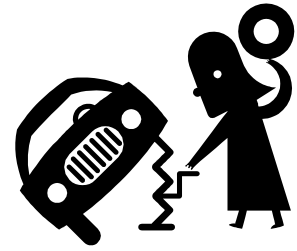


An Emergency Kit for Your Vehicle

By Gemie Martin



Ideally each vehicle you own should have an emergency kit to keep you prepared for whatever may happen out on the road.

Put the following items into a backpack and/or the trunk of your car:

- Jumper cables
- Tool to remove and tighten lug nuts (This should come with your car)
- Jack (This may come with your car)
- Spare tire—check periodically to make sure it is inflated properly
- Extra fuses (know how to change these)
- Scraper for windshield for ice and snow removal
- Windshield sun shade (can be left in car)
- Life Hammer (or similar tool) to break the windshield from inside and slash through seat belts. **Store SECURED within reach of the driver—not in the backpack.** This should not float. It needs to be secured so it does not become a dangerous projectile in the event you are in an accident
- Cell phone (and charger that plugs into the cigarette lighter). Also, spare charger with connecting cords
- Phillips Screw driver, slip joint pliers, and other tools you may need
- Tire gauge (to check tire pressure)
- 14-20 foot tow rope with metal hooks
- Flashlight with extra batteries (store batteries separately)
- A can of tire sealant and inflator (make sure it can be safely stored in a hot car). Make certain the stem with the opening for air is not at the bottom of the tire—sealant will not go in if the weight of the car is on this opening
- Whistle with lanyard
- Compass
- Duct tape
- A large “Call Police” distress flag or sign (can be written with marker on the back of a sun reflector shield)
- Reflective Triangle(s) or flares (to alert other drivers of problems ahead)
- Water proof matches and an outdoor lighter (keep away from children. **DO NOT** light if gas is leaking)
- Small rubber hose for siphoning gas (available at automotive supply stores)
- Swiss-type army knife
- Emergency (Mylar-type) blanket and/or sleeping bag version of this
- Small rain poncho with hood
- Hand and foot warmers

- Signal mirror—metal, not glass
- Leather (or leather-palm) work gloves
- Pen and paper—a permanent marker could be used to write vital information (medical conditions, name, emergency contact phone number, etc.) on clothing
- Diapers (and/or Depend undergarments or pads for adults—in case you are trapped in your car for hours)
- Cups (there are a number of collapsible cups available which save space)
- Water (leave space for it to expand if it may freeze). Carry 1 gallon if possible in PETE bottles
- Reflective Tape
- Food—emergency ration bars work well. Rotate often due to higher internal car temperatures. Make sure you have food for babies and small children Also consider those with health concerns such as diabetes or hypoglycemia
- Sneakers (for women—high heels don't work so well in emergencies)
- First aid kit—it should have basic medications, equipment, bandaging supplies and hand sanitizer. Check it periodically to make sure items have not expired
- Plastic bags. Large black plastic bag. Extra zipper bags
- Automobile fire extinguisher (check to see what safe storing temperatures are. We leave ours home in the summer because the car interior is too hot)
- 12 volt spotlight (optional)
- Small hatchet or axe (optional)
- Emergency tri-fold shovel (optional)
- Roofing shingles (or something that you can slide under your tires to help regain traction—optional)
- Small portable air compressor with inflator (optional)
- Portable Battery charger (optional—but nice if another car is not available to jump-start you). Keep it charged and store it in your trunk. We store ours in the garage and take to only for long trips or outings into the wilderness

Final notes: Maintain your car's gas tank at least half full at all times. If you are a woman traveling alone do not open the car door to a stranger. Instead have him call for help if you are unable to place a call. Also, do not stop to help a stranger (or strangers) if you are alone in a remote area. Sometimes “accidents” are staged to take advantage of would-be good Samaritans.

References:

Null, Christopher “How to Create an Emergency Kit for Your Car,”

Ririe, Stephen D. *72 Hour Kit, Emergency Preparedness Handbook*

The following catalog site: www.survival-supply.com has kits and emergency items available