

Disaster Preparedness Handout

IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY PLEASE CALL 911.

Packing a go bag is essential for disaster preparedness. Here are important items to include. Keep your go bag in an accessible location, such as a front hall closet or garage, where it's easy to grab on your way out the door.

- 1. The bag.** Your carryall must be large and sturdy enough to hold the essentials and small enough to grab on the run. A backpack is a great option. If you're not able to carry a heavy bag, recommends a duffel bag on wheels.
- 2. Food and water.** Add lightweight, nutrient-dense foods, such as protein bars, instant oatmeal, nuts and seeds, and at least one gallon of water per person, per day. Don't forget a manual can opener and utility knife. A go bag should have enough food and water for at least three days; remember to pack enough for your pets, too.
- 3. Personal essentials.** Purchase travel-sized toiletries and a first aid kit. Pack a change of clothing, including a warm, waterproof layer, as well as an extra pair of eyeglasses or contact lenses (and solution). Other items that should be in your go bag are an emergency blanket, scissors, duct tape, work gloves, towels and matches, according to the American Red Cross. Hand sanitizer that contains at least 60 percent alcohol, soap, antibacterial wipes and a thermometer are important, too
- 4. Medications.** If there is a warning that you may be evacuated, call your pharmacy and request an extra medication refill. Pack a list of your medications and the phone numbers for your pharmacy and physicians. You'll also need portable versions of specialized medical equipment like syringes, CPAP machines and oxygen tanks.
- 5. Electronics.** Throw in extra phone chargers, a flashlight and batteries. "We recommend hand-crank portable radios. When all of our lines of communication go down during a disaster, AM/FM radios have proven to be one of the most reliable sources of communication, and you don't need to worry about having fresh batteries.
- 6. Paperwork.** Make photocopies of essential documents, including passports; birth certificates; driver's licenses; Social Security and Insurance cards; marriage, adoption and naturalization certificates; title or lease documents; insurance paperwork; and credit and debit card information. Make sure to store these in a waterproof, zip-top bag.
- 7. Cash.** If natural disasters cause power outages, you may not be able to use your debit or credit cards to make purchases, so add cash to your go bag. Rule of thumb suggests a couple hundred dollars for a two-member household, to cover gas, food and other last-minute essentials. A combination of small bills and rolls of quarters is ideal if you need to buy food or water from vending machines.