

# Disaster Supplies Kit

## AWARENESS MESSAGES

### Why talk about a Disaster Supplies Kit?

After a disaster, local officials and relief workers will be on the scene, but they cannot reach everyone immediately. You could get help in hours, or it may take days. Basic services, such as electricity, gas, water, sewage treatment, and telephones, may be cut off for days or even weeks. 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 will need. A Disaster Supplies Kit can help your family stay safe and be more comfortable after a disaster.

### What is a Disaster Supplies Kit?

A Disaster Supplies Kit is a collection of basic items that members of a household would probably need in the event of a disaster. The items are stored in a portable container(s) near, or as close as possible to, the exit door. Every household should assemble a Disaster Supplies Kit and keep it up to date. The number of people in a household and their ages and abilities will determine how many containers will be required to carry the kit items.

### What to Tell Children

Parents and caregivers should:

- Involve children in disaster preparedness at home so they are aware of the need to prepare and know what is being done. As they are able, have children help plan and assemble kits and put them where they will be ready if needed. Involving children is the first step in helping them know what to do in an emergency.
- Ask children to help the household remember to keep the kits updated by rotating the emergency food and water or replacing it every six months, and by replacing batteries as necessary. Children could make calendars and mark the dates for checking emergency supplies.
- Ask children to think of items that they would like to include in a Disaster Supplies Kit, such as books or games or nonperishable food items.
- Involve children in preparing plans and disaster kits for pets and other animals.

## **ACTION MESSAGES**

### **Assemble a Disaster Supplies Kit**

#### **CORE ACTION MESSAGES**

- **Assemble and maintain a Disaster Supplies Kit.**
- **Keep emergency supplies in every vehicle.**

You should assemble and maintain a portable Disaster Supplies Kit that you can use at home or can take with you if you must evacuate. In addition, if you have a vehicle, you should always keep it stocked with basic emergency supplies. (See "[Emergency Supplies for Your Vehicle](#)")

In a disaster situation, you may need access to your Disaster Supplies Kit quickly—whether you are sheltering at home or evacuating. Store the items in your kit in sturdy, clearly labeled, easy-to-carry containers near the door, if possible. Duffle bags, backpacks, and covered trash receptacles are good candidates for containers. In addition to the three-day supply of food and water in your Disaster Supplies Kit, you should consider maintaining a two-week supply of food and water in your home. (See "[Storing Food and Water Safely](#)") Following a disaster, having the right supplies can help your household endure home confinement or evacuation.

**Assemble the following items** for use at home or in case you must evacuate. Pack them in easy-to-carry containers and label the containers clearly. (See below "Tips for Preparing Your Disaster Supplies Kit")

- Food—a three-day supply in the kit and at least an additional four-day supply readily accessible for use if you are confined to home. You may want to consider stocking a two-week supply of food and water in your home. (See "Stocking and Storing Food and Water" and "[Food and Water Safety During/Post Disaster](#)")
- Water—three gallons per person in the kit and an additional four gallons per person readily accessible for use if you are confined to home. (See "[Storing Food and Water Safely](#)") and "[Food and Water Safety During/Post Disaster](#)")
- Portable, battery-powered radio or television and extra, fresh batteries.
- Flashlight and extra, fresh batteries.
- First aid kit. (See "[First Aid Kit Contents](#)")
- Medications—Prescription and non-prescription that are regularly used. Check with your physician or pharmacist on storage requirements.
- Cash and coins.
- Copies of personal identification, such as driver's licenses, passports, and work identification badges, and copies of medical prescriptions and credit cards.
- An extra set of car keys and house keys.
- Matches in a waterproof container.
- Map of the area marked with places you could go and their telephone numbers.
- Items for infants, such as formula, diapers, bottles, pacifiers, powdered milk, and medications not requiring refrigeration.
- Special items, such as denture needs, contact lenses and supplies, extra eyeglasses, and hearing aid batteries.
- Items for seniors, disabled persons, or anyone with serious allergies.

- Kitchen accessories: manual can opener; mess kits or disposable cups, plates, and utensils; utility knife; sugar and salt; aluminum foil and plastic wrap; reseal-able plastic bags.
- Household liquid bleach.
- For each person, one complete change of clothing and footwear, including sturdy work shoes or boots, raingear, and other items adjusted for the season, such as hat and gloves, thermal underwear, sunglasses, dust mask.
- Blankets or sleeping bag for each person.
- Small tent, compass, small shovel.
- Paper, pencil; needles, thread; small A-B-C-type fire extinguisher (See "[Fire Extinguishers](#)"); medicine dropper; whistle; emergency preparedness manual.
- Sanitation and hygiene items: toilet paper, towelettes, soap, hand sanitizer, liquid detergent, feminine supplies, shampoo, deodorant, toothpaste, toothbrushes, comb and brush, lip balm, sunscreen, plastic garbage bags (heavy-duty) and ties (for personal sanitation uses), medium-sized plastic bucket with tight lid, disinfectant, household chlorine bleach.
- Entertainment, such as games and books. Favorite comfort dolls, stuffed animals for small children.
- Roll of duct tape (10 millimeters thick) and scissors.
- Plastic sheeting pre-cut to fit shelter-in-place room openings.

**NOTE:** In the unlikely event that a certain type of chemical hazard causes officials to advise people in a specific area to **shelter-in-place in a sealed room**, households should have in the room they have selected for this purpose:

- Plastic sheeting pre-cut to fit room openings
- Duct tape and scissors.

Ten square feet of floor space per person will provide sufficient air to prevent carbon dioxide buildup for up to five hours. (See "How to Shelter-in-Place") Local officials are unlikely to recommend the public shelter in a sealed room for more than 2-3 hours because the effectiveness of such sheltering diminishes with time as the contaminated outside air gradually seeps into the shelter.

**NOTE:** Always keep a shut-off valve wrench near the gas and water shut-off valves in your home.

## Disaster Supplies Checklist for Pets

Prepare a pet disaster supplies kit that includes:

- Medications and medical records stored in a waterproof container and a first aid kit. A pet first aid book also is good to include. (See "[First Aid Kit for Pets](#)")
- Sturdy leashes, harnesses, and carriers to transport pets safely and to ensure that your pets cannot escape. A carrier should be large enough for the animal to stand comfortably, turn around, and lie down. Your pet may have to stay in the carrier for hours at a time while you have taken shelter away from home. Be sure to have a secure cage with no loose objects inside it to accommodate smaller pets. These may require blankets or towels for bedding and warmth, and other special items.
- Current photos and descriptions of your pets to help others identify them in case you and your pets become separated and to prove that they are yours.
- Food and water for at least three days for each pet, bowls, cat litter and litter box, and a manual can opener.
- Information on feeding schedules, medical conditions, behavior problems, and the name and telephone number of your veterinarian in case you have to board your pets or place them in foster care.
- Pet toys and the pet's bed, if you can easily take it, to reduce stress.
- Other useful items include newspapers, paper towels, plastic trash bags, grooming items, and household bleach.

## Tips for Preparing Your Disaster Supplies Kits

**Keep items in separate airtight plastic bags.** This will help protect them from damage or spoiling.

- **Observe the expiration or "use by" date on stored food and water. If you have prepared your own containers of water, replace them every six months** to ensure freshness.
- **Rethink your kit and family needs at least once a year.** Replace batteries, update medicines, clothes, etc.
- **Ask your physician or pharmacist about storing prescription medications.** You may find that the best solution is to gradually acquire a reserve by refilling prescriptions a little early, but always using those on hand first to avoid having the expiration dates lapse. Be sure they are stored to meet instructions on the label. It may be difficult to obtain prescription medications during a disaster because stores may be closed or supplies may be limited. Keep copies of essential prescriptions with you at all times.
- **Use easy-to-carry containers** for the supplies you would most likely need for an evacuation. Label them clearly. Think about using:
  - Large trash container with handles and a cover
  - Camping backpack
  - Duffel bag
  - Cargo container that fits on the roof of your vehicle
  - Insulated cooler that protects stored items in hot climates
- **Store water separately** to prevent damage from leakage.
- **Always keep your cell phone with you**, if you have one. Do not pack it in the kit. Consider getting an extra cell phone battery to keep with your Disaster Supplies Kit.