

Why A Go Bag Is Crucial When Prepping – Part 1

The modular nature of the SO Tech Mission Go Bag makes it a very adaptable Go Bag.

This bag was designed and built to fill the Go Bag niche and adapts to be carried any way you would like to carry it and piggybacks onto or tucks into larger packs.

The Role of the Go Bag

In the context of a Modular Survival Kit, the increased capacity of a Go Bag, adds needed capability to the core layer of survival/self-recovery equipment carried in your pockets, but is smaller and lighter than a day pack or assault pack and much smaller and lighter than the main pack or ruck that carries the survivalist's subsistence load.



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A Go Bag is typically a shoulder bag (although they are ideally modular and may convert/expand to a waist pack, carry-on, backpack and more) that is small and light enough to be part of your EDC or Everyday Carry. The bag's contents (and perhaps even the bag itself) may change from day to day to adapt to the user's current environment and mission and the threats at that come with them.

The Go Bag enables the survivor to carry more of what's needed to survive than can reasonably be carried in their pockets. A little more ammo, trauma kit, shelter water and food than can

fit into a PSK is very welcome in a survival ordeal.

For example, an aviator has some basic survival gear on his vest, a larger kit in his ejection seat and then the very basics attached to the parachute harness. One way to look at is that he has primary, secondary and tertiary survival gear. Another is that each layer gives him or her a little more capability and sustains the aviator a little longer. It also builds in the capacity to adapt to unanticipated conditions. If non-aviator personnel travel aboard a military aircraft and must bail out, at least they will have the parachute itself and the small, tertiary kit attached to the parachute harness, which contains a small pocketknife so they can more easily and effectively use of the parachute material and paracord, and so on.

Catch A Glimpse of Green Beret Outdoor Survival Ingenuity

Depending on your load bearing equipment and pack are configured, a Go Bag can fit in a compartment of your main pack, buckle to the outside or form the top lid of your main pack so that it can be removed in seconds should you have to doff your main pack in order to move faster or in the event that you go for an unplanned swim. Your Go Bag can also go with you as part of your everyday carry in situations where a larger pack can't come with you.

As with dress and other equipment, the absence of overtly tactical features on you bag will help avoid unwanted scrutiny from all but those who live the "tactical lifestyle." Unless you take your efforts to subdue your appearance to the extreme, the best you can hope for with this crowd is plausible deniability. And that goes double if you're a military-age male.

Go Bag Contents



This image is representative of the type of gear that should be carried in a go bag: the basics to break contact with the enemy, survive and then self-recover or signal for rescue.

Here I'll discuss what's a go bag should contain, but first I should touch on what shouldn't make it into a go bag.

What Should Not Be in a Go Bag?

What I don't carry in mine is:

- My Core Layer, including my PSK, which I often refer to as a Survival/Self-recovery kit, to shift the emphasis from rescue to self-recovery.
- My primary sidearm isn't in it either. This is both because it's part of my core layer survival/self-recovery equipment, but also because of the tactical liabilities that come with carrying your weapon in a bag as opposed to firmly attached to your body. Unless a bag (or purse) is secured firmly to your body with both shoulder and waist straps, your holster platform is flapping in the wind, which doesn't make for a consistent grip index or facilitate the subsequent points of a proper draw. The other problem is that it is easier to separate your bag from you than a holstered firearm. The bag itself is a target for theft and if someone gets a secure grip on the strap, then you're

playing tug 'o war over your firearm.

- Anything beyond what I need to survive and effect self-recovery or signal for rescue. Shoot for exactly what you need and nothing more. Some say to pack a little less than what you need, but that will happen naturally. While it is good to challenge yourself while training and help is a call away, you don't need build in additional challenges built in to a life and death survival ordeal. You may be facing more than you can handle already. The fact that you can't reliably predict the future makes gear selection tough enough by itself. That's why so many people don't survive. In fact, it's so common that we often don't even hear about them. So many people die every day that another death or two are often unremarkable. Pack precisely what you'll need and nothing more.

EDC

EDC Guidelines: Your Go Bag isn't going to do you any good at home in your closet. To justify bringing it with you everywhere you go, it's got to contain things that are useful in everyday life in addition to being useful for survival. In large part, this can be achieved by choosing survival gear, whose multi-use nature also projects into everyday life and vice versa.



Sample Contents:

EDC

- **EDC Dopp** – Comb, toothbrush, toothpaste, floss, wet wipes, small squeeze bottle of Dr Bronner's soap, a quick-dry wash cloth for long trips, whatever you use for TP, extra zip seal bag or two, lens cloth. The contents of mine is in the photo below. As you can see, the contents fit on a bandana folded in 8ths.
- **Electronics Accessories** – At a minimum, you should be able to charge your cellphone, PLB or satellite messenger and the batteries for your headlamp, flashlight, radio and GPS if you carry one. A small solar battery pack means that if you walk out the door and off the grid, you don't lose situational awareness and the ability to communicate.
 - **Solar USB Battery Pack** – Augmented communications and signal capability and the means to extend the runtime of cellphones, radios and other critical equipment with a small solar battery pack & charger. Many times, another couple of hours of runtime for a cellphone, radio or PLB makes all the difference. While movies, TV and advertisements may give the impression that an instantaneous contact is all that is necessary to coordinate rescue or self-recovery, many dozens of messages are passed in the average incident of

either.

- **Memory** – We all have data that is important to us. Carrying a Digital Survival Library on a pen drive that works with both your computers and cell phones ensures that you have access to the information you need, even if returning home isn't an option.
- **Batteries** – I carry lithium batteries in devices that may be stored long-term or in the heat and carry some rechargeable batteries for equipment I carry.
- **Cables** – Short charging & data cable with adapters for common devices.
- **Chargers** – A small 12v or USB battery charger enables you to recharge small batteries using your solar battery back.
- **Adapters**
- **Camera** – If you carry a separate one. I included it because I carry one because of what I do for a living.
- **Bandana** – An extra, clean, 100% cotton bandana or two have near unlimited uses.
- **Communications** – I also carry some extra SIM cards when I travel. An old school radio pager is a great way to be able to receive messages from any phone that don't betray your location.
 - **Pre-paid Cell Phone** – If you may need a phone that can't easily be traced back to you.
 - **SIM Cards** – SIM cards are tiny, inexpensive and necessary to make cellphones work.
 - **PLB or Satellite Messenger** – These amazing devices can greatly shorten a survival ordeal. Just realize that you'll still have to survive until rescue and even though you may be able to communicate anywhere on Earth, many areas simply don't have search and rescue teams. In these areas, you can press the button until the battery

dies and no will come looking for you.

- **Communications Plan** – Should include a small address book for contact information as well as frequencies, contact times, callsigns, pre-paid codes to add minutes to phones and an international calling card number. I carry postage stamps too.
- **Money** – A stash of cash above and beyond what you carry in your wallet and on your person is far more likely to get you out of a survival/self-recovery jam than a firearm. Even the hardest men need food, transport, supplies, lodging and other aid and money to pay for them. In my book, the emphasis of firearms and other weapons to the exclusion of all other solutions is borne out of a truly special kind of naivety.
- **Field Book/Notebook & Pen** – Metal body pens are improvised weapons that are allowed almost anywhere, and a survival field book is an important tool to leave notes and take notes. Mine comes in handy for reconnaissance and orienteering and is packed with forms and checklists of lifesaving information that is near-impossible to remember under the stress of a life-threatening emergency.
- **Leatherman Tool**
- **Small Tool Pouch**
 - **SolKoa GRIPS-S Handles** – These quickly became one of my favorite tools and can hold reciprocating saw blades, wire saws and about any shape bit under $\frac{1}{4}$ ".
 - **6" Diamond Reciprocating Saw Blade** – If you can't bypass or pick a padlock this will get you in and is a lot lighter than a pair of bolt cutters.
 - **6" Multipurpose Saw Blade** – Metal, wood, bone, plastic.
 - **Spiral Wire Saw Blade** – Extra blade for handles.
 - **Traveler's Hook** – Unlocks live-latched doors far more effectively than a pocket jim.

- Leather Awl
- Sail Needle
- Sewing Needle
- 100MPH Tape
- Ferro Rod
- Carbide Sharpener/Ferro Rod Striker
- Double-sided Diamond Knife Sharpener
- Smith's Diamond Rod Sharpener (Rod only)

Security/Situational Awareness



Security Guidelines: A few magazines of ammunition for your sidearm and primary weapon system. By the time you dig into your Go Bag, you may well have burned through the ammunition you carry concealed or in your LBE (Load Bearing Equipment). You may require more ammunition to break contact and E&E, especially if your side took

casualties.

Sample Security Contents:

- **Magazines** – I typically carry four extra standard mags for my sidearm in my Go Bag. If I'm also carrying a rifle, I carry a three-magazine shingle. If not, I add a pouch of three Glock 18 magazines.
- **Smoke Munitions** – Screening smoke may help you break contact. If you have Bouchon-fuzed smoke munitions, I would advise against carrying them short of the absence of rule of law unless the BATFE relaxes their position that such fuzes are "destructive devices." Commonly

available signal smoke can also serve in this role, so a lower profile option is to carry legal signal smoke munitions and use them to screen if needed.

- **Monocular** – A monocular doesn't take up much space and can help you tell friend from foe at a distance. I use mine on the trail to scan waists, hands and packs for weapons before other groups are aware of mine. Pointing your weapon at someone to identify them with the optic could start you off on the wrong foot.
- **Balaclava, Flame/Flash Resistant, Gloves, Sunglasses & Hat** – I carry one in a flesh-tone, so it doesn't attract attention under a hood or hat. If you're about to do something you're not going to be proud of, change your appearance, cover your face and put on some gloves first. Cameras are everywhere and facial recognition software has made faces identifiable. Cameras also show tattoos, clothing and anything you touched with ungloved hands, so investigators know right where to look for prints. In a pinch, a bandana or even an extra t-shirt can serve. These articles also offer a degree of protection against eye particles, skinned knuckles and minor injuries that might impair performance or arouse suspicion later.



- **Tactical Flashlight** – A high percentage of gun fights happen at night and you need a light to ID targets.
- **Faraday Pocket or Pouch** – Anytime you want to drop off the grid or make sure no one is using its microphone to

eavesdrop on you, drop your phone in this pouch and your signal disappears. The bag's other use is that it can protect sensitive microelectronics against HEMP.

- **Tripwire Alarms, FifthOps** – These precision machined perimeter tripwire alarms use only the part of the shotgun shell you need, it's #209 shotshell primer, which makes both the device and the primer that powers it far smaller than earlier devices you may be familiar with. It's smaller than a shotgun shell. This means that you can carry a half-dozen of them and plenty of primers about the same space as a battery organizer.
- **Amateur Radio** – As the saying goes, "You ain't got comms, you ain't got jack." Without communications, not only are you a lone wolf, but you also miss out on potentially life-saving information.
- **Headset** – The ideal solution is an in-ear communications headset with a cutoff for loud noises such as gunfire to prevent hearing damage. Headsets can protect against loud noises while still feeding through radio, cellphone, intra-vehicle communications and even amplifying ambient noise you need to hear.
- **Entry Kit** – Basic lock picks, bypass tools, jigglers, shims and pry tools. The key here (no pun intended) is that they fit in a small case. I also include a few master keys commonly used on security panels, entry panels, key cabinets (most buildings organize all their high-security keys to impossible to open locks in a lockbox protected by a crappy wafer lock that is easily opened by one of a couple of keys), police cars (yeah, go figure ... untold thousands of police cars are opened by fleet keys and police cars are full of stuff a guy or gal might need if things go sideways), elevators, heavy equipment, etc..

Read [Part 2 here.](#)



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