The “Go-Bag”

One component of disaster preparedness is your “Go-Bag”. A Go-Bag is a backpack or other easy-to-carry container that you keep close by in case you must deal with a disaster or other emergency, and have to evacuate to a safe place quickly. Since you might have to be away from home for several days, your “Go-Bag” contents should include not only foods, water and support equipment, but personal comfort items as well.

Many folks keep their “Go-Bag” in the trunk of their car. This is highly practical, as long as you park your car outside and away from structures that could collapse in an earthquake; and provided nothing in it is affected by heat. The items listed are individually very light weight. However, combined, the bag can weigh as much as 20 lbs.- primarily due to weight of liquids.

You should prepare one “Go-Bag” for each family member and make sure each has an I.D. tag. Remember, you may not need to evacuate your home, but be required to stay there for several days without utilities, and unable to get any support by anyone for some time. So you should also have emergency supplies in your home to last at least 10 days (a separate recommended list is available).

Also remember that you might be at work when an emergency or disaster strikes, and you may not be able to get home. So it would be prudent to keep some supplies in a small container at work. Those items should be based on what you would need at work for your immediate safety and comfort until the emergency subsides. Remember, it is far better to have the items and never need them, than to the items in an emergency and not have them. Advance preparedness is key.

Go-Bag Contents:
- Flashlight (waterproof) (LED recommended) with fresh batteries and backup batteries
- AM / FM / Weather radio – battery, solar or windup operated, with earphones (note: a radio that includes shortwave bands is even better)
- Extra Radio Batteries
- Whistle (USCG approved water / storm proof)
- Dust masks & heavy work gloves
- Folding knife (larger blade)
- Emergency survival blanket (metalized polyester “space blanket”) or survival bag
- Emergency / votive / t-light candles with holder
- Matches (windproof/waterproof) in a waterproof container, butane lighter, or other fire starter (hint: a baggie with dryer lint makes excellent kindling)
- Cup, bowl, plate (polyvinyl), knife, fork, spoon (lexan), and water bottle
Can opener (military fold-up type recommended)
One climbing-rated spring-gated carabiner and several “mini-biners”
Stainless steel or polymer mirror
Emergency cash in small denominations and quarters for phone calls
Sturdy shoes, a change of clothes (including underwear), and hat
Local map
Compass
Some emergency foods and water:
- several small bottles of water
- power bars / granola bars / nutrition bars @ 1200 calories/day/person
- powdered gatorade, tea bags, coffee bags, sugar packets, salt packets, etc.
- hard candies & gum
Reflector arm band or waist band
First Aid Kit with alcohol wipes, band-aids, anti-bacterial ointment, tweezers, etc.
Hand sanitizer
Water purification tablets
Permanent marker, pen, paper and tape
Parachute cord (Military Spec) or other strong lightweight rope
Photos of family members and pets for re-identification purposes
List of emergency point-of-contact addresses, phone numbers, email, etc.
List of drug and food allergies (especially antibiotics)
Copy of health insurance and identification cards
Extra prescription eye glasses, hearing aid or other vital personal items
Prescription medications, aspirin, ibuprofin, mosquito repellent, etc.
Feminine items as required
Small personal rolls / packets of toilet paper
Toothbrush / toothpaste, safety razor, soap, and shampoo
Antibacterial soap & container
Sun screen
Deck of plastic coated playing cards, paperback book, or other personal entertainment items
Extra keys to your house, mailbox, and vehicle
Bandana / hat
Viscose (quick drying) towel

In-Car Preparedness Items
Some folks keep their Go Bag inside their home with a plan to take it with them if a disaster strikes and they have to leave quickly. Others keep one Go Bag in their home and another in their car. Regardless, your car should also have the following items:

Flashlight (waterproof) LED recommended, with batteries
Granola Bars / Power Bars
Wrecking bar or crow bar
Folding shovel
Short-stroke hand saw
Light weight tarp (10’X10’)
50 foot rope
Sleeping bag or polyester blankets (in waterproof bag)
Tool box with standard hand tools (hammer, pliers, screwdrivers, wire cutters, adjustable wrench, wire, box / open end wrenches, etc.)