

# THE PREPPER'S PLAYBOOK

Your A-Z Guide To Preparing,  
Surviving, And Thriving  
No Matter What



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## INTRODUCTION

### ANYTHING CAN HAPPEN

*"Man can live about forty days without food, about three days without water, about eight minutes without air, but only for one second without hope."*

*- Anonymous*

Whoever so elegantly said that we always need hope to survive surely understood the importance of advance planning. Preparing ahead for events creates hope of survival despite dire situations where food, water, or safe shelters are in short supply.

Though "preppers" are often referred to in (implied) derogatory terms like "doomsdayers", the fact is that a host of natural and man-made events around the world from hurricanes to war have proven that planning ahead for disasters, or any kind of crisis no matter what form it takes, makes sense.

Preppers are not doomsdayers. They are strategic planners who look ahead, anticipate certain events, and logically and methodically prepare to deal with them.

In other words, survival starts with an open mind and the

acknowledgment that “life happens”, and it usually happens when least expected. No one anticipated a 1.5 mile wide EF4 tornado would drop down on Alabama in April, 2011 and kill 64 people, destroying or damaging hundreds of homes. The Japanese didn’t plan on a tsunami in 2011, nor were Colorado Springs residents expecting wildfires to destroy entire neighborhoods in 2012.

Though many crises are natural disasters, there are plenty of man-made disasters too. The American Red Cross website reports the disaster relief agency responds to approximately 70,000 natural and man-made disasters annually just in the U.S.<sup>1</sup> Employee errors at electric plants, chemical spills, financial fraud, and even terrorism can cause small and large emergencies on a moments notice, and the consequences of these situations can be much bigger than the event itself. After all, the terrorist attack on New York City’s Twin Towers created immediate problems for New York residents before it went on to change how Americans travel and deal with foreign threats forever.

So, preppers are realists. They understand that disasters can happen at any time, in any location, with absolutely no warning. They do what logical, reasonable people do: plan and prepare in advance for the worse-case and most likely scenarios. It is safe to say there is not a single prepper who wants a catastrophe to occur in order to test survival skills.

However, they do understand that *should* a disaster occur, the safety and health of family members will be threatened due to a lack of essential items like water, food or shelter. The tens of thousands of residents who are still displaced three months after Hurricane Sandy hit the New York and New Jersey coastline in October 2012, or the families huddling in hurricane damaged homes with no power or water so they can protect remaining possessions against looters, probably wish they had been better prepared to survive a catastrophe.

**Let’s face it:** Urban dwellers are usually not prepared when the water stops flowing from the tap, the supermarket shelves are bare, there is no power for cooking or heat, the police and fire departments cannot be contacted, and it is impossible to reach an emergency room.

So, the bottom line is this: Survival starts with an open mind and an awareness of the various situations that can occur. Once awareness develops, the next step is contingency planning, but for what type of disasters?

## ONE SIZE DOES NOT FIT ALL

It’s great to say everyone should prepare for disasters, but it is important to prepare wisely. A wise prepper looks at historical disasters to determine which ones are most

likely to happen next.

Californians know they should be prepared for earthquakes, while people living in northern states should prepare for blizzards.

Gulf Coast states experience numerous hurricanes, while western states frequently battle wild fires.

A riot is much more likely to occur in Chicago than it is in the small Missouri town of Sullivan. A terrorist act is more probable in New York City than in Boise.

However, a hazardous chemical spill, gas explosion, fire, or power outage can occur in any town or city. Below you'll find a list of possible disasters or events for review and research guidance. It will be necessary to use your judgment, based on where you live, concerning items like rioting and war.

The FEMA site categorizes disasters as natural, human-caused, and technological. Their list of disasters includes the following:<sup>2</sup>

1. Blizzards
2. Cyber attacks (bringing down essential community services)
3. Dam or levee failures
4. Disease outbreaks (epidemic)
5. Drought
6. Earthquakes
7. Explosions
8. Extreme heat

9. Fire (wildlands or structures)
10. Floods
11. Food shortages (due to supplier interruptions, weather, etc.)
12. Hazardous chemicals (accidents and intentional)
13. Looting
14. Mudslides
15. Nuclear plant disaster (radiation exposure)
16. Power outages
17. Riots (demonstrations)
18. Structural failures (i.e. bridge collapse)
19. Terrorist acts (chemical, biological, nuclear, explosives)
20. Thunderstorm (severe with lightning, hail and wind)
21. Tornadoes
22. Tropical storm
23. Tsunamis
24. Volcano
25. War
26. Municipal water contamination or plant failure
27. Winter storms

Reading down the list can put fear in your heart unless you're willing to prepare in advance for some of these situations. Though it is impossible to predict the future, you can find out which of the disasters on the list are

most likely to occur in your area.

After all, there is no sense storing snow shovels if there is almost zero probability of a blizzard in your area. Therefore, the first survival step is preparing a realistic risk assessment.

You can find out what could happen or is most likely to happen in your particular area by contacting any of the following agencies or organizations:

- Contact your state Emergency Preparedness Agency and ask (listing at: [http://www.aoa.gov/aoaroot/Preparedness/Resources\\_Network/emergency\\_preparedness.aspx](http://www.aoa.gov/aoaroot/Preparedness/Resources_Network/emergency_preparedness.aspx))
- Contact your local health department
- Contact the local chapter of the American Red Cross (to find local chapters: <http://www.redcross.org/find-your-local-chapter>)

The questions to ask include the following:

1. What specific disasters are most likely to occur in your community?
2. Can the agency send free information on preparedness?
3. Is there a public warning system, what sounds are signaled, and what are the typical warnings for?
4. What should you do when you hear the warning system?

At this stage, you are merely collecting information in preparation for making a plan.

## IT TAKES A VILLAGE

Contrary to popular belief, most preppers are not loners who spend their days perched in a rocking chair, shotgun at the ready, just waiting out for the Apocalypse to come. Most preppers are average men and women who you see every day, mowing their lawn, going to the office and paying their taxes. Normal. Everyday. People.

And just like normal people, they have family and friends they will want to protect and help during a disaster.

In addition, it makes sense to keep everyone informed of their roles and how they should respond in the event of a disaster. The importance of team effort for survival was reinforced after Hurricane Sandy. For example, a newscaster reported on a man who had run an extension cord from his generator to an elderly woman's heater in a next-door house, so she could have heat for several hours each day. Other people swapped power for food, ensuring people were both warm and fed. Long before the authorities were on the scene to do anything, neighbors took care of each other.

Thus, during a disaster, teamwork is important. Getting family, friends and

neighbors involved in a disaster plan will ensure everyone knows their responsibilities and everyone knows where to turn to for help, if needed.

The old adage “A place for everything and everything in its place” is an apt way of thinking when it comes to involving your family and friends in disaster preparedness planning.

You can hold an informal meeting in your home and invite anyone you want; however, your Family Disaster Plan is the most important. Just be sure to ease them into it. If a someone is unaccustomed to a preparedness lifestyle, a sudden submersion in it can be quite a shock for them and possibly scare them off for good.

When holding the meeting below is a list each person, including children, who takes part in the planning meeting should know:

- Why survival planning is so important
- The most likely events for the area
- How to best respond to each type of event
- The importance of not letting stress lead to panic, confusion or poor decisions
- At least 2 areas where everyone agrees to meet with outside the home. The first one should be in the neighborhood and the second outside the neighborhood

- How to communicate should family and friends get separated
- Contact information for one or more people outside the local area who can serve as central points of information when disaster victims are separated (i.e., each person calls the contact after the disaster to let him or her know they are okay and a current location)
- An evacuation plan and route if ordered to leave the area
- A predesignated emergency shelter for pets

Remember to hold review meetings regularly with your “village” because people tend to forget the small things as time passes and in survival it is quite often the “small things” that put you in the most danger.

This is especially true for children.

Evacuation drills need to be rehearsed so they become second nature. If friends and neighbors are part of the plan, be sure to include them in drills and review meetings.

It takes a village to raise children. Likewise, it also takes a village to ensure the safety and well-being of everyone in it before, during, and after a crisis.

Including people in the planning process is a way to engage them and get their

commitment to implement survival tactics when necessary.

## MAINTAIN A REASONABLE PERSPECTIVE

Like I said above, you need to ease some people into this.

There are people who tend to go overboard once they decide to become preppers. You have seen the reports on television. They borrow tens of thousands of dollars, build underground shelters that can withstand direct nuclear bomb hits, or have enough food and water stored to last through Armageddon and then some.

To each his own. Even though that is the choice of a select few, the vast majority of us simply cannot logically go to those lengths. It is vitally important that you balance your life equally between work, prep, and play.

Preparing to survive a disaster should not break the bank or hurt your ability to maintain a comfortable life now. You are not trying to live in the future right now; you are preparing for possible events that may or may not happen. The 10-year supply of freeze dried food purchased on credit does

not put fresh food on your children's plates now. In other words, disaster planning should not harm your current living status because you are so worried about your future living conditions.

In the following sections, this guide will review reasonable principles, methods, and practices for preppers. First, there is a review of the basics, which are water, shelter, food, and fire. That section is followed by a discussion of safety and security, addressing securing your shelter, basic medical care, self-defense, and the defense of your home. The chapter on planning presents checklists to help you make important decisions like "bug in or bug out", items needed for different time periods, and accommodations for people with special needs, like infants and elderly.

Of course, no discussion on survival planning is complete until you consider how you will deal with situations involving other people. For example, are you prepared to calm rising tensions or do you know how to barter for essential items? Do you know your capabilities and limitations? It is time to begin doing what preppers do best.....prepare!



## GETTING DOWN TO BASICS

*“Sometimes even to live is an act of courage.”*

*- Lucius Annaeus Seneca Roman Stoic  
Philosopher and Statesman*

Seneca died in AD 65, a time when life was rough even on a good day, so he knew what he was talking about. However, living a full life requires courage, but living through a disaster requires the courage to plan ahead.

In this section, we consider the absolute basics for survival, which are water, shelter, fire, and food. A person can endure very difficult conditions as long as basic needs are met. Therefore, as Julie Andrews sang in *The Sound of Music*, “Let’s start at the very beginning, a very good place to start.”

## WATER

Water is an excellent starting point because you can only survive for a few days without it. The harsh truth is that everything else becomes irrelevant if you die from lack of water. In fact, dehydration can cause physical problems, like vomiting and muscle cramps, and mental problems, like fuzzy short-term memory and an inability to do even basic math.

Since we are used to having clean water available any time, day or night, directly from our faucet, it’s difficult to imagine a water treatment plant failing, being knocked out by a storm or cyber attack, or forced to shut down due to water contamination.

However, all of these events have happened.

The first question is: How much water should be stored? The answer, of course, depends on whether you are planning for a three day, three weeks, or three month disaster period. However, if you store for a three day emergency event, it is important to have developed water collection skills for longer survival events. The same holds true for three weeks or three months. What will you drink the fourth week or fourth month?

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) recommends storing at least two weeks of water. As a guide, you can plan on needing a minimum of:

- One-half gallon of water per person, per day for drinking purposes only

Or

- One gallon of water per person, per day, with half for drinking purposes and the other half for hygiene practices like teeth brushing

There are several checklists or charts here to guide you. The first checklist identifies the various considerations associated with water storage for disaster planning. The second checklist identifies the various sources of water you can turn to should the municipal water supply fail and you run out of stored water.

The third chart is a guide to different methods of water purification. Fortunately, there are many ways to collect water, and you need to learn as many as possible so you have options to choose from based on the situation. Water collection and purification methods are one case in which redundancy



## WATER STORAGE CHECKLIST

Description	Comments	✓
3-Day storage amount	3 gallons per person	
3-week storage amount	21 gallons per person	
3 month storage amount	90 gallons per person	
Special water needs?	Children, elderly, health conditions, pets	
Preferred container size	12-oz bottles, gallon bottles, 55 gallon drums	
Required amount of storage space available?	1 gallon of stored water = eleven 12-oz bottles 1-gallon requires 1/7th cubic foot of storage space	
Storage space strong enough?	1-gallon of water = 8 pounds	
Proper storage environment	Store water away from sun, and in cool, dry locations away from possible contaminants	
Will buy water?	What bottle size can you store?	
Will bottle tap water?	Only use food grade containers	
Develop water management plan	Replace municipal tap water every 6 months or Follow bottled water label instructions	
Learn 2 water collection methods	See following checklist	
Identify most common area pollutants	Pollutants include industrial metals like lead and arsenic, inorganic compounds like gasoline and solvents, and microorganisms like bacteria, protozoa, viruses and parasites	
Prepare water collection supplies kit	Assemble basic supplies used in multiple water collection methods, like small tarp, plastic bags and pieces of rope	
Assemble water disinfectant supplies	Assemble basic supplies for water purifying like activated charcoal, bleach and iodine	

is the best thing you can have.

Stored water is a finite resource and should you run out before life gets back to normal, it is vital to know how to collect and disinfect water from any source available. The following chart lists the various methods for finding and collecting water. Use the list to identify the best options for your area and then spend time learning and practicing the techniques. Of course, it is critical to master several appropriate methods so you have options. For example, you may

want to know how to recycle rainwater and how to make a ground still.

The checklist can be used like an inventory sheet. For example, if you have a pond or canal close to your home, then check it off the list and make sure you learn how to disinfect the water should you have to drink it.

## CHECKLIST: METHODS FOR WATER COLLECTION

Description	Your Comments	✓
<b>Quick Urban Sources</b>		
Ponds		
Swimming pools or fountains		
Hot tubs		
Canals or ditches		
Rain catchments		
Hot water tanks		
Roof water tanks		
Water pipes		
<b>Survivalist Sources</b>		
Condensation & Evaporation (from any source available) <sup>4</sup>		
Vegetation still		
Sweat bag still		
Solar still		
Tarpaulin over a fire still		
Inflatable solar survival still		
Rainwater collection (post disaster), i.e. in barrels, etc.		

Since this is a discussion on survival, it should be mentioned that drinking purified urine is another water source. However, this is a last-ditch desperation tactic to be used only when there are no other water alternatives and your life is threatened by dehydration. Urine should not be consumed more than three (3) times, and you don't want to drink it early in the morning as it is more concentrated with body toxins at that time.<sup>5</sup>

There are many sources of water, if you know how to extract water from the air, ground, or vegetation. Identifying the type of water sources you will rely on will ensure you also collect the right supplies and tools in your survival kits.

You can purchase portable filters, but it is important to understand what the filters are capable of removing. Also, be sure to learn a water collection technique that requires mostly skills and not supplies.

For example, a sweat bag still can collect water from vegetation, mud, or contaminated water and only requires a bag and natural materials like stones and sticks.

## METHODS FOR PURIFYING WATER

Contaminant	Boiling	Chemical Additives	Ultra-violet	Distilling
Parasites	X	Maybe	X	X
Protozoa	X	Maybe	X	X
Viruses	X	X	X	X
Bacteria	X	X	X	X
Inorganic Compounds	N	N	N	Maybe
Metals	N	N	N	Maybe

X = Yes

N = No

Maybe = Uncertain

One final note on water concerning disinfection or purifying. The well prepared prepper will know how to make safe drinking water with supplies and when unable to reach purifying supplies like bleach or iodine. Knowing more than one way to get what you need ensures a good outcome, and the best prepper is the thorough prepper.

## SHELTER

There are two ways to think about shelter:

- What to do should a disaster make your home uninhabitable
- Preparing a space where family members are kept safe and secure in the case of events like a terrorist attack, rioting and looting, or a natural disaster



In the 1960s, people began building fallout shelters because they were afraid of nuclear war. It is a bit incredible that over 50 years later, that same fear exists, with modern crises including biological warfare and terrorist attacks added on.

This is in addition to natural disaster threats, like tornadoes and earthquakes that can quickly leave a family homeless. Severely damaged homes present a safety risk and can be declared inhabitable. What then?

This section primarily addresses preparing in advance to ensure your family has options for shelter should a crisis occur. The survival process occurs on a continuum. When a event occurs, this is a typical pattern:

- Family immediately finds safety, which may mean leaving the home due to damage
- Family finds short-term emergency shelter when the home is inhabitable
- Family finds temporary alternative housing
- Family seeks more permanent living arrangements

Short-term displacement is typical for a natural disaster. However, there are two problems people face after a natural disaster.

- The need for protection from the weather
- The need to protect possessions now subject to looting

Both problems often lead people to set up temporary camp on their own property rather than relocate to a temporary shelter. Preparing in advance to ensure your family has shelter no matter what happens may mean reinforcing the house by building a safe room and assembling temporary shelter supplies.

A safe room can provide protection in a variety of situations that include war, rioting, tornadoes, and hurricanes. It is not useful for disasters like floods and earthquakes. The one major drawback to a safe room is the expense.

Building a safe room makes sense when:<sup>9</sup>

- You live in an area with high risk of extreme winds or a man-made crisis
- You are unable to reach an emergency shelter before severe storms or cannot escape to safety during an attack
- You can afford the cost of a shelter

FEMA measures risk by considering the wind zone the house is located in and the number of tornadoes that have occurred per 1,000 square miles in the area. If you live in a high risk area, a shelter is recommended. As far as man-made threats, adding a shelter to your home may make sense if you live in a big city, a high crime area, or a city where terrorist acts have already occurred or are likely to occur.

As mentioned, even if you build a safe room, there will be events where the safe room is

not usable. Therefore, you need to be prepared to set up temporary shelter. The most basic type of shelter is a tent large enough to hold your family.

Here is a list of basic supplies to establish temporary and immediate shelter, whether it is in your front yard or at a government staging area.

### CHECKLIST: SHELTER SUPPLIES

Description	✓
Tent, tent poles and anchors	
Sleeping cots	
Flashlights	
Lantern (battery with long life)	
Hand crank or solar powered flashlight, cell phone & radio charger	
Sleeping bags	
Basic clothing, including coats, gloves and boot covers	
Thermal Blankets	
Rain ponchos	
Emergency food	
Emergency water	
Plastic tarps	
Dishes and eating utensils	
Extra line or rope	
Waterproof matches	
Radio	
Portable toilet and waste treatment chemicals	

It is also important to spend time learning basic wilderness techniques for setting up a shelter in case you can't get to your camping supplies. Also, some people live in rural areas and have ready access to natural resources. The following is a checklist of various kinds of improvised shelters made from mostly natural or found materials.

You should spend some time investigating the various types of shelters and choose a couple that are suitable for your area. For example, if you live in the desert, a debris hut may not be an option simply due to the fact that there is not enough available debris to build an insulating shelter. The following list is only meant to give you an idea of the options available.<sup>9</sup>

## CHECKLIST: TYPES OF SHELTERS

Description	Main Materials	✓
Debris hut shelter	Short stakes with ridgepole covered by debris	
Beach shade Shelter	Dig trench into sand and use driftwood for roof framework, cover with natural materials	
Tree Pit Snow Shelter	Dig snow out around tree trunk, cover with boughs	
Swamp or standing water bed	Find 4 trees in a rectangle or drive 4 poles into ground, attach 2 poles to tree so they run parallel, lay a series of perpendicular poles, cover with grass or broad leaves	
One person shelter	Secure a pole to a tree waist high, lay 2 more poles on the ground on each side of secured pole, lay a tarp or other material over attached pole, spread ground poles and tuck material under them to secure	
Parachute tepee	Tie line at top of parachute, toss line over tree limb and tie to tree trunk, stake edges of parachute and tie with line	
Lean-to	Tie rope between 2 trees, hang poncho or tarp or other material over line, stake each side to the ground	

These wilderness shelters can be adapted to urban environments. You may not have two trees left, but there may be two cars and lines can be tied to the door handles. When there has been a disaster, sometimes any kind of shelter is welcomed when it is not possible to reach an emergency shelter or emergency supplies.

One final note on shelters is that you should always research evacuation routes for your area and have a plan of escape should it be necessary to leave. In fact, you should drive the route and an alternate route periodically and make sure you know the way out.



# FIRE

Can you build a fire....without matches?

Probably not, but don't worry most people if handed a bow drill or friction saw would not be able to produce a fire. Even the most skilled survivalist doesn't produce a roaring fire every time.

If you plan ahead, primitive fire starting can be bypassed for most short term disasters. That said, having the skill and knowledge to produce primitive fires is ALWAYS a good idea. After all you never know when that zippo isn't going to light!

There is a good chance you will need to build a fire after a major disaster if you are unable to reach an emergency shelter and are experiencing a power outage. A fire can be used for:

- ✓ Cooking
- ✓ Providing heat
- ✓ Killing bacteria in water
- ✓ Signaling distress
- ✓ Sterilizing metal items
- ✓ Repelling insects
- ✓ Providing light

- ✓ Drying clothes
- ✓ Providing security lighting
- ✓ Repelling predators

Building a fire is not difficult. Starting a fire can be, depending on whether you have matches, a fire starter and decent weather.

If the wind is blowing, it is raining, or there's snow on the ground, starting a fire can be challenging. When you assemble your disaster kit, remember to more than one fire starter.

Like most products today, there are many choices.

- ◆ Windproof and waterproof matches
- ◆ Wood matches you coat with wax
- ◆ Magnesium blocks
- ◆ Emergency fuel tablets
- ◆ Sterno
- ◆ Flint and steel kits
- ◆ Fire sticks
- ◆ ferro rods
- ◆ Butane lighter

Inexpensive materials you can use to start a fire include:

## CHECKLIST: FIRE STARTING MATERIALS

Description	✓
Cotton balls (coated with petroleum jelly for a slower burn)	
Dryer lint	
Shredded newspaper	
Tree fungi (scraped from the tree trunk)	
Moss	
Char cloth (pieces of charred t-shirt stored in watertight container)	
Kindling or twigs	
Charcoal	
Dry leaves or pine needles	
Bark	

If it is sunny outside, and you have a magnifying lens, it is fairly easy to start a fire with kindling. When the kindling begins to smolder, blow on it until it ignites. It is also possible to spark two wires attached to a 9v or higher battery and ignite kindling, but it is important to know what you are doing to avoid injury. Once kindling is lit, it can be transferred to the fire pit.

By the way, you should never start a fire in your shelter. Wherever you do start a fire should have plenty of ventilation and not present the possibility of creating a new disaster by catching something on fire.

## FOOD

We will always have food available. Right?

You would not agree if you lived on Staten Island, New York in the days following Hurricane Sandy. The roads were closed, transportation trucks could not deliver food, and power outages led to the loss of all refrigerated food. Hurricane Katrina left approximately 100,000 people without food for several days because no one could reach them.

In other parts of the world, we get a glimpse of the food problems disasters can spark. The massive 2010 Haiti earthquake led to food riots, and the 2011 flooding in China displaced approximately 5 million people and destroyed vegetable crops.

Believing that living in a country like the U.S. means never going hungry is a mistake. You

are as likely to experience a major natural disaster as anyone else in the world. Food shortages can result from:

- Natural area disasters that create power outages and block roads
- Crop destruction of essential food items as a result of flooding
- Food supply interruptions due to international natural disasters or economic and social crises
- Economic disasters that force food prices up and make food temporarily unaffordable
- Riots that make it impossible to leave the house
- Runs on grocery stores leading to empty shelves as people panic before storms arrive

Preparing for a food shortage is the key to surviving any kind of crisis, whether created by nature or people. The type of food stored should have certain characteristics:<sup>6</sup>

- Non-perishable
- Must include items that do not need cooking
- Does not have to be refrigerated
- Simple to prepare and eat
- Contains high amounts of nutrients that promote energy
- Rich in calories
- Meet dietary restrictions or special needs

The food you store can be a mixture of items that do and do not need cooking. Not all disasters lead to situations where you are unable to cook. Sometimes it is simply a case where emergency personnel tell you to remain in your home because roads are blocked by trees, the city is experiencing domestic turmoil, or weather events make driving impossible. You may still have power and water, but are virtually trapped in your own home, possibly for days.

The reigning king of emergency food is the freeze dried version. Food is flash frozen, and then placed in a vacuum chamber where all moisture is removed. The dried food is then sealed in packaging that serves as a barrier against oxygen, moisture, and light.

- Most can be stored for up to 25 years
- Maintains its nutritional value
- All food categories are available, including meats, dairy, vegetables, fruit and juices
- Compact and easy to store
- Does not need to be rotated out every few years
- Easy to prepare
- Can easily be purchased on the internet from reputable businesses
- Can purchase as individual entrées or items or buy in bulk

Of course, you can also buy canned, boxed and packaged foods at the grocery store.



Most of this food has a much shorter shelf life than freeze dried food. However, if you are willing to keep track of expiration dates and are willing to re-invest in food supplies, canned and boxed food are storable.

Some good options are canned foods with pull-top lids, so there is no need for a can opener. Remember that grocery store foods will require more storage space than freeze dried food. That is one reason you probably do not want to buy large meal-sized canned foods unless you know for a fact there is enough storage room.

Ultimately, the best plan is to mix up your food stock a bit. Freeze dried foods need water for reconstitution, so it is not good food for a crisis in which water supplies are limited or non-existent. For this reason, commercially dehydrated foods are also not a good option because they require a lot of water during preparation. Conversely, if you need a long-term plan, canned goods solve the water issue but require space and rotation. Thus, a mix will help you cover all your bases.

The foods chosen for storage should provide enough daily calories for all family members for the chosen time period.

## FOOD OPTIONS

Description	Advantages	Disadvantages
Dehydrated	Stores well; must be kept in air tight containers; can be purchased pre-packaged; up to 20 year shelf life; can dehydrate home grown foods	Requires significant amount of water; needs cooking
Freeze Dried	Stores well; pre-packaged; 20-25 year shelf life; maintains nutrition and flavor	Requires water and cooking; can be expensive
Canned or Boxed	Simple to prepare; shelf life ranges from a few months to a few years; must be rotated regularly	Can purchase foods that may or may not require water and cooking
MREs	Complete balanced meal with cooking source; 5 year shelf life;	Expensive
Home Canned	Can use home grown garden foods and agricultural products; supplies are re-usable as food is rotated; shelf life usually under 5 years	Time consuming to prepare; requires training; glass jars are breakable; glass jars require storage in dark, cool location

A minimum 3-day supply of non-perishable food should be stored. For a 3-day food supply, the recommended foods generally do not need cooking but supply high energy. They include:<sup>7</sup>

- ✓ Protein bars
- ✓ Fruit bars
- ✓ Ready-to-eat canned foods, including meats, vegetables and fruits
- ✓ Dried fruits and nuts
- ✓ Peanut butter
- ✓ Crackers
- ✓ Dry cereal
- ✓ Non-perishable pasteurized mil
- ✓ Canned juices
- ✓ Vitamins
- ✓ Special needs foods for infants, elderly or those with medical conditions

The Washington Military Department *Emergency Management Division* offers simple to remember, practical guidelines for determining how much food to store:<sup>8</sup>

- ◆ MINIMUM 2 cans of food per person, per day

For a person a normal 2,000 calorie diet per day, food storage would include:

This chart represents absolute minimum amounts to stay healthy. The quantities of food are multiplied by the number of emergency days and the number of people to be fed. It is necessary to add items like formula for infants and foods for restricted diets.

FOOD OPTIONS

Description	Type	Amount
Meats, Beans & Nuts	Meat, turkey, chicken, or seafood; legumes, nuts	5.5 ounces
Vegetables & Vegetable Juices	Variety of vegetables and juices	2.5 cups
Fruits	Variety of fruits and fruit juices	2 cups
Grains	Dry cereals, pretzels (low salt); crackers, granola, snack bars (oatmeal or granola); white rice	6 ounces

These are just guidelines. Some people buy a basic three supply of food and then add to the supply as their budget permits. Just buying a couple of extra cans of food each time you go to the grocery store or ordering one box of freeze dried food each month will quickly create an adequate food supply.

As you add foods to your supply, mix it up a bit. No one wants to eat white rice and tuna every day for 3 weeks. Buy cans of chili, tuna fish, dried soups, a variety of cereals, accent foods like salt and pepper, and even some treats like cookies.

Finally, it is important to keep a food inventory that includes the month and date

of purchase. Then write the same date on the food items with a marker. Before storing the food item, make sure you are satisfied with the packaging. Some items may need re-sealing if they are packaged in:

- Paper
- Plastic
- Cardboard box
- Oxygen permeable plastic containers

Before resealing, make sure as much air is removed as possible. If bulk items like rice or corn is stored, the storage container needs to be very tightly sealed.

## SAFE, SECURE AND READY TO DEFEND

*“The desire for safety stands against every great and noble enterprise.”*

*- Tacitus Roman Empire Senator*

When disaster strikes, it creates a threat to you and your family’s safety and security in more ways than one. Your personal safety is jeopardized by the lack of power, water or shelter and potentially by damage to things

like gas valves or electrical systems. However, it may also be threatened by the way people act after the disaster.

It is unfortunate, but disasters often bring out the worst in people because they see it as an opportunity to loot damaged homes. Looters prey on whoever they believe is vulnerable.

Damaged homes or property are like personal invitations to looters who are looking for an easy way to rob property owners of their possessions. In this section, we review steps you can take to secure your home before and during a crisis and some self-defense methods should you have to confront looters or those who are acting irrationally due to fear and stress.

## SECURING YOUR SHELTER BEFORE A CRISIS

The best time to secure your home is before a crisis ever occurs. There are a number of steps you can take that range from ensuring window and door locks work properly to creating a safe room.

Below are some checklists to help you identify inexpensive and more expensive steps you can take to secure your home. You’ll also find a checklist of items you need to be familiar with before a crisis or a disaster to protect yourself from harm.

## SIMPLE AND INEXPENSIVE WAYS TO SECURE A SHELTER

Description	✓
Install motion sensor flood lights at entrances and around property	
Add anti-shatter film to windows	
Add a peephole to the front door	
Change existing locks to higher quality, more secure models	
Secure deadbolts with longer screws	
Display warning signs for security system or guard dog	
Secure pet doors	
Remove tall trees or shrubs near house that provide hiding places	
Keep shrubs trimmed below windows	
Make sure there is a clear line of sight between street and entrance/windows	
Move heavy items to lower shelves	
Ensure all gas connections are strong and flexible	
Secure flammable materials	
Create secrete hiding places for food and money	



## MORE EXPENSIVE WAYS TO SECURE A SHELTER

Description	✓
Purchase 24-hour monitored security system	
Add video camera system	
Install door alarm security bar	
Install magnetic contact alarms for windows	
Consider adding steel bars to windows (in high risk areas)	
Install security screen doors with bars	
Install solid-core or steel exterior doors	
Install steel door in at least one interior room for backup	
Install double-pane or reinforced glass windows that are harder to break or non-breakable Plexiglass	
Add high-tech locks that operate electronically, by responding to a command, or by fingerprint recognition	
Build a safe room with thick walls and fire-rated doors	
Install surface mount deadbolts on every exterior door	
Get a guard dog or install a security system with barking dog sounds	
Install fencing and electronically controlled gates	
Install fire resistant roofing	
Install hidden trap door for undetected escape	

# ON A NEED-TO-KNOW BASIS

## ✓ Location of:

- Main water valve
- Main gas valve
- Main shut-off valve wrench!
- Hot water tank shutoff
- Appliance shutoffs, including dryer, oven, fireplace
- Garage door manual override
- Main electrical breaker box

## ✓ Know how to shut off:

- Main water valve
- Main gas valve
- Appliances, including dryer, oven, fireplace, hot water tank
- Main electrical breaker box

## ✓ Floor Plan Showing:

- Exit doors
- Windows
- Fire extinguishers
- First aid kits
- Emergency water and food supplies location
- Emergency equipment location, like generator
- Family assembly location

## ✓ Other

- Draw picture of breaker box and label
- Tag utility box keys and hang in easily reached location
- Tag and hang other spare keys to car, utility rooms etc.
- Determine best escape route from second floor and place escape ladder or rope in accessible location
- Cut emergency cover-up boards to fit windows, mark and store

## SECURING YOUR SHELTER AFTER A CRISIS

Remember the old adage about trying to close the barn door after the horses have escaped? If so...just forget it. Sometimes life happens, and we find ourselves in situations requiring post-crisis action. Even the most prepared person can't anticipate every single event. Unfortunately, one of the facts ordinary and honest citizens must cope with is looting. Sure, it can be anticipated but until you know what is damaged during the disaster, it is impossible to make a specific plan for securing your shelter.

For example, you may have installed specially constructed doors and door frames able to withstand a battering ram. However, what happens if an earthquake damages the door or a tornado rips out a portion of a wall containing the most secure door in the world?

Mother Nature is a force to be reckoned with, but man is a creature to be feared

You must be prepared to secure your property against people as well as the weather.

Some steps you take will help manage both types of problems: Those associated with looting and those associated with shelter damage. The following checklist will help you determine the types of supplies you need to have handy to respond to a disaster, like the pre-cut plywood, bolts for securing the plywood, and a drill.

The first checklist addresses the steps to take immediately after a disaster.<sup>11</sup> The second checklist assumes you stay in your home and must secure the residence for safety and security reasons, including preparing for potential looting.

## IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE DISASTER HITS

Description	✓
Initiate disaster plan with family, first locating all members	
Check for injuries and quickly attend to emergencies first (triage)	
If able, leave house until able to check for damages or additional injuries	
Turn off electric utilities at main valve	
Put on heavy shoes for safety reasons and begin shelter inspection	
If gas leak is suspected, turn off gas main valve, open windows and leave house	
If no gas leak, assess for fires or fire hazards, watching for smoldering material and flames	
Listen to battery powered radio for information, weather alerts, etc.	
If determined safe, assess damage to house, roof and chimney, looking for risks to personal safety and shelter security (if high, leave residence immediately),	
If necessary to leave, implement evacuation plan	
If able to remain, move to the safest part of the shelter (safe room, undamaged area)	
Charge up cell phones	

## STAYING IN A HOUSE AFTER A DISASTER

Description	✓
If able to remain, move to the safest part of the shelter	
If necessary to leave, implement evacuation plan or set up temporary shelter in safe area	
Cover roof openings with plywood and tarp	
Cover broken windows with plywood	
Do not use lights at night (they let people know you have supplies and equipment)	
Board up windows if looting seems likely	
Black out windows so light and movement is masked	
Assemble items for defense like pepper spray and firearms	
Place a “prepper’s welcome mat” on porch at main doors or under windows (large pieces of plywood with nails sticking up)	
Set-up trip wires attached to soda cans at the outer property perimeters and in doorways (as a inexpensive and quick alert system when power is out)	

House damage and looting are the two biggest threats after a disaster or during a societal break down. People who have not planned ahead will soon start looking for easy food and water, which is why grocery stores are often the first stores to get looted. However, looters do not stop at essentials and will begin looking for easy targets like your house.

In many cases, people can’t leave their property, even if they want to, because roads are closed or they have a family member that is physically unable to leave. Whether you stay out of choice or circumstances, it will be necessary to dig in and defend your property.

It is impossible to predict all of the circumstances that may occur, but looting is almost a certainty. Some people suggest placing random trash around the yard to give the impression the house has already been looted. That may or may not work. Your best options are bolting plywood to the windows, leaving yourself a view and lookout, booby-trapping the doorways, and arming yourself with both non-lethal items and firearms.<sup>12</sup>

# BASIC MEDICAL CARE

Perhaps the above quote from Mr. Hornby is a bit dramatic, but that doesn't make it any less true. If the sight of wounds or blood makes you feel the urge to run screaming from the room, in an emergency you'll have to get over it.

In a disaster there is almost always someone injured, and that person (possibly you) will need

help. An injured person is in no position to listen to anyone gagging and whining that blood makes them squeamish. You need to get over your fears and learn to act. A lapse between thought and action, even a few seconds, can be the difference between a speedy recovery and a hole in the ground.

Being prepared to give basic medical care has two benefits. First, you plan in advance for a medical event and are forced to think about what could happen. Second, running for the medical supplies on hand and thinking about basic first aid practices will distract you from any squeamishness you might experience.

The best offense is a good defense, and that means having a quality first aid kit prepared in advance and knowing how to treat the most common injuries. You are not expected to do surgery in the field, but it is critical to know basic first aid because it can save a life.

The following checklists provide guidance for preparing a first aid kit and identifying the types of injuries you should be able to at least minimally treat until emergency help is available.

Below is just a guideline: In order to fully help in first aid you should take at least an introductory course in first aid and CPR.

**Remember:** Preppers plan ahead!

Any type of injury can occur during a disaster, of course, but some are more common than others. Preppers need to assemble their first aid kit and then learn how to use the items in

***“You don’t ask people with knives in their stomachs what would make them happy; happiness is no longer the point. It’s all about survival; it’s all about whether you pull the knife out and bleed to death or keep it in.... ”***

***- Nick Hornby in How to Be Good***



## BASIC FIRST AID SUPPLIES

Description	Purpose	✓
Sterile non-stick dressings	Control bleeding; apply pressure to wounds	
Sterile and Non-Sterile Bandages	Covering wounds	
SAM Splint	Immobilize broken bones or injured neck	
Butterfly strips	Close small wounds	
Tape	Hold bandages in place	
Gauze	Breathable coverage for wounds; hold bandage in place	
Adhesive Bandages	Cover blisters, small burns, bites, scratches	
Eyewash	Flush eyes	
Disinfectant	Betadine—disinfects wound, medical equipment or water	
Scissors, knife for cutting bandages		
Thermometer	Take person's temperature	
Latex Gloves	Self protection from contamination; protect patient during treatment	
Headlamp	Hands free light for first aid delivered at night	
Allergy meds	Treat allergic reactions and anaphylaxis	
Antibiotic ointment	Prevent infections	
Burn gels	Treat burns and scrapes	
Laxatives and Anti-diarrheal medicines	Treat diarrhea or constipation	
Decongestants	Treat congestion	
Pain Relievers	Treat headaches and minor aches and pains	
Space blanket	Keep injured warm and dry	
Activated charcoal	To counteract poisoning and overdose of orally administered drugs	
Moist antiseptic and Non-antiseptic Towelettes	For cleaning wounds	
Prescription Medicines (with written instructions for dosage frequencies by name)	Administer required medications like asthma inhalers, insulin, blood pressure or heart medicines	
Soap	For sanitation	
Chapstick	Lip protection	

it to treat typical injuries. Some injuries will be very severe and beyond the capabilities of a survivalist to treat, but that is out of your control. What you can do is prevent minor injuries or illnesses from turning into bigger problems.

Here is a chart listing typical injuries that occur during natural disasters, like tornadoes or earthquakes, and truth be told, may also result from altercations with other people.<sup>13</sup> It does not begin to list all possible injuries but will get you thinking in terms of basic medical care needs.

## TYPICAL INJURIES

Type of Injury	Basic Treatment	✓
Bleeding	Apply direct pressure, pressure point pressure, elevation, tourniquet, digital ligation	
Blisters	Cover and cushion small blisters. Disinfect, open, and cover large or infected blisters.	
Insect Bites & Stings	Apply antibiotic ointment to ease itching and prevent infection; remove bee stingers with knife blade; clean and dress spider bites and scorpion stings; watch for life-threatening reactions like airway swelling	
Animal bites	Apply antibiotic ointment	
Lacerations, abrasions, cuts, scrapes etc	Clean, close with butterfly bandages, apply antibiotic; dress with bulky bandages	
Dislocations	Use weights or manual traction, or pull joint back into place and then splint	
Sprains	Compression wrap or splint, elevate	
Broken bones	Use SAM splint, branches or saplings as splints, then tie series of strips or bandages around splint	
Head injury	Clean and cover wounds, monitor the person's well-being for at least 24 hours.	
Burns	Apply clean wet dressings over burn, treat like a wound, keep airway open, watch for shock	
Hypothermia	Wrap person in a warm sleeping bag or immerse in a warm bath, administer hot fluids	
Breathing problems (obstructions, inflammation, tongue blockage)	Clear foreign objects, administer abdominal thrusts; use jaw thrust method, give mouth-to-mouth resuscitation; keep warm; if asthma, sit person up and lean forward while quickly administering medications	
Heatstroke	Bring body temperature down by applying cool wet compresses to joints; wet head; administer fluids	
Constipation	Administer laxatives	
Diarrhea	Administer anti-diarrheal	

## DEFENSIVE STRATEGIES

Defensive strategies can be grouped into three main categories: simple self-defense strategies using no weapons, defense measures utilizing less lethal protection devices, and lethal defense

of your home with firearms. This section complements the section on safety and security.

In other words, you have taken steps to secure your home from intruders and looters, as much as possible. However, there could come a time when you must deflect potential invaders who want your food, water, supplies, or personal possessions.

Once again, you should review the checklists, decide which ones fit your personal needs and life philosophy, and then learn how to effectively and efficiently implement them.

## SIMPLE SELF-DEFENSE METHODS WITHOUT A FIREARM

Description	✓
Lock yourself and family in the safe room	
Chopping the throat or neck with the edge of a flattened palm	
Kick the attacker on the body part closest to you	
Headbutt the attacker	
Use a common item as a weapon (pen, hammer, golf club, baseball bat, umbrella, stone, etc.)	
Attack vulnerable and vital body areas like the eyes, ears, throat, groin, and especially the kneecap	
Biting	
Arm yourself with a kitchen knife	
Complete basic self-defense course	
Escape through secret exit	
Smoke bomb	
Temporarily blinding strobe light	

Every situation is different. The first goal is to keep the looter from entering the house, in the first place. If an armed looter gets into the house and you do not have a firearm, it is not wise to directly confront the invader. Surprise him from behind with a golf club swing to the head or leave the house, but don't try to defend yourself with maneuvers like kicks and chops unless formal training has been completed.

Of course, there are desperate situations in which you may have to charge the person, while ducking and weaving. If so, try to grab a shield first, like a television tray or piece of metal roofing.

## LESS THAN LETHAL DEFENSE MEASURES

Less lethal measures are intended to incapacitate the looter or convince the looter to leave. They can cause bodily harm but are not intended to kill the person. These items are purchased

and should be kept in multiple and easily accessible locations.<sup>14</sup>

## LESS THAN LETHAL WEAPONS

Description	✓
Pepper spray	
Wasp spray	
Mace	
Stun gun	
Thermal guns	
Shotguns firing nets	
Darts tipped with (legal) drugs	
Bean bags filled with metal shot and fired from an adapted grenade launcher	
Batons	

## LETHAL DEFENSE OF YOUR HOME

Lethal defense of your home is another option after a disaster or during a crisis. Legal lethal weapons are generally classified as:

- ✓ Firearms
- ✓ Knives

This could very well be the best option if you are confronted with a group of looters or a people on the edge due to their uncontrollable fear and desperation. Knives are a distance second choice to guns. You can purchase firearms for a lot of reasons, and self-defense is one of them. The U.S. Constitution protects the right of citizens to own and bear arms. However, there are some important points to keep in mind.

First, you need to learn firearm safety and learn how to correctly use the weapon. A

firearm in the hands of someone unfamiliar with guns creates a high risk of self-injury.

Training includes:

- ✓ Firearm safety
  - Handling
  - Storing
  - Firing different types of weapons
- ✓ Weapons loading and unloading
- ✓ Tactical use for effective results
- ✓ Maintaining a safe weapon
- ✓ Laws concerning firearms

Use of lethal force has consequences, and you must be prepared to accept them. For this reason, use of lethal force embraces psychological, moral, and legal issues. Recognizing that firearms or knives used against intruders are intended to take a human life, you must be willing to live with the potential guilt should that happen.

Anyone who says, “I just want to scare someone away!” should not attempt to use a gun. Chances are the intruder will sense the reluctance, take the gun away, and turn it on the person.

You also need to understand that there will also be legal repercussions, if someone gets killed. The burden will be on you to prove it was a life and death situation for you or your family. That may require hiring an attorney and spending a lot of money proving your case. Yet, you have a right to defend yourself,

- and no one can take that right away. However, you do need to know the law.
- ✓ Learn federal, state, county and local firearm laws
  - ✓ Thoroughly learn your rights and when lethal self-defense is allowed by law
  - ✓ Learn the terms, like “immediate threat”, “self-defense”, “aggressor”, “justifiable force”, and so on

Here is a chart with some points to keep in mind:

DO’S AND DON’TS OF LETHAL DEFENSE

Description	✓
Do Choose weapons comfortable to use	
Do store plenty of ammunition for all weapons	
Do store or hide firearms in places children cannot access	
Do know the firearm safe combination by heart (and practice quick openings)	
Do have all required firearm permits	
Do practice shooting often	
Don’t overestimate your abilities with firearms	
Don’t underestimate the abilities of intruders to use firearms and to harm	
Don’t try to balance a firearm and flashlight in a single hand	
Don’t shoot anyone not threatening your life	
Don’t shoot out of the window unless able to prove an immediate and direct safety threat	
Don’t use non-lethal bullets when defending home during a crisis	
Don’t hesitate to shoot when the right time arrives	
Don’t draw a firearm just to scare someone off—be ready to use it	

The decision to use firearms to defend your shelter is a serious one. After a disaster or during a crisis, there is a good chance that police response will be slow or completely unavailable for a long period of time. In the meantime, your family is left vulnerable to riots, looters and desperate people that may be willing to do whatever it takes to get something that you have. For this reason, millions of citizens bear arms solely to defend the lives of their families and their property.



## PLANNING

# DECIDING TO BUG-IN OR BUG-OUT (STAY OR GO?)

*“Desperation is the raw material of drastic change. Only those who can leave behind everything they have ever believed in can hope to escape.”*

*- William S. Burroughs, Writer*

Stay or go? That is the question after a disaster or during a crisis. Sometimes, it is clear that it's time to bug-out. For example, during a wildfire that is close to burning down your neighborhood or when ordered to evacuate by government officials, you would clearly want to leave.

However, even during an ordered evacuation, some people choose to stay. The decision to bug-in or bug-out ultimately lies with you and will depend on a number of factors.

The time to consider these factors is before a disaster or crisis occurs. In that way, you know by given conditions what the decision should be for that event. Following are a couple of checklists to help you assess situations that you might encounter during a disaster.

## BUG-IN

Description	✓
Able to remain in home without endangering family	
Enough supplies are stored to last through expected event timeline	
No family member's health is threatened by loss of power	
There are alternative heating sources should the power go out during wintertime	
There are no available alternatives for sheltering within easy reach	
Are prepared to protect home from looters	
There is no evacuation route	
Leaving would expose family to contaminated air	
Alternative sheltering on property is available should it be necessary to abandon a damaged house	
Willing to live under martial law should it be implemented	
Not able to leave quickly and efficiently (traffic log, family health issue, road conditions, etc.)	
Leaving would expose family to worse problems like terrorism or radiation	
Rioting and looting is underway in home area and leaving would force family to make contact with participants	
Can still make decision to bug-out after a few days to see if power comes back on	
Not able to walk any distance should it be necessary	

## BUG-OUT

Description	✓
Event appears to be getting worse than anticipated, putting family in danger	
Not enough food and water is stored for event duration	
Evacuating later, should it be necessary, would not be possible	
Infant, elderly or sick members of family cannot live in a home during a power failure	
Conditions are life threatening, i.e. fire, mudslides, flooding	
Home is not habitable after disaster and it is not feasible to setup outside shelter	
Necessary to have access to medical treatment and medications	
Not able to defend yourself against potential intruders	

The fact is that each event must be evaluated on its own merits. The decision to bug-in or bug-out ultimately rests on a family's ability to stay safe, secure, and healthy during the duration of the event.

No two events are identical. The power may go out during a hurricane one year but stay on through a tornado the next year. Looters may be a problem in the big city but not in your town. A blizzard may last one day or a week. An economic crisis creating a food shortage may endure for months.

Review the checklists and think through your family's needs and your ability to meet those needs with the preparations you have made. The right decisions are usually clear.

## READY FOR THE FIRST 72 HOURS

The first 72 hours of a disaster are critical because it is a time of potential panic. It is also the most likely time period during which power, gas, and water supplies will be interrupted. In

addition, relief workers are swamped and unable to help everyone who needs it right away. Advance preparation ensures your family can take care of themselves for the first few days.

Every family needs to have several kits or bags assembled. Based on the previous discussion, you should know that food and water are most critical. However, there are eight categories of items that need to be in the house and readily accessible. The bug-out bag is designed to grab and go.<sup>15</sup>

## BUG-IN BAG/SUPPLIES

Description	Comments	✓
3-day water supply	See Chapter 2	
3-day food supply	See Chapter 2	
First aid supplies	See Chapter 2, 1 kit for home and 1 for each vehicle	
Clothing	Include warm clothing for each family member in event disaster occurs in winter months	
Bedding	Sleeping bags able to handle minus 20 degrees F preferred in cold climates	
Tools & Emergency Supplies	See next checklist	
Special items for family members	For infants, elderly, people with medical conditions, disabled	
Medications	Especially prescription medications	

## TOOLS & SUPPLIES

Description	✓
Plates (paper and plastic) and cups	
Plastic utensils	
Non-electric can opener	
Utility knife (multi-function knife is most useful)	
Battery operated or solar powered radio	
Hand crank power generator for cell phones, radio	
Flashlights, light sticks, battery operated lamps	
Fire extinguisher	
Waterproof matches	
Hammer and nails	
Hand axe	
Screwdrivers (various sizes)	

Description	✓
Pry bar	
Wrenches (various sizes)	
Saw	
Nylon line, twine	
Dust masks	
Duct tape	
Utility valve shut-off wrench	
Tube tent	
Non-electric cooking stove and fuel	
Candles	
Water purification tablets or solution	

## BUG-OUT BAG

Description	Comments	✓
3-day water supply	See Chapter 2	
3-day food supply	See Chapter 2	
First aid supplies	See Chapter 2	
Clothing	Include warm clothing for each family member in event disaster occurs in winter months	
Bedding	Sleeping bags able to handle minus 20 degrees F preferred in cold climates, emergency blankets	
Tools & Emergency Supplies	See previous Tools & Supplies list and select those for which you are able to accommodate, always carry a good multi-function knife	
Special items for family members	For elderly, people with medical conditions, disabled	
Water purification tablets or solution	To purify water	
Toilet paper	Sanitation	
Portable toilet	Sanitation	
Plastic bags	To protect gear or use for temporary shelter	
Feminine hygiene supplies	Sanitation	
Indestructible water container	Carrying water	
Bandanas	Multiple purposes	
Extra eye glasses	Extra protection	
Denture needs	Extra protection	
Firearm and ammunition	For protection	
Spare set of keys	To house, vehicle, safe deposit box, storage facility, safe haven shelter location, etc.	
Emergency cash	Emergency purchases, at least \$500	

Now that you are ready to bug-in or bug-out, it is time to consider disasters that may last up to 3 weeks.

## READY FOR 3 WEEKS

Three weeks seems like a long time, but disaster recovery often takes that long and much longer. There are some things to keep in mind.

- ✓ Food and water needs to be rationed

beginning week 3

- Inventory food
  - Eat spoilable food first
  - Eat available natural foods (i.e. garden vegetables)
  - Calculate food portion sizes for children and adults based on revised expected length of emergency situation
  - Distribute food based on the plan
  - Collect additional food and water whenever possible and add it to the inventory
- ✓ If winter is approaching, prepare well in advance
- ✓ Assist the community with recovery because everyone benefits when people work together
- Volunteer at food and water distribution points
  - Work with community sanitation efforts
  - Check on neighbors, especially the elderly and infirmed

Unfortunately, it is important to not tell people that you have stored food and water. As is discussed in the next chapter, tensions rise during a disaster or crisis and people can act irrationally when desperate. You do not want to put your family in danger by letting others know you were well prepared. That encourages looters.

## SETTLING IN FOR THE

## LONG-TERM

Stockpiling food, water, and supplies helps for a certain period of time, but a long term situation presents new challenges. The consequences of disasters can endure for months, and if your supplies were designed to last for weeks, there must be options.

Emergency rations distributed by disaster recovery workers will be inadequate over the long term, and municipal water supplies may be erratic, even if the power is restored.

When you plan for a long term disaster, you will need to think in terms of self-sufficiency.

- ✓ Renewable Water Source
- Learn natural purification methods like solar pasteurization
  - Construct a rain catchment system
  - Rain barrel system
  - Rainwater harvesting
  - Install a water storage tank
- ✓ Sustainable Food Source
- Plant a garden
  - Build a greenhouse
  - Learn long term storage techniques, i.e. freeze drying, canning, freezing, drying, preserving
  - Collect natural, local foods like berries and fruits
  - Learn to cook using native vegetation as much as possible



# SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

There is a good chance each family has a member who is a special needs person. Following is a checklist of people who may need special accommodations during an emergency. A bug-in and bug-out kit will need to include the items necessary to ensure they stay safe and secure.

Special needs people may simply need certain supplies or particular foods. However, someone who is blind, mentally challenged, or confined to bed due to a medical condition, will need the help of other people. A disaster or crisis is stressful for everyone, but for someone dependent on others for their well-being, it is four times so.

Following is a checklist of things to consider if your household has special needs.<sup>16</sup>

## SPECIAL NEEDS

Description	✓
Infants	
Elderly	
Physical disability	
Sensory disability	
Cognitive disability	
Disabled	
Chronic illness	
Current medical condition	
Pregnant	
Female hygiene	
Dietary restricted	

## MAKING A PLAN FOR SPECIAL NEEDS PEOPLE

Description	Comments	✓
Organize a support network familiar with your needs	Family, friends, neighbors; include at least 3 people that you know can be trusted	
List needs and available resources	To identify where help is needed	
Personal care requirements	Adaptive equipment	
Feeding devices	Special equipment	
Mobility equipment	Wheelchair, electric lifts, walkers, etc.	
Transportation	Specially equipped vehicle	
Food restrictions	Food storage requirements	
Evacuation needs	Assistance needed to leave home or evacuate area	
Interpreter	Communication needs	
Service animals	Pet accommodation	

Description	Comments	✓
Local special assistance programs	Check for emergency assistance availability	
Personal care attendants	If currently using, plan with the person or agency for times of emergency	
Develop communications plan	List of names, phone numbers and location of family, care-givers, and support personnel	
Identify safe place in home for disabled	Allow room for person and their assistive equipment, in addition to family members; allow for alternative plans for different hazards	
Plan escape routes out of house	Allow room for moving essential equipment with person, i.e. wheel chairs, mechanical beds, etc.	
Backup power supply	For medical and assistive equipment	
Backup equipment	For example, manual wheelchair in case electric wheelchair stops working	
Special needs bug-in, bug-out and first aid kits	Assemble kits that contain supplies to accommodate special needs	

The special needs supplies can be added to family kits or separate special needs kits assembled. In some cases it may be as simple as adding backup hearing aid devices and batteries, and communication cards to the kit. However, as mentioned earlier, infants probably require their own bug-in and bug-out kits, as would someone who is chronically ill or has dietary restrictions.

Once the special needs emergency plan is developed, it is important to review it at least every 6 months. Circumstances can change, which will require amendments to your plan. You need to meet with all family members and ensure that more than one

person is able to assist the special needs person should you not be able to carry out planned duties.

In 2009, an interesting study was completed by Temple University. The study compared the preparedness of households with and without special needs members. The results sadly reported that, despite having greater vulnerability to a disaster, households with special needs family members were not more likely to have prepared in advance by planning and buying.<sup>17</sup>

Successful preppers plan ahead for everyone in their circle.

## DEALING WITH OTHERS

*“We feel free when we escape—even if it be  
but from the frying pan to the fire.”*

*- Eric Hoffer, Philosopher*

### IT'S NOT “ME AGAINST THE WORLD”

“Why me?” That is often the initial feeling when disaster strikes. Why was *my* house destroyed, but my neighbor's house is still standing. Why is my friend calling *me* looking for food and water, when he should have planned ahead? Why did *my* husband get injured during a tornado, at a time when *I* needed him most?

These kinds of questions are normal because we feel personally attacked during a disaster or crisis. One fact you can count on is that a lot of seemingly unfair events will surround disasters.

The nicest person in the neighborhood is mortally wounded trying to help someone escape a damaged house. The 3-month old infant loses an arm when it is crushed by falling debris. Your house burns to the ground due to a gas leak caused by an earthquake, while everyone else in the area suffers minor damage. The looters try to rob you of your food and water but leave your neighbors unharmed.

The first thing to remember is that a disaster

or crisis can strike at any time, but it is not targeting *you* or *your family* or *your friends*. Therefore, you must strive to avoid falling into the trap of thinking that it is “you against the world” and that you now must stand alone in your defense of all that is important in your life.

Here is a fact: Survival applies to one person, but recovering and thriving takes a village. We opened the discussion on survival by pointing out that “it takes a village” or teamwork to move beyond the damage, fear, and stress that inevitably accompanies a disaster. To survive means to you stay alive and healthy. To thrive means you rebuild a community and move forward with life.

Humans were not meant to be alone. We are social creatures and without the interaction and teamwork with other humans we would have never made it this far up the food chain. Think about it, we are not the biggest, nor the strongest. We don't have razor sharp claws and bone crushing teeth. We are small, fragile, pink animals that need each other to continue on.

Rebuilding is a group effort, and people need to help each other. Ten pairs of hands can build a shelter in a fraction of the amount of time it would take you to do it on your own. Five pairs of hands can remove a large tree from a road in a matter of hours, as opposed to days for a single person.

The people who manage the best during a disaster are those who maintain the right

state of mind. Negative thinking will impede the ability to make good decisions and to solve problems. Keeping your family safe requires the ability to adapt to conditions and to keep a “can do attitude”. It is quite possible that you will have to deal with the basic problems of thirst, hunger, cold, or heat. However, as a prepper, you have planned ahead and those problems should be temporary.

To ensure you maintain a “can do attitude”, first assess your skills for several reasons:

- Identify personal capabilities
- Identify need for additional training
- Assist community with rebuilding
- Supplement group efforts by contributing missing skills

In addition, you will have to learn how to work within the community to get what you need to survive and then thrive. Do you know how to network and barter? Those skills could be as important as being able to repair a roof or cook food over an open fire. It just all depends on the type of disaster and how long recovery takes.

In the meantime, the most useful tool in your inventory is a positive mental attitude. This is of as much importance as your physical, body for survival.

While you may start off the end of a disaster fighting off hordes of looters or whatever else may be thrown your way, ultimately,

once you know your family is safe and secure, it is time to rebuild the village.

## SKILLS ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

Most of us never stop to assess or list our particular skills. However, when your home and community is ravaged by a disaster, all skills are important to someone or some group.

Also, assessing current skills will help you identify weaknesses and the need for additional training. The checklist begins with the most basic survival skills and then proceeds to skills requiring specialized training.

The World Bank Building Resilient Communities report, which addresses disaster risk reduction, disaster response, and disaster recovery, says that international experiences have proven that:<sup>18</sup>

- Disaster effects are first felt at the community level
- The community is the first to respond
- The most successful risk reduction measures are those involving the community exposed to hazards

It takes many different types of skills and participation of community members to rebuild a disaster stricken community. Combining your skills with the skills of others leads to faster recovery efforts.

## SKILLS ASSESSMENT

Description	✓
Build an emergency shelter using natural resources	
Filter water using natural resources	
Identify area edible plants	
Build a fire without matches	
Signal for help using available resources	
Wilderness survival training	
First aid skills	
Tree removal	
Carpentry	
Plumbing	
Electrical	
Roofing	
Masonry	
Equipment repair	
Vehicle repair	
Heavy equipment operation	
Technology skills	
Road repair	
Firefighter	
Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) training	
Emergency Rescue training	
Military training	
Veterinarian	
Counselor	
Dentist	
Health professional (doctor, nurse, nurse's aide etc.)	

## ASSESS A THREAT

During times of disaster or crisis, people's stress levels will rise dramatically. Unfortunately, some people will turn violent. Learning the warning signs that a person may pose a threat to your safety and security is important, and there are many verbal and physical cues to be on the lookout for.



## WARNING SIGNS A PERSON MAY BE VIOLENT

Description	✓
Clenching fists	
Eye bulging	
Clenching teeth	
Going red in the face	
Puffing out the chest	
Screaming	
Excessive cussing	
Rocking on feet in agitation	
Making moves toward you	
Making threats	
Waving a weapon (even if not pointed at you)	
Sudden flashes of uncontrollable temper	
Incoherent or delusional ranting	
Refusing requests to leave property	
Expressions of extreme confusion or paranoia	
Profuse sweating	
Refuses to listen to reason	
Rapid, heavy breathing (not due to physical activity)	
Excessive crying	
Rise in the pitch of the voice	

When someone appears to be in an extreme state of agitation, there are two choices: leave or try to calm the person down. Sometimes, if the other person is angry or scared enough, he or she may not let you leave easily. In the following section, we briefly discuss how to calm rising tensions.

## REACTING APPROPRIATELY TO THE SITUATION

When people are in a panic, scared,

and tense, they can adopt the “pack mentality”. That is how situations quickly get out of control. There is a good chance you may encounter situations in which tensions are on the rise and a pack mentality is clearly forming.

When one or more people approach you and are agitated and tense, you can help relieve the tensions in many cases. In the following checklist, you will find suggestions that may reduce panic levels.

## CALMING TENSIONS

Description	✓
Organize productive activities, like cleaning the area of debris	
Stay calm in the face of rising tensions and don't join the fray	
Walk away from stressful situations that do not improve (don't become part of the problem)	
Help people find solutions to their problems, when possible	
Show confidence in the ability of the community to recover	
Be willing to listen to people's concerns and express empathy	
Suggest ways people can better direct their energies	
Ask community members to join a volunteer group with you	
Recommend people experiencing high levels of stress use church and community counseling resources	
Help families reunite	
Provide information about community resources (gathered during your pre-planning efforts)	

During your initial planning, you will want to spend time researching how to talk to agitated people in a calming manner. People who are frightened experience emotional and physical effects that may make them irrational. Blood pressure rises, adrenaline flows, and mental anguish impairs thinking. Someone must maintain rationality and calm, and that is much easier for a person who has fully prepared themselves for this situation than those to whom disaster was never a thought in their mind. However, as a community member, rising tensions can only bring trouble.

If you are ever put in a position such as this you need to know exactly what to do or say to defuse the situation.

## BARTERING FOR SURVIVAL

Most urban Americans have never bartered, or have they? If you have ever been to a flea market then you have been a patron of the barter system. If when you were younger you agreed to do your brother or sister's chore in return for yours, or perhaps you offered to do their chore for a part of their allowance, you have effectively completed a barter transaction.

Bartering in its most simple form is the exchange of goods or services between persons without the use of money. During a disaster, bartering can be a useful skill when

supplies get low and cash isn't worth the paper it's printed on.

Of course, some supplies are more important than others. Food and water top the bartering list. However, there are other items that you can barter with or for, depending on your need. Knowing the most valuable bartering items can help you with your planning efforts. Maybe a carton of soap really is worth storing!

Following is a list of items commonly used in bartering activities after a disaster. However, in theory you can barter for and with just about anything in your survival storehouse.

Remember, just because an item has little or no value to you doesn't mean that it will not be a highly sought after prize to another person. Often, you can barter with items that have no value to you, but will net you what you need.

That concept instantly turns otherwise useless barter items into prized commodities. You may not smoke, but the man with the matches you need just might like the pack of cigarettes that Uncle Henry left at your house a few weeks before the disaster. The

SPECIAL NEEDS

Description	✓
Soap	
Coffee	
Condiments (salt & pepper)	
Cigarettes	
Alcohol	
Sugar	
Bleach	
Candles	
Toilet paper	
Ammunition	
Pain relievers	
MREs	
Canned or dried food items	
Food from your garden	
Hand tools	
Bic lighters	
Feminine hygiene products	
Hygiene products (toothpaste, dental floss, etc.)	

cigarettes have no value to you, but they do to the other man.

Knowing the items people will most likely need and want means you can stock up on them, even if you don't want or need them for your own personal use. It's like having currency in the bank.

## CONCLUSION

A thousand pages could be written about survival and responses to disasters or crises but there is no way that that amount of information could ever be contained in one book let alone inside your head.

The key to preparation is to start where it benefits you the most. You wouldn't need to pack snow chains and ice picks if you lived in the desert would you?

No each person is going to have their own opinions on what needs to be prepared for, what supplies need to be kept on hand, and what skills need to be trained for. Preparedness is not a singular path.

However, this report gives you an excellent foundation for taking action. One of the mistakes people make is telling themselves that they will start buying items "soon" or "next paycheck" or "next month".

The main problem with this frame of mind is that a disaster doesn't happen on schedule. That next big quake or F5 tornado could hit much "sooner" than your next paycheck..

It has become apparent from the tragedy of the many recent natural disasters that most people do not plan ahead, and they end up hungry, thirsty, and out of luck.

Building survival boxes, kits, and bags does not require taking out a bank loan. You can begin by making a commitment to buy several items each week. For example, when you grocery shop this week, buy 2 cans of food and a bag of rice. Clearly mark a plastic container with the words "survival food", and you are on your way to being prepared.

Granted, some items you want to purchase may cost more, like a hand crank battery recharger, but as your budget permits, one day it too can be crossed off the list.

Not everything in your kit has to be brand new! Don't be afraid to reuse something that you already have on hand.

Scrap wood and nails can be used for weapons or home fortifications.

Left over lint from the dryer screen makes a perfect tinder bundle ( why do you think so many houses burn down each year from a clogged dryer?).

Before you throw something away, take a second look at it and try to find a reason to keep it. Could it be reused for a different purpose? Would it make a great barter piece for someone else?

Remember that skills are even more

important than your gear. When gear can fail you, you need to make sure you have a back up that will not.

Practice your skills to hone new ones and sharpen old ones, never let them rust. The best part.

The information in this report has covered the basics of storing water and food, and taking shelter in or out of the home. There was as a discussion about safety and security, defending your family and home, and planning to bug-in and bug-out.

Finally, your relationship to other people during a disaster was considered. It is a lot of information, but there is something for everyone.

You have probably noticed that the *Prepper's Playbook* represents a blend of both urban and wilderness survival techniques. The fact is that a disaster in the city can quickly turn people into outdoors men and women.

You may not ever go camping for recreation, but you should know the basics of how camp, should Mother Nature destroy your residence and

suddenly remove the option of staying indoors.

Ultimately, this information is meant to help you prepare to stay safe, secure and healthy.

The only way this information will ever be useful is if you implement the suggestions in your daily life, practice them, and expand on them as much as possible.

You won't have the time or ability to absorb all of the information to keep you safe and even if you print all of this out, there is no guarantee it will be of any use to you if you haven't already reviewed it and put it into an actionable plan.

One of my mentors said this to me and I have never found it more applicable than now.

"You never want to be doing something for the first time when you need it to save your life."

So read this report fully, decide how you want to approach your own personal preparations and get started...

***Right Now!*** ●

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