



Personal Go Kit for Emergency Communications

Why a Personal Go Kit is essential for EmComm?

In times of crisis, when conventional communication systems falter, amateur radio operators become a lifeline—linking communities, coordinating response efforts, and restoring vital connections. But readiness isn't just about having a license or a radio; it's about being equipped to deploy at a moment's notice. That's where the Personal Go Kit comes in.

A well-prepared Go Kit is more than a backpack—it's a mobile command center. It ensures that operators can function independently, safely, and effectively in unpredictable environments. Whether responding to a natural disaster, supporting a public service event, or assisting in a search and rescue mission, having the right gear—organized, tested, and ready to roll—can make the difference between chaos and coordination.

For amateur radio volunteers, a Go Kit reflects commitment, professionalism, and foresight. It's a symbol of service—and a practical tool that empowers us to do what we do best: communicate when it matters most.

Preparedness Starts with your Go Kit

As a volunteer emergency communicator, your mission is clear: deliver every message swiftly, accurately, and without delay. Success in this role demands more than technical skill—it requires operational readiness and the ability to stay focused under pressure. That's why preparation isn't optional; it's essential.

Being truly ready for an emergency communications assignment means anticipating the unexpected. From radio gear and power sources to clothing, food, water, and personal essentials, your Go Kit should be thoughtfully assembled to support both your mission and your well-being. It's not just about packing equipment—it's about eliminating distractions so you can concentrate on what matters most: reliable communication when lives may depend on it.

A well-planned Go Kit reflects foresight and professionalism. By considering the range of scenarios you might face—whether it's a field deployment, shelter support, or a mobile relay—you ensure that when the call comes, you're not just ready... you're already on the move.

Types of EmComm Assignments

As a volunteer Emergency Communicator, your versatility is your greatest asset. You may be deployed in a variety of roles, each with distinct operational demands and environments. Whether you're stationed at a command center, operating in the field, or supporting mobile operations, your ability to adapt—and your Go Kit's readiness—can make all the difference.

Base Station Assignments – Fixed Stations such as:

- * Incident Command, hospital, helibase, staging/deployment area, someone's home, EOC

Field-Portable Stations –

- * Field Command Post (CP), Shelter, Aid or Rest Station, Decon Unit, etc.

Mobile Stations –

- * Mobile CP, Staff shadow, Vehicle Transport, Relay Station (manual or x-band), etc.

Length of Assignments

- * Simple drill or other event lasting a few hours or less

- * Overnight such as phone failure, internet disruption

- * Two to Three days, Multishift Multiday (MSMD) Event such as wx, act of terrorism, etc.

What is a Go Kit?

A Go Kit is a pre-staged collection of equipment and personal gear that you will need to perform your duties as an EmComm operator in the event of a call out.

Your Go Kit should be tailored to your needs, your equipment, expected assignments and expected length of assignments. It's suggested your kit will be tailored around a multi shift multi day event.

You need a Go Kit for several reasons. In the event of a major disaster your assignment location will probably be on emergency power or without power. This could mean the loss of heat, water and telephone service.

As an EmComm operator you must supply your own equipment and other gear. You must be independent in your operations. At this point you are responsible for your own safety and be responsible for your own welfare and comfort.

Building a Go Kit ensures you will be able to be an effective EmComm operator by being self-sufficient that you will have the items you need when you need them. When an activation comes you will not have the time you need to hunt things down and drop them in a grocery bag. Most likely you will forget items that maybe critical to your being able to remain on station and assist.

the following lists are not overly comprehensive. There are many online docs available to help you create your perfect kit. The most important thing is...have a kit. Keep a basic one in your car less water.

Types of Go Kits – They are geared towards:

By Function – Type of Incident, type of assignment or mission, length of assignment

By Location – Carried on person or carried by vehicle, cached at fixed location, gathered as needed

Modular Concept – Your kit is made up of small modular modules that can be packed as needed. These can supplement any kit to extend capabilities.

Basic Kit – Day Pack – Short duration or mobile/foot assignment, 24 hr Kit for overnights, 72 hour kit for multi day events up to three days.

Specialty Kits – Office Kit, Portable Radio Kit, Computer Kit, tool kit, antenna/mast kit, Emer Pwr gear.

Additional kits – sleeping bag/bivy sac, evac kit

Consider putting your 'kits' in zip lock style freezer bags. They are durable for multiple uses, lightweight, see through, writable surface, etc.

Small daypack – immediate use

- * Radio, Handheld, 2m/70cm, USB-C chargeable
 - Roll up J pole
 - Microphone/Speaker, external
 - Battery Pack, Rechargeable,
 - Battery Eliminator, 12V
 - Battery Pack, 10 AA, w/ PowerPole connector
 - Spare Batteries, AA (10)

- Cable, antenna adapter, SMA to SO-239
- Radio cheat sheet
- * GPS Receiver, Garmin eTrex Legend C (phone can work for this)
- Spare Batteries, AA (2)
- * FCC license, class transcript, Task Book, ARES/HOSP ID
- * Flashlight, high-intensity LED, dimmable, USB-C
- * Manual, ARES Field Resources
- * Map, county & state, printed and digital
- * Multi-Tool, Leatherman Core
- * Paper, waterproof notebook, 4½" x 7"
- * Pen, rolling ball, blue (2)
- * Pen, Sharpie marker, black
- * Whistle
- * Cable Ties, nylon, UV-resistant (blk), asstd.
- * Rope, 1/8" nylon (50 ft)
- * Food/Water – trail mix, protein bars, other snacks
- * Money – both cash and a few quarters (no CC)
- * Water – bottled, 1.5L
- * Ear Plugs, disposable (2 pr)
- * Gloves, leather
- * Goggles, safety, impact-resistant
- * Hat, roll-up
- * Mask, dust (2) N95
- * Outer Shirt, pullover, wind-resistant
- * Vest, safety, green w/ reflective stripes
- * Eyeglasses, prescription
- * Lip Balm, Carmex
- * Lotion, hand sanitizer, waterless
- * Meds, prescription (morning and evening doses)
- * Sunscreen, SPF-35
- * Blanket, emergency, mylar, 56" x 84"
- * Clippers, nail
- * Mirror, steel
- * Tweezers
- * Bag, Ziploc, quart
- * Blade, razor, single edge
- * Dressing, adhesive, finger (2)
- * Dressing, adhesive, knuckle (2)
- * Dressing, adhesive, 2" x 3" (2)
- * Dressing, adhesive, 3" x 4" (2)
- * Dressing, adhesive, strip (10)
- * Dressing, gauze pad, 3" x 4" (2)
- * Matches, wind- and water-proof
- * Moleskin, 3" x 4" (4 sht.)
- * Safety Pin (2)
- * Tablets, anti-diarrhea, Imodium A-D
- * Tablets, acid reducer, Zantac 75
- * Tablets, Ibuprofen 200 mg
- * Tape, first aid, 1" cloth
- * Towelette, hand sanitizer (4)

To Make a 24 hours kit out of the above kit add:

- * Charger for HT
- * Additional meals such as freeze dried, MRE's with heaters or stove
- * blanket
- * Cup (SS)
- * weather jacket/poncho
- * Towel/washcloth
- * bags – trash, zip lock
- * TP – wipes, hand wipes
- * bottled water, 1.5G

Add the following to create a 72 hours kit – basically expanding the 24 hour kit

- * Clothing – SS shirt, underwear, socks, pants (hiking) nylon, sweat shirt, thermal shirts, etc.
- * additional meal options
- * increase medication amounts
- * Personal items such as comb, floss, picks, toothbrush/paste, lip balm, lotion, deodorant, sun screen, shampoo, washcloth, soap
- * Can opener, fire kit, scissors, tweezers,

Office Kit

Clipboard, blank forms and templates, several pens/pencils with sharpener or use knife, stapler, scissors, paper pads, notebook with docs for county