PACKING AN EMERGENCY BAG (GO-BAG)

What goes in the backpack when you have to leave quickly, how to pack it so it carries well – with a children's backpack, a document pouch and a twice-yearly check.

Last updated: 05/11/2026

The emergency bag is meant for the moment when you have to leave your home **quickly**: a fire in the building or the neighbourhood, a gas leak, a flood, an evacuation. There is no time then to pack calmly as you would for a holiday. One ready-packed backpack per person gets you through the first days – until you are with friends, relatives or in an emergency shelter and can go back home.

AT A GLANCE

- **One backpack per person**, children included. A backpack is better than a suitcase because both hands stay free. The BBK advises: for each family member, take no more than fits into one backpack.
- **For the first two to three days:** food for two days, a full water bottle, warm and weatherproof clothing, medication, first aid supplies, a torch, a radio, a charged power bank, a document folder and cash.
- **Only as heavy as you can carry without help, even for a longer time.** Heavy things go close to your back and at about shoulder height, light things at the bottom, things you use often at the top and in the side pockets.
- **Keep it within reach**, in a place everyone knows – ideally near your front door. ID, cards, keys and phone are added at the last moment.
- **Check it twice a year:** expiry dates, batteries, power bank – do the clothes still fit (especially children's)?

START SMALL

You don't need to buy a complete backpack today. You probably have a lot already – an old backpack, a torch, a change of clothes, a water bottle. Start with that and add one thing each day. None of these tasks takes more than ten minutes:

- **Pick a backpack** you already have – a hiking pack, a school backpack, a sports bag with straps. One for each person. In the app you can create a packing list for each person under Bags.
- **Put in the first layer of clothing:** underwear, socks, a warm jumper, a rain jacket. It costs nothing and is already worth a lot.
- **Write a phone list on paper** – with your family's numbers, a contact person outside the area and your meeting point – and put it in a plastic sleeve. You can add the printed family plan right away.

- **Make copies:** copy or print your ID card, driving licence, vaccination record and medication plan. More on this in the Document folder guide.
- **Some cash in small notes** in an envelope, in the inside pocket.
- **Add a torch and a power bank:** a hand or head torch with fresh batteries, the power bank charged, the right charging cable with it.
- **Choose a fixed place** for the backpacks – close to the door – and show it to everyone at home. Put the rest (food, first aid kit, radio) on the shopping list and get it bit by bit.

UNDERSTANDING

When you need the emergency bag

For a holiday you pack in peace. If you have to leave your home unexpectedly, there is no time for that. The BBK names typical cases: a leak in a gas pipe, a fire in the house next door, a disaster that is building up. Situations like these can make it necessary to clear individual buildings or even carry out larger and longer evacuations – during a flood, for example.

The BBK describes it like this: there is a fire in your neighbourhood, suddenly your home is affected too, and in the middle of the night you and your family leave the house quickly. If you have a packed backpack and know where your keys, phone and wallet are, you can act calmly instead of searching frantically.

The emergency bag is **not** your supply for home. If you can stay at home – during a power cut, for example – you live off the supplies in your kitchen and cellar (see Drinking water and Food supplies). The emergency bag is only for the journey from here to there and the first days somewhere else.

Why two to three days

After an evacuation it can take a while before you are allowed back into your home. That is why the BBK advises planning ahead: you may first stay in an emergency shelter or with acquaintances, and the emergency bag should get you through the first days. Hamburg's checklist sets the goal of managing **at least two to three days** without further supplies. The Johanniter speak of being self-sufficient for **48 to 72 hours** per person.

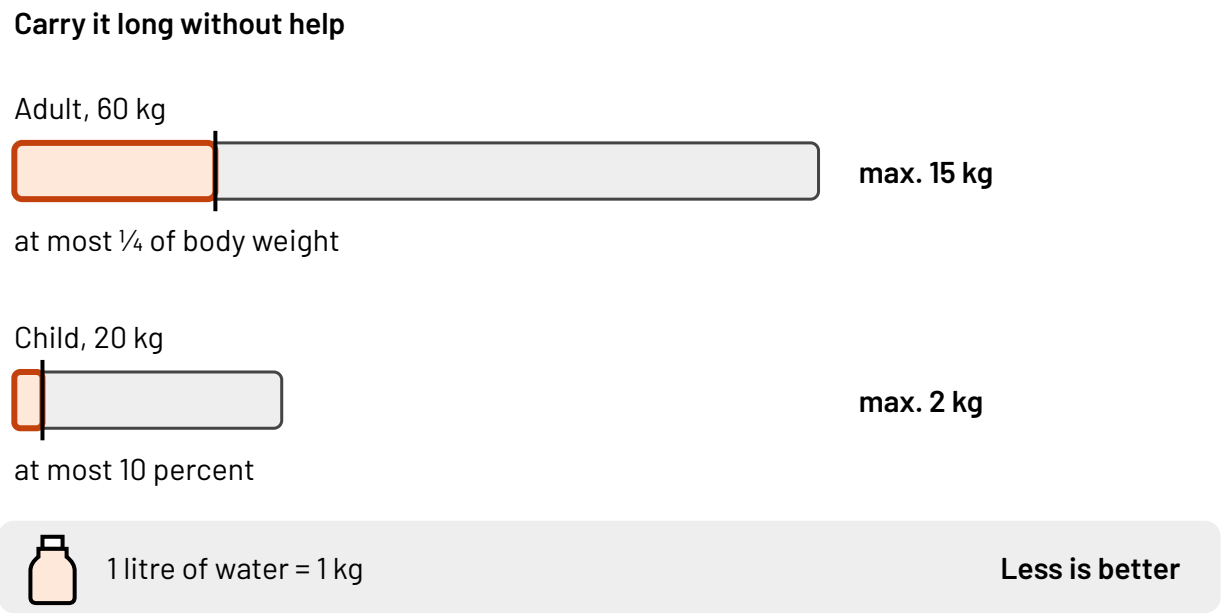
That is why every list includes **food for two days** and a water bottle – not a two-week supply. More would be too heavy. In an emergency shelter or with friends, water and food are usually available again. What you cannot get so easily: your own medication, your glasses, your papers. The BBK stresses that if you have to stay somewhere else for a while, access to medical care may be limited – which makes it especially important to have your personal medication with you.

Why weight matters so much

The older BBK leaflet on the emergency bag puts it simply: the emergency bag may only be so big that it can be **carried without outside help, even for a longer time**. Perhaps no buses are running, the road is closed, you have to walk part of the way to the assembly point, up and down stairs or through rain. A

backpack that is too heavy slows you down, hurts, and in the worst case gets left behind – along with your medication and papers.

Alpine clubs give an upper limit for hikers: the Swiss Alpine Club (SAC) says a backpack should be no more than **20 to 25 percent of your body weight**, the German Alpine Club (DAV) says **at most a quarter**. For children, the DAV recommends that the packed backpack weighs **no more than ten percent of the child's weight**. These are upper limits for fit, healthy people – not a target. If you are older, have back problems or need to carry a child, pack much lighter. The Johanniter advise choosing the size of the backpack according to your own physical fitness.



Guide values for weight: the BBK says the emergency bag must be carried without help, even for longer. Alpine clubs give at most a quarter of body weight for adults, so 15 kilograms at 60 kilograms; for children at most ten percent, so 2 kilograms at 20 kilograms. Less is better; water weighs one kilogram per litre.

The heaviest thing in the backpack is usually **water**: one litre weighs one kilogram. Then come food and the sleeping bag. Under Bags you can enter the weight of each item; the app adds up the total for you and shows you where you can save weight.

Sources for this section: BBK guide (11/2025), BBK "Notgepäck" (website), BBK leaflet on the emergency bag (MVE05), Hamburg "Notfallrucksack", Johanniter LV Nord "Der Notfallrucksack", SAC (6/2022), DAV "Der richtig gepackte Wanderrucksack" (11/2023), DAV "Packliste Wandern mit Kindern" (7/2026).

PREPARING

Choosing the backpack

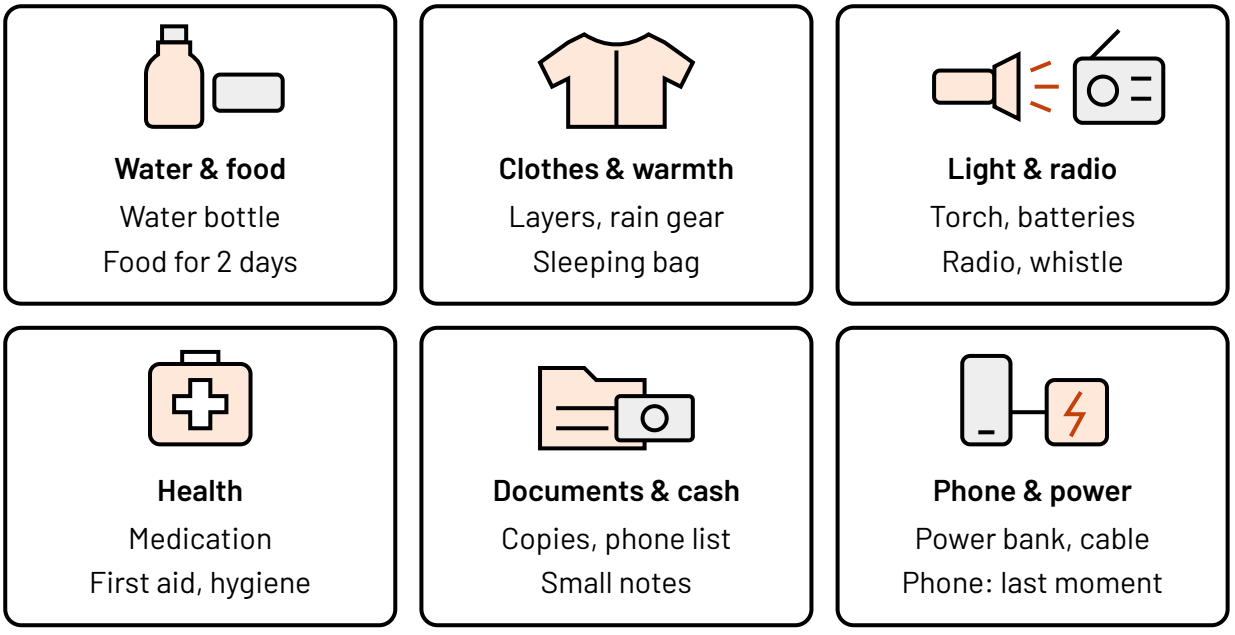
You don't need to buy a special "emergency backpack". A good hiking or travel backpack that you already have is enough. What matters:

- **Size:** the Johanniter name about **30 to 50 litres**, depending on your fitness, and **about 40 litres** in their checklist from North Rhine-Westphalia. For comparison: the SAC considers 30 litres enough for a weekend hike. A bigger backpack tempts you to pack too much.
- **Carrying system:** a padded back, **chest and hip belt** for relief and stability (Johanniter). The carrying system should suit your height and back length (DAV). Some models come in different back lengths – it's best to try them on (SAC).
- **Weather protection:** water-repellent material and a **rain cover** (Johanniter, DAV).
- **No wheeled suitcase:** a backpack is better than a wheeled case because your hands stay free (BBK, Johanniter) – for children, handrails, a torch or the dog's lead.

Children get their own small backpack (see below). For people who cannot carry anything themselves, see "Care needs and medication".

What goes in – by group

The list below sums up what the BBK names in its guide and on its website, with additions from the Johanniter, the Malteser and the City of Hamburg. It is a suggestion, not a must – cross out what you don't need and add what only you need. The same list is stored as a template in the app: under Bags, every new backpack starts with it, and you can adjust it and tick it off.



Six groups for the emergency bag: water and food, clothing and warmth, light and radio, hygiene and first aid, documents and money, phone and power.

1. Water and food

- **Refillable water bottle**, filled (BBK). Hamburg names a 1-litre bottle; the Johanniter reckon with at least two litres per person for 24 hours. Think about how much you can carry.
- **Food for two days**, long-lasting and in **dust-proof packaging** (BBK). Ideally something you can eat **without cooking** (Province of Nova Scotia) – for example cereal or protein bars (Hamburg,

Johanniter) or tins (Hamburg). Tins are heavier and need a tin opener.

- **Crockery and cutlery** (BBK), as light as possible.
- Only pack what you like and can tolerate – think of allergies and baby food (BBK).

2. Clothing and warmth

- **Warm clothing, rain protection and sturdy shoes** (BBK). The BBK recommends the **onion principle**: several layers on top of each other, plus a rain jacket or raincoat and sturdy, waterproof shoes or wellies.
- **A change of clothes** for a few days: underwear and socks (BBK, Johanniter).
- **A hat** and **work gloves** (BBK).
- **Sleeping bag or blanket** (BBK), perhaps a sleeping mat (BBK leaflet).
- **Emergency blanket** – it is on the Province of Nova Scotia's list and is also part of the Johanniter's first aid kit.

3. Light and information

- **Torch** with spare batteries (BBK). A head torch leaves your hands free.
- **Radio** that runs on batteries, solar power or a crank (BBK). When mobile networks and the internet fail, warning apps stop working too – but radio stations keep broadcasting.
- **Notepad and pen** (BBK).
- **A list of important phone numbers on paper** (BBK guide, checklist "Information") and a **copy of your emergency plan with a map of the area** (Province of Nova Scotia). Many maps can also be downloaded and used offline (BBK) – in Bereitsein under Map.
- **A whistle** to draw attention to yourself (Province of Nova Scotia, Johanniter).

4. Hygiene and first aid

- **First aid supplies** (BBK) – for example plasters, dressing packs, disinfectant, disposable gloves and scissors; the Johanniter have a detailed list for this.
- **Personal medication** and your medication plan (BBK) – more below under "Care needs and medication".
- **Toiletries**: toothbrush, toothpaste, soap, toilet paper, bin bags, period products, nappies for small children (BBK, Heilbronn fire service, Johanniter).
- **Respirator mask (FFP2)** (BBK).
- **Sun cream** (BBK).
- **Spares for aids** such as glasses or hearing aids (BBK).

5. Documents and money

- **A folder with important documents** (BBK) – packed waterproof, see "The document pouch" below.

- **Cash**, ideally **in small notes** – in case cash machines are not available (BBK, Johanniter, Province of Nova Scotia).

6. Phone and power

- **A charged power bank** (BBK) with **charging cable and adapter** (Johanniter). With it you can keep making calls and getting information.
- The phone camera helps you **document damage** later (BBK).

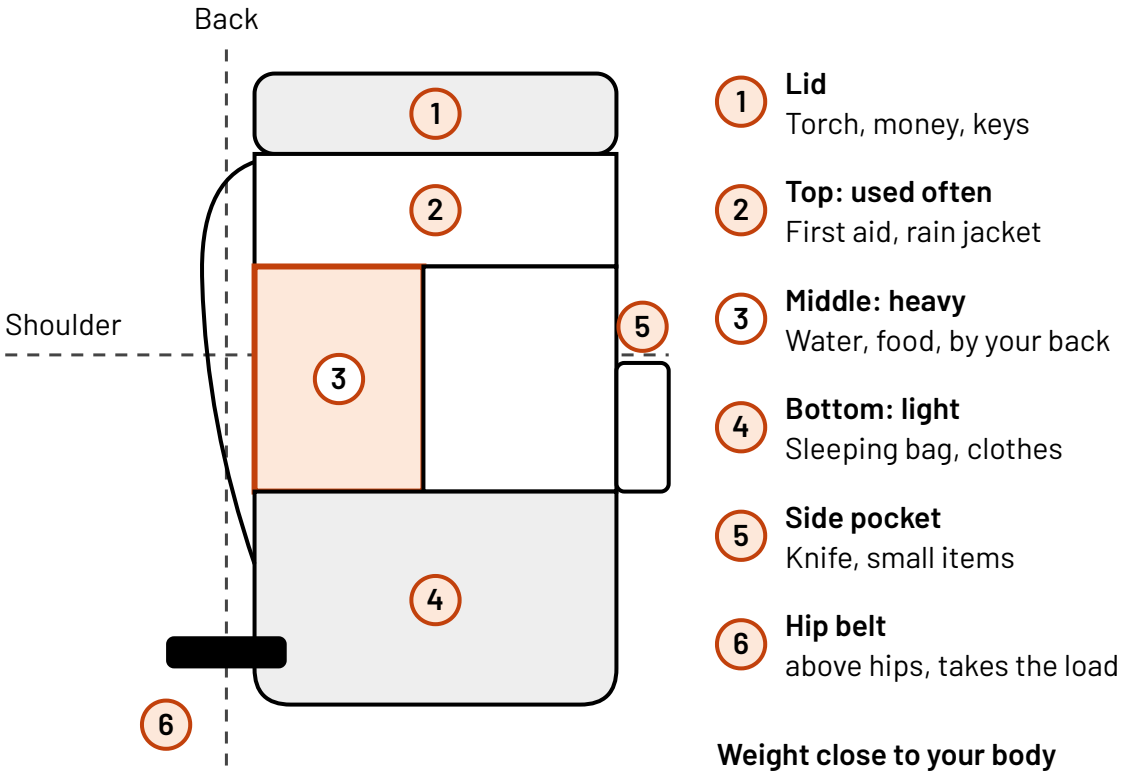
Plus: small tools

- **Pocket knife and tin opener** (BBK).
- **Lighter or matches** (BBK).
- **Keys:** you take your front door key and, if needed, your car key at the last moment (BBK).

The template in the app also contains a spare key, cable ties and a water filter or purification tablets – take what is useful to you. If you want to treat water on the way, first read in the Drinking water guide what these products can and cannot do.

Packing and weight distribution

How you pack decides whether a backpack carries well or badly. Alpine clubs have simple rules for this:



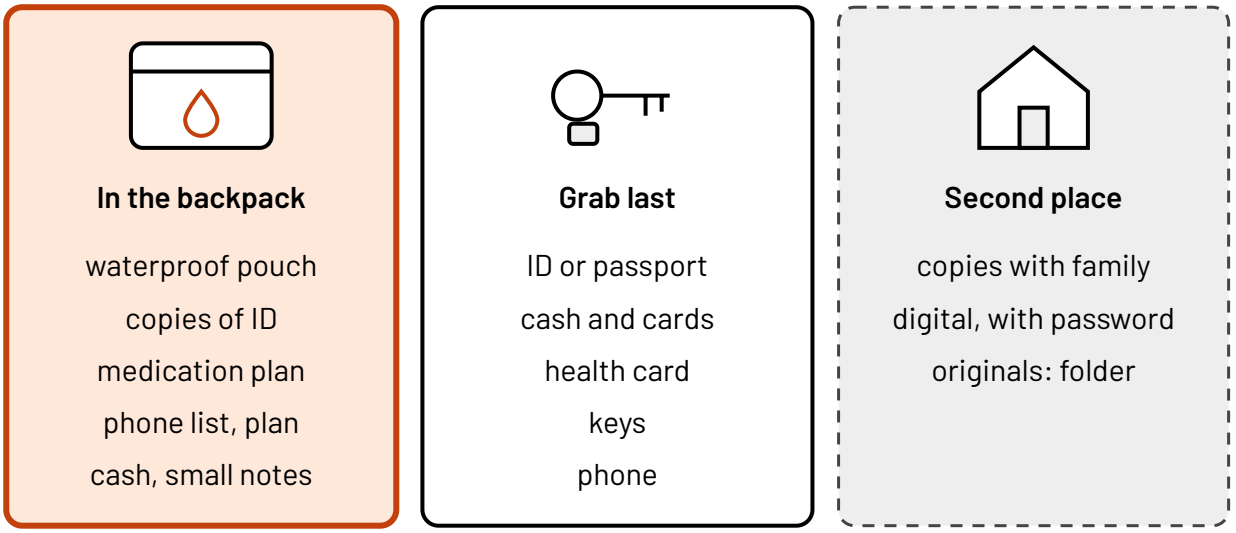
Packing scheme for the backpack: at the top and in the lid go things you use often, such as a torch, first aid and a rain jacket. In the middle, at shoulder height and close to the back, go heavy things such as water and food. At the bottom go light things such as the sleeping bag and spare clothes. Small items in the side pockets, papers and money in the inside pocket. The hip belt sits above the hips and carries most of the weight.

1. **Bottom: light and rarely needed.** Sleeping bag, blanket, change of clothes. The SAC: light things such as the sleeping bag and down jacket go at the bottom of the backpack. The DAV packs the least needed items at the bottom.
2. **Middle, close to your back: heavy.** Water, food, tins. The backpack's centre of gravity should be as close to the body as possible and **at shoulder height** (DAV, SAC). If heavy things sit far from your back, the centre of gravity moves away from your body and the backpack pulls you backwards.
3. **Top and lid: used often or fragile.** Whatever you need more often on the way goes in the upper part and the side pockets (SAC). **First aid kit and rain protection** should be easy to reach (DAV) – as should the torch and radio.
4. **Lid and side pockets: small items.** Pocket knife and other small utensils (DAV).
5. **Store valuables safely:** money and keys in the lid pocket or a hidden compartment (DAV). Put the document pouch where you can find it quickly but won't lose it.
6. **Small things in bags:** pack small items in separate pouches so you find them more easily (SAC) – for example one pouch for "hygiene", one for "power" and one for "first aid".
7. **Put it on properly:** adjust the hip belt so it runs **above the hips** – that is where most of the weight should rest (SAC). Then tighten the shoulder straps and chest strap.

A good test: put on the packed backpack and walk once around the building, including down the stairs and back up. If something presses, the backpack sways, or it is too heavy for you, repack or take something out.

The document pouch

If you have to leave the house suddenly, important documents should be within reach: in a fire or flood they can be lost, and it can be difficult or impossible to replace them (BBK). The BBK advises keeping them in a **fireproof or waterproof container**; in the emergency bag they should be **packed waterproof** (BBK leaflet). The Johanniter recommend sorting them in an expanding file and protecting them against water.



Everyone knows where they are

Documents in three places: the waterproof pouch in the backpack holds copies of ID and vaccination record, the medication plan, a phone list, the emergency plan and cash. At the last moment, ID, cards, keys and phone are added. A second place holds copies with relatives or digitally.

What goes in the pouch in the backpack – for the first days, copies are usually enough:

- **Copies** of your ID card or passport, driving licence, vaccination record (BBK: a simple copy is enough)
- Your **medication plan** and, if you have one, a **medical ID** with illnesses, allergies, aids and emergency contacts (BBK). You can create and print one in Bereitsein under Medical ID.
- A **phone list on paper** and the printed family plan with meeting points
- **Cash** in small notes
- Copies of insurance papers (Province of Nova Scotia)

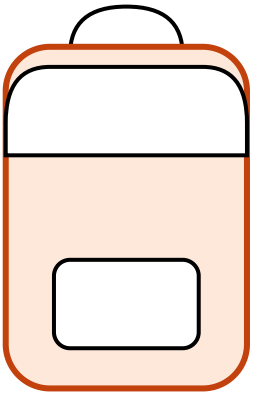
What you grab at the last moment – things you can't pack in advance because you need them every day (BBK): ID card or passport, cash and bank cards, health insurance card, vaccination record, front door key and, if needed, car key, phone. Always put them in the same place at home so you don't have to search.

What belongs in a second place: the BBK advises making **digital copies** of important documents or **leaving copies elsewhere** – with relatives, friends, a notary or in a bank safe deposit box. According to the BBK, you can store digital documents in a cloud, on a portable hard drive or on a USB stick. This is sensitive data – protect it with a password.

Originals such as birth and marriage certificates or a will are kept in the **document folder** at home, which you take along as well in an evacuation. Whether a document has to be an original or a certified copy is something the office that issued it can tell you (BBK). Everything about this is in the Document folder guide. And: everyone in the household should know where the folder is (BBK).

The children's backpack

Every child should have their own emergency bag (Province of Nova Scotia, BBK). It gives children a sense of security: they know what is inside and have something of their own with them. Many children like to carry their most important things themselves – for example a cuddly toy, a water bottle and a small snack (DAV).



max. 10%
of the child's weight

In it:

- ✓ small water bottle
- ✓ snacks
- ✓ rain jacket
- ✓ change of clothes
- ✓ small torch
- ✓ cuddly toy



Neck pouch
name
date of birth
address

Adults carry the rest

Children's backpack: no more than ten percent of the child's weight. In it go a small water bottle, snacks, a rain jacket, spare clothes, a torch and a cuddly toy. Plus a neck pouch or SOS capsule with name, date of birth and address. The parents carry the rest.

- **Weight:** the packed backpack should weigh **no more than ten percent of the child's weight** (DAV). For a child of 20 kilograms that is 2 kilograms – really just the essentials. Water, food for everyone and spare clothes are carried by the adults.
- **What can go in:** a small water bottle, a few snacks, a rain jacket, a change of clothes with socks and a hat, a small torch, a cuddly toy or a small game. That is also what the children's template under Bags contains.
- **Name and address on the child:** the BBK recommends a **neck pouch or SOS capsule with name, date of birth and address** for children. That way the child can be matched to you if you get

separated by accident. SOS capsules are sold in department stores, pharmacies and chemists. A note with your phone numbers and the meeting point in their jacket helps too (see the guide Children in a crisis).

- **For babies and toddlers:** nappies (BBK, Heilbronn fire service) and infant formula and baby food (Canada) – these go in an adult's backpack.
- **Remember they grow:** at every check, see whether the packed clothes still fit – especially for children, who grow quickly (Province of Nova Scotia).

Let your child help with packing. You can explain playfully what the emergency bag is for – calmly and without frightening pictures.

Pets

"What is good for you is good for your pet," writes the US health authority CDC: take animals with you when you evacuate. If you leave them behind, they may get lost or injured. The CDC lists for a pet emergency kit:

- **Lead, collar with tag** and a harness if needed; a **suitable carrier** with a blanket or towel. Keep the lead and carrier close to the exit.
- **Label the carrier** with your pet's name, your name and your phone numbers.
- **Identification:** a collar with current contact details; if the animal is microchipped, keep the details up to date with the registry.
- **Copies of papers** in a waterproof container: vaccinations, medical history, medication, plus **recent photos** of your pet.
- **Food and water:** the CDC names a **two-week** supply per animal, plus bowls and feeding instructions. That is a lot to carry – think about what fits in the backpacks and what you put ready next to them.
- The animal's **medication** with instructions, cat litter and a tray, bags and cleaning supplies, a toy.

Find out in advance where you can stay with your pet: the CDC points out that emergency shelters do not always take pets – service animals excepted. Alternatives can be friends and relatives outside the area or a boarding kennel. More in the guide People who need care, and pets.

Care needs and medication

Personal medication belongs in everyone's emergency bag. If you need aids or support in everyday life, think carefully as well about what you would need if you had to leave the house quickly. The BBK lists:

- **Aids** such as glasses or hearing aids – and spares
- **Spare batteries, rechargeable batteries and chargers** for technical aids
- **Mobility aids**, if you have to leave the house quickly
- A **medication plan** and a **supply of the medication you need** (watch the expiry dates and storage)

- **Pet food and water** for an assistance animal
- A **list of emergency contacts** and a **medical ID**

How much medication? For the emergency kit of people with disabilities, the CDC advises **at least one week's supply** of all prescription medication and a cool box for medication that has to be kept cold. The contact list of the people who support you should be kept in a watertight container. Talk to your doctor or pharmacy about how to build up a small supply.

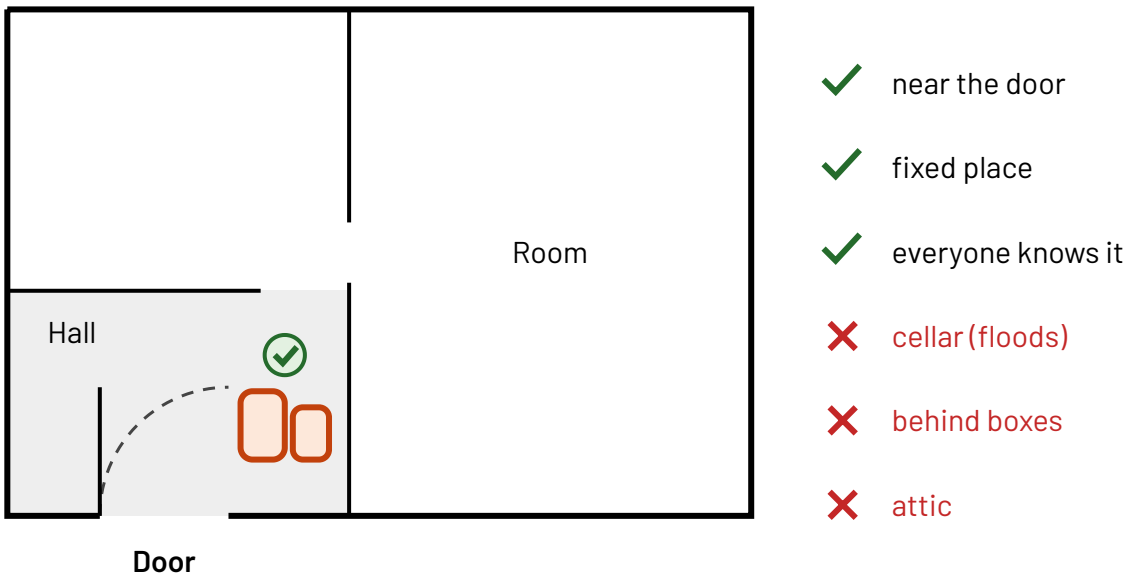
If you cannot use escape routes on your own, think in advance about who can support you and how (BBK). Talk to neighbours, relatives or your care service. A medical ID as well as pen and paper help you communicate with emergency services (BBK). You can create the ID in Bereitsein under Medical ID. If you care for someone who cannot carry anything, pack their emergency bag into the others' backpacks or plan who carries what.

Workplace and car

The Province of Nova Scotia advises considering an emergency bag not only at home but **also at work and in your vehicle**. It can be smaller than the one at home – a selection from the list above that suits your route. The BBK also advises knowing the escape routes not only at home but also at your workplace. For water in the car, read in the Drinking water guide why PET bottles should not lie in sun and heat for long.

Where the backpack goes

The BBK speaks of an emergency bag that is **within reach**. The Johanniter advise a central, easily accessible place that everyone in the household knows; the Government of Canada gives the **front-hall closet** as an example, and for pets the CDC advises keeping the lead and carrier **close to the exit**.



Where the backpack belongs: in the hallway close to the front door, in a fixed place everyone knows. Not in the cellar, which is dangerous in a flood, and not behind boxes in the attic.

- **Good:** in the hallway, on the coat rack, in the cupboard next to the door – in a fixed place.
- **Not in the cellar:** during a flood, the BBK says you should not enter the cellar under any circumstances.
- **Not behind clutter:** right at the back of a cupboard or in the attic, you won't find it at night.
- **Everyone knows:** show everyone in the household where the backpacks and the document folder are – children too.

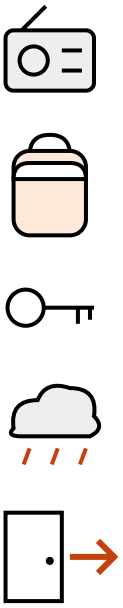
Sources for this section: BBK guide (11/2025), BBK "Notgepäck" and "Dokumente sichern" (websites), BBK leaflet on the emergency bag (MVE05), Heilbronn fire service "Im Notfall vorbereitet", Hamburg "Notfallrucksack", Johanniter LV Nord and Johanniter NRW, Malteser "Evakuierung", DAV (11/2023, 7/2026), SAC (6/2022), Province of Nova Scotia (7/2026), Government of Canada (9/2025), CDC (2024).

IN AN EMERGENCY

When you have to leave – step by step

How much time you have depends on the situation. In a fire every second counts; in an announced evacuation there are often a few minutes. The order stays the same: people first, then the backpack, then everything else.

1. **Stay calm**
   Follow announcements, radio
2. **Take your backpack**
   one per person
3. **Add the last things**
   ID, money, keys, phone
4. **Dress for the weather**
   Children and pets ready
5. **Leave, tell others**
   Meeting point, rescuers



Fire: get out, never go back

Grab and go in five steps: 1. Stay calm, follow announcements. 2. Take one backpack per person. 3. Add the last things: ID, money and cards, keys, phone. 4. Dress for the weather, look after children and pets. 5. Leave and tell others. In a fire: get out at once, never go back.

1. **Stay calm and get information:** listen for announcements from the police, fire service and others (Malteser), switch on the radio or a warning app and follow the instructions (BBK).
2. **In a fire: get out at once.** Never escape through smoke-filled rooms or stairwells – just a few breaths of smoke can be deadly. The rule always applies: don't put yourself in danger (BBK). If the backpack isn't on your way out, it stays behind. Warn the people in your household and the neighbours, call 112.
3. **Take one backpack per person.** Everyone takes their own, children their small one.
4. **Add the last things:** ID card or passport, cash and bank cards, health insurance card, vaccination record, front door and car keys, phone (BBK). If you take medication every day: add the supply from the bathroom or kitchen. Take the document folder.
5. **Dress for the weather:** layers of clothing, a rain jacket, sturdy shoes or wellies (BBK). Put the backpack on, close the hip belt.
6. **Children and pets:** hang the neck pouch or SOS capsule around your child's neck (BBK). Pets on the lead or into the carrier (CDC).
7. **If there is time:** turn off the water and gas supply, switch off lights and electrical appliances such as kettles and irons, close windows and doors (Malteser). The details are in the Evacuation guide.
8. **Leave and tell others:** if you know of people who are still in the danger area, tell the rescue services (Malteser). Pass on information from the authorities to others (BBK). Text your family and go to the agreed meeting point.
9. **Sort out where to stay:** as soon as you have left the danger area, sort out where you will stay – with friends, relatives or acquaintances (Malteser), otherwise in the emergency shelter named by the authorities.

You only find out how long it really takes when you practise. Under Drill there is an exercise in which you leave your home with your emergency bags within ten minutes – as if the call came right now.

On the way and in the emergency shelter

- **Keep the backpack with you:** don't leave papers, money and medication unattended.
- **Save your phone battery:** short messages instead of long calls, the power bank for essentials. Get information from the radio (see Power cut).
- **Keep an eye on the children:** the neck pouch or capsule stays on the child until you have arrived.
- **Keep taking your medication** as planned. If something is missing, tell the helpers early.

Sources for this section: BBK guide (11/2025), BBK "Notgepäck" (website), Malteser "Evakuierung", CDC "Pet Safety in Emergencies" (4/2024).

AFTERWARDS

Back home

- **When you return, too,** follow the authorities' instructions (BBK).
- **Photograph damage:** with your phone camera you can document damage for the insurance company (BBK).
- What to do after a flood is in the Floods and heavy rain guide.

Unpack, refill, put it back

An emergency bag that has been used is often half empty, wet or in a mess afterwards. A few days after you get back, take half an hour:

1. **Take everything out**, dry wet things, wash the clothes.
2. **Replace what was used:** food, water, medication, plasters, batteries. Whatever is missing goes on the shopping list.
3. **Top up the power:** charge the power bank, check the batteries.
4. **Documents back:** originals into the folder, copies into the pouch, refill the cash.
5. **Repack** following the packing scheme and put the backpack back in its place by the door. In the app, "Unpack everything (check again)" under Bags clears all the ticks so you can tick items off again one by one.

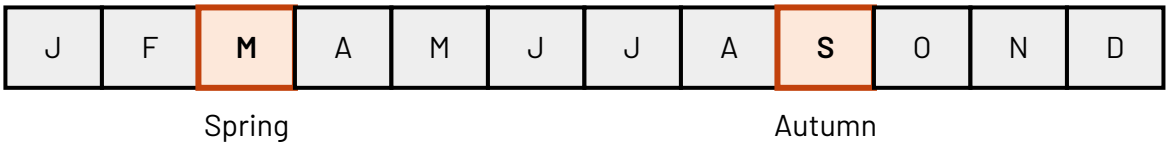
Learning from it

Sit down together briefly: what was missing? What was too heavy? What did nobody need? Did everyone know where their backpack was? Improving one thing is enough – lighter food, for example, or a second torch.

Check it twice a year

Even an unused emergency bag ages. The Province of Nova Scotia advises checking it **twice a year** and replacing anything that is out of date; the CDC also recommends reviewing the emergency kit **every six months**. The Government of Canada names as a minimum replacing food, water, batteries and medication **at least once a year**. The Johanniter remind you to check regularly so that food, medication and electronics stay usable.

CHECK TWICE A YEAR



- [ ] Expiry dates
- [ ] Clothes for the season
- [ ] Batteries, power bank
- [ ] Phone list up to date
- [ ] Clothes still fit
- [ ] Cash complete

Fixed dates make it easy

Check plan twice a year, for example in March and September: expiry dates of food and medication, batteries and power bank, whether clothes still fit and suit the season, documents and phone list up to date, cash complete.

Choose two fixed dates, for example one in spring and one in autumn. A good fixed date in Germany is the nationwide warning day in September. Then check:

- **Expiry dates** of food, medication, first aid supplies and, if relevant, water
- **Batteries:** replace or check them; **charge the power bank**
- **Clothing:** does it still fit – especially children's (Province of Nova Scotia)? Does it suit the season? The province explicitly lists seasonal clothing.
- **Documents and list:** are the phone numbers, meeting points and medication plan still right?
- **Cash:** is it all still there?

In the app you can set a "Check by" date for each item under Bags – Bereitsein reminds you in good time when medication, food or batteries are due.

Sources for this section: BBK "Notgepäck" (website), Province of Nova Scotia (7/2026), CDC "Building an Emergency Kit" (9/2024), Government of Canada (9/2025), Johanniter LV Nord.

COMMON MISTAKES

- **Wanting to buy everything at once:** start with what you have and add to it bit by bit.
- **One backpack for everyone:** each person needs their own – otherwise everything is missing if you get separated.
- **Packing too heavy:** if you can't carry it for longer without help, it gets left behind in an emergency.
- **Heavy things right at the bottom or far out:** that pulls you backwards. Heavy things close to your back, at shoulder height.

- **A wheeled suitcase instead of a backpack:** your hands need to stay free.
- **Only originals, no copies:** if originals are lost, they are hard to replace. Copies in the pouch, a second copy in another place.
- **Unprotected papers:** pack documents waterproof.
- **Forgetting medication:** it is the most important thing you can't easily replace.
- **Backpack in the cellar or attic:** it belongs within reach by the door.
- **Going back into a fire for the backpack:** never. People come first.
- **Never checking:** expired bars, flat batteries and children's jackets that are too small don't help.
- **Children without name and address:** neck pouch or SOS capsule with name, date of birth and address.

CHECKLIST

Backpack

- [ ] One backpack per person, a small one for children
- [ ] Padded back, chest and hip belt, rain cover
- [ ] Weight tested: can be carried for longer without help, children no more than 10% of their weight
- [ ] Packed by the scheme: light at the bottom, heavy close to the back, often-used at the top

Water and food

- [ ] Full, refillable water bottle
- [ ] Food for 2 days, in dust-proof packaging, edible without cooking
- [ ] Crockery, cutlery, tin opener

Clothing and warmth

- [ ] Warm clothes in layers, rain jacket, sturdy shoes
- [ ] Change of clothes, underwear, socks
- [ ] Hat, work gloves
- [ ] Sleeping bag or blanket, emergency blanket

Light, information, power

- [ ] Hand or head torch with spare batteries
- [ ] Radio with batteries, solar or crank
- [ ] Charged power bank, charging cable, adapter
- [ ] Notepad, pen, whistle

Hygiene and health

- [ ] Personal medication (at least 1 week) and medication plan
- [ ] First aid supplies
- [ ] Toiletries, toilet paper, bin bags, period products, nappies if needed
- [ ] FFP2 masks, sun cream
- [ ] Spare glasses or spares for hearing aids, batteries and chargers for aids

Documents and money

- [ ] Waterproof pouch with copies of ID, driving licence, vaccination record
- [ ] Phone list on paper, printed family plan, map of the area
- [ ] Medical ID filled in
- [ ] Cash in small notes
- [ ] Copies or digital copies in a second place

Tools

- [ ] Pocket knife, lighter or matches

Children and pets

- [ ] Neck pouch or SOS capsule with name, date of birth, address
- [ ] Cuddly toy or small game, clothes in the right size
- [ ] For pets: lead, carrier with name and phone number, food, copies of vaccination records, photo

Storing and checking

- [ ] Fixed place close to the door, everyone knows it
- [ ] A fixed spot for ID, cards, keys and phone that is always the same
- [ ] Checked twice a year (for example March and September)
- [ ] Practised an emergency once

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