ Hygiene and feminine supplies |
| ☐ Cash in small bills | ☐ Paper plates, cups, utensils |
| ☐ Copies of important papers | ☐ Paper and pencil |
| ☐ Sleeping bag or blanket each | ☐ Books, cards, puzzles |

Where this information comes from: FEMA, Ready.gov: Build a Kit (Basic Disaster Supplies Kit; Additional Emergency Supplies).

Coming Soon: The Whole Book

You've taken the first steps. The complete **Lantern** handbook walks you through everything else, in the same calm, large-print style, with checklists and fill-in pages throughout.

Part	What it covers
Get Ready	Your family plan, water and food, go-bags and car kits, when to stay or evacuate
Natural Disasters	Earthquakes, hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, wildfire, winter storms, heat, pandemics
When Systems Fail	Long power outages, internet and phone blackouts, cyberattacks and AI scams, money in a crisis
Threats & Conflict	Terrorism, chemical and nuclear emergencies, war, home security and self-defense
Health & Survival Skills	First aid, medicines when pharmacies close, finding food and water, sanitation
Technology Without the Internet	Offline libraries, two-way radios, solar power, smart devices
People	Neighbors and community, older adults, grandchildren, pets, staying steady
Afterward	Insurance, disaster aid, avoiding scams, legal and estate papers

Coming Soon: The Printed Handbook

About 280 large-print pages, printed, bound, and mailed to your door. No printer needed.

The full handbook is almost ready. **Watch your inbox:** you'll be among the first to hear when it's available.