

Emergency Preparation and Creating a “Go Bag” by Cynthia Brian



Natural disasters know no boundaries. One never knows if a fire, earthquake, flood, mudslide, or other calamity is on the horizon. It’s imperative to be prepared for all emergencies. Because of climate change and global warming, we can be assured that natural disasters will be more frequent and more devastating.

Be Prepared!

Here are ways that you can be prepared. Add your requirements and be ready to drive away at a moment’s notice. Besides Go Bag essentials listed below, these are items that require your attention.

1. Sign up for emergency alerts via your County Community Warning System where you can register your phones, emails, and text numbers to be notified. Even if you are already registered with Nixle (<https://www.nixle.com>), your local CCWS is the alert system that will be used for location-specific information.
2. Install an analog landline phone if you don’t already have one. These are the old-fashioned phones where the jack plugs into the wall. Electricity is not necessary for them to work. Although billing is more expensive than cell phones, when the power is out, these landlines work.

3. Make a rescue plan for your pets and animals and have a bag ready for them next to your Go Bag.
4. Know how to manually open automatic garage doors and gates.
5. Make copies of your passport, driver's license, credit cards, insurance information, and have small bills available. Put these in your Go Bag.
6. Backup your computers, scan your important documents, and keep files in the cloud or off-site.
7. Family mementos, jewelry, heirlooms, and any irreplaceable article that you can't live without must be stored with your Go Bag.
8. Know your neighbors and their contact numbers to keep in touch to make sure everyone is safe.
9. Make a list of a network of friends that you can call in an emergency.
10. Know where you will go in evacuations.
11. Have a sign already made with your name and phone number and the words "All Evacuated" sitting on top of your Go Bag along with a roll of blue painter's tape. Only if time permits, tape your sign to your door when you leave so that firefighters know the house is clear.
12. Listen to and obey the first responders. These trained men and women have your safety and that of your home as their priorities. Follow their orders.
13. When told to evacuate, go quickly and carefully. Take **one** vehicle only so as not to clog the escape routes. Do not attempt to evacuate on foot.
14. Stay calm.

Whatever the calamity, it will behoove you to have an emergency supply kit (AKA "**Go Bag**") in **every** vehicle and a larger one in your home in a closet or area near the front door that will offer you supplies for a few days. You want duplicate Go Bags in your vehicles because when disaster strikes you may be in your vehicle and unable to return home. In an emergency at your dwelling, you may only have time to grab your keys, phone, wallet, pets, Go Bag, and what you can carry. There will not be time to "load your car" or to be searching or running from room to room to find what you need. Keep everything that is essential together in one place. Remember, you may be evacuated for hours, days, or weeks. Sometimes, as has been the case with our California wildfires and earthquakes, a matter of minutes means the difference between life and death.

Most of all, remember that saving your life and that of your family is the most important. Everything else can be replaced.

Fill a backpack or small case with the following and keep one of these in ALL of your vehicles and one in your home. Pack a small bag for each family member, or, if easier, pack a larger bag to include everyone. Remember you may only take ONE vehicle upon an evacuation.

Go Bag Necessities

First Aid kit
Duplicate chargers for phones, tablets, and computers
Work gloves
Warm gloves
Towelettes
Small towel
Bottled water (1 gallon per person per day)
Blanket
Walking shoes
Socks
Warm jacket
Peanut butter
Honey
Protein bars
Personal hygiene kit with a toothbrush, soap, medications
Matches
Candle
Flashlight and headlamp with extra batteries
Eating utensils and plates
Breathing masks (Niosh-N95 if available, or Covid masks)
Clothing change
Extra set of keys to home, office, etc.
Cash
Toilet Paper

Hopefully, you will never have to use these emergency kits, but it's best to be prepared. It is natural to assume that a catastrophe will happen to someone else, but the reality is no one is immune. Across the country, natural disasters are becoming more prevalent and frequent. Think safety first. The life you save will be your own.

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