

52 Weeks of Emergency Preparedness Tips

Week One: Build a Basic Kit

Purchase a backpack or container for your 72 Hour Kit. FEMA recommends that each person have a kit in place during an incident or disaster. When choosing a container make sure it is water proof and able to withstand any element that could destroy it or the contents inside. Due to a wide variable of weather conditions in the region; high heat, humidity, dampness or cold temperatures the condition of the container or contents can be affected, so choose wisely!

Week Two:

You will need one gallon of water, per person, per day for drinking, food preparation, and sanitation. It is imperative that you address this issue for everyone in your home to maintain your health. During a time of disaster water may be the first resource that is limited or unavailable, so preparing in advance will ensure that you have water when you need it to maintain your ever day living!

Week Three:

Purchase a battery powered radio, a NOAA Weather Radio with tone alert and have extra batteries for both. The need to be informed of the event, safety measures to follow, evacuation procedures, and where shelters are located, is critical during an incident or disaster. The possibility that electrical services will be delayed or destroyed can be high, so a redundant communication resource is essential to receive up-to-date news.

Week Four:

During an incident or disaster electrical services can be affected; purchase a flashlight with extra batteries to support your needs, regardless if you are at home or in a shelter. Having a flashlight is a critical resource to have so you know where you are and what is around you. Also, purchasing a whistle to draw attention to yourself if you are injured or cannot speak will alert first responders of where you are so they can assist you!

Week Five:

Purchase a First Aid kit and add extra latex gloves, bandages, gauze pads, tape, sanitary pads (make incredible pressure bandages) and a bottle of liquid bandage. Basic First Aid Kits do not have enough supplies for a family for 3 or more days. It is imperative that you have enough of those items in your kit to support basic first aid treatment until the emergency medical personal can arrive!

Week Six:

Place copies of personal documents; bank statements, wills, insurance papers, birth certificates etc. in your kit. The need to have copies of those items that support your financial and personnel business is critical. Many times during large events, critical infrastructures such as banks, hospitals, doctor's offices, and city/government buildings are destroyed. If you have copies of pertinent information about your accounts with you, recovery can be organized and efficiently done.

Week Seven:

If you have an infant, put formula, bottles, food/snack items, any medications, toys, extra clothes, blankets, diapers etc. in their kit, and take into account extra water needed to prepare formula. The needs of a child are critical to maintain their health and life safety. A child relies on those who are their

parents or guardians to maintain their care. Having those resources available to take care of them is critical during an incident or disaster whether it be at their home or in a shelter!

Week Eight:

Purchase disposable gloves, 1 gallon of bleach, moist towelettes, garbage bags, and plastic ties for personal sanitation, clean-up, and waste. During an incident/disaster the use of water is either limited or non-existent. The need to maintain living conditions that are germ free and clean is critical in maintaining good health for everyone in the household. All "waste" needs to be tied up in a garbage bag and stored until public utilities are resumed.

Week Nine:

Put several dust masks or a cotton t-shirt in your kit to help filter the air, along with some plastic sheeting and duct tape to shelter-in-place. During an incident or disaster debris fields can include pollutants that can be harmful to breathe. Having a filtering device or masks in place is critical in maintaining good health. Also, sheltering in place maybe encouraged if you cannot leave your home due to events outside the home, so to "shelter in place" will require a designated room, one that is free of outside ventilation, and one that can be sealed with plastic sheeting and duct tape. The areas to seal are around the water pipes, door, window frames, attic doors, vents, etc.

Week Ten:

Put an 8" crescent wrench or pliers in your kit to turn off utilities. Natural Gas, Propane and water lines need to be shut off, if your home shows structural damage or if you know of, see or smell a leak. Once the utilities have been turned off, you **CANNOT** turn them back on; you must call the utility company.

Week Eleven:

Put a list of emergency contacts (family/friends) in your kit. During an incident or disaster, local phone lines can become inundated, and the ability to call outside of the affected area will be much easier. It is imperative that your loved ones know you are safe or are in need of help.

Week Twelve:

Put a list of those emergency responder's numbers in your kit: Fire, LE, 911, doctor, and the Poison Control 1-800-860-0620 etc. Many of us have cell phones that we use daily, but during an incident or disaster our first response is to call for help, but without a phone book, and if we are injured or stressed, the ability to remember phone numbers is not easily done. Having a complete list of emergency contacts will allow you to contact those who can assist you.

Week Thirteen:

When purchasing food for your kit, make sure you put those items that you are used to eating; canned fruit, fruit juices, pork and beans, tuna, which are all good sources of nutrition. Also, during an incident or disaster we become stressed, if food items in our kit are not what we are used to eating, you will find yourself sick and not able to maintain your care!

One final note: DO NOT FORGET TO PUT A CAN OPENER IN YOUR KIT AND ROTATE YOUR FOOD EVERY SIX MONTHS TO MAINTAIN FRESHNESS!

Week Fourteen:

Purchase a roll of duct tape for your kit! Duct tape can be used for securing plastic on your windows, repairing broken structures, reinforcing a cracked window, supporting a splint, etc. This is one resource

that can assist in repairing or securing many things, it maintains its durability, and can withhold it's structure during many kinds of weather conditions.

Week Fifteen:

Pet Care! Pets are the responsibility of the owner, and a kit (food, medication, leash etc.) should be done for your pet. Only service animals are allowed into shelters, so contact your County Emergency/Disaster Services coordinator to see what plans they have in place for an animal shelter if the homeowner has to evacuate their home.

Week Sixteen:

The Emergency Preparedness Kit should be specific to your needs. If you are on medication, ***do not withhold your daily dose, it is imperative that you contact your physician to address medication needs for your kit.*** Also, take inventory of what you use on a day to day basis, does someone use allergy free products, feminine hygiene products, foot cream, powders, shaving supplies, etc. Take the time to think about what should be in your kit!

Week Seventeen:

Put card games, coloring books, and crayons in your kit if you have small children. Keep in mind that hand held games require batteries or electricity, so basic activities that require little or no effort are the best! Children become frightened and moody during an incident or disaster, activities that can be done to limit stress in a child is critical for their well-being, and their transition back into a normal way of life!

Week Eighteen:

Do not store water in empty milk jugs, or oil containers; the milk and oil residue that is left in the containers goes into the plastic, and then leaches into the water which then contaminates it, glass bottles break, and green containers inhibit the light. You can also use empty cider containers if they are thoroughly washed out. Empty 55 gallon water containers are lite; full they weigh several hundred pounds, so it is critical that you place them in convenient, easily accessible areas! Note: Soft Water Heaters hold 55 gallons of potable (drinkable) water!

Week Nineteen:

Purchase a legal size pad and a black sharpie for your kit to support the following: communication needs if you cannot speak due to an injury, write notes, make signs, document health conditions, address where a gas or water leak is, draw maps, show areas damaged, all which will support the response and recovery efforts by the first responding agencies.

Week Twenty:

Add an empty 5 gallon bucket with disposable 13 gallon garbage bags inside to make a portable port-a-potty. An old toilet seat fits on the top of the bucket; you then can tie up your bag and place it in a contained area until public utilities are restored. This is critical for sheltering in place and should be addressed with enough items to support a family or those effected for several days!

Week Twenty -One:

Put some cash into your kit (\$25.00 a month); during a large scale incident or disaster bank ATM's may not be operating and banks will be closed. It is common for individuals to have to pay for small items to maintain their own care during an incident or disaster. Whether it is food items, gasoline, clothing, and building supplies, etc. the need to have some cash on hand is critical!

Week Twenty-Two:

Put some local maps in your kit; a good resource is the phone book or Google earth. You can inexpensively laminate maps that can support an evacuation, address where shelters are located, show medical or triage areas, family assistance centers, etc. Maps can assist you when reporting a situation at your own home to the first responding agencies, or when identifying critical infrastructure sights.

Week Twenty-Three:

Have your emergency plan in place, and practice fire, severe weather, and evacuation drills monthly. During an emergency is not the time to address your plan; if plans are not practiced and reviewed then those in the home can risk either injury or death during an incident/disaster. So practice your plan and be sure and check your fire alarms twice a year, when the time changes in the Fall and Spring!

Week Twenty-Four:

Time to rotate your foods and check for freshness! If you have dried beans, macaroni, oats, corn meal, rice etc. in your kits make sure they are stored in air tight containers. Dry items, such as cookies and crackers lose their freshness, and need to be replaced. It is also the time to re-address the number of people in your home, and review food items to ensure that you have planned for sufficient amounts of food and water for everyone.

Week Twenty-Five:

Purchase a steno warmer, camp stove, or portable barbecue with fuel to prepare food, and make sure any items you use for food preparation are safe and can be used either inside or outside...**READ THE DIRECTIONS!** Emergency candles are a good resource and are offered in our local dollar stores. If you use candles, make sure they are only used by an adult or if used by a child under adult supervision. Stick matches should be used and stored in a water proof container! ***Please note: candles in bottles are usually scented and are not recommended due to the risk of the container breaking, and the scent in a contained area which could make you sick!***

Week Twenty-Six:

Have a First Aid Kit! The store bought first aid kit does not have all of the supplies needed to maintain use for several days. The kits do not include antacids, allergy pills, Advil, extra rubber gloves, cotton balls, ointment, iodine, good scissors, etc. Review the needs of yourself and family members, and purchase extra items for your first aid kit. ***Please note: The local dollar stores are a great resource to purchase first aid items, and can also assist you in making a homemade first aid kit which can be stored in a 1 gallon Ziploc storage bag.***

Week Twenty-Seven:

If you have a computer, go to: www.fema.gov/training and review the Independent Study Course List. There are a number of classes that will support your preparedness efforts. These classes are free and cover a multitude of subject matter. They can be done in the comfort of your own home, and will increase your basic knowledge of what a disaster involves, who supports a disaster, why we should be prepared, what is emergency preparedness, and how the first responding agencies work together.

Week Twenty-Eight:

Put together a preparedness kit for your car to include the following: battery cables, battery powered radio, flashlight, blanket, snow shovel, kitty litter, water, nutrition bars and first aid kit. As we travel during severe weather issues we should be prepared in case of a vehicle break down or wreck. Road conditions can inhibit our ability to travel where we need to go in a reasonable amount of time, or cause

us to be stranded in our car. Having the necessary items in your car is critical in maintaining your well-being during a roadside event!

Week Twenty- Nine:

Do a hazardous analysis of the inside and outside of your home and fix any problems. Do you have misplaced or old chemicals, unsecured hot water heaters, book shelves, frayed wires, too many appliances put on one outlet, old paint rags? Don't wait for a problem, take the time to fix those issues, and clean up! A clean home is a safe home!

Week Thirty:

Become a volunteer for the American Red Cross, Salvation Army, or a soup kitchen to help others in your community! Many of the resources in our communities that support those less fortunate, or an incident or disasters are in need of volunteers to support their operations. Consider helping and being a part of the response and recovery process during an event!

Week Thirty-One:

Become a CERT - Community Emergency Response Team volunteer to support the first responding agencies during a disaster. This training will give you the necessary life skills in basic fire suppression, first aid, cribbing, CISM, to support your role as a volunteer. This training has proven to be a valuable asset during national disasters, and your help is needed! Contact your Emergency/Disaster Services Coordinator in your area or in Twin Falls contact jfrey@co.twin-falls.id.us for more information.

Week Thirty-Two:

Review the contents of your kit, and check the expiration dates on first aid supplies, batteries, and food items. During a disaster is not the time to find that those items you have in your kit are expired, not fresh, or in good working order. It only takes a little time to ensure your items of "preparedness" are ready to go, and will continue to meet the needs of your family or yourself during an event!

Week Thirty-Three:

Keep in mind dehydrated fruit or protein items have high sugar content and sodium, which can cause issues for those with high blood sugar and blood pressure. It is critical that you address your diet with your physician and individualize your kit to meet the hydration and nutrition needs you require without any side effects!

Week Thirty-Four:

Most cities do not have a Civil Defense warning siren, recognize and become familiar with an EAS – Emergency Alert Notice and train your children to know what it is as it comes across your TV or Radio. The local radio and TV stations will put out an EAS Alert to inform you of an event in your area.

Week Thirty-Five:

Purchase a utility knife and ax for your kit. These items can be used in a number of ways; open boxes or packages, cut rope, cut tree limbs to burn, cut kindling etc. and should be kept in the kit in a leather case or cover. If the items are chipped or broken do not use, replace with one in good condition.

Week Thirty-Six:

Continue to purchase those food items needed for your kit or those that you have taken out and used. During the year you may find yourself using items in your kit to support the needs of yourself and family. It is imperative that your kit be ready to go, with the items needed to support yourself and family during an incident or disaster!

Week Thirty-Seven:

Include in your kit a small sewing kit and some laundry soap. During an incident or disaster we may be limited on our clothing and bedding. The ability to repair those items or make splints or bandages to support a medical injury is important. To wash items as needed is also important in maintaining a clean environment when resources are limited.

Week Thirty-Eight:

Purchase or have sleeping bags or bed rolls in an accessible place for yourself and family members in case of evacuation. If you have those items needed to set up a bed for you and your family in a shelter, or a designated room in your home during an incident or disaster it will make the transition much easier.

Week Thirty-Nine:

Make a goal to always have the fuel tanks on all vehicles at least half full. During an incident or disaster the ability to fill your car up may be hindered due to the electricity being off (gas pumps run on electricity.) Long lines, cost, and shortages will be a problem, so if your gas tank is full or half full you will not need to address this issue immediately. Keep in mind, all vehicles during the winter should be kept full in case of slide offs, wrecks, etc. where you would need to stay in your car and keep warm!

Week Forty:

Consider taking CPR and First Aid training by a licensed vendor so you are prepared for a medical emergency in your home or community!

Week Forty-One:

Purchase "Emergency Blankets" (the foil kind) for your kit! The foil blankets work well to either keep heat in or shelter from the heat; these blankets are inexpensive, and small enough that they are an incredible resource that requires little space!

Week Forty-Two:

Put disposable plates, cups, bowls, napkins, and silverware in your kit! The lack of water will hinder the cleaning of our food containers or dinner ware. Having disposable items also weigh less and are easily stored in our kits. These items are easily assessable and cheaply purchased!

Week Forty –Three:

Put a couple of hand towels, dish rags, towels, paper towels, and Kleenex soft packs in your kit! The need to be able to dry your hands, wash and dry items, wipe your nose, etc. should be addressed. However or whatever you choose to put in your kit is your decision, but having something on hand will be beneficial to your needs.

Week Forty-Four:

Review your insurance coverage to make sure it covers your needs. See if catastrophic coverage; flooding, wild land fire, tornado is a part of your plan! The time to mitigate and plan for an issue whether it be manmade or natural should be done before an event!

Week Forty-Five:

Practice your fire drill with your children! Do you have a map of the interior layout of your home? Have you designated a room for “sheltering in place?” Do you have a staging area outside of your home for family members to go if there is an incident that you have to evacuate? During drills address the Emergency Preparedness Kit you have, and those items in it that will benefit you or your family during an incident or disaster.

Week Forty-Six:

Go out and see what s in your community! There are a number of preparedness and health fairs in the communities! Go and learn! Many of these fairs offer free samples of brochures, and misc. items that can educate you about your health and emergency preparedness. Knowledge is your key resource in preparing yourself for an incident or disaster... When something happens in your community, the knowledge you have may save your life, or the life of someone else.

Week Forty-Seven:

Add a book or two to your kit! Reading is healthy and fun! Add pamphlets, tri-folds, charts, anything that can give you some information about your mental health, dealing with an incident or disaster, and preparedness tips, etc. Reading allows you to relax, and to calm down, and don't forget to have books and articles for your children to read and look at to occupy their time!

Week Forty-Eight:

If you live in a cold weather climate, you must think about warmth, it is possible that the power will be out and you will have no heat. You will need to put one complete change of warm clothing and shoes in your kit for each person.

Week Forty-Nine:

Review your WILL, if you do not have one in place, make arrangements to get one done. Every adult should have a WILL! The ability to have those final plans in place if something happens to you is critical for both your burial and handling of your private affairs. If the planning process has not been done, then your expressed wishes cannot be carried out!

Week Fifty:

Review your emergency call out list for the first responding agencies and family contacts! Make sure the numbers are correct; during an incident/disaster is not the time to find out the numbers you have down are no longer in service!

Week Fifty-One:

Don't Panic! If you are faced with an emergency situation, the most important thing that you need to remember is to stay calm. When you panic you risk not being able to make good decisions, which could make matters worse!

Week Fifty-two:

Help someone you know put together an Emergency Preparedness Kit! Give them the advice and time they need to do this correctly, if you have any questions contact your Emergency/Disaster Services Coordinator in our county.