

# Disaster Kit Checklist



Part of the Public Safety Office's "Be Ready" series

Use this checklist when putting together your disaster kit. Remember, this is just a basic list, and you may have special needs or wants that will add to it.

Also keep in mind that 3-5 days is a *minimum* guideline; many disaster relief organizations now recommend that your kit be able to supply your family's needs for at least 9-12 days, as in the event of a major disaster (such as a major earthquake) it may take a week or more for disaster workers and emergency personnel to reach those who have been affected.

- Water—one gallon per person per day for 3-5 days (if you have a four-person family, 12-20 gallons; a case of 1/2-L bottles is enough for one person for three days)
- Spare prescription medication—ask your doctor for samples or an extra prescription, and keep the extra in your kit; rotate it out every month with new medicine
- Spare eyeglasses—when you get a new pair, put the old pair (in a hard case!) in your kit; the same goes for dentures if possible
- First aid kit
- Utility wrench or crescent wrench (for shutting off gas)
- Non-perishable food, preferably that doesn't need cooking, such as canned foods, granola bars, jerky, "disaster food" bars, etc., as well as "comfort" foods such as cookies or candy—enough for 3-5 days
- Hand-operated can opener
- Portable AM/FM radio (battery-operated, solar, or hand-crank), and spare batteries if needed
- Sunscreen
- Bleach (for treating water from non-bottled sources—avoid fragrances and additives)
- Flashlights—one for each family member (these don't have to be fancy, and can often be picked up for as little as a dollar) and spare batteries
- Baby/toddler care items (if applicable), such as diapers, wipes, formula, etc.
- Feminine supplies (if applicable)

- Change of clothes for each person—these can be older, worn-out items: instead of throwing them out or donating them, stick them in your kit (make sure you rotate them as your kids grow!); don't forget socks and underwear
- Comfortable walking shoes or sturdy boots—again, can be older items
- Fire extinguisher—we suggest getting an ABC-type extinguisher, and the biggest one you can afford (2A10BC lasts twice as long on both A and B type fires as 1A5BC, and 4A30BC lasts four times as long on type A fires and six times as long on type B fires)
- Blankets—solar blankets (these look like giant pieces of foil) can be picked up for under \$2 apiece, and will keep you warm in the winter and protect you from the sun's heat in the summer; they also take up very little space in a kit
- Toilet paper and plastic bags for waste disposal (newspaper bags work well for this purpose)
- Pet food and care items, such as a water dish and spare leash (if applicable)
- Waterless hand sanitizer
- Paper plates, plastic cups, plastic utensils, garbage bags
- Comfort items, such as toys, books, stuffed animals, board games, etc.
- Storage totes to put it all together—should be water-resistant (a duffel bag won't protect your kit in a flood) and shock-resistant in case it gets bounced around during the quake or an aftershock. Keep the items inside sealed in plastic bags to protect against bugs and condensation. Especially for larger families, several smaller totes may be easier to manage than one large tote.
- Any other items you need or want, such as a multi-tool, camp stove & fuel, sleeping bags, glow sticks, lighter/matches, portable generator, work gloves, etc.

Also try to set aside five or ten dollars in cash each month, as often times after a disaster it's cash-and-carry only.