

Focus on Go-Kits

This document is intended to assist school personnel in selecting the appropriate materials for use in personal and school go-kits.

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Background

In the summer of 2006, the U.S. Department of Education's Emergency Response and Crisis Management Technical Assistance Group released Volume 1, Issue 2 of their *Helpful Hints* series¹. That document, along with many others, reviewed the value of administrators, nurses and other school staff in preparing emergency bags or crisis kits. Often called go-buckets or go-bags, these kits are often very unique and vary greatly from school to school in size, shape and contents.

Choice of Kits

The Center for Safe Schools frequently receives requests from schools for technical assistance in choosing the correct go-kit. The response to those requests varies depending on the intended purpose of the go-kit. For example, who will use the kit and how will it be used? Understanding the duties and functions an individual holds in an emergency situation will guide the selection process.

Before purchasing a commercially prepared kit or compiling components for a homemade kit, it is important to determine the answers to the following questions:

- *What are the emergency duties and functions of the person using the kit?*
 - Is the primary emergency duty the care of students?
 - Is the primary emergency duty the provision of medical treatment?
 - Is the primary emergency duty the performance of crisis team duties?
- *What is the capability of local responders?*
 - How long will it take local responders to arrive on-scene?
 - Will local responders be able to bring adequate supplies for your population?
 - Is the district, building or classroom able to stockpile the amount of supplies needed until help arrives?

Best Type of Container

- For classroom use, a large bucket with a lid is frequently used for the go-kit. The bucket serves multiple purposes. While it will be used primarily as a container for supplies, it can also serve as a temporary stool for the teacher when outside the school building. Additionally and as a last resort, when fitted with a plastic trash can liner, toilet paper and plastic tarp or shower curtain (as a privacy barrier), the bucket can also be used as a temporary lavatory.
- For front office use, backpacks or small soft-sided cases are often the container of choice for their durability and functionality. Since these bags come in a variety of sizes and often contain exterior pockets easy access to needed items, office staff usually prefers these to hard-sided containers.

¹ http://rems.ed.gov/views/documents/HH_GoKits.pdf

- School nurses and medical team members tend to prefer tool boxes, those with multiple drawers and compartments. These tool boxes provide quick access to organized medical supplies, which will result in the ability to quickly provide medical treatment to those in need.
- For building-wide use, large, hard-sided, wheeled cases or a large plastic rolling trash can with a fitted lid provide the amount of space needed to quickly move the amount of supplies necessary for an entire building.

Commercial and Homemade Kits

- The decision to purchase a commercially prepared, pre-assembled emergency kit or to create one is a matter of personal choice. There are pros and cons to either approach. This decision hinges on two key concerns:
 - Does the commercially prepared kit have all, or most of, the needed items?
 - Is the cost of the commercial kit comparable to the money and time need to create a personalized kit?
- Several reputable organizations sell school emergency kits, including companies which offer customized kits to meet the particular personnel or school needs.
- Some Intermediate Units utilize their school-to-work programs to compile emergency go-kits for their schools.

Recommended Contents for School Go-Kits

Item	Teacher	Other Staff	Emergency Team Member	Nurse ²	Administrator ³
Clipboard	X	X	X	X	X
Pad of Paper with sharpened pencils and pens (2 each)	X	X	X	X	X
Permanent marker – medium and fine point (minimum 2 different colors)			X	X	X
Roster ⁴ of student's in class(es)	X	X			
Roster of student's in buddy teacher's class(es)	X	X			
List of emergency contact numbers	X	X	X	X	X
Disposal poncho	X	X	X	X	X
Small pack of tissues or toilet paper	X	X	X	X	X
School Emergency Procedures	X	X	X	X	
School Emergency Plan (full plan)			X	X	X
School emergency checklists or other forms	X	X	X	X	X
ICS forms			X	X	X
Parent/Child Reunification Procedures	X	X	X	X	X
Student release forms as needed	X	X			X
Whistle with lanyard	X	X	X	X	X
Flashlight – with batteries or electromagnetic/wind up capable	X	X	X	X	X
Second flashlight or spare bulb for primary light	X	X	X	X	X
Light sticks	X	X	X	X	X
Small first aid kit including PPE ⁵	X	X	X	X	X
Small tarp or plastic sheeting	X	X		X	
Sun block	X	X	X	X	X
Insect repellent	X	X	X	X	X
Age-appropriate student activity materials ⁶	X	X			
Cell phone charger and extra batteries			X	X	X
Portable radio with extra battery			X	X	X
Map of local area			X		X
Teacher schedules					X
School building floor plans ⁷ (10 copies)			X		X
School building photos					X
Student yearbook or recent photo CD					X
Map of campus – 5 sets minimum					X
Map of area around the school – 5 sets minimum					X
Bullhorn					X
Master keys to building (2 sets minimum)					X
HVAC emergency shutdown procedures ⁸			X		X

² These items are personal bag items and do not include specialty medical supplies and equipment a nurse or medical team may need in an emergency.

³ Some recommended items for administrators may be contained in a school kit rather than a personal kit.

⁴ All rosters should be accompanied by sealed/secured information on students with special medical or dietary needs, along with custody limitations or prohibitions. These envelopes should be clearly marked confidential/ emergency use only.

⁵ PPE for a school first aid kit is probably limited to protective gloves and a barrier shield device for rescue breathing. A dust mask may also be included.

⁶ Student activity materials may include playing cards, inflatable balls, checkers, bubbles, Nerf™ balls, etc.

⁷ All building plans should have the HVAC, electrical and other utility shuts-offs prominently marked.

⁸ All shutdown procedures should be laminated prior to placement in the kit in case fire/rescue or Haz-Mat needs to enter the building with sprinklers activated.

Item	Teacher	Other Staff	Emergency Team Member	Nurse ⁹	Administrator ¹⁰
Fire alarm shut off procedures			X		X
Blank index cards (multiple colors)			X	X	X
Vest or bright hat for easy identification			X	X	X
Duct tape			X		X
Plastic wire ties of various sizes					X
AM/FM radio (battery operated)				X	X
NOAA-SAME weather radio (battery operated)				X	X
Roll of heavy trash bags	X	X	X	X	X
Water – with cups	X	X	X	X	X
Hard candies or other long shelf life food	X	X	X	X	X
Roll of paper towels	X	X		X	
Multi-tool or screw driver with multiple tips			X		X
Peel off labels (2 x 4 minimum) for emergency name tags or labeling			X	X	X
Personal medications	X	X	X	X	X
Local telephone directory					X

Recommended Contents for Building or District Go-Kits

Specialty Kits: One per school and district	Notes
Signs or flag for command post	Coordinate these markers with local responders
Rosters of students/master schedule	
Teacher Schedules	
Full emergency plan with annexes, checklists, etc	
Banner or poster for parent-child reunification	Use large banners, bigger than 8 x 10 inch paper
Alphabetical grouping signs A-L and M-Z A-F, G-L, M-R and S-Z	Pre-plan alphabetical breakdowns according to the size of your building's student population. Some schools may need 4 or 5 groups
School building floor plans ¹¹ (10 copies)	Even if your school has a secured website, it is best practice to have hard copy backups available in the event that Internet or electric service is disrupted
School building photos	
Map of campus – 5 sets minimum	
Map of area around the school – 5 sets minimum	
Student yearbook or recent photo CD	
Bullhorn	Some schools may need more than one
Master keys to building (2 sets minimum)	
HVAC emergency shutdown procedures ¹²	Laminate these procedures

⁹ These items are personal bag items and not to be all inclusive of specialty medical supplies and equipment a nurse or medical team may need in an emergency.

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¹² All shut down procedures should be laminated prior to placing in the kit in case fire/rescue or Haz-Mat needs to enter the building with sprinklers activated.

Specialty Kits: One per school and district	Notes
Fire alarm shut off procedures	
Duct tape	
Plastic wire ties of various sizes	
Blank index cards (multiple colors)	
Vest or bright hat for easy identification	
Extra batteries for all electronic devices	
AC charger for cell phone and portable radios	
CAT-5e internet cables	Dependent upon existing technology infrastructure
Single line telephones with cords	

Be sure to include any items from the administrator list that are not carried in personal go-kits.

Please note that the lists provided above are suggested based on best practice information. These lists can be expanded based on individual needs.

For additional information on personal preparedness kits for use at home or in your car checkout these web sites:

<http://www.ready.gov/america/getakit/index.html>

<http://www.fema.gov/pdf/about/regions/regionii/r2-what-goes-in-an-emergency-kit.pdf>