

## The Urban Go-Bag

Let's talk about preparedness packs, commonly called the "3-day bag", "72 Hour Bag", "go-bag", "get out of Dodge bag" or "bail out" bag. When we talk about these bags, I classify them as either a "papa pack", a "mama pack" or a "baby pack".

The "papa pack" is a "let's go out into the deep woods and live off the land for an extended stay". This pack typically weighs 80 to 100 pounds depending on how many items you want to haul around. The pack includes a sleeping bag and tent along with food, clothing and an assortment of camping gear. The "mama pack" consists of three days' supply of food, clothing and gear. It includes limited shelter along with a cook stove and extra creature comforts or techno gadgets. This "mama pack" weighs in at 35 to 50 pounds. Lastly is the "baby pack". This pack is a small, lightweight portable pack. It is easy to carry, transport and store. It weighs less than 9 pounds or around 14 pounds when the water bladder is filled with water. It will suit the basic needs for three days of survival for one person on the go or at a stationary location.

The criteria for this "baby" pack are as follows:

- Must be lightweight, the complete pack must weigh no more than 14 pounds or 9 pounds without the added water.
- Must be portable and easily carried for long distances.
- Must not take up a lot of cubic space, it needs to store in a trunk of a car or in a closet.
- Must provide food, water and limited shelter for three days.
- Must provide for first aid and hygiene.
- Must provide navigation, receive radio communication and have a light source.
- Must provide for personal protection
- Must not attract unnecessary attention

Before we go into the explanation of the "baby pack" let's talk about emergency or preparedness scenarios. There are many scenarios and each one calls for a specific list of items. There is no magical "do-all" or "carry-it-all kit". If you go to the American Red Cross or FEMA websites they will give you a list of items that you should keep on hand in your home. They also list special needs for various disasters such as hurricanes, tornadoes, blizzards, nuclear attack and so on. It is good reading and I suggest you look at these sites to see how to prepare for an emergency.

I designed the "baby pack" for the urbanite. I will explain one of the scenarios that this pack might be used for. This scenario is the "grab and go" plan. It is designed so if you have to evacuate, you can do so easily, comfortably and fast. This pack is designed to be stored in your vehicle or put away in your front hall closet. Each member of the family should have a similar pack. The urban pack has the

advantages over the traditional three-day pack in that it is lightweight and compact. The pack measures 9.5" wide by 17" high by 4.5" deep. Because of its small weight and size, it will not cause questions or suspicions while you are transporting it. It has the outward appearance of a daypack or small gym bag. It has two main compartments that contain the contents with four plastic bags. These bags have grommets that secure them to the main pack using paracord.

### **The Grab and Go Scenario:**

There is a natural disaster, fire, man-made disaster or a terrorist attack. You have to evacuate the area. Everyone is trying to leave at once and the roads are in complete gridlock. If you have a bicycle or motorcycle you might be miles ahead of everybody. If you do manage to get out of the city, you will need basic supplies. If you cannot get out of the city, or are stopped halfway out of the city, you are going to have to walk. This is where a portable lightweight backpack comes into play. This pack is designed to get you on the move fast. The pack will enable you to get to a safer location where hopefully there are more supplies and shelter. You should plan on not having any government help for a period of at least three days. Remember that if you do reach a public aid shelter, do not let them know that you have any supplies. The authorities will confiscate any items that you have.

This pack was developed with the possibility of either a three-day survival or a three-day trip by foot. If you have to make an extended hike what sort of problems will you incur? The first problem that will occur will be the carrying of too much weight. Ask any military person or hiker about the problems of having too much weight. The saying goes "ounces equal pounds and pounds equal pain". Also be aware that a large percentage of our population is also obese. Not everyone exercises and if they have to do a long walk they cannot carry a large load. What about if you have children? How much weight can they carry? To put things in perspective, make a trial walk for 4 hours with a small backpack weighing 30 pounds. Two hours one-way and two hours back. After this hike, think about how long you could walk for an extended period of days with that 30-pound load. After you get done with your hike, get in your car and drive the same distance. You may be surprised that your four-hour walk was only a 15-minute or less drive by car. In an evacuation scenario, it is just not practical for most of us to carry a large load. I took this weight issue and designed my pack accordingly.

The second problem that you may encounter will be blisters on your feet. In an emergency evacuation you may only have the shoes that you are wearing. Now look down at your shoes and think about a 3-day walk. This kit addresses the problem by providing a pair of high-quality athletic socks that wick away moisture. These socks stay dry and add a cushion that reduces the friction that causes blistering. A good pair of clean dry socks is essential in any pack. The kit also includes a medical blister treatment pack if you do get a blister. With this applied you can continue your walk. The baby pack includes a small container of medicated body powder. The body powder can be used for your feet or other areas

of your body where needed. This prevents your clothing from rubbing or chafing that causes skin irritation. I did not include any footwear in the kit. You may want to have a good pair of walking shoes, stored in a baggie, placed along with this kit. But again this is a small, lightweight go-pack designed for “grab and go”.

I have covered the walking problem now let's talk about the next problem that you may encounter. This is protection from the weather. If you are walking and it starts to rain you are going to be very uncomfortable. Wet clothing robs your heat from the body. The added weight of soaked clothing will also slow you down. You do not want to get wet and lose your energy so I included a disposable rain poncho to combat this problem. The next set of problems that you may incur are; sunburn, annoying insects, insect bites, sun blindness and heat problems. To solve this problem, the pack includes a combination insect repellent and sunscreen stick. A pair of disposable sunglasses is also provided in the pack to reduce eye strain. I added a pair of mechanic gloves for hand protection. A floppy hat is packed for sun protection or to aid in helping maintain the body temperature. Rehydration powder is also provided to reduce the possibility of heat stroke.

When we are walking, we have to know the direction in which we are heading. The pack includes a liquid filled ball compass that attaches to the front strap of the pack. This compass can be easily viewed without the use of your hands while walking. The compass is also self-illuminated. I recommend that you have a detailed map of your city, county and the surrounding counties to go along with the pack. You can make these maps waterproof by painting them with waterproof patio deck sealer found at most hardware stores. If you have to walk out of the city or suburbs you may have to avoid trouble spots. Think about the path that you will take to get out of the area. Are you going to walk along a major highway or cut through small neighborhoods? Are the roads a straight line or do they curve and twist? Without a detailed map you can waste valuable time and energy trying to negotiate through unknown areas. In some scenarios a GPS or cell phones may fail. It is not a good idea to depend on this method of navigation. I have a small portable clip-on light attached to the front suspender of the pack. This outside location is ideal so you can find it in the dark without having to open the pack. Use this portable light to guide the way at night, signal for help or find items in the dark.

Now that I have covered walking, let's think about food and water along the way. The kit includes nine separate Coast Guard approved ration bars with a shelf life of 5-years. The minimum caloric intake suggested by the government is 1200 calories per day. These nine bars contain a total of 3600 calories. With this in mind you can eat three bars a day. These food bars are specially designed not to cause thirst. Having hot food or drink is a real physical and mental help. I added a portable pocket stove with fuel tabs and nine packages of soup broth from some soup noodle packs. The stove fits into a one quart stainless military style drinking cup and cover. Along with the food pack I have included six emergency water ration packs. Each of these packs is designed to be used as a single serving and contain over four fluid ounces of water. These emergency water packs are also US Coast

Guard approved. These ration packs are a secondary emergency water source to be used as a backup to the main hydration system. The primary water system is the hydration pouch. This hydration pouch lets you drink water from a bladder located inside the back of the pack. The bladder on this pack holds 2.5 liters (approximately 85 oz.) of water. Together with the six packets, the fully loaded pack contains over 110 ounces of water. When disaster strikes you should find water immediately and fill this bladder pouch. If you cannot find access to a water source then you need to fill it along the way. Stop and fill this bladder at a gas station, a store or even from someone's garden hose. You should always drink from this main hydration pouch first. Then refill it as it empties when you have access to a clean water supply. If you cannot find replacement water then the water ration emergency packs should be used. Always keep on the lookout for a dependable water source if possible. Do not pre-fill the bladder before an emergency because the water may become undrinkable with bacteria after extended storage. If you live in a climate that freezes, the water in the bladder could freeze. This will damage the bladder if it is left filled while stored in a car or an outside the garage. You can also leave the water ration packs outside in freezing weather. They can be used as ice packs for injuries. When the water bladder is filled, it provides additional padding and makes the pack more comfortable to wear. Remember that the water in the bladder adds 5 pounds to the pack when filled. The pack includes a filtration straw in the event that the water source is of questionable quality.

The next topic for the pack is first-aid and hygiene. This pack includes a basic medical pack. It contains a first aid booklet, bandages and other basic first aid essentials designed for the short-term survival. This is great for the small, common or minor problems that may happen. But what happens when you're crawling over a fence and you slice open your arm or leg? The hospitals in the area may be overtaxed or shut down. To handle this situation the pack contains the medical agent called Quick Clot gauze. This product is used by the military, emergency paramedics and hospitals. It works great on large wounds to stop bleeding fast. The kit also contains butterfly bandages, larger bandages and tape to close the wound. A scalpel blade, small pair of tweezers and toenail clippers are also included in the pack.

During the scenario you're going to have to keep your mental wits and energy up. There is a separate bag containing 4 packs of Tylenol (acetaminophen) and 6 packs of Aleve (naproxen sodium). The Tylenol is an important item because after a long day of walking you may feel muscle soreness and may have a headache. The Aleve will reduce the swelling in your feet. I have a 5-hour energy drink and a small bag of multi-vitamins in the pack. Take the first dose of the vitamins from the pack as soon as possible after you evacuate. The added stress caused from evacuating will lower your body's resistance. You do not want to become ill in the days ahead. The 5-hour drink may come in handy if you need to travel at night but your energy level is low from the day's stress. You may be traveling with friends or family and need to stay awake to watch over them during the night. As a note, you

do not have to drink the entire contents if you only need a quick pick me up. As far as hygiene goes, there are antibacterial body wipes. These are a larger version of the towelettes similar to the ones you get when you eat out at a restaurant. They are hypoallergenic contain a mild deodorant. They are enriched with skin conditioning aloe. They can also be used for emergency first aid to clean minor scrapes or used as a field bandage. Keep the used ones handy to use as toilet paper. A small bottle of hand sanitizer is included. Feminine napkins are provided and can also be used as large bandages. Lastly the pack includes a small hand towel, toothbrush, a small tube of toothpaste, dental floss pick, soap, shampoo and a comb.

Other items can also be tied, strapped or repaired using the 10-foot section of 1/8 inch 550 para-cord or duct tape that is supplied in the pack. The cord is made of 7 strands that can be unraveled to make longer lengths of smaller cord. A NIOSH 95 respirator is included if there is dust debris or threat of disease.

Let's now focus on how to get out of Dodge. We already said that we have a compass on the outside of the pack. You not only need to know which direction to go but also you need to be informed of any emergency and weather updates. This is very important as we are going to try to avoid any danger spots and need to know the upcoming weather conditions. To solve this, the pack includes a hand crank radio with flashlight that can be used to hear the local news and weather reports. The flashlight also has an output jack to charge your cell phone.

The pack also contains a backup compass with a thermometer and whistle. The whistle can be used if you are trapped, need to alert someone or need to signal for help. The thermometer will come in handy by knowing if the temperatures are too hot or too cold so you can adjust your walking speed or to take shelter accordingly. If you live in warmer areas of the country, included is a package of rehydration powder. For shelter, it contains a personal survival sleeping bag. You can stick your whole body into this bag and it is waterproof. This Mylar sleeping bag is an improvement over the single sheet space blanket. The pack also contains one 12-hour disposable light stick. There is a 12-hour survival cup candle, waterproof matches, Bic style lighter and cotton balls with Vaseline for fire starting and heat. If your car breaks down in the cold, the heat from this cup candle may save your life.

Let's cover personal protection. You may want to bring a side arm to carry. I will not go into this because they are a personal choice of size, weight, caliber and capacity. Remember that this pack is designed to fit nicely in your car trunk or front hall closet that will be unattended for an extended period of time. It is dangerous to keep an unattended loaded handgun at these locations. Long arms do not fit this scenario as they are too bulky, heavy and will attract unwanted attention if you are walking. If you do have a handgun available at the time of the disaster, you may want to take it along. I recommend that you have a concealed carry holster for that weapon. If you do not have a side arm then the next nonlethal item is

pepper spray. A small can of the spray is included in the pack. This spray should be removed from the pack and slipped into your pocket or attached to the front strap of the pack when you evaluate. The idea is to have pepper spray available or at the ready. The spray is used in case a stray animal or someone approaches you and wants your pack or any other items you may have. This will not stop a determined attacker but might deter or stop an assailant. The spray also has a blue dye to identify the person that is sprayed. The “baby pack” contains a tactical folding pocketknife with a 4-inch blade. This knife can be worn on your belt or inside your pocket and has a quick opening device. The knife can be used as deadly force against an assailant if the pepper spray is not available or effective. This knife can also be used as a nice utility tool.

There are other items that you will want to store into the pack. These include a pair of spare glasses or contact lenses and wetting solution if you wear corrective lenses. A cheap pair of folding reading glasses should also be included if you need them. Add a week’s supply of any medicines that you are currently taking.

When you look at the outside of this pack, the bulk of the pack is food and water. The actual pack that contains most of the other items mentioned above is only 9 inches wide by 17 inches tall by 5 inches deep. This pack that I have selected is constructed with heavy-duty materials with padded back and padded suspenders. The suspenders are a quick release type. It also has a top carrying strap.

You should have some cash tucked in the pack. We I would suggest \$5 in one dollar bill denominations and \$50 in ten dollar bill denominations. It is also a good idea to have any important documents such as your passport, deeds, automobile titles, birth certificate, social security card, insurance papers, credit card numbers, bank account numbers, a list of household valuables and pen and paper wrapped in a large zip lock plastic bag. Keep this bag in a safe place at your home and be prepared to grab it in an emergency. This zip lock bag will fit behind the water bladder in the pack. You can also carry a flash drive in your pocket that has copies of the same information. Use your scanner to download your documents along with any important information and pictures. Don’t forget to attach a set of car keys and house keys to the outside of the pack. If you have to leave in a hurry you will not have time to look for misplaced car keys or house keys. If the pack is kept at home, store a utility shut-off wrench near the pack. Use this to shut off the gas line to your house. Start planning ahead today.

There is a large list of items that I considered including in this pack. But again the idea of this pack has to be small and lightweight. You need to get away fast and not attract attention. You’re leaving everything behind that is not necessary. The whole idea of this pack is to be small, light weight and easy to transport and not to cause attention.

You may ask, why don’t I just buy a “mama sized” pack and not fill it to the maximum capacity? Because most people will fill the pack to maximum capacity.

If you have a larger pack, you greatly increase the risk of having it taken away from you. The smaller pack is less noticeable and looks like it doesn't carry a lot of items. It doesn't look like it could hold a lot of items and is not much bigger and size than a couple of large fanny packs. During our scenario the people who have nothing are going to go after the people with something. The mama-sized pack will invite problems.

Before you invest in buying a premade commercial or store brought emergency three-day go-bag, think about how you're going to carry it if you have to travel by foot. Compare them with what you would need for our scenario. Make sure that the pack you buy will hold up to abuse if needed. What happens while you are walking and the pack rips or gets torn? What now? Does the nylon bag have a carrying handle or shoulder straps? If it has a carrying handle are you going to be able to comfortably carry it over long distances? The store brought nylon bag may have shoulder straps but will they dig into your shoulder blades after a couple miles. Think of what you would rather have on a three-day hike. Look at the contents of other packs. Do they contain socks, blister treatment and hospital grade blood clotting agent? Will it carry 110 ounces of water? The choice is yours. To sum this up, this is a lightweight, portable three-day basic supply back to get your way from danger.

When the time calls for using the pack, do the following:

- Find a water supply
- Empty the contents from both the top and bottom compartments.
- Remove and fill hydration bladder and repack the the filled bladder back to pack
- Insert your documents and maps between the bladder and compartment wall
- Take vitamins with found water
- Remove the pepper spray and pocket knife / attach to your clothing
- Remove the ball compass and light, clip them to the outside of the pack
- Put the cash into separate pockets of your clothing
- Repack top compartment
- Repack lower compartment minus plastic bag #4 Hygiene (Water Blatter has made pack thicker and lost some compartment room)
- Put Hygiene bag in your pocket or discard
- Put pack on and secure using both chest and waist straps

### **List of contents:**

#### Main Bag

- 2 Compartment Bay with Hydration System. Measures 9.5"W x 17"H x 4.5"D (Red Rock Catus or equivalent)

#### Top pocket contents:

- (6) Emergency drinking water pouches (4.227 fluid ounces each)
- SOS survival packet 3600 calories

- Ball Compass
- Emergency Poncho with Hood
- 4" Folding pocket knife
- Drinking water filtration tube
- Vitamins in small zip bag

Lower Pocket Contents:

- Portable chargeable crank flashlight with am/fm radio
- FM 3-50.3 (FM 21-76-1) Survival, Evasion, and Recovery
- Boonie Hat
- 1 Quart Cup and lid
- Esbit folding emergency stove
- (9) Chicken flavor packs
- Plastic Bag #1 – General Items
  - 8" x 5" Heavy zip Lock Clear Bag with Grommet at bottom and 12' Para Cord
  - Printed Contents Card
  - Wet Ones antibacterial wipes
  - Water purification tablets
  - 12 Hour Glow Stick
  - Small Notebook
  - Small Pencil
  - Disposable Sun Glasses
  - 5-1 Survival Whistle with Compass
  - Bic Style Lighter
  - Waterproof Matches
  - Hand Sanitizer
  - 10' of 1/8" Para Cord
  - Emergency Poncho with Hood
- Plastic Bag #2 General Items
  - 8" x 5" Heavy zip Lock Clear Bag with Grommet at bottom and 12' Para Cord
  - Printed Contents Card
  - Mechanic Gloves
  - Athletic Moisture Wicking Socks
  - Emergency 12 Hour Cup Candle
  - Small Roll Duct Tape
  - Disposable Sun Glasses
  - 5 Hour Drink
  - Rehydration powder
- Plastic Bag #3 First Aid
  - 8" x 5" Heavy zip Lock Clear Bag with Grommet at bottom and 12' Para Cord
  - Printed Contents Card
  - First Aid Book
  - Moleskin Blister Pack
  - Roll of Medical Tape – 13.5'



- (2) 5" x 9" ABD Sterile Pads
- (8) Butterfly Bandage
- (5) 1" x 3" Bandage
- (6) Antiseptic Wipes
- (6) Alcohol Wipes
- Aleve and Tylenol
- Scalpel Blade
- Nitrile Gloves
- N95 Dust Mask
- EMT Scissors
- Salt tables
- Plastic Bag #4 Hygiene Items
  - 8" x 5" Heavy zip Lock Clear Bag with Grommet at bottom and 12' Para Cord
  - Printed Contents Card
  - Hand Towel
  - (4) Sanitary Napkins
  - Pocket Tissue
  - Body Powder
  - Disposable Razor
  - Comb
  - Toothbrush
  - Tooth Paste
  - Soap bar
  - Shaving Cream
  - Shampoo
  - Hand and Body Lotion
  - Deodorant Gel
  - Dental Pick / Floss
  - Toenail Clipper
  - Spare 6" x 9" zip lock bag



