



The ravaged hills are ash the morning after the blaze.

Photo Cynthia Brian

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These supplies need to last you for one or more days. You want duplicate Go Bags in your vehicles because when disaster strikes you may be in your vehicle and unable to return home. In an emergency at your dwelling, you may only have time to grab your keys, phone, wallet, pets, Go Bag, and what you can carry. There will not be time to “load your car” or to be searching or running

from room to room to find what you need. Keep everything that is essential together in one place. Remember, you may be evacuated for hours, days, or weeks. Sometimes, as has been the case with our California wildfires and earthquakes, a matter of minutes means the difference between life and death.

Most of all, remember that saving your life and that of your family is the most important. Everything else can be replaced.

Go Bag Necessities

Fill a backpack or small case with the following and keep one of these in all of your vehicles and one in your home. Pack a small bag for each family member, or, if easier, pack a larger bag to include everyone. Remember you may only take one vehicle upon an evacuation.

Include:

First Aid kit

Duplicate chargers for phones, tablets, and computers

Work gloves

Warm gloves

Towelettes

Small towel

Bottled water (1 gallon per person per day)

Blanket

Walking shoes

Socks

Warm jacket

Peanut butter

Honey

Protein bars

Personal hygiene kit with a toothbrush, soap, medications

Matches

Candle

Flashlight and headlamp with extra batteries

Eating utensils and plates

Breathing masks Niosh-N95

Clothing change

Extra set of keys to home, office, etc.

Cash

Toilet Paper

Because of the pandemic, N95 grade masks are in short supply and reserved for medical professionals. Although better than nothing, unfortunately, surgical masks, cloth masks, and bandanas do not protect against smoke inhalation. The Air Resources Board advises everyone to stay indoors with windows and doors closed. Run recirculating fans or air conditioners and keep aware of changing conditions.

Hopefully, you will never have to use these emergency kits, but it's best to be prepared. It is natural to assume that a catastrophe will happen to someone else, but the reality is no one is immune. Across the country, natural disasters are becoming more prevalent and frequent.

It is becoming a common cliché to utter “stay safe.” Instead, be proactive and be prepared. The life you save will be your own.