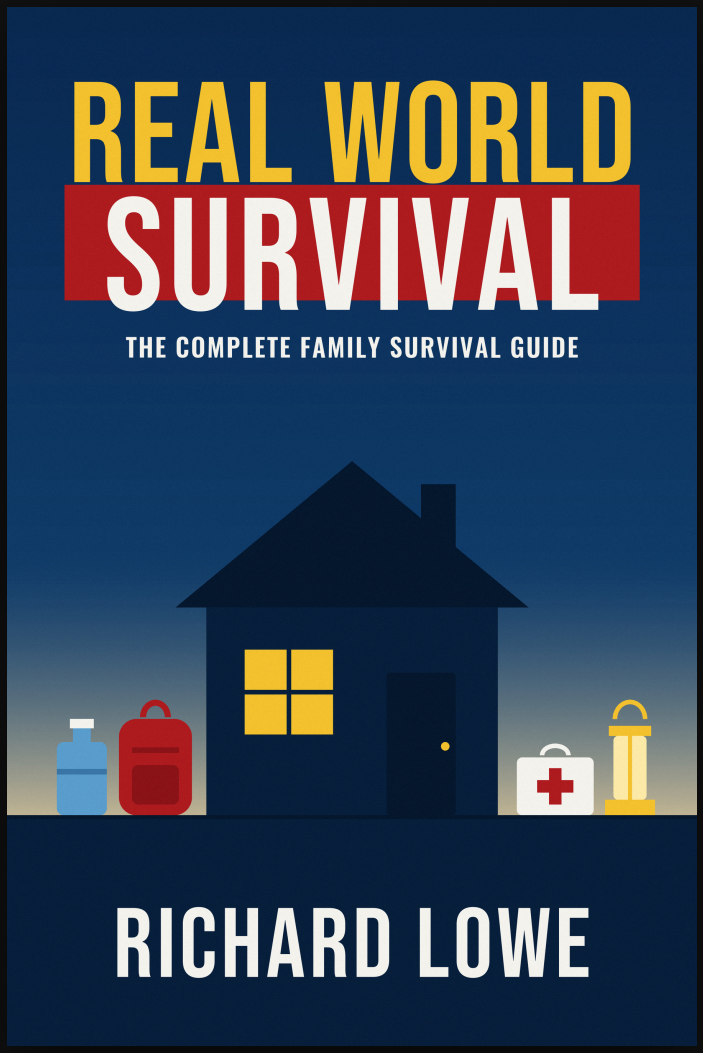
A FREE COMPANION TO REAL WORLD SURVIVAL

Our Family Emergency Plan

A fill-in workbook that turns a kitchen-table conversation into a written plan everyone in your house can follow.



RICHARD LOWE

How to Use This Workbook

Fill it in together, keep it in your disaster planning notebook, and put a copy in your go-bag.

Real World Survival makes the point early: buying water bottles and a flashlight is shopping. Planning means knowing your risks, knowing your options, and having procedures everyone in the house can follow when things go sideways. This workbook walks you through writing those procedures down.

1. **The family conversation** and who lives here.
2. **Know your area**: hazards and the places you'll need.
3. **The home walk-through.**
4. **The communication plan** and meeting places.
5. **Stay or go**: evacuation routes and destinations.
6. **The first 24 hours**, on one card.
7. **Paperwork and the twice-a-year review.**

> *No plan survives contact with an actual disaster. The goal is to think through the most likely scenarios in advance so you can make better decisions when you're stressed and scared.*

Part 1: The Family Conversation

Sit down with everyone you live with. Expect someone to call it paranoid. Have the talk anyway.

- ☐ We talked honestly about the emergencies most likely where we live
- ☐ We talked about where each of us might be when one hits: work, school, traveling
- ☐ Everyone was involved, including the children
- ☐ The children heard it in age-appropriate words: no scaring, no lying

Who lives here

NAME	WHERE THEY USUALLY ARE BY DAY	MEDICATIONS, EQUIPMENT, MOBILITY OR OTHER NEEDS
Pets		

For anyone with a disability or chronic illness

Each person completes a personal assessment. Write the answers on the back of this page.

- [ ] Do I need equipment that runs on electricity, like an oxygen machine? How long does the battery last?
- [ ] If I use an electric wheelchair or scooter, do I have a manual backup?
- [ ] How do I get out if the elevators stop or debris blocks the path? How do I reach the shelter area?
- [ ] Do I have several days of my medications on hand most of the time?
- [ ] Who helps with personal care after a disaster? What does my service animal need?

Part 2: Know Your Area

Look it up on a map, print it (you may have no internet later), then drive it with the notebook on the seat.

Hazards near us

- [ ] Chemical plant or manufacturing facility
- [ ] Superfund site
- [ ] Buried gas lines or oil pipelines
- [ ] High-tension or transmission lines
- [ ] Railway, freeway or freight route
- [ ] Bridge that could fail in a quake or storm
- [ ] Flood zone, levee or low ground
- [ ] Brush or forest (fire zone)

Places we'll need

PLACE	NAME AND ADDRESS	ROUTE NOTES (BRIDGES, FLOODING, ALTERNATES)
Hospital		
Police station		
Fire station		
Grocery store		
Hardware store		
Gas station		
Schools		
Friends' homes		

Your county emergency management office and city or county website list official evacuation routes and evacuee centers.

Part 3: The Home Walk-Through

Draw a floor plan and make copies. Stand in each room and look at it the way a disaster would.

Getting out

- [ ] Two escape routes marked from every room, usable by everyone in the house
- [ ] Every lock opens from inside without a key
- [ ] No window or door painted or sealed shut; nothing blocking the way

Utilities

- [ ] Electrical panel located, not locked (or key handy), flashlight hanging beside it
- [ ] Gas meter and shutoff valve located; a wrench that fits kept nearby (don't practice turning it)
- [ ] Water heater strapped in its upper and lower thirds
- [ ] Carbon monoxide alarm working; generator only outdoors, 20 feet from the house, with a transfer switch

Things that fall, fly or burn

- [ ] Cabinet latches on anything heavy, sharp or dangerous
- [ ] Tall shelves moved away from exits or secured to the wall; heavy items moved low
- [ ] Pictures on earthquake hooks; putty or a guardrail on open shelves
- [ ] Windows filmed, shuttered or replaced, starting with bedroom, living room and kitchen
- [ ] Roof and chimney checked for loose bricks; gutters and drainage clear
- [ ] House bolted to its foundation (earthquake country)
- [ ] Brush cleared around the house as local rules require (fire country)

Fire extinguishers

- [ ] Multipurpose (ABC) extinguisher at the kitchen exit, away from the stove
- [ ] One in the garage and at least one on every floor
- [ ] Everyone knows: pull the pin, aim low, squeeze, sweep
- [ ] Gauge checked monthly

Safe room

Where we go for a tornado, storm or break-in: _____

The book recommends your local CERT class, which covers extinguisher use and much more.

Part 4: The Communication Plan

In a big disaster, nobody calls each other. Everybody reports to someone outside the area.

ROLE	NAME AND CITY	PHONE, TEXT, EMAIL
Primary out-of-area contact		
Secondary out-of-area contact		
Backup contact		

Pick people who answer their phones and check their messages. Long-distance calls sometimes get through when local lines are jammed, and texts often go through when voice calls won't.

Our protocol

1. If the emergency is just our home, get to safety and call 911.
2. If it's area-wide, email and text both contacts: what happened and the status of everyone you know about.
3. Wait a few minutes. If either one acknowledges, don't call. If neither does, call and leave a brief status.
4. Don't call locally unless you must. Send an update every hour while the networks work.
5. Everyone outside the area calls the contacts for news, never into the disaster area.

Meeting places

MEETING PLACE	WHERE EXACTLY
Outside the house (fire or local emergency)	
Outside the neighborhood (can't get home)	

Choose places that mean something to your family: the big tree in the front yard, the community center, a familiar church.

Test date: _____ Both contacts replied? _____

Part 5: Stay or Go

Decide on an honest assessment of the threat, not emotions or wishful thinking.

The three questions

QUESTION	OUR ANSWER FOR THIS THREAT
What's the worst case if we stay?	
What's the worst case if we leave?	
Which can we better prepare for and handle?	

> *If you're unsure whether to evacuate, err on the side of leaving early.*

Where we'd go

DIRECTION	DESTINATION AND CONTACT	TAKES PETS? CONFIRMED?
North		
South		
East		
West		

Primary route out: _____ **Alternate:** _____

We leave when: _____

- [ ] Tank kept full in fire and hurricane season; tires and fluids checked
- [ ] Routes driven ahead of time and timed under normal traffic
- [ ] Hurricane: leave before tropical-storm winds arrive, never in a lull or the eye
- [ ] Wildfire: leave at the first warning, in daylight if you can

Write it on one card per scenario

The book's ADHD chapter offers advice that works for anyone: small and specific beats long and exhaustive. Make a separate short card for each scenario you face.

- [ ] Earthquake card
- [ ] Evacuation card
- [ ] Shelter-in-place card
- [ ] House fire card

Part 6: The First 24 Hours

Cut this page out, laminate it, and keep one on the wall and one in the go-bag.

1. **Check for injuries.** Serious bleeding, breathing problems and unconsciousness first. Scrapes wait.
2. **Put on shoes and clothes.** Broken glass and weather turn small problems into big ones.
3. **Check the building.** Cracks, sagging ceilings, damaged supports. When in doubt, get out once the shaking stops.
4. **Check utilities.** Gas off only if you smell or hear a leak. Power off if you see sparks, never while standing in water. Water off if pipes broke.
5. **Take stock.** Food, water, medical supplies, lights, batteries. Never ration drinking water.
6. **Reach out.** Text the out-of-area contacts. Check on neighbors.
7. **Document.** Photos, notes and receipts start now, for insurance and assistance.

Part 7: Paperwork and the Twice-a-Year Review

Read your actual policies, not the marketing summary.

Insurance check

- ☐ Do we have flood insurance? (Standard homeowner's policies exclude it.)
- ☐ Earthquake coverage, where we need it?
- ☐ Is wind-driven rain covered, or only wind?
- ☐ Replacement cost or actual cash value?
- ☐ Limits on temporary living expenses, in dollars and months?
- ☐ Are generators, solar panels and large supply stocks covered to their value?

Documents

- ☐ Identity documents
- ☐ Financial records
- ☐ Insurance policies
- ☐ Medical information
- ☐ Legal documents and will
- ☐ Property records and photos
- ☐ Encrypted scans in the cloud
- ☐ Copies with a trusted relative

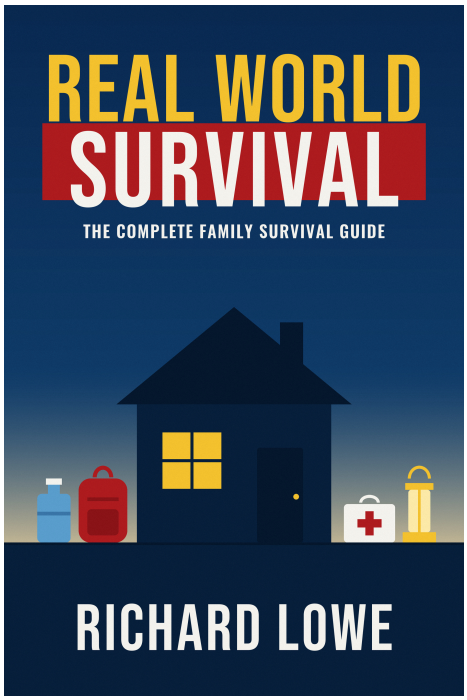
Review log

Review everything at least twice a year, and whenever someone moves, a number changes or a new hazard appears.

Reviewed on: _____ _____ _____ _____

The Whole Story

This workbook holds your plan. Real World Survival holds the reasons behind it: what to expect from each kind of disaster, how to store water and food, power your home, care for children, older adults and pets, and recover afterward, drawn from Richard Lowe's own earthquakes, wildfires and hurricanes.



Real World Survival:
Preparing Without Becoming a Prepper
Prepared, Not Paranoid

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