

Go-Bags & 72-Hour Kits

A pre-packed kit of essentials, ready to grab, so a household isn't scrambling to gather things during an actual emergency. This guide isn't tied to one manual chapter, because a real kit is really just Water & Food, Medical Care, and a few other chapters, repacked into one bag instead of spread across the house.

Same kit, different names

"Go-bag" and "72-hour kit" describe the same core idea, and the contents below work for either. The difference is emphasis, not substance:

- **72-hour kit** is the term most familiar in Utah specifically, taught for decades through LDS Church emergency-preparedness lessons and the state's own "Be Ready Utah" campaign. It anchors to a fixed duration: the classic emergency-management baseline that a household should be able to get through the first three days on its own before outside help reliably arrives. Even Be Ready Utah's own current guidance has moved past a strict three-day window, now recommending "three days, five days, or longer" and treating the exact "72-hour" figure as somewhat dated, though the name has stuck around in everyday use.
- **Go-bag** is the more nationally-used term, and it emphasizes grab-and-go speed and portability over any fixed time window. It's also used more loosely: this site's own Document Go-Bag guide is a go-bag too, just a narrower one scoped to paperwork alone, not the full kit below.

Two related terms worth knowing, since they show up elsewhere and aren't quite the same thing: a **bug-out bag** implies leaving home entirely for an extended stay somewhere else, so it's typically bigger and more self-sufficient than the kit below. A **get-home bag** is kept in the car or at work, sized only to get you home from wherever you happen to be, not to shelter you once you're there.

What actually goes in it

Category	What to pack	Notes
Water	1 gallon/person/day, at least 3 days	See Water Purification for making more once the kit runs dry
Food	3-5 days, non-perishable, no-cook or minimal-prep	Rotate it into your regular pantry use so it's never actually expired when you need it
Health	First aid kit, a few days of any prescription meds, spare glasses or contacts, basic OTC medication	See Medical Kits: What Actually Goes in Each One for exactly what belongs in this bag's kit, and First Aid Basics for how to use it
Light & power	Flashlight or headlamp, extra batteries, a NOAA weather radio, phone charger or power bank	See Family Communication Plan & Emergency Radio
Tools	Multitool, whistle, dust mask, duct tape, plastic sheeting, a wrench or pliers for utility shutoff, manual can opener	The whistle and mask are the two items households most often skip
Warmth & clothing	A full change of clothes, sturdy closed-toe shoes, an emergency blanket or lightweight sleeping bag	Broken-in, not brand new; see Physical Readiness
Sanitation	Wet wipes, a couple of small garbage bags, hand sanitizer, a little toilet paper	Doesn't need to be a full kit, just enough to get through a few days
Documents & cash	Copies of ID, insurance, and medical records; small-bill cash	The real version of this belongs in its own fireproof kit; see Document Go-Bag & Digital Backup and Financial Preparedness Basics
Household-specific	Infant formula or diapers, pet food and a leash, backup power for a medical device	See Pet Evacuation Basics and Backup Power for Medical Equipment

Size it to how it'll actually be carried

One go-bag per person for personal items (clothes, meds, documents), plus a shared household bag or tote for the bulkier items that don't need duplicating, water jugs, tools, a larger first aid kit. If there's any real chance of walking with it, the bag itself matters: a properly fitted backpack that carries weight on the hips,

not a plastic tote or a bag that was never actually tried on loaded. See Physical Readiness for what a well-fitted pack actually looks like.

Keep a separate, smaller version in each vehicle too, sized as a get-home bag rather than a full kit: your car is one of the more likely places to actually be stranded away from home, and a kit that only lives in the garage closet doesn't help there.

Check it twice a year, not once and done

Water and food need rotating, batteries corrode, kids outgrow clothing and shoe sizes, and prescriptions expire. Pair the check with something already on the calendar, a clock change, a birthday, so it actually happens instead of becoming the thing that was "ready" three years ago.

Sources

- Ready.gov, "Build A Kit": Ready.gov
- Be Ready Utah, "Get a Kit: Family": Be Ready Utah