

Walker-Catoosa County ARES Training

Go Bags

What Is A Go-Bag?

A Go-Bag is a portable container(s) that contain all of the items you will need to survive a given event and/or EmComm deployment. Deployment can be a simple one, such as to an established Emergency Operations Center with pre-positioned radios, antennas, backup power, toilet facilities, etc. Or the deployment could be a very in-depth deployment, such as to a position out in the middle of nowhere, surrounded by nothing but trees next to a gravel road. You might also find yourself operating from your home shack. But even then an evacuation could force you to work from a relative's home or a motel room so preparing Go-Bags is still a good idea.

How To Get Started

Begin by putting together four types of Go-bags, customized to your needs, based on the items suggested in the lists below.

These lists are not all-inclusive but more like a starting point. Your Go-Bags should be well thought out and include items suited for you and your equipment. You may already have most of the listed items but consider acquiring the items that you don't while there is time and no urgency.

DON'T WAIT until you are called to begin assembling your Go-bags. Do it in advance of anticipated events. Remember, fires, earthquakes, Haz-Mat, etc. often don't provide either a warning or time to pack. Also, set a reminder to inventory the contents of your Go-Bag on a regular basis and replenish any supplies that need to be refreshed. This would also be a good time to make sure any chargeable devices are re-charged and ready to go.

Four Types of Go-Bags

- **Personal Go-Bags**
- **VHF/UHF Go-Bags**
- **Tool Go-Bags**
- **HF Deployment Go-Bags**

Personal (Survivor) Go-Bag

A properly prepared personal Go-Bag will help you with your personal survival needs. Consider the personal items you might need if you had to stay at a shelter or a friend's home for a few days. Every family member should have a personal "Go-Bag" ready for such emergencies and have it stored in a place that is quick and easy to access during an emergency. The personal Go-Bag will always be the first bag that should be loaded out in a deployment or emergency situation.

- A 3-day Supply of personal medications
- Clothing, Boots, Socks, Undergarments that are appropriate for the season (bright colors for shirts and jackets)
- A Season-Appropriate Hat
- Leather Gloves
- Spare Eyeglasses/Readers (spare contacts and/or solutions if you wear them)
- First Aid Kit/Trauma Kit
- Insect Repellent (summer)
- Sunscreen
- Headache/upset stomach/anti-Diarrhea/anti-bacterial & virucidal cream/Calamine lotion
- Sunglasses
- Water - Take a minimum of two times the amount of water you expect to need.
- Water Filter
- Water Purification Tabs
- Toilet Paper/Kleenex
- Headlamp or Flashlight w/extra batteries. Headlamps keep hands free!
- Rainsuit/Poncho
- Hi-Viz Orange or Yellow Vest (for use if your clothing is drab colored)
- Moist Towelette Packets
- Space Blanket
- Plastic ground cover tarp
- Spare shoe laces
- rope and twine
- Wool blanket and/or sleeping bag
- Fanny-pack/Back-Pack
- Sports/Bicycle water bottle
- High energy snacks and meal replacement bars
- Large trash bags
- A whistle
- Swiss Army Knife or Multitool
- Pencils and or Pens and Notepads
- Smartphone and charging method

VHF/UHF Equipment Go-Bag

This bag contains VHF-UHF equipment and other useful items and accessories. It also contains a list of miscellaneous items that might be useful in certain circumstances.

If resources are not available to stock an equipment in a Go-Bag on a stand-by basis, simply include a punch-list that has a list of items you will need to grab and add to the Go-Bag before deployment.

- ARES/EmComm/RACES/served-agency identification card(s), especially id cards needed to gain access to facilities
- A copy of your FCC-issued amateur radio license
- Handheld radio (dual or tri-band, if possible)
 - Spare battery pack(s) – fully charged
 - Charger with all needed cords
 - USB charger and USB charging cords, if applicable
 - 120 volt power supply, if applicable
- Headset with microphone
 - For high-noise areas the headset should have noise cancellation in the -20db to -30db range to be effective
 - Speaker mics will be very hard to hear in high-noise environments
 - Note: do not use the VOX option
- Antenna(s)
 - 19 inch magnetic mount antenna with ground plane kit (for dual band 2m/70cm) or equivalent portable antenna
 - Tripod mounted or hanging j-pole style antenna (dual-band or tri-band)
 - Mast, tripod or push-up pole for antenna if being used outside vehicle
- Coax cable (various lengths)
- Coax jumpers and connectors
- Coax connector adapters (BNC/PL259, BNC/SO239, many H/T's require SMA connectors)
- Duck tape
- Notebook, pen, pencil & clip board
- Watch or digital clock
- Maps of the area (topographic and street)
- Copies of message forms:
 - Activity log
 - ICS-213,
- Compass and/or GPS
- Copy of District & Unit Operations Manual.
- List of served agency phone numbers in your area (not just your district)
- High-viz boundary/wire marking tape

TOOLS Go-Bag

A properly prepared Tool Go-Bag will provide you with the best chance at making repairs in the field when things break. You may already have a tool kit/bag that you use every day that contains most of these items plus more! If so, all you need is a punch-list reminder to “grab your tool bag” before deployment.

- Swiss Army Knife or Multitool (if not included in your Personal Go-Bag)
- Razor knife (cheap, plastic disposable – available at Home Depot, Lowes, etc...)
- Multi-bit Screwdriver with interchangeable bits (Phillips, Flat)
- Folding set of Allen/Torx wrenches
- Nut Driver set
- Needle-nose Pliers
- Diagonal Side Cutters
- Crescent Wrench
- Electrical Tape
- Digital Voltmeter (VOM)
- Fuses (especially sizes for radio, power supplies, etc...)
- Fence Pliers (has built-in hammer!)
- Crimping Tool
- RF Connector Crimper
- Assortment of Crimp Connectors and RF Connectors
- Powerpole crimper (optional)
- Assorted Powerpole connectors (optional)
- Fasteners (Nails, Brads, Tacks)
- Rope, twine and fishing line
- Assorted plastic cable ties
- Soldering iron (butane-powered preferred in electricity not available)
- Solder
- 3 Wire AC Extension Cord w/2-3 pin adaptor
- AC to 12V power inverter
- Zip Cord
- Cash
- AM/FM battery-powered radio w/batteries
- Magnifying glass or strong reading glasses

VHF Deployment Go-Bag

Some deployments may require you to set up HF radios and antennas. Your VHF Go-Bag should be well thought out and include items suited for your own use and your own equipment! Once you have your Go-Bag outfitted, do a mock deployment, setting up your equipment just as you would during a real deployment. It's the best way to make sure you have everything you need for a successful deployment.

- HF transceiver (12V dc preferred)
- Microphones (and a backup for each radio)
- Noise Cancelling Head phones, external speaker
- Morse Code Key if appropriate
- Antenna Tuner
- Multi-band, NVIS antenna: which is NOT a mobile vertical, 75m dipole or 130 ft of wire
- Multi-band Dipole or EFHW antenna
- 50+ ft. of RG8X or better coax with appropriate antenna/radio connectors for each antenna.
- Insulators
- Antenna switch
- Lead weight & 50 ft light line for tossing over branches (or bow & arrow or slingshot)
- Guy ropes and Tent pegs
- High-viz marking tape to warn passers-by of antenna cables, lines and guys
- 3 Masts for the NVIS: One sectional, 20 foot with guy wires and two 8ft or more all preferably non-conductive to dissuade lightning strikes.
- Power source (one or, preferably, more):
- 12V LiFePO4 battery - 75 A/H or better w/ charger (generator with DC inverter or Vehicle w/ 12V battery & gas)
- Deep discharge, 12 volt marine battery with the same charging options
- Automobile with accessible battery terminals
- Cable with alligator clamps on one end and Anderson PowerPole connectors (or other) on the other end.
- Adequate gasoline.
- 120 Volt Power Supply (if utility/generator power is available)

Other Equipment (Optional or Deployment Specific)

- Cooler with Food & Drink
- Lawn chair
- Folding table
- Tablet or 3-ring binder
- Umbrella, tarp or canopy (sun or rain)
- Shelter Tent large enough to stand in
- Table and chairs
- Logbook
- Battery-powered work lights