



Building 3-day readiness

A gradual and low-cost guide to being prepared for disruption*

THE THREE-STEP APPROACH: You do NOT need to buy an expensive emergency kit. Start with what you already have. Build up your supplies gradually when you can.

1. START: £0 Use what you already have: food, blankets, torches, batteries, chargers, power banks, warm clothing, a radio, a manual tin opener, first-aid supplies and information.

2. BUILD — A LITTLE AT A TIME: When you can, add one useful item during normal shopping. There is no need to buy everything at once.

3. WORK TOWARDS 3 DAYS: Gradually build enough food, water and essential supplies to manage for at least 72 hours.

1. FOOD — USE WHAT YOU ALREADY HAVE

- Choose foods that keep well and can be eaten with little or no cooking: cereal, crackers or oatcakes, tinned beans, fish or meat, tinned fruit and vegetables, soup or ready-to-eat meals, peanut butter, UHT milk, dried fruit, biscuits or cereal bars, tea/coffee and juice.
- Rotate, don't stockpile: put new items behind older ones, use what you store and replace what you use.

2. THE £1-AT-A-TIME APPROACH

- If your budget allows, add one useful item occasionally, for example:
 - ☐ week 1 — beans; ☐ week 2 — crackers; ☐ week 3 — UHT milk;
 - ☐ week 4 — tinned fruit; ☐ week 5 — cereal bars. Prices vary, so choose what is affordable for you.
- If you cannot afford extra food this week, don't buy it. Your normal food comes first.

3. WATER — BUILD TOWARDS THE TARGET

- Current UK Government preparedness research uses 3 litres of drinking water per person per day as the planning figure — 9 litres per person for 3 days.
People 3-day target: 1 = 9 litres, 2 = 18 litres, 3 = 27 litres, 4 = 36 litres
- If you cannot afford this amount today, start with what you can safely store and build gradually. Think about where you could obtain water during an outage and follow advice from your water company and local authority.

4. USE WHAT YOU ALREADY HAVE

- ☐ Light: torch and spare batteries. ☐ Power: phone charger/power bank. ☐ Warmth: blankets, warm clothes and sleeping bags. ☐ Information: battery/solar/wind-up FM radio, a paper list of important numbers and copies of key documents.

5. DON'T BUY SPECIALIST EQUIPMENT FIRST

- A camping stove can be useful if you already have one, but it is not the first priority. Focus first on water, food, light, warmth, essential medicines and information.
- CARBON MONOXIDE WARNING:** Never use a BBQ, camping stove or other fuel-burning appliance indoors unless it is specifically designed and certified for indoor use. Never use a cooker or oven to heat your home.

6. MAKE IT WORK FOR YOUR HOUSEHOLD

Plan for anything your household cannot easily manage without:

- ☐ Baby formula ☐ Pet food/water/medicines ☐ Special diets or allergies
- ☐ Mobility equipment, hearing-aid batteries ☐ Essential medicines, spare glasses
- ☐ Children's comfort items.

* Guidance note: the 3 litres/person/day figure and several preparedness categories in this leaflet reflect the UK Government's 2026 household preparedness research. This leaflet is practical guidance, not a legal requirement. Always follow current instructions from emergency services, government and your local authority. [Ver. 01 24/09/2026]



7. KNOW WHERE TO GET HELP

You are not expected to choose between preparing and feeding your family.

- ☐ Sign up for the Priority Services Register (PSR), a free UK wide service which provides extra advice and support, including when there's an interruption to your electricity, gas or water supply.
- ☐ Your local council and voluntary sector may have support available for food, energy, water, hygiene and essential items. Support varies by area.

8. YOUR LOW-COST 3-DAY CHECK

£0 START: ☐ What food, water, torches, blankets, chargers and medicines do I already have?

BUILD: ☐ What is one affordable useful item I can add when I can?

PLAN: ☐ Do I know how to turn off utilities, get official information and contact someone who may need help?

HOUSEHOLD NEEDS: ☐ Have I considered babies, pets, medicines, mobility, hearing aids or special diets?

9. KNOWLEDGE CHECK

- ☐ How to call emergency services - 999
- ☐ Basic first aid/CPR
- ☐ NHS advice line - 111
- ☐ How to shut off household utilities
- ☐ Power cut reporting procedures – 105
- ☐ Emergency Alert system recognition
- ☐ Family meeting place
- ☐ How to register for utility company Priority User List

THE GOAL: Look after your household while services are disrupted — not to expect the worst. Three days is a goal to work towards, not a test you must pass today.

• Start with what you have. • Build gradually. • Use what you store. • Replace what you use. • Ask for help when you need it. • Don't go without today's essentials to prepare for tomorrow's emergency.

DO WHAT YOU CAN. Check the "Ready for 3 days" guide for more advice on preparing your household for power cuts, water outages, severe weather and other disruption