

PREP 101:

AN INTRODUCTION TO GETTING PREPARED



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Our mission at Emergency Essentials is “Helping People Prepare.” We hope this overview of preparedness points helps you catch the vision of getting better prepared against a crisis, large or small, natural or man-made.

This e-guide is only an introduction; it will help you get the ball rolling as you learn the basics of emergency preparedness. It is full of links to more in-depth information that will more thoroughly explain everything you need to know to get properly prepared and enjoy the peace of mind that follows.



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WHEN DISASTER STRIKES...

THE FIRST 3+ DAYS OF AN EMERGENCY

WHY PREPARE?

Preparing for disasters ahead of time will bring you peace of mind, increase physical comfort, and reduce or eliminate dependence on outside help.

SURVIVAL: Staying alive is your first priority in an emergency. Get the food, water, and gear you need to stay alive until help arrives (anywhere from 3-14+ days).

INDEPENDENCE: Once you've got your survival needs covered, expand your supplies to last longer and cover more areas so you won't be dependent on outside help.

COMFORT: When you're prepared to take care of your needs, then think about the items, skills, and preparations that will allow you to not only survive but thrive on your own in a crisis.



HOW TO PREPARE

BUY OR BUILD a short-term survival kit (for at least 3 days). Then customize based on your needs

THE "BASICS OF PREPAREDNESS" are the same for every scenario—you'll always want the 12 Tools covered, no matter the situation. Use the 12 tools as a minimum level of preparation, and build from there. Start with your 3+ day kit, then build an at-home supply covering the same 12 areas.

UNDERSTAND AND PREPARE for disasters that are likely in your area. Now you know that the basics are the same for every disaster—but there *are* additional things you can do to prepare for and protect against specific disasters. Know which scenarios are likely in your area, and check out our "Ounce of Prevention" guide for tips.

WATER STORAGE & TREATMENT

THE IMPORTANCE OF H2O

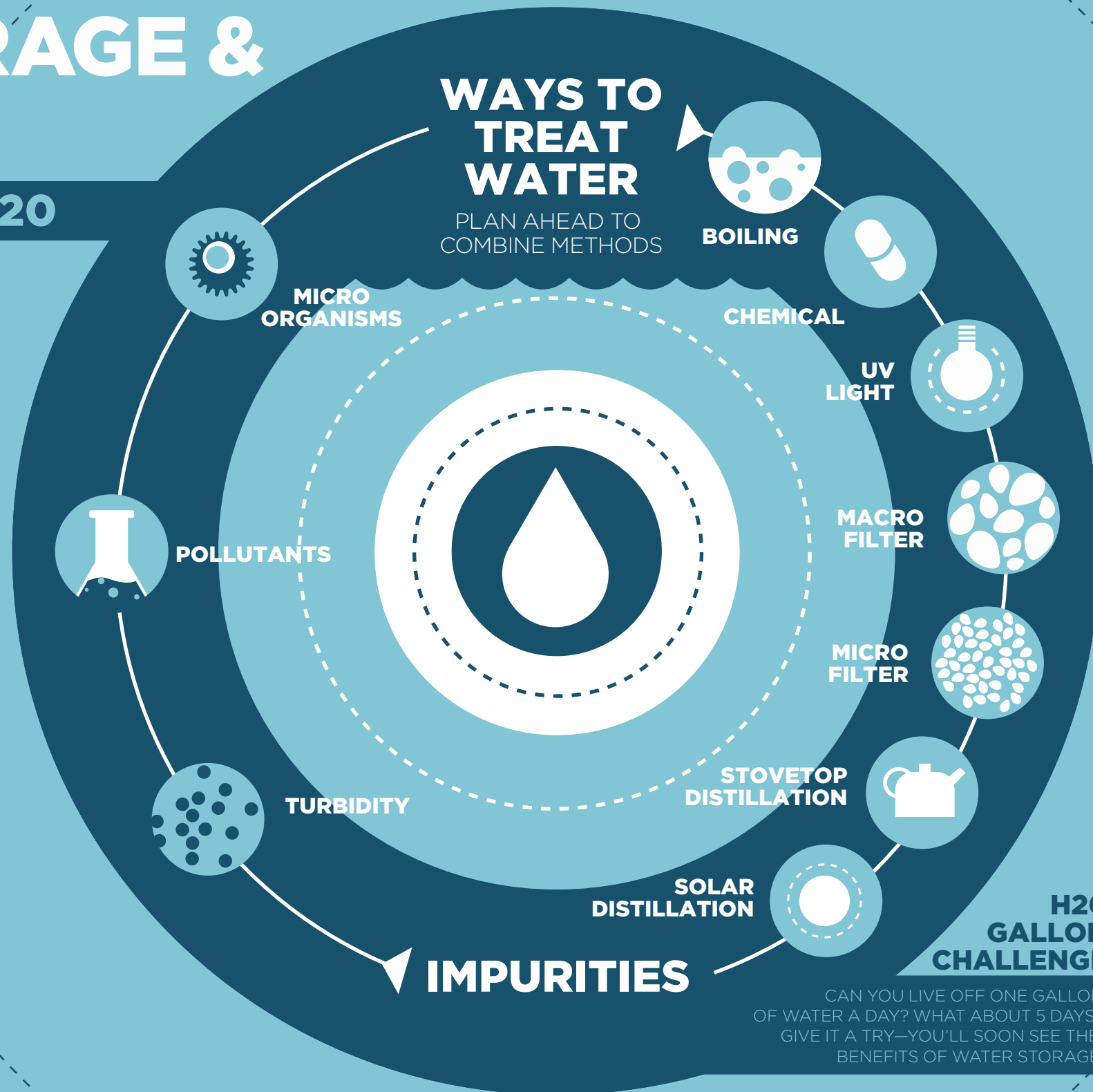
Water is critical for your survival. In a disaster, you'll need it to keep hydrated and clean. It's also essential in cooking (especially rehydrating food storage), laundry, sanitation, and first aid.

The average American uses 70 gallons of water per day. The more usable water you have in an emergency, the better.

HOW MUCH WATER STORAGE DO I NEED?

Experts recommend 14 gallons per person as a minimum. That's one gallon per person per day for two weeks, which will only be enough for drinking and light hygiene. Store 3 gallons a day per person for more personal hygiene options, preparing emergency foods, and hand-washing a few clothes.

In addition to potable water, store filters and treatment options that will make "found" water safe to drink.



WATER STORAGE TIPS

YOU SHOULD HAVE STATIONARY AND PORTABLE water containers. At home, large barrels are excellent, but if you're forced to evacuate, you will need 5 or 7-gallon containers of water to take along.

COLOR COUNTS. Blue containers are dark to restrict light and the growth of algae. Also, blue indicates water, while red indicates fuel. Get the right containers and the right color for the job.

USE ONLY CLEAN, FOOD-GRADE CONTAINERS and avoid used milk jugs and glass containers. Milk jugs are biodegradable and glass breaks easily, putting your supply at risk when you need it most.

START WITH THE CLEANEST WATER you can get longer shelf life and less treatment.

TREAT WATER WHEN YOU USE IT, not when you store it.

STORE AWAY FROM SUNLIGHT—the darker the better.

PLACE BARRELS AND JUGS ON A PALLET or raised on 2 x 4's to allow air to circulate underneath and to avoid leaching of chemicals from the floor.

ROTATE YOUR WATER ONCE A YEAR for freshness and purity.

FOOD STORAGE

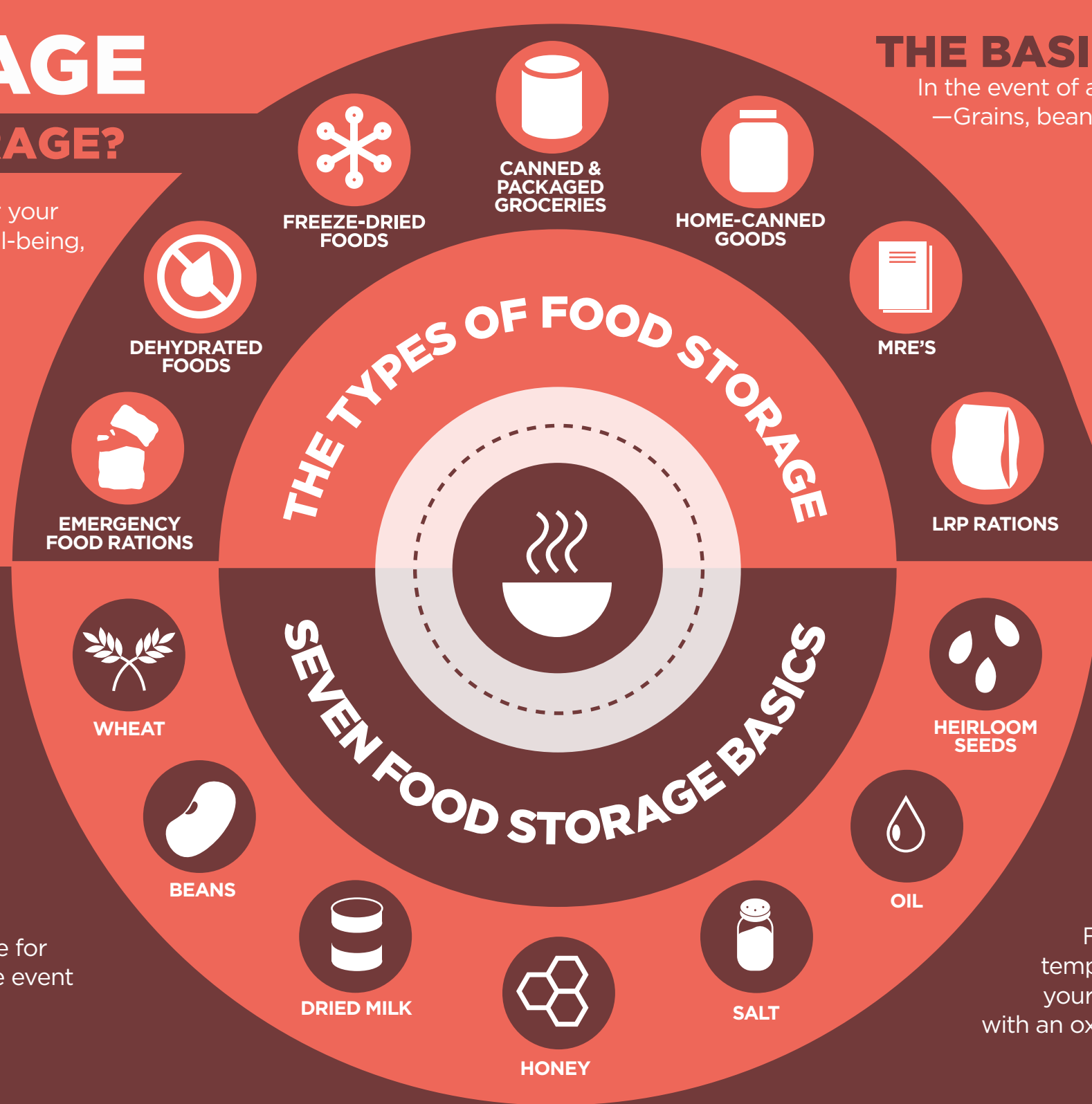
WHY LONG-TERM STORAGE?

Think of long-term food storage as insurance for your food supply. It's an investment in your future well-being, providing security in uncertain times ahead. Stock up on the food your family will rely on in a crisis, and when the time comes, whether it be a full scale emergency or just an extended inconvenience, you'll be glad for your wise investment.

PREP FOR SHORT EMERGENCIES FIRST

More common than widespread disasters are weather or local emergencies that temporarily disrupt power, water, or access to food for only a few days or weeks. For these "extended inconveniences", consider storing your Basic Seven in forms your family uses every day; breakfast cereal, instant soups, drinks, or beverages, peanut butter, crackers—items with months-long shelf life that can be stored in a pantry or closet and rotated and replenished in regular daily use.

Also, 72-hour food buckets are inexpensive, store for years, and provide that short-term security in the event of an extended inconvenience-type emergency.



THE BASIC SEVEN...AND BEYOND

In the event of a long-term crisis, the Basic Seven of food storage—Grains, beans, dried milk, honey, salt, oil, and heirloom seeds—will sustain life, providing proteins, carbohydrates, minerals, and sodium, along with the ability to continually provide food.

But don't stop at the basics. Freeze-dried fruits, vegetables, meats, and eggs are easy to store and add variety to your supplies. They are easy to use, too—just rehydrate and use like fresh food! Baking mixes, MREs, and just-add-water entrees add further convenience and variety.

There are many options and approaches to securing peace of mind in the event of an emergency. Choose the varieties that work best for your time, budget, skill, and tastes. Check out all of our food storage options, plus delicious food storage recipes, at BePrepared.com.

BEAT THE ENEMIES OF FOOD STORAGE



Food exposed to oxygen, light, moisture, and high temperatures degrades faster. Be sure to buy or place your food in sturdy, light-protected, air-tight canisters, with an oxygen absorber packet enclosed. Then, store your food in the coolest, darkest space you can (70° Fahrenheit or below).

TEMPERATURE CONTROL

Controlling body temperature is crucial in an emergency—any significant rise or drop can compromise your strength, health, and personal safety.

CLOTHING & GEAR

Choose wicking, quick-dry fabrics or wool for warmth and moisture control, and dress in layers for flexibility and comfort.

A seasonal checkup of your survival kit is recommended (check children's kits more often, since they grow more quickly).

Matches and fire starters are must-haves for warmth. And there's nothing quite like hand warmers or a hand-held fan in extreme temperatures.

SHELTER & BEDDING

Shelter from the elements is crucial. Consider survival first, then durability, then comfort.

For bedding, an emergency sleeping bag is all you really need, but adding a sleeping pad and inflatable pillow makes a big difference in sleep quality. Throw in a space blanket...it's cheap, easy to store, and very effective.

COMMUNICATION

Keeping in touch during a disaster is essential. Have the plan, skills, and gear you need to communicate with your loved ones in a crisis.

PLAN

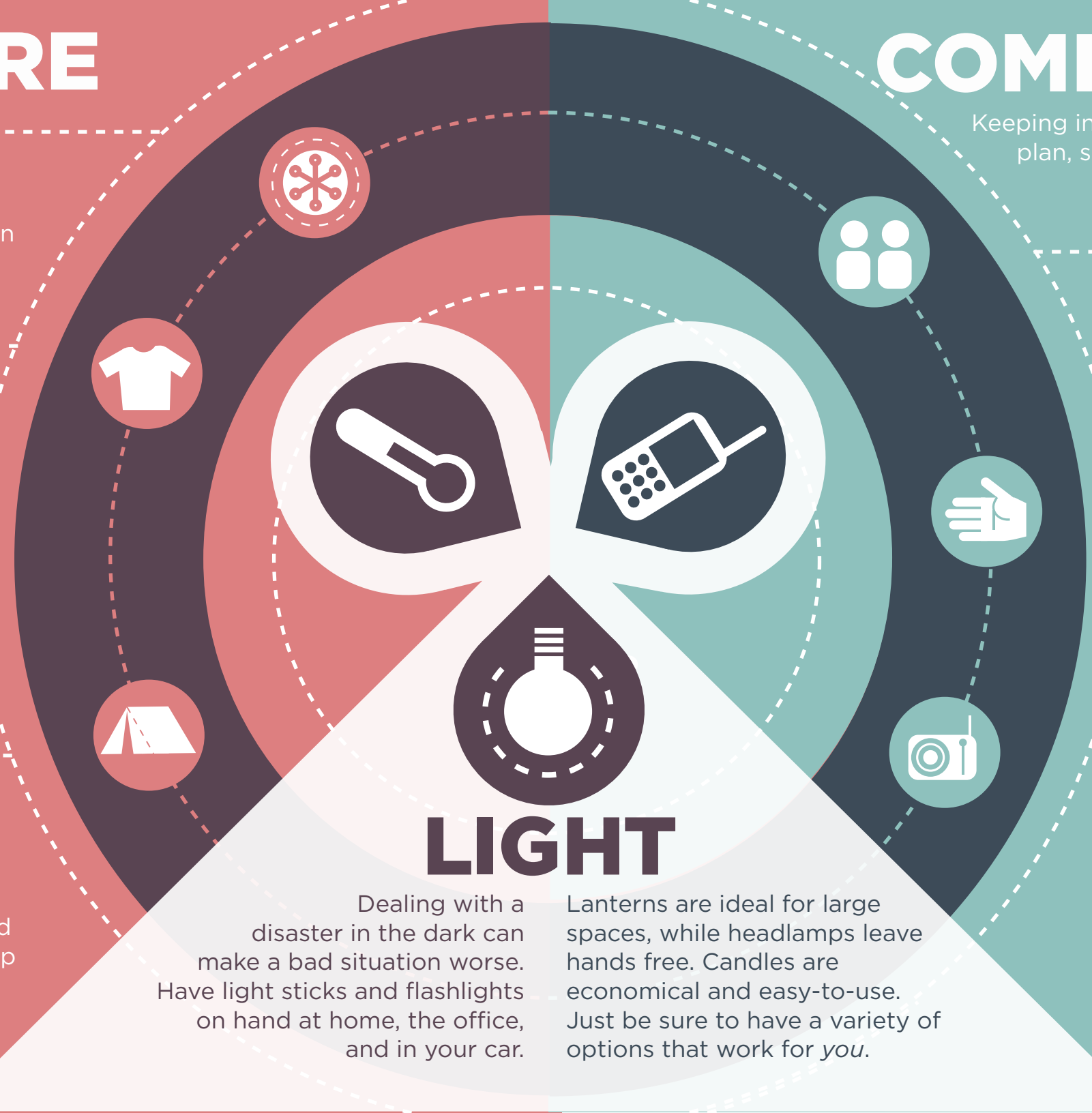
Before a disaster happens, establish a meeting place, memorize each other's home, office and cell numbers, and determine an out-of-area contact through whom your family can relay messages.

SKILLS

Knowing how to use a signal mirror, lay out a visual distress signal, and make a smoke signal are a few simple communication skills that will pay off in a wide area crisis.

GEAR

Communications gear includes a cell phone, a land line phone, and a hand-crank phone charger; a radio with emergency and NOAA bands; a whistle; and a signal mirror. And don't forget paper and a pencil.



LIGHT

Dealing with a disaster in the dark can make a bad situation worse. Have light sticks and flashlights on hand at home, the office, and in your car.

Lanterns are ideal for large spaces, while headlamps leave hands free. Candles are economical and easy-to-use. Just be sure to have a variety of options that work for you.

FIRST AID

A first-aid kit and knowledge of first-aid basics is helpful even in the best of times. But in the event of an emergency, they are always in high demand.

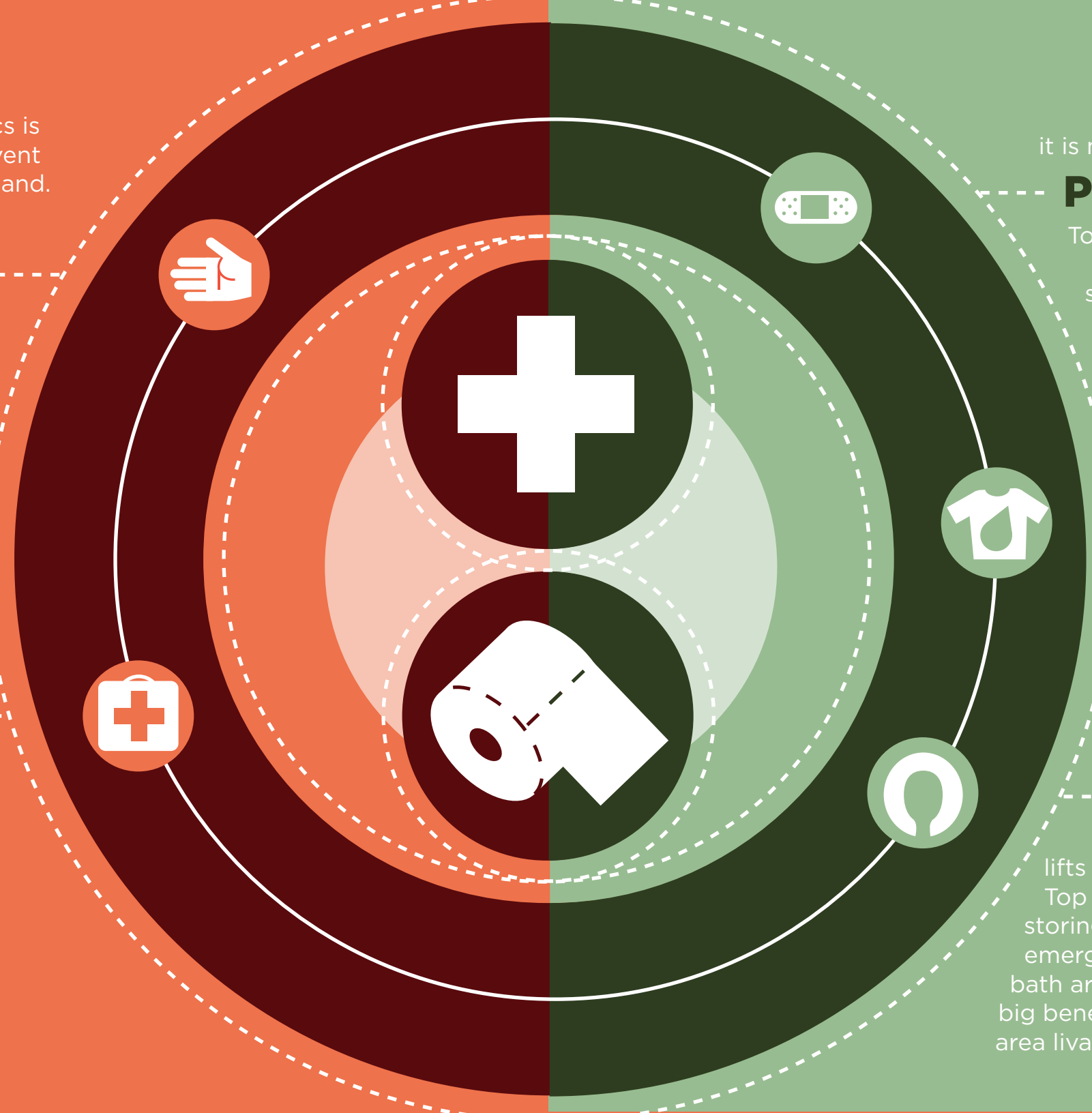
USEFUL SKILLS

Know how to stop bleeding and how to sanitize and dress a wound. Learn CPR and the Heimlich maneuver. Get trained on the proper use of an AED machine. When you know these basics, you can address 90% of common first aid situations.

More advanced skills include stabilizing a broken bone, closing wounds, or helping triage victims in a large-scale event.

YOUR FIRST AID KIT

You can buy a pre-assembled kit, or build your own using our checklist (Appendix #2). If you've got the skills, consider adding a minor surgery kit or some dental tools to your supplies. Start with the basics, then customize according to your needs and skills.



SANITATION

In a disaster, cleanliness is more than a luxury; it is necessary in preventing infection and sickness.

PREVENTING INFECTION

To stay healthy in a disaster, plan ahead to keep yourself and your surroundings clean. Hand sanitizer, extra water, and a jug of bleach are a good start. Use sanitary cooking practices, keeping utensils, food, water, and hands free from bacteria. Boiling water and using soap to wash hands and sanitize utensils are necessary practices in a disaster.

LAUNDRY TIME

Clean clothes are an important factor in keeping healthy. Emergency work brings caregivers into contact with sick people and contaminated environments. A 5-gallon bucket and a Mobile Washer make emergency laundry quick and easy, which helps stave off infectious disease.

HYGIENE

In a disaster, taking care of personal hygiene lifts spirits while preventing infection and disease. Top priority? Dealing with human waste. Consider storing a pair of privacy shelters, one for a portable emergency toilet, and another for a shower/sponge bath area. Such an inexpensive arrangement returns big benefits, keeping your family and the surrounding area livable, while providing that much-needed space, privacy, and chance to refresh.

AUTO

Being prepared for a late-night breakdown, a dead battery, or getting stuck in the snow brings peace of mind as you await assistance.

CAR EMERGENCY KIT

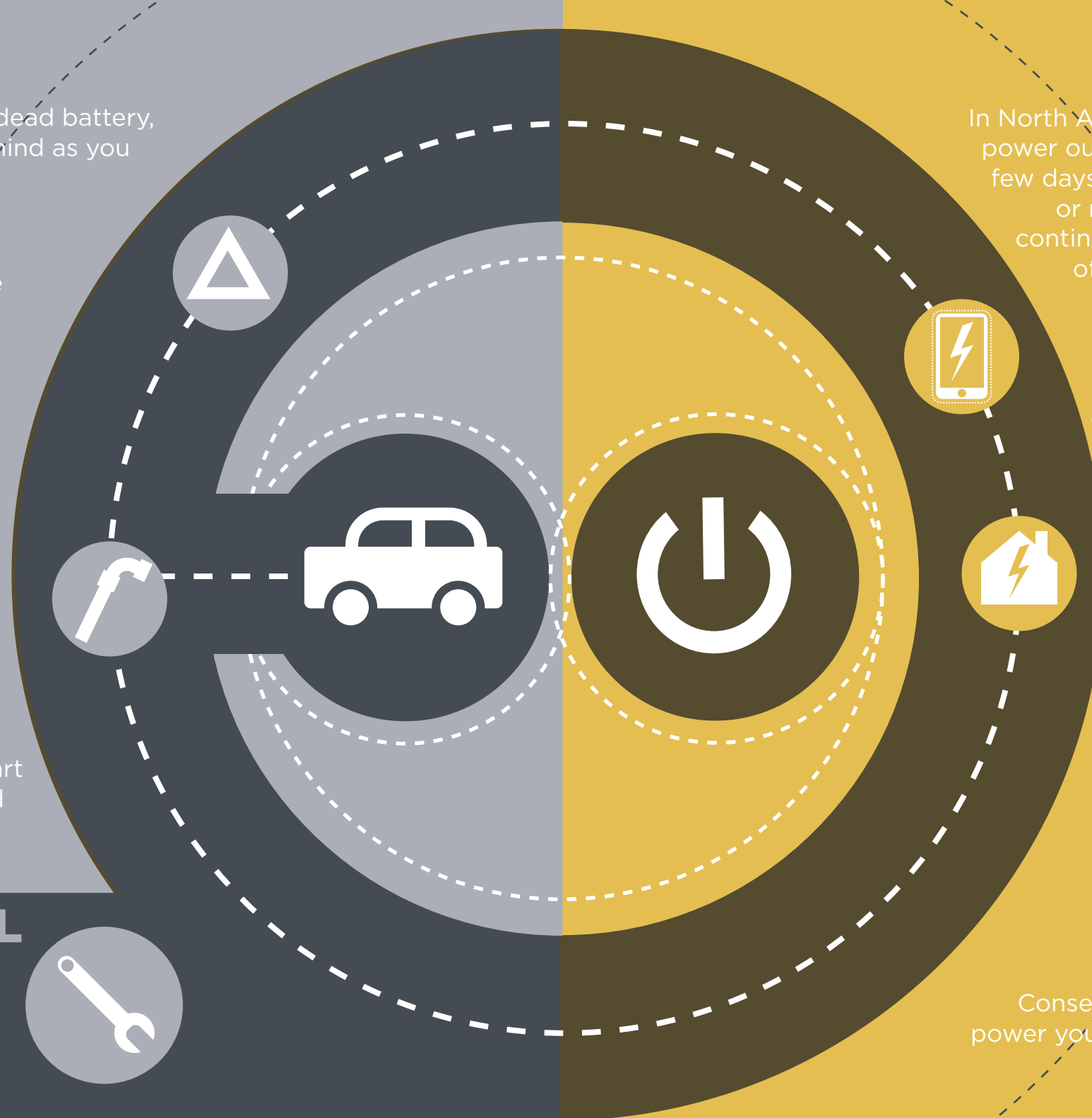
Like preparing for home emergencies, prepare for on-the road emergencies with food, water, shelter, warmth and communications. An auto emergency kit should include enough high-energy bars and water for a few days, with light sticks, a flash light, a blanket, hand warmers, sanitation supplies, and a hand-crank power generator for radio and cell phone communication.

TOOLS

Keep a car-specific tool kit in your trunk or under a seat. A jack, lug wrench, and spare headlight bulb are a few basics to include. A multi-use tool will come in handy. A high-powered LED flashlight/signal light could be a lifesaver. And a jump starter box that can start the car, power a laptop, recharge a phone, and illuminate a signal light is could be considered an indispensable roadside emergency device.

TOOL KITS IN GENERAL

Essential tools during any disaster include a durable knife, a pocket chainsaw, an ax, and a length of rope or paracord. A minimum toolkit should also include a multi-tool, duct tape, and a sturdy short-handled shovel.



POWER

In North America, most fire, storm, and earthquake related power outages are restored within a few days. But even a few days without refrigeration or heat, cell phone power, or radio and TV news can be crippling. If an outage continues into weeks, it is devastating. There are many off-the-grid power options to prepare you for any loss of electricity.

SMALL SCALE NEEDS

Small-scale solar and hand-crank generators are excellent for on-demand power. They're not only crucial for light and communications, they're handy anytime your phone or camera needs a boost when you're away from a plug.

LARGE SCALE NEEDS

Larger solar generators are great for powering large household appliances temporarily, relying only upon the sun to keep the power on. Fuel-powered generators are not dependent upon sunny weather, but require a ready fuel supply—something difficult to replenish in a disaster.

Conserve the cool by keeping refrigerators and freezers closed as much as possible, particularly if you depend upon them to store other critical supplies, like medications.

Conservation is key in an emergency; the less optional power you use, the more you can power essential devices.

EMERGENCY PLANNER

In addition to your food supplies and survival gear, keeping a binder containing important documents, cash, and critical information will make it quick and easy to grab in an evacuation.

IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS

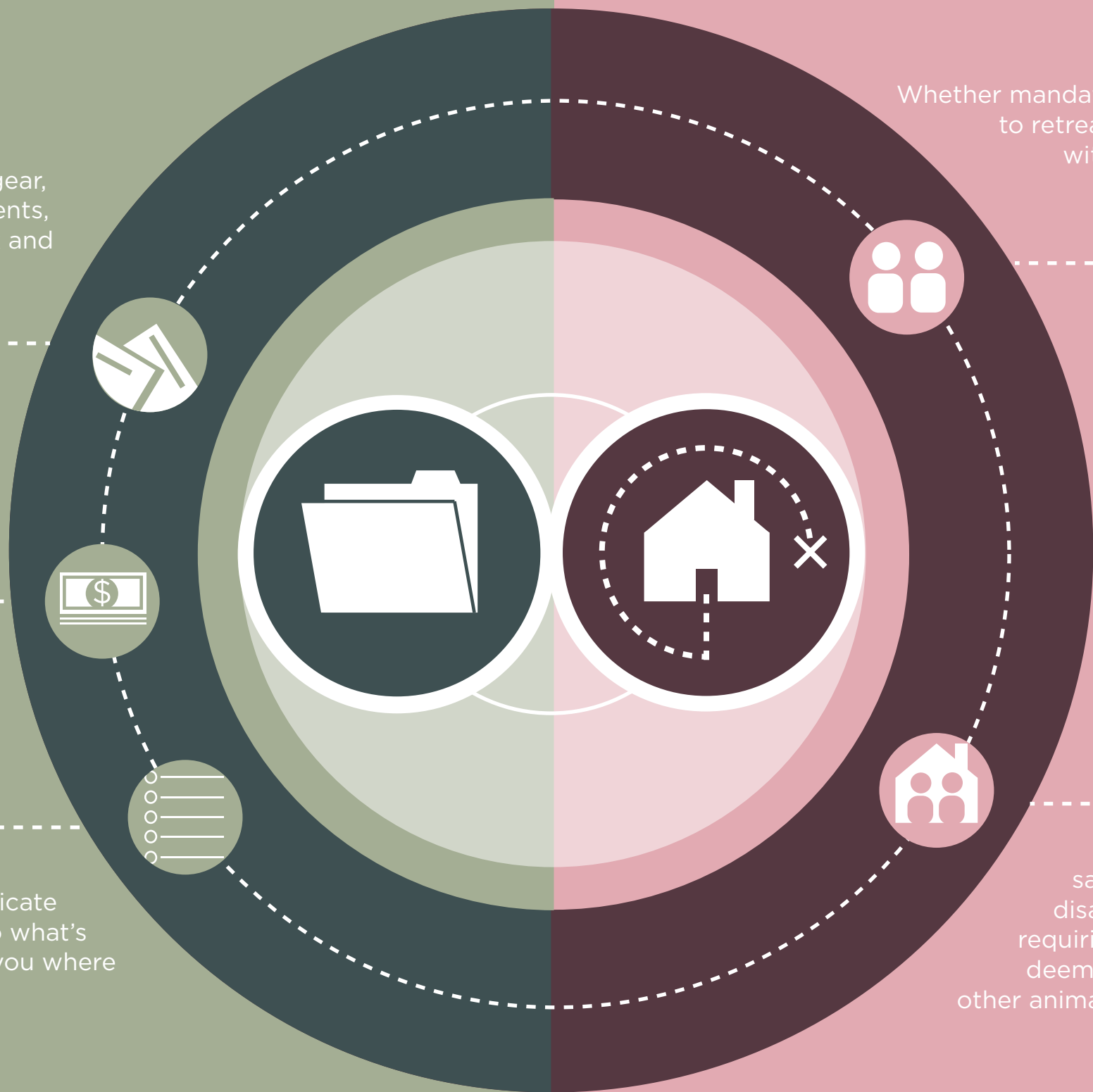
Storing insurance papers, a list of valuables, IDs, birth certificates, passports, social security information, tax returns, bank and investment information, and other vital data in your binder will speed the process of recovery after a disaster.

CASH

Widespread disasters often lead to a loss of power—which means no ATMs or credit/debit transactions. Keep some cash, in small bills, in your binder ready for purchases when the power's out.

INVENTORY SHEETS

Keep track of your preparation storage with inventory sheets. They will help you avoid duplicate purchases, track what you've used, alert you to what's expiring and needs to be rotated, and remind you where everything is stored.



EVACUATION

Whether mandated by local authorities, or if you've determined to retreat on your own, the need to evacuate can come with little advanced notice. Establish your family's evacuation plan in advance, and then practice.

PLANNING

Consider the following as you develop your family's evacuation plan:

Someone shuts off the electrical breakers and takes emergency binder to the car.

Someone locks all the doors and does a head count at the car.

Someone shuts off the gas and main water valves.

Someone grabs cell phones and the family pets.

In addition, everyone is responsible for grabbing their own emergency kit.

RETURNING HOME

Remain evacuated until authorities deem it safe to return. Going home after a storm or other disaster can be difficult and even dangerous, often requiring official inspection. After the house has been deemed stable, remember that snakes, alligators and other animals may have made their way inside, particularly after floods. Tread with caution.

NATURAL DISASTERS

Here are a few disaster-specific tips that could protect you and your family in a disaster.

EARTHQUAKE

Before: Secure bookcases and appliances to the wall. Store china and heavy items in lower cabinets. Secure items that can fall with earthquake putty or gel.

During: During an earthquake, DROP to the floor. Find COVER under a sturdy table or desk. HOLD ON.

After: If structural damage has occurred, turn off gas and electricity to prevent fire. Move carefully to avoid upsetting debris. Document damage for insurance.

FIRE

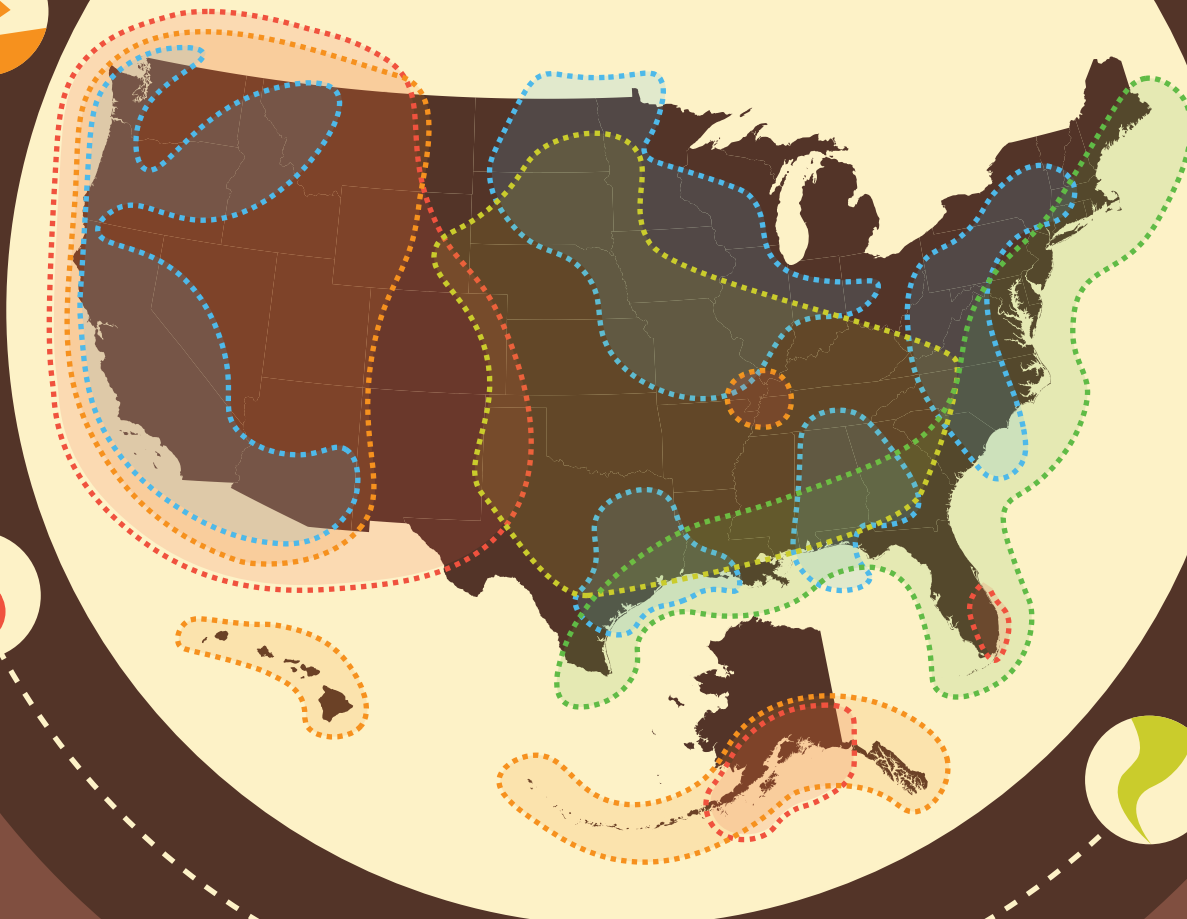
Before: Prevention is key. Be careful with candles, matches, and appliances. Check smoke detectors regularly. In wildfire areas, create defensible space around your home.

During: When smoke detectors sound, stay low and away from smoke and get out fast. Call 911. Do not stay inside to fight fire or to collect valuables.

After: Seek medical treatment for burns or smoke inhalation. Document damage for insurance.

PLAN FOR DISASTERS IN YOUR AREA

for more information, visit <http://www.ready.gov>



FLOOD

Before: In downpours, almost anywhere can become flood zones, even hillsides. Build accordingly, and plan for ready access to sandbags to keep water from basement windows and doors.

During: Follow all evacuation orders, but never cross floodwaters. Move to the highest level of your home or building.

After: Be careful of debris that has washed into your home. Watch for mold in flood-damaged areas. Document damage for insurance.

HURRICANE

Before: Board up windows and doors. Bring outdoor furniture and other potential projectiles inside. Keep a battery operated/hand crank radio on hand.

During: Heed ALL official evacuation warnings. Stay inside in an interior space away from windows. Stay informed via emergency radio.

After: If structural damage has occurred, turn off gas and electricity. Move carefully through debris. Document damage for insurance.

TORNADO

Before: Find a local emergency shelter or the safest location in your home. Interior rooms without windows are good. Basements are better. A tornado shelter is best. Install storm shutters.

During: Heed all warning sirens. Close storm shutters. Stay inside until the storm has passed. Stay informed via emergency radio.

After: If structural damage has occurred, turn off gas and electricity. Move carefully through debris. Document damage for insurance.

