

Go Kits



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

The best “kit” for you may not fit a “manufactured list”, but should be based upon your operating mode, experience and local conditions. It is better to have the bare essentials always with you than to leave a “complete” kit in someplace that you may not be able to access in a time of need. A larger kit bag is more practical for extras and can be stored in your car.

The trunk of your car is the best place to store emergency gear. It is usually dry, relatively secure and is accessible at home or away. It is sometimes actually better to have three kits. An [*everyday kit*](#) is one that can accompany your 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, foul weather gear, a larger gel cell battery, clothing and shelter to sustain a 3-day activation or evacuation.

A typical “go kit” should sustain a day of continuous operation and be easily supplemented for overnight or weekend trips. The bare essentials are 2-meter or dual-band HT, some sort of gain antenna, auxiliary power source, writing materials, and personal comfort and safety items. You can do a lot with a minimum kit, if you plan the contents carefully. There is risk of not having something if you go too light, but obvious “bells and whistles” should stay home. This may seem like a lot of stuff but emergency communication teams must be entirely self-sufficient, otherwise they cease being an asset and become a liability.

Everyday Kit

Your “everyday” kit should always be within easy reach. Including a dual-band HT, it should weigh no more than 5 pounds. Some amateurs have them in a small waist bag and include the following:

- Dual-band HT (with CTCSS) in padded belt case
- Copy of current FCC operating license
- RACES ID card
- Extra high-capacity (1000 mah or larger) rechargeable battery, or backup AA battery case for HT
- DC adapter & cigarette plug cord for HT
- Two extra fuses, for HT cord
- Earphone and/or speaker mike
- Multi-purpose tool (Swiss army knife, leatherman)
- Mini-Mag-Lite, extra bulb and spare AAs
- Pencil and pocket notepad (pens fail when needed most)
- Emergency gas / phone money (\$20 bill, four quarters, five dimes)
- 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 (if you have a modern HT you may need a male SMA to female BNC adapter also)
- 6 ft. RG8-X jumper w/BNC male and female connectors to extend HT antenna with suction cups or auto window clip
- Band aids, moist towelettes and sunscreen
- Small pocket compass
- Operating reference card for HT
- RACES phone numbers and frequency reference card

Backup Bag

The “Backup Bag” contains “24-hour” items in a sturdy shoulder bag with carrying strap. Some amateurs use a padded nylon camera bag with external pockets marked as to contents. It can stay in the car until needed. Suggested contents are:

- \$40 emergency cash, credit card, long-distance calling card
- Second, backup or loaner 2-meter HT. (Battery packs and accessories should interchange with the dual-band radio)
- Spare rechargeable battery pack and AA-battery pack, ear phone and speaker-mike for second HT
- Operating manuals for both HTs
- Fused DC adapter cords with Anderson Power Pole connectors for brick amplifier and HTs
- Extra 10' 10 gauge twin lead extension cord, with battery clips, in-line fuses and Anderson Power Pole connectors to power brick amp or HT
- Gain antennas for both HTs: (telescoping half-wave Maldol AH-510R and flexible dual-band Pryme RD-98, 1/4-wave VHF, 5/8-wave UHF)
- AC wall chargers for HT rechargeable and 12V gel cells
- Gel cell batteries to power small brick amp at 10w @ 25% duty cycle / 8 hrs
- Two refills of AA Alkaline batteries for HT
- RG8-X jumpers with soldered PL-259s, two 3', one 6', one 10' and one 25' with barrel connectors to combine all
- BNC-male + BNC female to SO-239;
BNC-male + BNC female to PL-259;
NMO to SO-239 adapters
- Pocket VOM or multi-meter w/ test leads
- Cable ties, large and small, 6 each
- Two sharpened pencils, pencil sharpener, gum eraser, note pad, permanent marker
- ARRL ARES Field Resource Manual
- County road map with road numbers and names
- Topo maps of rural areas
- Cyalume lightsticks

- Compact, rugged, flashlight (Pelican mini lights), with extra bulb and AA batteries
- Two sets of spare fuses for all of your HT cords, mobile radio or brick amplifier
- Spare eye glasses of current prescription
- Comfort, safety and basic first aid items: sunglasses, sun block, space blanket, matches, tissues, toothbrush, sewing kit, insect repellent, tweezers, band-aids, adhesive tape, gauze pads, wound cleaning wipes, snacks, throat lozenges, aspirin, toilet articles, etc
- Appropriate clothing including foul weather gear
- USCG approved water packets (1 day worth)
- USCG approved rations (1 day worth)
- Compact, rugged, 25-40w 2 meter or dual-band [brick amplifier](#)

Disaster Bag

The "Disaster Bag" is packed in duffel, stowed with the "backup bag" in a Rubbermaid storage locker in the car trunk or at home 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:

- 2 meter or dual-band base antenna (Ringo Ranger or J pole)
- Mast kit, tripod adapter
- 100 ft. of RG-213 or similar coax on reel
- Small, mobile-type SWR/power meter
- Assorted connectors / adaptors including no-solder BNC and UHF for emergency repairs
- AC power supply and extension cord
- AC charger for HT rechargeable batteries and small gel cells
- 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 florescent light, for use as needed)
- 12-volt florescent droplight 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 or candles
- Soldering iron and solder
- Adjustable open-end wrench
- Screw drivers
- Folding hex key set
- Wire cutter and striper
- Crimpers
- Needle nose pliers
- Channel locks or Vise-Grip pliers
- Vinyl electrical tape for rain wraps, 1 roll

- Cable ties, large and small, 1 dozen each
- Rubber bands, medium and large, six each
- Duct tape
- Parachute cord
- Tarp
- Wool blanket or sleeping bag
- Wool fingerless gloves, warm hat, sweater, insulated rubber safety boots, extra dry socks and change clothing for at least 3 days for current season
- Repeater directory
- Two message pads, two pencils, grease pencil, two sheet protectors, 12 pushpins
- Small fire extinguisher
- First Aid Kit
- Personal safety gear including safety glasses, leather work gloves and hard hat
- Personal hygiene and sanitation supplies
- 2 additional days supply of USCG approved water and rations

PORTABLE BRICK AMP GUIDELINES

- ✓ 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 rechargeable 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 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." Some communications groups have found that the Mirage B-34, BD-35 and RF Concepts Mini-144 to be satisfactory.