



**Taking it one step  
at a time.**

# How Long Can You Survive?



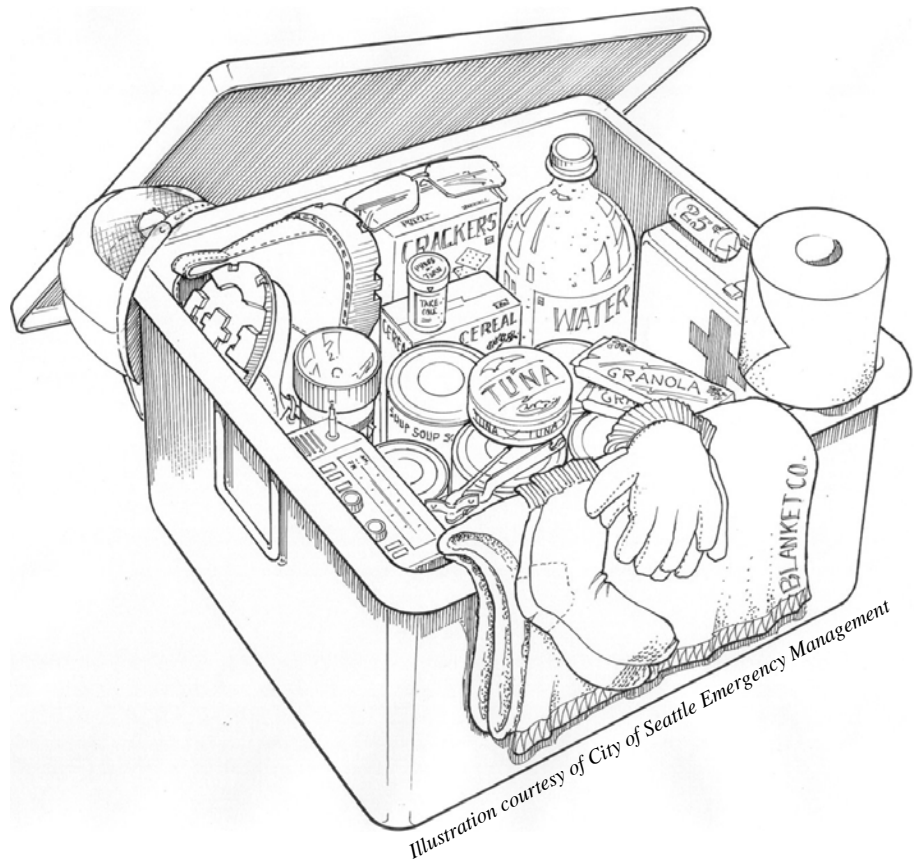
## ***Preparing an emergency kit for yourself and your family***

*Due to overwhelming need elsewhere or lack of access to your neighborhood, you may be on your own for several days after a major disaster. A well-stocked kit can help you survive and be more comfortable during a major event such as an earthquake, flooding, power outages, etc.*

***What will you need to survive for a week? Two weeks?***

## ***Storing Emergency Supplies***

***Layer supplies*** and keep them together in a container such as a sturdy plastic bin or plastic garbage can with wheels. For larger kits, you can stack bins or use two garbage cans. Rotate food and medications every year; bottled water can last longer. Children's clothing may need to be replaced more frequently. ***Keep items you might need immediately, like a flashlight or first aid kit, on top.***



*Illustration courtesy of City of Seattle Emergency Management*

- ***Start with what you already have.*** If you're a camper or backpacker, you've got a head start. Your cook stove, tent, and other gear can double as emergency supplies.
- ***Think about what you literally can't survive without.*** Medications? Home oxygen? Powered medical equipment? Mobility aids?
- ***Stock essential supplies for the long haul.*** Even if you can obtain food and water within 3-4 days, medications or medical supplies may be unavailable for a week or more. Consider one week's worth of essential medications and oxygen bottles as a minimum; two weeks' worth is even better.
- ***Choose a cool, dark location*** for storage, such as a closet or "safety corner" in the garage. If you live in an apartment or have limited space, be innovative. Other possible storage locations include under the bed, under stairways, or even in a large box or plastic tub that can be covered with a tablecloth and used as an end table.

# Being prepared is one more form of insurance

## **FOOD:**

- Use canned or foil-pouch foods for easy storage and long shelf life. Choose ready-to-eat meat, fruits, and vegetables that your family likes. (A disaster is not the time to try new menu items: you're under enough stress!) Keep food fresh by checking dates and rotating items every year.
- Also recommended are canned or dried juice mixes; powdered or canned milk; high energy food (peanut butter, jelly, crackers, unsalted nuts, and trail mix); cereals, and rice.
- Store foods in packaging sizes appropriate to your needs to prevent having to store leftovers.
- Don't forget your pets. Store canned and dry pet food along with an animal carrier, extra collar and leash, medications, and a favorite toy. Check out options for boarding your pet *in advance*: pets are not allowed in most shelters.
- **Pack a manual can opener (and a spare)**, cooking and eating utensils, and basic food seasonings.

## **WATER:**

- Store 3-4 days of water for each family member. One gallon per person per day is recommended for cooking, drinking, and washing. Remember to include water for your pets. Write the date on the water containers and rotate them roughly every two years to maintain a fresher taste (commercially bottled water has a long shelf-life, depending on the container).
- Learn how to remove the water from your water heater just in case you need it. Be sure to turn off the gas or electricity to the tank before draining water for emergency use.
- Purify water by boiling it for 5-10 minutes or by adding drops of household bleach containing 6.0% hypochlorite (8 drops of bleach per gallon of water; use 16 drops if water is cloudy). Water purification tablets or a filter system such as those designed for campers and backpackers also work.

## **CRITICAL DOCUMENTS:**

- Keep copies of critical documents, including prescriptions, vaccination records, birth certificates, insurance policies, and passwords. Send a set to a trusted friend or relative living outside the region.

## **OTHER ITEMS:**

- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> First aid kit                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Fire extinguisher            | <input type="checkbox"/> Ax, shovel, broom            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Blankets                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Trash bags                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Pliers, wrench, pry bar      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Battery-powered clock         | <input type="checkbox"/> Convenience medications      | <input type="checkbox"/> Extra can opener             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Candles                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Extra eye glasses            | <input type="checkbox"/> Household bleach             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Flashlights                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Hearing aid batteries        | <input type="checkbox"/> Map of area                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Battery-powered radio         | <input type="checkbox"/> Cook stove with fuel         | <input type="checkbox"/> Diapers, baby formula        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Extra batteries               | <input type="checkbox"/> Heavy gloves                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Hygiene products             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Waterproof matches            | <input type="checkbox"/> Duct tape                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Warm clothes for each person |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cash (quarters & small bills) | <input type="checkbox"/> Sturdy shoes for each person |   |

## **GET YOUR NEIGHBORS INVOLVED:**

- Working through your neighborhood or homeowners' association, arrange to share more expensive equipment items such as chain saws, generators, and 4-wheel drive vehicles. (If there is no formal organization in your neighborhood, start with your immediate neighbors and expand from there.)
- Start a "buddy squad" to check on elderly or disabled neighbors during and after major events, such as extended power outages or winter storms. Also check on children who may be home alone.
- Turn your organizing efforts into a neighborhood social event, such as a block party. (Draw them in with food, then make your presentation!)