

BOB – Bug Out Bag

The Essentials

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The information below was delivered in a presentation to the Toronto Survivalism Group by Dwayne O'Connor, an emergency preparedness expert and owner of Assuring Safety.

<http://www.assuringsafety.com/> the notes were compiled by Laurie Varga.

#1 Priority – PLAN AHEAD. Planning is the most important part of getting out safely and ensuring you have all the supplies you need. Map the routes you'll take, where you will meet and how you will travel. Having alternate plans is a necessity. What if you can't drive your car or take transit to get out of the city?

Having a BOB does you no good if you forget to take it with you. Always have 2 or 3 of them packed with multiples of all your supplies. One for each exit of your home and one for the car (if applicable). Some people even keep one at work.

What is the biggest threat in the Toronto area? Believe it or not, it's earthquakes. We've all seen how devastating and chaotic an earthquake can be – a BOB is essential for both natural and man-made disasters.

Most important items in relative order of priority:

- Water - 2 litres per person per day. You could get away with 1 litre per day if necessary. Compact water pouches can be purchased and have a shelf-life of 5 years.
- Medications for everyone coming with you.
- A small, cheap tent that can be purchased for \$10-\$20. This can be used for privacy and safety even if you have to stay in a shelter.
- Light sticks that provide 12 hours of illumination – have several with you.
- Energy in the form of food. Dehydrated food made especially for emergencies is best. It's very compact, requires no preparation and will provide the required calories. Look for food that has a shelf-life of at least 5 years. Always test foods in advance to ensure family members do not have an allergy or sensitivity to the food. For a flavour review of a few popular choices check out this article in Popular Mechanics:
http://www.popularmechanics.com/science/worst_case_scenarios/4219185.html
- Pocket tool (multi-tool) like a good-quality Swiss Army Knife or a Leatherman. Look for items that are not made in China. Always put your tools to the test before you put them in your kit to make sure they aren't faulty and won't break.
- A collapsable water bag with an attachable filter. Water can be chemically treated in the bag and then filtered.
- Water purification chemicals or tablets which are widely available. Always test them before hand to ensure no one in your family has an allergy to the chemicals. The last thing you want is a serious medical emergency on top of an evacuation!
- Duct tape – a must have. Can be used for repairs and even medical emergencies (use gauze over top of an open wound. Duct tape has a chemical compound that heals wounds faster than normal.
- A small, 52 piece first aid kit. Should contain the basics including Q-tips, band-aids, non-alcohol cleaning pads, non-stick gauze and materials for splinting (can also use materials from the rest of the kit for splints).
- Heavy duty garbage bag(s)

- Respirator masks – good quality and as many of them as you can carry (2-3 per person per day)
- Waterproof matches a lighter and other fire starting materials.
- Cheap rain ponchos (2 per person as they rip easily)
- One or two can openers – very handy and one can be traded with someone who has cans but no opener.
- A plain metal container for boiling water and preparing food.
- Copies of important documents in a waterproof case. Birth Certificates, Passports, marriage licenses, etc.
- Bear repellent for personal protection.
- A few pairs of heavy-duty work gloves for rough and dirty jobs. Will also need several pairs of latex gloves for first-aid situations.
- Rope or utility cord.
- Germicidal tablets and alcohol gel for cleaning wounds and water.
- Iodine tablets - useful for purification and for treating radiation sickness.
- Mirror or other signaling device.
- Toilet paper or tissue is not essential for survival but can make the trip far less stressful. Also can be used to barter for other goods. Toothbrushes and toothpaste are also handy to have but not essential.
- Plain condoms for collecting and storing water.
- Cash, coins or other valuables to use for trading or purchasing items.
- Fishing or hunting tools if evacuating to a wilderness area.
- Have good, comfortable shoes. Sturdy, waterproof boots are best. Also carry a few pairs of good socks. If you have trouble with your feet you cannot travel and will be miserable.
- Shortwave radios can be purchased for \$10-\$20 and are very useful for finding out what's going on and for weather forecasts.

Other important notes:

When there is still infrastructure in place people will share and help each other. When the infrastructure breaks down each person is far more inclined to care only for themselves and their family.

If you will be travelling with an alcoholic do not take any products containing alcohol with you. They will find it, use it and become very ill.

Always test out your gear **before** you need to use it in the field. Equipment that breaks easily can be dangerous and is at best useless. This includes testing any chemicals and foods that will be consumed or used on the skin to ensure no one in your family has an allergy or a reaction which can be dangerous in a location where there is little or no medical care.

Most adults will need a minimum of 800 calories per day. Pregnant and lactating women will require more.

If you find a store of canned goods check all cans for bloating and check the smell before consuming. If any food (including wild edibles) smells like almonds or peaches do not eat it! If there is a decomposing body in the vicinity of any food source do not eat it. Contaminants from the body can be airborne and will cover nearby surfaces. Only if you can carefully clean and disinfect canned goods found near a corpse can they be used.

Consuming too many MREs (Meals Ready to Eat) in a short period of time can cause urinary tract and/or kidney infections. Try to find fresh or canned foods to supplement MREs.

Remember that luck favours the prepared.