



# INDIVIDUAL FIRST AID KIT (IFAK)

PLANNING AND PREPARATION GUIDE

# INTRODUCTION TO IFAK

An Individual First Aid Kit (IFAK) is a specialized medical kit designed to address immediate life-threatening injuries in emergency situations. Unlike standard first aid kits, IFAKs focus on critical interventions that can save lives in the crucial minutes before professional medical help arrives.

**KEY DIFFERENCE:** An IFAK is NOT a basic first aid kit. It is specifically designed for immediate life-threatening injuries and should be kept separate from your regular first aid supplies.





# MISSION STATEMENT

To provide comprehensive guidance for assembling and maintaining an Individual First Aid Kit (IFAK) capable of managing immediately life-threatening injuries in emergency situations, while ensuring users are properly educated on the purpose, limitations, and proper use of each component.

## CORE OBJECTIVES:

- › Enable immediate response to life-threatening trauma
- › Standardize emergency medical response capabilities
- › Bridge the gap between injury and professional medical care
- › Promote proper training and familiarization



# KEY PRINCIPLES

## PLANNING PRINCIPLES

- › Plan contents before selecting container
- › Focus on life-saving interventions
- › Maintain standardization across kits
- › Keep medical supplies separate from basic first aid
- › Consider environmental factors
- › Account for skill levels

## USAGE PRINCIPLES

- › Train regularly with all equipment
- › Know your limitations and scope
- › Maintain clear organization
- › Practice rapid access to critical items
- › Document and track inventory
- › Stay within your training level

# M.A.R.C.H. PROTOCOL COMPONENTS

The M.A.R.C.H. protocol (Massive Hemorrhage, Airway, Respiration, Circulation, Hypothermia/Head Injury) provides a systematic approach to treating trauma casualties. This protocol prioritizes the most immediate life-threatening conditions first.

## M (MASSIVE HEMORRHAGE)

Priority: Immediate control of life-threatening bleeding

- › 2× CAT Tourniquets (Gen 7 recommended)
  - ›› One readily accessible
  - ›› One in main compartment
- › Hemostatic Gauze (Combat Gauze or Celox)
  - ›› Minimum 2 packets
  - ›› Z-folded for quick deployment
- › Compressed Gauze
  - ›› Minimum 2 rolls
  - ›› Vacuum sealed for space efficiency
- › Pressure Dressings
  - ›› Emergency bandage or OLAES
  - ›› Multiple sizes if space allows

## A (AIRWAY)

Priority: Establish and maintain patent airway

- › Nasopharyngeal Airway (NPA)
  - ›› 28Fr or 30Fr recommended
  - ›› Consider backup size
- › Water-based Lubricant
  - ›› Single-use packets
  - ›› For NPA insertion
- › Airway Adjuncts
  - ›› Oral pharyngeal airway (if trained)
  - ›› Airway maintenance supplies

## R (RESPIRATION)

Priority: Address chest injuries and ensure adequate breathing

- › Chest Seals
  - ›› 2 pairs minimum
  - ›› Consider backup seals
- › Chest Decompression Needle
  - ›› Only if specifically trained
  - ›› 14ga × 3.25" recommended



# M.A.R.C.H PROTOCOL COMPONENTS

## C (CIRCULATION)

Priority: Maintain blood flow and prevent shock

- > Pressure Bandages
  - » Multiple sizes
  - » Quick-application design
- > Elastic Bandages
  - » 4" and 6" widths
  - » Self-adhering type
- > IV Equipment (if trained)
  - » IV Start kit
  - » Normal saline
  - » Administration sets

## H (HYPOTHERMIA/HEAD INJURY)

Priority: Prevent heat loss and monitor mental status

- > Hypothermia Prevention
  - » Emergency Space Blanket
    - » Military grade recommended
    - » Vacuum-sealed for compactness
  - » Ready-Heat Blanket
    - » Chemical activation
    - » Multiple hours of heat
- > Head Injury Monitoring
  - » AVPU Scale Card
    - » Alert, Voice, Pain, Unresponsive
    - » Waterproof reference card
  - » Pupil Light
    - » For neurological assessment
    - » Compact penlight





# STORAGE AND ORGANIZATIONS

## CONTAINER REQUIREMENTS:

- › Weather-resistant construction
- › Quick-access design
- › Modular organization capability
- › Secure closure system
- › MOLLE/PALS compatible (if applicable)
- › Clear compartment identification

## ORGANIZATION TIPS:

- › Use clear organization pouches
- › Implement color-coding system
- › Place most critical items for quick access
- › Secure closure system
- › Consider left/right-handed access
- › Use vacuum-sealing for space efficiency

# IFAK STANDARDIZATION

It is essential to maintain consistency in the configuration of all Individual First Aid Kits (IFAKs) across various locations, including home, vehicles, and tactical gear. While the kits may differ in color for easy identification, their contents remain uniform. This approach ensures that IFAKs are casualty-specific and equipped to handle life-saving interventions (LSIs) effectively, regardless of the situation or location.

The standardized setup eliminates the need for location-specific adjustments, maintaining a reliable and predictable resource for emergencies. This consistency is a critical component of the overall preparedness strategy.



# KEEP YOUR IFAK SEPARATE

When organizing your supplies, it is advisable to maintain a clear distinction between your first aid kit and your Individual First Aid Kit (IFAK). While items such as band-aids, antiseptic wipes, and moleskin are valuable components of a general first aid kit, they should not be included in your IFAK. The rationale behind this separation lies in accessibility and purpose. Everyday items like band-aids and pain relievers are frequently needed, and their absence can lead to the unintended misuse of your IFAK.

If these common items are stored in your IFAK, there is a higher likelihood that someone may remove them for routine use, leaving the kit incomplete or misplaced during a critical situation.

Additionally, it is recommended to avoid incorporating standard "12 essentials" or similar multi-purpose survival items into your IFAK. These belong in a separate kit designed for general preparedness. By maintaining these distinctions, you ensure that your IFAK remains intact, readily available, and specifically equipped for emergencies when every moment counts.





## IFAK PACKING LIST

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 x Tourniquets - TCCC Recommended (min) | <input type="checkbox"/> Nasal Phyrengal Airways - sized to team & packaged with lubricating jelly |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 x Kerlix Gauze - Z-folded              | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 x military safety pins from cravats                                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hemstatic Gauze                          | <input type="checkbox"/> Small roll of 100 MPH tape  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cravat                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Shears  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4 x 7 Individual first aid dressing      | <input type="checkbox"/> Gloves  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4" Emergency trauma dressing             | <input type="checkbox"/> Space blanket or Blizzard bag   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Preplanned Windlass                      |  |