

"What's In Your 'Go' Kit?"



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Many of us take an HT along on our daily activities. Obvious accessories are an extra nicad battery pack, external power cord, some sort of gain antenna and comfort and safety items in case of some unexpected disaster. It only takes your nicad to "go south" when you need to access the autopatch to report a traffic accident, or to get lost or break down on the road in an unfamiliar place to appreciate the value of being "prepared."

The best kit for you may not fit a "canned" list, but should be based upon your operating mode, experience and local conditions. It is better to have the bare essentials always handy than to leave a bulky pack someplace where you can't get to it. A larger kit bag is more practical if you are almost always in or near your home or car.

The trunk is the best place to store emergency gear because it is dry, relatively secure and is accessible either at home or away. I actually have three kits. An "everyday" kit accompanies my HT and is small enough to fit in a briefcase. A larger "backup" bag stashed in the car provides 24 hours of auxiliary power, a spare HT, brick amp, coax and accessories for extended operating. The "disaster" bag has emergency cash, food, water, rain gear, a larger gel cell battery,

clothing and shelter to sustain a 3-day activation or evacuation.

The ARRL ARES Field Resources Manual provide excellent guidance on "Go" kits. If you travel through rural areas, you should also include fire making supplies, a pocket knife and a compass in the kit. In the suburbs, you'll want a local street atlas, change for a pay phone and emergency cash or a credit card. A compact, sturdy flashlight, extra batteries, first aid kit, extra HT battery pack and spare eyeglasses of your current prescription are useful everywhere. If you regularly take prescription medications, you should carry those.

A typical "go" kit should sustain a day of continuous operation and be easily supplemented for overnight or weekend trips. The bare essentials are a 2-meter or dual-band HT, some sort of "gain" antenna, auxiliary power source, writing materials, comfort and safety items. You can do a lot with a minimum kit, if you plan its contents carefully. There is risk of not having something you may need if you go "too" light, but obvious "bells and whistles" should stay home.

My "every day" kit stays within easy reach. Including a dual-band HT, it weighs 5 pounds and is 4"x5"x10." It fits in a small waist bag and includes the following:

7. Dual-band HT in padded belt case.
8. Copy of current FCC Operating License.
9. "Tiger tail" (enhances transmit and receive of typical "rubber duck" by 3 db).
10. Extra high-capacity (1000 man) nicad, or backup AA battery case for HT.
11. DC adapter & cigarette plug cord for HT
12. Two extra 2A fuses, for HT cord .
13. Earphone and/or speaker mike
14. Spartan pattern Swiss Army pocket knife
15. Leatherman multi-purpose tool
16. Mini-Mag-Lite, extra bulb and spare AAs
17. Pencil and pocket notepad
18. Emergency gas / phone money (\$10 bill, + four quarters and five dimes in pill box).
19. SO-239 to male-BNC adapter to fit HT to mobile antenna coax and female BNC to SO-239 to fit HT gain antenna to jumper.
20. 6 ft. RG8-X jumper w/BHC male and female connectors to extend HT antenna with suction cups or auto window clip.
21. Spare eye glasses of current prescription.
22. Band aids, moist towelettes and sunscreen
23. Pocket sewing kit, matches
24. Small pocket compass
25. Operating reference card for HT

26. ARES phone and frequency reference card

The "Backup Bag" contains "24-hour" items in a sturdy shoulder bag with carrying strap. I am trying to reduce mine from its 12"x8"x6" size and 18 lbs. weight. I use a padded, ballistic nylon camera bag with external pockets marked as to contents. It stays in the car until needed. Suggested contents are:

27. Neck-lanyard pocket with spare car keys, \$20 emergency cash, credit card, long-distance calling card and ARES photo ID.
28. Second, "backup / loaner" 2-meter HT. (battery packs and accessories should interchange with the dual-bander)
29. Spare nicad and AA-battery pack, ear phone and speaker-mike for second HT
30. Operating manuals for HT's.
31. Fused DC adapter cords with Molex connectors for brick amplifier and HTs
32. Extra 10' AWG 10 gage twin lead extension cord, with battery clips, in-line fuses and Molex connectors to power brick amp or HT.
33. Compact, rugged, 25-40w 2 meter or dual-band brick amplifier. - See note at right>>.
34. Gain antennas for both HTs: (telescoping half-wave Larsen and flexible dual-band Comet CH-72, 1/4-wave VHF, 5/8-wave UHF).
35. HT nicad, and 12V gel cell wall chargers.
36. Four NP2-12 gel cell batteries to power small brick amp at 10w @ 25% duty cycle / 8 hrs.
37. Two refills of AA Alkaline batteries for HT.
38. RG8-X jumpers with soldered PL-259s, two 3 ft., one, 6 ft., one 10 ft. and one 25 ft. with double-female connectors to combine all.
39. BNC-male+BNC female to SO-239;
BNC-male+BNC female to PL-259;
NMO to SO-239 adapters.
40. Cable ties, large and small, 6 each
41. Lensatic compass, 7.5min. series area topo.
42. Two sharpened pencils, pencil sharpener, gum eraser, note pad, permanent marker.
43. ARES Field Resource Manual
44. Compact, rugged, flashlight (Pelican Stealthlite), with extra bulb and AA batteries
45. Two sets of spare fuses (2A, 10A, 15A) for HT cords, mobile radio or brick amplifier.
46. Comfort, safety and basic first aid items: sunglasses, matches, tissues, toothbrush, sun block, sewing kit, insect repellent, tweezers, band-aids, adhesive tape, gauze pads, wound cleaning wipes, etc.

PORTABLE BRICK AMP PARAMETERS:

The purpose of a brick amp for emergency use is to provide better range and clarity with an HT while providing maximum endurance when operating on battery power. When choosing a portable amp to augment a hand held for ARES, it should weigh no more than 1.5 lb., provide 10-15w output when driven by the HT transmitting on its low power setting and 25-40w output when the HT is operating at full power from its normal nicad battery pack.

A portable brick amp should draw no more than 8 amps of current at its maximum output, so that it can run safely from a Series 1545, .093 pin Molex connector and fused cigarette plug. FM mode only is fine. No preamp is wanted or needed, because a preamp usually increases intermod.

Low-priced, no-name amps may overheat and "quit" under heavy use. It is more important to buy a rugged amp with an ample heat sink than the smallest "box." Our ARES group has found the Mirage B-23, BD-45 and RF Concepts Mini-144 to be satisfactory in our experience.

The "Disaster Bags" -- are packed in a duffel, stowed with the "backup bag" in a Rubbermaid storage locker in the car trunk, until needed. Their contents are inspected and changed seasonally to provide a complete change of clothing, shelter, food and equipment to support a weekend activation or evacuation, such as operating a remote Skywarn Net Control station during a power outage accompanying a severe storm event:

47. 3-ring binder with Fairfax County ARES Handbook, Skywarn Net Control Operations Manual, area topo maps and operating manual for auto mobile rig, in zipper portfolio.
48. Dual-band or 2-meter mag mount antenna, with portable ground plane.
49. MS-44 mast kit, tripod adapter, dual-band base antenna and 100 ft. of 9913F coax on reel.
50. AC charger for HT nicads and small gel cells
51. BCI Group 27, 95 ah AGM battery and 1.5 amp charger (48 hrs. power for HT brick amp or mobile rig on low or medium power, plus 12V, 8w flourescent light, for use as needed).
52. 12-volt flourescent drop-light with alligator clips for attaching to auto or gel cell battery, with spare bulb. Adequate light is important for operating efficiency and morale. A strong, battery powered light is safer and more reliable than gasoline lanterns.
53. Weller Pyropen soldering torch with 2 cans of propane fuel, 63/37 eutectic solder and flux.
54. Leather work glove shells, wool finger less liners, warm hat, wind/rain suit, sweater, insulated rubber safety boots, extra dry socks and change of underwear.
55. Tarp or poncho
56. Wool blanket or insulated poncho liner
57. Two message pads, two pencils, grease pencil, two sheet protectors, 12

push pins.

58. Vinyl electrical tape for rain wraps, 1 roll
59. Cable ties, large and small, 1 dozen each
60. Rubber bands, medium and large, six ea.
61. Adjustable open-end wrench, 6"x 0-5/8"
62. Folding hex key set
63. Klein pliers with crimpers and side cutters
64. Needle nose pliers
65. Channel locks or Vise-Grip pliers
66. Small, mobile-type SWR/power meter
67. Pocket VOM or multi-meter w/ test leads
68. Assorted connectors / adaptors including no-solder BNC and UHF for emergency repairs
69. First Aid Kit container.
70. 3 days supply of bottled water and nonperishable food (which can be eaten cold*), mess kit and utensils.
71. Personal hygiene and sanitation supplies.

* 1 gallon of water per person/day, is needed for drinking and washing. Good are canned soup, beans, tuna, juices, fruits, veggies which can be eaten cold, or warmed without further preparation; also peanut butter, cheese spread or jam in plastic jars, lots of hard candy, instant coffee, tea, dried fruit, crackers. Sterno is best for warming. Military MRE's are light weight and convenient, but some find them both expensive and boring. You get better variety, more appetizingly and cheaply at the grocery store, if weight is not a problem.

All of the above seems like "overkill," but ARES mutual response teams must be entirely self-sufficient, otherwise they cease being an asset and become a liability. The above is not the "last word", but is offered as a "thought starter" for your family or group disaster planning.

Reprint from "Skywarn Net Control Operations Manual" Revised Second Edition - Copyright 1996 [Daniel Gropper](#)

3.1.4 Preparations for Extended Activation.

SKYWARN amateur radio volunteers should be prepared for an extended stay at the NWS if SKYWARN is activated for a hurricane or for severe winter long-duration storms. The nearest food store is two (2) miles from the forecast office and may not be open or accessible during extremely severe weather. Volunteers are responsible for bringing food, medications and personal hygiene supplies to maintain themselves for the duration of their stay at the NWS. Please be prepared to be as self sufficient as possible. The following "NWS Survival Hints" were written by KD4DGQ shortly after arrival home from serving as Net

Control at the NWS for a thirty two (32) hour duration during the Blizzard of '93 on March 13-14, 1993:

I. FOOD (to be placed in one cooler and/or one paper bag)

- A. No stove is available. Only take food that can be eaten cold or micro waved.
- B. Although the NWS has a refrigerator, do not count on space being available. Bring a cooler with two or three reusable freezer packs to be refrozen as necessary.
- C. Bring change for the soda machine.
- D. Keep meals simple as time and facilities will be in short supply. Suggest cold sandwiches (i.e. peanut butter and jelly); cold vegetables, fruits, cookies and snacks and your favorite beverage.
- E. Hard candies (for sore throats)
- F. Canned soup.
- G. All cooking and eating implements (cup, plate, bowl, knife, fork, spoon, can opener)

II. SLEEPING ACCOMMODATIONS and CLOTHING (one duffel bag)

- A. Sleeping bag with mattress pad and a REAL pillow.
- B. Blanket (it may be cold!) or Fan (it may be hot!)
- C. Enough shirts, socks and underwear for the time you expect to be there, plus a few more things, just in case!
- D. Comfortable pants, you will be sitting for a long time. (Loose fitting / sweat pants work best)
- E. Comfortable inside shoes.
- F. Alarm Clock to get you up for your next shift.
- G. Toilet kit and medications for your stay (plus a little more just in case!) Razor, comb, toothbrush and toothpaste, motel size soap, towels and cologne (for covering for a few days without showers)
- H. Packages of facial tissue.
- I. Aspirin or Substitute. You will need it!

III. RADIO EQUIPMENT and GENERAL GEAR (one backpack)

- A. Handie talkie and dry cell battery pack and batteries.
- B. Speaker mike.
- C. Earphone (small and lightweight).
- D. Your own SKYWARN book with scripts, frequency charts or repeater lists you will need.
- E. Pen and Pencils and legal pad with hard back or clip board.
- F. Flashlight with extra batteries.

- G. AM/FM Battery Radio with earphone.



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