

County of Bruce 72 Hour Survival Kit

We Live in a Relatively Safe Part of the World

In general living in the County of Bruce is relatively safe - we do not live in a tsunami or earthquake prone area (although they do happen); tornados are infrequent; power outages are also relatively short and infrequent. Many people therefore question the need for a '72 Hour Survival Kit' noting these facts and that they personally have 'alternatives' available if an emergency did necessitate them evacuating their home/community including: being able to move in with family living nearby, being able to escape to a family cottage, having a travel trailer parked in the yard or at a nearby campground etc.

So Why Prepare a 72 Hour Survival Kit?

Well probably for the same reason you buy insurance - just in case, peace of mind, and a belief in some degree of self-sufficiency. Also, preparing a 72 Hour Survival Kit is more than just gathering together the various components - it offers the time to discuss with your immediate family (and maybe elderly parents and others who rely on you) what you would do in various situations. What you would do in the event of a longer term power outage or IF a tornado hitting your community?

In fact, the most important part of the 72 Hour Survival Kit may not be the Kit itself but the preparation of a Family Emergency Plan

(<https://beprepared.emergencymanagementontario.ca/myplan/Privacy.aspx>)

Components of a 72Hour Survival Kit

There are many websites and publications that offer a list of what you should have in your 72 Hour Survival Kit. The recommendations in this 'County of Bruce 72 Hour Survival Kit' list reflect some of the unique aspects of living in Bruce County (dealing with winter) while addressing some of the limitations of other lists, weight of the Kit being most important. The list is broken down into two Tiers - Tier 1 are things we think are essential; Tier 2 are things that are nice to have. Remember one key point: **Only pack what you can realistically carry in an emergency situation.**



What to ask yourself before you pack your 72 Hour Survival Kit

Consider your family's situation. How many people are in your family? Does anyone in your family need special consideration? Allergies? Medicine? Do you have an infant? All of these things will determine what you want to pack in your 72 Hour Survival Kit. Keep in mind that your Kit should be as minimal as possible—the more you pack, the heavier your Kit will be.

TIER 1 - What you absolutely need in your 72 Hour Survival Kit

Every 72 Hour Survival Kit should be catered to the family's individual needs. There is no "one-size-fits-all" solution to putting a pack together; however, many of the base needs are the same. These following items are things that we feel you cannot go without in your 72 Hour Survival Kit.

Water - Water should be #1 on the list for every 72 Hour Survival Kit; it is the most basic and most important thing you need to survive. However, storing enough **drinking** water for you and your family quickly becomes a problem. The [recommended of amount of drinking water](#) is 3.0 litres for men over 19 years old and 2.2 litres for women 19 years and older per day per person. One litres of water weighs 1.0 kilogram (2.2 pounds), so if you're packing for a three person household, 72 hours worth of water can add up to over 22 kilograms (49 pounds) of water—not exactly realistic to carry.

Instead, we recommend packing three one-liter bottles of drinking water per person (for a family of three this would be a total of 9 litres weighing 9 kilograms/20 pounds) and getting something like a [LifeStraw Personal Water Filter](#) or other portable filter to add to your backpack. Look for something that removes 99.99% of waterborne bacteria and protozoa from any water source and can filter **up to 1,000 liters (264 gallons)** of contaminated water per filter.

We should clarify that this reduced water recommendation is strictly for limiting the weight of your 72 Hour Survival Kit if you need to evacuate. In many emergency situations, you will not have to evacuate your home and may simply be without power or running water. We recommend storing the maximum amount of drinking water—at least three litres per person for three days—in your home food storage. Only for emergencies where you need to evacuate do we recommend reducing water weight.

Non-perishable food - Don't just get non-perishable food; look for "non-cook" items for your Survival Kit, as well. You don't want to have to rely on a stove, fire, or any other cooking mechanism in an emergency situation. If you don't have to cook, you don't need cooking supplies, which means you can save space—and more importantly, weight.

Make your meal plan for all 3 days selecting a meal and one or more snacks for each meal. Remember, these meals are meant to help you survive and include enough calories (aim for 1500+ calories per adult per day), but you should pack items that you know you and your family will actually eat, especially if you're packing for a small child. We suggest packing any of the following non-perishable, non-cook food items:

- Crackers/cookies
- Nuts/trail mix/dried fruit
- Protein/granola/breakfast bars
- Beef jerky/sticks [Note that the smell from beef jerky/sticks may seep into other items in your pack]
- Canned beans, meat, tuna, pasta [Avoid "pop-top" cans. These can leak or explode in your pack.]

*Food Items assume that water will be the beverage of choice. Include powdered beverages if you are looking for some variety.

Backpack/Duffel - While a backpack is certainly the most 'efficient' at being able to handle all of the items needed for your 72 Hour Kit, an old hockey duffel bag (remember to remove any smelly old socks first) is a suitable alternative.

Can opener - Since you're packing canned food (no "pop-tops"), you'll need a way to get into the cans. This might be part of a multi-tool or a separate can opener, it's up to you.

Knife - Many people will pack a multi-tool and call it good, but we suggest having multiple cutting tools in case one is misplaced or doesn't work for the job. Having a knife with a large, fixed, non-foldable blade, may come in handy if you find yourself needing to cut through large items or cut for a long time.

Flashlight - Make sure to pack a durable, lightweight flashlight. There are a number of combination [radio/flashlight](#) products on the market that do not require batteries (work on a crank) and some that also include a charging port for a cell phone (only if you remember to bring the charging cable!).

Radio - Being able to follow the progress of recovery efforts, hear about evacuation routes or other potential threats is essential to being able to transition your family to safe location. A radio, or radio/flashlight combination will provide you with the ability to hear emergency bulletins or just for some old fashioned entertainment.

Extra batteries - All of your emergency electronics need power, and 72 hours is a long time to go between charges. Make sure to have an ample supply of backup batteries for your flashlights, radios, and any other emergency electronics you decide to pack. You might even consider a solar charger for your phone or radio.

Lighter - We don't recommend lighting fires in the aftermath of a disaster because you never know if a gas line has been damaged and may be leaking. However, every disaster situation is different and you may find yourself in need of a fire. Add a few lighters to your pack, in case you need to build a fire. We recommend a lighter over waterproof matches for a number of reasons, mostly because they can start thousands of fire, don't add much weight to your pack, and can still be used to create a spark long after the fuel runs out. Matches are virtually weightless, so you can still throw them in as a backup if you prefer.

Gloves - You'll need to do most everything by hand in an emergency situation so you want to make sure you have good protective gloves to keep from getting splinters or blisters. Gloves can also be used to sheathe a pair of scissors or other sharp utensils you may have in your pack. Including a pair of waterproof gloves will come in handy when working in snowy/wet conditions.

Large Heavy Duty Tarp - While sheltering in your vehicle is possible (if you have one), having the ability to set up a shelter or protect some of your rescued possessions from the elements is valuable. A large tarp can take the place of a tent or provide additional covered space outside a vehicle. Just remember to include bungee cords or rope (we like para cord) to tie it down.

Poncho - Like many other items in your survival kit, ponchos are a versatile survival item that can be used for [more than just the obvious](#). We suggest finding a quality poncho made from rip-resistant nylon, rather than going for a cheap plastic version.

Mylar/Thermal Blankets - Considering that sleeping bags are bulky and can be expensive, mylar/thermal blankets can fill a similar role and also have [multiple uses](#). You'll definitely want to have one or two in your 72-hour kit. A suitable replacement could be an 'emergency sleeping bag'. These bags pack in a small space and are lightweight. Examples include the SE EB122OR 84-Inch X36-Inch Orange Heavy Emergency Sleeping Bag available from on-line retailers.

Duct tape - Duct tape seems to be the fix-all solution, and it really is valuable in all sorts of situations. Check out some useful [duct tape survival tips](#).

Whistle - An emergency whistle will allow you to signal for help, alerting relief parties to your whereabouts.

First aid supplies - A standard first aid kit. Refer to [St John's Ambulance](#) or [Canadian Red Cross](#) to see suggested components.

Medications - Make sure to cover the basics to deal with pain, in case you or someone in your family is injured during the emergency. Acetaminophen, ibuprofen, children's medication, any other personal medication prescribed (enough for three days).

Toiletries - Basic toiletries such as toilet paper, toothbrush/toothpaste (travel size), feminine hygiene products, hand sanitizer/wet wipes etc. See our Article on 'Bathrooms (Sanitation & Hygiene) in an Emergency' for comments on using the Bathroom.

Eating & Clean Up - Since most, but not all of the recommended food items are relatively easy to eat you should only need a couple of plastic spoons or sporks to eat. Include wet wipes or similar for clean-up/hygiene and include a number of garbage bags (good also for keeping things dry and as a makeshift sleeping bag).

Dust mask - The likelihood of dust and debris is high in any emergency situation. Make sure to have some dust masks in your pack to protect your lungs.

Sweater & undergarments - In general it is easier to deal with summer temperatures during an evacuation than spring/fall/winter. We do suggest that you include a sweater or similar to deal with cold/cool conditions BUT include at least a change of underwear (your mom will be proud you remembered a clean pair) and socks.

Cash - Depending on the disaster, your credit cards may not work. Keep enough cash in small bills to survive for a week.

Infant needs - If you have an infant you'll need to pack all the necessary items like diapers, wipes, formula, medications specific to the infant, etc.

Copies of legal documents - Photocopies of your important documents such as insurance policies, birth certificate(s), will, passport, health card.

TIER 2 - What you'll probably want in your 72-Hour Survival Kit

This is where you start to differentiate each survival pack based on who it's for. Most of these items may seem like "cannot go without" items but depending on your pack, these are things you could theoretically live without—but probably don't want to — for 72 hours.

Tent - It's important to know that a two-man tent probably won't fit two people and their packs, especially if you want to be comfortable. You'll probably only need one tent for the entire family, but you need to plan for its size accordingly. If you have four people in your family, we suggest going with a 6-8 person tent so you'll have room for everyone and their packs. Also, make sure to store your packs inside the tent at all times. You don't want bugs or other animals getting into them.

Dishes/utensils - Cup, plate, knife, fork, spoon set.

Rope - Most sites suggest carrying 50 feet of rope.

Hatchet - Hatchets provide multiple uses beyond chopping wood. Here are [six unique survival uses](#) for your hatchet.

Sleeping bag—Sleeping bags present an interesting size and weight problem. You can make do without one by wrapping yourself in multiple thermal blankets, or there are a number of ‘mylar thermal sleeping bags’ on the market that weigh less than 4 ounces. They are not as comfortable as a big fluffy sleeping bag but they are light and will keep you warm at night.

Sheets - Cloth and plastic sheets can come in handy for ground-cloths, tablecloths, bandaging, food covers, etc.

Shovel - A shovel is another multipurpose tool that comes in handy in a pinch. A military folding shovel, lets you dig, saw, chop, cut, pick, pry, hammer, and even open bottles. And it even folds so you can carry it easily.

Bug repellent - Insects are ever-present in the aftermath of disasters. Pack some bug spray to protect yourself from irritating bites, painful stings, and bug-carried diseases.

Disposable camera - Having a disposable camera (yes they are still available) will allow you to document the damage done to your home so you can later report it to the insurance company. Don’t rely on your phone camera for this valuable documentation since it may lose battery or be damaged in the event.

Playing cards - Because in all likelihood, you’ll do a lot of sitting and waiting.

Gum - Chewing sugarless gum after a meal can help prevent tooth decay. Watch out for mint-flavored gum. The mint can seep into other items in your pack and flavor them. Nobody wants minty granola bars.

Pen & paper - An emergency isn’t something we are used to dealing with and some emergencies might have strange or complicated information that you will want to write down and remember. Information like addresses, milepost number, emergency contacts, etc.

Powdered drinks - This is a great way to rehydrate and add some flavor to your drinking water, especially if you are purifying your water with a LifeStraw.

Emergency two-way radio - Keeping yourself informed and having the ability to communicate during an emergency is invaluable.

Other things to consider for your 72 Hour Survival Kit

Immunizations up to date - Make sure you keep your immunizations up to date annually. Disasters cause all sorts of injuries and health concerns, and you want to keep yourself protected from any illnesses you might encounter.

Young children—We mentioned infants earlier, but toddlers and young children can create unique challenges. Consider your children's ages and personal needs and plan accordingly.

Do you know how to use all of your equipment? - This will fall in line with your semi-annual kit testing, but make sure you understand and can use every item in your pack as it's intended and more.

Pets - Pets are like children and you need to plan for their specific needs as well.

Organization - A neat, organized pack goes a long way to relieve stress in an emergency. Being able to find what you need as quickly as possible is a must. Stay away from minty gum or jerky because they can flavor other things in the pack. The flavors seep into other foods the longer they are stored together.

Storage - Store your kit in a place that is easy to reach, and ensure that everyone in your family knows where it is. Your kit does not have to be built overnight. Spread your shopping over a few weeks. Purchase a few items every time you go to the store.

Check and refresh your kit at least once a year - When the clocks shift to or from daylight savings time is a good time. Check all expiry dates and replace food and water with a fresh supply. Check batteries and replace as needed.

Above modified from <https://www.asecurelife.com/72-hour-kit/>