



26 Weeks to Family Emergency Preparedness

Week 1: Get a portable container with a lid to use as an emergency kit. A plastic storage bin or garbage can works well, particularly one with wheels. Choose an accessible location for the container near an exit, and label the container. Make sure all family members know what it will be used for and where it is. *(Items can be packed in smaller individual wheeled carts or packs to make it easier to carry by individual family members).*

Week 2: Stock your kit with at least a three-day supply of water, and don't forget to include water for your pets. You need four litres of water per person per day - two for drinking and two for food preparation and hygiene.

Week 3: Stock your kit with at least a three day supply of food for each family member. Include packaged foods, canned meats and dried fruit. Include a manual can opener. Remember special dietary needs of family members.

Week 4: Arrange an **out-of-area** phone contact person, and keep this and other emergency phone numbers near each telephone. Teach each family member these numbers and give them a copy to keep in their wallet.

Week 5: Keep a leash or pet carrier near your kit and add a three-day supply of pet food.

Week 6: Get a battery operated, solar powered and/or crank operated AM/FM portable radio and extra batteries for your emergency kit. Remember the radio in your vehicle is a good source of information during an emergency too!

Week 7: Learn about hazards. Find out what the hazards are in your community, and do a home hazard hunt to make your home safer.

Week 8: Prepare a first-aid kit that includes extra prescription medication, extra eyeglasses, bandages, sterile gauze pads, tape, scissors, tweezers, antibiotic ointment, hydrogen peroxide and over-the-counter pain pills. Ready made kits can also be purchased.

Week 9: Give every family member specific safety tasks to do in an emergency. For example, designate one person to be in charge of turning off electricity, one to collect the emergency container, one to track down family members and make sure people with disabilities are provided for. Delegate someone to take charge of any pets.

Week 10: Identify safe places in your home and on your property. Plan and practice evacuation drills using two different escape routes from each room. Know that your community may set up Reception Centre for evacuees during an emergency.

Week 11: Identify a family meeting place away from home but close to your regular spots (between work and home or school). Add some books, toys and cards to your kit to keep people occupied, if evacuated.

Week 12: Add a flashlight and extra batteries, along with candles and waterproof matches and lightsticks.

Week 13: Add some dried soups, crackers and peanut butter to your emergency kit.

Week 14: Check your insurance policies and make records of your possessions.

Week 15: Stock your kit with both large and medium-sized plastic garbage bags (orange or yellow make good visible signals). Large bags can also be used as ponchos, ground covers or blankets. Add plastic or paper dishes.

Week 16: Add a change of clothing for each family member to your kit. Be sure to include warm clothing and protective footwear.

Week 17: Add some canned food like stews, baked beans and vegetables to your kit.

Week 18: Enroll a family member in a first-aid course. Or re-new your first aid certification, if required.

Week 19: Assemble important documents like wills, insurance papers, medical records, inventory of possessions, identification, etc. in a fireproof/waterproof container. Add a family photo album to your emergency kit.

Week 20: Add personal toiletry items like toilet paper, handi-wipes, soap, detergent, toothbrush, toothpaste, comb, sanitary supplies, etc. to your emergency kit.

Week 21: Add evaporated, canned or powdered milk to your kit.

Week 22: Get a large bucket with a tight-fitting lid to use as a toilet, and put it with your emergency kit. Use the bucket to store other emergency tools like an axe, a folding shovel and rope.

Week 23: Add sleeping bags or blankets to your kit and consider adding plastic emergency ponchos to your kit.

Week 24: Add some freeze-dried or foil pouch food products like meats, soups, vegetables and stews.

Week 25: Add a pocket-knife (Swiss army style), cutlery, a whistle and spare set of house and car keys to your container.

Week 26: Meet with neighbours to discuss emergency preparations and the possibility of sharing items such as generators.

Once your emergency kit is assembled and your emergency plan is in place, don't forget to rotate and replace items as they expire. Practice your plan and update it as your family's needs change.