

What are the differences between a disaster kit, emergency kit, first aid kit, and survival kits?

(Short Title: What are the Differences between Disaster kits?)

Oftentimes these names are used interchangeably depending on the manufacturer's marketing, but there are some notable differences for no two kits are exactly alike.

The **First Aid Kit** is the most clearly distinguished among all the other kits; but there are significant differences among first aid kits themselves. The main purpose of a first aid kit is to provide short-term medical assistance until the "patient" can get to a hospital or a place where his needs can be addressed completely. The simplest kind of first aid kit (used for a very light outing a short distance from help) contains items for small bruises, burns, and twisted ankles. This kit would have bandages, antiseptic lotion or cream, scissors, gauze, and maybe sun-tan lotion, bee sting ointment, and poison ivy anti-itch cream.

The longer the stay out of doors, the further away from help, and the more people involved require larger quantities of supplies. If there is an increased chance of danger and severe injuries, the simple first aid kit is expanded to include splints, thermometer, spoon, tourniquets, aspirin, cold packs, adhesive bandages, cotton balls and swabs, sterile dressing, tape and elastic wrap, personal locator beacon, and a few other items to handle distinct medical emergencies. This kind of kit is called an **Emergency Medical Kit**.

At the upper end of the scale, when massive injuries might arise, severe and deadly harm to one or more people, and where emergency medical help is needed but not available, **trauma kits, medical kits (with rudimentary surgical tools), or field medical kits** are highly recommended. Long term expeditions into remote locations are in themselves fraught with unexpected events; one or more of the leaders of the group should be trained in emergency field medicine. Since these kits usually contain specialty medical supplies, it is best to buy your trauma, medical, or field medical kits from a specialty dealer.

Survival Kits or Wilderness Survival Kits, to be used in conjunction with a First Aid or Medical Kit, are designed to hold you over until you are rescued from an untenable situation. A Survival Kit might be used in situations where you are stranded somewhere, lost, suffered an injury rendering you immobile, or just too tired to carry on. For this reason, most good survival kits contain food and supplies to keep you alive for 1-2 weeks. Some of these kits come with thermal blankets, waterproof poncho, MREs, water, compass, cell phone, GPS, flashlight, 1+ firestarters, PLBeacons, a knife, energy bars, and manual can opener. Survival Kits that you buy in a store vary a great deal so it is a really good idea to check them out thoroughly to make sure the kit you are buying has ALL of these items. You may have to buy a few of these items separately if not included.

A **Wilderness Survival Kit** might contain an axe, a weapon, rope, sanitation supplies, kindling, small camp stove, candle, duct tape, plastic bags, (tools-wrench, saw, screwdriver, hammer) and battery powered radio, in addition to the **Basic Survival Kit** items above,

The most extensive "preparedness" kit to our way of thinking, are **Disaster Kits**. If a disaster strikes, in its fullest meaning, you stand to lose everything. Think Hurricanes, Earthquakes, Tidal Waves, etc. Therefore, **disaster kits are those things you need to start life over with**. Starting life over with nothing is the ultimate tragedy. The determining factors are your own resilience or will-power to overcome major loss and regain a sense of purpose and place in your

life. So, to put it bluntly you can never be completely prepared for a disaster. Your own life experiences and background will be the best judge on what you will need to take out of a disaster-area.

That said, the essential items for life most probably could be compartmentalized into 5 sections or parts; 1) Health & Well Being, 2) Safety & Security, 3) Shelter & Clothing, 4) Communication & Transportation, 5) Documentation, Plans, Personal Effects, & Identification.

If you believe that you or your close ones would be able to carry 5 large cargo bags or the equivalent easily out of a disaster-area into a safer place, then here's our extended list of Disaster Kits Items. Pack enough of these items for yourself and those traveling with you for 1 month. The items listed in each category are prioritized according to our experts. If you believe that carrying all this stuff around with you for a month is impossible; then grab what you can. Remember, the key factor is your willingness or motivation in starting life over.

A. Health & Well-Being

1. Personal Hygiene Articles
2. Medicines
3. Bath and Grooming Supplies (tweezers, small scissors, toe-nail clippers, etc)
4. Cosmetics
5. Toothbrush, Soap, Towels
6. Toilet paper & Facial Tissue (Kleenex)
7. Canned, Boxed or Dried Foods
8. MRE's & or Gorp.
9. Fruit & Fruit Juice (hopefully very fresh)
10. Water Jugs filled with water
11. Cooking & Eating Tools & Supplies (small pots & pans, utensils, paper plates, etc)
- 12. Emergency Medical Kit or Trauma Kit**
13. First Aid Book
14. Watches
15. Sanitation Supplies
16. Jewelry (don't over do it; a few items will do)
17. Anti-diarrhea supplies
18. Assistive Living Devices (for the physically or mentally impaired), if applicable, and if portable.
19. Garbage Bags
20. Energy Bars &/or Chocolate Bars
21. Gum, Candy, Cigarettes

B. Safety & Security

1. Keys
2. Flashlight(s)
3. Cash (Paper & Coin) from \$100 to 200 dollars at the most for immediate needs.
4. Matches (in waterproof tin)
5. Weapon
6. Rope
7. Knife
8. Firestarters, Lighters
9. Candle
10. Wallets & Purses if readily available)
11. Tools (see above)
12. Duct tape

C. Shelter & Clothing

1. Tent or emergency shelter
 2. Sleeping Bags &/or Blankets
 3. Waterproof Drop Cloth, Plastic, Tarp, or Canvas
 4. Enough Clothing for 1 month out of doors, or 2 weeks without a washing machine, etc.
 5. Clothing should be appropriate for 2 seasons (i.e. Fall-Winter, or Spring-Summer) and in excellent condition.
 6. Having waterproof clothing and one heavy coat per person is recommended in case of emergencies (i.e.- that freak thunderstorm that appears out of nowhere, or if someone comes down with the chills)
- D. Communication & Transportation
1. GPS
 2. Personal Locator Beacons
 3. A Deluxe Battery Powered 2-Way, Marine, Emergency Radio
 4. Cell Phones
 5. Storage Containers, Backpacks, Suitcases (to put your stuff into & carry it.)
 6. Disaster proof mode of transportation- it depends on the situation or impending situation, but have an escape route and a back-up plan for getting out in a hurry, and a way of implementing it.
 7. Lap-top computer with battery back-up and Wi FI capability.
- E. Documentation, Plans, Personal Effects, Identification
- This section is fairly obvious, but many people seem to forget these important items.
1. Driver's License
 2. Credit Cards
 3. Other Identification Cards- Medic Alert Cards, Immigration Papers if applicable,
 4. List of Important Addresses & Phone Numbers (next of kin etc.) If you are in shock, or cannot talk, disaster personnel will need to see the list, so they can make "the phone call."
 5. Calendars, Datebook, Business Planners, Maps, List of Medications & Dosage Schedule,
 6. The Bible or inspirational book
 7. Dog tags
 8. Work Place Information
 9. Insurance papers, particularly life insurance and homeowners insurance.
 10. Writing paper, & pens & pencils
 11. Briefcase
 12. Other Basic Personal Effects that describe who you are and have meaning for you.

As we indicated above, there isn't anyway to be completely prepared for a disaster. If you or a family member needs to bring that special stuffed teddy bear or that one keep-sake, if it is small and can be carried, bring it along. Moreover, if you have pets, bring enough pet food, pet supplies, leash, bed, hygiene, and grooming supplies for your pets. However, if you have to scrimp on one of your children's supplies in order to satisfy the pet(s), we would advise against it. Nevertheless, that's your decision.