

# Survival Gear: Build a Vehicle Survival Kit

*by Tim MacWelch*

'Tis the season for roadside survival stories. On the heels of the story about the Nome, Alaska resident who survived off frozen beer for 60 hours while stuck in his truck, we have another winter survival story about a college co-ed who endured being trapped in her snowbound car for 10 days.

Last week, Lauren Weinberg, a 23-year-old Arizona State University student, was found alive in her vehicle after being stranded in the snow for 10 days on a remote dirt road in northeastern Arizona. How did she make it? She told a Coconino County Sheriff's deputy that she had survived on two candy bars, melted snow water and prayers. Weinberg was quoted saying, "At times I was afraid, but mostly I had faith that I would be found."

Impressively, these folks survived with very little in terms of supplies or equipment. But not everyone is so lucky. And with New Year's Day just around the corner, I'd like to throw out an idea for you to consider: Why not make a resolution to set up a vehicle survival kit this year?

You can start off by considering the most critical equipments needed for survival: necessary prescription meds that you need to live, and communication equipment with a back-up power source. Weinberg had a cell phone during her survival incident, but the battery was dead. A car charger for that cell phone might have given her the means to get rescued on day one of her emergency.

The next thing to consider is shelter. Depending on the circumstances, you may need shelter from the cold or from the heat. Consider sleeping bags for warmth, and tarps to create cooling shade in hot climates. A vehicle can become a freezing tomb in cold weather or a scorching oven in hot climates. Plan ahead to have the right equipment based on the season and location you are traveling through.

As for the rest of the recommended equipment, you can fill a bin, satchel or duffle bag with the needed goods, sealing the most important things in zip-top bags to prevent water damage. This gear should include basic survival essentials and some items specific to automotive emergencies.

## **Any good vehicle emergency kit should include:**

- Shelter items like sleeping bags and blankets, at least 1 item per seat in your car
- Extended shelter gear like a tent or a tarp for shade in hot climates
- Gallons of drinking water and purification equipment to disinfect more water
- Several days worth of high calorie, no-cook foods like protein bars, peanut butter, trail mix, etc.
- First aid supplies, sanitation and hygiene supplies like toilet paper, hand sanitizer, etc.
- At least three fire starting items and a small pot to boil water or to cook in
- A few basic tools like a knife, wrenches, screwdrivers, duct tape, rope, etc.
- Extra clothes appropriate to the season and a poncho for wet weather
- A small shovel, jumper cables, flares, reflective sign, tow strap, ice scraper
- Fix-a-flat spray and starter fluid
- Flashlight with extra batteries and 12 hour light sticks
- Snow chains for snowy climates or a sand bag for emergency snow traction

This kind of gear might make a world of difference in any roadside emergency. If you don't already ride around with this kind of gear, I hope you won't let another year go by without putting together a kit.

(Article Courtesy of Outdoorlife.com)