

Safety Note # 188

## BUILDING AN EMERGENCY GET HOME BAG



A Get Home Bag (GHB), is an important part of your personal emergency preparedness plan. A GHB contains emergency supplies to assist you to get home as safely and quickly as possible in the event your normal commute is compromised by a disaster, such as an earthquake. Your GHB should have enough supplies to last you at least one day away from home, even if your home is less than a half a day walk. The bag should be a backpack, which keeps your hands free, and is the easiest way to carry it. Your GHB should be kept in your vehicle or work space every day for quick access. If you park in a parking garage, keep the bag at your work space. The bag will also be helpful during road closures, vehicle break downs, and sheltering in at work.

*The average person can walk 3 miles an hour on flat easy ground. Use this as a guide to determine how long it would take you to walk home. Add extra time for rough terrain.*

*Choose a backpack that is durable and rugged. It should be small and lightweight to carry under 20 pounds of supplies. Purses, and fanny packs are too small for an adequate GHB.*

### Supplies for building your emergency Get Home Bag:

- **FOOD** – Pack nonperishable, ready to eat foods, that don't require cooking, such as energy and protein bars. Jerky, trail mix and Gatorade Energy Chews also should be considered. High calorie foods are best.
- **WATER** – Have a full stainless steel water bottle for your GHB. If additional potable water is not available during your trip, you can boil water in a stainless steel bottle. A water filter such as a LifeStraw, and water purification pills, should also be part of your Get Home Bag.
- **FIRST AID** – Include a small hiking sized first aid kit, along with a First Aid instruction guide. Foot blister pads and sunscreen should also be included.
- **MEDICINE** – Carry a 3 day supply of prescriptions, pain/allergy and stomach relievers.
- **CLOTHING** – Have clothing that is best for walking and hiking, including footwear. Change the clothing you pack according to the seasons. Have a coat and rain gear available during the winter. Have clothing to protect you from the sun as well as a pair of work gloves and eye protection.
- **EMERGENCY SUPPLIES** – Emergency Mylar sleeping bag, tent, and blanket. They are small and lightweight.
- **TOOLS** – Pocket knife, flash light, light stick, lighter, multi-tool, duct/electrical tape, whistle, paracord, compass, phone charger, batteries, spork, can opener, and map. Compact binoculars and a small hand held radio can be useful depending on the terrain and weather.
- **PERSONAL** – Grooming and personal hygiene items, Chap Stick, camp toilet paper and/or wet wipes, money.
- **PROTECTION** – Consider items such as a Knife, Pepper Spray and/or Stun Gun.

**Remember** – There is no “right way” to assemble a Get Home Bag as they will differ from each person to suit their own unique situations. The only purpose for the bag is to get you home safely and quickly.