

Preparing For An Emergency

The Prudent Thing To Do

Why You Need An Emergency Kit For Your Family

Preparing in advance for a disaster does not mean you are overly anxious. It simply means you want to protect yourself and your family from harm.

Actually, if you think about it, you take precautions every day, not just when a blizzard bears down on you. For instance, you wear your seat belt in the car just in case you are in an accident. You make your children wear a helmet when they ride their bicycles. You keep a first aid kit and a fire extinguisher in your home to battle emergencies. You double check your iron to make sure it is unplugged. And you place a non-slip mat in your bathtub to prevent falls.

This philosophy - to be prepared - is not new. It was etched into the hearts and minds of our ancestors. Your grandparents, in fact, very likely had extra supplies scattered throughout their home: soap and shampoo piled in bathroom closets, bags of onions and potatoes stored in the basement, and canned goods neatly aligned on pantry shelves. They understood the value (and wisdom!) of having a little extra on hand for emergencies.

Since hazards of various types do affect New Hampshire - such as ice storms, tornadoes and floods - it is wise to prepare for the unexpected. This brochure is intended to guide you in creating a 7-day emergency kit for your family.

Why 7 days? Because most homes already have three days of food on shelves and in the refrigerator. Yet disasters can last longer than that. For instance, in 1998, a major ice storm closed roads and knocked out power in some parts of New Hampshire for up to a week.

So "7" just makes sense.

Preparedness In 5 Easy Steps

- 1.** Discuss disasters most likely to happen in your area and their possible impact on you. Hazards in New Hampshire include home fires, severe winter weather, floods, earthquakes, drought and hazardous materials threats. An act of terrorism is also a possibility.
- 2.** Train all family members. Take first aid classes. Learn to use a fire extinguisher and how to turn off utilities in your home.
- 3.** Assemble your emergency supplies into a 7-day preparedness kit. This would include water, food, clothing and medications to last you and your family for an entire week. Store this kit in a convenient place and keep a smaller version of the kit in the trunk of your car just in case you must evacuate the area.
- 4.** Identify people you can contact in-state and out-of-state in an emergency. Give copies to each family member, and include a list in your kit. When local phone service is out, family members can use their out-of-state contacts to relay messages.
- 5.** Maintain your readiness since you never know when a disaster will strike. Review your preparedness plan with your family at least once a year and use that time to replace supplies as needed.



Store a 7-day supply of non-perishable food for an emergency. Although you want to store nutritious food you enjoy eating, try to select food items that require no refrigeration, preparation or cooking, and little or no water. Also, choose foods that are compact and lightweight, such as powdered milk, freeze dried spices and dehydrated fruits.

Food Groups To Store

- Whole Grains and Beans (e.g., canned beans, instant rice, ready-to-eat cereals)
- Dairy Products (e.g., powdered or canned milk, powdered eggs)
- Sweeteners (e.g., honey, sugar, syrup, molasses)
- Fruits, Vegetables and Soups (e.g., beans, beets, carrots, corn, peas, tomato paste, tomato sauce, potatoes, soups)
- Kitchen Staples (e.g., relish, pickles, mayonnaise, peanut butter, jam, salad dressings, nuts, bouillon cubes, crackers, gravy mixes, catsup, soy sauce, steak sauce, vinegar)
- Seasonings, Spices and Flavorings (e.g., garlic powder, onion powder, parsley flakes, salt, pepper, lemon, maple, vanilla extract)
- Meat and Seafood (e.g., dried beef, corned beef, canned chicken or turkey, canned luncheon meats, canned shrimp, salmon or tuna)
- Beverages (e.g., tea bags, instant coffee, hot cocoa, powdered juice, canned beverages)
- Comfort Foods (e.g., snacks, sweets)
- Cooking Staples (e.g., salt, yeast, baking powder, baking soda, shortening, vegetable oil)

Smart Storage Tips

- ✓ Keep all food in a dry, cool spot - a dark area if possible. If you store your food in the basement, stack the items on a raised platform to avoid direct contact with the floor. Platforms include wooden pallets, wire shelving units and metal storage cabinets.
- ✓ Store dry items like grain, beans, rice, dried fruits and powdered products in airtight, waterproof containers. Use new and clean food-grade plastic containers. How do you know if it's food grade? There

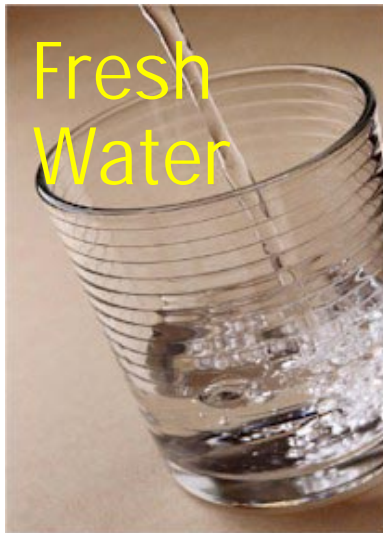
are two marks on the container that will reveal whether it is: Look for the HDPE mark (High-Density Polyethylene) AND a triangle symbol with a 1 or 2 in its center.

- ✓ Inspect all food for signs of spoilage before use, including cans with bulging lids. Throw away any unsafe foods.
- ✓ Use foods before they go bad, and replace the items you eat with fresh supplies. Use a marker to indicate on the label the date when the item was purchased. Place new items at the back of the storage area and use "older" items first.
- ✓ If a disaster occurs and you lose your electricity, eat the food found in your refrigerator first. The items are perishable and will spoil quickly. Keep the refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible to maintain the cold temperature. The refrigerator will keep food safely cold for about 4 hours if it is not opened. If the power remains off longer than that, use your emergency food supply.

7 Makes Sense !

Preparing Your 7-Day Emergency Kit

- Review the checklist in this brochure.
- Gather the supplies that are listed. You may need them if your family is confined at home.
- There are five basics you should stock in your home: water, food, first aid supplies, special emergency items and an evacuation kit.
- Place the supplies you would most likely need for an evacuation in an easy-to-carry container, such as a backpack or duffel bag.



You need about 2 gallons of water per person per day in your family for drinking, cooking, cleaning and personal hygiene needs.

While you probably will not be able to store large quantities of water at home, you should be able to keep several gallons of bottled water on hand.

If you have advance notice that a storm is approaching, it's a good idea to fill your bathtub and sinks with water.

That way you will have additional water available for cooking, cleaning and flushing toilets if the water distribution system is affected.

Smart Storage Tips

- ✓ Store your water in a cool, dark place - it prevents bacteria from growing.

- ✓ Don't store water in plastic containers that once held food! The plastic in these containers often retains the taste and smell of its previous contents, which may contaminate any water you store in it. Also, these containers may burst if you drop them.
- ✓ If your water comes from an untreated source such as a well, lake or river, purify it before storing it. You can buy water purification tablets from a store to do this, or you can use an eyedropper to add 16 drops of liquid chlorine bleach to each gallon of water. Sodium hypochlorite (5.25% to 6% concentration) should be the only active ingredient in the bleach.
- ✓ Use a label and marker to record the date the container was filled. When opening water containers, follow the "first in, first out" adage. Hence, you would use water stored on August 11, 2001 before water stored on January 15, 2002.
- ✓ When determining your water needs, don't forget your pets! They need clean drinking water too.



First Aid Kit

Assemble a first aid kit for your home and one for each vehicle. You can either buy a universal first aid kit at a drug store, or assemble individual items that meet your needs. Regardless, store everything in a clean, waterproof container, which itself should be kept in a dry and easily accessible location. Check the kit's contents each year for leaks and damage, and replace any expired products.

When you buy first aid items, look for quality and cleanliness. Pay attention to the expiration dates of ointments, creams and disinfectants, which are stamped on the product itself.

Keep prescriptions filled, up-to-date and safely stored. Remember that many drugs need to be stored at a specific temperature and humidity, otherwise their effectiveness is decreased. Discuss with your pharmacist or physician the storage limitations for any medication you intend to keep on-hand.

Suggested First Aid Supplies

- First aid book
- Latex gloves
- Antiseptic towelettes
- Hydrogen peroxide
- Sterile wound closure strips
- Butterfly bandages
- Band-Aids (assorted sizes)
- Gauze pads (assorted sizes)
- Gauze rolls (2- and 3-inch)
- Adhesive tape (assorted types and sizes)
- Eye pads
- Moleskin patch
- Elastic bandages
- Tourniquet
- Antibiotic ointment

First Aid Kit (continued)

- Lubricating jelly
 - Tongue depressors
 - Sunscreen
 - Antibacterial soap
 - Bandage scissors
 - Aspirin
 - Tweezers
 - Needle
 - Safety pins (assorted sizes)
 - Pencil and paper
 - Syrup of Ipecac
 - Activated charcoal
 - Anti-diarrhea medications
- Special Baby Items**
- Baby formula
 - Diapers and wipes
 - Bottles
 - Powdered milk
 - Medications (including anti-diarrhea medications)
- Special Adult And Elderly Items**
- Medications/Dietary items
 - Denture supplies
 - Contact lens supplies
 - Extra set of eyeglasses
 - Feminine hygiene products

Optional items to consider adding to this kit, include: thermometer, fingernail clippers, antacids, penlight, burn ointment and instant cold packs.



It's a good idea to have a so-called "grab bag" ready to go in case you ever need to evacuate your home in an emergency. The backpack or duffel bag should contain items you may need for several days, such as food, water and a complete change of clothing and footwear (appropriate for the season) for each person in your family. Other suggested items include:

Evacuation Kit

- Cooking utensils
 - Mess kit (or paper plates and cups and plastic utensils)
 - Can opener (non-electric)
 - Radio
 - Flashlights
 - Extra batteries
 - Cyalume chemical light sticks
 - Candles and matches
 - Cash and change
 - Cooking stove and fuel
 - Soap (dishwashing, bath)
 - Towels
- Cooking thermometer
 - Toothbrush and toothpaste
 - Water purification tablets
 - Fire extinguisher
 - Toilet paper
 - Sewing supplies
 - Pocketknife
 - Hand ax
 - Camp shovel
 - Tools and work gloves
 - Duct tape
 - Rope and twine
 - Dust masks
 - Blankets or sleeping bags
 - Emergency reflective blanket

Safety Tips!

- ✓ Keep your vehicle's gas tank filled above halfway. In an emergency you may not be able to get fuel.
- ✓ Do not use cooking or heating items indoors that burn kerosene, propane or white gas. They can create carbon monoxide, a lethal odorless gas.
- ✓ Store fuel containers outside in a shed or garage. Do not leave containers outdoors in direct sunlight.
- ✓ Keep burning candles and lamps out of the reach of children and pets.
- ✓ Have several fire extinguishers in your home, and store them where they can be quickly reached. Check them twice a year to ensure they are charged.
- ✓ Install battery-powered smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors in your home.
- ✓ Have chemical "extinguisher sticks" on hand to snuff out a chimney fire if one begins. To reduce the risk of a chimney fire, have your flue cleaned each year.
- ✓ With regard to cooked and prepared food items, keep hot foods **HOT** and cold foods **COLD!** Use refrigerated, cooked leftovers within 4 days.
- ✓ Wash your hands before and after handling any raw food item. And remember to sanitize the counter or cutting board often.

This brochure was produced in cooperation with the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services, New Hampshire Office of Emergency Management, University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension, New Hampshire Chapters of the American Red Cross, Salvation Army, and the New Hampshire Grocers Association. For more information about emergency preparedness, visit the following websites:

www.fema.gov
www.redcross.org
www.nhoem.state.nh.us