

The Act of Surviving: At a Glance

One page, the whole sequence. Each row links to its full chapter for the actual how-to.

RIGHT NOW Is it safe?	Drop/Cover/Hold On · lowest room · get out, stay out · don't drown. Make it safe (utility shutoff, seal air, move rooms), or evacuate. Full decision tree and four reflexes: What to Do Right Now.
WITHIN 1 HOUR Assess	Check people for injury, sort by severity if more than one hurt. Check hazards (gas, damage, lines) · account for pets. Text, don't call · turn on a radio for official information.
WITHIN 3 HOURS Stabilize	Confirm shelter is real (~2–3 hrs if sealed), not assumed. Treat injuries beyond the first check · get warm if needed. Count real water, food, and medication for the next 3 days.
WITHIN 24 HOURS Take Inventory	Walk the house, count what's actually there, not a guess. Check on nearby family · document damage before cleanup. Stand up sanitation if needed · guess at duration.
WITHIN 3 DAYS Settle In	Real rationing plan running, not just supplies sitting there. FIFO tracking started · scheduled comms check-ins. Isolate anyone sick · reassess duration honestly.
WITHIN 14 DAYS Extend, or stand down?	The explicit decision point, deliberate, not a slow drift. Redo the full assessment either way, things have changed. Tier 1 covers roughly this window, know which path you're on. → resolving? go to Recovery below · continuing? Tier 2 next
STILL GOING: THE OPERATING RHYTHM (TIER 2-4)	
WEEKS – MONTHS Running the Extended Plan	A weekly rhythm: standing slots for water, food, sanitation, fuel. Labor split by category, not decided fresh each day. Watch decision fatigue · reassess weekly or monthly.
INDEFINITE Sustaining Indefinitely	A seasonal rhythm: plant, grow, harvest, gather fuel for winter. Pace for an undefined horizon, real rest actually matters. Cross-train so no single person is a point of failure.
COMMUNITY Operating as a Community	Approach people you already trust first, one ring out. Regular check-ins, shared-resource scheduling, a live roster. Share the load deliberately, avoid burning out one person.
REACHABLE FROM ANY ROW ABOVE Recovery	Re-entry safety and documentation first, in that order. Then the claims process: insurance, FEMA, contractor vetting. Feed lessons back into Prepare, a new beginning, not an end.

Parts 1-5 grounded in the "rule of threes" and FEMA/Red Cross's 72-hour baseline. Tier 2-4 rhythms sourced to off-grid/homesteading and sustained-operations research.