Go Bag Checklist

A grab-and-go evacuation bag, packed in advance for the moment there is no time to think.

Documents (copies, sealed in a waterproof bag)

- [ ] Passports, driving licences and birth certificates
- [ ] Insurance policies: home, car, health, life
- [ ] Deeds, lease or mortgage papers
- [ ] Bank and credit card details
- [ ] A printed list of emergency contacts
  Written on paper, because a dead phone takes your contacts with it.
- [ ] Medical records, allergies and prescriptions
- [ ] A USB drive with scans of everything above
- [ ] Recent photos of family members and pets
  Used to identify them if you are separated.

Water and food

- [ ] One litre of water per person, plus a filter or purification tablets
- [ ] Three days of food that needs no cooking
- [ ] A manual can opener if any of it is tinned
- [ ] Food for any dietary restriction in the household
  Shelters rarely cater for allergies or infant formula.

Medication and first aid

- [ ] Seven days of every prescription medicine
- [ ] A written list of medicines with doses and prescriber
- [ ] First aid kit with bandages, antiseptic and painkillers
- [ ] Spare glasses, contact lenses and solution
- [ ] Hearing aid batteries or other device spares
- [ ] Diary a date to rotate anything with an expiry
  Set a calendar reminder every six months; this is the step that gets skipped.

Power and communication

- [ ] Power bank, charged, plus cables for every device
- [ ] Hand-crank or battery radio
- [ ] Torch and spare batteries
- [ ] Whistle
- [ ] Paper map of the area with two routes out marked
  Phone navigation fails when the network is down or towers burn.

Cash and keys

- [ ] Cash in small notes
  Card readers need power and a network; neither is reliable in an evacuation.
- [ ] Spare house and car keys
- [ ] A written note of where the household will meet

Clothing and shelter

- [ ] One change of clothing per person
- [ ] Sturdy closed shoes
- [ ] Rain jacket or poncho
- [ ] Emergency blanket or sleeping bag
- [ ] Work gloves
- [ ] N95 masks
  Smoke and demolition dust are the common hazards after a fire or quake.

People who need their own bag

- [ ] Infants: formula, bottles, nappies, wipes
- [ ] Children: one comfort item each
  Small thing, large difference on the first night away.
- [ ] Older adults: mobility aids, spare batteries, care plan
- [ ] Pets: carrier, lead, food, vaccination records

Keeping it ready

- [ ] Store the bag where you can reach it without going upstairs
- [ ] Tell everyone in the house where it is
- [ ] Recharge the power bank every few months
- [ ] Review the whole bag twice a year
- [ ] Re-cut it as children grow or medication changes