

Prepare for Disasters Before they Occur: Build a Disaster Supplies Kit

Items for a Preparedness Kit

Water

Food

Medications and Special Items

Tools and Supplies

Sanitation

Clothing and Bedding

Emergency Car Kit

Important Family Documents

First Aid Kit

There are six basics you should stock for your home in the case of an emergency:

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|---------------------------------|--|
| 1. water | 4. food |
| 2. first aid supplies | 5. clothing and bedding, |
| 3. tools and emergency supplies | 6. special items for medical conditions. |

Keep the items that you would most likely need during an evacuation in an easy-to carry container. Possible containers include a large, covered trash container, a camping backpack or a duffle bag. Below is a comprehensive list of what should be included in your kit



Water

Store water in plastic containers such as soft drink bottles. Avoid using containers that will decompose or break, such as milk cartons or glass bottles. A normally active person needs to drink at least two quarts of water each day. Hot environments and intense physical activity can double that amount. Children, nursing mothers, and ill people will need more.

Store one gallon of water per person per day.

Keep at least a three-day supply of water per person (two quarts for drinking, two quarts for each person in your household for food preparation/sanitation).

Water sources during an emergency

Having an ample supply of clean water is a top priority in an emergency. A normally active person needs to drink at least two quarts of water each day. Hot environments can double that amount. Children, nursing mothers and ill people will need even more. You will also need water for food preparation and hygiene. Store a total of at least one gallon per person, per day. You should store at least a two-week supply of water for each member of your family.

If supplies run low, never ration water. Drink the amount you need today, and try to find more for tomorrow. You can minimize the amount of water your body needs by reducing activity and staying cool.

Water Sources

How to Store Water

Store your water in thoroughly washed plastic, glass, fiberglass or enamel-lined metal containers. Never use a container that has held toxic substances. Plastic containers, such as soft drink bottles, are best. You can also purchase food-grade plastic buckets or drums. Seal water containers tightly, label them and store in a cool, dark place. Rotate water every six months.

Emergency Outdoor Water Sources

If you need to find water outside your home, you can use these sources. Be sure to treat the water according to the instructions on page 3 before drinking it.

- Rainwater

- Streams, rivers and other moving bodies of water

- Ponds and lakes

- Natural springs

- Avoid water with floating material, an odor or dark color. Use saltwater only if you distill it first.

- You should not drink flood water.

Hidden Water Sources in Your Home

If a disaster catches you without a stored supply of clean water, you can use the water in your hot-water tank, pipes and ice cubes. As a last resort, you can use water in the reservoir tank of your toilet (not the bowl).

Do you know the location of your incoming water valve? You'll need to shut it off to stop contaminated water from entering your home if you hear reports of broken water or sewage lines.

To use the water in your pipes, let air into the plumbing by turning on the faucet in your house at the highest level. A small amount of water will trickle out. Then obtain water from the lowest faucet in the house.

To use the water in your hot-water tank, be sure the electricity or gas is off, and open the drain at the bottom of the tank. Start the water flowing by turning off the water intake valve and turning on a hot-water faucet. Do not turn on the gas or electricity when the tank is empty.

Three Ways to Treat Water

In addition to having a bad odor and taste, contaminated water can contain microorganisms that cause diseases such as dysentery, typhoid and hepatitis. You should treat all water of uncertain purity before using it for drinking, food preparation or hygiene. There are many ways to treat water. None is perfect. Often the best solution is a combination of methods.

Two easy treatment methods are outlined below. These measures will kill most microbes but will not remove other contaminants such as heavy metals, salts and most other chemicals. Before treating, let any suspended particles settle to the bottom, or strain them through layers of paper towel or clean cloth.

Boiling: Boiling is the safest method of treating water. Bring water to a rolling boil for 3-5 minutes, keeping in mind that some water will evaporate. Let the water cool before drinking. Boiled water will taste better if you put oxygen back into it by pouring the water back and forth between two clean containers. This will also improve the taste of stored water.

Disinfection: You can use household liquid bleach to kill microorganisms. Use only regular household liquid bleach that contains 5.25 percent sodium hypochlorite. Do not use scented bleaches, color safe bleaches or bleaches with added cleaners. Add 16 drops of bleach per gallon of water, stir and let stand for 30 minutes. If the water does not have a slight bleach odor, repeat the dosage and let stand another 15 minutes.

The only agent used to treat water should be household liquid bleach. Other chemicals, such as iodine or water treatment products sold in camping or surplus stores that do not contain 5.25 percent sodium hypochlorite as the only active ingredient, are not recommended and should not be used.

While the two methods described above will kill most microbes in water, distillation will remove microbes that resist these methods, and heavy metals, salts and most other chemicals.

Distillation: Distillation involves boiling water and then collecting the vapor that condenses back to water. The condensed vapor will not include salt and other impurities. To distill, fill a pot halfway with water. Tie a cup to the handle on the pot's lid so that the cup will hang right-side-up when the lid is upside-down (make sure the cup is not dangling into the water) and boil the water for 20 minutes. The water that drips from the lid into the cup is distilled.

Food

Store at least a one week supply of non-perishable food. Select foods that require no refrigeration, preparation or cooking, and little or no water. If you must heat food, pack a can of sterno. Select food items that are compact and lightweight.

Include a selection of the following foods in your Disaster Supplies Kit:

- Ready-to-eat canned meats, fruits, and vegetables
- Canned juices
- Staples (salt, sugar, pepper, spices, etc.)
- High energy foods
- Vitamins
- Food for infants
- Comfort/stress foods

Food Supplies

When Food Supplies Are Low

If activity is reduced, healthy people can survive on half their usual food intake for an extended period and without any food for many days. Food, unlike water, may be rationed safely, except for children and pregnant women.

If your water supply is limited, try to avoid foods that are high in fat and protein, and don't stock salty foods, since they will make you thirsty. Try to eat salt-free crackers, whole grain cereals and canned foods with high liquid content.

You don't need to go out and buy unfamiliar foods to prepare an emergency food supply. You can use the canned foods, dry mixes and other staples on your cupboard shelves. In fact, familiar foods are important. They can lift morale and give a feeling of security in time of stress. Also, canned foods won't require cooking, water or special preparation. Following are recommended short-term food storage plans.

Special Considerations

As you stock food, take into account your family's unique needs and tastes. Try to include foods that they will enjoy and that are also high in calories and nutrition. Foods that require no refrigeration, preparation or cooking are best.

Individuals with special diets and allergies will need particular attention, as will babies, toddlers and elderly people. Nursing mothers may need liquid formula, in case they are unable to nurse. Canned dietetic foods, juices and soups may be helpful for ill or elderly people.

Make sure you have a manual can opener and disposable utensils. And don't forget nonperishable foods for your pets.

Food Storage Tips

- Keep food in a dry, cool spot - a dark area if possible.
- Keep food covered at all times.
- Open food boxes or cans care-fully so that you can close them tightly after each use.
- Wrap cookies and crackers in plastic bags, and keep them in tight containers.
- Empty opened packages of sugar, dried fruits and nuts into screw-top jars or air-tight cans to protect them from pests.
- Inspect all food for signs of spoilage before use.
- Use foods before they go bad, and replace them with fresh supplies, dated with ink or marker.
- Place new items at the back of the storage area and older ones in front.

Nutrition Tips

During and right after a disaster, it will be vital that you maintain your strength. So remember:

- Eat at least one well-balanced meal each day.
- Drink enough liquid to enable your body to function properly (two quarts a day).
- Take in enough calories to enable you to do any necessary work.
- Include vitamin, mineral and protein supplements in your stockpile to assure adequate nutrition.

Shelf-life of Foods for Storage

Here are some general guidelines for rotating common emergency foods.

Use within six months:

- Powdered milk (boxed)
- Dried fruit (in metal container)
- Dry, crisp crackers (in metal container)
- Potatoes

Use within one year:

- Canned condensed meat and vegetable soups
- Canned fruits, fruit juices and vegetables
- Ready-to-eat cereals and uncooked instant cereals (in metal containers)
- Peanut butter
- Jelly
- Hard candy and canned nuts
- Vitamin C

May be stored indefinitely (in proper containers and conditions):

- Wheat
- Vegetable oils
- Dried corn
- Baking powder
- Soybeans
- Instant coffee, tea and cocoa
- Salt
- Noncarbonated soft drinks
- White rice
- Bouillon products
- Dry pasta
- Powdered milk (in nitrogen-packed cans)

Shelter

Close and lock all windows and exterior doors.

If you are told there is danger of explosion, close the window shades, blinds, or curtains.

Turn off all fans, heating and air conditioning systems.

Close the fireplace damper.

Get your family disaster supplies kit and make sure the radio is working.

Go to an interior room without windows that's above ground level. In the case of a chemical threat, an above-ground location is preferable because some chemicals are heavier than air, and may seep into basements even if the windows are closed.

Bring your pets with you, and be sure to bring additional food and water supplies for them.

It is ideal to have a hard-wired telephone in the room you select. Call your emergency contact and have the phone available if you need to report a life-threatening condition. Cellular telephone equipment may be overwhelmed or damaged during an emergency.

Use duct tape and plastic sheeting (heavier than food wrap) to seal all cracks around the door and any vents into the room.

Keep listening to your radio or television until you are told all is safe or you are told to evacuate. Local officials may call for evacuation in specific areas at greatest risk in your community.

Vehicle

If you are driving a vehicle and hear advice to “shelter-in-place” on the radio, take these steps:

If you are very close to home, your office, or a public building, go there immediately and go inside.

Follow the shelter-in-place recommendations for the place you pick described above.

If you are unable to get to a home or building quickly and safely, then pull over to the side of the road.

Stop your vehicle in the safest place possible. If it is sunny outside, it is preferable to stop under a bridge or in a shady spot, to avoid being overheated.

Turn off the engine. Close windows and vents.

If possible, seal the heating/air conditioning vents with duct tape.

Listen to the radio regularly for updated advice and instructions.

Stay where you are until you are told it is safe to get back on the road. Be aware that some roads may be closed or traffic detoured. Follow the directions of law enforcement officials.

First Aid Kit

Assemble a first aid kit for your home and one for each car.

- (20) adhesive bandages, various sizes.
- (1) 5" x 9" sterile dressing.
- (1) conforming roller gauze bandage.
- (2) triangular bandages.
- (2) 3 x 3 sterile gauze pads.
- (2) 4 x 4 sterile gauze pads.
- (1) roll 3" cohesive bandage.
- (2) germicidal hand wipes or waterless alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- (6) antiseptic wipes.
- (2) pair large medical grade non-latex gloves.
- Adhesive tape, 2" width.
- Anti-bacterial ointment.
- Cold pack.
- Scissors (small, personal).
- Tweezers.
- CPR breathing barrier, such as a face shield.
- Non-Prescription Drugs
 - Aspirin or nonaspirin pain reliever
 - Anti-diarrhea medication
 - Antacid (for stomach upset)
 - Syrup of Ipecac (use to induce vomiting if advised by the Poison Control Center)
 - Laxative
 - Activated charcoal (use if advised by the Poison Control Center)

Tools and Supplies

- Mess kits, or paper cups, plates, and plastic utensils
- Emergency preparedness manual
- Battery-operated radio and extra batteries
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- Cash or traveler's checks, change
- Non-electric can opener, utility knife
- Fire extinguisher: small canister ABC type
- Tube tent
- Pliers
- Tape
- Compass
- Matches in a waterproof container
- Aluminum foil
- Plastic storage containers
- Signal flare
- Paper, pencil
- Needles, thread
- Medicine dropper
- Shut-off wrench, to turn off household gas and water
- Whistle
- Plastic sheeting
- Map of the area (for locating shelters)

Sanitation

Toilet paper, towelettes
Soap, liquid detergent
Feminine supplies
Personal hygiene items
Plastic garbage bags, ties (for personal sanitation uses)
Plastic bucket with tight lid
Disinfectant
Household chlorine bleach

Clothing and Bedding

Include at least one complete change of clothing and footwear per person.

Sturdy shoes or work boots
Rain gear
Blankets or sleeping bags
Hat and gloves
Thermal underwear
Sunglasses

Special Items

Remember family members with special requirements, such as infants and elderly or disabled persons

For Baby

Formula
Diapers
Bottles
Powdered milk
Medications

For Adults

Heart and high blood pressure medication
Insulin
Prescription drugs
Denture needs
Contact lenses and supplies
Extra eye glasses

Entertainment (based on the ages of family members)

Games (cards) and books
Portable music device

Important Family Documents

Keep these records in a waterproof, portable container:

Will, insurance policies, contracts deeds, stocks and bonds

Passports, social security cards, immunization records

Bank account numbers

Credit card account numbers and companies

Inventory of valuable household goods, important telephone numbers

Family records (birth, marriage, death certificates)

Store your kit in a convenient place known to all family members. Keep a smaller version of the supplies kit in the trunk of your car.

Keep items in airtight plastic bags. Change your stored water supply every six months so it stays fresh.

Replace your stored food every six months. Re-think your kit and family needs at least once a year.

Replace batteries, update clothes, etc.

Ask your physician or pharmacist about storing prescription medications.

If an earthquake, hurricane, winter storm or other disaster strikes your community, you might not have access to food, water and electricity for days, or even weeks. By taking some time now to store emergency food and water supplies, you can provide for your entire family. This brochure was developed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency in cooperation with the American Red Cross and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Having an ample supply of clean water is a top priority in an emergency. A normally active person needs to drink at least two quarts of water each day. Hot environments can double that amount. Children, nursing mothers and ill people will need even more. You will also need water for food preparation and hygiene. Store a total of at least one gallon per person, per day. You should store at least a two-week supply of water for each member of your family.

If supplies run low, never ration water. Drink the amount you need today, and try to find more for tomorrow. You can minimize the amount of water your body needs by reducing activity and staying cool.

Evacuation Plan

Local government officials, not the Red Cross, issue evacuation orders when disaster threatens. Listen to local radio and television reports when disaster threatens. If local officials ask you to leave, do so immediately; they have a good reason for making this request.

Coordinate your evacuation plan in advance when creating your family's disaster plan. Ensure that you've tested the evacuation routes and that you have planned several in the instance of closed roads and routes.

Remember these simple tips:

Wear long-sleeved shirts, long pants and sturdy shoes so you can be protected as much as possible.

Take your disaster supplies kit.

Take your pets with you; do not leave them behind. Because pets are not permitted in public shelters, follow your plan to go to a relative's or friend's home, or find a "pet-friendly" hotel.

Lock your home.

Use travel routes specified by local authorities — don't use shortcuts because certain areas may be impassable or dangerous.

Stay away from downed power lines.

If you have only moments before leaving, grab these things and go!

Medical supplies: prescription medications and dentures.

Disaster supplies: flashlight, batteries, radio, first aid kit, bottled water

Clothing and bedding: a change of clothes and a sleeping bag or bedroll and pillow for each household member

Car keys and keys to the place you may be going (friend's or relative's home)

If local officials haven't advised an immediate evacuation

If there's a chance the weather may get worse or flooding may happen, take steps now to protect your home and belongings. Do this only if local officials have not asked you to leave.

Protect your home

Bring things indoors. Lawn furniture, trash cans, children's toys, garden equipment, clotheslines, hanging plants, and any other objects that may fly around and damage property should be brought indoors.

Leave trees and shrubs alone. If you did not cut away dead or diseased branches or limbs from trees and shrubs, leave them alone. Local rubbish collection services will not have time before the storm to pick anything up.

Look for potential hazards. Look for coconuts, un-ripened fruit, and other objects in trees around your property that could blow or break off and fly around in high winds. Cut them off and store them indoors until the storm is over.

Turn off electricity and water. Turn off electricity at the main fuse or breaker, and turn off water at the main valve.

Leave natural gas on. Unless local officials advise otherwise, leave natural gas on because you will need it for heating and cooking when you return home. If you turn gas off, a licensed professional is required to turn it back on, and it may take weeks for a professional to respond.

Turn off propane gas service. Propane tanks often become dislodged in disasters.

If high winds are expected, cover the outside of all windows of your home. Use shutters that are rated to provide significant protection from windblown debris, or fit plywood coverings over all windows.

If flooding is expected, consider using sand bags to keep water away from your home. It takes two people about one hour to fill and place 100 sandbags, giving you a wall one foot high and 20 feet long. Make sure you have enough sand, burlap or plastic bags, shovels, strong helpers, and time to place them properly.

Remember. Houses do not explode due to air pressure differences. Damage happens when wind gets inside a home through a broken window, door, or damaged roof.

Cover the outside of windows with shutters or plywood. Tape does not prevent windows from breaking.

All tape does is prevent windows from shattering. Using tape on windows is not recommended.

Protect your valuables

Move objects that may get damaged by wind or water to safer areas of your home. Move television sets, computers, stereo and electronic equipment, and easily moveable appliances like a microwave oven to higher levels of your home and away from windows. Wrap them in sheets, blankets, or burlap.

Make a visual or written record of all of your household possessions. Record model and serial numbers. This list could help you prove the value of what you owned if those possessions are damaged or destroyed, and can assist you to claim deductions on taxes.

Do this for all items in your home, including expensive items such as sofas, chairs, tables, beds, chests, wall units, and any other furniture too heavy to move. Store a copy of the record somewhere away from home, such as in a safe deposit box.

If it's possible that your home may be significantly damaged by impending disaster, consider storing your household furnishings temporarily elsewhere.

Gather essential supplies and papers

You will need the following supplies when you leave your home; put them all together in a duffle bag or other large container in advance.

This is your disaster supplies kit.

Flashlight with plenty of extra batteries

Battery-powered radio with extra batteries

First aid kit

Prescription medications in their original bottle, plus copies of the prescriptions

Eyeglasses (with a copy of the prescription)

Water (at least one gallon per person is recommended; more is better)

Foods that do not require refrigeration or cooking

Items that infants and elderly household members may require

Medical equipment and devices, such as dentures, crutches, prostheses, etc.

Change of clothes for each household member

Sleeping bag or bedroll and pillow for each household member

Checkbook, cash, and credit cards

Map of the area

Important papers to take with you

Driver's license or personal identification

Social Security card

Proof of residence (deed or lease)

Insurance policies

Birth and marriage certificates

Stocks, bonds, and other negotiable certificates

Wills, deeds, and copies of recent tax returns