

14-day Emergency Kit

from “The Sense of Survival”

In most disasters the first seventy-two hours are the most critical to survival, and many adverse situations develop so quickly that there is little or no time for preparations. This makes a preplanned kit with all reasonable necessities included a very useful item.

Of course a seventy two-hour kit would take care of things in many foreseeable difficulties. Even in a nuclear war it may be reasonably safe in many areas to leave shelter after seventy-two hours for long enough to retrieve additional nearby supplies. But in many instances, especially those of major proportion, a seventy-two-hour kit would not be enough. The question is: If the emergency lasts more than 72 hours, who is going to feed you? In all candors it is unlikely that any local emergency management system is sufficiently strong to feed very many people in very many areas. (Call and ask!)

Here are some examples where a seventy two-hour supply may not do the job:

1. A nuclear war, in which case it is reasonable to be prepared to survive for at least two weeks in a shelter with only minimal cooking.
2. A widespread earthquake, which may not allow supplies to be forwarded to your area for longer than seventy-two hours.
3. The threat of nuclear war, which could bring about widespread relocation to rural areas.
4. A forced evacuation based on civil disorder or criminal activity or other needs as perceived by those in authority. (This happens. A small town in Utah was recently evacuated for weeks while law enforcement personnel searched for two at-large criminals.)

With very little more preparation, a seventy two-hour kit can contain enough food and water for two weeks and become a 14-day Emergency Kit. The kit could then handle a two-week fallout shelter stay or relocation. The foods can be replaced and rotated into normal use every half-year or full year to prevent waste and to assure a useable supply.

The kit should include provisions for food, shelter, heat, sleeping gear, clothing, light, tools, sanitation, personal items, first aid, valuables, water, and specialty and miscellaneous items. The most important factor to consider in a crisis is protection from the extremes of the crisis, including the weather. After that, water is most essential to survival; food is next; and then the other equipment.

The following list gives several possibilities under some headings. These are only meant to be suggestions of various possibilities and not an all-inclusive list of essentials. For instance, under shelter are listed "tube tent, lightweight nylon tent, family-size tent, and/or motor home." You obviously do not need to buy them all; just obtain the best you can practically afford that will do the job. Or, you simply may not be interested in having some of the items listed in your kit. For related discussion, see the individual subjects elsewhere in this book. The discussion on equipment in Chapter 11 may be especially helpful.

FOOD

The food supply should consist of foods you and your family like that provide reasonably balanced nutrition. Special dietary needs, such as those for babies and diabetics, should be considered. Your short-term emergency supply should not require refrigeration and should need little or no cooking. Energy-rich food is helpful in keeping up body energy. Salty foods increase need for water intake and should be minimized.

Although the food should be able to be used without cooking, it would be desirable to provide a means of cooking or at least heating it. Canned heat and heat-tab stoves are very inexpensive and would do the job, as would a regular camping or backpacking stove, which is preferred. A camping cook kit, kitchen cookware, or some shortening cans could be used to cook in.

One list (*Essentials of Home Production and Storage*, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, p. 11—now out of print) shows estimates that the following to supply one person with essential nutrients and 2,100 calories per day for three days (seventy-two hours):

- 1/2 lb. canned tuna fish or pork and beans
- 1/2 lb. nonfat dry milk
- 1 lb. graham crackers
- 1 lb. dried apricots
- 46 oz. canned orange or tomato juice
- 1/2 lb. peanut butter

By multiplying these amounts by four and adding some hardtack candy and a couple of cans of stew or freeze-dried meals, this would easily become a fourteen-day rather than a seventy-two hour supply.

The story of the farmer who told his wife to add another cup of water to the soup whenever a visitor stayed for dinner gives some further "food for thought" here. In a hard-press situation you could add some salt, bouillon and hot water to a "meal" that is made to feed four and feed twenty-four. The "soup" might be a little short on calories but it could still be filling and refreshing.

Another concentrated food item that is convenient is "food tabs." These tablets are nutritionally balanced, easily assimilated, and can be stored for several years with no significant deterioration. They are short on calories and need supplementation, however. (See Sources at the end of this chapter.)

Dehydrated and freeze-dried foods designed for backpacking and camping are ideally suited for emergency supplies, but adequate water supplies must accompany them. They are available packaged in individual servings and in #10 cans. Freeze-dried entrees are delicious, light in weight, nutritious, and they are easy to prepare. They are not cheap, but they are good. Buying in # 10 cans saves on the cost.

Meals Ready to Eat (MREs) are very practical and easy to use. These retort foods are used as field rations by the U.S. military and are essentially canned meals in "soft cans"—foil and plastic. They are lighter weight than canned foods, need no cooking, and are widely available. (Sources are listed at the end of this chapter.) MREs should be heated to make them more palatable. Heating in a water bath is usually most convenient. A variety of entrees are available. Try them first and select the ones you like. Some are rather strong-flavored and may not suit everyone's taste buds. In fact it could be worse—members of at least one family I know refuse to eat some flavors.

If an MRE pouch is bulging or swollen do not eat it! This is similar to a bulging can and means the contents are spoiled and can cause extreme illness. The soft pouches are more easily perforated than cans—a frequent cause of spoilage.

Dehydrated fruits that are available with MREs are tasty and make good snack food, but eat them slowly and drink water with them to prevent dehydrating your digestive system. This has been a recurring problem and can be fairly serious.

Other suggestions for food include nuts, nut butters, crackers, cereals, canned fruits and vegetables, bouillon, canned juices, cookies, freeze-dried meals, canned meats and stews, cheese spreads, hardtack candy, other candy, dried fruits and vegetables, canned milk, powdered milk, vitamin pills, and table salt.

Food preparation items may be only a sierra cup and a spoon; or paper plates and plastic utensils; or a good camping cook kit, including pans, plates, and cups; or something improvised from the home cupboard for your own needs. Cooking or heating can also be done in cans if nothing else is available. Aluminum foil is also useful. Dish soap, paper and cloth towels, a pitcher for mixing and pouring, and something to use for a dish pan should also be included. And don't forget the can opener!

SHELTER

Shelter could be plastic tube tents (2 per person), lightweight nylon tent, large family-size tent, and/or motor home. In addition, a waterproof poncho or acceptable substitute is essential; polyethylene sheeting, a "space blanket/" and/or a tarp are very useful.

HEAT

Heating needs may be met with a campfire, camp stove, kerosene heater, propane heater, portable metal stove (some of these fold up and can burn wood or charcoal), heat tab stove, canned heat and stove, matches, lighters and/or other means of lighting fire, and fuel for whatever is used.

SLEEPING GEAR

Include warm dry clothes; some combination of wool blankets, other blankets, and/or sleeping bags; a "space blanket;" and an insulating pad.

CLOTHING

Adequate, sturdy, comfortable clothing is a must. Sturdy footwear is an absolute "must have." Include poncho, coat, hat, gloves, socks, and underwear.

LIGHT

Include flashlights and candles—at least. Lamps, lanterns and light sticks are also possibilities. Don't forget matches and/or lighters and fuel and batteries. Lighters tend to lose their fuel so don't count on them alone for lighting purposes.

TOOLS

Pliers, saw, ax, file, sharpening stone, wire, cord, adjustable wrench, hammer, screwdrivers, duct tape, shovel, pocket knife and/or larger knife, can opener, bucket, nail bar or crowbar, and pick or mattock are all pretty basic.

SANITATION

Remember to include an emergency toilet of some type (at least a bucket), toilet paper, feminine hygiene products, disposable diapers, pre-moistened towelettes, plastic sacks, shovel, soap, towels (paper and cloth), and disinfectant. (See also the discussion in "Sanitation," Chapter 13.)

PERSONAL ITEMS

Some suggested personal necessities are: toothbrush and toothpaste, hairbrush and/or comb, shaving gear, deodorant (indispensable), mirror, nail clippers, and personal medication. (Baking soda can double as toothpaste and deodorizer for room or person.)

FIRST AID

Take a first aid course and review the information often. Keep immunizations current— especially tetanus. Keep a first aid kit and a good manual with the kit. (See "First Aid", Chapter 17, for more specific suggestions on first aid kits, manuals and supplies.)

VALUABLES

Cash, personal papers, licenses, treasured books, important photos, insurance policies, contracts, deeds, social security information, passports, birth certificates, checkbook, charge cards, wills and testaments, genealogical records, jewelry, and so on should be placed where they can be readily retrieved. A specialty item that is in my mind very important is scriptures and other solid written material that is uplifting.

WATER

There should be at least seven gallons for each person, and preferably fourteen gallons. (Portability becomes a problem here.) Water should be stored in containers no larger than fifteen gallons, otherwise it is difficult or impossible to carry. Depending on the container, fifteen gallons will weigh upwards of 130 pounds. There are sturdy, heavy-duty plastic containers that would probably withstand a substantial earthquake and are ideal if there is someone around who can lift them. The heavy-duty, one-to-five-gallon plastic jugs or buckets with lids and insulated jugs are also good. In a pinch, five gallons of water could keep a person going for a period of two weeks of shelter living; but if you were doing heavy work in southern Arizona in the summer, that amount would not cover it. Water purification equipment should also be included (see Chapter 10). Large plastic bags contained in a burlap bag, pillowcase, or makeshift cloth sack will hold water in the absence of something better.

Other options are retort water packets and mylar-cardboard box containers.

SPECIALTY ITEMS

Other important items are weapons, communication gear, survival kit, and war protection equipment. Weapons are discussed in Chapter 14 of this book. Weapons that may be included in this kit are a matter of individual choice. Most civil defense or emergency management instructions proscribe firearms in this type of situation, but I think that is somewhat unrealistic—especially in some areas of the country and in some foreseeable circumstances. Unrealistic—especially in some

areas of the country and in some foreseeable circumstances.

Communications gear should include a portable radio and spare batteries (preferably the radio should include short wave reception), compass, map of your area, an emergency signaling device (mirror, whistle, flare gun, etc.), and possibly even some CB or other equipment.

A 'survival kit for procuring small animals might include a razor blade, wire, monofilament line, picture-hanging wire, fishing hooks, aluminum foil, a few finishing nails, and a knife.

War protection equipment consists of an anticontamination suit, rain suit or improvised suit to keep nuclear fallout or chemical agents from touching your body or from being carried into your shelter (see "Anti-contamination Suit" in chapter 4), thyroid blocking agent (potassium iodide), monitoring equipment for nuclear fallout (i.e., a dosimeter and a survey meter); and, depending on what provision you have made, materials for an expedient fallout shelter, including a ventilation device. Associated first aid supplies, such as antibiotics, are also something to keep in mind.

MISCELLANEOUS

Pencils and notebook; polyethylene sheeting; sewing kit (including needles, thread, safety pins and scissor); aluminum foil; fire extinguisher; survival manual; recreational equipment such as games, musical instruments, song books, other books, paints, glue, paper, scissors (see Chapter 16 for additional ideas); a small piece of hose (for siphoning); insect screen; and dust masks. Dust masks are included because many of the potential emergencies, such as a volcano, can produce a lot of dust. A large bandana could also serve as a dust mask and impart other utility as well.

One final very important item is transportation. Keep fuel in your car, and you may want to consider other options, such as bicycles, some sort of wagon, or a cart.

CONTAINERS

Containment of items in this kit could probably be best done in soft, waterproof duffle bags or in good backpacks that can be easily carried; but other containers such as trunks, suitcases, new metal garbage cans are less convenient to transport but could also do the job. Avoid cheap plastic garbage cans; they crack and break with time and in cold. If you use garbage cans, don't overload and make them too heavy to easily lift. Some of these items listed may not lend themselves to sitting in storage—some of the tools and valuables for instance. Keep a list of these things. Don't be misled into thinking you could gather "everything" up at a moment's notice. You can't do it! If you don't believe it—try it!

Preparations to enjoy backpacking and camping can also, at the same time, be important emergency preparations. As part of 14-day Emergency Kit gear, backpacks can be packed with their ordinary backpacking trip containment. Each family member could carry an appropriate-sized kit that would enable his survival if separated from the family group.

As is also mentioned in "Software" (Chapter 11), in a pinch if you have to leave home and pack things in a hurry, lay out three or four layers of sheets and/or blankets. Place things in the middle, fold the opposite ends together and tie them in square knots. Wrap a rope or strap around the knots and tie firmly. Such a bundle can be carried "Santa Claus" style, or two such bundles may be tied to the ends of a shovel handle or other sturdy bar or board and carried "yoke" fashion. A good pad (perhaps another blanket) would be necessary to cushion such a yoke from the shoulders.

Don't be overwhelmed by the thought of putting together a 14-day Emergency Kit. Most of it is already around the house. Just start gathering it up. Begin simply and go from there. It's just fine if you have to start out with a piece of plastic, a roll of paper towels, a jug of water, a shovel, a sewing kit, a sack of hardtack, a can of tuna fish, a coat, valuables, and a pencil and notepad. Then with time, keep building it up as you can.

As part of emergency departure preparations all responsible household members should know how to turn off the utilities (gas, electricity, and water). Some will probably require tools to turn them off. If you ever do leave home in the emergency mode it's a good idea to lock the

doors and windows too.

In addition, many who have thought considerably about the possibilities for needing emergency kits see the need for a very basic lightweight emergency kit made up of carefully selected items. This kit would then be always carried in the car or wherever the owner goes away from home, including work and other daily pursuits. It makes sense.

There are two main ideas on emergency kits. The first is that if an emergency threatens your home you need to, most importantly, escape with your hide. The second is that if you leave home in a hurry, you still need to be able to function. Most reasons for leaving home in a hurry seem to indicate a threat to the home. Hence, the kit should be transportable by car but may need to be quickly rearranged to less bulky proportions. Think about the kit, and do what makes sense to you.

14-DAY EMERGENCY KIT CHECKLIST

Food <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Food <input type="checkbox"/> Utensils (pots, plates, spoons, etc.) <input type="checkbox"/> Cleanup gear (dishpan, towels, soap) 	Sleeping Gear <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Night clothes <input type="checkbox"/> Bag and/or blankets <input type="checkbox"/> Ground pad
Shelter <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Tent(s) <input type="checkbox"/> Poncho <input type="checkbox"/> Tarp, plastic, space blanket 	Clothing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Complete change of clothing <input type="checkbox"/> Suitable outerwear (coat, poncho, hat, gloves) <input type="checkbox"/> Sturdy footwear
Heat <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Stove or heater <input type="checkbox"/> Matches, lighter <input type="checkbox"/> Fuel 	Tools <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Pliers, wrenches, and screwdrivers <input type="checkbox"/> Knife, axe, saw, and hammer <input type="checkbox"/> File, sharpening stone, and sharpening steel <input type="checkbox"/> Shovel, pick, and bar <input type="checkbox"/> Cord, tape <input type="checkbox"/> Bucket, can opener
Light <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Candles <input type="checkbox"/> Flashlight <input type="checkbox"/> Lightsticks <input type="checkbox"/> Lamps or lanterns <input type="checkbox"/> Fuel, batteries <input type="checkbox"/> Lighters, matches 	Water <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Contained water <input type="checkbox"/> Water purification device <input type="checkbox"/> Container (bucket, pan, plastic sacks) <input type="checkbox"/> Solar still
Sanitation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Toilet paper <input type="checkbox"/> Toilet (see Chapter 13 for ideas) <input type="checkbox"/> Disinfectant <input type="checkbox"/> Soap <input type="checkbox"/> Diapers <input type="checkbox"/> Hygiene items 	Specialty Items <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Weapons <input type="checkbox"/> Communication gear <input type="checkbox"/> War protection gear D Survival kit
Personal Items <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Toothbrush, toothpaste <input type="checkbox"/> Hair care equipment <input type="checkbox"/> Shaving gear <input type="checkbox"/> Nail clippers <input type="checkbox"/> Personal medications 	Miscellaneous <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Radio <input type="checkbox"/> Survival manual <input type="checkbox"/> Pencil and paper <input type="checkbox"/> Fire extinguisher <input type="checkbox"/> Sewing kit <input type="checkbox"/> Dust masks <input type="checkbox"/> Fuel for auto <input type="checkbox"/> Games <input type="checkbox"/> Insect Screen
First Aid <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Take a first aid class and put notes in kit <input type="checkbox"/> Manual <input type="checkbox"/> Immunizations 	Valuables <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Personal papers & records <input type="checkbox"/> Cash, jewelry, credit cards <input type="checkbox"/> Books, photos, scriptures <input type="checkbox"/> Deeds, contracts, policies, certificates