

Presentation Notes: 72-hour kits

Every Prepper has bags and kits packed and ready to go in case of emergency. These become our plan B to life's problems and they are the cornerstone for most Preppers. We have 72-hour kits, get home bags, possible kits, bug out bags, get out of dodge bags, never coming home bags, survival kits, kid kits, pet kits, family kits, guest kits, hunker down kits and a kit for all seasons. If there is a potential problem out there, someone has developed a kit for it. It can be as simple or as complicated as you want it to be to best suit your needs.

We are going to suggest the basic and the most necessary kits to you today. There is no perfect kit list or prebuilt kit available because each one has to be individualized to suit your specific needs. Even in the same family, dad's kit is different than mom's kit and the kid's kits are very different. The most important advice I can recommend before starting a kit is you have to honestly assess your own disaster plan and abilities. If you have stocked up on food but don't have water stored then this becomes a liability for you. It may be that you are great on supplies but don't have all your medications you need stored up. You might have a great bug out bag but you haven't hiked in years and maybe can't go as far as you did when you were 18. Some folks are home all the time and don't need a get home bag where as others spend more time at work than home and need the get home bag more than anything else. And before you build a never coming home wilderness survival kit you need to make sure you have the skills, training and practice necessary for our climate and seasons.

Every Prepper home should have an easy and simple three-day kit assembled to provide them with the basic necessities to handle an emergency. The reason the kit is set up for three days is that most essential community services after an emergency will have been responded to in this timeframe although as Preppers, we tend to have around a week's worth in our kits. Three days is the minimum kit though. In our Northern Nevada Area, we fortunately don't have too many natural disasters to worry about but we still have wildfires and we are ranked number 4 by the USGS for states with the most seismic activity. Odd things can happen in Nevada though. As an example, a portion of Fernley was flooded and many homes were ruined when a dirt bank gave way on the irrigation ditch that runs behind a housing area. The people living in a dry desert town never saw that coming.

During the recent snow storms occurring in the south, people had forewarning and quickly went to the stores to stock up on items they knew they would need. Reports from a Prepper friend in Georgia near Atlanta was the store inventory was cleared out very quickly, which is typical. For those that didn't or couldn't make it in time their options were somewhat limited.

Having the resources ready to go to care for yourself and your family for a few days when an issue arises provides piece of mind and allows you to concentrate on other responsibilities and duties you may have in your life. The kit only needs to have on hand what you would need if you had to stay in your home for a few days in what we call a bug-in situation or if you had to be evacuated from your home for any reason. You would already be packed up and ready to go. You won't have to worry about forgotten items that were necessary to get yourself back on track. I tend to think of major snow storm to keep me at home for a few days and I think earthquake or house fire to make me leave my house. It's important to remember though that

people react to stress in different ways and most of them are not in a good way. Once you've gone to this kit, you have to expect nerves may be a bit frayed so we need to plan for that for our families. You may need to add more luxury or comfort than you would need for yourself. Whoever is the strong one when things get tough is who should be the most involved with putting the kit together.

To make the task of getting your 72-hour kit built in a realistic way, imagine if you and everyone in your house were going to have to stay at a Red Cross shelter at a nearby school for three days. You can't go back home and you don't have a means of buying anything because it isn't there to buy. You may have to park quite a ways from the school and walk to it. The people you need to talk to will be there but you need your personal information and proof of identity. No one will take your word of who you are unless you have ID and account numbers. If you can set up a kit like this you will be good for pretty much anything other than living in the wilderness. It will serve you at your home, at a friend's house or at a hotel.

To provide you the best means to get yourself back on track after an emergency or take care of you during a disaster, a 72-hour kit should have copies of your personal information. Although you can put everything on a thumb drive or memory stick remember that most people with government issued computers won't risk putting an unapproved device in their machine. Paper copies will work best when dealing with different government agencies. You can insist all day long of whom you are but after Katrina, the government needs proof now.

Your insurance company would love to have photos of your property and serial numbers though so if possible, have both paper and electronic copies. You will need your account numbers when calling utilities to suspend service in case your house was damaged, otherwise the bills will keep coming. Because of all the fraud that people attempt with utilities, they are very particular about what information they need before they can help you over the phone. Write down your passwords because they are difficult to remember when stressed or if your computer automatically logs into your accounts.

Make your kit portable. Your kit should be designed to be taken with you in case of an evacuation so you need to be able to carry it. Keep it compact and lightweight. You can use a plastic storage container or back packs for each of you. Water will make up most of the weight of a kit. You need 1 gallon per day for each person plus extra water for pets and special needs family members. Water weighs 8.34 pounds per gallon so everyone has an automatic 25 pounds of weight to carry. 5 gallon jugs are heavy but they make storing the water very convenient.

Keep your kit easily accessible. Keep it near an exit door, where you can grab it and go like a hallway closet, pantry or laundry room. Don't bury it under clutter. If you keep your kit in the garage, be aware that you risk freezing in the winter and having things melt during the worse heat of summer.

Keep your kit up to date. Rotate food and medications at least every six months. Temperature changes of just 10 degrees begin to affect the life expectancy of canned food. All the long term

food shelf life is dependent on optimal conditions. Even military MRE's are only good for 5 years at maximum and no more than a year when stored at summer temperatures. Check the prepacked clothing annually to make sure it fits. I notice my stored clothing shrinks a little bit each year. Check expiration dates on batteries.

Check your kit regularly to make sure you have everything your family needs for three days' survival. Ask yourself if you have the proper clothes packed in your kit. Do you need to go to work or do you need heavy winter clothes versus summer clothing? Family situations change and so do their needs. Add the new medications, equipment, paperwork and anything else that best suits your needs. It takes a bit of discipline but when you are at the shelter, you'll be thankful you were diligent.

Put all items inside Ziploc bags or tied plastic garbage bags, so they won't be ruined by rain or flood water. It is also a great way to keep the contents organized.

Make sure you know how to use everything in your kit, and that the supplies are of good quality. Don't weigh down your kit with cheap junk. You don't have to buy top notch gear but know that it will work for you. Most importantly though, test it out, use it now and then and practice. Remember that practice promotes proficiency and a tough time to try to learn to use something is when you are stressed.

Make your kit divisible. Provide a backpack or portable container for each family member, in case you get separated. When choosing back packs I would caution you to buy quality and try to blend in. If you show up with military grade gear and packs, you will draw attention to yourself. You will stand out and people will notice what you have and that you are more prepared than everyone else. That isn't always a good thing when mixing in with people. Confrontation is best avoided at all costs so don't ninja up your gear. Someone dragging an old gym bag or suitcase around looks to be woefully unprepared next to the Army Ranger but both may have exactly the same gear in their bags.

Personalize your kit. No commercial kit or generic supply list will completely provide for the unique needs of your family. You will need to adjust the contents and check them frequently to make sure your current needs such as medications, baby supplies, pets and so forth, are met. Your physical condition may change and what you could have tossed on your back last year now needs wheels to cart around. Remember it this way, if you were going on vacation you'd pack your own bags rather than going to a store to pick one out already packed and ready to go. But, you can save a lot of time and effort when first starting out with a premade kit and then work from there. At least you will have the basics covered when beginning and that is the most important thing. You can always add to it later but get the basic kit done now while the weather is good, not when it's flooding.

Make the kit serve you both at home and if you have to evacuate. Clearly staying at home means you have access to more equipment and supplies so you don't need to make the kit heavy and difficult to manage. The items you need either on the road or at home though are the

same so think of it that way. You still have all the items and supplies you always have at home so you may never get to the level of using your kit but should you find yourself coming up short on something, you always have your kit to fall back on. During the Loma Prieta earthquake in 1989 many folks had structural damage to their homes making them unsafe to stay in and other people simply erred on the side of caution and camped in their back yards and sheds. If we were to face the same 6.9 event, we would be faced with the same challenges and with that in mind, your kit would be your means of support for you and your family, whether living in the back yard or at a shelter or friends house.

There are example lists provided to you that generally all cover the same basic things in the same way. The basics will always be the same for all of us. We start with copies of all of our important paperwork. We then need water as a top priority so have some on hand and have sure ways to gather more safe water. You can get filters, chemical treatments or store it yourself. You need food with enough useful calories to keep you fueled up and going. You need the right type of clothing. Disasters happen on their schedules so the chance you'll be wearing exactly what you need to have on is very slim. It's best to think about running outside at oh dark hundred from a dead sleep and then deciding on what you need to wear.

You need shelter of some kind and that can be tents, tarps or simply bedding. A means to protect yourself from the elements quickly takes over when your normal shelter is gone. First Aid is another basic item we all need to have with us. You don't need a full trauma kit but some band aids and hygienic wipes are a must. Your necessary medications are part of this first aid kit. Before you spend a lot of money on a first aid kit though, think back over the last year or so how many items you used for first aid and what were they. Most times it's just some small band aids that you needed.

Have a means to provide light. When applying the Prepper rules of three where one is none, two is one and three is just right, this is a good place to have that rule working for you. The more means to provide light the better. Have a means to make fire as well. You may never need to use it in a shelter but then again, you never know when it will come up. Follow your Prepper rules of three for this one as well. Have a knife in your kit. A multitool serves this function but add a backup if you have the room.

Having a means to cook is great and easy to add with pocket stoves and metal camp cups. You simply only need to boil a cup of water or heat some food but having that ability goes a long ways to providing comfort not to mention making your drinking water safe. The last basic items all kits have in common are hygiene items. You need to maintain personal hygiene because simple preventable disease kills more people than all the disasters combined.

From these very basic items you can expand on the specific items tailored for you and your family. When building your kit make sure you practice using everything in it and put your kit to the test at least annually. You have to include everyone the kit is designed to support. It's a great way to keep your items rotated and fresh as well by replacing everything you use.

Additionally to your kit you have at home, if you have the means you can make up other kits and keep them at a friend's or family member's house to fall back on if necessary. For those with travel trailers and such, these can be a place to store a kit. One of our members and a close friend told me a story once about his daughter when she moved away. He wanted her to be prepared in case anything happened but she wasn't of a Prepper mindset. Instead he asked her if he could store a food kit in her apartment in case he ever needed to head that direction during a disaster. She agreed and now she has a kit ready to help in case of emergency. I always considered that one of his more brilliant stories.

I have found that most people regardless of lifestyle or personal philosophies generally seem to understand the importance and value of having a basic supply kit ready at all times but just never seem to get around to it. It's an easy thing to do because anyone who ever packed for a trip has already built that kit. It can be done very cheaply. Use your second hand clothing and gear. Use the same food you eat every day. You don't need special food, just canned foods and simple to make items like cereal bars, peanut butter and crackers, fruit snacks and other snack type items.

Make getting your paperwork together a priority though. You can always use old bills and statements if you don't have the time or means to copy everything. Get a basic kit put together and packed up the sooner the better. It would only take you less than an hour to do, which is about a half hour more then you get when being evacuated from your home due to wildfires burning.