

EMERGENCY ESSENTIALS®

# PREP 101



# TRAVEL

## TRAVEL PREPAREDNESS

### Introduction: Why Take Special Precautions for Travel?

Regardless of your destination or the length of your trip, you never know when you might face difficulty on the road (or on the train, bus, or plane). Whether you're stranded in a storm without help or delayed by a major accident on the highway, you'll be in better shape if you have some basic emergency items, a travel plan, and extra items for extreme weather conditions.

### 1. Emergency Kits for Travel

It's best to carry a basic auto emergency kit in your vehicle at all times. These kits contain items similar to an at-home kit, but with additional items for your vehicle (see our detailed vehicle emergency kit checklist at the end of this module for details). When traveling with a group, especially long distances, consider carrying enough emergency supplies for each person. You might bring your at-home emergency kits when traveling as a family. That way, each person will have his or her personal kit. If traveling with others not of your household, encourage them to bring an emergency kit.

Temperatures in vehicles can fluctuate dramatically, so if you store supplies in the cabin of your vehicle, keep them out of direct sunlight. Storing your kit in the trunk may offer better protection, but may not be accessible in some emergency situations. If you keep your supplies in the bed of a truck, be sure they're protected from the elements as much as possible.

When traveling by public transportation, delays caused by weather or mechanical failure may require you to stay longer than expected at an airport, train station, or bus station—you may even have to stay overnight. Have a reasonable supply of food, water, and other allowed items in your purse or carry-on bag. Consider carrying a travel blanket and pillow, entertainment items like books or media devices, and a first aid kit with allowed items. Be aware of restrictions on

what emergency supplies you can carry. It's best to contact your travel provider for up-to-date information on what they will or won't allow you to carry.

### 2. Travel Planning

It's important to have an emergency plan when traveling no matter how far you're going. Being prepared is critical if you're traveling through less populated areas, especially if bad weather is possible. It's a good idea to be aware of potential risks and ways to get help along your route. If traveling in a personal vehicle, make sure it's running smoothly before your trip.

If you plan to drive long-distance, it's a good idea to give your car a thorough diagnostic check, preferably by a trusted professional mechanic. Also, make sure you have a spare tire, jack, tire iron, jumper cables, and some basic hand tools for minor repairs you can do on your own.

Consider marking gas stations and auto shops along your route on a map and keeping a list of their phone numbers. That way you'll know who to call if you have vehicle trouble. If you have roadside assistance, be sure to have the phone number handy.

If possible, inform friends or relatives both at home and at your destination of your planned route and estimated arrival time. Communicate before you leave and when you arrive. If there is an emergency, and they have not heard from you, they can tell the authorities where to look. If you get caught in bad weather, your car breaks down, or you're delayed for any other reason, inform your contacts as soon as possible.



### 3. Preparing for Extreme Weather

Extreme temperatures can add risk to short or long-distance travel. Winter weather in particular can make travel difficult and dangerous. Pay attention to severe weather warnings, and if possible, check weather forecasts for the areas you plan to pass through. State Highway Patrols also have phone numbers you can call for road conditions. Always have basic supplies with you and bring additional items appropriate for the season.

Extra items for cold-weather travel may include:

- Extra warm clothing including coats, winter hats, scarves, gloves, wool socks, etc.
- Wool blankets and/or cold-weather sleeping bags
- Body warmers
- A snow shovel
- Tire cables or chains
- Sand or cat litter for traction if you get stuck
- Extra items for hot-weather travel may include:
  - Extra clothing that is loose-fitting, lightweight, light-colored, and that covers as much skin as possible
  - Extra water
  - A battery-operated fan
  - Some type of shelter that can provide shade if needed
- Avoid traveling in severe weather if possible. If you must travel or are caught off guard, consider the following tips
- If you find yourself traveling in a severe winter storm:
  - Slow down and maintain as much distance as possible between you and the car in front of you.
  - Pull off into the nearest town or gas station to wait out the storm.
  - If you become stuck in a snow drift, stay with your vehicle; tie a brightly-colored cloth (preferably red) to your antenna; run the car long enough to warm the cabin, then turn it off; and keep the windows opened slightly

to reduce your risk of carbon monoxide poisoning.

- If possible, contact someone at your destination and let them know about your situation and location.
- If your car breaks down or you're stranded for any reason in hot weather:
  - Stay as cool and hydrated as possible.
  - Avoid overexertion, especially in the hottest part of the day.
  - Find or make shade to rest in. You know best what the weather is like in your region. Plan your extra auto kit supplies accordingly. If you're traveling to a region you're not familiar with, ask the locals what you should plan for.

### 4. Real Tales of Travel

On November 25, 2006, James Kim, his wife Kati, and their two infant daughters became lost on a mountain road in Oregon. They took the road thinking it was a shortcut to their destination, not realizing it was hazardous in winter. They soon found themselves stuck in deep snow.

The family stayed with their vehicle, running the engine as long as they could to stay warm. According to a news report, "The couple quickly realized that help may not be coming for an extended period... and began rationing the food so that it would last two weeks."<sup>1</sup> During the day, they made S.O.S signals in the snow. They even burned the tires from their car to create smoke signals, but the smoke dissipated before it rose above the trees.<sup>2</sup>

The news report went on to say that "On December 2, James Kim estimated that they were four miles from the town of Galice. . . . [He] set out . . . [but]

1: Sandoval, Greg. "Kati Kim describes harrowing week lost in woods." CNET.com. 18 January, 2007. Web. Accessed 29 October, 2012.2: Ibid.

never returned. . . . Kati Kim and her two daughters were rescued nine days [after becoming stranded] . . . on December 4, but . . . [James Kim] died of exposure and hypothermia.”<sup>3</sup>

On March 19, 2011, Rita and Albert Chretien were heading south through northeast Nevada when they became stranded. According to a news report, “Albert Chretien [may have been] . . . trying to make a course correction in his family van when he left the relative safety of a paved state highway to follow a dirt road into one of the nation’s most inhospitable high deserts.”<sup>4</sup> He had supposedly taken the wrong highway and was searching for a way to get back on his planned route. The van slid off the road as he attempted to turn around.<sup>5</sup>

After three days in the van, Albert left to find help, taking “a blanket[,] . . . a bag of trail mix, water and chocolate candy,”<sup>6</sup> but never returned. Rita stayed behind in the van, “with no fire, surviving on a daily tablespoon of trail mix, a fish oil pill and water taken from a nearby stream, and later when she became weakened, from mud puddles.”<sup>7</sup> She survived this way 48 days before hunters discovered and rescued her.<sup>8</sup> Albert’s body was found in October 2012, about 9 miles from the van and about 6 miles from the nearest town.<sup>9</sup>

The following is an experience related by Emergency Essentials® co-owner Don W. Pectol.

“I will never forget a time when I was traveling back from a visit to my parents around Christmas time. Though a few storms had left snow in the mountains, the weather was fine when I left. The forecast said that more snow would come, but not until after I was planning to return. When I left in my small four-wheel-drive truck, I felt safe even though the weather was overcast. About 30 miles into my trip a major snowstorm hit. The snow was coming down so fast I could barely see 30 feet in front of me. I followed closely in the tracks of a larger four-wheel-drive truck. I struggled to see where

<sup>3</sup> : Sandoval, Greg. “Kati Kim describes harrowing week lost in woods.” CNET.com. 18 January, 2007. Web. Accessed 29 October, 2012. <sup>4</sup>: Cockle, Richard. “Missing Canadian couple: Rita Chretien returns home while searchers try to retrace husband’s steps.” Oregonlive.com. 10 May, 2011. Web. Accessed 29 October, 2012.

<sup>5</sup>: Ibid

<sup>6</sup>: Ibid

<sup>7</sup>: Ibid

<sup>8</sup>: CBC News. “Albert Chretien’s family thankful he died peacefully.” CBC.ca. 2 October, 2012. Web. Accessed 31 October, 2012.

the road ended and the side of the road began. “At one point I noticed a faint light off to the left side of the road. I immediately slowed down and pulled off to the right a little. I hoped that if someone were following my tracks they would continue straight. I put my coat on and walked across the road to see what the light was. To my astonishment it was a small compact car with a young couple and a new baby inside. They had slid off the road and the vehicle was stuck. They had no food for either them or their child and no adequate clothing for the situation. Another large four wheel drive truck stopped and the driver came down to help us. His vehicle was closer and had more room for the young family. They left their car and got in with my new friend. I followed him (a few feet behind his bumper, because of the poor visibility) to the next town 60 miles away. It took us nearly 4 hours to arrive safely.

“When I look back on this experience, I’m reminded of what Richard Gist, a Psychologist for the Kansas City Fire Department once said: “Do not put off the improbable for the unthinkable.” He then said, “If there is a one in a million chance of something happening to you then it is happening to 300 people in this country right now.” Simple preparations can

<sup>9</sup>: Meena Hart Duerson. “Hunters find body of Canadian Albert Chretien who went missing in Nevada wilderness in 2011.” NYDailyNews.com. 2 October, 2012. Web. Accessed 31 October, 2012.





make all the difference in the world.”

These stories remind us that the unexpected can happen, whether we're prepared or not. In each case, more food and water, warmer clothing, fire making tools, and more knowledge of the route could have saved lives. Thorough planning and a sufficient amount of emergency supplies can increase chances of survival, exponentially especially in harsh winter weather.

### Conclusion

For many of us, travel is a part of daily life. Family trips or road trips with friends can be a source of lasting memories. Hopefully, your travels will always be trouble free, but it's best to be prepared for whatever comes your way. Remember to keep an auto emergency kit in your vehicle, always make a travel plan, and bring what you need in extreme weather conditions. If you're prepared, you'll be better able to face the unexpected with confidence.



## QUICK REFERENCE

### Tips for Travel Preparation:

- Carry a basic auto emergency kit in your vehicle at all times
- Carry emergency supplies for each person
- Bring your at-home emergency kits when traveling as a family
- If traveling with other not of your household, encourage them to bring an emergency kit

### Tips for Travel Planning:

- Be aware of potential risks and ways to get help along your route
- Consider marking gas stations and auto shops along your route on a map and keeping a list of their phone numbers.
- Inform friends and relatives both at home and at your destination of your planned route and estimated arrival time
- If you get caught in bad weather, your car breaks down, or you're delayed for any other reason, inform your contacts as soon as possible.

### Tips for Driving in Extreme Weather:

- Pay attention to severe weather warnings, and if possible, check weather forecasts for the areas you plan to pass through.
- Bring additional items appropriate for the season.
- Avoid traveling in severe weather if possible
- If you're traveling to a region you're not familiar with, ask the locals what you should plan for

### Extra items for cold-weather travel:

- Extra warm clothing including coats, winter hats, scarves, gloves, wool socks, etc.
- Wool blankets and/or cold-weather sleeping bags
- Body warmers
- A snow shovel
- Tire cables or chains

- Sand or cat litter for traction if you get stuck

### Extra items for hot-weather travel:

- Extra clothing that's loose-fitting, lightweight, light-colored, and that covers as much skin as possible
- Extra water
- A battery-operated fan
- Some type of shelter that can provide shade if needed

### Traveling in a severe winter storm:

- Slow down and maintain as much distance as possible between you and the car in front of you.
- Pull off into the nearest town or gas station to wait out the storm.
- If you become stuck in a snow drift, stay with your vehicle; tie a brightly-colored cloth (preferably red) to your antenna; run the car long enough to warm the cabin, then turn it off; and keep the windows opened slightly to reduce your risk of carbon monoxide poisoning.
- If possible, contact someone at your destination and let them know about your situation and location.

### If your car breaks down or you're stranded for any reason in hot weather:

- Stay as cool and hydrated as possible.
- Avoid overexertion, especially in the hottest part of the day.
- Find or make shade to rest in.

## BAISC EMERGENCY KIT CHECKLIST

### Portable Container

- Durable, water-resistant backpack, frame pack, daypack, or duffel bag

### Water

- As much water as you can carry (extra portable water: 3-5 gallons of water stored for sanitation and drinking)
- Method of water filtration and treatment

### Food

- Minimum 3-day supply of food: Food ration bars, meals-ready-to-eat.

### Warmth and Shelter

- Windproof/waterproof/strike anywhere matches
- Second method to start a fire
- Tent/shelter
- Wool blend blanket/sleeping bag
- Emergency reflective

### Add-ons for Basic Auto Kit

- Jumper Cables
- Tire chains
- Oil, washer fluid, transmission fluid
- Shovel
- Flares
- Car Jack
- Tire iron
- Tools for making minor repairs

bag/blanket

- Hand and body warm packs
- Poncho

### Light Sources

- LED Flashlight w/batteries
- Candle
- Lightsticks
- LED Headlamp
- Hand-crank LED flashlight

### Tools

- Pocket knife
- Shovel/trowel
- Hatchet or axe
- Sewing kit
- 50-foot nylon rope
- Multi tool
- Duct tape

### First Aid

- First-aid kit and supplies
- Burn gel and dressings
- Potassium Iodide Tablets

### Extra Items for Cold-Weather Travel

- Extra warm clothing including coats, winter hats, scarves, gloves, wool socks, etc.
- Wool blankets and/or cold weather sleeping bags
- Body warmers
- A snow shovel
- Tire cables or chains
- Sand or cat litter for traction if you get stuck

- N95 respirator mask

### Communications

- Radio with batteries alternate power sources
- Whistle with neck cord

### Personal Sanitation

- Toilet paper/tissues
- Toothbrush and paste
- Hand sanitizer/soap
- Sanitary napkins/tampons
- Comb
- Razor
- Shampoo/Conditioner

### Extra Clothing

- A complete outfit of seasonally appropriate clothing
- Sturdy, comfortable shoes

### Important Papers

- Copies of documents important to your family (such as birth certificates, marriage

licenses, wills, insurance forms)

- Phone numbers you might need

### Stress Relievers

- Games, books, hard candy, inspirational reading
- For children: small toys, paper and pen, favorite security items

### Money

- At least \$20 in small bills

### Additional Items

- Camp stove
- Mess kits and other cooking equipment
- Sun block
- Insect repellent
- Snake bite kit
- Special medication or other needs
- Cell phone

TRAVEL SHEET PLAN

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**DESTINATION:**

**MEANS OF TRAVEL** (INLCUDE FLIGHT NUMBERS, RESERVATION NUMBERS, ETC.):

**PLANNED ARRIVAL TIME:**

**PEOPLE TO CONTACT** WHEN LEAVING, ARRIVING AND IN CASE OF DELAYS - AT HOME AND DESTINATION:

**HOTEL/LODGING** INFORMATION FOR DESTINATION:

**PLANNED TRAVEL ROUTE:**

(Could there be possible side trips or shortcuts? (Stopping to see sights, cutting through an area that is less populated or unpopulated to shave some time off the trip?)

IMPORTANT PLACES ALONG THE WAY

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**GAS STATIONS:**

**REST STOPS:**

**REPAIR SHOPS:**

**TOURIST/OTHER SITES:**

**RESTAURANTS:**