

Disaster Kit

Assemble A Disaster 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, but it could take days.

Basic services such as electricity, gas, water, sewage treatment, and telephones may be cut off for days, a week, or even 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 supply kit is a collection of basic items that members of a household may need in the event of a disaster.

Kit Locations

Since you do not know where you will be when an emergency occurs, prepare supplies for home, work, and vehicles.

- **Home:** Your disaster supply 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 and can lift and carry the kit. Additionally, you may want to consider having supplies for sheltering for up to two weeks and plan for possible power outages at home.
- **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 maps, food, water, a manual can opener, a first aid kit and manual, flares, jumper cables, a flashlight and extra batteries, a fire extinguisher (5lb., A-B-C type), blanket, rain gear, and seasonal supplies.

Water

How much water do I need? You should store at least one gallon of water per person per day. A normally active person needs at least one-half gallon of water daily just for drinking. In determining adequate quantities, take the following into account:

- Individual needs vary, depending on age, physical condition, activity, diet, and climate.
- Children, nursing mothers, and ill people need more water.
- Very hot temperatures can double the amount of water needed.

- A medical emergency might require additional water.
- Water is used for sanitation needs as well as for drinking.

How should I store water?

To prepare the safest and most reliable emergency supply of water, it is recommended that you purchase commercially bottled water. Keep bottled water in its original container, and do not open it until you need to use it. Be sure to observe the expiration or "use by" date.

If you are preparing your own containers of water: It is recommended that you purchase food-grade water storage containers from surplus or camping supplies stores to use for water storage. Before filling with water, thoroughly clean the containers with dishwashing soap and water, and rinse completely, so there is no residual soap. Follow the directions below on filling the container with water.

If you choose to use your own storage containers, choose two-liter soft plastic drink bottles - not plastic jugs or cardboard containers that have milk or fruit juice in them. Milk protein and fruit sugars cannot be adequately removed from these containers and provide an environment for bacterial growth when water is stored in them. Cardboard containers also leak easily and are not designed for long-term storage of liquids. Also, do not use glass containers because they can break and are heavy.

If storing water in plastic soda bottles, follow these steps: Thoroughly clean the bottles with dishwashing soap and water, and rinse completely, so there is no residual soap. Sanitize the bottles by adding one teaspoon of non-scented liquid household chlorine bleach to a quart of water. Swish the sanitizing solution in the bottle so that it touches all surfaces. After sanitizing the bottle, thoroughly rinse out the sanitizing solution with clean water.

Filling water containers: Fill the bottle to the top with regular tap water. If the tap water has been commercially treated from a water utility with chlorine, you do not need to add anything else to the water to keep it clean. If the water you are using comes from a well or water source that is not treated with chlorine, add two drops of non-scented liquid household chlorine bleach to the water. Tightly close the container using the original cap. Be careful not to contaminate the cap by touching the inside of it with your finger. Place a date on the outside of the container so that you know when you filled it.

Store in a cool, dark place. Replace the water every six months if not using commercially bottled water.

Food

The following are things to consider when putting together your food supplies:

- Avoid foods that will make you thirsty. Choose salt-free crackers, whole grain cereals, and canned foods with high liquid content.

- Stock canned foods, dry mixes, and other staples that do not require refrigeration, cooking, water, or special preparation. You may already have many of these on hand. (Note: be sure to include a manual can opener.)
- Include special dietary needs.

Maintaining Your Kit

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.
- Throw out any can that become swollen, dented, or corroded.
- Store boxed food in tightly closed plastic or metal containers to protect it from pests and to extend its shelf life.
- 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 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's 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.

[For a Hurricane Supply Checklist, click here.](#)

You can visit FloridaDisaster.org to build your Family Emergency Plan. A customized Disaster Supply Kit will be generated as part of your plan.