

# PREPAREDNESS ON A SHOESTRING

## FAMILY DISASTER KIT: HANDOUT



FEMA

### ACTIVITY: DISASTER KIT SCAVENGER HUNT

**You may need to survive on your own after an emergency for at least 3 days.** Local officials and responders will be on the scene after a disaster, but they cannot reach everyone immediately. Creating a family disaster preparedness kit does not have to be costly—many of the items for your family's kit may be found around your home.

You can make a game of getting prepared by organizing a family scavenger hunt. Begin by finding a container to store the items (e.g., large bucket, pillowcase, backpack, plastic container, etc.).

#### ☐ **Water—at least 1 gallon per person per day for at least 3 days, for drinking and sanitation**

**Cautions:** Unopened (sealed) water bottles should be good for at least 1 year. After a bottle is opened, the water will begin to grow bacteria in less than a month.

**Alternative Water Source:** If you are unable to purchase water, a typical home water heater can provide 30 or more gallons of clean drinking water. To use the water in your tank, first turn off the electricity or gas to the water heater. Then, close the supply valve to preserve the cleanliness of the water in the tank. Next, get the air out of the tank by opening any hot water tap such as the kitchen sink. (Caution: The water coming out of the tank may be very hot.) You can use a short water hose (e.g., the supply hose to a washing machine) to drain the water from the tank. Use a screwdriver or coin to operate the drainage valve. If you do not have a hose to transfer the water to jugs or pots, use a shallow pan to collect the water. Allow the tank to fill before restoring power to the water heater.

#### ☐ **Food—at least a 3-day supply of nonperishable food**

**What To Include:** Include ready-to-eat canned or dried meats/tuna, fruits, juices, and vegetables. High-energy foods such as peanut butter, cereals, breakfast bars, etc., are the best. Add a can opener, scissors, or knife for cutting open foil and plastic pouches, and disposable plates, cups, and utensils.

**Tips:** Make sure to include food for infants or those on special diets (e.g., medical restrictions, food allergies). Pack all these items in plastic bags to keep them dry and as airtight as possible. Keep a list of dates when food items need to be inspected and possibly replaced. Remember to include food for pets and service animals.

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### ☐ **First aid supplies**

**What To Include:** Look for items such as bandages, cotton washcloths, cleaning agent/soap, hydrogen peroxide/isopropyl alcohol, antiseptic cream, and aspirin or an aspirin substitute. Include a list of medical conditions and prescription medicines.

**Tip:** Keep your prescriptions in a plastic bag or travel kit in an easy-to-find location.

### ☐ **Copies of important information**

**What To Include:** Include important information such as phone numbers, family records, insurance and financial documents, and copies of passports, identification documents, Social Security cards, immunization records for people and pets, etc.

### ☐ **Radio, flashlight, and batteries**

**What To Include:** Include a battery-powered or hand-crank flashlight and radio and extra batteries.

**Tips:** Avoid using candles, which can easily cause fires. It is advisable to have a Weather Radio with tone alert. If you are unable to get a Weather Radio, you may be able to listen to alerts on local radio or access them on the Internet at:  
<http://www.nws.noaa.gov/nwr/streamaudio.htm>

### ☐ **Other supplies and items:** You may want to include things such as a whistle to signal for help, wrench or pliers to turn off utilities, sanitary products, diapers, and any other items you'll need during an emergency.

**Check the expiration dates of items in your kit at least every 6 months.**

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### REMINDERS: WHEN DISASTER STRIKES

Disaster can strike quickly and without warning. It can force you to evacuate your neighborhood or confine you to your home. Below are some steps you should take if a disaster strikes.

**PLACE THIS LIST IN  
YOUR DISASTER KIT!**

### Keep Informed

Listen to local radio or television for news and instructions.

- **WATCH** means it is possible that severe weather conditions will develop.
- **WARNING** means the weather is already occurring or is likely to occur and that people should take proper protective measures.

Bring things indoors such as lawn furniture, trash cans, children's toys, garden equipment, clotheslines, hanging plants, and any other objects that may be blown around. Confine or secure your pets in a location in your home or in a carrier for evacuation. Move to a safe area of your home unless you are instructed to evacuate.

### Follow Evacuation Orders

- ✓ **Evacuate immediately** if told to do so. Ignoring an evacuation order puts you and your family in danger. Wear protective clothing and sturdy shoes. Lock your home. Use the travel routes specified by local authorities; other routes may be impassable or dangerous. If you have only moments before leaving, grab the following items and go:
  - Prescription medications and other essentials
  - Driver's license, personal identification, insurance information, and other critical documents
  - Disaster kit
- ✓ **Notify your family contact.** Relatives and friends will be concerned about your safety. Letting someone know your travel plans will help relieve the fear and anxiety of those who care.

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### When It Is Safe—Assess the Damage

- ✓ **Check for injuries.** Determine if anyone is injured. If so, call for help and provide simple first aid measures.
- ✓ **Wear protective clothing and sturdy shoes.** Disaster areas and debris contain many hazards. The most common injury following a disaster is cut feet.
- ✓ **Help your neighbors** who may require assistance in an emergency situation—infants, elderly people, and people with disabilities—and the people who care for them.
- ✓ **Look for hazards.**
  - **Gas:** If you smell gas or suspect a leak, open a window and get everyone outside quickly. Turn off the gas at the outside main valve.
  - **Electrical system:** If you see sparks or broken or frayed wires, or if you smell burning insulation, turn off the electricity at the main fuse box or circuit breaker. Getting damaged utilities turned off will prevent further injury or damage. Stay away from downed power lines.
  - **Water:** If the water pipes are broken, turn the water off at the main valve. Tip: For all the utilities—gas, electric, and water—find out where shutoff valves/switches are before a disaster strikes.
  - **Structural problems:** Watch for objects that could fall. Evacuate structures that are not stable.
  - **Spills:** Stay away from areas that contain spilled chemicals or other hazardous materials.