COMPANION GUIDE TO ONLINE TRAINING

Self-study — no subscription required — use alongside the online lessons at fortunefavorstheprepared.com/pln-04-landing/

PLN-04: PREPAREDNESS CONDITIONS
SELF-STUDY COMPANION GUIDE

The Household Readiness Reference

Scale Structure, Trigger Design, Action Sets, and Your Personal Triggers & Actions Annex
National Baseline Correlation · Indicator-Based Triggers · MAG Go-Code Integration · Personal PREP-CON Log

Edition v1.0 · 2026

Semper Paratus, Semper Gumby

https://fortunefavorstheprepared.com/
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PLN-04: PREPAREDNESS CONDITIONS — SELF-STUDY COMPANION GUIDE

Companion Guide to Self-Study Online Training

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ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This companion guide is free and designed for self-paced study alongside the PLN-04 Preparedness Conditions online lesson series at fortunefavorstheprepared.com/pln-04-landing/. The online lessons are the instruction. This guide contains condensed reference tables, the indicator-category library, blank trigger and action worksheets, and the Personal PREP-CON Log — it does not substitute for the lessons themselves.

How to Use This Companion Guide

THIS GUIDE IS A COMPANION TO THE PLN-04 SELF-STUDY ONLINE LESSONS

This companion guide is built to be used alongside the PLN-04 Preparedness Conditions self-study lesson series — the online lessons are the instruction. This guide contains reference tables, the indicator library, and blank worksheets only. It is not a standalone document.

Self-study lessons: fortunefavorstheprepared.com/pln-04-landing/

What this guide contains

For each of the seven online lessons: a condensed reference summary covering the key terms, level definitions, and the indicator-category library — not the instruction itself. The Five PREP-CON Levels reference table, the trigger and action sets, and the Triggers & Actions Annex structure are included as working tools. Blank worksheets for building your own annex and logging real-world level changes are in Part III.

THIS WORK IS PART OF YOUR FAMILY EMERGENCY PLAN

By working through this guide, you are building a section of your Family Emergency Plan. This guide includes a working excerpt of the PREP-CON Triggers & Actions Annex (v1.1) in Chapter 4 — enough to learn the method and get started. The complete, general-terms trigger and action lists for all five levels live in the Family Emergency Plan Workbook (fortunefavorstheprepared.com/product/family-emergency-plan-workbook-loose-leaf/). Treat that workbook as the master reference; this guide as the method for using it.

YOUR TRIGGERS ARE SPECIFIC TO YOUR AREA

The Family Emergency Plan gives you triggers and actions in general terms. Your specific triggers depend on the actual threats and hazards where you live — that determination is done with the Personal Preparedness Assessment Workbook (fortunefavorstheprepared.com/product/preparednessassessment/). If you'd rather have that legwork done for you, FFTP also offers a Personal Preparedness Assessment Report (fortunefavorstheprepared.com/ppa-report/) covering your specific area. Chapter 4 walks through worked examples of turning a known local hazard into a specific trigger and action.

Recommended workflow — online lessons before using this guide

> **ORDER MATTERS**
>
> Do not fill out any worksheet in this guide until the corresponding online lesson has been completed. The condensed summaries here are reference material, not instruction. The sequence below is recommended, not optional, if you want the tools to actually make sense.

- Step 1 — Access the self-study lessons at fortunefavorstheprepared.com/pln-04-landing/
- Step 2 — Complete all seven lessons (PLN-04-00 through PLN-04-06), including knowledge checks
- Step 3 — Use this guide to build your household's or MAG's own Triggers & Actions Annex
- Step 4 — Keep this guide with your planning materials as a living reference and log

> **THIS GUIDE IS NOT STANDALONE**
>
> The instruction for each lesson is delivered through the online lesson series. This guide contains condensed reference tables and blank worksheets only. If you have not completed the online lessons, this guide will give you tables and categories whose reasoning you do not yet fully understand.

Guide Map — What to Reference When

When you need...	Turn to...
What PREP-CON is, and what it is not	**Part I, Chapter 1**
Scale direction, sky names, and the national/personal distinction	**Part I, Chapter 2**
The Five PREP-CON Levels reference table	**Part I, Chapter 3**
The trigger-writing method — direct and indicator-based	**Part I, Chapter 4**
The full indicator-category library across the scale	**Part I, Chapter 4**
The action-set reference by level	**Part I, Chapter 5**
The COVID trigger case study — why deciding in advance wins	**Part I, Chapter 6**
Localizing the national baseline with the Daily Threat Report	**Part I, Chapter 7**
The escalation path and MAG go-code integration	**Part I, Chapter 8**
The Triggers & Actions Annex structure	**Part II, Chapter 9**
A blank Personal Triggers Worksheet	**Part III — Triggers Worksheet**
A blank Personal Actions Worksheet	**Part III — Actions Worksheet**
A blank Personal PREP-CON Log	**Part III — PREP-CON Log**
Doctrinal and framework sources behind the method	**Part IV — Doctrinal Sources**
Where the full, general-terms trigger and action lists live	**Family Emergency Plan Workbook**
How to determine your own area-specific triggers	**Part I, Chapter 4 + Personal Preparedness Assessment Workbook**
FFTP products that support this work	**Part IV — Related FFTP Resources**

PART I — REFERENCE TABLES

Chapter 1: What PREP-CON Is — and Is Not

PREP-CON is the FFTP five-level framework for civilian readiness posture. It answers one question: how urgently should you be preparing, and what should you be doing right now? It runs 5 to 1. Level 5 — Blue Sky — is the steady, everyday baseline. Level 1 — Black Sky — is an active incident already underway. As the level descends, your posture escalates through triggers and actions you agreed to before the moment arrived.

PREP-CON Is / PREP-CON Is Not

PREP-CON IS	PREP-CON IS NOT
A preparedness posture scale — how ready you should be	A threat forecast or alert system
Tied to specific triggers and actions you set in advance	A substitute for your own situational awareness
Published daily as a US-wide baseline by FFTP	An estimate of classified government conditions
Yours to adjust upward for your local situation	A one-size-fits-all national prescription

> **WHERE PREP-CON CAME FROM**
>
> PREP-CON started as a joke — in a conversation about continuity planning, someone asked whether there was a preparedness equivalent of COGCON and DEFCON. There was; it had simply never been framed as "conditions." It arrived the next day as a mind map, first christened MEACH-CON. MEACH-CON still exists as a specific family and group plan. PREP-CON is that same framework, formalized for any household or Mutual Assistance Group willing to set its own triggers and actions in advance.

Note on source material: this guide works from the same PREP-CON Triggers & Actions Annex (v1.1) that ships in the Family Emergency Plan Workbook. This guide's tables are a working excerpt for learning the method; the Family Emergency Plan Workbook carries the complete, general-terms trigger and action list for all five levels.

Chapter 2: Scale Direction & Structure

Every PREP-CON assessment starts from the same structural facts: which way the numbers run, what the scale is meant to drive, and who is responsible for setting it. Get these four elements straight before you touch a single trigger.

Element	Definition
Scale Direction	5 = Blue Sky (steady baseline) → 1 = Black Sky (active incident). Lower number, higher urgency.
What It Drives	Pre-agreed triggers and actions — so you act on a plan, not on adrenaline.
Published	Daily, as a US-wide baseline, in every Daily Threat Report (DTR) cycle and on the FFTP home page.
Set Personally	Your own PREP-CON — informed by the national level, adjusted for your situation.

NATIONAL BASELINE VS. PERSONAL LEVEL

FFTP publishes a PREP-CON level, but it is a US-wide baseline — a starting point and a floor, not a ceiling. Where you live, your sector, your family situation, and your operational role all shift the picture. A regional event that barely moves the national level may demand a higher posture from you. The national number tells you the general weather; only you can set the level for your own ground.

Chapter 3: The Five PREP-CON Levels In Depth

Each level pairs a readiness state and sky name with the general posture it calls for. Full plan-ready triggers and matching actions are in Chapters 4 and 5 — this table is the level-by-level orientation reference.

Level	General Triggers	Posture
PREP-CON 5 Blue Sky No Incident	None specific — no known or anticipated threat to water, communications, power, banking, or food distribution.	Build and maintain. Rotate supplies, fill gaps, train and exercise skills.
PREP-CON 4 Orange Sky Incident Possible	Possible near-future disruption to comms, power, or financial systems; severe weather watches; elevated space weather or government readiness indicators.	Increase monitoring across information sources; verify and maintain equipment.
PREP-CON 3 Brown Sky Incident Probable	Elevated probability of disruption; financial stress; government continuity actions; widespread supply shortages; significant public-health indicators.	Notify the MAG, stand up a local net, check Get-Home and Bug-Out bags, top off fuel.
PREP-CON 2 Gray Sky Incident Imminent	Disruption expected or highly likely; maximum readiness indicators; civil disturbance or public-health emergency in your area; financial devaluation.	Stage for departure. Review comms procedures, raise personal-defense readiness. Able to move within 2 hours.
PREP-CON 1 Black Sky Active Incident	Active disruption of comms, power, or critical infrastructure. No-notice events — travel restrictions, martial law, grid failure — demand immediate action.	Execute the plan. Bug out or shelter in place, initiate the MAG go-code, establish communications nets.

DESCENDING THE SCALE

The general verb sequence runs build (5) → monitor (4) → coordinate (3) → stage (2) → execute (1). By the time you reach PREP-CON 1, there is no planning left to do — only execution. All the planning work was supposed to happen at PREP-CON 5.

Chapter 4: Reading Triggers — Direct vs. Indicator-Based

A trigger is an event you decide in advance will raise your level. Direct triggers are plain-language events — a bank holiday, a martial-law announcement, a confirmed pandemic declaration. Indicator-based triggers are slower-moving data-source signals drawn from the FFTP intelligence registry that give you lead time before a direct trigger fires. Reading indicators is a discipline: no single indicator is decisive on its own, and the value is in tracking the category over time, not reacting to one data point.

Indicator Categories Across the Scale

Category	Example Indicator	Typical Level
Space Weather	Geomagnetic storm watch, G2 or greater (NOAA Space Weather Prediction Center)	4
Space Weather	Solar flare activity reaching G4/S4/R4	3
Space Weather	Solar flare activity reaching G5/S5/R5	1
Communications Infrastructure	Confirmed undersea-cable fault or cut on a route serving your region	4
Communications Infrastructure	COMCON move to level 3 — confirmed degradation of communications infrastructure	3
Communications Infrastructure	COMCON move to level 2 — widespread communications failure in progress	2
Communications Infrastructure	COMCON move to level 1 — total or near-total collapse of public communications	1
Financial / Economic	Sustained OFR Financial Stress Index above +1.5 for three or more consecutive trading days	3
Financial / Economic	Stock market run, bank holiday declared	3
Financial / Economic	Rapid currency devaluation	2
Government / Continuity	COGCON raised to level 3; AmCON raised to level 4	4
Government / Continuity	COGCON condition 3, or widespread “work from home” for government facilities	3
Government / Continuity	DEFCON, COGCON, or AmRRON condition 2	2
Government / Continuity	COGCON condition 1	1
Public Health	National wastewater viral activity entering “High” or “Very High” in multiple regions (CDC NWSS)	4
Public Health	Indications of a pandemic likely to affect critical infrastructure	3
Public Health	Confirmed pandemic declaration (CDC/WHO) with active infrastructure impact	2

Category	Example Indicator	Typical Level
Logistics / Supply	Logistics Managers Index: simultaneous freight-capacity contraction and inventory drawdown	4
Logistics / Supply	Widespread panic-buying shortage beyond normal resupply capacity	3
No-Notice / Immediate-Action	Martial-law announcement, travel restrictions, or a Black Sky event (EMP, cyberattack, seismic, geomagnetic)	1 — single trigger

NO SINGLE INDICATOR IS DECISIVE

Indicator-based triggers work as a category, not a headline. One geomagnetic storm watch does not mean grab the bug-out bag. A sustained pattern across a category — rising financial stress readings for a week, a second undersea-cable fault in a month — is what earns a level change. Immediate-action events are the exception: a handful of no-notice triggers (martial law, travel restrictions, a confirmed Black Sky event) justify PREP-CON 1 on their own, no pattern required.

Determining Your Own Local Triggers

The table above covers national and regional indicators. But some of your most reliable triggers are hyper-local — tied to a specific hazard within a specific distance of your home. Knowing your threats and hazards is what lets you write a trigger that fires early and correctly. That determination is done with the Personal Preparedness Assessment Workbook, which walks you through identifying what is actually near you: power plants, fuel storage, rail lines, highways carrying hazardous cargo, flood zones, and more. If you'd rather have that legwork done for you, FFTP also offers a Personal Preparedness Assessment Report covering your specific area.

Known Local Hazard	Monitoring / Trigger	Action
Nuclear power plant within ~50 miles	The plant's sirens or public notification system; an emergency event notification issued by the plant	Evacuate per your route plan
Fuel storage depot within ~5 miles	A fire or emergency event at the depot	Evacuate
Rail line carrying hazardous cargo near your home	A derailment, chemical release, or emergency broadcast affecting the line	Evacuate or shelter in place, depending on the specific hazard and wind direction
Major highway / hazmat transport corridor near your home	A multi-vehicle incident involving hazardous cargo	Evacuate or shelter in place, depending on the release and plume direction

The same logic applies to any fixed hazard in your area — a chemical plant, a dam, a quarry, a refinery. A directly assessed local hazard gets a directly written trigger and a directly written action; it doesn't need to wait for a national indicator to catch up.

COMMUNICATIONS DISRUPTION TRIGGERS YOUR PACE PLAN

Communications Conditions (COMCON) are covered in detail in PLN-05. But independent of PREP-CON or COMCON level, a serious or sustained disruption in your own household's or MAG's communications is itself a trigger — it activates your PACE plan (COM-01). You don't need to wait for a level change to fall back to your Alternate, Contingency, or Emergency communications method.

Chapter 5: Actions By Level

Each level's posture translates into a concrete action set. The verb changes with the level — from routine building at Blue Sky to full execution at Black Sky.

Level	Posture Verb	Representative Actions
5 — Blue Sky	**Build & Train**	Rotate food storage in bulk; add to medical supplies; update the Family Emergency Plan quarterly; distribute one-time pads and other authentication material; train medical and communications skills; conduct exercises to test the plan.
4 — Orange Sky	**Monitor & Verify**	Verify contact information and test comms apps (Signal, WhatsApp, Zello); inventory and replenish supplies; increase monitoring of situational sources; perform equipment maintenance.
3 — Brown Sky	**Notify & Coordinate**	Implement secure notifications with authentication; finalize plans and set imminent-action triggers; maintain fuel, power, and batteries; activate monitoring; stand up a local open net; top off fuel; add to long-term food storage.
2 — Gray Sky	**Stage**	Establish the go-code; confirm authentication material is current and in hand; review comms procedures; make last-minute purchases; raise personal-defense readiness; stage vehicles for immediate departure.
1 — Black Sky	**Execute**	Initiate the go-code; establish secure and satellite comms; convoy to alternate locations; monitor comms sources; implement authentication procedures; establish HF NVIS comms outside the affected region.

Chapter 6: The COVID Trigger Example — Deciding in Advance

A condition scale is only as good as the triggers and actions behind it. The power is in the phrase “in advance.” A household with a trigger set on the earliest reporting out of China in late December 2019 — and an action to quietly build up protective and cleaning supplies — was weeks ahead of the curve.

> **WHY DECIDING IN ADVANCE WINS**
>
> The 90% of households that waited for certainty then panic-bought all at once, and that surge emptied the shelves. The retail logistics network can absorb a single regional disaster; it cannot absorb every store in the country seeing the same demand spike in the same few days. The prepared household never saw an empty shelf, because it acted on a trigger instead of a headline.

This is the entire value proposition of a condition scale: it removes the in-the-moment debate about whether now is the moment, because that decision was already made — calmly, without adrenaline — back at PREP-CON 5.

Chapter 7: Setting Your Own PREP-CON

FFTP publishes a PREP-CON level, but it is a US-wide baseline — a starting point and a floor, not a ceiling. Your own PREP-CON may be different. Where you live, your sector, your family situation, and your operational role all shift the picture.

Factors That Shift Your Personal Level

Factor	Effect on Your Level
Location	Proximity to affected infrastructure, coastlines, fault lines, or border regions can raise your personal level above the national baseline.
Sector / Occupation	Work in critical infrastructure, healthcare, finance, or government can mean earlier visibility into stress — and earlier justified escalation.
Family Composition	Dependents, medical needs, or mobility constraints can justify staging earlier than a single, mobile adult would need to.
Operational Role in MAG	Net control stations, medical leads, and logistics coordinators may need to escalate ahead of the general membership to prepare the group's response.
Regional vs. National Scope	A regional event that barely moves the national number may demand a materially higher posture from you specifically.

> **HOW THE DAILY THREAT REPORT HELPS YOU SET IT**
>
> The Daily Threat Report (DTR) identifies threats by location and applies PREP-CON analysis to them, translating the national picture to your own situation. Read the published level as input, use the DTR's geographic detail to localize it, and set the level you will actually operate at.

Chapter 8: The Escalation Path & MAG Go-Code Integration

PREP-CON does not operate in isolation from your group's plan — the descent from Blue Sky to Black Sky should map directly onto concrete, pre-agreed readiness milestones, culminating in the MAG go-code at PREP-CON 1.

Level	Readiness Milestone
5 — Blue Sky	No fixed readiness timeline — routine build-and-train posture.
4 — Orange Sky	Equipment verified and maintained; monitoring increased; no group-wide action yet required.
3 — Brown Sky	Local net stood up; MAG notified; every member reachable and briefed.
2 — Gray Sky	Able to move within 2 hours or less; vehicles staged; go-code established and confirmed.
1 — Black Sky	Go-code executed; convoy or shelter-in-place underway; alternate communications established.

The Routes annex — primary and alternate travel routes, rally points, and alternate destinations — is built once, reviewed regularly, and executed without further planning at PREP-CON 1. See Chapter 9 for how the Routes and Readiness sections fit into your full Triggers & Actions Annex.

PART II — ANNEX STRUCTURE

Chapter 9: The Triggers & Actions Annex Structure

A condition scale is only useful once it is written down. The Triggers & Actions Annex is the document your household or MAG builds to make PREP-CON operational — one section per level, with direct triggers, indicator-based triggers, and matching actions specified in advance. Levels 2 and 1 add a Readiness commitment; a Routes section covers travel plans for use at the more urgent levels.

Sec	Title	Entry
1	**Level Header**	PREP-CON number, sky name, and incident descriptor (e.g., "PREP-CON 3 — Brown Sky — Incident Probable").
2	**Direct Triggers**	Plain-language events that independently justify this level — no interpretation required.
3	**Indicator-Based Triggers**	Slower-moving data-source indicators, cross-referenced to the DTR and the FFTP intelligence registry.
4	**Actions**	What your household or MAG does upon reaching this level — specific, assignable, and testable.
5	**Readiness (Levels 2–1)**	Movement or timeline commitments — e.g., "able to move within 2 hours."
6	**Routes (as needed)**	Primary and alternate travel routes, rally points, and alternate destinations.

BUILD IT AT PREP-CON 5

The annex is written during the routine, low-stress conditions of PREP-CON 5 — not improvised during PREP-CON 2. Review it quarterly alongside your Family Emergency Plan, and update it whenever a real-world level change reveals a gap. Part III gives you blank worksheets to build your own annex and a log to track real level changes over time.

PART III — WORKSHEETS

Personal Triggers Worksheet

For each level, write your household's or MAG's own direct and indicator-based triggers. Use Chapter 4 as your reference library, but write these in your own words — a trigger you didn't write yourself is a trigger you won't act on.

> **A VISUAL COMPANION: THE PREP-CON MIND MAP**
>
> If you think better visually, FFTP also sells a PREP-CON Mind Map (16x20 poster) laying out the five levels and their triggers at a glance — with room to write in your own triggers and actions as you work through these worksheets. Available at fortunefavorstheprepared.com/product/prep-con-mind-map-16x20/.

Direct Triggers	Indicator-Based Triggers
PREP-CON 5 — Blue Sky	
PREP-CON 4 — Orange Sky	
PREP-CON 3 — Brown Sky	
PREP-CON 2 — Gray Sky	
PREP-CON 1 — Black Sky	

Direct Triggers	Indicator-Based Triggers

Personal Actions Worksheet

For each level, write the specific actions your household or MAG commits to. Use Chapter 5 as your reference library. Actions should be specific enough that someone else in your group could read this page and know exactly what to do.

Actions
PREP-CON 5 — Blue Sky
PREP-CON 4 — Orange Sky
PREP-CON 3 — Brown Sky
PREP-CON 2 — Gray Sky
PREP-CON 1 — Black Sky

Actions

Personal PREP-CON Log

Use this log to record real-world level changes as they happen — not as a drill, but as an actual record of when your household or MAG moved, why, and what was done. Review the log at your next PREP-CON 5 planning session.

Date / Time	Level Set	Trigger That Fired	Action Taken	Reviewed By

PART IV — DOCTRINAL SOURCES

Chapter 10: Doctrinal Sources

Source	Publisher	Relevance
FFTP Triggers & Actions Annex (v1.1)	Fortune Favors the Prepared, 2026	Primary source for level-by-level triggers, actions, and the indicator framework used throughout this guide.
DEFCON	Department of Defense	Conceptual origin of the numbered readiness-alert scale, adapted for civilian household and MAG use.
COGCON	National Continuity Policy / FEMA	Continuity of Government Readiness Conditions — companion government scale referenced as a public trigger source.
FEMA Community Lifelines	FEMA, v2.1, 2023	Infrastructure status vocabulary cross-referenced for indicator-based triggers; see PLN-01, Community Situational Awareness.
Public Indicator Sources	NOAA SWPC, CISA, OFR, CDC NWSS, USDA FSIS, Drought.gov, Logistics Managers Index	Publicly available indicator feeds referenced in the FFTP intelligence registry underlying Chapter 4's indicator-category library.

Related FFTP Resources

This guide is a method for using PREP-CON. These FFTP products are where the full plan actually gets built.

Product	What It's For
Family Emergency Plan Workbook	The master reference: complete, general-terms PREP-CON trigger and action lists for all five levels, plus the rest of your Family Emergency Plan. fortunefavorstheprepared.com/product/family-emergency-plan-workbook-loose-leaf/
Personal Preparedness Assessment Workbook	Identifies the specific threats and hazards in your area so you can write triggers that are actually yours, not generic ones. fortunefavorstheprepared.com/product/preparednessassessment/
Personal Preparedness Assessment Report	A done-for-you version of the assessment above, covering your specific area. fortunefavorstheprepared.com/ppa-report/
PREP-CON Mind Map (16x20)	A wall poster laying out all five levels and their triggers at a glance, with room to add your own. fortunefavorstheprepared.com/product/prep-con-mind-map-16x20/

A condition scale does not predict the future. It removes the in-the-moment debate about whether now is the moment — because that decision was already made, calmly, at PREP-CON 5. The household that set its triggers in advance acts on a plan. Everyone else acts on adrenaline.

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