

About Your “Ready Kit”

Power—Your 72-hour kit should have several sources of power in it, with extra battery packs and an alkaline battery pack for your handheld. For mobile VHF and UHF radios, larger batteries are needed. Gel-cell or deep cycle marine batteries are good sources of battery power, and you must keep them charged and ready go. It is also wise to have alternate means available to charge your batteries during the emergency. You can charge smaller batteries from other larger batteries. You can build a solar charging device. If you’re lucky, you may have access to a power generator that can be used in place of the normal electrical lines. Have more battery capacity than you think you might need. Have several methods available to connect your radios different power sources.

Gain Antennas—You can expect to need some kind of gain antenna for your handheld, as well as an additional gain antenna that can be used on either your handheld or your mobile rig. The extra antenna might be needed by someone else, or your first antenna might break. For VHF and UHF, you can build a J-pole from TV twinlead for an inexpensive and very compact antenna. Have several lengths of coax in your kit, totaling at least 50 feet, and barrel connectors to connect them together.

Personal—Include staples: water, or a reliable water filtration and purification system; enough food for three days; eating utensils, a drinking cup and, if needed, a means of cooking your food. Shelter is also important. Here, you are only limited by the size of your kit and the thickness of your wallet. Some hams plan to use their RVs as shelter, conditions permitting. Other disaster conditions may make the use of an RV impossible, so you should have several different plans for shelter. Light is important psychologically during an emergency. Make sure that you have several light sources available. Various battery-powered lights are available, and lanterns that use propane or other fuel are also good possibilities.