



Get Out (GO) Bag

What *is* a GO Bag?

Emergencies almost always happen at the least opportune moments. Staying calm is probably the most important element in overcoming a difficult situation. Having a plan and being mentally and logistically prepared are just as critical.

Often referred to as a *bug-out bag*, a Get Out or GO Bag is a collection of essential supplies you may need during an emergency. No matter what you call it, the intention is the same: deescalate a potential crisis to a mere inconvenience. A few carefully selected items stuffed in a small backpack which you can just grab and go, may do just that!

If you are not sure how to make a GO Bag, you are in the right place! Keep reading and we will help you put together your own!

Contents of a GO Bag

The web is full of resources and ideas on how to construct a GO Bag. Survival experts and professional doomsday preppers have “absolute musts,” lists and acronyms. But ultimately no one knows your needs better than you. Given our urban environment here at WCSU, and the emergencies we are likely to encounter, we recommend organizing the contents in the following five categories:

- Weather protection;
- First Aid;
- Illumination;
- Nutrition, and
- Miscellaneous items

Each of these categories is described in further detail to give you a better idea of what your GO Bag may consist of. The goal is to build a resilient WCSU community composed of resilient individual members.

Weather Protection

Humans can survive three weeks without food and three days without water. But we cannot survive more than a few hours when exposed to certain climatic condition. Therefore, our first priority is personal protection. The weather can be unpredictable, especially in New England. Hypothermia is the primary concern and it can strike any season. Staying dry and warm are paramount. With that in mind, a poncho and a few layers of clothing have a rightful place in your GO Bag.

First Aid

A first aid kit is a must have for your GO bag. While pre-made first aid kits are better than nothing, we recommend you take some time and make your own to suit your needs. The following [link](#) will take you to our First Aid Kit resource page where you will find a guide and a suggested checklist to get you started.

Illumination

Power outages are becoming a rather frequent occurrence in our area. When the lights go out, our first thought might be to use our phones as a light source. But that function drains the battery and hinders the device from its primary function: communication, which becomes critical in an emergency. Having a separate light source available can be extremely helpful. Keeping a small keychain LED light with you is super handy. These trinkets are small, light (no pun intended) and do not take up much space. We also recommend having a wearable headlamp available for hands-free operation. You may want to consider reversing the polarity of one of the batteries to prevent accidental activation or battery leakage until you need to use it. Also, remember to keep a set of extra batteries, just in case!

Nutrition

Since the GO Bag we are discussing here is not designed for an expedition in the wilderness, water and food become more of a comforting factor than a survival need. That said, having a couple of water bottles and a few granola bars handy can go a



long way to invigorating the spirit. Consider your needs and plan accordingly. One thing is certain: your emergency kit at home should contain a 72-hour supply of water and food for each person of your household. For those of us who remember our ordeal with Norovirus several years ago, some sort of water purification or filtration method is always good as a last resort if our emergency water supply runs out.

Miscellaneous

The term “miscellaneous” is often misconstrued as “not important.” Not the case here!!! This category is for any other items that do not necessarily fit in any of the other groups but have their place in your GO Bag. These are typically multi-purpose items, whose function is only limited by your imagination. A garbage bag, for instance, can become a tube tent, a solar still, a rain catch or a tourniquet. With some duct tape and paracord, you can fix almost anything! Think outside the box and wow your friends and family! Do not forget the toilet paper. When the poop hits the fan, you should have some ready to go!

Final Thoughts

Your GO Bag should be as unique as you. The checklist we are including here is only a suggestion based on our situation, environment, and experiences. Feel free to print it out to use while you put together your GO Bag. Check the WCSU Emergency Management page for more resources: <https://www.wcsu.edu/emergency-management/>

Be thoughtful and creative, resourceful and resilient.



GO Bag Checklist

Weather Protection:

- Poncho
- Mylar Emergency Blanket
- Jacket
- Hat
- Gloves
- Socks and shoes
- Pants and shirt

First Aid:

- Various sized band aids
- Triple antibiotic ointment
- Antiseptic wipes
- Gauze
- Safety pins
- Medical tape and duct tape
- Bandages
- Personal necessities: prescription meds, EpiPen, contacts/solution, feminine products, etc.



Illumination

- LED keychain flashlight
- Headlamp
- Flashlight
- Batteries

Nutrition:

- Water
- Nonperishable food
- Water purification method

Miscellaneous:

- Garbage bag
- Toilet paper
- Bandana
- Needles and thread
- Money in small bills
- Multi tool
- Duct tape
- Paracord
- Whistle
- Safety pins

These are only suggestions to give you some ideas, not requirements. We encourage you to take it further. Add anything for your personal needs that you are comfortable carrying.