

MEDIA PSA: Basic Emergency Preparedness Recommendation

Individual and Community Emergency Preparedness

In 2013, a knowledgeable team of emergency preparedness and response experts, including federal, state and local emergency management professionals, and specialists from the fields of emergency medicine, urban and wilderness survival, academia, law enforcement and related private sector services, convened to compile individual preparedness recommendations for a short-term disaster. The objective was to create a Two Week Shelter in Place Basic Kit for one person, which would enable citizens to Shelter in Place (either in their residential or in community shelters) for up to two weeks, in the event of a local or regional catastrophic event.

Such events include, but are not limited to, meteorological, geological, technological and biological hazards, which pose a serious threat to power and communication grids (which are increasingly complex), transportation and material supply lines, food supplies, and both water and sanitation systems.

We buy insurance coverage for our autos and homes, which we hope never to use. Preparing a Shelter in Place Basic Kit for two weeks is far less expensive than other insurance premiums, and though we hope never to use those provisions, if the day should come when you need them, their value will be priceless.

These easy instructions will simplify the process of setting aside minimal provisions for a short-term emergency. Of course you can take the two-week basic provisions list and multiply it in order to establish sufficient supplies for longer crisis duration. While two weeks of provisions is considered the absolute minimum, six weeks of provisions is the recommended threshold per person. However, the more provisions you set aside, the better able you will be to assist others in need.

Moreover, building more substantial emergency provisions will provide you with the opportunity to share those provisions with others in need, and reduce dependence on local, state and federal government relief efforts. The fact is, government relief programs for critical events are underfunded, undersupplied and in the event of a regional crisis, the most basic provisions may not be restored for weeks.

Even with relatively inert weather threats, the shelves of urban and suburban food and supply sellers can be emptied in hours, and can remain empty for days or weeks because resupply warehouses are often in other regions and clear transportation routes may be a problem.

This Two Week Shelter in Place Basic Kit is designed to meet basic needs of one adult should there be a local or regional disruption of services and supplies. This Kit should be modified to account for the ages of members in your household and special medical or dietary needs including prescription drugs. Many of the provisions on this list can be easily transported in the event you must evacuate the area.

There are two stages required for preparing your Two Week "Shelter in Place Basic Kit." First you must determine your nutritional and health needs. Second you must determine your shelter needs. The information below is designed to greatly simplify that process. (For more detailed information on Emergency Preparedness, link to <http://patriotpost.us/eprpc/>)

STEP ONE -- SET ASIDE YOUR NUTRITIONAL AND HEALTH PROVISIONS

Determine how you plan to store and rotate items with limited shelf life. This would include food and medicines, and water. When considering nutritional supplies, you can either store common canned and bagged goods, or you can readily purchase long-term food storage buckets (5-7 years) at Costco, Sams, Amazon.com, and other suppliers. Store your emergency provisions in a cool, dry location (not an attic) to extend shelf life. Large plastic bins with lids are readily available from any household retailer, and ideal for setting aside provisions for each person in your

household. Water jugs may be stored separately. (Purchase a battery-powered or hand crank radio with NOAA Weather Radio capabilities for emergency broadcasts -- readily available from any major retailer.)

Water: (Water can be stored and/or filtered or disinfected) 2.5 gallons is the minimum recommended amount of water needed per person, per day. Much more is required in hot weather and with high levels of physical activity. Store at least ten gallons of water per person. That will provide sufficient water for several days, in order to locate additional water sources. Alternative water sources in your home, if the water supply is disrupted, include the water stored in your hot water heater, which has a drain valve. Additional water may be available from swimming pools, rainfall runoff and groundwater sources. Disinfect water from non-sterile sources with a stored supply of household chlorine bleach, 16 drops per gallon of water. (Do not use scented, color safe or bleaches with added cleaners.) Be sure and have spare containers to collect and store water, if necessary.

Food: Store what you eat. Canned goods that require no cooking or refrigeration are quick and easy solutions. Be sure to have a manual can opener. For foods that require preparation, a small camp stove, cook kit and fuel for stove may be required, if you do not have a natural gas stove or grill. An LP grill can also suffice without electric or natural gas appliances. Keep a supply of disposable cups, plates, towels and serving/eating utensils as water may not be available or sanitary for cleaning dishes.

Storing common canned and bagged goods (canned meats and vegetables, bagged rice and pastas, etc.) requires more planning as these goods will have to be rotated out of your kit with some regularity. The process is as simple as determining what you consume in a day, then figuring out quantities for two weeks. Those products should then be placed in an airtight bin and stored in a cool, dry location.

Many vendors now sell long-term emergency nutritional supplies in a 30-day bucket for one person. These pre-packed buckets include freeze dried and dehydrated foods. (Freeze dried foods do not require much heat to rehydrate and serve, while dehydrated foods require hot water.)

Medical: Determine your medical needs similarly. What medications do you use daily, including prescription and non-prescription items, and other health products like vitamins? Now, calculate your needs for the two-week supply kit. Remember personal and feminine hygiene products. Note expiration dates. Of course, a well-stocked first aid kit is important. Set aside additional prescription glasses, extra contact lenses and contact care supplies. Dust masks will help filter contaminated air. Most personal physicians will fill prescriptions for emergency storage.

Remember -- your nutritional and health provisions will need to be checked on a yearly basis in order to replace items that are beyond shelf life expiration dates.

Self-Defense: The ability to defend your family and community is essential. We advocate -- consistent with the Constitution's Second Amendment mandate -- that all households should have at least one knowledgeable firearms user and the appropriate arms and ammunition. In a major crisis, combine your families or neighbors into a central location so that you can work together for security and safety.

STEP TWO -- PREPARE YOUR SHELTER NEEDS

Clothing and Bedding: 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 not have heat. Rethink your clothing and bedding supplies to account for growing children and other family changes. One complete change of warm clothing and shoes per person, including: jacket or coat, long pants, long sleeve shirt, sturdy shoes, hat and gloves, sleeping bag or warm blanket for each person, rain gear

Shelter: Fire starter, tent, warm sleeping bag, tarps, roll of plastic sheeting, duct tape, matches in a waterproof container

Light: Flashlights, extra batteries, Generator, Cords, fuel, candles, lanterns, and lamp oil.

Security: Ability, Equipment (choose what works best for your situation) and training for self-defense/protection. Additional items: fire extinguisher, whistle to signal for help, and a wrench or pliers to turn off utilities.

Tools: Gas and water cutoff wrench, hand ax, knife, multi-tool, shovel and rake

Sanitation: Heavy duty garbage bags, 5 gallon buckets with lids, toilet paper, disposable baby wipes, bleach (basic unscented), dust - face masks, shovel. Moist towelettes and hand cleaners/sanitizers, disinfectant

Administrative: Copies of important family documents such as copies of insurance policies, identification and bank account records in a waterproof, portable container. Make a set of extra keys and have cash or other negotiable instruments for transactions. Paper and pencil -- 3x5 cards as your phone and laptop/desktop computers may be disabled.

Communication: Cell phone with chargers, inverter or solar charger, portable handheld two-way radios if cell phone service is down. Good supply of batteries. (Note that as many households are giving up their landline phone service and only using cell phones, in a crisis, your cell phone service may be far more limited than a household landline -- with a phone that does not require batteries or power.

Other Supplies:

Some other items for your family to consider adding to its supply kit: Emergency reference materials such as a first aid book or other information on FEMA's www.ready.gov website, infant formula and diapers, pet food and water, books, games, puzzles or other activities for children.

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