

America is on the move. We travel short or long distances nearly every day. Many travelers are not prepared for roadside or community emergencies. In addition, with so much attention being placed on the ability to evacuate a community quickly, having an emergency car kit prepared and in the trunk would be invaluable and could even save lives.

One option is to buy ready-made kits. Many are available through online stores or at emergency supply stores. However, putting your own kit together is a way to make sure you include items that will meet your specific needs. Consider these tips for preparing an emergency car kit.

- First, check the tools in your vehicle. These should include a spare tire, jack and lug wrench, jumper cables, flares or reflectors, a flashlight and batteries, a help or distress sign, maps, a small tool set, a fire extinguisher, a tire inflator, sealant and duct tape.
- Next, include additional safety tools. These include a tow rope, shovel, tire chains and sand or cat litter for traction if you live or travel in winter conditions.
- Now you are ready to include survival items. These include high energy foods, nutrition bars, nuts, dried fruits, candies, water, emergency thermal blankets, warm clothing, a safety whistle, cell phone and charger, heavy gloves, folding utility knife, garbage bags, tissues/toilet paper and survival medications. All vehicles should also carry a first aid kit with manual.
- Other items to include are a brightly colored scarf or distress flag to tie to your car antenna and an envelope stored in the glove compartment listing family contact information.
- Be sure to keep the gas tank at least half full at all times, and carry cash in small bills (ones, fives and change) in a secured compartment. Before leaving home, always let someone know where you are going and when you will return.
- When faced with an emergency situation, do your best to take care of yourself and others. Assess your surroundings and make sure your car is still safe to serve as a shelter. Most of the time, it's best to stay with your vehicle. Rescuers will have an easier time spotting a large piece of metal than a person on foot.

Whether making a quick trip to the grocery store or taking a trip across the country, it is important to expect the unexpected. Be prepared and always have information, tools

and emergency supplies in your vehicle. With luck, you will never have to use them; but if you do, they can be both time savers and life savers.

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