

Being Prepared for Emergencies: Getting Started

by Michael Gambino

The subject of emergency preparedness is not a particularly enjoyable topic to delve into. No matter how positive an attitude we may have about being prepared, it still demands that we think about some unpleasant “what if” scenarios in order to properly plan for emergencies.

Even a relatively simple situation can become hazardous (like getting stranded with a flat tire and no spare on a deserted stretch of road in winter), so it is prudent that we become more aware and take logical and even simple precautions. Most people would agree with this, yet when it comes to addressing the possibility of large-scale emergencies, many people’s eyes glaze-over quickly. For some, the topic can be overwhelming at best, or deeply unsettling at worst.

As we begin to really think about preparing for emergencies, a degree of uneasiness or worry may arise. This is to be expected, but it should not deter you for moving forward into action.

For this emergency preparedness program I wanted to share some ideas that you may not find in the usual places like the Red Cross, FEMA, and your state and local websites. They all have the same generalized advice regarding preparing for emergencies, and though their information is simple, many people are still not taking action. One reason I feel this might be the case is that people need more details concerning what and why they need these items, as well as a detailed emergency kit shopping list to use as a starting point. What I hope to cover here is a way to move into action on getting prepared – to bring this topic from the back of your mind towards the front.

We need to be prepared for emergencies as if they are coming and we have received advanced warning. Think of it this way: If the weather forecasters could predict another Sandy or Katrina precisely six months from today, you would begin making plans and you would re-prioritize what you do with your time, energy, and resources to address preparations for the coming storm. You would take steps to prepare and protect your loved ones and your assets. You would get things in order in a calm and deliberate manner. Advanced warning is a gift, so use it to your advantage.

Preparedness self-assessment

There are many skills and abilities that would be handy to possess in an emergency. There are also liabilities that we normally tend to live with that might prove more problematic in an emergency. The following list may help you identify gaps in your personal skill set and take any liabilities into account when planning. Put your efforts into what you feel are your most vulnerable areas first. Even a small amount of extra training and preparation pays off when faced with an emergency.

- **Your Health** – (oral hygiene, medical issues, diseases, afflictions, obesity, hernia, orthotics, minor surgery, physical exams, etc.). If you have been putting off some personal healthcare items, take care of these things right away. Consider that in an emergency you might not have access (for a while) to medical services that you are accustomed to, or even access to prescription medications you need. Your emergency plans should consider your health factors. Get this stuff handled as best you can as soon as you can. Schedule your appointments this week, even if the appointment is two months from now.
- **Personal Fitness Level** – Dealing with an emergency cranks up our stress level for days and weeks, and this can lead to weakened immune systems, injuries, and susceptibility to even ordinary illnesses. Build your strength and endurance while you can, if you are not already physically active. You can start physical conditioning simply by walking every day, rain or shine, summer or winter. Add a backpack to your walk if it becomes too easy.
- **Diet and nutrition** – All I will say here is that we are what we consume. The human body needs quality building materials in the form of our food in order to repair, heal and grow stronger. You would not want to live in a house made of wimpy sugar cereals, pizza, or fiberless, greasy french fries, and soda. Stick to basic nutrition – fruits and veggies, whole foods, proper hydration, eliminate junk and processed foods, and so forth. With all the information available, we all know what to do by now. We just need to focus on the reason to do it.
- **Learn about wild foods** – (plants and animals) This skill set takes time to learn, so pack your emergency kits with the healthiest food you can now while learning about wild foods. Even learning a few basic plants can be useful, and there are many good resources available on this topic. Select one plant each week and learn about its uses. Practice carefully and skip the wild mushrooms altogether. Know your poisonous plants.
- **First-Aid basics** – Many organizations and continuing education programs offer training in first-aid and CPR. Learn to recognize signs of life-threatening conditions such as heart-attack, hyperthermia and hypothermia, shock, infections, etc. Keeping small cuts and injuries from becoming worse is essential.
- **Map and Compass skills** – There is a long list of skills that our ancestors possessed that are lost to most of us. As we accept more and more technology into our lives, we lose touch with self-reliance skills. (Don't let your smart phone steal your awareness and observation skills!) Relying solely on GPS devices for direction and travel is a liability. Study maps and learn their features, topography, legend, symbols, and many other elements of information concerning the layout of cities and towns, surrounding landscape, habitats, and possible hazards. Make written directions. Pay attention to your surroundings as you drive. Be aware of where you are traveling to and through. Train yourself to look at your surroundings and note where landmarks and potential resources are.

Once learned map and compass skills are very easy to remember – like riding a bicycle or driving a car. Check your local hiking club or sporting goods store for map & compass skills classes.

- **Wilderness Survival Basics** – Survival training is not just for the military or for explorers, field biologists, or wilderness guides. You could drive your car for one hour into a wilderness area and it would take you *days* to walk back out should your vehicle become disabled. Learn how to make a proper shelter, find water and purify it, make fire without matches, and find something to eat that can sustain you. Learn how nature works and how to follow nature’s laws. One day of hands-on practice will give you real knowledge, compared to just watching a TV program or reading a book on the subject.
- **Meditation** – Meditation is an important skill to practice. We live in a world where we are absolutely bombarded by stimulus and information. We hardly have room for our deeper thoughts and quiet self-reflection these days, so we must set time aside deliberately to check in with ourselves. In that quiet place of stillness through meditative practice we can discover solutions to our problems, de-stress our body, mind, spirit, and emotions.

There are many ways to meditate, but one simple way is to find a quiet place indoors or in nature where you can sit undisturbed for a few minutes each day. This is a separate practice than your usual yoga or workout time. Pay attention to your senses and what is happening around you. Take a few deep breaths and let go of any thoughts and distractions. Ask yourself “How am I feeling?” and then wait, listen, and look. “Why am I feeling this?” and “How can I heal this?” are natural follow-up questions. This simple practice will begin to transform your experience of life. Most success in life is about just showing up, so even if you think you are not getting anything, keep to your practice and things will unfold. Setting aside 20 minutes a day, or even 5 minutes will improve your life.

- **Household fire drills and escape practiced** – What if the main exits in your home were blocked in some way, either by fire or debris? What’s your alternate escape? Do you have a fire ladder by the window of your upper story rooms? Is your fire escape uncluttered? Can you actually climb out your windows? Where are the fire extinguishers in your home located, and have they been checked lately to see if they need replacing? Do your children, elderly, or visiting guests know what to do and where to meet if they must get out of the house? Maybe it’s not a fire – it could be a flood, a mudslide, or an earthquake that forces you to flee your home with only a moments notice. You get the idea. Physically walk through the drill, don’t just talk about it. Get new smoke detectors if they are more than 10 years old. Not sure? Buy new ones now – don’t take a chance. The discipline and mindset that this simple and important habit develops translates to improved planning for other emergencies, personal communication, and practical thinking for the whole family. Complete the drills twice a year, modifying them as needed.
- **Camping skills** – Camping and backpacking skills are essentially modified survival skills. Recognize what constitutes a safe location to place your tent, equipment, and campfire. Become aware of your environment and the potential hazards from storms (flash floods, falling branches, lightning) and from animals of any size (from ticks and

wasps to rodents, poisonous snakes, and bears). With all the modern equipment available you can get into camping at almost any level. If you have not camped before, or not done so in a few years, you can, even do a “mock” camping weekend with your children in the backyard or a nearby park that permits overnight camping. There you can field-test your equipment, getting familiar with how to set up your tent, learn to use and clean that shiny new cooking gear, make a sensible and safe campfire, try recipes for cooking over a fire, and experience how your body and mind responds to a “house fast” for a day or two. Pass the time by practicing knot-tying, plant and wildlife identification, and so on. Be prepared with a variety of activities and simple games, and try an “electronics fast” at the same time. Need a challenge? Try doing simple and routine (and safe) tasks while blindfolded. This practice alone will teach you incredible things and expand your awareness greatly.

Types of emergency kits you will need

The best survival kit is the one that you have when you need it. Your kit does you no good if you leave it at home every day when you go to work if there is an emergency that prevents you from getting home. That’s why there are several different emergency kits you’ll need to prepare to cover different situations. Some kits will contain items that are complimentary and slightly redundant with the others. A household emergency kit for surviving-in-place will naturally have many more items than would your go-bag kit. The idea is to have easy access to at least one of these emergency kits regardless of where you are. Always store your emergency kits in easily accessible location so you can get to it in a hurry even in the dark. Here’s the basic purpose of each type of kit:

1. **Household kit:** This type of kit is for situations that permit you to “survive in place” at home when the type of emergency makes it a safer option than traveling. Always consider that you might need to shelter people in your home other than your immediate family. Neighbors may need your help, and out of town friends or relatives may be visiting when an emergency occurs. You’ll have to have enough supplies to provide for them as well. Whatever your family size is, prepare for at least four additional people staying with you for a week.

2. **Everyday Carry (EDC) kit:** This is a small kit with basic items to help with providing for your survival priorities. You’ll include items for setting up a shelter, a water filter, some food and snacks, matches, some extra clothing, a few tools and a flashlight. The EDC kit travels everywhere with you and is within reach. Your EDC kit can be designed to fit into a fanny-pack, pouch, or small backpack. Designed for short-term emergency situations away from home.

3. **Workplace kit:** You never know where you’ll be when an emergency occurs. Keep a cabinet, locker, or drawer at your workplace supplied with emergency items, including water and food. This kit remains on site and is designed for surviving in place for a few days. Inquire with your employer or school officials what plans they have in place to provide or care for those people that might have to shelter-in-place at work or school locations. No matter what your workplace might be planning for, you should have your own kit prepared. Know where your exits are as well, and what resources and hazards might exist just outside the building where you work.

4. **Go-bag:** In a sudden emergency, you grab it and go, heading towards safety leaving everything else behind. The go-bag is typically a 3 to 5 day emergency kit that stays at home. Your go bag is an important investment, so keep it out of sight, but easy for you to retrieve in a hurry. What you put in your pack will be dictated by your survival needs and abilities, with the maximum load-weight dictated in part by your physical stature and strength. If too heavy, your pack will become a problem for you very quickly. Depending on your stature and strength, keep your pack weight to 30 or 40 pounds. It is not exactly like packing for a travel vacation or a long backpacking trip. Each person in your family or group needs a go-bag, but the size, contents, and weight need to be adjusted accordingly. You may have to carry extra items that the children, elderly, or injured cannot carry themselves. Don't over pack the go-bag, but keep reworking it to make it complete, efficient, and manageable. Organize items in ziploc bags.

5. **Car safe box kit:** This is a durable, waterproof duffel bag or a sturdy and secure box that can hold more items than your go-bag and is ready to load into the car when you need to. Include items like a shovel, tent, tarp, extra food and water, and more clothing. This kit gets loaded into your vehicle in an evacuation scenario, if you have enough time during an emergency, whereas your go-bag is for use when you have only a moments warning and need to get out fast as possible. On a related note, keep your car's gas tank at least half full when you park it for the night, and completely filled if there is a possibility of a storm or other dangerous situation in your area.

6. **Off-site:** Having a place away from your home where you could store a box of emergency items and copies of important papers would be important. Perhaps it is possible to place one of these kits at a relative or friend's home outside of your area where you could eventually get to it. This way if your house were to become unsafe to enter (structural damage for instance) you could then retrieve some amount of supplies from your off-site location.

Survival priorities

One of the foundations of wilderness survival training is understanding the order of priorities in which you should focus your efforts. While emergency and survival situations vary, your needs are essentially the same. With some exceptions, your priorities are: 1) shelter, 2) water, 3) fire, 4) food. Here is a quick overview of these survival priorities:

#1 – Shelter

The main purpose of a shelter is to conserve your energy by not losing it through exposure to wind, sun, cold, rain, heat, etc. Conservation of energy is the number one law of survival in nature. A survival shelter is any shelter that works on the principle of trapping your body heat in tiny pockets of dead air space (like a sleeping bag or down jacket) while repelling precipitation, sun, and wind.

The basic wilderness survival shelter is the debris hut, made from leaves and sticks, and creates a close-fitting sleeping area. It is essentially a giant cocoon or sleeping bag. You need lots of debris available for proper construction and insulation, but when made properly it can keep you very comfortable and warm while repelling the elements outside. Watch the squirrels building their nests in the trees. They construct small, efficient shelters made from leaves and twigs that can keep them warm even in a blizzard.

Having a shelter establishes a center or home-base for you in an unfamiliar landscape. It can help you to calm your mind and emotions so you can think more clearly about your situation.

When thinking about shelter, don't just think about being in a tent or a sleeping bag, or having a campfire, since you may not have these available to you in an emergency. Stuffing your jacket, pants legs, or shirt with crumpled newspaper or dry leaves and grasses may not feel comfortable, but it might save your life. If you were stuck at the office or in your car, remember that a smaller space is easier to keep warm since your body heat is more contained. Improvised shelters can be made from stacked furniture, mattresses, or seat cushions and can create a smaller enclosure within a larger room and thus keep you warmer. If you were stranded in your car during cold weather, you could stuff the inside full of leaves or other insulating materials and work your way inside for a warmer shelter. At home, if you have no heat, you might use plastic sheeting or tarps to close off a portion of a larger room where you could keep the smaller space warm enough (also use the furniture and mattress idea for better effect). Wherever you go, pay attention to your immediate surroundings and ask yourself what you could use to make a warm, safe shelter if you had to.

#2 – Water

After your shelter needs are met, water is the next immediate concern. If you have no water, conserve the water in your body by minimizing exertion as much as possible. Loss of water through sweating and the water vapor expelled through rapid breathing can accelerate dehydration and its consequences. Since we can only live about 3 days

without water, conserving what you have in your body is important, but this is only part of the solution – you'll need to find water quickly.

The safety of any water source you are collecting from, be it from a pipe, pond, or puddle must be considered. Be aware of sensory clues such as a stagnant or chemical odor associated with it. Does the water look rusty, muddy, or full of algae? Does it look or feel oily or irritating to the skin? Even clear looking water may be contaminated, so be careful. Look at the vegetation in the area and notice it's color and health. Even pristine-looking waters in wilderness areas can contain chemical or biological contaminants. We live in an excessively toxic environment already, but a disaster may compromise your water sources even further. Your survival kits must contain a reliable water purification filter. Simple home water filters like Brita and Pur brand are for improving tap water taste, not removing microbes or toxic chemicals. Boiling questionable water or using disinfecting tablets or bleach alone won't remove chemicals or metals. You need to have an activated-charcoal filter component on your water filter to accomplish this.

All our bodily functions require water. The metabolism of food, the conversion of stored fat into energy, and the removal of metabolic waste from our blood and tissues all require clean water. We need about a gallon of drinking water per day under conditions of moderate physical exertion. Drinks like coffee, orange juice, soda, and Red Bull are not a substitute for drinking plain water. Another important thing to keep in mind is that long before you might perish due to a lack of water, your body will experience distress. Fatigue, diminished mental clarity, headache, and flu-like symptoms can arise quickly as toxemia develops. Toxemia can occur when the toxic substances such as metabolic wastes in the blood accumulate. You must drink clean, purified water to flush this waste from your body, so give some real thought to how you will provide for safe drinking water.

Don't just assume your usual water source is safe to drink after a disaster, since municipal and home (well) water sources may have been contaminated from flood waters, chemicals, or sewage entering the system through cracked or ruptured pipes somewhere along the distribution line.

Start with the cleanest water possible before disinfecting it. If it is cloudy or has debris or soil in it, let it settle for a while, then slowly pour it through a cloth (bandana or T-shirt, etc.) and then boil it for 5-15 minutes and let cool. If you can't boil your water, treat it with regular unscented bleach, using 8 drops per gallon for clear water and 16 for cloudy water. Shake or stir the container well to mix. You must let this water sit a while to disinfect properly (30 minutes). It is best to then filter this water if you can to remove any other contaminants. Pour disinfected water into clean containers and always cover it. Capture rainwater by setting up a tarp to direct rain into containers or barrels.

#3 – Fire

Fire is the next priority after water. You need fire for warmth, rescue signaling, and for boiling water and cooking food to make them safe to consume. Fire can help make your primitive tools for survival such as pottery, hardened spear points, and much more. A campfire offers a great psychological advantage in the wilderness or anywhere by lifting your spirits and providing a sense of safety, companionship, and comfort.

Understanding the principles of what makes a fire is important to your ability to get one started and keep it under your control. There are three ingredients you need to ensure a proper fire: fuel, oxygen, and a heat source sufficient to raise the fuel to a combustible temperature. These ingredients need to be of suitable type and in the proper relationship to work. That is, you need the right amount of each ingredient as well as a proper structure to facilitate a successful fire. Consider the purpose of the fire – do you require a large signal fire, a small cooking fire, or do you need to warm your shelter without burning it to the ground? Pay attention to fire safety. Also, remember that many things will burn as fuel, but some release harmful toxins.

There are many ways to light a fire, using items like metal matches (ferrocium and magnesium), cigarette lighters, and stick matches. Several of these methods must be included in your emergency kits. Learning how to make fire from friction (a bow drill or hand drill) is also a good idea.

#4 – Food

Since most of us are moderately to totally dependent on getting our food from others who grow, raise, process, and deliver it, we need to think about what food we put into our emergency pantry and emergency kits. If we are accustomed to a healthy diet of fresh produce and organics, we might find in an emergency that we need to rely on dried, canned, or processed foods if nothing fresher is available. If the systems that produce and deliver our food suffer a widespread breakdown, we are going to find food more scarce on the shelves of our local markets. Obtaining wild foods in an emergency will be a big challenge unless you get some experience with it in advance. For this reason, let's focus on what food you can carry in a pack, and what you might want to store in a box to fit in your car or at home. Stocking your home pantry with a week or two worth of nonperishable food and water per person is not complicated. Just pick up a few extra items each time you shop. Consider how you will prepare the foods you stock if your usual methods are no longer possible. Keep in mind that refrigeration may not be possible after an emergency either. Dehydrated foods also require water to prepare, though some can be eaten dry.

It's a good practice to keep a list of pantry items and their expiration dates as you'll need to rotate the stock as they get near expiration time. Replace items as needed. Don't forget to rotate foods and snacks in your other portable emergency kits.

Dehydrated and freeze-dried emergency foods are a helpful, lightweight option for your emergency kits. The internet has many websites that sell such products, so you can shop around for different foods, packaging and prices. Most of these websites have ingredients lists about each product that you should read before purchasing. Emergency food or not, some ingredients do not sit well in my body, like TVP (textured vegetable protein) and partially hydrogenated oils. Other people have no problem eating products containing these ingredients. Many websites sell bulk food to last for a week, a month, or a year. Try samples of these food items if possible before buying in bulk.

Dehydrating your own foods is time consuming, but you do have control over what you are storing in your pantry and the ingredients in the recipes. You'll need to buy a

dehydrator (see link below). I make a delicious vegetarian chili and just dehydrate and store it in a glass jar. I can nibble on it dry, or reconstitute it with a little hot water. I've included a link (below) to a do-it-yourself food dehydrating website full of recipes and instruction.

Many websites sell bulk food to last for a week, a month, or a year. I suggest that you try samples of these food items before investing in bulk foods that way.

1. <http://www.harmonyhousefoods.com>
2. <http://beprepared.com>
3. <http://www.backpackingchef.com/dehydrating-food.html>
4. <http://www.nesco.com/products/Dehydrators>

Preparing your emergency kits

There is no single kit configuration that works for everyone, and you'll need to have several types of kits prepared, as previously mentioned. The cost of assembling these kits can vary widely, but the idea is to put together the best possible configuration that you can afford. You will be making a considerable investment in adequately preparing these kits. Quality life-saving gear tends to be pricey, but offers a convenience and efficiency you'll appreciate if you have to rely on that gear during an emergency.

If you buy a few extra items each month you can have a basic-level version of these kits fairly soon. Focus on getting at least something together that will support your essential survival needs. As your financial means allow, you can upgrade and add items to your emergency kits. If you begin to feel anxious that you need more and more stuff to take with you, just know that this feeling is simply you realizing the scope of your dependency on society's conveniences and services. The vast majority of the population is in the same situation. The electric grid that supports our society and way of life is like a magical hammock where we live our lives suspended above and mostly disconnected from the earth. If the magic spell is suddenly broken, society will be dumped on the ground very abruptly, and many people will find themselves facing a situation they are not prepared to endure beyond a few days. Let that anxious feeling become a motivator for you.

Remember to rotate and replace any perishable items or products with expiration dates such as food, prescription medicines, aspirin, and other things like hand-sanitizers, water purification tablets, triple anti-biotic ointment, stored water, and so on. Begin to use and replace them a month before the expiration date arrives. If you get new prescription eyeglasses, update your back-up spare with new lenses as well. Check all your kits every six months and replace items as they are used. It is worth keeping an inventory list of each kit's contents listing expiration dates. Write the expiration dates on individual cans and packages using a permanent marker to make it easier to locate and read later on, especially if the lights go out.

Alternate Routes, Safe Areas, and Rendezvous Locations

The three most likely places you'll be if an emergency arises are: 1) at home, 2) at your place(s) of work or school, 3) commuting, especially to work or school. As discussed, you want to have emergency supplies in these three places (home, work, car), since you can't predict where you will be during an emergency, or if you can safely return home to grab your supplies.

You should study these three locations and learn what hazards, traffic bottlenecks, possible sheltering places exist along these routes. Look at alternate routes away from or into these areas.

Rendezvous locations for meeting up with family and friends after a disaster or other emergency are important. It is a good idea to select several locations for each of these distances: 1) an area immediately outside of your home in the event of a fire or other damage to your home, 2) a location outside of your neighborhood or a few towns away,

and, 3) some place further away, perhaps with a family friend or relative in another state. Depending on the situation, it may take several days for your family to be rejoined at the same safe location. Remember, think “towards” rather than “to” since you may have to first go some distance north in order to head south.

In some emergencies police or firefighters may restrict access into an area. You may be cut off from entering your street or neighborhood because of this. Factor this into your selection of rendezvous locations. Older children should know how to get to nearby rendezvous locations on foot or by bicycle safely. Map out their route on paper in advance. They should know where the other more distant locations are so, if needed, they can tell authorities who can help get them there, or at least notify someone at that location. Each person in your family should know your rendezvous location addresses and phone numbers.

Other Considerations and Notes

- a. Review the plan with family twice a year; update contacts, maps, modify the plan.
- b. Rotate/replace food and medicine items in your kits before before they expire.
- c. Keep your vehicle in good repair, gas tank at least 1/2 full each night
- d. Make your emergency plans and kits to provide support for a *minimum* of 72 hours (3-days) if you are on the move, and for two weeks at home if you are sheltering-in-place.
- e. Staying fit is important
- f. Get a good pair of walking or hiking shoes and keep them in your in your car
- g. Adjust your expectations of comfort and needs; mental attitude is key
- h. Fatigue and stress will be higher than usual during an emergency, so plan for this
- i. Help your neighbors if the situation is safe
- j. Listen to official information and instructions – be sure you have a reliable radio.
- k. Often in emergencies, cell phone service is reduced or cut off. Use texting or at least record an outgoing message on your voicemail so that callers can know you are okay and where you are staying.

Do it now

Plan to devote enough time over the next three months (90 days) to get everything together. Keep lists to help organize your thoughts and to know what you have in the final kits. Since you can't carry your house on your back, concentrate on the most important essentials of survival first. Adjusting your expectations, especially of comfort and convenience during an emergency, is very important. You may end up sleeping on a cot or on the ground or in a car rather than in your comfy bed. You may want your usual foods, but might have no choice except to get by for a while on emergency rations from the Red Cross (or your own stored food supply).

Some things to consider

As responsible adults, we must be prepared for emergencies. Even though most of the time we cannot predict what will happen or when, it is prudent to assume that something will happen that will affect us and our communities, and that it might happen today. The sooner we prepare, the better our chances are of handling an emergency.

We may feel that there is too much to worry about in our own lives just trying to make it through a week, a day, or an hour to even think about the rest of the world. Despite the urge to switch off our sensitivity, we must never stop caring about other people or our earth mother, even when disasters or crises take place far from where we live. Don't allow yourself to become numb or calloused to the violence and suffering in the world. Keep your heart open despite the frightful state of our world. Hope remains for a better future so long as caring, loving people lend their strength to others, and work hard for what matters most: peace, love, joy, and a purpose beyond self. If enough of us do this, we have a chance to make it through the dramatic, global changes that are upon us.

(Lists begin on the next page)

Kit-specific Shopping Lists and Links

First, some important notes:

- 1) The items listed are suggestions only. I do not endorse products, but from my research, trial (and error), and reliable product reviews, I feel these items should work well enough, though people have also done well with creative do-it-yourself solutions and thrift-shop purchases. Some folks live in rural areas while others are city dwellers and suburbanites. Your situation and needs are unique and personal. Your kits should reflect this.
- 2) This is a generalized sorting of items according to size and function of various kits. You may choose to mix-and-match items from other lists and kits, or omit things you feel you don't want to carry or stock. Use this guide to make your own shopping lists for your emergency kits. My goal is to help you move into action on getting prepared.
- 3) In some instances I have also listed product options "Option A" for example concerning knives will be something similar to a Swiss Army Knife, whereas Option B" will be for those more comfortable with using a small hunting or fixed-blade knife, and "Option C" is a suggestion for a bigger, heavier duty (and sometimes pricier) bushcraft knife.
- 4) Website links provided are starting points for your research. They may stop working at any time if the site changes their product pages or items are discontinued. For well-established brands or companies you can often find many products with a general internet search for that item. Once I have found products I like, I always check ebay to see if they are available cheaper. Beware of counterfeit or cheap and often faulty products from China and elsewhere!
- 5) Whatever you buy, get familiar with its usage, be it a tent, a fire starter, a water filter or food products. Practice with this stuff, actually using it. Read directions for care of certain tools, clothing, and other gear. Choose durable and low-maintenance products when possible.
- 6) When possible, physically check out the items listed in a store near you, especially backpacks.
- 7) Keep your receipts, and beware of impulse buying. Better to wait a day or two and revisit the item you are considering to see if you really need that one, or if you can do better (or cheaper). Also, I like to use PayPal for online purchases whenever possible as it helps me ask "Do I really need this item? Do I really need to spend that much on this item, or can I satisfy the need another way?"
- 8) Keep in mind how many people you are buying for and be sure to get enough for all. Not everyone needs their own radio, hammer, or camp stove, but everyone does need a good blanket or sleeping bag. Only buy food you will eat (if you won't eat more than the occasional meal of canned sardines, don't overstock them). Learn how to properly store food items.
- 9) Most people consider their pets to be family, so when you are making plans and packing emergency supplies and such, remember to plan for your pets as well. Can

your pet walk and carry something, or must they themselves be carried at some point?

- 10) Not everyone will have experience with using camping or survival gear. If this is you, get to know this stuff you are putting in your kits. You don't want to have to read directions in small print during an emergency. You must practice with everything, including tasting your selection of dehydrated meals (write up some recipe cards too). Practice cooking over a campfire, collect and boil your water. Use the water filters and follow maintenance and care guidelines.
- 11) The better your survival skills are, the more minimalist your kits will probably be. I know of only a few people who can truly survive indefinitely with nothing but the clothes on their backs and possibly a knife, so when filling your kits, stick with those survival priorities first: shelter, water, fire, food. Don't skimp on these items.
- 12) Take a deep breath! Don't think you will complete this process in a weekend or a month. In fact, it is never really finished because you will always be improving on your emergency plan and supply kits.

(Continued on next page)

Kit #1: Your Household Kit

SHELTER RELATED ITEMS

- **Blankets** – 100% wool, wool blends, fleece. Read about the pros and cons of fleece here:
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fleece_\(clothing\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fleece_(clothing))
- **Clear plastic sheeting** or plastic drop cloths (many uses)
- **Tarps** – several sizes, with grommets
- **Bedding** – extra sheets, pillows
- **Sleeping Bags** – synthetic insulation, not down-filled
- **Sleeping Pad** – keeps you insulated off cold or wet ground. Use beneath sleeping bag.
- **Clothing** – warm layers and rain jacket/boots/hats/gloves. Even in summer you might want some winter clothing if power is out and temps chill out for a few rainy days.
- **Duct Tape** – many uses
- **Bungee cords** – Get some assorted sizes, and with metal hooks rather than plastic.
- **Shovel, Broom, Rake, & Mop** – for storm clean up (inside and out)
- **Tools** – hammer, pliers, adjustable wrench, screwdrivers, battery powered drill (fully charged), assorted nails, screws, & tacks, hand saw, Swiss Army or other sturdy knife, small pry bar, staple gun, gas siphon hose, empty gasoline container.
- **Gloves** – Work gloves for moving storm debris, rubber gloves for wet clean up of trash and rot.
- **Rope** – Strong nylon type for small tasks, and also include heavier rope for towing or pulling
- **Buckets** – and lids, 5-gallon plastic type (many uses, so get several). Do not put food or water for consumption into buckets previously containing chemicals. Find new ones at hardware stores or online. A bucket lined with a plastic bag can be used as an emergency toilet.
- **Trash bags** – White kitchen trash bags and heavier black contractor bags (many uses).
- **Disinfectant** – For kitchen surfaces, toilet, etc., (and rubber gloves, sponges, pail)
- **Hand-Sanitizer gel** – Loses germ killing ability over time, so look at expiration date.
- **Dust Masks** – Look for N95 rated masks; mark each person's name on their mask when in use.
- **Bleach, unscented** – Also need measuring cup, measuring spoons, empty containers to disinfect drinking water

- **Firewood** – Keep your chimney clean, too!
- **Fire Extinguishers** – Learn about them here: <http://www.fire-extinguisher101.com/index.html>
- **Camping stove** – and fuel canisters: [Coleman174-Two-Burner-Stove](http://www.coleman174.com/Two-Burner-Stove)
- **Radio** – with power options: hand crank, solar, and battery power. Many radios out there, but most have one or more important flaws. Here is one option that got good reviews:

1. **C. Crane “Solar Observer” Radio** – This one is sometimes temporarily out of stock. If so, you can search the internet for other sellers. <http://www.ccrane.com/radios/wind-up-emergency-radios/>

- **Flashlights** – and spare batteries for each
- **Candles** – placed in a mason jar for fire safety and to keep wind from blowing out flame
- **Glow sticks** – look for 5-year self life on product: www.nicaboyne.com/Chemical-Glow-Products/Glow-Sticks/6-Safety-Glow-Sticks.html

WATER RELATED ITEMS

- **Bottled and stored water** – Store enough for 7-14 days, 1 gallon per person per day for drinking. Additional for cooking or washing. Never use pool water or spa for consuming, but okay to wash or flush toilets with it. You can store municipally treated tap water without disinfecting first so long as you store it in a clean and sealed bottle or container. Empty water jugs or soda bottles are food-grade plastic so they’re good. A new, large plastic trash can is not food-grade plastic, so while you may store water in it, you should wash the can with soapy water prior to filling. Best to filter water before drinking, especially if it has been stored for a while. Label your water (tap, disinfected, or rainwater, and include “replace by” date). Replace water at least once every six months. Water is heavy, weighing 8 lbs. per gallon. If you want to have the option to move a trash can or rain barrel once it’s full, build a wheeled platform for each barrel or trash can. Do NOT buy the ones with wheels attached to the actual can since it may leak. Consider a rain barrel system for your home to take advantage of nature’s provision when it comes. YouTube has several DIY projects demonstrated. Here’s one video:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fn_5HRgiftg. This water can be used for everything so long as it is clean rain water and you filter and treat it before consuming. Untreated, it’s usually fine for other uses like watering your vegetable garden, washing clothes, dishes and for bathing.

- **Water Filter** – hand pump, portable, packable, cleanable. Must have a built-in or accessory attachment with activated charcoal filter. There are some gravity fed filter rigs available too. Check product output rates and maximum filtered gallons it can achieve. All filters need to be properly maintained. Your life depends on clean water. Here are some options:

1. Option A: (Very Good) Katadyn “Vario” filter <http://www.highwaterfilters.com/Katadyn-Vario-p/8014931.htm>
 2. Option B: (Excellent, expensive, ceramic filter) Katadyn “Combi” <http://www.highwaterfilters.com/Katadyn-Combi-p/8017763.htm>
 3. Option C: (Best, expedition grade, expensive, ceramic filter) Katadyn “Pocket Filter” <http://www.highwaterfilters.com/Katadyn-Pocket-Microfilter-p/8013618.htm>
 4. Back-up and EDC kit filter – Small, “straw” type filter good for about 50 gallons: <http://aquamira.com/consumer/frontier-pro-filter-system/product-description>
- **Chemical treatment tablets** – Adding small amounts of household bleach, or using tablets such as iodine or chlorine dioxide can kill organisms when you cannot boil the water. Always read and follow instructions on packages. Boiling water from a pond or water barrel will kill organisms, but it will not remove pollutants or improve taste. In all cases, you still need to filter the water. Tablets are very much in demand, so check around the internet to find availability.

Aquamira disinfecting tablets. <http://www.aquamira.com/consumer/aquamira-water-purifier-tablets-24-pack> Be sure to allow 4-6 HOURS for them to work. You may have to shop around to find these as they are often out of stock in many places due to demand.
 - **Water bottles** (and other containers) – Mark water containers “Untreated” and “Drinkable” to reduce chances of cross-contamination. This may be necessary for individual family member’s bottles as well. Keep water cool and rotate through treated and stored water to keep it fresh.

FIRE MAKING RELATED ITEMS

- **Matches, BIC lighters, fire steel fire starters** – All of these work, but remember that you need dry fluffy material for best fire starting results. In a pinch, you can use small strip of bicycle inner tube and light one corner with a match before adding to your tinder. Add fuel a little at a time, gradually increasing the size of fuel (size = tinder < twigs < sticks < logs).
- **Fire-starter bars** – Find them at the supermarket or hardware store. Good for when you may not have enough dry tinder or even kindling on hand. They burn long enough to get your larger (properly dried and split) firewood to ignite, but not long enough for cooking with by themselves. Many do-it-yourself options including dipping cotton balls in a bit of melted candle wax, and mixing melted wax and sawdust or dryer lint and pour into cardboard egg carton. Break into individual fire-starters when cool.
- **Hearth and Fuel** – Think about alternative heating and cooking solutions you might use if your usual method is not an option. Consider using an outdoor BBQ grill (charcoal or propane), outdoor fire pit, indoor fireplace, butane canisters for a single burner stove, and keep a good supply firewood handy if you can. Store combustibles safely, and never use charcoal, propane, or gas BBQ grills indoors!

- **Fire Extinguishers** – Everyone should have at least one in their home, and ideally several, placed in key locations in your home. Everyone should know how they work.

FOOD RELATED ITEMS

- **Canned, dehydrated, freeze-dried, bulk dry, ready-made, no or low-cook foods** – look for basics in your supermarket and online. Buy a sampler, or just one of each product that you might like to try before buying in bulk. Read ingredient lists. Keep in mind that this food is emergency food, but you do have to rotate stock to keep it fresh, even if there is no emergency need for years. You will want to incorporate these food items into your family meals as expiration dates approach. Replace what you use. You may want to make your own dehydrated meals. Here is one of the best websites on the topic with emphasis on backpacking recipes. There is lots of information to get you started: <http://www.backpackingchef.com/dehydrating-food.html>
- **Seasonings, herbs & spices** – adds a degree of comfort in an emergency, and can help improve taste of certain emergency meals.
- **Tea, coffee, healthy snacks** – for comfort.
- **Multivitamins** – and other supplements
- **Bulk Food & Storage** – investigate this option, especially for backpack kits (other than your household emergency kit) to save space and weight. Here are two links that should educate and supply you: www.HarmonyHouseFoods.com, and www.EmergencyEssentials.com
- **Can opener** – typical manual kitchen type, or find one on your Swiss army knife or multi-tool.
- **Sponges & Plastic scouring-pads** – for meal clean up
- **Heavy-duty aluminum foil** – for campfire cooking
- **Pots, pans, dishes, utensils** – some that can withstand direct contact with flame or hot coals
- **Dishwashing liquid** – dilute before using to minimize amount of rinse-water required
- **Ziploc storage bags** – organize stuff, protect papers, clothing, container for water collection.

FIRST-AID ITEMS and TOILETRIES

You will customize this list as needed, but here's a basic list. Be sure to have enough for the whole family and then some:

- **bottles of hydrogen peroxide and isopropyl alcohol**
- **sunscreen**
- **burn ointment or aloe gel**
- **insect repellent**

- **saline eyewash**
- **antibiotic ointment**
- **aspirin/ibuprofen, etc.**
- **prescription eyeglasses (spare)**
- **other prescription medications**
- **herbal preparations and medicinal teas**
- **hand-mirror**
- **nail clippers**
- **disposable gloves**
- **band-aids and gauze pads**
- **rolls of gauze dressing and tape**
- **large safety pins and triangle bandage** – for arm sling
- **tea tree oil** (*Melaleuca alternifolia*) – has broad-spectrum topical antimicrobial activity
- **lip balm, aloe vera gel**
- **hand-sanitizing gel**
- **mild bar soap** – hygiene and wound washing
- **antacid tablets** – or fresh box of baking soda stored in airtight container
- **electrolyte powder mix** – Emergen-C brand or similar from health food store
- **scissors and tweezers**
- **toilet paper**
- **feminine hygiene products**
- **etc.**

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Kit #2: Everyday Carry (EDC):

- **Backpacks and bags** – Small or large as needed to fit the basics. Many to choose from on the internet and at your local sporting goods store. Go for proper fit, durable construction, adjustability, and capacity. Outside pockets on the pack will make for easy access to gear in a hurry. Any good outfitter will help you find the right pack that fits your body and needs.

1. EDC size: <http://www.sunnysports.com/Prod/KLTPRTN.html?&&>

2. <http://www.ems.com/product/index.jsp?productId=3790619&cp=3677338.11354705.12946357>

- **Emergency Blankets** – reflective silver/orange blanket or bag reflects 90% of your body heat to keep you warm. Adventure Medical makes a variety of these products and seem to be the best: <http://www.adventuremedicalkits.com/products.php?catname=Shelter&cat=53>
- **Clear plastic sheeting** – If you have room for this, add a plastic drop cloth, 2 mil thick 9 ‘ x 12’ from Home Depot (many uses).
- **Trash Bags** – heavy contractor bags, folded to about an 8” rectangle and end taped to keep from unfolding in your pouch. Can be used as a rain jacket (cut hole in one corner enough to fit your head through. Arms stay underneath – no holes). For an insulated mattress or pillow, stuff a bag with crumpled newspaper or dried leaves (no sticks). Tape closed with duct tape.
- **Duct Tape** – Wrap several yards of tape around a wooden pencil to make a mini-roll. Cut protruding pencil ends off. Alternatively, use an old plastic gift card to wrap a flatter roll of tape.
- **Water Filter** – “Straw” type, good for quick drinks from unpolluted water (i.e. water from a hot water tank drain, clear flowing stream, rainwater container, etc.) Frontier and LifeStraw are just two of the brands. Read about them. I have a FrontierPro. Here’s the link: <http://aquamira.com/consumer/frontier-pro-filter-system/product-technology> You may, however, still prefer a pump-type filter in your kit. If so, see the links listed above under “Household Kit”.
- **Multi-Tool** – Plenty of poor-quality interpretations of this tool category are out there, so if you want something that you can rely on, have a look at the industry leaders such as Swiss Army knife, Leatherman, Gerber, and SOG:
 1. <http://www.victorinox.com/us/product/Swiss-Army-Knives/Category/Hunting/Hiker-Sharpener-Set/59110>
 2. <http://www.leatherman.com/category/multi-tools> and
 3. <http://www.sogknives.com/everyday-carry/multi-tools/powerduo-multi-tool-satin.html>
- **Fixed-blade Knife** – Fixed-blade knives (non-folding) are sturdier and can handle tougher tasks like splitting and chopping branches. There are many small knives that

would make good EDC knives for your kit. Here are some suggestions for a good quality knife (and a sharpener):

1. <http://www.knifeworks.com/eseezulaiiodgreen.aspx>
2. <http://www.amazon.com/Light-Fire-FireKnife-Stainless-FireSteel/dp/B007SLT3BG>
3. http://www.kniveshipfree.com/product_info.php?cPath=27_597&products_id=23154
4. OPTION – Spyderco Folding pocket knife: http://www.amazon.com/Spyderco-Delica4-Lightweight-Ground-PlainEdge/dp/B003CH3V5E/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1394136074&sr=8-1&keywords=spyderco+delica+4

- **Compass and Maps**

1. <http://www.thecompassstore.com/guideorange.html>
2. <http://www.thecompassstore.com/51a10.html>
3. <http://www.thecompassstore.com/micone.html>

- **Whistle** – if you should have the need to call for help, the whistle will be louder and require less effort than shouting over and over. I have the flat black one listed here, but there are others too. Be mindful of the twist-off compartment on other designs as these things can sometimes unscrew themselves and be lost after a few weeks hanging on your keychain. They should be okay to put in your kit though.

1. <http://www.esafetysupplies.com/Emergency-Whistle-and-Id-Holder-w-Keychain.html>
2. http://www.ebay.com/itm/Lot-5-quality-Emergency-kit-rescue-distress-whistles-/261026000080?pt=LH_DefaultDomain_0&hash=item3cc65cacd0

- **Pepper Spray** – defense against dangerous animals you may meet.
- **Flashlight** – Over time batteries leak and can corrode inner workings of the flashlight. Store batteries with, but perhaps not in the unit for long-term storage.

For a small but useful little light, have a look at the Photon Microlight:

http://www.amazon.com/LRI-PWK-Photon-Keychain-Micro-Light/dp/B00006I4Y2/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1394136277&sr=8-1&keywords=amazon+photon+micro+light

- **Cord** – strong nylon type for lashings sticks together and setting up a shelter using the plastic drop cloth or a tarp. You can use cord from the hardware store, but I prefer something more versatile and stronger called “paracord 550”. It has many smaller strands inside the outer nylon sheath that can be used for more delicate cordage needs like fishing line, dental floss, and more. Keep 100 ft. hank per kit; I carry several hanks of different lengths): http://stores.ebay.com/Sportsman-Survival/_i.html?_nkw=paracord+100ft&submit=Search&_sid=726745828

- **Glow sticks** – look for 5-year self life and mark date on them when you get them: www.nicaboyne.com/Chemical-Glow-Products/Glow-Sticks/6-Safety-Glow-Sticks.html
- **Matches and BIC lighter** – Keep them dry and conserve them when using.
- **Water bottle** – ready-to-drink, but also for use in tablet disinfecting additional water. Platypus brand makes tough, foldable flex-bottles <http://www.backcountrygear.com/camping-and-hiking/hydration/water-bottles/platypus-softbottle-with-push-pull-cap.html>
- **Jute Twine** – Found at hardware stores. Use for simple cordage needs, but also as great tinder material for fire starting. Just use a 12” length of it cut into 4-pieces; untwisted and pulled apart into the three strands. The individual strands are each untwisted and pulled into short fibers. Then the fibers are fluffed together into ball or small nest for catching your spark, coal, or flame. Carefully blow your tinder bundle into flame. The flaming bundle can then ignite your kindling (thin twigs or similar), and you are on your way to having a campfire.
- **Food** – snack bars, dried fruit and nuts, dehydrated meals, chia seeds, tea bags, supplements, electrolyte powder. Lots to choose from. Rotate stock from your kits before expiration dates. Pack what you will eat, eat only what you need. Enough quality calories for up to 3-days. In an emergency, you may burn more calories than usual, so anticipate this.
- **Dust Masks** – N95 type. These are an important item. Keeping smoke, dust and other airborne particulates out of your lungs and sinuses is extremely important as many health issues can arise after exposure to poor air quality. Many people experienced just this sort of thing in the days and even years since the World Trade Centers were destroyed. Forest fires often blanket large areas with smoke and fine ash for days. If you have to be outside in such air quality, wearing the masks helps minimize inhalation of troublesome particulates. Pay attention to prevailing winds in your area, because they may blow such far away effects in your direction. Keep these masks easily accessible in your kit. You can also wear a wet bandana over your nose and mouth as a mask.
- **Bandanas** – Have some in your kit (pre-wash them to remove excess dyes and starch), they have many uses including masks, water filtering for large particles, collecting morning dew for drinking, compresses or bandages, staying cool by wetting and wearing around neck, and for personal hygiene.
- **First-Aid and Hygiene** – put together a basic kit that includes assorted bandages, tape, topical disinfectants, alcohol wipes, hand-sanitizer, triple-antibiotic ointment, tweezers, small mirror (for tick-check and rescue signaling), aspirin, prescriptions, extra pair of eyeglasses, dust masks, etc.

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Additional Emergency Kits

The remaining types of emergency kits should include many of the same or similar items as listed previously in both the Household and EDC kits, though in different quantities. Therefore, with the remaining kits I will focus mostly on additional items and information specific to these kits and their purposes. Your survival priorities are still the same, so make sure you have them covered.

Kit #3 – WORKPLACE KIT

This kit might be considered a much smaller version of the Household kit, or a somewhat larger version of the EDC kit. If you had to stay at your place of work for a few days, possibly without electric power and running water or heat, what conditions and resources currently exist there? What would you need to do to stay safe while sheltering in place?

Build your kit from the previous lists and don't forget items from the following categories:

- **Box, backpack or other bag** – (see section on “Packs and Bags” below)
- **Foods, nonperishable, low or no-cook**
- **Water, ready to drink**
- **Extra clothing for warm or cold weather**
- **Solar cell phone charger**
- **Paper road map of the county or local area**
- **Sleeping pad and blanket**
- **Walking Shoes** – Keep a pair of good walking shoes in your office, locker, or car
- **Small Tool kit, or good Multi-Tool**
- **Printout of important phone numbers**

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Kit #4 – GO BAG KIT

This emergency kit is larger than your EDC kit and is used for an extended stay away from most typical resources, including your home. Consider essential tools, supplies, and equipment that you would need to survive for a week or two carrying it all on your back.

You can start with the EDC Kit list previously discussed and add to it and upgrade items as desired and required. You will most likely need a larger backpack for these items, perhaps a 44 or 50 liter (volume) pack. Plan for being without conveniences of almost any kind for at least a week, perhaps two, then prepare for that situation. Remember your survival priorities: shelter, water, fire, food. Include in your go-bag additional food and clothing items.

You'll begin to appreciate dehydrated and freeze-dried foods when you realize you might have to have to carry 7-14 days worth of calories in your pack. Each family member will need their own go-bag that fits well and is not overloaded or too heavy for them to handle for a long duration. You might have to carry stuff in your pack for other family members who can't.

Don't forget a rain jacket or poncho, hat with a brim that shades your ears and neck, a change of clothes, and good walking shoes. You'll need some simple cooking tools as well – at least a small pot or coffee can, a metal cup, plate, and utensils. Make sure each person in your family has their own bag and that it is clearly marked with an ID tag.

Remember, like all your other kits, they are a work-in-progress and will naturally change as you learn more and think more about your survival needs. My last note for the moment on your go-bag (and EDC kit) concerns storage locations. You need to keep your go bag in an easily accessible place in your home, BUT it should be kept as inconspicuous as possible. You want it out of sight of friends, neighbors, and especially any potential burglar. Your bag is a critical survival lifeline, and a significant expenditure of money, time, and energy, so keep it safe until needed. Hide the bag someplace that won't be attractive to burglars – in the back of a boring broom closet, buried in a basket of laundry (that you leave in place in the laundry room), and so on. You'll remember where it is since you will be reviewing it every six months and will need to rotate some supplies, and perhaps making changes to its contents as time goes on.

- **Backpack** – Many packs and bags are available on the internet and in stores, but here are two options. Look for something like a 44 or 50 liter capacity:
 1. <http://www.sunnysports.com/Catalog.aspx?op=ItemDisplay&ProductID=KLTPRW44&Page=1&Term=redwing%2044&Hit=1>
 2. <http://www.sunnysports.com/Catalog.aspx?op=ItemDisplay&ProductID=KLTPRW50&Page=1&Term=redwing%2050&Hit=1>
- **Money** – if electric power is out then credit cards and ATM machines likely won't work, so carry cash in small bills and conceal it well. Suggested amounts vary widely from \$100 dollars per person in your group to \$500 or \$1,000.

- **Passport and Important papers** – copies of documents in a ziploc bag or two. Driver's license, bank account records, mortgage receipt, renter's policy, and so forth. Data stored on a USB flash drive may also be a good idea.
- **Sturdy hiking stick** – to help you over and around any obstacles in your travels and keep your balance while wearing a backpack. Also helpful to protect yourself from animals.
- **Headlamp** – for hands-free lighting and working in the dark (I have not bought one yet but these looked promising and affordable):
 1. Option A: http://www.moosejaw.com/moosejaw/shop/product_Black-Diamond-Cosmo-Headlamp_10021280_10208_10000001_-1_
 2. Option B: http://www.moosejaw.com/moosejaw/shop/product_Petzl-Tikka-Plus-2-Headlamp_10216116_10208_10000001_-1_
- **Family photos** – to aid in locating them after a disaster. You can show them to the police and others who might have seen them and may be able to help reunite you with them.
- **Paper printout of important contacts and emergency meet-up locations** – keep these updated every 6 months.
- **Extra collapsable water containers** – Platypus water bottles are tough and can be rolled up when not needed. When filled, they can be stowed in your pack in different locations to balance the load. Alternatively you can get a back up water bladder from Platypus or another company. Cheapest of all perhaps is a collapsable 5-gallon water jug with spigot (for camp use rather than drinking while hiking). A bit bulky for your Go Bag kits, but good for Household and Car emergency kits.
 1. <http://www.survivalcampingstore.com/CollapsibleWaterCarrier-Stansport-5Gallon>
 2. <http://www.rei.com/product/820769/platypus-platy-bottle-70-fl-oz>
 3. <http://www.rei.com/product/767108/platypus-big-zip-sl-30l-reservoir-100-fl-oz>

Kit #5 – VEHICLE EMERGENCY KIT

This kit is one for when you have a little bit of time to evacuate and can load your PRE-ASSEMBLED kits into your car or truck. It is not the time to begin to assemble one since that will take too long. Lock up your home, turn off the gas main, electric circuit, and the main water valve in your home before leaving. Know how to do these things, where valves are located, and keep a wrench or other necessary tools near these locations.

As before, look through the previous list of items and build or modify as needed. Here are some additional items to consider including:

- **Duffel bag or box** – (see section on “Packs and Bags” below)

- **Extra cash** – This amount will be up to you, but some people suggest \$500-\$1,000 in small bills and maybe some amount in traveler's checks. Remember it is possible that electric power may be out and you won't be able to withdraw cash from ATMs or use credit cards.
- **Tents** – Many places to buy them. Here's one tent from L.L. Bean:
http://www.llbean.com/llb/shop/73377?feat=tents-SR0&page=eureka-tetragon-5-person-tent&attrValue_0=Dark%20Green/Tan&productId=1225408
- **Tarps** – Two large ones for making camp and shelter for your group and protecting your gear
- **Basic vehicle safety kit** – road flares, tools, reflective vest, jumper cables, motor oil, ice scraper, wiper fluid, antifreeze, can of flat-fixer, duct tape, flashlight, rope, tire jack and crowbar, etc.
- **Road maps and Compass** – good old fashioned paper map and magnetic needle compass
- **5-gallon buckets with lids** – keep things organized, waterproof, collect water for campsite
- **Shovel, short handled** – dig a fire pit or a latrine, remove snow, level ground, smack things.
- **Rope and bungee cords**
- **Car charger for cell phone and electronics**
- **Emergency radio** – don't rely solely on the vehicle's radio – you might need to abandon it.
- **Extra clothing, coats, hats, gloves**
- **Extra Water** – in refillable containers / buckets with secure lids to avoid leakage while driving
- **Extra food** – as with other consumables, don't use what's in your go-bag until you need to.
- **Fishing gear, pocket size** – many possibilities, and YouTube is loaded with DIY videos
- **Small BBQ grill with cover** – you can use twigs and branches for fuel, and you can do this just about anywhere if you can build a campfire on the ground safely. Alternatively, pack a camping stove and fuel canisters
- **Field Guide books** – edible plants, knot-tying, bushcraft/survival, tracking, etc. Here are just a few of the many available:
 1. http://www.amazon.com/Browns-Field-Guide-Wilderness-Survival/dp/0425105725/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1360442401&sr=8-1&keywords=tom+brown+jr

2. http://www.amazon.com/Browns-Field-Nature-Observation-Tracking/dp/0425099660/ref=sr_1_9?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1360442513&sr=1-9
 3. <http://www.amazon.com/The-Foragers-Harvest-Identifying-Harvesting/dp/0976626608>
 4. <http://www.amazon.com/Euell-Gibbons/e/B001KCP8N6>
- **Books, Cards and games** – helps pass the time and take your mind off your situation for a while
 - **Extra glow sticks** – for marking things like your latrine area, tent stakes and ropes, and people. Use small glow sticks too. These can help save the batteries in your flashlights. <http://www.nicaboyme.com/Glow-Sticks.html>

When assembling a vehicle emergency kit or car box, keep in mind the following:

1. You can load more supplies into your vehicle than you can probably carry if you had to abandon the vehicle and walk. Be ready to leave behind some of the nonessential gear.
2. Make sure everyone has their Go-Bag in the vehicle as well.
3. Consider if and how you might transport your large car kit box over rugged or uneven terrain. Will you pull it on a sled? Will the box have all-terrain wheels? Can you build (or pack a pre-made) travois to haul the box? If you want to know what a travois is, then just do an internet search for “travois”, or visit your local library and you’ll see images and get the basic idea.
4. Practice how to load this emergency kit in or onto your vehicle. Use secure webbing straps with a ratchet to tighten loads in place. Consider buying a roof rack for your specific vehicle if it has none. Don’t exceed the weight and size capacity of your rack – or roof! Driving your vehicle fully loaded like this is a different experience than you may be used to. Gas mileage, speed, and handling all change dramatically, as does the wear on your brakes. Keep your tires properly inflated (including your spare).
5. Protect the kit from rain and dirt if strapped to the roof. Wrap it in a tarp using rope to secure the tarp from flapping incessantly or flying off when driving.

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