

# Simple Steps to Emergency Preparedness

There are multiple parts to being prepared. Coordinating and organizing beforehand increases your chance of survival.

## Preplanning

- Arrange for an out-of-area person to be your contact point. Have each family member carry that information with them at all times. If disaster strikes while one of you is away from home, the only way you may be able to connect is by this third party. Include any other emergency numbers you might find useful. Also plan a central location where family members can meet up, if home is not possible and you are unable to reach each other by phone.
- Inspect your home for hazards, such as unsecured heavy objects that may fall and hurt someone in case of earthquake.
- Know where all shut-off valves are located. If a special tool is needed to shut these valves off, keep them nearby wrapped in waterproof material.
- Coordinate the family by giving them specific tasks to perform. Some examples: if you have a propane tank, in the case of an earthquake, make sure someone is assigned to turn off the valve immediately; assign family members to retrieve the emergency kit and, if appropriate, load it into your vehicle for quick evacuation.
- Schedule emergency drills so that everyone is sure of what must be done. When disaster strikes, there may not be time to think and action may be instantaneously required.
- Coordinate with your neighbors. Determine how you can help one another and tasks that may be shared.

## Your Emergency Kits

Well-stocked emergency kits need not be too complicated. Store them in an area where they are easily accessible as you may have to retrieve them quickly.

## Individual kits

Along with the main Emergency Kit, have a smaller one under each family member's bed. Backpacks are convenient for such minimal kits, which would include a flashlight, protective gear (ex. gloves, hard hat), prescription drugs, a signal whistle, some dehydrated foods, bottled water, small bottle of hand sanitizer, personal hygiene necessities, etc. Do not make it heavier than that individual can carry. In case a rapid evacuation is necessary and the main kit cannot be reached, these individual kits may make the difference between life and death.

Some of the items mentioned will have to be replaced if not used within their shelf life, such as prescription medications. Mark a calendar or keep a reminder list in your computer and/or smartphone as to which items in your emergency kit should be replaced and when.

## Primary Emergency Kits

- Use waterproof container(s) to store your survival necessities; if you plan on storing them outside, make sure they are also bear proof! Small items should be placed in resealable, plastic bags.
- Store at least 3 days of water per person; bottled water is perfect, but there are other possibilities as in multi-gallon storage tanks made specifically for holding potable water.
- Pack survival foods such as dried fruit, dehydrated or canned meats, soups, and vegetables; check camping and survival stores, locally or online, for all the possibilities (see list below). Include a manual can opener, light weight dishes and eating utensils. Along this line, include a sharp, multi-blade pocket knife.
- Don't forget the needs of your pets. Include enough food, water and supplies taking the "three day per" rule into consideration.
- Include a portable radio, flashlight and batteries. Consider getting hand-cranked (manually rechargeable) radio/flashlight combo. Add in candles and waterproof matches.
- Put together a basic, first-aid kit, or buy a ready-made one at the local pharmacy. Add in prescription medications, extra pair of eyeglasses, and a list of your doctors with their contact numbers.
- Add hygiene necessities: toothbrush/toothpaste, combs/brushes, detergent, soap, toilet paper, etc.
- Include extra sets of house and vehicle keys, along with copies of all your important documents (ex. wills, insurance information, IDs, credit card numbers).
- Have a large (5 gallon), covered bucket available to use as a latrine. In the meantime, you can use it to store more emergency items.
- Other items: sleeping bags, blankets. Shop for space (foil) blankets which take little room and are great insulators, rain gear (ex. light weight rain ponchos).
- If you are using more than one container, number them in indelible marker pen and have several lists of all your survival gear noting where each item is located. Place lists in a plastic bag and tape to each of the containers; include the same list in the individual emergency kits.

Items to include:

Tarp(s) (6' x 8')  
Work gloves  
Rope (3/8" x 50')  
Axe  
Pry bar (18")  
Duct tape  
Safety goggles  
Vice grip(s)  
Large garbage bags  
Folding shovel  
Extra batteries