



## WHAT'S A GO-BAG, WHY YOU NEED ONE, AND WHAT NEEDS TO BE IN YOURS?

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### ***What is a Go-Bag?***

A Go-Bag is an emergency-preparedness bag that you pack in advance of an emergency to help you and your family and pets survive a disaster. These bags are useful in situations such as earthquakes, floods or wildfires that may require a quick evacuation or may prevent you from being able to access your home in a disaster. Your emergency kit should be self-contained in one easily-managed bag and should contain enough nonperishable food and potable water for you, your family and pets to last *72 hours*. Having a Go-Bag at home and one in your office or car will ensure you will have what you need when you least expect it.

### ***Why should you have a Go-Bag?***

As we've seen many times in the past, disaster can strike at any time. Residents of wildland/urban interface (WUI) areas of Santa Cruz County are especially vulnerable to disasters such as catastrophic wildfires. As residents in the 2008 Trabing Fire sadly learned, one is not always able to get home when disaster strikes, due to road congestion. Without proper preparation, you leave yourself and your loved ones vulnerable. Preparedness is the key to survival in these disaster situations. Preparing a comprehensive Go-Bag to keep ready at your home, office and in your automobile should be a top priority for anyone who is interested in being ready when the next disaster strikes.

### ***What should be in your Go-Bag?***

There are a few basic things that the body needs to survive, no matter the situation, including:

- Air: You can survive for 3 minutes without air.
- Shelter: You can survive for 3 hours without shelter in a harsh environment.
- Water: You can survive for 3 days without water.
- Food: You can survive 3 weeks without food.

However, other things that should be considered during your Go-Bag planning include:

- Clothing
- Defense
- Heat/Warmth
- Lighting
- First Aid
- Navigation Tools (keep in mind that cellphones may not work at all in disasters)
- Multi-purpose Tools
- Miscellaneous

CalFire recommends that you put together your emergency supply kit long before a wildfire or other disaster occurs and keep it easily accessible so you can take it with you when you have to evacuate, possibly in the middle of the night. Plan on having to be away from your home for an extended period of time, in case damages are extensive and local law enforcement prohibits re-entry to your neighborhood. Each person should have a readily accessible emergency supply kit. Backpacks work great for storing these items (except food and water) and are quick to grab. Storing food and water in a tub or chest on wheels will make it easier to transport. Keep it light enough to be able to lift it into your car or carry it for an extended distance in case roadways are blocked. Also, remember that if you live in the WUI, you may have issues with San Francisco dusky-footed woodrats and other wildlife, so be sure to keep your food in secure containers. Check it from time to time to ensure it is safe and fresh.

***GO-BAG CHECKLIST:***

- Three-day supply of non-perishable food and three gallons of water per person (a water filter can come in very handy if you live in the mountains)
- Map marked with at least two evacuation routes that you and your family are familiar with and can navigate in darkness or poor-visibility conditions (your GPS or cell phone may not be working)
- Prescriptions or special medications (ask your doctor for an emergency supply of your non-perishable medications you can store in your go-bag)
- Change of clothing and sturdy shoes (cotton or wool clothing are best if you are evacuating from a wildland fire, however cotton should be avoided during winter storm-related evacuations due to its poor insulating and moisture wicking properties)
- Extra eyeglasses or contact lenses
- An extra set of car keys, credit cards, cash or traveler's checks (ATM's may not work and stores may be without any means to accept credit / debit cards for payment. Small bills are best, such as \$1s, \$5s, \$10s and \$20s.)
- Emergency first aid kit
- Flashlight and spare and/or rechargeable batteries (or head lamp to keep your hands free for other tasks)
- Battery-powered radio with spare and/or rechargeable batteries (preferably one that receives NOAA weather and emergency alerts...remember that your car has a radio too)
- Sanitation supplies (including hand sanitizer)

- Copies of important documents (birth certificates, passports, etc.) Preload these items onto an encrypted memory stick for easy and lightweight transportation
- Current list of family contact numbers, in case your cellphone and computer do not work. Designate a central contact person that is out of the area who can be the message center for your family and friends to contact in a disaster.
- Don't forget pet food, medications, transport carriers and water!

#### **ITEMS TO TAKE IF TIME ALLOWS:**

- Easily carried valuables such as jewelry
- Family photos and other irreplaceable items
- 2-way radios
- Personal computer information on hard drives and disks
- Chargers for cell phones, laptops, etc.

In order to be extra prepared, it can be beneficial to scan important documents and photos, save them on an external hard drive or other data storage media and keep them off site in a secure location.

*Always keep a sturdy pair of shoes and a flashlight near your bed in case of a sudden evacuation at night.*

You can find more information at the websites listed below.

- The United States Department of Homeland Security: [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov)
- CAL FIRE: [www.readyforwildfire.org](http://www.readyforwildfire.org)

#### **ABOUT FIRE SAFE COUNCIL OF SANTA CRUZ COUNTY**

Fire Safe Santa Cruz County (FSSCC) was formed in September 2016 as a nonprofit corporation, 501(c)(3), in the state of California through collaboration between local fire safe councils, CAL FIRE, local government, water districts, non-profit organizations, industry, and the Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County (RCD). FSSCC is overseen by a Board of Directors. The RCD temporarily serves as the group's fiscal and administrative sponsor, while we build capacity.

#### **OUR MISSION**

The purpose of Fire Safe Santa Cruz County (FSSCC) is to educate and mobilize the people of Santa Cruz County to protect their community, homes, and environment from wildfire.