LAST-MINUTE SHTF PREPPING GUIDE

BASED ON OUR FLORIDA HURRICANE SOP FOR PEOPLE WHO DIDN'T PREPARE

Get the essentials squared away while stores, pumps, and pharmacies are still open.

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A practical, last-minute checklist for water, food, medicine, fuel, communications, and getting your household ready.

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LAST-MINUTE SHTF PREPPING GUIDE
BEFORE STORES CLOSE

If stores are still open, the pumps are still running, then you've still got time to get a few things squared away. Don't go blowing money on gear you don't need. Take care of the basics that will matter if the power, phones, or supply chain go sideways.

Survival Dispatch is based in Florida. My family has many decades of experience prepping for hurricanes. The following list is what I give to people who ask me for guidance at the last minute when they haven't done their due diligence. Feel free to share it with anybody you want.

Godspeed,
Chris Heaven, Founder
Survival Dispatch News

1. WATER FIRST

- Get drinking water. Figure at least one gallon per person, per day.
- Fill the clean jugs and containers you've already got at home.
- Fill the bathtub for flushing toilets. That is not your drinking water.
- If you can find a decent water filter or purification tablets, pick them up.

2. FOOD THAT DOESN'T REQUIRE COOKING

- Grab canned meat, beans, soup, and vegetables. Things you'll actually eat.
- Peanut butter, crackers, nuts, and protein bars are easy wins.
- Don't overlook shelf-stable milk, formula, or anything your kids need.
- Make sure you've got a manual can opener. An electric one won't do you much good.
- Get enough dog and cat food to make it through at least a week.

3. FUEL AND TRANSPORTATION

- Fill the tanks on every vehicle you own. Don't put that off until morning.
- Top off approved gas cans if you have them. Store them safely, away from the house and ignition sources.
- Check your tires, including the spare. A flat is the last thing you need.
- Park so you can get out without shuffling vehicles around.

4. MEDICATIONS AND FIRST AID

- Pick up prescription refills if they're due and the pharmacy will fill them.
- Grab the over-the-counter medicines your family normally uses.
- Restock bandages, gauze, antiseptic, and disposable gloves.
- Get batteries or backup power for hearing aids and essential medical equipment.
- Think about what the kids and older family members need every single day.

5. CASH AND FINANCES

- Get some cash, preferably smaller bills. A hundred-dollar bill won't help much if nobody can make change.
- Don't count on ATMs or card readers working during an outage.
- Buy what you need while the payment systems are still up.
- Keep that cash somewhere secure and easy for you to reach.

6. LIGHTING AND POWER

- Get flashlights and headlamps, plus the right batteries. Check what you've already got.
- Put every power bank and portable power station on charge now.
- Charge phones, laptops, radios, and rechargeable lights. All of them.
- LED lanterns are a better choice than open flames inside the house.
- Test the generator and check the fuel. Run it outdoors, well away from doors, windows, and vents. Never in a garage.

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7. COMMUNICATIONS

- Charge your handheld radios and any spare battery packs.
- Pick up a battery-powered AM/FM or weather radio if you don't have one.
- Download offline maps before the cell network gets overloaded or goes down.
- Put important phone numbers and addresses on paper. Not just in your phone.
- Agree on check-in times and two places to meet if the family gets separated.

8. SANITATION AND HYGIENE

- Toilet paper, heavy trash bags, and disinfectant. Get them now.
- Grab soap, hand sanitizer, and baby wipes. You'll use all three.
- Don't forget diapers or feminine hygiene supplies if your household needs them.
- A bucket, heavy liners, and absorbent material will give you a backup toilet option.

9. HOME SECURITY AND SAFETY

- Walk the house. Check doors, windows, locks, and outside lights.
- Check the batteries in your smoke and carbon monoxide alarms.
- Know where your fire extinguishers are and make sure they're usable.
- Secure anything outside that could blow around or block an exit.
- Make sure the family knows where the emergency gear is kept.

10. GET YOUR HOUSE READY BEFORE BED

- Get the laundry done and the dishes washed while you can.
- Everybody who needs a shower should take one.
- Freeze a few bottles of water to help the freezer hold its temperature longer.
- Check your refrigerator and freezer settings. Keep the doors shut if the power fails.
- Finish filling your clean drinking-water containers.
- Know where the main water shutoff and electrical panel are. Don't go looking for them in the dark.

11. PREPARE TO LEAVE

- Put a three-day bag together for each person. It doesn't need to be fancy.
- Pack medicine, water, food, a change of clothes, hygiene supplies, and a flashlight.
- Protect IDs, insurance information, and important paperwork from water.
- Have a paper map and more than one route out of your area.
- Decide what will make you leave before you're under pressure to make that call.

12. DON’T FORGET THE PEOPLE AROUND YOU

- Check on elderly relatives and neighbors. See what they're short on.
- Anyone relying on powered medical equipment needs a backup plan, not wishful thinking.
- Talk with the neighbors you trust. Find out who can help whom.
- Make sure everybody in your house knows the plan. Don't assume they do.

IF YOU ONLY HAVE 30 MINUTES

- Fill the gas tank.
- Get drinking water.
- Buy three days of food you can eat without cooking.
- Pick up essential medication.
- Get some cash in small bills.
- Buy flashlights and batteries if you're short.
- Get home, charge your gear, and fill your water containers.

BOTTOM LINE: Get your water, food, medicine, fuel, communications squared away now. If nothing happens, you're still better prepared for the next emergency.

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