

Everyday Readiness: Build Your Go Bag, Car Kit, and Stay Bin

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While no one wants to think about disasters, odds are you might one day be faced with something unexpected—a flood, wildfire, hurricane, landslide, or tornado—that forces you to either evacuate your home or to stay there for an extended period of time. Being prepared for the unexpected can give you peace of mind.

Emergency Kits and Locations

We don't know where we will be when an emergency occurs, so prepare supplies for:

- **Go Bag - Leave from Home:** This kit should include necessities and be stored in a “grab and go” container to take with you in case of evacuation.
- **Car Kit - Vehicle:** If disaster strikes and you are unable to return home, keep a kit of emergency supplies in your car.
- **Stay Bin - Shelter at Home:** Keep these supplies in a designated place so you will have them if needed. These supplies are in case you are unable to leave your home and may not have electricity or other utilities.



Go Bag (kept in the home and used in case of evacuation)

- Change of clothing for all family members
- Rain gear
- Water and food for people and pets
 - Enough for up to three days
 - Select non-perishable items like energy bars, dried fruit and nuts, cereal, crackers, powdered milk, jerky, peanut butter
- Cups, plates, utensils, paper towels, can opener
- Blankets or sleeping bags
- Activities for children – books, games

- Pet supplies, vaccination records, medications
- Children's immunization records
- Passports
- Stored in fireproof/waterproof file box or electronically on phone
 - Birth certificates
 - Copies of prescriptions
 - Contacts and policy numbers for auto, home, and health insurance
 - Contacts and account numbers for utilities and bank accounts
 - Save doctor/pharmacy contacts in your phone

- Have prescription medications close at hand to grab on your way out of the home
- Cash in case stores aren't able to accept credit cards due to power outages. The exact amount will depend on your family size and the length of time you expect to be away from your home but a general rule of thumb is \$50-\$100/day to cover food, gas, and potentially lodging. Be sure to keep the cash in a lockbox or other place that would make it difficult for thieves to access.

Car Kit: If you do not have a vehicle or are concerned about auto theft, store these items in your Grab and Go evacuation kit

- Flashlight with extra batteries
- Safety light sticks
- Emergency Blanket
- Tarp
- Duct tape
- Trash bags
- Matches in waterproof container
- Whistle with lanyard to signal for help
- N95 or KN95 face masks
- Emergency weather radio (battery or hand crank)

- List of emergency contacts (hard copy in case phone isn't working)
- Personal hygiene supplies
- First aid supplies
- Emergency food and water (see Go Bag section for specific recommendations)
- Paper and pencil
- Maps
- Phone charger
- Charging block
- Contact numbers for utility companies and insurance providers saved in your phone

Stay Bin

Experts recommend storing at least a two-week supply of basics. Tailor the list below to your household's unique needs.

Essentials for Your Stay-Bin

The contents of your stay bin can help ensure your household can remain safe and comfortable if cut off from outside help. By preparing now, you give your family peace of mind and the ability to weather an emergency with confidence.

Experts recommend storing at least a two-week supply of basics. Tailor the list below to your household's unique needs.

Water

- Store at least 1 gallon per person per day (2 gallons is better).
 - Half for drinking, half for food prep, sanitation, or washing.
 - Rotate stored water every 6 months to keep it fresh.
- Include unscented household bleach and a medicine dropper for purifying additional water.
- A water filter and coffee filters can help if tap water is unsafe.

- Remember: bottled water is easiest to store, but clean plastic containers (like soda bottles) also work

Food

- Keep at least a two-week supply of nonperishable food.

Choose items that:

- Don't require refrigeration or much cooking
- Come in single-meal sizes to reduce waste
- Match your family's preferences and dietary needs

Examples:

- Ready-to-eat canned fruits, vegetables, and meats (tuna, chicken, Vienna sausage)
- Peanut butter, crackers, granola bars, nuts, dried fruit
- Comfort foods like cookies, hard candy, tea, or instant coffee
- Infant formula or foods for babies, elderly adults, or those on special diets

First Aid Supplies

Keep a well-stocked kit that includes:

- Adhesive bandages, gauze pads, roller bandages, tape
- Antiseptic wipes, antibiotic ointment, soap
- Tweezers, scissors, safety pins, gloves
- Pain relievers, antacids, anti-diarrhea medicine, sunscreen
- Prescription medications and extra eyeglasses/contacts

Power and Lighting

- Flashlights or headlamps (with extra batteries)
- Hand-crank or battery-powered radio (NOAA Weather Radio preferred)
- Solar or battery-powered phone chargers



- Battery backup power supply (can run small appliances, phones, fans, or medical equipment)
- Avoid gas-powered generators indoors – use only outdoors due to carbon monoxide risk.

Tools and Emergency Gear

- Duct tape, plastic sheeting, and multi-tool
- Whistle (for signaling help)
- Fire extinguisher
- Non-sparking wrench/pliers to shut off utilities
- Non-electric can opener
- Matches or lighter in a waterproof container
- Sleeping bags or blankets for each person

Sanitation and Hygiene

- Toilet paper, paper towels, moist towelettes
- Soap, hand sanitizer, disinfecting wipes
- Feminine hygiene items, diapers, incontinence supplies
- Garbage bags and ties for waste disposal

Special Items

- Baby supplies (formula, diapers, bottles)
- Pet food, water, litter, medications
- Entertainment (books, puzzles, games)

Maintaining Your Stay Bin

- Check and refresh food, water, and medicine every six months
- Keep canned and packaged food in cool, dry areas.
- Replace expired or outdated items.
- Review your family's needs each year and adjust supplies (new medications, growing children, added pets)

Preparedness isn't about fear—it's about confidence and peace of mind. By taking the time to build a Go Bag, Car Kit, and Stay Bin, you ensure that you and your loved ones have the essentials to stay safe and comfortable during an emergency. Review and refresh your

supplies regularly, and tailor them to your family's unique needs. A little planning today can make all the difference tomorrow. For information about financial security during a disaster, please see publication FSFCS76 *Keep Your Financial Information Safe After a Disaster*.

References:

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<https://gema.georgia.gov/ready-kit-checklist>

<https://gohsep.la.gov/divisions/hazard-mitigation-assistance/fact-sheet-index/disaster-supplies-kit/>

<https://www.getagameplan.org/make-a-plan/build-a-kit/>