



the Survival
MOM

7 Things to Do When Panic Sets In

1. Assess the situation (a.k.a.: stop panicking!)

Your panic served its purpose by letting you know how serious the situation is facing you. Take some deep breaths and take a few minutes to think.

Where are your family members? Do you need to get them or are they safer where they are?

What is the exact situation and how long will it last?

Is it best to stay in place or do you need to leave?

What do you need to have on hand or to take with you for the duration of the situation?

Make a list and then get moving. Here are some more steps to follow, depending on how much time you have. If you only have 30 minutes to evacuate, you should probably just do the last two steps – gather the important items, pack them, and get out. However, if you have a few hours or a few days, the rest of the steps could be key to surviving.

2. Get gas

Fill up your gas tank and any [gas cans](#) you may have on hand. You can buy a [four-pack](#) on Amazon. *Do not* use any random container you might find to [store gasoline](#). It's just not worth the risk. It's better to be [safe in your gasoline storage](#) than, well, you know.

If you have to leave, you'll want to have gas to get where you want to go. It isn't at all unusual for gas stations along evacuation routes to have long lines, run out of fuel, or radically raise their prices. Buying early and bringing some gas cans with you will save you the hassle of dealing with that.

Even if you plan to stay where you are, you may be forced to leave at some point and you want to be able to do that, if you have to. Depending on the scenario, gas prices may rise quickly, leaving you unable to afford more fuel and stuck only being able to go a shorter distance or even forced to

shelter in place, no matter the danger. Also, if electricity might be out for a long time, the [gas pumps could stop working](#) for a while.

3. Get cash

If there is a chance electricity could be down for any length of time, you need to get some cash to have on hand to purchase goods or services. ATMs and cash registers won't work without electricity. **If you have the time, try to change the \$20 bills out for smaller bills so you can pay an exact amount instead of overpaying if a store or person doesn't have exact change.**

If you ask, you can easily get \$100 in \$1 bills, \$10 in quarters, etc. because that's how banks [bundle cash](#).

4. Get food and water

Fill empty containers in your house with water. Buy water, too. If you have a [water BOB](#), go ahead and fill it but keep in mind that will only be useful if you shelter in place or upon return to your home. It is not something you can take with you during an evacuation.

Buy food that doesn't need refrigerated and can be cooked easily without power. Canned goods and soup, along with shelf stable nuts, fruit, and crackers, would be good to have on hand. There are also pre-packed meals that can be eaten cold from the package. As one example, [Tasty Bite](#) has a variety of Indian entrees available from Costco and some markets. Target has a similar product under their house label.

Consider, too, how you would cook, and if you need matches and firewood, charcoal and lighter fluid, or extra propane tanks. Bleach for cleaning and disposable plates and silverware could come in handy. Toilet paper, diapers, and feminine hygiene products should also be grabbed if you have a chance to run to the store and don't have a stockpile at home.

Don't forget about your pets! They need a [food / water bowl](#), carrier, favorite toys, somewhere to sleep, and proof of vaccinations. Don't forget food and treats! If you have a dog, bring their leash, doody-bags, and a muzzle, if there is even the slightest chance they might conceivably need one.

Actually, you should keep proof of their vaccinations in with your important paperwork because without it, they won't be allowed in many places, most specifically including shelters, which may not take pets under any circumstances. In addition, if your vet's office is destroyed in whatever is headed your way, this may be your only proof. Do you really want to go to the hassle and expense of getting new vaccinations? During an evacuation? Exactly.

5. Get medicine

What prescriptions are necessary for your family to survive the duration? Do you have enough? If not, a call to your doctor or pharmacy would be worth trying to get more on hand. Even if you do have enough, **ask your doctor for a letter stating any chronic medical conditions that require medication and what that medication is, including dosage.** Keep this with your important paperwork.

Why do you need the letter if you have the medication? In an emergency, you could grab an old, empty bottle by accident, drop or otherwise lose it as you are leaving, spill the pills, or any number of other things resulting in not having any medication. If you have a letter from the doctor with this information, it will make it a whole lot easier to have another doctor (who doesn't know you) provide a replacement prescription.

If that is not a possibility, research homeopathic or natural remedies and try getting those options to have on hand. (For example, Survival Mom explores options for dealing with diabetes [here](#).)

6. Figure out security options

What are your options for keeping yourself safe during this situation? If you have guns, do you have enough ammo? Does everyone who needs to know how to use the guns? **Laws vary state by state for concealed carry, open carry and transporting firearms – check what they are in your state and any state you will be traveling to or through.**

What other weapons do you have? Do you have a knife? Baseball bat? Do you have hunting weapons, including bow and arrow, black powder firearms, or larger knives? Who knows how to use them and do you have all the supplies you need? If you plan to travel with them, do you know of any restrictions on their usage or carrying in any states you will travel through or your final destination? (Regulations on black powder weapons are often different than for more modern weapons.)

Gather [important papers](#) that you don't want to lose or have fall into the wrong hands. (This is a step you can shortcut by always keeping everything in one easy-to-find-and-carry container, such as a [fire safe box](#).) This includes electronic devices like thumb drives, laptops, tablets, and cell phones. If you have a backup hard drive with files and/or photos, gather that as well. Don't forget charging cords and cubes.

Documents should include medical files, social security cards for everyone in the family, passports, pink slips, birth certificates, immigration papers, copies of driver's licenses / ID cards, and green cards. Don't forget custody papers, if they apply. In addition to the information mentioned above, **your medical file should include immunization and vaccine records for everyone in the family, human or not.** Again, this reduces the chances of having to get shots because no one can confirm you have had them without records. Doctors have to provide immunization records free of charge. (The rest of your file will cost you.)

Make your kids responsible for their own data security. They can, and should, gather their own electronic devices, including school-use ones and thumb drives, and the cords and cubes they need, as well. If they travel often, including weekend trips to grandparents' homes, they may already have this down pat - if you regularly make them responsible for packing their own things.

7. Pack up

When it's time to leave, gather everything you need to survive and start packing up. Use blankets to cover valuables that can be seen from outside the car. Put valuable documents, medicines, and electronics together in one bag that stays with you all the time.

If you plan to shelter in place, **know that any situation can turn and you may need to get out abruptly.** You may want to start packing up bug out bags for everyone in your family and gather food, supplies and important documents together near the door, or even pre-packed in your vehicle, so you can grab them quickly if you do need to leave.

Final thoughts

If you have time, you might want to consider contacting neighbors, friends, and family members to not only let them know about your situation and your plans, but also so they can prepare as well. Use your panic to your advantage by making you take your situation seriously and do everything in your power to ensure you and your family's survival.