

Step 3: Build or Buy a 72 hour kit

We have all watched the devastation of Hurricane Sandy and Katrina aftermath of these powerful storms. Well, locally we deal with wildland fires that can cause that much damage as well. The key to these disasters is to learn from them. A number of things to consider while watching the news about these devastating events are things we might think about NOW and prepare for, things that might make a disaster similar in magnitude a little easier for our own households to deal with when it happens here.

1) No Electricity for seven days or longer.

- A refrigerator will only keep food safely cold for about four hours if unopened during a power outage, according to the US Department of Agriculture (USDA). A full freezer will hold the temperature for about 48 hours if full (24 hours if half full), per the USDA.

http://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/food-safety-education/get-answers/food-safety-fact-sheets/emergency-preparedness/keeping-food-safe-during-an-emergency/CT_Index

- Restaurants may have generators (as long as they have the gas to keeping them running) to keep power to their equipment and doors open. Reports from Hurricane Sandy showed that restaurants were hauling food to the streets for disposal after four days. A take away is to have a plan on how you will feed your family after a disaster. Always start with food in the refrigerator, then the freezer, and finally your canned food. Plan for at least three days on your own.

2) No gas in the car

- No electricity, pumps at gas stations will not operate.
- Gas Station owners may not be able to get to their business or suppliers may not be able to get into the affected area. This will result in gas shortages.
- During Hurricane Sandy, gas lines at the few stations with gas were over a mile long. People with gas cans were waiting in line for hours to fill their cans

3) No credit cards

When the power is out ATM and credit card machines will not work so all purchases will need to be done in cash or barter.

4) No transit/ roads

Even if you have gas you may not be able to drive your vehicle because the streets may have been damaged during the disaster. Do you have another means to get around? Have you thought about a bike or how far you can walk? This maybe the only way you will be able to get the necessary supplies you need. Won't it be nice if you already had some supplies to get started with?

5) No running water what to do for

- Drinking water
- Cooking water
- Personal hygiene
- Flushing toilets if you can

FEMA and the American Red Cross tell us the best way to protect yourself and your family in an emergency or disaster is to be prepared and informed! Store at least 72 hours of food and necessities for each member of your household. Based on previous disasters, it has been demonstrated it would be beneficial to have additional supplies for those situations where it takes much longer for things to get back to some kind of normal! To get started, follow this simple list, use the references provided and build or buy a 72-hour kits.

1. The 72 hour kit is your lifeline until help arrives. Because you do not know where you will be when an emergency or disaster occurs, you will want to have a kit at home, in the car and at work or school. Each member of your family needs a kit. Also do not forget about your furry family members as well.

a.) Build your own kit: follow the guidelines on FEMA and American Red Cross websites

<http://www.ready.gov/build-a-kit>

<http://www.redcross.org/prepare/location/home-family/get-kit>

<http://www.palmspringsca.gov/index.aspx?page=1081>

b.) Buy a preassembled kit but check the contents of a preassembled kit against the list developed by FEMA and the American Red Cross! If your purchased kit does not have it—buy it and add it!

2. What kind of container do I put my supplies in and where do I store my kit?

There are several options for how to store your 72-hour kit. If the kit is for your car or work/school kit, you may want to consider a container that is easy to carry—like a back pack or duffle bag. At home, depending on your household, you may have many more supplies in your kit. You could use a garbage can on wheels or plastic bins to store your kit. If you are asked to evacuate, will your kit fit in your car? Consider containers for your kit that you can lift by yourself and WILL fit in your car! If you are asked to evacuate, will you have gas in your car? Make it a practice to fill your vehicle with gas when it gets between a quarter and half a tank.

At home, store your kit where it is easy to get at. This could be in the hall closet, under a bed or in the garage. Sometimes, a kit can be stored in an outbuilding on your property. Make sure everyone in the household knows where the kit is stored.

3. What about my personal documents?

The Step Two module walked you through preparing your personal grab and go kit for important documents. Keep your personal documents in a waterproof pouch and store it in your 72-hour kit.

4. Personalize your kit for each family member. Also consider unique needs of each person.

Whether you buy or build your own 72 hour kit, be sure to personalize it for every family member. Include special items for each person: copies of prescriptions, 14-days of prescription medication, eye glasses or contact lenses, hearing aid batteries, and any other unique needs. When you need to use this kit, it will be VERY nice to have a book, a deck of cards or something for you to do as you pass the time.

5. Inspect your 72-hour kit at least twice a year.

Periodically check your 72-hour kit to make sure expired items are rotated out. Make it a practice to complete this inspection at the same time you change your clocks and batteries in your smoke detectors during the Fall and Spring. Check clothing in your kit. Is it seasonally appropriate? Check expiration dates on batteries, food and water or any other date sensitive item you may have in your kit.

6. Plan for pets.

If you have pets at home, create a 72-hour kit for them such as food, water, a dish for their food and water, and a copy of their shot records. Make sure your pet has a crate for sleeping or to contain your pet if needed. Also, do not forget to microchip your pets. Please check out Step 7 for more information.

Emergency services professionals tell us it may take three days for them to get to us in an emergency. Remembering Haiti earthquake, Hurricane Sandy and Katrina—we know it could take much longer if the disaster affects a large number of people! Preparing our own household is important!

Let's get ready Palm Springs! Step by step, house by house, neighborhood by neighborhood!