

Emergency First Aid Kit Construction

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Last Updated: 29 Oct 2001

Introduction:

Constructing a First Aid kit suitable for someone trained to the Emergency or Standard First Aid level is a trade-off between the types and quantities of equipment and supplies likely to be required, versus the amount of space and expense you're willing to sacrifice. Based on my own training and experience, I've come up with what I believe to be an acceptable compromise kit, which is likely to provide you with everything you're most likely to need in an emergency first aid situation.

Such a compromise starts with the basic assumption that, as a first-aider, your primary goal is to keep the patient alive, following the principles of ABCD (Airway, Breathing, Circulation & Deadly Bleeding).

Also assumed is that in a serious emergency situation, advanced care has been requested in the form of an ambulance or advanced first response (i.e. fire department), and that your goal is to keep the situation stabilized until they arrive. For that reason your kit will not contain much in the way of supplies used for patient transportation (i.e. splints).

Having said that, you'll find that because you're trained in First Aid, you'll also be called upon to deal with non-emergency situations, such as minor cuts, scrapes, etc. So your kit will contain basic supplies for that purpose.

The "Starter" Kit:

After some research, I decided the best approach is to start with a pre-fabricated first aid kit, remove some items from that, and add some specific items to bring the overall kit up to what I consider to be an acceptable compromise. Items were removed because they were redundant (i.e. you don't really need two types of band-aids); non-compliant with current standards (i.e. latex gloves); or simply took up too much space to allow the additional materials.

I selected a 138-piece kit available from Costco. It contains a reasonable selection (and quality) of supplies, and the actual bag is large enough to hold what we need, without being too large. The basic kit costs about \$25. Following is a list of the kit contents.

Description	Qty
Antiseptic Towelettes	25
Alcohol swabs	15
Adhesive strips	30
Knuckle bandages	3
Fingertip bandages	3
Adhesive bandages	2
Triangular bandage	1
Elastic bandage (3"x5yd)	1
First Aid Manual	1
Pressure Bandage (4")	1

Conform Bandage (3"x5yd)	1
Gauze Pads (2"x2")	5
Gauze Pads (4"x4")	2
Trauma Dressing (5"x9")	1
Tweezers	1
Burn Relief Gel Pak (3.5g)	1
Scissors (small)	1
Adhesive tape (1/2"x5yd)	1
Cotton Swabs	8
Examination gloves (latex)	4
Kids Adhesive strips	10
Cold Compress	1
Telfa Pads (2"x3")	2
Butterfly Closures	5
Iodine swabs	2
Insect Sting Relief swabs	10
First Aid Cream (25g tube)	1
Calamine lotion (115ml bottle)	1
Hydrogen peroxide (225ml bottle)	1

The items marked in red at the bottom of the list were removed for reasons indicated above. You could choose to store these in a separate bag/box in your car/house/cottage, since they'll certainly be useful at some point, just not likely in an emergency.

Bringing it up to "Spec":

To this basic kit, I identified a few items that needed to be added. In a few cases it was more a matter of beefing up quantities of important items such as triangulars. Prices indicated are from a local supplier, and may assume a quantity "group" purchase.

Description	Qty	Cost	Ext. Cost	Notes
Cling roll (4"x5yd)	1	\$1.02	\$1.02	12-pack \$12.25
Compress (4"x4")	3	\$1.25	\$3.75	
Triangular bandages (40"x40"x56" non-sterile)	3	\$1.40	\$4.20	
Res-Cue Mask	1	\$7.95	\$7.95	attaches to key ring
Mylar blanket	1	\$5.50	\$5.50	
Gauze pads (4"x4")	8	\$0.18	\$1.44	box of 100 for \$17.95
Burn Dressing (4"x4")	1	\$4.35	\$4.35	
non-latex Gloves (Nitrile are best)	4			min 2 pair
small notepad	1			
Pen	2			
small flashlight	1			
Total			\$28.21	

Optional Additions:

Finally, I identified a few “optional” items, which I personally like to carry. Be aware that not only are some of these items expensive, they’re also unlikely to fit in the Costco bag. If you decide you want to carry some of these items, you may want to consider replacing the bag with a larger one. Empty first aid bags can range anywhere in price from under \$20 to several hundred. I can help you “customize” your kit. If you’re planning on eventually training to the Advanced First Aid level, you’ll eventually migrate to a larger kit.

Description	Qty	Cost	Ext. Cost	Notes
Field Dressing (7"x11")	2	\$5.25	\$10.50	
Sam Splint	1	\$11.25	\$11.25	
Pocket Mask	1	\$12.00	\$12.00	without O2 nipple
Burn Dressing (8"x8")	1	\$8.95	\$8.95	
Safety Glasses	1	\$9.90	\$9.90	
Antiseptic Hand Cleaner (4oz)	1	\$1.90	\$1.90	
Garbage Bags (small)	2			
Total			\$53.50	