



Go-Bag Builder: Starter to Advanced

If you had to leave home in 15 minutes, what would you grab? Build a go-bag in stages. Start with the Starter kit and add on as you can.

A go-bag (also called a “bug-out bag” or evacuation kit) holds what you need to get through about **3 days away from home**. The American Red Cross recommends a 3-day supply of food and water for evacuation.

About the three levels: Starter, Intermediate and Advanced are **building stages**, not shopping lists. Build one level at a time, and remember many items may already be in your home. **See current deals at thepoplarreport.com/deals/**

LEVEL 1 · STARTER KIT

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ Water: 3 days per person (1 gallon/day) at home by the door; bottles or pouches in the bag | ☐ Moist towelettes, garbage bags, plastic ties |
| ☐ 3 days of ready-to-eat food: bars, nut butter, crackers | ☐ Phone charging cable |
| ☐ Flashlight + spare batteries | ☐ Copies of ID and key documents in a zip-top bag |
| ☐ Whistle to signal for help | ☐ Small bills in cash |
| ☐ Emergency (Mylar) blanket for each person | ☐ Paper list of phone numbers |
| ☐ Basic first aid kit | ☐ Prescription medicines (7-day supply) and glasses |
| ☐ Dust masks | ☐ Any sturdy backpack you already own |

LEVEL 2 · INTERMEDIATE KIT

Everything in the Starter kit, plus:

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|---|--|
| ☐ Battery or hand-crank radio (NOAA Weather Radio) | ☐ Rain poncho and work gloves |
| ☐ Portable water filter (pair it with boiling or bleach; see handout #4) | ☐ Hygiene kit: soap, toothbrush, toilet paper, hand sanitizer |
| ☐ Power bank, fully charged | ☐ Change of clothes, warm socks, sturdy shoes |
| ☐ More complete first aid kit (see handout #6) | ☐ Matches in a waterproof container |
| ☐ Multi-tool | ☐ Notepad and pencil |



LEVEL 3 · ADVANCED KIT

Everything in the Starter and Intermediate kits, plus:

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|--|---|
| ☐ Quality, comfortable backpack sized to what you can carry | ☐ Wrench or pliers to turn off utilities |
| ☐ Headlamps for each person | ☐ Local paper maps with routes marked |
| ☐ Larger power bank or small solar charger | ☐ Spare eyeglasses; extra hearing-aid batteries |
| ☐ Water purification tablets as a backup | ☐ Tarp or plastic sheeting and duct tape |
| ☐ Sleeping bag or compact sleeping pad | ☐ Extra cash in small bills |
| ☐ Small camp stove + fuel (outdoors only) | ☐ Seasonal gear: hat, gloves, sun hat, sunscreen |

PERSONAL ITEMS ONLY YOU CAN ADD

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ Prescription medicines and a written list of doses | ☐ Pet supplies: food, water, leash or carrier, vet records, recent photo |
| ☐ Medical supplies: glucose meter, inhaler, CPAP supplies, mobility aids | ☐ Spare house and car keys |
| ☐ Copies of insurance cards and photo ID | ☐ Comfort items: a book, cards, reading glasses |

Other needs in my household: _____

CAR-READY HOUSEHOLD BINS

One go-bag per person, plus a few labeled, lidded bins of shared supplies stacked by the door, labels out. When it's time to go, the **bins go in the car first** (water on the bottom), then the bags on top.

WATER BIN

- ☐ Jugs: 1 gallon per person per day, 3 days
- ☐ Filter or purification tablets
- ☐ Cups and a collapsible jug

FOOD & COOKING BIN

- ☐ 3 days of no-cook, shelf-stable food
- ☐ Manual can opener, utensils, plates
- ☐ Camp stove + fuel (outdoors only)

SHELTER & BEDDING BIN

- ☐ Sleeping bag or blanket for each person
- ☐ Sleeping pads or foam mats
- ☐ Tarp, rope and duct tape

TOOLS & POWER BIN

- ☐ Flashlights or lanterns + batteries
- ☐ Car phone charger, jumper cables
- ☐ Multi-tool and work gloves

SANITATION & HYGIENE BIN

- ☐ Toilet paper, wipes, hand sanitizer
- ☐ Bucket + heavy trash bags (toilet)
- ☐ Soap, towels, toothbrushes

PET BIN

- ☐ Food and water for 3+ days, bowls
- ☐ Leash, carrier, waste bags or litter
- ☐ Pet meds, vet records, recent photo



10-MINUTE EXIT CHECKLIST

No bins or go-bags yet? Grab these:

- ☐ **1.** Water, at least a gallon per person if you can carry it, plus water bottles and a filter or purification tablets
- ☐ **2.** Medications and prescriptions, any medical gear and a first aid kit
- ☐ **3.** Wallet, ID, cash in small bills and credit cards
- ☐ **4.** Important papers: insurance, deeds/titles, birth certificates (or photos of them on your phone)
- ☐ **5.** Phones, chargers, car charger and a power bank
- ☐ **6.** Clothing for the weather, plus an extra layer and sturdy shoes
- ☐ **7.** Food that's ready to eat without cooking: bars, nuts, crackers, canned goods with pull tabs
- ☐ **8.** Blankets or sleeping bags
- ☐ **9.** Flashlights or headlamps, with spare batteries
- ☐ **10.** Multi-tool, duct tape and a small battery or hand-crank radio
- ☐ **11.** Toiletries: toothbrushes, toilet paper, wipes, sanitizer
- ☐ **12.** Glasses or contacts, and hearing aids
- ☐ **13.** Pets: leash or carrier, food, bowls and their meds
- ☐ **14.** Keys: house, car and spares
- ☐ **15.** A written list of phone numbers, in case your phone dies

☐ *** Text or call someone and tell them where you're going and which way you'll be going to get there**

Tape this page inside a closet door. When it's time to go, start at the top and work down. When officials say leave, leave, and never drive through floodwater: **turn around, don't drown.**



OUR LEAVE-HOME PLAN

Out-of-area contact: _____ Meeting place if separated: _____

WHERE MY GO-BAGS ARE KEPT

PERSON / BIN	LOCATION	KIT LEVEL	LAST CHECKED

GO-BAG TIPS

- ☐ **Keep it light.** Walk the block with it. Too heavy? Take things out, or use rolling luggage
- ☐ Keep a smaller kit in the car, and one at work if you can
- ☐ **Check the bag twice a year** (an easy habit: when the clocks change): replace food, water, medicine and batteries; update clothes for the season
- ☐ Make sure everyone in the house knows where the bags and bins are
- ☐ **Practice loading the car once:** bins first, bags on top. Keep the gas tank at least half full

MY GO-BAG CHECK LOG

DATE	WHAT I REPLACED	NEXT CHECK

Get the next handout free: join **Watchmen Weekly**, the calm, practical weekly newsletter from The Poplar Report. Sign up at thepoplarreport.com. Share this sheet: thepoplarreport.com/gobag

SOURCES: Ready.gov, "Build a Kit" (ready.gov/kit); American Red Cross, "Survival Kit Supplies" (redcross.org); Ready.gov, "Pets and Animals" (ready.gov/pets); Ready.gov, "Water" (ready.gov/water).

General preparedness information only. It is not medical, legal or financial advice. Always follow instructions from local officials and your own doctor. Prepared October 2026; agency guidance can change, so check the sources above for updates.