

Step Seven – May 2016

Radios – Flashlights – Solar

For our 96 hour kit this month (May 2016) we would like to go over three different items, one is emergency radios, another is flashlights and lastly, personal solar panels.

The first reason to have an emergency radio is so we can listen to emergency broadcasts or notifications. The radio should be able to access AM/FM channels and also, weather channels so you can get the latest up-to-date weather alerts. There are so many kinds of radios, it is hard to pick one. The best thing to do is google emergency radios and do a little research. You can find radios that have batteries, hand cranks, solar back up, flashlights built in and some have two-way radios built into them. I think the best thing to do is see what will fit your needs and price range.

These types of emergency radios start around 40 dollars and go up from there.

Some of these emergency radios do have two-way radios built into them which is great for communication. There are two kinds of two-way radio, Family Radio Service (FRS) which will put out 0.5 watts or less and General Mobile Radio Service (GMRS) which will put out about 5 watts of power. The higher watts you have the better range and clarity you will get. The range and clarity will depend on the landscape you are in, 5 watts will be good for about 5 miles under good conditions. A quick note, if you do look at the GMRS radios you will need to get a FCC license, they run about 90 dollars. This might be something you look at after your kit is done.



Another big necessity are flashlights, there are so many flashlights to choose from a person could spend days researching them. If you pick a flashlight with batteries, you will need to have extra batteries for back up. They make flashlights with hand cranks, small solar panels that are built in and rechargeable batteries.

You can pick some up for around 30 to 40 dollars, Once again find what works for you and in your price range.

The big thing now are solar panels. It's a great way to get power from the sun, but they can be quite expensive. The type of solar panels we're talking about are the personal use panels. They do make small portable solar packs that put out about 5 watts, which is great for charging small devices like cell phones and tablets. They start around 20 dollars and go up.

One last note: we live in a day when our electronic devices have become a critical component in our lives. A charged and functioning device could be very valuable when it comes to emergency communications (assuming the infrastructure is not damaged). Keeping them charged is one of the many priorities. Some of the crank and solar charging radios have USB charging capabilities. Some flashlights have USB charging outlets. Personal solar panels can charge a variety of devices, depending on the solar kit you choose. Please research the options of these devices and plan your purchases around your needs.

By now your 96 hour kit should start looking like a kit that you could use, don't forget to put a few more dollars in your kit, till next month keep preparing and good luck.