Home Emergency Preparedness

After a major disaster, the usual services we take for granted such as running water, refrigeration, electricity, and telephones, may be unavailable. Experts recommend that you should be prepared to be self-sufficient, sheltering in place, for at least three days. That means being able to cook foods, wash, and do other things for 3 days or longer. Ten days worth of supplies is recommended. Recent disastrous storms on the east coast and the giant earthquake in Japan show that a 30-day supply is not unreasonable.

Once you begin to gather your home disaster / emergency items, they should be stored in an easily accessible, dry, and safe location. One idea is to put the items in a large, watertight container (e.g. a large plastic garbage can with a lid and wheels) that will protect the items and allow you to move them to another location easily if necessary.

Your basic home emergency supplies should include:

- Water – one gallon per person per day
- Food – at least a 10-day supply of ready to eat or requiring minimal water such as:
  - Canned meats (tuna / chicken / spam / beef) and vegetables
  - Canned soups & stews
  - Dehydrated Meals (provided water is available)
  - Packaged products like power bars, granola bars, pop-tarts, etc.
  - Canned milk (dry milk is also suggested, provided water is available)
  - Hard candies
  - Drink mix, instant coffee, tea bags
- Manual can opener and other cooking supplies (pan, large spoon, dish soap, etc.)
- Portable stove with fuel (cooking outside with such a stove is highly recommended):
  - Multi-fuel “Coleman” type 2-burner stove (i.e. white gas & unleaded gas)
  - Propane Stove
  - Sterno collapsible stove
- Disposable plates, utensils and other eating items
- Well-equipped First Aid kit with extra supplies such as elastic bandages, gauze
  Compresses, etc. and instructions, mosquito repellent
- 2-week supply of prescriptions and multi-vitamins
- Extra sets of prescription glasses & sunglasses
- Solar / hand crank / battery – powered AM / FM / Weather radio
- Solar powered lights (4) / battery powered LED lantern / Cyalume glow sticks (8)
  (emergency candles not recommended but can be used for temporary light
  if extreme care is used to locate on / in fireproof locations)
- A copy of important documents & phone numbers
- Warm clothes, extra boots / shoes, and rain gear for each family member.
- Heavy work gloves / safety goggles / dust masks
- Disposable / Digital camera
Matches

Unscented liquid household bleach and an eyedropper for water purification

Personal hygiene items including extra toilet paper, feminine supplies, hand sanitizer and antibacterial soap

Clear plastic sheeting, duct tape and utility knife for covering broken windows

Tools such as a crowbar, hammer & nails, staple gun, adjustable wrench, fiberglass handled shovel & rake, rope, bungee cords, screw drivers, nails, screws, tree saw, plastic cable ties, stainless steel wire, electrical tape

Firewood for heat, including kindling

Blanket or sleeping bag for each person in the family (30 degree rating recommended)

Zip locking freezer-size bags

Large heavy duty plastic bags for trash, and a plastic bucket with plastic bags for waste and sanitation (not recommended, but in an emergency, a small amount of waste can be directly buried - not in a container or bag - in a 12” deep hole at least 25 feet from any living or water areas).

Any special-needs items for babies, children, seniors, or people with disabilities.

Pet food, water, medications and supplies, including leash and portable carrier

Deck of cards, paperback books, board games and other personal entertainment items

Optional Items may include:

- Solar battery / cell phone chargers
- Solar stove / oven
- Bicycle with spare tubes and tire repair kit
- Electrical generator with 1 week’s fuel and oil
- 100 ft. 12-guage all-weather extension cord
- Gas powered chain saw with fuel & oil, safety gear, and chain sharpener
- HD plastic sheeting sufficient to cover all windows and roof
- HD stapler and staples or sheetrock nails
- Measuring tape (25’)

NOTES:

- Water heaters typically hold up to 40 gallons of water that can be drained and used if necessary. Bathtubs can also be filled and used as extra water resource.
- Water can be treated with 8-16 drops (1/4 teaspoon) of non-scented chlorine bleach to kill bacteria. Let stand for 30 minutes. Double for cloudy water.
- All canned foods should be rotated at their expiration date.
- Never use a BBQ indoors.
- Solar stove / oven plans are available on-line, are easy to create, and cost almost nothing to build. Daytime sun can create temperatures up to 140 deg.
- Non-sparking natural gas shutoff wrenches are recommended
- Generators must be run outdoors, but under a porch or canopy during rain or snow