

You may need to survive on your own after a disaster. This means having your own food, water, and other supplies in sufficient quantity to last for at least three days. Local officials and relief workers will be on the scene after a disaster, but they cannot reach everyone immediately. You could get help in hours, or it might take days.

Basic services such as electricity, gas, water, sewage treatment, and telephones may be cut off for days, or even a week or longer. Or, you may have to evacuate at a moment's notice and take essentials with you. You probably will not have the opportunity to shop or search for the supplies you need.

A disaster supplies kit is a collection of basic items that members of a household may need in the event of a disaster.

### The Basics

- **Water** — at least a three-day supply of water
- Store at least one gallon of water per person per day. A normally active person needs at least one-half gallon of water daily just for drinking, but consider individual needs. Hot temperatures, children, nursing mothers, and medical emergencies typically require more water.
- For information on storing and preparing your own water containers, check [FEMA's site](#).
  
- **Food** — at least enough for 3 to 7 days
- 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.
- Avoid foods that will make you thirsty.
- Choose salt-free crackers, whole grain cereals, and canned foods with high liquid content
- Be sure to include a manual can opener and eating utensils.
- Examples:
  - Non-perishable packaged or canned food / juices
  - Foods for infants or the elderly
  - Vitamins
  - High energy foods--peanut butter, jelly, crackers, granola bars, trail mix
  - Comfort/stress foods--cookies, hard candy, sweetened cereals, lollipops, instant coffee, tea bag

- **First Aid Supplies** — Include a first aid kit in your car and your home. Make sure necessary medications are included as well.

- [Contact your local American Red Cross chapter](#) to obtain a basic first aid manual.
- Typical Kits Include:
  - Sterile adhesive bandages in assorted sizes
  - 2-inch sterile gauze pads (4-6)
  - 4-inch sterile gauze pads (4-6)
  - Hypoallergenic adhesive tape
  - Triangular bandages (3)
  - 2-inch sterile roller bandages (3 rolls)
  - 3-inch sterile roller bandages (3 rolls)
  - Scissors
  - Tweezers
  - Needle
  - Moistened towelettes
  - Antiseptic
  - Thermometer
  - Tongue blades (2)
  - Tube of petroleum jelly or other lubricant
  - Assorted sizes of safety pins
  - Cleansing agent/soap
  - Latex gloves (2 pair) Sunscreen
  - 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)

- **Bedding Supplies** —blankets, pillows, sleeping bags
- **Clothing** — If you live in a cold climate, you must think about warmth. It is possible that you will not have heat.

- Include at least one complete change of clothing and footwear per person.
- Consider seasonal / rain gear / sturdy shoes

- **Sanitation Supplies**

- Toilet paper
- 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
  
- **Toiletries / Hygiene items / Moisture wipes**
- **Special Items** —Remember to consider the family members with special needs, such as infants and elderly or disabled persons.
  
- **Keys**
- **Toys, Books and Games** — It's important to stay entertained to remain calm and sane.
- **Important documents**
- Keep cash on hand as banks and ATMs may not be open or available for extended periods.
  - Keep these records in a waterproof container:
  - Will, insurance policies, contracts, deeds, stocks and bonds
  - Photo IDs, 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)
  - Photocopies of credit and identification cards
  
- **Tools** — keep a set with you during the storm
- Mess kits, or paper cups, plates and plastic utensils
- [Emergency preparedness manual](#)
- Portable, battery-operated radio or television and extra batteries
- Flashlight and extra batteries
- Cash or traveler's checks, change
- Nonelectric 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)
  
- **Vehicle fuel tanks filled**
- **Pet care items**
  - proper identification / immunization records / medications
  - ample supply of food and water
  - a carrier or cage
  - muzzle and leash

## Supply Kit Storage

Just as important as putting your supplies together is maintaining them so they are safe to use when needed. Here are some tips to keep your supplies ready and in good condition:

- Keep canned foods in a dry place where the temperature is cool.
- Store boxed food in tightly closed plastic or metal containers to protect from pests and to extend its shelf life.
- Throw out any canned good that becomes swollen, dented, or corroded.
- Use foods before they go bad, and replace them with fresh supplies.
- Place new items at the back of the storage area and older ones in the front.
- Change stored food and water supplies every six months. Be sure to write the date you store it on all containers.
- Re-think your needs every year and update your kit as your family needs change.
- Keep items in airtight plastic bags and put your entire disaster supplies kit in one or two easy-to-carry containers, such as an unused trashcan, camping backpack, or duffel bag.
- Consider having kits ready and stored at home, work, and in the car.