WHERE DO I START IF I HAVE NEVER PREPARED FOR ANYTHING?

Start with a written plan, not a shopping list. Ready.gov puts planning first: meet your household, write down contacts and meeting places, then build a kit with water, food and a radio over time. Add one item each week, and the plan keeps working while you build.

THE STEPS

01 Make the plan first: contacts, meeting places, and who does what.

02 Store water at one gallon per person per day.

03 Add food that needs no cooking.

04 Add a flashlight, a radio and extra batteries.

05 Add copies of documents and a small amount of cash.

06 Review everything on a schedule.

THE CHECKLIST

- ☐ Plan written
- ☐ Water
- ☐ Food
- ☐ Light and radio
- ☐ Documents and cash
- ☐ Review date set

Sources: Ready.gov, Make a Plan; Ready.gov, Build a Kit; Ready.gov, Financial Preparedness. Last reviewed November 17, 2026. General planning information, not medical, legal or financial advice.