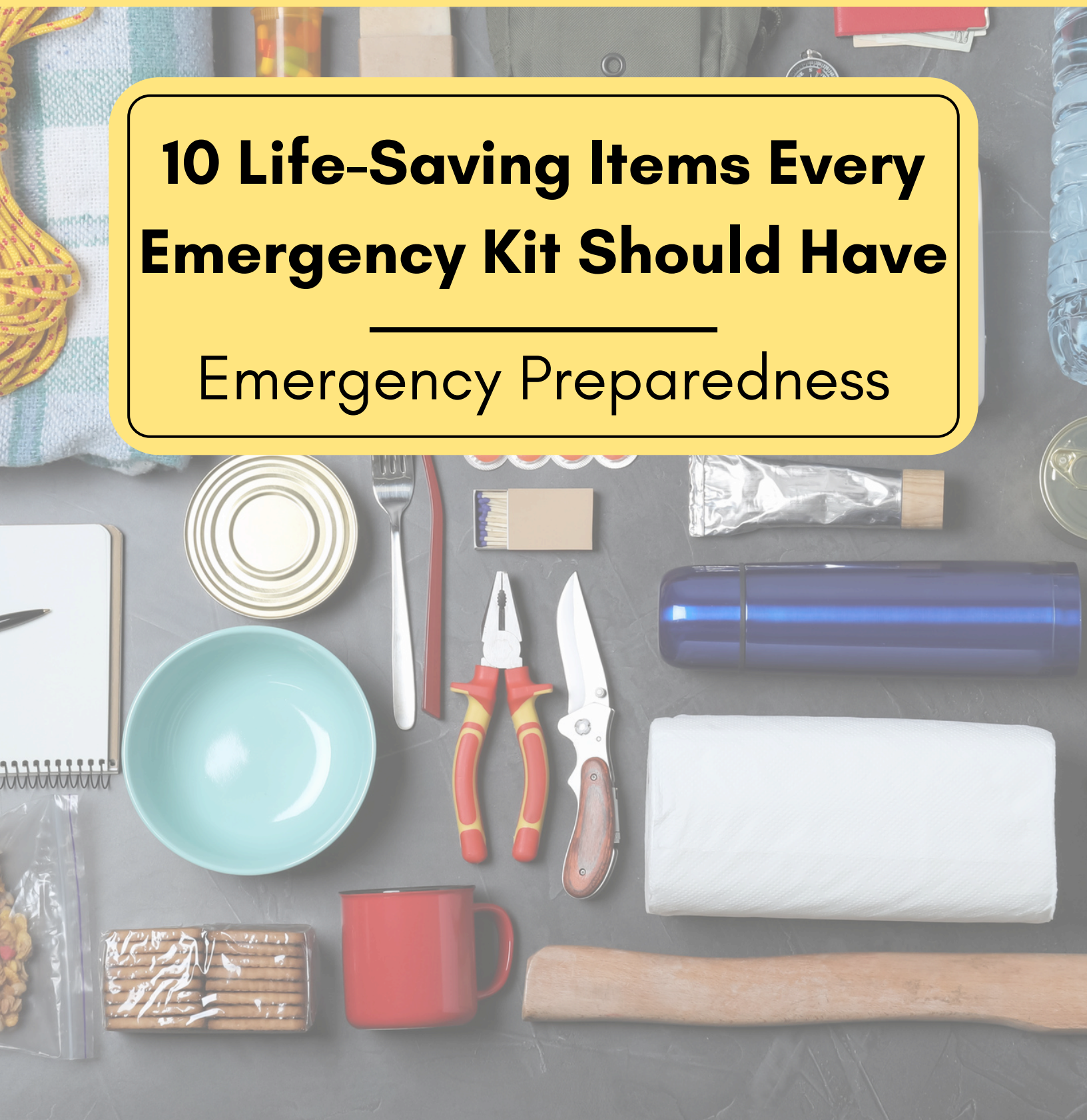




10 Life-Saving Items Every Emergency Kit Should Have

Emergency Preparedness



A top-down view of a wooden desk. On the left, a portion of a white computer keyboard is visible, showing keys for 'enter/return', 'shift', 'PgUp', 'PgDn', and 'Home'. A blue binder clip is attached to the top edge of a yellow folder. The folder is open, and the words 'EMERGENCY PLAN' are printed in large, bold, black, sans-serif capital letters across its top flap. A red pen with a silver tip lies on the right side of the folder. A yellow paper clip is visible at the bottom edge of the folder.

10 Life-Saving Items Every Emergency Kit Should Have

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Disasters rarely come with a warning. Whether it's a power outage, earthquake, flood, storm, or a worldwide pandemic, having an emergency preparedness kit ready can make a life-saving difference. But what exactly should go in it? Here's a deeper look at the 10 most important items your emergency preparedness kit should include—and why they matter.

1. WATER

Why it matters: The human body can survive weeks without food, but only a few days without water. Clean water is vital for hydration, hygiene, and food preparation.

What to include in your kit:

- Store at least 3 gallons per person (1 gallon/day x 3 days).
- Include bottled water or large jugs with secure lids.
- Consider water purification tablets or a portable water filter (like a LifeStraw or Sawyer filter) in case stored water runs out or becomes contaminated.



2. NON- PERISHABLE FOODS

Why it matters: In a crisis, grocery stores may be inaccessible or empty. You'll need food that doesn't spoil, requires little to no prep, and keeps you nourished.

What to include in your kit:

- Canned goods: beans, tuna, soup, fruit, and veggies.
- Ready-to-eat items: granola bars, peanut butter, trail mix, and jerky.
- Freeze dried meals: lightweight and have a long shelf life.
- Manual can opener: don't rely on an electric one in an emergency!

Tip: Choose foods high in calories and protein for sustained energy. Rotate out items every 6–12 months to prevent spoilage. See more here.



3. FIRST AID-KIT

Why it matters: Medical help may be delayed in a disaster. A first aid kit allows you to treat injuries or illnesses immediately.

What to include:

- Bandages (assorted sizes), gauze, adhesive tape
- Antiseptic wipes, alcohol pads, antibiotic ointment
- Trauma or Stop the Bleed kit
- Pain relievers (ibuprofen, acetaminophen)
- Tweezers, scissors, disposable gloves
- Thermometer
- Burn cream, sting relief pads
- Personal medications (7-day supply, if possible)
- Include a first aid manual or basic instruction sheet

Tip: Tailor your kit to your family's medical needs (e.g. EpiPen, insulin, inhaler).

What to include:

- At least one reliable flashlight per person
- Extra batteries (check compatibility and expiration dates)
- Consider a headlamp for hands-free use
- LED flashlights are preferred for longer battery life

Tip: Keep a flashlight in your vehicle in case of an emergency.

5. RADIO: BATTERY-POWERED OR HAND-CRANK

Why it matters: In major emergencies, cell towers may be down. A NOAA weather radio keeps you informed about storm paths, evacuation orders, and rescue updates.

What to include:

- Battery-powered or hand-crank emergency radio (some models have USB ports for charging phones)
- Look for one with AM/FM
- Solar-powered radios with built-in flashlights offer extra utility



4. FLASHLIGHT

Why it matters: Power outages can leave you in the dark, making it dangerous to move around or signal for help.





6. MULTI-TOOL & GEAR

Why it matters: Versatile tools are invaluable when you need to open cans, cut bandages, fix equipment, or build a makeshift shelter. Ensure your tools are durable, rust-resistant, compact, and easy to carry.

Tools and gear to include:

- Knife
- Pliers
- Screwdrivers
- Scissors
- Saw blade (optional but useful)
- Work gloves
- Duct tape
- Sturdy rope or paracord

Tip: A compact folding shovel can double as a digging tool, fire pit maker, or even self-defense.

7. IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS & CASH

Why it matters: Identification and proof of residence may be required for assistance, and ATMs may not work, so cash is essential for getting what you need.

What to include:

- ID (copy of your drivers license, passport, or other personal identification)
- Birth certificates for every member of household
- Insurance cards
- Important medical records
- Emergency contacts
- Small bills in cash
- Map of the area to navigate

Tip: Store documents in a waterproof pouch. Include a USB drive with digital backups for extra security.

8. CLOTHING & WARMTH SUPPLIES

Why it matters: Exposure to the elements (cold, heat, rain) can be just as dangerous as lack of food or water.

What to include:

- Emergency blankets (Mylar)
- Lightweight tarp or emergency bivvy
- Extra clothing layers, gloves, hats
- Waterproof matches or lighter
- Hand/feet warmers

Tip: Pack a couple of large contractor-grade trash bags—they can serve as ponchos, ground cover, or even makeshift shelter.

When including clothing in your kit, focus on durability and adaptability for various conditions. Include a long-sleeved shirt, long pants, a warm layer (like a sweatshirt or fleece), durable shoes, socks, underwear, and rain gear (poncho or jacket). Consider adding a hat, gloves, and a bandana for extra versatility.

9. HYGIENE & SANITATION



Why it matters: During disasters, toilets may not function, and poor hygiene can quickly lead to disease outbreaks. The need for proper sanitation is at an all-time high.

What to include:

- Moist towelettes, hand sanitizer, hand soap, dish soap, laundry detergent, washable rags
- Face masks
- Toilet paper
- Plastic bags and zip ties (for waste disposal)
- Feminine hygiene products

Tip: Heavy-duty duct tape can secure makeshift toilet setups, patch leaks, and more.

10. COMFORT & MENTAL HEALTH ITEMS

Why it matters: Emergencies are stressful. Comfort items can keep morale up and reduce panic, especially for children.

What to include:

- Books, playing cards, puzzles
- Comfort snacks or tea bags
- A small stuffed toy for kids
- Notebook and pen

Tip: Include a small pack of hard candies—these last a long time, boost energy, and provide comfort in stressful situations.

CONCLUSION

Preparedness is about empowerment, not fear. By assembling these essentials ahead of time, you give yourself and your family the tools to stay safe, healthy, and calm in the face of the unexpected. Think of your kit as an investment in resilience—one that turns uncertainty into readiness.



Resources:

- [Ready.gov | Build a Kit](#)
- [American Red Cross | Survival Kit](#)
- [CDC | Building an Emergency Kit](#)
- [Emergency Supply Checklist](#)