

# Be Prepared and Informed – September is National Preparedness Month



Wildfires, flashfloods and winds have been plentiful around Utah this year. Other parts of the nation and world face hurricanes, tropical storms and earthquakes. Watching the news and seeing others struggle, along with the unknown in our areas, can add to a sense of unrest. Since September is National Preparedness Month, now is a great time to evaluate, or begin, your preparedness supplies and plans for the future.

The website: <https://www.ready.gov/build-a-kit> has an option to download a printable Basic Disaster Supplies Kit. The list also has suggestions for “unique needs,” that include

pets and elderly adults.

Recommendations for the Basic Disaster Supplies Kit include:

- Water – one gallon per person per day for at least 3 days for drinking and sanitation
- Food – at least a 3-day supply of non-perishable food
- Battery-powered or hand crank radio and NOAA Weather Radio with tone alert
- Flashlight
- First aid kit
- Extra batteries
- Whistle to signal for help
- Dust mask to help filter contaminated air as well as plastic sheeting and duct tape to seal off windows and doors if sheltering in place
- Moist towelettes, garbage bags and plastic ties for personal sanitation
- Wrench or pliers to turn off utilities such as natural gas
- Manual can opener for food
- Local maps
- Cell phone with chargers and a backup battery

Other items are important, but adding size and weight to the kit may require additional portable totes or back packs. Items to consider are pet supplies, changes of clothing, sleeping bags, cash and prescription medications. A complete list is found at the link above.

Remember that assembling a kit is not a one-and-done task; it requires regular maintenance. You may need to place a re-occurring date on the calendar to update and replenish the

kit. Canned and packaged food will expire, batteries will lose power, and you may think of things to add or adapt to better suit your needs and situation.

The link also describes where to store your kits—namely in three locations:

- **Home:** Keep the kits in a designated place and have them ready in case you have to leave quickly. Make sure all family members know where they are kept. Consider including a list of pre-determined additional valuables that can be located and loaded in 5-15 minutes if there is time, space and transportation available. The list can be taped to the container top or stored in a pocket of the backpack.
  
- **Work:** Be prepared to shelter at work for at least 24 hours. Your work kit should include food, water and other necessities like medicines, as well as comfortable walking shoes stored in a “grab and go” container in a place that is easily accessed.
  
- **Vehicle:** In case you are stranded, keep a kit of emergency supplies in your vehicle. It can be similar to your work kit, but you may also want to include some form of shelter and source of warmth should you need to leave your car.

The key to facing potential disasters is being informed and prepared. The suggestions for supplies listed here are important and can reduce the fear of being hungry, cold or injured. However, also take courage in the power of the human

spirit regularly demonstrated among our neighbors, families, friends and people across the nation.

By: Kathleen Riggs, Utah State University Extension family and consumer sciences professor, [kathleen.riggs@usu.edu](mailto:kathleen.riggs@usu.edu) or 435-586-8132