PAST THE 14-DAY MARK

When No Help Is Coming

Somewhere around the 14-day mark, you decide, deliberately, whether you're continuing or standing down (that decision is walked through in full in Surviving's Extend or Stand Down chapter). If you're continuing, this is what continuing actually looks like day to day, not just "the first three days, but longer." It runs in two stages: a weekly rhythm once the stored buffer is close to gone, and a seasonal one if there's still no end in sight months later. This is also the single largest set of skill guides on the site, thirty-eight of them, because this is where deeper self-sufficiency projects stop being optional extras and start being the actual plan.

Running the extended plan

This is what continuing actually looks like day to day.

The real signal you've crossed into this stage

Not a date on a calendar. The stored buffer, the water, the food, the fuel you had set aside for exactly this, is genuinely gone or close to it, and there's no return-to-normal timeline in sight. That's the moment rationing what you had stops being the plan and producing or sourcing more becomes the plan instead.

A weekly rhythm, not a daily scramble

The first few days ran on hour-by-hour and day-by-day checkpoints because the situation itself was changing that fast. This stage is slower, and treating it like an ongoing emergency, reacting fresh every single day, burns people out faster than the actual workload requires. What worked in the acute phase (constant reassessment) becomes a liability here; what you need instead is a routine that repeats.

Give water sourcing and treatment, cooking from bulk stores, sanitation upkeep, fuel or power management, and a security check each a standing slot in the week, the same way a household would schedule chores in any long-running homestead operation, rather than deciding fresh each day whether they're getting done. A simple structure that holds up in practice: a fixed morning task

block, an afternoon block, and an evening block, with three genuinely non-negotiable tasks identified for the day rather than an open-ended list that never actually finishes.

What a week actually looks like

Time block	Task	Notes
Morning	Water run (2x/week)	Source and haul more if the stored supply is running low; treat before it's used
Morning	Cooking prep from bulk stores (daily)	Batch what you can; fewer fire/stove cycles beats cooking fresh every meal
Midday	Sanitation check (daily)	Toilet cover material, hand-washing station restocked
Afternoon	Dishes, batched (1–2x/day)	Not after every meal; batching cuts total water use
Afternoon	Laundry (1x/week)	Pick a fixed day; check the line if weather's turning
Evening	Fuel/power check (2x/week)	Fuel level, battery charge, generator run-time logged
Evening	Security check (daily)	Doors and windows secured, a walk of the property; see Security & Self-Defense
Evening	Trash/waste sort (daily)	Wet waste separated from dry as it's generated, not after

None of this has to happen at exactly these times or frequencies, what matters is that each task has a fixed slot at all, so it's a scheduled habit rather than a daily negotiation.

Labor allocation across categories

A fixed number of people now has to cover water, food, sanitation, security, and everything else, indefinitely, not for a single acute stretch. Assign standing responsibility for each category to a specific person or pair rather than handling whichever task feels most urgent that day; ad hoc assignment is what leads to some categories being neglected for days at a time while others get redundant attention.

Decision fatigue is a real cost, not a mood

Extended, uncertain situations measurably degrade decision-making, not because anyone's weak-willed, but because the same open questions get re-litigated every day: what to eat, what to fix first, whether it's safe to go outside. The most effective, low-cost way to reduce that load is the same one

Preparing's own Mental Health chapter already names for the household's psychological state: a predictable routine, decided once and then simply followed, rather than re-decided daily. Set the weekly rhythm above, and treat sticking to it, not re-optimizing it, as the actual goal for the first few weeks of this stage.

Sleep debt compounds the same problem directly: it's its own measurable cause of worse decisions, not just tiredness. If someone needs to be awake overnight, see the Physical Readiness skill guide's watch-rotation and napping section, decided once in advance, the same way the weekly rhythm above is.

A reassessment cadence of its own

The first few days gave you 24-hour, 3-day, and 14-day checkpoints, tight enough for an acute event. This stage needs a slower one, weekly or monthly, specifically so the shift into an indefinite operation doesn't happen by drift. Pick a day (tie it to something memorable, the same way Preparing's own FIFO rotation habit is tied to the twice-yearly clock change) and actually ask, out loud, whether this still looks like "extended" or whether it's become "indefinite."

> **If this is resolving**
>
> Not every extended situation stays extended. If things are genuinely wrapping up, go to Recovery instead of continuing through the rest of this page.

Sustaining indefinitely

The weekly rhythm above was still fundamentally a response to a disruption, extended, but with an edge somewhere out there. This is different: the household is no longer waiting for anything to come back online. It's operating.

The real signal you've crossed into this stage

Not a length of time, a shift in posture. You've stopped waiting for external recovery and started building toward a genuinely self-sufficient standing operation, the level Preparing's own Tier 3 sections and the addenda's Stage 3 content assume a household has actually reached. If the weekly-rhythm question above was "how do we keep going until this ends," this stage's question is "how do we keep going, period."

A seasonal rhythm replaces the weekly one

The weekly structure above doesn't disappear, it keeps running underneath, water still gets sourced and dishes still get washed on the same rhythm as before. What's new here is a much larger cycle sitting on top of that weekly one, and it's this larger cycle that now governs what matters most:

Season	Primary focus	Where the how-to lives
Spring	Planting and irrigation setup	Water and Food addenda, Stage 3
Summer	Growing-season upkeep and watering	Water and Food addenda, Stage 3
Fall	Harvest and preservation	Food addendum, Stage 3
Ahead of winter	Fuel-gathering and equipment maintenance	Energy & Heat addendum, Stage 3

Missing a seasonal window (planting late, not curing enough firewood before the first hard freeze) isn't a one-day setback the way missing an earlier task was; it can cost you the rest of the year. The how-to for each of these belongs to the categories that already own it, this page names the rhythm, the addenda linked above cover the actual technique.

Pacing over an undefined horizon

The weekly-rhythm stage could be run as a sprint because it had a rough end point. This stage explicitly doesn't, and pacing yourself as if it does is a fast route to burnout. Sustained-operations research from contexts that share this exact problem, no fixed end date, real physical labor, is consistent on the core point even though it's drawn from a different setting than a household emergency: performance holds up when real rest is actually protected (something in the range of 7 to 9 hours of sleep where at all possible, short deliberate naps when it isn't), not when everyone just pushes through on willpower. Treat rest as part of the operating plan, not as the thing that gets cut first when the task list is long.

Cross-training against a single point of failure

Earlier in an extended situation, a household can often absorb one person being unavailable for a few days. At this stage, if the only person who knows how to treat water safely, run the wood stove, manage the garden, or stand a security watch is hurt or sick, the whole operation is exposed, not just delayed. Deliberately cross-train a second person on every task that only one person currently owns. This is the same logic Preparing's own Tier 4 sections apply at community scale, applied one level earlier, inside the household itself.

If this is resolving

Sustained operation isn't the only path from here either. If things genuinely resolve at this stage, go to Recovery.

Next: operating as a community

Once the household itself is stable at this level, the next real lever isn't more household self-sufficiency, it's extending outward. See Building Something That Lasts.

The skill guides for this stage

Thirty-eight of this site's seventy-nine skill guides apply here, by far the largest set on the site. Most are capability guides: things worth building over weeks or months once the acute phase has passed, not things you needed finished before anything happened. Grouped by category, same order as the rest of the site.

Water

- Measuring Your Water Intake
- Sourcing & Hauling Water
- Building a Biosand Water Filter
- Collecting Water From Snow, Dew & Condensation
- Water Testing: Strips, Labs & Field Methods

Food

- Calorie Planning for Your Food Supply
- Food Preservation: Canning, Dehydrating & Smoking
- What to Grow: Crop Selection & Seed Saving
- Solar Cooking: Box, Panel & Parabolic
- Building a Walipini: The Underground Greenhouse
- Improvised Cold Storage: Root Cellars & Evaporative Cooling
- Hunting, Trapping & Field Dressing Basics
- Foraging Wild Edibles Basics
- Backyard Poultry & Small Livestock Basics
- Row Crop & Raised Bed Gardening
- Growing in a Walipini

Sanitation & Hygiene

- Bathroom & Hygiene Without Running Water
- Household Trash & Pet Waste Disposal
- Death, Burial & Body Disposition
- Composting Toilets: Humanure, Vermicomposting & Incineration
- Soap Making: Lye & Oils
- Greywater Disposal Basics

- Hydroponics & Aquaponics Basics
- Microgreens

Medical Care

- Pregnancy, Childbirth & Newborn Care
- Isolating a Sick Household Member
- Herbal Medicine & the Home Apothecary
- Dental Emergencies & Basic Care

Energy & Heat

- Fire-Starting: Ignition, Fire Lays & Extinguishing
- Building a Jean Pain Compost Heat Mound
- Building a Rocket Mass Heater
- DIY Solar Water Heater
- Pedal Power: Bicycle Generators

Access & Functional Needs

- DIY Assistive Equipment Fabrication

Mental Health

- Substance Withdrawal: What's Actually Dangerous

Economic & Financial

- Barter & Local Trade Systems

Transportation

- Land Navigation Without GPS
- Basic Bicycle Maintenance & Repair

Where to go from here

- Running the Extended Plan and Sustaining Indefinitely: the original chapters this page is drawn from, part of Surviving's full chronological sequence.
- Operating as a Community: extending this same logic beyond one household.
- Surviving the First Days: back to the 24-hour to 72-hour stretch, if that's actually where you are.
- The Addenda: the Stage 3 depth referenced throughout this page, one category at a time.
- Ready, Set, Ready: if none of this is built yet, start there instead.

Sources

- Homestead weekly-chore and daily-routine structuring, including the "three must-do goals" time-management technique: Grow Where You Sow; Off Gridy
- Disruption of routine as a driver of psychological distress in extended crises, and disaster fatigue: Resilience.org; PEASI
- Seasonal cycle and category-specific Stage 3 skill depth: this site's own Water addendum, Food addendum, and Energy & Heat addendum

- Sustained-operations rest and fatigue-management guidance (adapted from a military/expeditionary context, the closest available literature on pacing indefinite physical operations): Human Performance Resource Center (HPRC)
- Cross-training against single-point-of-failure risk in a self-sufficient household: The Homesteading Hippy