

MY TOP 5 EVACUATION ESSENTIALS:

- 1 **Living beings.** Pets, kids, family and all of their needs
- 2 Laptop, power cable, **external hard drives** - key documents and photos.
- 3 ***ONE or TWO irreplaceable things from life on Planet Earth** (for me, writing project files and photos, family photo montage)
- 4 **Cell phone chargers**
- 5 **Go Kit** (see list below)

*** An urgent note about #3 - *Living beings and irreplaceable things from life on Planet Earth***

Be careful- this could suck up all of your time. I keep all of my hard drives in one crate for easy access. Plan this list carefully in advance and pre-place these items together year 'round so you don't have to hunt them down – you will NOT have time. In fire service they say - there is nothing you have that is worth your life. Do not dilly-dally with this.

PET GO-KIT - essential evacuation items - for pet parents:

- **Easy to carry, soft-sided pens for pets – one for each pet.**

Every pet needs their own crate - a place where they can get comfortable. Hard-sided crates take up too much room and are heavy to carry. At Walmart, I found inexpensive pop up crates. Dude and Doodle used to like to be together, but I found out, they argue in an emergency (imagine that!) They need personal space. Dude doesn't do crates normally, but he really needed a cave after evacuating last night. The cat got the big hexagonal pet playpen, with her litter box and bed.
- **A bed with their own smell, for each pet**
- **Leashes, water and food bowls, toys**
- **A week's worth of food and water**
- Boy, what I wouldn't give, for **Rescue Remedy** right now - for all four of us
- **Cat box, cat bed, cat food, food and water bowls**
- **Cell phones, cell chargers, all the right cables for every device** - car and wall units. Portable cell phone chargers are the bomb (Oh, excuse me, that's evacuation humor.)
- **Emergency Go-Kit** that supports you and your family for 3 days to 3 weeks with food, water and supplies.
- **Water is the hardest and heaviest** - but the most important. A camping filter and a water storage bag can save you time if you live around water like we do - but it's labor intensive.
- **Gym bag with changes of clothes** - believe me, you want a new wardrobe every day with all that stress. Don't forget extra undies.
- Your **travel kit of toiletries**
- **First aid kit** and/or medical supplies

Evacuation essentials list – make one today!

I pulled out my evacuation list and only had time to gather my top three priorities.

Those seemed like they took a couple of hours to pack into the car.

Time completely changes in a disaster.

My Top 3: The irreplaceable, can't live with out it, evacuation list

- 1 **Living beings.** Pets, kids, family and all of their needs
- 2 **Laptop, power cable, external hard drives** with photos, documents.
- 3 **Irreplaceable items** – wedding and kids photos - business plan – you first painting - letters from grandpa (me: *Surf Dog Diaries* writing project)

This is what evacuation looks like



The large playpen on the left is the cat condo, after evacuating her in the small cat carrier for the evacuation trip. Condo has her cat box and bowl, and she's separate from the dogs. The cat got the big hexagonal pet playpen, with her litter box and bed.

On the right- inexpensive Walmart pet soft-sided crates – one for each dog. I tried them together in the same pen and they fought – animals get stressed in these situations and need their own space. Let them out to hang out with you if you can. Many shelters will not take pets – fold out pet fences or playpens create a yard for them – perfect.

PLEASE do not hesitate- evacuate. When you evacuate, you literally only have minutes. What's first on the list? Living beings. Pack 'em up.

Immediately put the cat into a pet carrier or a small room while you get the carrier ready. Don't wait. Once they smell smoke and fear, you will never see them again. (How is it that cats can de-materialize?) They will not be able to evacuate. Expect a scene while the cat goes in the bag.

Number 4 on the list - Cell phone chargers

- Charger for car and wall- and especially portable "pocket" chargers
- Cables for every device –in the car at all times
- A backup of cell chargers and cables in your GoKit

You burn cell phones in no time. I was missing a charger cable and the phone died. I had a pocket recharger and it died. Keep everything in your car and your kit charged. You won't get to AC power for quite some time. Text, don't call - it saves power and works in lower cell coverage areas. Turn off Wi-Fi- roaming drains your phone. In a quake or long-term power outage, you likely won't have cell service.

Listen to your car radio. Post notes posted at your family meeting place. Call your out of state contact- phone interruption is local, so all family members should call in to one out of state contact that can tell everyone the status of everyone else.

The Go-Kit. Start with your travel/camping/weekend kit, that's easiest.

Build and keep your Go-Kit in an easy-to-reach place at home and a smaller one in your car. ALL cars should have a kit – for home, work and travel use.

About denial

In evacuations, you and your neighbors will be in denial. Some think they can hunker down and it will all just go away. They want to be home to cope (don't we all?) But the risk -- the reality -- is worth inconvenience. Don't hesitate - evacuate. What's the worst that can happen if you evacuate? Inconvenience. Stress. Either way - you've got it!

The Morning After

After 24 hours, there's all-new emotional baggage. It really did happen. This isn't a TV show where it's all-better the next day. The stress is almost worse The Morning After. Plan for a diversion for you and the kids- your favorite book or game or something to help pass the time and turn off your brain. Journal if that helps you.

From train derailment and wildfires – here's what we learned:

- In one moment, everything can change.
- Don't take one moment of near-normal life for granted.
- Plan how you'd take action - if suddenly, everything changed.



Barb, Dude, Doodle and Tia Ayers

Surf Dog Diaries / www.DogDiary.org