

Be Prepared! How to Stock an Emergency Supply Kit



The best time to prepare for an emergency is *before* the crisis strikes.

To help ensure that you have what you need to keep you and your family safe, use the checklist below...

- Water**—one gallon of water per person per day for at least three days (for drinking and sanitation).

- Food**—at least a three-day supply of nonperishable food. *Note:* Recommendations vary on the specific amount of water and food to have on hand. The American Red Cross and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) advise that you consider maintaining a two-week supply of food and water.

- Battery-powered or hand-crank radio** and a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Weather Radio and extra batteries for both.

- Flashlights and extra batteries.**

- First-aid kit.**

- Whistle** to signal for help.

- Dust mask** to help filter contaminated air.

- Plastic sheeting and duct tape** to shelter in place.

- Moist towelettes, garbage bags and plastic ties** for personal sanitation.

- Wrench or pliers** to turn off utilities.

- Manual can opener** for food, matches and multitool pocketknife.

- Paper cups and plates** and plastic utensils.

- Warm clothes and blankets**, including warm, waterproof and protective footwear and gloves. Mylar blankets can be especially helpful—use them as your first layer between you and additional blankets to preserve body heat.

- Items for unique family needs**, such as daily prescription medication and/or pet food. If you take medication, have at least a week's supply on hand and keep a copy of your prescriptions as well as dosages.

- Important family documents**, such as medical records, wills, deeds, Social Security numbers, credit cards, bank account information and tax records. Also have cash or traveler's checks. *Helpful:* Keep these documents in a waterproof container.

- Additional items**, such as eyeglasses, hearing aids, hearing aid batteries, wheelchair batteries and oxygen. Also have copies of your medical insurance and Medicare or Medicaid cards readily available.

Develop an Emergency Plan

When an emergency occurs, family members may not be in the same location. To plan how you will contact one another, come up with a strategy to address different situations. For example, consider a plan where each family member calls, e-mails or sends a text message to the same friend or relative in the event of an emergency.

In some situations, it's easier to make a long-distance phone call, so an out-of-town contact may be the best person to communicate among separate family members. You can also use the Internet to communicate by e-mail, Facebook, Twitter and other social media networks. These communication channels allow you to share information quickly with a widespread audience or to find out if loved ones are OK. The Internet also can be used for telephone calls through Voice over Internet Protocol (such as Skype).

Depending on the emergency, it may be safer for each member to stay put rather than get away. Make a plan for both situations. Watch TV and listen to the radio for official instructions as they become available.