

# Assemble a Disaster Supplies Kit

***You may need to survive on your own after a disaster. This means having your own food, water, and other supplies in sufficient quantity to last for at least three days. Local officials and relief workers will be on the scene after a disaster, but they cannot reach everyone immediately. You could get help in hours, or it might take days.***

Basic services such as electricity, gas, water, sewage treatment, and telephones may be cut off for days, or even a week or longer. Or, 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 need.

A disaster supplies kit is a collection of basic items that members of a household may need in the event of a disaster.

## Basic Disaster Supplies

There are six basics you should stock in your home:

- Food and water
- First aid supplies and medications
- Clothing, bedding, sanitation and personal hygiene items
- Tools
- Personal items
- Cleaning products
- Paper goods

## Disaster Supplies Kit Locations

### Home

Your disaster supplies kit should contain essential food, water, and supplies for at least three days.

Keep this kit in a designated place and have it ready in case you have to leave your home quickly. Make sure all family members know where the kit is kept.

Additionally, you may want to consider having supplies for sheltering for up to two weeks.

### Work

This kit should be in one container, and ready to "grab and go" in case you are evacuated from your workplace.

Make sure you have food and water in the kit. Also, be sure to have comfortable walking shoes at your workplace in case an evacuation requires walking long distances.

### Car

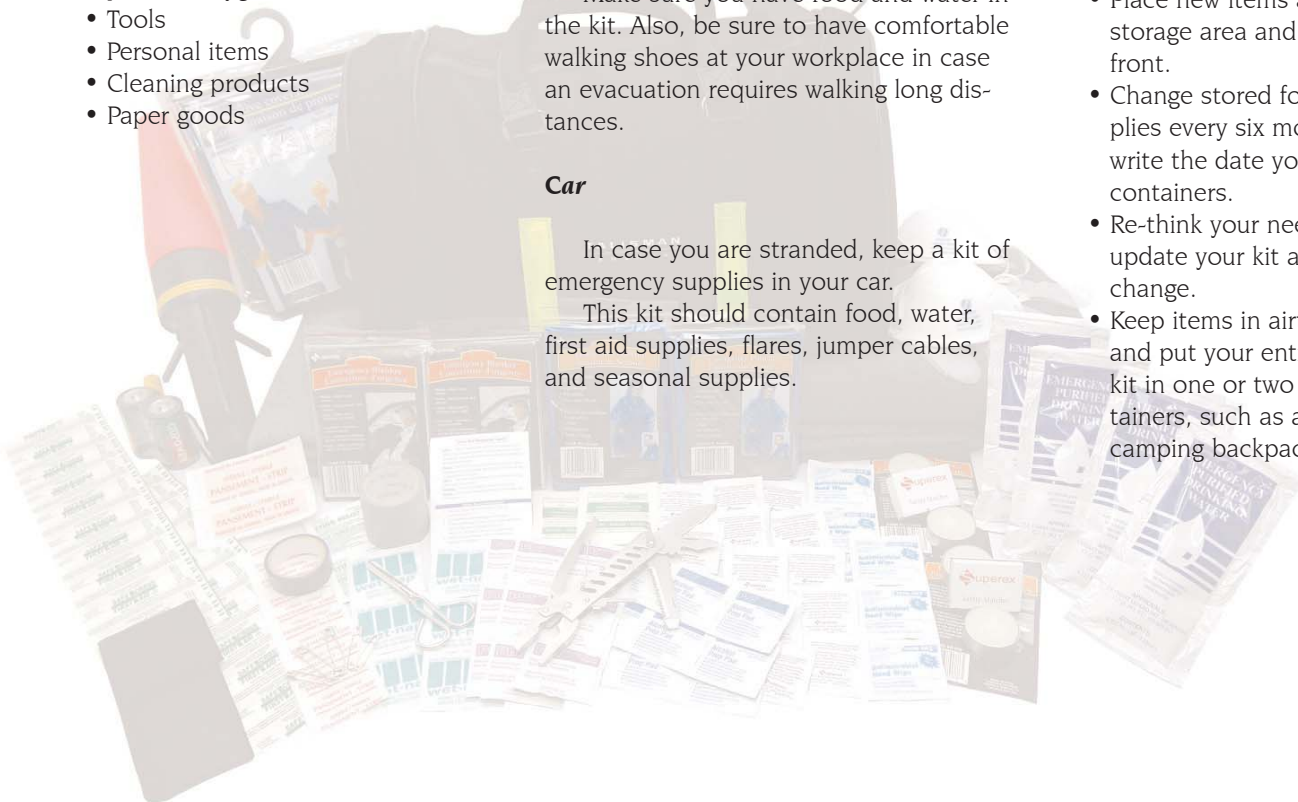
In case you are stranded, keep a kit of emergency supplies in your car.

This kit should contain food, water, first aid supplies, flares, jumper cables, and seasonal supplies.

## Disaster Supplies Kit Maintenance

Just as important as putting your supplies together is maintaining them so they are safe to use when needed. Here are some tips to keep your supplies ready and in good condition:

- Keep canned foods in a dry place where the temperature is cool.
- Store boxed food in tightly closed plastic or metal containers to protect from pests and to extend its shelf life.
- Throw out any canned good that becomes swollen, dented, or corroded.
- Use foods before they go bad, and replace them with fresh supplies.
- Place new items at the back of the storage area and older ones in the front.
- Change stored food and water supplies every six months. Be sure to write the date you store it on all containers.
- Re-think your needs every year and update your kit as your family needs change.
- Keep items in airtight plastic bags and put your entire disaster supplies kit in one or two easy-to-carry containers, such as an unused trashcan, camping backpack, or duffel bag.



## Safety Skills

It is important that family members know how to administer first aid and CPR and how to use a fire extinguisher.

### Learn First Aid and CPR

Take a first aid and CPR class. Local American Red Cross chapters can provide information about this type of training. Official certification by the American Red Cross provides, under the "good Samaritan" law, protection for those giving first aid.

### Learn How to Use a Fire Extinguisher

Be sure everyone knows how to use your fire extinguisher(s) and where it is kept. You should have, at a minimum, an ABC type.



### Escape Routes

Draw a floor plan of your home. Use a blank sheet of paper for each floor. Mark two escape routes from each room. Make sure children understand the drawings. Post a copy of the drawings at eye level in each child's room.

### Where to Meet

Establish a place to meet in the event of an emergency, such as a fire. This could be a place near the home, like the next door neighbor's telephone pole. Or, this could be a place outside the immediate area, such as the neighborhood grocery store parking lot.

### Planning for Special Needs

If you have special needs: Find out about special assistance that may be available in your community. Register with the office of emergency services or the local fire department for assistance so needed help can be provided.

- Create a network of neighbors, relatives, friends, and coworkers to aid you in an emergency. Discuss your needs and make sure everyone knows how to operate necessary equipment.
- Discuss your needs with your employer.

- If you are mobility impaired and live or work in a high-rise building, have an escape chair.
- If you live in an apartment building, ask the management to mark accessible exits clearly and to make arrangements to help you leave the building.
- Keep specialized items ready, including extra wheelchair batteries, oxygen, catheters, medication, food for service animals, and any other items you might need.
- Be sure to make provisions for medications that require refrigeration.
- Keep a list of the type and model numbers of the medical devices you require.

## Caring for Animals

Animals also are affected by disasters. Use the guidelines below to prepare a plan for caring for pets and large animals.

### Guidelines for Pets

Plan for pet disaster needs by:

- Identifying shelter.
- Gathering pet supplies.
- Ensuring your pet has proper ID and up-to-date veterinarian records.
- Providing a pet carrier and leash.

Take the following steps to prepare to shelter your pet:

- Call your local emergency management office, animal shelter, or animal control office to get advice and information.
- Keep veterinary records to prove vaccinations are current.
- Find out which local hotels and motels allow pets and where pet boarding facilities are located. Be sure to research some outside your local area in case local facilities close.

Know that, with the exception of service animals, pets are not typically permitted in emergency shelters as they may affect the health and safety of other occupants.

### Guidelines for Large Animals

If you have large animals such as horses, cattle, sheep, goats, or pigs on your property, be sure to prepare before a disaster.

Use the following guidelines:

1. Ensure all animals have some form of identification.
2. Evacuate animals whenever possible. Map out primary and secondary routes in advance.
3. Make available vehicles and trailers needed for transporting and supporting each type of animal. Also make available experienced handlers and drivers. (Note: It is best to allow animals a chance to become accustomed to vehicular travel so they are less frightened and easier to move.)
4. Ensure destinations have food, water, veterinary care, and handling equipment.
5. If evacuation is not possible, animal owners must decide whether to move large animals to shelter or turn them outside.

Source: [www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov)



**EAST-WEST GATEWAY**  
Council of Governments

Creating Solutions Across Jurisdictional Boundaries

**Gateway Tower**  
One Memorial Drive, Ste. 1600  
St. Louis, MO 63102-2451

**314-421-4220**

**618-274-2750**

**Fax 314-231-6120**

**[www.ewgateway.org](http://www.ewgateway.org)**