

Emergency Kits and Go-Bags: Prepare Your Community

Every religious organization should be prepared for the possibility of disaster: Long before calamity strikes, assemble emergency resources in anticipation of the needs of people who are likely to be on your property when a problem might occur. Take these steps:

1. **Make a list of the scenarios that could require emergency provisions.** You might include disease, violence, or natural disasters prevalent in your region.
2. **Think about the particular needs of people likely to be on your property if a disaster were to occur.** For example, store extra batteries for a staff member's hearing aid.
3. **Store the emergency resources in a readily accessible area on your property.** And be sure to let people know where they can find them.

Here are some items you'll probably want to include among provisions for a potential emergency:

- **Important records and scans**

Prepare for the loss of vital documents by taking images of them. Use either a scanning app on your phone or scanning equipment that attaches to your computer. Transfer the files to a secure cloud account. Your insurance policy should be among these digital documents.

- **Flashlights, batteries, and chargers**

Most smartphones have flashlights, but pack a separate high-powered flashlight, too. Add extra batteries for the flashlight, and for any other appliances or equipment you've deemed important in an emergency. Gather and store chargers for phones and laptops, and include battery packs for phones.

- **Food and water supply for three to five days**

Calculate the largest number of people likely to shelter in place on your property, and prepare a store of food and water that can accommodate them. Non-perishable food items such as protein bars, canned vegetables and beans, and dried fruit and nuts are good choices. Make sure to collect food that will not cause allergic reactions among the people who are likely to consume it.

- **First aid kit** – A well-resourced kit includes

- alcohol wipes
- antibiotic ointment, hydrocortisone (anti-inflammatory) ointment
- bandages, gauze, and tape
- chemical cold and warm packs
- disposable gloves
- pain relievers
- scissors
- thermometer
- tweezers

- **Essential tools**
At a minimum, include a manual can opener, a wrench, and pliers
- **Thick blankets or sleeping bags**
- **Matches and fire extinguisher**
- **Other items** – You may want to create individual kits with
 - whistle for signaling for help
 - moist wipes
 - garbage bags
 - dust masks, plastic sheeting, and duct tape, which can be especially useful in regions prone to dust and wind storms, or volcanic eruptions
 - maps, especially those that show evacuation routes for your area
 - paper and pencils

Go-Bag Preparation

A compact version of your emergency provisions should be ready for you to take along in case of evacuation orders. Keep necessities in a duffel bag (or identify which items are most important and portable), so that a go-bag can be packed expediently.

Auto Emergency Kit

Keep small emergency kits in your religious organization's vehicles, and include these items:

- flares or other means for signaling distress
- cat litter or sand to help the vehicle gain traction on ice
- tire inflation kit or supplies for tire changes
- multipurpose tool
- jumper cables

Although it takes some effort to gather emergency materials, Church Insurance believes it's well worth the time for the peace of mind it can bring. If your organization is ever affected by disaster, you will be grateful that you are prepared.