

GET OUT of DODGE



ABSOLUTERIGHTS

SPECIAL REPORT

WHEN DISASTER STRIKES

Disasters are highly unpredictable and disruptive events that cause suffering, deprivation, injury and death, as a result of direct injury, disease, the interruption of commerce and business, and the partial or total destruction of critical infrastructure such as homes, hospitals, roads, bridges, power lines, etc.



Disasters can be caused by naturally occurring events, such as earthquakes, hurricanes, floods, or tornadoes, or they can be the results of man-made events; either accidental (such as an accidental toxic waste spill or nuclear power plant meltdown), or deliberate (such as various terrorist bombings, shootings, poisonings or riots and anarchy).

Certain types of natural disasters are more likely to occur in particular parts of the world. For instance, areas near coastlines, lakes or rivers are more likely to experience flooding problems than land-locked areas. However, almost every place you could live is prone to one type of natural disaster or another. No place is absolutely safe from natural disasters. And, of course it goes without saying, that no place is safe from the threats posed by terrorism and other man-made disasters.

It may be impossible to avoid disasters, but it is possible to plan ahead and prepare to minimize the impact that any given disaster might have on you or your family's health, safety and property.

When disasters strike, people can lose everything. Power can go down, mass communications devices can be rendered useless, banks can be shut down and credit cards become worthless. Local supermarket

shelves will soon run empty, water supplies may become tainted, and entire communities may fall apart, overnight. Only those who are prepared for every major disaster scenario can make the decisions that will keep us and our loved ones safe. Only proper planning and preparation will allow you to remain organized and effective both physically and mentally, during a disaster.

Disaster preparation is not a linear process. Buying supplies at your local store does not make you prepared. You will need to research the types of disasters that are most likely to occur in your area. You will need to determine which physical items you need to have ready and packed in case you must evacuate. Scouting your immediate area ahead of time will help you evacuate quickly and avoid "choke" points, while other less prepared people are frantically trying to do the same and are willing to do anything to evacuate.

You will need to know how to protect yourself from harm and how to nourish yourself if there are no supermarkets around. Finally, you will need to know how to move both, quickly and inconspicuously. Disaster scenarios can create hectic situations and bring out the worst in people. The faster you move and the less noticeable you are, the safer you will be, at all times.



Types of Disasters:

HURRICANES



Hurricane Katrina struck swiftly and suddenly during the storm season of 2005. It was the sixth strongest hurricane ever recorded in the United States and caused the deaths of over 1,800 people. This devastating storm reminded the country of the powerful and devastating impact that nature can impose on modern society. The majority of the damage was done in the Greater New Orleans area. Massive floods engulfed parts of the city, forcing people from their homes into the flooded rivers that used to be lazy neighborhood streets. Over 26,000 people were forced into temporary residence at the local football stadium; the Superdome.

crucial steps to prepare for a hurricane emergency

- ✓ prepare a disaster protocol
- ✓ set up multiple meet-up points with your family
- ✓ communicate via walkie-talkies
- ✓ Keep important documents and cash, on hand at all times

Hurricanes can quickly drive people from their homes, separating them from one another and causing extreme damage to structures. It is important to prepare for hurricanes from a tactical perspective. You should be aware of and prepared for the effects that the hurricane will have on both you and your surroundings. You should also prepare your family and loved ones for the events that are about to unfold. Be prepared for the flash flooding, strong winds, airborne



debris, and power outages that will occur.

Simple as it may seem, taking swimming lessons as a family at the local YMCA can be great preparation for a hurricane. Flash flooding can knock over homes in seconds and those who are familiar with how water can knock the human body around; will be able to react quickly and efficiently. You rarely hear about strong swimmers drowning or dying in floods resulting from hurricanes. Even if you are a strong swimmer, however, it is never advised to try and cross a flooded path during a hurricane. Fast moving debris and unseen objects under the water can cause severe injury or death.

Pre-set meeting points will allow friends and family members to know where everyone else will be, in case they are separated. Having a destination or two, planned out in advance, will help keep you cool and focused under pressure. You will want to have a nearby, easily accessible meeting point. This can be a place everyone in your home knows about, such as, a child's school, the local library, or a nearby park.

If the hurricane is so destructive that you must evacuate the immediate area, an alternate, more distant meeting point will be necessary. This location should also be known to everyone in your home and should be scouted out together; as a family. Preferably, this location should be far enough away so that you are outside the range of

imminent harm. It should be close enough, however, that every family member will be able to get there on their own, if necessary.

Sewing small pockets into shirts, pants and jacket linings is a great way to prepare for hurricanes, as well. During a hurricane, flooding will often destroy important documents. Making copies of identification cards and placing them into pre-sewn pockets along with some cash and a phone card is a great way to make sure everyone can get by if they are left alone.

This can prove to be a life-saving tactic with regards to kids and the elderly. Simply make copies of all the documents you may need and withdraw a couple of hundred dollars in \$20 bills, from your checking account. Fold the documents and cash neatly in small squares and sew them into the inner linings of the clothing items mentioned. Have the clothing items at accessible location throughout your home, so that everyone can have easy access to them if there is a need to evacuate. This way, even if folks do not have time to pick up cell phones, wallets and original identification materials, they can still have access to their benefits.

The walkie-talkie is a way of hedging your bets against downed phone lines and wireless network failures. Hurricanes can disable power lines and take down cell phone towers. Keep in mind, however, that walkie-talkies do not have great range. They

are far more useful in the early moments of a separation, than they are later on and over increasing distances. They can also be picked up by scanners, so even if you cannot communicate with your family, you can still call for help and expect someone to hear you.

One final point about hurricanes; trust no one. We will repeat this point several times throughout this report as to hammer home the actual on-the-spot insanity of disaster situations. You should always rely on yourself first and be wary of all persons, whether they are authority figures or not.

In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, multiple New Orleans police officers were prosecuted for crimes. A select group was even charged with the homicide of a mentally retarded man, whom they shot in the back. This comment is by no means a potshot at law enforcement officers. It is merely a reminder, that everyone is susceptible to erratic behavior during a disaster and that your trust cannot be blind.

Preparing yourself and your family to be quick, smart and efficient during a hurricane minimizes the potential of getting involved in volatile situations which can lead to conflict, violence or worse. Remember, the most important action in a hurricane is movement; you never want to be stationary. Always be moving towards your meeting point and/or away from the storm.

Types of Disasters:

RIOTS



The Los Angeles Riots of 1992 shocked the nation and reminded us that we do not need nature to create a disaster. Sometimes our neighbors and fellow citizens can do that by themselves. Sometimes humans are capable of doing far more damage than any natural disaster.

A riot will require your endless vigilance and studious observation. There will be no weather report issuing warnings of an oncoming riot. Riots happen organically and spread like wildfire. The best thing that you can do to prepare for a riot is to secure yourself and your loved ones, long before the first signs of trouble.

Riots will offer up two basic tactical options. One will require staying and the other; going. In either case, arming oneself is an absolute must. The most secure tactic is to purchase, store and practice using firearms.

Secondary weapons such as stun guns and pepper spray are useful, as well. Taking a self-defense class cannot hurt, even though riots usually do not feature one-on-one combat.

Keep in mind that non-firearm self-defense tools and tactics are only useful at close range and against one assailant at a time. In a riot, you are far less likely to face individual assailants and far more likely to run up against an unruly mob.

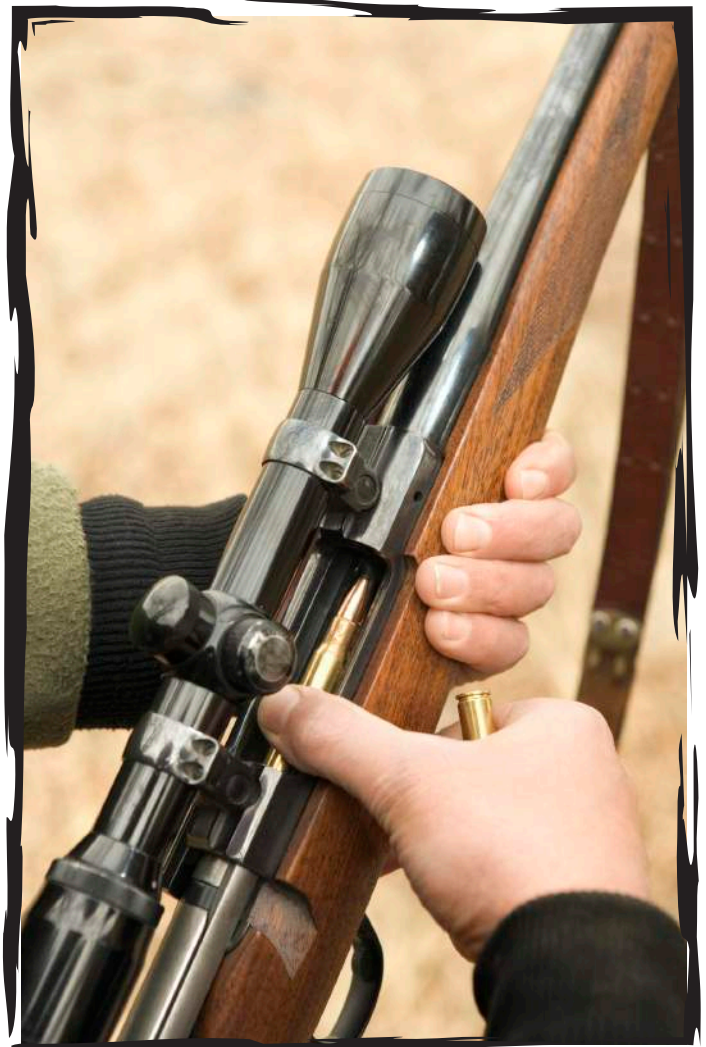
Those choosing to stand their ground against rioters, should secure their home and property.

All doors must have deadbolts and all entry points to your home and property must be secured with metal bars, sturdy gates, barbed wiring and if possible, an electrical fence. Every home and business should have a “panic room.”- This is a secure, impenetrable location somewhere on the property, which cannot be entered from the outside, once it is locked down from within.

If you are a good shooter and have a solid weapons arsenal backed by ample ammunition, you will be far better equipped to protect your home, business or property. Mobs function by animal reasoning and logic. Use the jungle as your conceptual guide. If it happens in the animal kingdom, it can happen during a riot. A pack of hyenas will much rather attack a group of gazelles and antelopes, than they would a solitary tiger or a lion. In some cases, the bigger, faster and stronger hyenas will even veer away from a cobra or a rattlesnake. The reason is simple, anyone or anything that can cause damage to the mob, becomes a less attractive target. The mob wants to crush and pillage, so it seeks the weak. If you are strong and can cause damage, you will have a better chance of survival.

Getting up to a perch, high above the oncoming mob can give you a great tactical advantage when armed. Since the invention of the sniper rifle, every military conflict has featured heroic tales of the single soldier, outmanned and outgunned, perched in the

perfect position high above his enemies. This soldier invariably defeats the odds and survives. The fact that he can see his enemies and shoot at them from a downward angle, overcomes his numerical disadvantage. He can shoot at all of them, but none of them can shoot back.



You should be very careful, however, if choosing to open fire on a mob during a riot. There is a very dangerous aspect to letting others know that you have weapons. This aspect is very rarely discussed and debated in America, but well known to those who

have experienced rioting throughout the globe.

What we really have to worry about in terms of the weapons we keep, is how those without them will react to us having them. Better yet, what will they think of us having guns? What will they assume about our homes, our businesses and our properties? They will probably assume we have something worth fighting for. This will motivate them to attack us.

For a sobering example, we can look to Argentina. Back in 2001, as Argentina was in the process of becoming a de facto ward of the IMF, their economy spiraled down the tubes. Inflation exploded and the Argentine Peso was rendered nearly worthless. Inflation drove food prices so high, that most people could not afford to eat. This is when the food riots began.

Not surprisingly, those who had food and other assets of value, attempted to protect themselves with guns. They succeeded; but only in the short run. After a while, those who showed their firearms early on in the rioting wound up suffering makeshift bomb attacks and experienced massive human herd rushes on their homes. Why? The answer is very simple if you think about it...

They showed the herd the one thing that they never should have. They showed that they had something worth protecting. From the rioters' point of view, this meant that they

had something worth stealing and looting. Even though they fought off the initial surge, their actions only prompted a more violent reaction from rioters.

Perhaps as important as being prepared for a riot, is being prepared for what the mob will do. People who riot generally have nothing to lose. They are distraught and distressed, devoid of empathy for anyone who has something they don't. It doesn't matter if you are rich or poor. It doesn't matter whether you are sitting on a year's worth of food supplies or if your family is barely surviving on a few cans of beans. If you have something of value, you may draw more undue attention to yourself by flashing your weapons. Keep this in mind when stockpiling your arsenal and taking target practice.

A .50 caliber machine gun or an RPG can seem like an all-powerful weapon. It will scare the pants, shirts and spinal columns off of anyone stupid enough to challenge your position. You must remember, however, that unless you have a full-scale battalion at your service, the mass of the herd will eventually overpower you.

At some point, you will have to go to sleep or let your guard down. When this moment comes, your guns will be rendered useless and when the herd does attack, it will run you into the ground. Keep this possibility in mind when deciding whether to draw your weapons.

You must have such examples in mind when deciding whether to dig in and face the mob. It doesn't mean that taking a shot at someone will lead to a full-blown occupation of your location. It does, however, mean that you must analyze all of the possible outcomes and act on the basis of information and knowledge, not just fear and emotion.

If you choose to escape the rioting, you must make peace with the destruction and loss of property from looting. Your home or business will probably be robbed and picked clean. Home and business owners alike, must have proper insurance coverage and be ready to pack their most valuable possessions at a moment's notice. Once you leave, you cannot look or go back.

Securing vehicles is highly recommended for riot evacuations. Makeshift window bars, chains on tires or a ramming grill can all make the difference in a tight situation. If you can afford it, arming your vehicle with bulletproof glass is the ultimate safety feature. It is worth mentioning, however, that no amount of armor can protect a vehicle from a big enough mob. No matter how well equipped or powerful your vehicle is, it will not be able to drive through crowds thicker than brick walls.

The key to making the decision to go will be a high dose of intestinal fortitude, or what most people refer to as guts. You will have to make the decision to step down on the gas

pedal and not let up. Not for anyone and not for anything.

An example from the 1992 L.A. Riots paints the most vivid picture of why guts and readiness rule the day, when evacuating a riot location. It is important to remember that sometimes...you will not get to plan. Sometimes, the decision between staying and going is going to have to be made on the spot, with little or no preparation time.

It was to be a leisurely ride to the Los Angeles Lakers game for a family of four in 1992. Having worked hard his whole life, the family patriarch was proud to be able to take his wife and children to see his favorite basketball team. They would sit a few rows from Jack Nicholson and have a nice dinner after the game was over. Sadly, they never made it. Not to the game and definitely not to the restaurant. In fact, the gentleman in question, who had left home in a \$50,000 Jaguar, nearly wound up driving a tin can.

As the family approached the Great Western Forum, they were engulfed by a sea of rioters. These rioters took one glance at the family vehicle and proceeded to pounce. The father reacted quickly and the Jaguar's V12 engine roared. The car jumped a curb and razed several front lawns before escaping around a corner. Bats, pipes and bottles had scratched up and dented the car. The windshield was smashed and a rear tire ran flat. It was nothing more than the man's steadfast

willingness to smash down the gas pedal and not look back, which kept his family safe.

Such an example outlines why riot preparation is crucial. Man-made disasters can be the most dangerous and understanding the riot mentality is perhaps the most important lesson you can learn in advance. During times of lawlessness, human beings can behave like animals. They attack without warning, devouring the weak and those who cannot protect themselves. Simple mischief can grow into full blown rage. Rape, torture and murders are not uncommon during riots.

The more recent riots in England and Egypt underscore the various themes and options we have discussed. Preparation, calmness and the right approach can mean the difference between life and death. In England, for instance, unfriendly weapons laws caused the premium on baseball bats and cricket paddles to skyrocket. Practically overnight, sporting goods and household items became valuable means of protection and self-defense. Someone living in England would be wise to think of regional items such as a cricket paddle, as a potential means of protection.

Egypt on the other hand, featured both aspects of the firearms scenario. Those who were well armed were able to protect themselves, but also faced undue attention from authorities. Since a lot of makeshift

weapons were made and used, those with actual guns were presumably in a position to feel more secure. That having been said, an environment featuring the total breakdown of local infrastructure could easily make weapons holders the primary target. Egypt would actually wind up being a rather benign situation for most citizens, as they were largely all on one side. This is perhaps the final point we can make about riots. If you know who “the players are” and who controls what sphere of influence, you can also go “undercover” and blend into the mob if the opportunity presents itself.

Riots are a constantly evolving crisis issue. Each one is different and specific to its own region. Knowing where you live and who your neighbors are factors in the equation, which should not and cannot be overlooked.

Often times, a display of strength is enough to entice the mob to look elsewhere for the quelling of their primitive desires. Whether it is a firmly secured home or a display of firepower from a perched position, a show of strength can be the difference between life and death.

Awareness is crucial during a riot. Always be aware of your surroundings and attempt to avoid conflict. Those who suffer the least in riots are often those who are the least likely to get noticed. Whatever play you make, attempt to make it quietly, quickly and efficiently.

Types of Disasters:

EARTHQUAKES



Earthquakes are the result of sudden releases of energy in the Earth's crust which create seismic waves. These waves shoot through the Earth's core, creating shaking and sometimes fracturing of the ground. As a result, anything which sits on the surface is in danger of falling apart or breaking.

Luckily, earthquakes usually occur near major fault lines, such as the San Andreas Fault in California. This does not make them any less severe or destructive. It does, however, offer us the ability to prepare for their occurrence. Much like hurricanes; earthquakes tend to repeatedly occur in the same areas. This means that disaster protocols in those regions will usually be of above average efficiency. If you live in one of these regions, you should still take note of some earthquake safety tactics. Keep the following points in mind, as many of them go against the faulty lessons many of us have been taught.

Never use the “duck and cover” approach, this is how people get crushed under pieces of falling roof and ceiling tile. Find a large fixture like a bed or a desk and crouch on the floor next to it like an animal. Under no circumstances should you hide underneath anything. Ducking under a desk or a bed will just lead to you getting crushed beneath them. Ducking next to a large item or piece of furniture will increase the likelihood of that item absorbing the heavy blows, instead of you.

If there is a choice, hide in a wooden structure, over one made of steel or brick. Wood splinters easily and usually will not crush anyone. Falling brick, steel or any sort of metal, on the other hand, will crush human bodies in an instant. Wood is usually very light, as well. Few houses today are made out of solid oak or maple trees. The processed wood materials used in houses, such as particle board, are very soft and pliable. They rarely break into large pieces and even though splinters can hurt, they usually will not kill or maim.

The next precaution to take is making sure you stay out of doorways and off of staircases. When doorjambes fall, they can cut up the people who stand in doorways, like a slicer would bread. Staying out of doorways is one of the best ways to prevent serious injuries, if you are in a collapsing building during an earthquake.

Stairs are the most likely part of the building to collapse in an earthquake, and they should be avoided at all costs. Since staircases are not connected to building infrastructure, earthquakes have the effect of shaking staircases into the rest of the building, and vice versa.

As a result of this “rubbing”, the stairs take the brunt of the damage. They have the ground fracturing beneath them and the rest of the structure, crashing into them, as well. Hordes of panicky people running on stairs

can also weaken them quickly. Avoid stairs, if at all possible.

The best thing to do if you are inside of a building during an earthquake, in fact, is to get out immediately. You can never guess if and when a structure will collapse. It is always better to watch your home crumble from the outside, than to be trapped inside and have it fall on top of you.

If you happen to be in your car, use extreme caution and think about available options. Your first reaction should be to stop your car, get out and lay down on the ground next to it. This behavior will create the same environment that lying down next to a bed or refrigerator would inside of a home. You would be making yourself small and increasing the likelihood of a large nearby object absorbing the brunt of a big blow.

Great as this strategy may seem, it is far from perfect. Back in 1994, the earthquake in Northridge, California caused highway overpasses to collapse. In this situation, those laying or crouching next to their vehicles were crushed just as badly as their cars. Unwary drivers drove their cars off the edge of freeways into thin air, crashing and exploding. This is another great illustration of why earthquakes do not give clear cut options. You must be aware of your surroundings. Earthquake safety tactics greatly depend upon your location. It is the crucial factor.



The 1989 San Francisco earthquake, not only delayed the World Series 10 days, but illustrated how earthquake safety tactics change based on location. For those who found themselves in downtown San Francisco, exiting their cars was the worst thing they could have done. Glass fractured, buildings ruptured and debris flew everywhere. Since the debris fell from unpredictable angles, lying down and hiding next to a car, garbage dumpster or other large object was counter-productive.

For those on the lower level of a double decker expressway, those who remained in their cars were crushed; while many of those

who got out and crouched low beside their cars survived the collapse of the upper level of the expressway.

These earthquake related scenarios illustrate that there is no optimal remedy or protective strategy during an earthquake, and that each situation depends directly upon where you find yourself when the earthquake begins.

The general rule, as with all other disasters, is to try and remain calm and gauge where the nearest, safest location can be found.

Once you have done so, immediately proceed to that location and make yourself as small as possible.

Types of Disasters:

NUCLEAR FALLOUT/ RADIATION

A photograph of two individuals standing in a desolate, rocky landscape. They are wearing dark green hazmat suits and gas masks. The person on the left is wearing red and black plaid pants, while the person on the right is wearing camouflage pants. In the background, there are some trees and a tall, thin structure, possibly a chimney or tower, under a cloudy sky. The overall tone is somber and ominous.

Nuclear fallouts are the most unpredictable of all disaster events. They are not as unpredictable in terms of occurrence, as they are in terms of damage and consequence. The effects of nuclear fallout, such as radiation spillage, can be felt years after the event.

Sometimes exposure to nuclear events can require little more than a shower. On the other hand, they can render entire geographic regions uninhabitable for decades. You will never know which situation you are in when one a nuclear event does occur. Therefore, you must act quickly.

Much like riots, nuclear fallouts present us with the stay or go dilemma.

The recent Fukushima nuclear plant crisis in Japan is a good example. Radiation is invisible, and not measurable to most people. In Japan, people relied upon their government to tell them whether they were safe or not. It turns out that early assurances were wrong; the radiation had spread faster than what authorities had thought or wanted people to know. It is recommended that you DO NOT stay in your home if you a near a nuclear accident, regardless of what authorities say.

But staying requires expert preparation which must be done well in advance. You will have to be very well insulated from any toxic elements and be prepared to stay withdrawn from

ground for long periods of time. Shelters must be built underground, in places like basements or subway tunnels. They should possess ample power, water and food supplies, while allowing you the option of not having to exit them for significant amounts of time.

Power sources are the first step and will require a large generator in addition to small portable units. Lots of batteries and battery operated lamps, flashlights and radios will also fall under your power umbrella.

A large canned food supply and fresh water are needed in copious amounts. The average person needs approximately a gallon of water per day to meet hydration and hygiene needs. Everything from first aid kits to

clothing and tools will be required, as well. Building a nuclear fallout shelter is almost like building a new world for you and your family. It will have to be abundant in quality and quantity of supplies.

Those who choose to evacuate during a nuclear disaster will need to react quickly and decisively. In case of nuclear fallout, everyone will hit the major roads and highways. Gridlock can make escape impossible.

Therefore, knowing the back roads and rural routes in your vicinity is a great way to get a head start on your evacuation. Study maps, whether traditional or digital. The next time you are online, spend a few minutes on Google Earth and get specific visuals of



your surroundings. Pick up a terrain map and read it carefully. Get to know what your immediate vicinity, actually looks like. Take scouting trips, venturing further out on each expedition. Know your geographic region and the travel times between set points. You can count on nuclear fallout greatly slowing down traffic and increasing those travel times. Prepare accordingly, by finding alternate routes. It is much smarter to take roundabout routes that avoid crowds, even if they span greater distances.

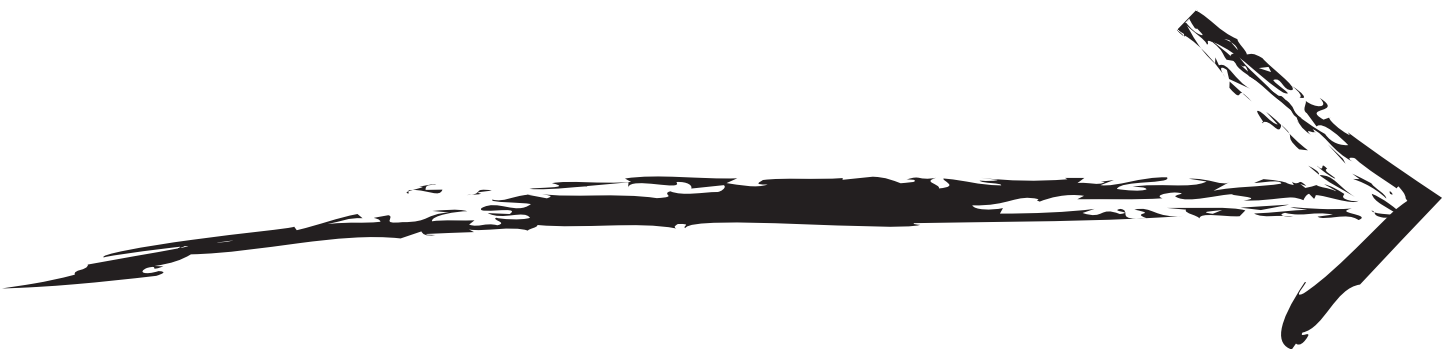
One approach most people never think of in terms of escaping is the UPS delivery strategy. UPS delivery drivers never make left turns. UPS studies have found that the amount of time it takes their drivers to make a left turn greatly impedes delivery time. Instead, UPS trucks only make right hand turns, with the help of dispatchers and GPS navigation. This tactic mainly relates to urban settings and UPS delivery trucks are a lot bigger than what you will be driving.

Nevertheless, this is the sort of outside-the-box thinking you should employ. Regard-

less of your approach and strategy, a GPS system can be of great help to you. You must remember, however, that GPS can also be rendered useless by power failures, so studying and holding physical maps is your best option, by far.

Tactical driving maneuvers can sometimes go against common logic, but are extremely useful. If you have studied your terrain map well, you may be able to “make your own road”, while avoiding crowds. This is a great strategy in areas with flat roads and few large bodies of water, such as the Midwest. You may find that driving straight across a corn or wheat field will cut your travel time by hours in a single shot.

Regardless of stay or go, the assumption must be made that access to your home and its supplies will not be available once you leave. This is why you will want to have a well-stocked go bag, regardless of whether you need to go to ground or whether you wind up hitting the road.



Types of Disasters:

WILDFIRES



The Texas Forest Service has had a heck of a time in Bastrop County lately. Back in September of 2011 36,000 acres went up in smoke and 1645 homes burnt in total. Over 25,000 acres and 500 homes burned in just over 24 hours after the start of the fire.

Since wildfires spread quickly it would be insane to try and fight one yourself. The best thing you can do if you see a wildfire brewing is to evacuate on the spot. There are, however, some domestic tactics which you can undertake which will avoid your home becoming the source of wildfires. These tactics are especially useful if you live in an area close to a forest or in a part of the country which is prone to droughts.

wildfire prevention in drought prone areas

- ✓ Trim back brush and remove any dead or dying trees, plants, grass, yard clippings, and any flammable items in a 100-foot-radius.
- ✓ Prune existing native vegetation to 6 inches above the ground.
- ✓ Cut low-hanging tree branches up to 6 feet off the ground and within 10 feet of touching a building, chimney

or power line. Low branches may carry a ground fire upwards into the trees.

- ✓ Reduce plants alongside the driveway by at least 10 feet on each side. Trim overhead branches to allow at least 13-1/2 feet of vertical clearance within the driveway for emergency and escape vehicle clearance.
- ✓ Seniors in the community may have difficulty maintaining their property. Your assistance will not only protect their property, it will help protect your own.
- ✓ Plants and trees should be irrigated with deep watering at least once a month for drought-tolerant species and once a week for high water-requiring species.
- ✓ Vary the height of plants and give them adequate spacing.
- ✓ Avoid planting trees under or near electrical lines because they could contact the lines and ignite.
- ✓ Consider using rock mulch in areas where you want to prevent vegetation growth such as under decks or close to combustible materials. Wood chip mulch could ignite and wreak havoc.
- ✓ Regularly clear leaves and debris from your roof, gutters, decks and yard. An ember landing on these dried materials can easily fuel a fire. After a storm is usually a good time to begin cleaning.
- ✓ Wood piles or other flammable materials should be relocated at least 50 feet from your home or business, more than 10 feet from an aboveground propane tank, and away from any flammable vegetation or trees.
- ✓ Firewood stacks should not be located uphill from a structure –a burning log could roll downhill and ignite the building.
- ✓ Use low-growing plants and remove furnishings or combustible materials under or near windows and glass doors. Even fire-resistant glass can break when exposed to the extreme heat of materials burning nearby.

Even though a wildfire will likely call for you to evacuate your home, there is no reason not to try and preserve your property value. Here are some tips which may ensure that your home is left standing, even if a wildfire does engulf the neighborhood.

ROOFS

- Upgrade your roof to a Class A fire-resistance rating. For details on roofing materials and other ignition-resistant construction requirements, check with your local fire department. If upgrading is not possible, then maintain your roof covering by repairing gaps in the tiles so embers cannot reach the sheathing underneath.
- Box in your roof eaves with a fire-resistant material to prevent any embers from blowing underneath.
- Install bird stops at the ends of barrel-style roof coverings. The stops prevent debris build-up and deter birds from nesting between the roof covering and sheathing.
- Install gutter covers to reduce debris build-up. The covers and gutters will still need maintenance, but not as often.

WALLS & CHIMNEYS

- Replace combustible home siding with fire-resistant materials, like stucco, brick, fiber-cement, or wood products previously factory-treated with fire retardant. If not possible, maintain and repair exterior siding, making sure there are no gaps for embers to enter the wall.
- Inspect your home for any signs of moisture rot and replace any affected areas – decaying wood is highly flammable.
- Retrofit your roof, wall, foundation, and vents with 1/4 inch non-combustible metal mesh to resist the intrusion of flames and embers. The mesh will still allow airflow for moisture control.
- Install a spark arrestor on your chimney.

DECKS & FENCES

- For attached decks, consider using fire-resistant materials such as wood factory-treated with fire retardant, concrete, bricks, tiles, or stones, instead of untreated wood or wood/plastic composite boards.
- Sweep debris accumulation from between the gaps of a wood deck. This reduces the build-up of flammable material and ventilates the wood to prevent decay.
- Enclose or screen the underside of your deck to prevent accumulation of flammable debris.
- When selecting lumber for a deck or fence, choose thicker boards at least 1.5 inches thick – they do not ignite as easily as thinner boards.
- Avoid using combustible fencing materials within 10 feet of your home.



MISCELLANEOUS EXTERIOR

- Replace windows with tempered glass dual pane windows. The outer pane acts as a thermal shield for the inner pane and tempered glass is stronger than regular glass. If window replacement is not possible, replace only the single-pane glass with tempered glass.
- If possible, expand your driveway to 16 feet wide. This will allow a large fire vehicle and a passenger vehicle to pass side by side. Some local fire agencies may require additional width for certain properties or communities.
- Auxiliary structures including patio covers, awnings and trellises should be constructed of non-combustible materials.
- Try to relocate wooden or combustible materials structures at least 50 feet from your home. If building a shed or other structure, consider using fire-resistant materials for the roof and siding.
- Purchase fire-resistant patio furniture.

INDOORS

- Hire a licensed contractor to install a fire sprinkler system indoors. A residential fire sprinkler system will detect and disperse water automatically and extinguish the fire or reduce its intensity until help can arrive.
- If you have a fireplace, get a screen (mesh, metal or glass) to prevent burning embers from escaping and starting a fire inside your home.
- Use rust-resistant metal screens to help absorb heat and keep embers from flying in an open or shattered window.



Types of Disasters:

BLIZZARDS



It is pretty strange that with all of the talk of climate change we hear in the media, blizzards are almost completely ignored. Some scientists are linking global warming to the 2010 blizzards which engulfed the country in February of that year. The event was even dubbed “Snowmageddon” by the media.

Blizzards can be just as deadly as any other disaster and may put us in some incredibly difficult decision making predicaments if we run out of food or if our limbs begin to freeze over. Having the right G.O.O.D.I.E Bag picked and packed for a blizzard may be even more important than in cases of other disaster events. Namely, blizzards make the common practice of evacuation impossible or at least, highly unlikely. If folks cannot travel, they cannot gain access to supplies. This makes blizzards the only disaster event which may erase your escape and evacuation options.

Here are ten general tips to keep in mind if you live in an area which is prone to blizzards:

1. PREPARE FOR POWER OUTAGES AND BLOCKED ROADS

Winds, ice and snow tend to bring down power lines. Make sure that you have candles, matches or lighters, a battery operated radio, and emergency food supplies and tons of

blankets. Think about where you'll put candles to keep them lit and safe. Have plenty of food staples like powdered milk and protein bars. If your water supply depends on an electric pump, bottled water may be a good idea.

2. STAYING WARM WHEN THE POWER GOES OUT MAY BE A PROBLEM

Don't think you're immune if you don't use electricity to heat your home. Many people don't realize that their heating system depends on a boiler that is powered by electricity. Electric stoves and gas stoves that depend on electricity will be powerless if the storm knocks the lines down. Be prepared with alternative heat sources and plenty of blankets.

3. TRAVELING IN A BLIZZARD IS JUST NOT A GOOD IDEA

If you are on the road during a blizzard look for a hotel or motel nearby and stay off the road until driving conditions are safe again.

4. IF YOU GET STRANDED IN YOUR CAR DURING A BAD SNOW STORM BE PREPARED WITH PLENTY OF WARM CLOTHES AND PACKAGED SNACK FOODS.

It may seem sensible to leave the engine running to keep warm, but it isn't. The danger of carbon monoxide poisoning is high. Snow can block your exhaust pipe and fill the car with deadly fumes. Keeping one window open just a bit will help avoid this. If you keep the engine running you may run out of gas before the storm is over. A better idea is to run the engine in short bursts. Turn the engine on long to keep the car warm and then turn it off. Keep this routine up until the conditions are stable enough for you to get back on the road.

5. DESIGNATE A SPOT, IN THE HALL CLOSET, TO KEEP A BAG OF WARM CLOTHES FOR EACH PERSON IN THE HOUSEHOLD.

If the lights are out, it will be hard to find that really warm turtle neck or a pair of

warm socks or gloves in the dark. Count on the power being out for at least a day or two and have some board games and a deck of cards on hand. Arts and crafts are always fun for the kids (especially if there isn't any television to distract them) so make sure you have some of those supplies easily available.

6. ALONG WITH WARM CLOTHES AND BLANKETS, CONSIDER STOCKING YOUR BLIZZARD KIT WITH THE FOLLOWING:

batteries, flash lights, battery operated radio/television, bottled water, toilet paper, non-perishable foods such as cereal or crackers, canned goods, a non-electric can opener, a small cooler, candles, prescription medicines and any over-the-counter remedies you use regularly; and if you have young infants or toddlers - diapers, baby wipes, formula, baby food.

7. STOCK UP ON SHOVELS AND SNOW REMOVAL EQUIPMENT BEFORE THE SNOW STORM.

You may also want to cover the windows and spaces around the doors to keep drafts at a

minimum in the event the heat shuts off.

8. IF YOU LIVE IN AN AREA THAT GETS BAD STORMS REGULARLY CONSIDER INVESTING IN AN EMERGENCY GENERATOR.

Having an alternate source of power if the main lines go down can be a life saver.

9. A CELLULAR PHONE IS A 'HOT' COMMODITY FOR THE SNOWBOUND.

If you have a cell phone, make sure it is charged and easy to find. Even if the phone and power lines go out you can get word out that you are stranded and need help.

10. FINALLY, STAY INSIDE.

However tempting it may be for kids to go out and make snow angels or play in the falling snow, use caution. Those blowing winds - both before and after a blizzard - are cold enough to cause frostbite, and snow-drifts may hide dangers children might otherwise see. Stay indoors where it's safe, and warm!

Types of Disasters:

TORNADOS



Much like a blizzard, a tornado may change your G.O.O.D.I.E Bag to more of a “Stay in Place” or S.I.P Bag. Tornadoes may seem to offer more mobility than blizzards, but they do not. What tornadoes do offer, however, is a tad bit more predictability, if you verse yourself properly.

One of the most important things you can do to prevent being injured in a tornado is to be alert to the onset of severe weather. Most deaths and serious injuries happen to people who are unaware and uninformed. Young children or the mentally challenged may not recognize an oncoming dangerous situation. The ill, elderly, or invalid may not be able to reach shelter in time. Those who ignore the weather because of indifference or overconfidence may not perceive the danger. Stay aware, and you will stay alive.

Remember: If a tornado watch is issued for your area, it means that a tornado is “possible.” If a tornado warning is issued, it means that a tornado has actually been spotted, or is strongly indicated on radar, and it is time to go to a safe shelter immediately.

Be alert to what is happening outside as well. Here are some of the things that people describe when they tell about a tornado experience:

- A sickly greenish or greenish black color to the sky.
- If there is a watch or warning posted, then the fall of hail should be considered as a real danger sign. Hail can be common in some areas, however, and usually has no tornado activity along with it.
- A strange quiet that occurs within or shortly after the thunderstorm.
- Clouds moving by very fast, especially in a rotating pattern or converging toward one area of the sky.
- A sound a little like a waterfall or rushing air at first, but turning into a roar as it comes closer. The sound of a tornado has been likened to that of both railroad trains and jets.
- Debris dropping from the sky.
- An obvious “funnel-shaped” cloud that is rotating, or debris such as branches or leaves being pulled upwards, even if funnel clouds are not visible.

If you see a tornado and it is not moving to the right or to the left relative to trees or power poles in the distance, it may

be moving towards you! Remember that although tornadoes usually move from southwest to northeast, they also move towards the east, the southeast, the north, and even northwest.

Encourage your family members to plan for their own safety in many different locations. It is important to make decisions about the safest places well before you ever have to go to them.

IN HOMES OR SMALL BUILDINGS

The best places are:

- In a storm shelter specifically designed for that use--within the basement or outside the home entirely. Some companies manufacture pre-fab shelters that you drop into a hole in the ground, and that blends in with your home's landscaping(some more, some less.)
- In a basement, away from the west and south walls. Hiding under a heavy work-table or under the stairs will protect the family from crumbling walls, chimneys, and large airborne debris falling into the cellar. A family in the April 8th, 1998 tornado in the Birmingham, Alabama area survived because a hutch toppled and was held up by the dining room table they were under. That hutch

helped deflect the debris that would have struck them. Old blankets, quilts and an unused mattress will protect against flying debris, but they should be stored in the shelter area. Precious time can be lost by trying to find these items at the last minute.



- In a small, windowless, first floor, interior room-like a closet or bathroom. The bathtub and commode are anchored directly into the ground, and sometimes are the only thing left in place after the tornado. Getting into the bathtub with

a couch cushion over you gives you protection on all sides, as well as an extra anchor to the foundation. Plumbing pipes may or may not help hold the walls together, but all the extra framing that it takes to put a bathroom together may make a big difference. If there is no downstairs bathroom and the closets are all packed with “stuff,” a hall may be the best shelter. Put as many walls as you can between yourself and the tornado. In a pinch, put a metal trash over as much of you as you can. It will keep some flying debris from injuring you. Even that may make the difference between life and death.

Wherever it is, the shelter should be well known by each member of the family. If you and your family will conduct annual emergency drills (fire, tornado, etc), everyone will remember what to do and where to go when a tornado is approaching-automatically and without panic. Choose a friend or family member in another part of town or elsewhere to be a “contact person” that will be called by everyone should the family members become separated.

Tornado preparation can overlap in many ways with hurricane preparation, with one major caveat. The reason we look at hurricanes as more of a “go” scenario is because the flooding they cause creates a comparative disadvantage with staying indoors as you can easily be flooded to death. Since water is

heavier than rock, we are more likely to take our chances on the road during a hurricane than risk being trapped inside and possibly drowned by massive amounts of flooding water. Tornadoes, on the other hand, create more risks out in the open as they can lift and carry relatively light items such as cars or human beings. This is why it makes sense to get entrenched for a tornado, as their destructive powers can do comparatively less damage if you stay indoors.

SHOPPING CENTERS, HOSPITALS AND FACTORIES

Go to interior rooms and halls on the lowest floor. Stay away from glass enclosed places or areas with wide-span roofs such as auditoriums, theaters, and warehouses. Crouch down and cover your head. Deaths have occurred in large, single story department stores. They have occurred inside the building when the roof or wide span brick walls, which collapsed. A corner would be safer than the middle of the wall. A bathroom, closet, office, or maintenance room with short walls would be the safest area, especially if it was on the north or east side of the building.

IN SCHOOLS

Leave auditoriums, gyms, and other free-span rooms, exiting in an orderly

fashion. Go to interior rooms and halls on the lowest floor, but avoid halls that open to the outside in any direction. If there are no interior hallways, avoid those that open to the southwest, south, or west, since that is the usually the direction the tornado will come. Stay away from glass, both in windows and doors. Crouch down, and make as small a “target” as possible. If you have something to cover your head, do so, otherwise, use your hands. Don’t assume that there will always be a teacher or other adult there to tell you what to do--if there is, you should follow their direction, but you need to know these things too.

Peak time for tornadoes to strike varies from region to region. In some southeastern states, early morning tornadoes are almost as common as late afternoon ones. In western and northern states, peak hours are from 3 to 7 PM, just at the end of the school, but including the hours of afterschool activities.

If really severe weather is expected, your school may be dismissed early in order that you can reach home before the worst of the weather reaches the area. If you are on foot or riding a bike, it is doubly important that you go home immediately, and not linger with your friends. If caught in the open, you should seek a safe place immediately. The chances of encountering falling trees, power lines, and lightning is greater than encountering the tornado itself. The basement of a

sturdy building would be best, but lying flat in a ditch or low-lying area may be the only thing available. A culvert in a ditch may be a good choice if there is no rain, but if there is rain, flash flooding may be more dangerous and likely than the tornado.

IN A CAR

If you are in a car, and you can see a tornado forming or approaching, you should leave the car and take shelter. You may think you can escape from the tornado by driving away from it, but you can't know what you may be driving into. A tornado can blow a car off

a road, pick a car up and hurl it, or tumble a car over and over. Many people have been killed in cars while they were trying to outrun the tornado, and although it is sometimes possible to escape, it is generally not a good idea.

An underpass may seem like a safe place, but may not be. While videos show people surviving under an underpass, those tornadoes have been weak. No one knows how survivable an underpass is in a strong or violent tornado. The debris flying under the underpass could be very deadly... head for a ditch.





THE G.O.O.D.I.E BAG **(GET OUT OF DODGE IMMEDIATELY** **AND EFFICIENTLY)**

A “G.O.O.D.I.E Bag” is a bag which you should pack today and hope you never have to use. Its purpose is solely intended for situations which necessitate hasty evacuations. The main purpose of a having go bag on hand is self-sufficiency. It should be packed in advance and ready to grab, so that you can simply...go. Other popular terms for the G.O.O.D.I.E Bag include: bug out bag, grab bag, go bag, battle box or PERK. (Personal Emergency Relocation Kit)

CHECKLIST OF ITEMS FOR YOUR G.O.O.D.I.E BAG

The size and contents of your G.O.O.D.I.E Bag will be determined by how much time you have to get yourself organized. Since the purpose of having a G.O.O.D.I.E Bag is preparation, it is a good idea to make the biggest possible list of potential contents and then pare it down. Here are some items to get you thinking:

- Bottled water and canned foods that come in pop-tops or easy to open container.
- Emergency Rations/ freeze dried/ dehydrated foods.
- Prescription meds for a week and copies of all prescriptions.
- Small first-aid kit.
- Camping tent.
- Blanket/throw/ pillows.
- Emergency solar blankets.



- Sturdy shoes/boots.



- Warm clothes, rain gear and hats.

- Flashlight/glow sticks.



- Battery powered radio. (or a dynamo as a just in case, if your batteries don't work)

- Extra batteries. (they need to remain sealed and separate from the electronics that they will be used for to avoid unwanted drainage)



- Pocket knife. (high quality, easy to open, stainless steel)



- Regional map. (if you are competent at navigating using a map only)

- Copies of important documents. (digital and hard copy preferred and in a waterproof container)

- Camping gear. (anything from camp stoves to mess kit tents to sleeping bags, depending on needs and size of group)



- Walkie-talkies. (be sure to select a specific channel ahead of time for communication)
- 1 roll of quarters/\$100 in small bills.
- Spare keys. (tucked away with your important documents in an inconspicuous part of the kit or a hidden pocket if available)
- Duct tape.
- Plastic Sheeting.



Beyond these initial items which quickly come to mind, it is important to focus on secondary items which become important in new areas. Think about the world that we live in. Social security numbers, bank accounts and finger prints are the gateway to identification. What if you lose your state issued identification? What if you don't have your passport, social security card or birth certificate with you? Most people don't think about how hard it can be to prove that they are, in fact, themselves.

When we think of packing and preparation, it is our natural tendency to flock to survival items and ignore documentation. Important documents are necessary to have on your person, if you have to leave your home. Get them all together in one place and store them in a container that is portable and water proof. If you have access to a scanner, you could also scan these important documents to a CD or a flash drive.

A simple trip to your local Kinko's, Fedex store, or public library can give you access to a scanner. Bring all of your important documents with you. Once you scan them, you can immediately copy/paste them into a text program, such as, Microsoft Word. Next, attach the document to your email on the spot and send an email to yourself. Then, pop your flash drive into a computer's USB drive, open your email and place

your important documents onto your flash drive. If your flash drive is equipped with an eyelet, attach it to your keychain or key ring inside of your G.O.O.D.I.E Bag. You have just successfully secured a lifetime's worth of important documentation for yourself and as many members of your family as you saw fit to. After this simple process is complete, you can either keep the flash drive on your key chain or pop a copy into your G.O.O.D.I.E bag.

Here are the specific documents you should always have on hand, in digital format:

- Birth Certificates.
- Driver's License.
- Prescriptions (list of prescription type & Doctor's Name/ Phone #)
- Proof of Residency - Mortgage bill/ Rental agreement.
- Renters/ Home owners insurance coverage.
- Medical insurance coverage.
- Life insurance coverage.
- List of credit cards/ emergency credit card.
- Family photos, which clearly show everyone's face.
- Children's fingerprint cards.
- Children's school registration or school

contact information.

- Pet registration.
- A copy of each bill -- utility --mortgage -- credit cards-- insurance.
(or a list of each and the account # and contact information).
- Phone number list including out of town & out of state contact person.

In a CBS report, correspondent, Armen Keteyian, noted that many copiers contained hard drives filled with images of every document they'd ever copied. Often, owners don't wipe these hard drives clean before selling the machines. This could be a potential risk to people doing this at a Kinko's location. At home scanners are the only fully secure way to complete this process.



TYPES OF G.O.O.D.I.E BAGS

5 MINUTE, 15 MINUTE, 30 MINUTE G.O.O.D.I.E. BAGS



The main difference between G.O.O.D.I.E's is the amount of time that it will take you to prepare them. The best way to get organized and prepared is to work backwards. That means that you should build your 30 minute bag first, moving down to the 15 minute bag, before finishing with the 5 minute bag. This way you can zero in the items that you truly need to take with you, versus the items you would simply like to have.

You should treat this as a game at the start; get the whole family involved. As time goes by, however, you should get more serious.

Remember that not all family members will be interested in practicing this, it is important that you do not impose it upon them. There are board games, worst case scenario as family time games, and children's versions of the worst case scenario books that may help to spike an interest in children.

Think of it as getting yourself in shape for a marathon. At first, you will walk and jog. Then you will run. Then sprint. Finally, you will incorporate everything into a running strategy for the big race.

You should perform this exercise with the help of a stopwatch. The first step is to make a list of items you think may be necessary. In addition to the items listed above, you may want to add:

- ✓ a multi-tool
- ✓ lighters
- ✓ a compass
- ✓ a can opener
- ✓ paring knife
- ✓ garbage bags
- ✓ plastic utensils
- ✓ paper cups and plates
- ✓ granola or energy bars
- ✓ paper towels
- ✓ tube socks
- ✓ underwear
- ✓ anti-biotic cream
- ✓ tweezers
- ✓ gauze pads
- ✓ band aids
- ✓ empty medicine bottles
- ✓ aspirin
- ✓ adhesive tape
- ✓ baby formula/diapers/wipes
- ✓ personal or feminine hygiene items

There is no limit to the amount of items to start out with. Just keep in mind that you can only carry so much.

At this point, let your stopwatch run. Have a sheet of paper and a pen ready. Set yourself and begin. Move briskly through your home collecting the items listed above and anything else that you think you may need. Do not panic, but be swift and cognizant of the time ticking away. Every time you add an item to your go bag, check it off the list. When the 30 minutes are up, stop.

At this point, you have your 30 minute G.O.O.D.I.E. Bag. Empty it and start over, this time stopping the exercise after 15 minutes. Close with the 5 minute bag. After performing this drill once, you will have an idea of its purpose. You want to know precisely what it is that you need and how long it will take you to assemble all of those items in your go bag.

It is great if you can have your 30 minute G.O.O.D.I.E Bag ready and waiting. If you are a master at compartmentalization and can carry heavy loads, you may be one of the few folks capable of putting together a 60 minute G.O.O.D.I.E Bag. It is your 5 minute G.O.O.D.I.E Bag, however, that will be your greatest signal as to which items you need have handy.

Even though you should always have a 30 minute G.O.O.D.I.E Bag prepared, it is prudent to have an idea of what you will

need to pack in case you only have 5 minutes available. Unfortunately, most people do not take the time to assemble an actual G.O.O.D.I.E Bag in advance, thinking they will have time on the spot. This exercise has the dual purpose of showing you what you need and perhaps more importantly, showing you why you need a G.O.O.D.I.E Bag, right now.



PLANS AND CHECKLISTS FOR EACH

The G.O.O.D.I.E Bag exercise can and should be taken further. Think of a rubber band. You want to stretch it out, slowly pushing the boundaries further and further apart. As the rubber band loosens you become more comfortable with your G.O.O.D.I.E Bag. You should do these exercises over and over again. After a while, you should no longer pack your items. You should lay them all out on a table or on the floor.

You should not use the items for anything else, unless you replace them first and you

should only replace an item with a higher quality item. For example, if you have laid your favorite pocket knife on the table, it stays in the kit until you replace it with something more important.

By now, you should know what is worth taking and what the costs are of leaving certain items behind. You can now come to the point where you overcome disciplinary problems. This is the point at which you prepare to succeed by eliminating doubt and confusion.

At this point, you should stop and take inventory. Now that you have practiced packing, and differentiating what you want from what you need, now you are ready for qualification. You must list the various uses of each item and rank them in order of importance. This will further aid you in prepping the perfect G.O.O.D.I.E Bag.

Some people may like or even be obsessed, with cleanliness. A roll of paper towels and wet naps, however, will simply not provide you as much utility as a multi-tool or a flashlight. Even if a roll of paper towels was as useful as a flashlight, you would still choose the flashlight if you had to eliminate one of the two. Though a paper towel roll is not heavy, it is bulky and takes up more space than it warrants. Anything which is small and light should automatically receive a ranking boost; flashlights and multi-tools are great examples.



COMMUNICATION PLANS AND RALLY POINTS

We should always prepare for the worst, while expecting the best. In a perfect world, we would just pick up our cell phone and talk to about our plans in real time. In the case of mass wireless network congestion, however, we will not have that luxury.

HAVE PLAN & MEANS TO COMMUNICATE WITH THOSE IN YOUR CIRCLE

We should always prepare for the worst, while expecting the best. In a perfect world, we would just pick up our cell phone and talk to about our plans in real time. In the case of mass wireless network congestion, however, we will not have that luxury.

Our loved ones must have a way to reach us and we must be able to reach them. As noted earlier, the simplest means of communication are properly powered walkie-talkies. They can be counted upon to work under dire circumstances and many are shock and water proof. They can also be picked up by scanners. The down side is that they do not have great range and will likely be of use only if you and your loved ones stick close together.

A great tactic which receives little attention, is the old relay system used throughout history by various organizations to pass on information. A relay person or “distant contact” would be used as a communication beacon for separated parties.

In today’s world, there is rarely a need for this sort of information relay, but an out of town or out of state contact is a great way to make sure you know what is happening with

your family in case you are separated. Every one of your family members must have the designated person’s contact info.

If you are unable to talk to each other, calling a pre-determined contact person who lives outside of your area can be your means of keeping tabs on one another. At different points in time, different family members may gain access to telephone or email. If they all call the same person at different points they may be able to engineer an artificial meeting point or in the least, know that their loved ones are okay.

IDENTIFY RALLY POINTS TO MEET YOUR CIRCLE IN CASE OF A DISASTER

Rally points are necessary for all of the disaster scenarios we have outlined. They are particularly effective in situations which call for immediate evacuation or as a protective measure against separation.

A great way to practice rally point cohesion is to take family camping trips. Especially in the case of younger children, the ability to react to stress proactively can mean the difference between life and death. Kids will often freeze up in new areas, new situations and around new people. Taking them outside of their neighborhood and teaching them landmarks and check points will get them prepared and more comfortable with

new surroundings. This will make them assets instead of liabilities during times of trouble.

It is best to use two separate rally points. Your initial rally point should be located close to your home and familiar to all of your family members. Preferably, you would be able to reach this location on foot.

The second rally point should be far enough away that you will be able to get away from the immediate danger surrounding your home. The decision should rest on the size, age and physical capacities of your companions.

Two college roommates will be able to pick a more distant location, than a single parent with three children. The idea behind a second location is to serve as a backup and to help maintain focus if your immediate surroundings are disheveled. If people have a specific goal to work towards, they will be more likely to ignore the havoc around them and keep moving towards that safe point, instead of roaming around aimlessly.

WHAT MAKES A SUITABLE RALLY POINT?

A suitable rally point must, first of all, be known and accessible to all members of your party. It should also be reasonably secluded, but not to the point where special skills or vehicles are required to reach it.

There is no value in a very distant and secluded rally point if everyone in your party cannot reach it. A suitable rally point will be far enough from the danger area, yet accessible enough, while maintaining some semblance of seclusion and security.

There is no perfect formula, so you must find a balance. If security and seclusion are of optimal concern, then your rally point will likely be tougher to reach and may require off-road vehicles. If the goal is to get many people organized quickly, a local camping ground or national park may be best.

Rally points should be defined from a directional perspective and tied to secondary



factors within your local community. Your own personal resources should also be taken into consideration. Do you own a boat? Is it docked in a bay, a marina, near a river or an ocean? If you live inland, this can make for a great rally point.

Your choice to head to such a location, however, should be guided by accessibility. If you live in California, it may make sense to shoot for Catalina Island, if you have a means of making it there. Since so many people will likely head east and away from the coast, it is a smart move to do the direct opposite and head towards the water. You are not only likely to encounter little traffic, but little danger from the human element, as well.

What if you live in New York City? The country's most densely populated metropolitan area is home to nearly 20,000,000 people. This means that this one small pocket of the country is more populated than all but three entire American states. Considering that New York City is on the Atlantic Ocean and the eastern seaboard, there are not many viable escape options. Few New Yorkers can afford boats and heading out into the Atlantic is highly questionable. The highways around New York City are eternally packed and since so many city dwellers count on public transportation, many cannot simply get in a car and go.

New York City does, however, have the

safety valves of Long Island and New Jersey, both can be reached quickly, via mass transport and by walking across various bridges. During the 9/11 terror attacks many Manhattan residents were able to make it to nearby Westchester county, just north of New York City, by walking and bike riding to the Bronx and then continuing north on foot.

What if you live in Texas and there is a breakdown of border security? We are all familiar with the Mexican mafia and the propensity of drug cartels to function within American borders. Once again, the herd mentality is something to avoid. The layman will likely consider heading south of the border, if there is an infrastructural breakdown in the United States. This person would be driving head first into the mouth of danger and potential death. The smart move under this scenario would be to move north and further inland.

Once again, however, we can't simply stop there. We must be vigilant and take all factors into consideration. What if we happen to be residents of El Paso, Texas, for instance? Here we are, mere miles from the Mexican border, but we also have Fort Bliss directly northeast of us. If we have packed our go bag full of guns, money and pain killers for our grandpa Jack, do we really want to be heading in the direction of a military base while our borders are under siege?!



Of course, we don't. We don't want to be heading in the direction of any armed personnel; foreign or domestic. This is not the time for patriotism or reliance on authoritative figures. When things go bad, police, military and government authorities react as hastily and panic just as much as regular folk. You do not want your safety and that of your family to be left up to the decision making of 19 year-old soldiers who do not have the experience to tell the difference between you and a dangerous criminal.

Remember that your rally point is always going to be unique to your location. If you live on a farm, escaping hundreds of miles away over a span of hours may not be

very difficult. If you live in a metropolis, however, simply getting a few miles away from the crowds and panic, can be enough to ensure momentary safety and buy valuable recovery and preparatory time.

The suitability of a rally point is directly tied into the dynamics of your living environment. Wherever you live, whichever way you choose to travel, always try to avoid crowds, mobs, major roadways and authority figures. All of these factors can serve to slow you down or worse, leave you stuck in place. Make your plans according to your strength and weaknesses, but also consider the structural and regional factors which surround you.



EVACUATION PLAN(S)

Adaptability is crucial to evacuation. How capable are you of adapting to your environment? This will be the most important question to ponder while preparing. No matter how well we plan, an evacuation is always going to be unpredictable. The most unexpected issues will arise. There will be at least one issue that we could not have prepared for. This is why being flexible and ready to make changes on the fly is so important.

HAVE AT LEAST 4: NORTH, SOUTH, EAST, AND WEST

Adaptability is crucial to evacuation. How capable are you of adapting to your environment? This will be the most important question to ponder while preparing. No matter how well we plan, an evacuation is always going to be unpredictable. The most unexpected issues will arise. There will be at least one issue that we could not have prepared for. This is why being flexible and ready to make changes on the fly is so important.

Since many people will evacuate at the exact same time, the most popular escape routes will almost certainly be blocked off, or at best, extremely congested. A directional escape plan must be created. Assume that three out of the four major directions will be rendered useless.

You should drive out at least one hour outside of your immediate area in each of the four major directions. Once you have gone an hour out in each direction, connect those extending points together and draw a “diamond” outline around your home town on a map.

Create a driving history of what you saw in each direction. Memorize or write down all roads. Keep tabs on non-paved terrain while thinking about whether it could be

navigated by your vehicle? Watch for police stations and/or military bases. The larger the authority presence in a given direction, the greater the likelihood of checkpoints, pat downs and other protocols which could serve to slow you down or even detention.

Terrain, types of roads, structures found along the way, presence of authority figures and other secondary and tertiary factors will all come into play. All of these factors should weigh on deciding which direction will provide the best escape route for you.

Depending on where you are located nationally, some of these directions will likely be more popular choices for the masses. If you can guess that most people will evacuate in one direction, you should go in the opposite direction.

People on coasts will tend to drift away from bodies of water. Therefore, the Carolinians will likely head west, while the Californians will probably head east. If you find yourself in either of these two states you should probably look either north or south, as the majority of traffic will likely not move in that direction.

If you are extremely well prepared, however, you may choose to go against common rationale, all together. If you have a boat docked somewhere off-shore, you can choose to make a nearby island your destination of refuge.

Few people will think to hide on a small island off the coast of California or North Carolina during a hurricane or even in a non-weather related evacuation scenario. Preparing well in advance and having a shelter dug near the shore of a nearby island can make evacuation both quick and efficient. This is precisely the outside-the-box thinking you will need to employ in preparing for evacuations.

Remember that congestion is as much of a danger during evacuations, as the cause of the evacuation, itself. Whatever you choose to do, your primary goal should be to distance yourself from crowds and crowded travel routes. Nothing good can come of being stuck in a crowd for long periods of time. Whether it was Katrina victims at the Superdome, riot victims by the Great Western Forum, or nuclear fallout sufferers near Fukushima, Japan; nobody benefitted from being stuck in a large human herd. In fact, most of those who were stuck in one place suffered just as much from immobility as they did from the original disaster.

KNOW WHICH DIRECTION IS THE BEST DIRECTION

Knowing which direction is best, depends greatly on understanding where you are and what the fallout scenarios of your emergency are. The reason most Carolinians

and Californians will head straight west or east is because coastal areas often experience flooding. The common sense in such a scenario is to move directly away from large water masses. There are, however, a good many factors to consider outside of the initial and most obvious ones. Traffic, weather patterns, and topography are just the tip of the iceberg. What other folks are doing should also have a profound effect on your decision making. It is very important to run away from the herd.

Let's look to Wisconsin for another escape example. With Wisconsin so close to Canada, a mere hop, skip and a jump across Minnesota territory and over our northern neighbor's border may seem like a safe plan. The problem is that state borders often feature check points and border patrols.

Let's say you have filled up your truck with a dozen plastic gasoline containers and a sizeable firearm supply. You probably will not want to come into contact with local police or authority figures.

Heading south or southwest into Illinois and Iowa can give you ample opportunities to explore the country. Looking at a map of the United States shows us that so much of the country is south of Wisconsin, that the opportunities for escape are infinite. This of course, means that most Wisconsin residents will probably follow this exact route. So what do we do to avoid crowds if we are

escaping Madison, Milwaukee or Green Bay?

Two great options include the Great Lakes, namely Lake Superior and Lake Michigan. A properly docked boat can transport your family to Michigan, Illinois or Indiana, bypassing cluttered roads and traffic along the way.

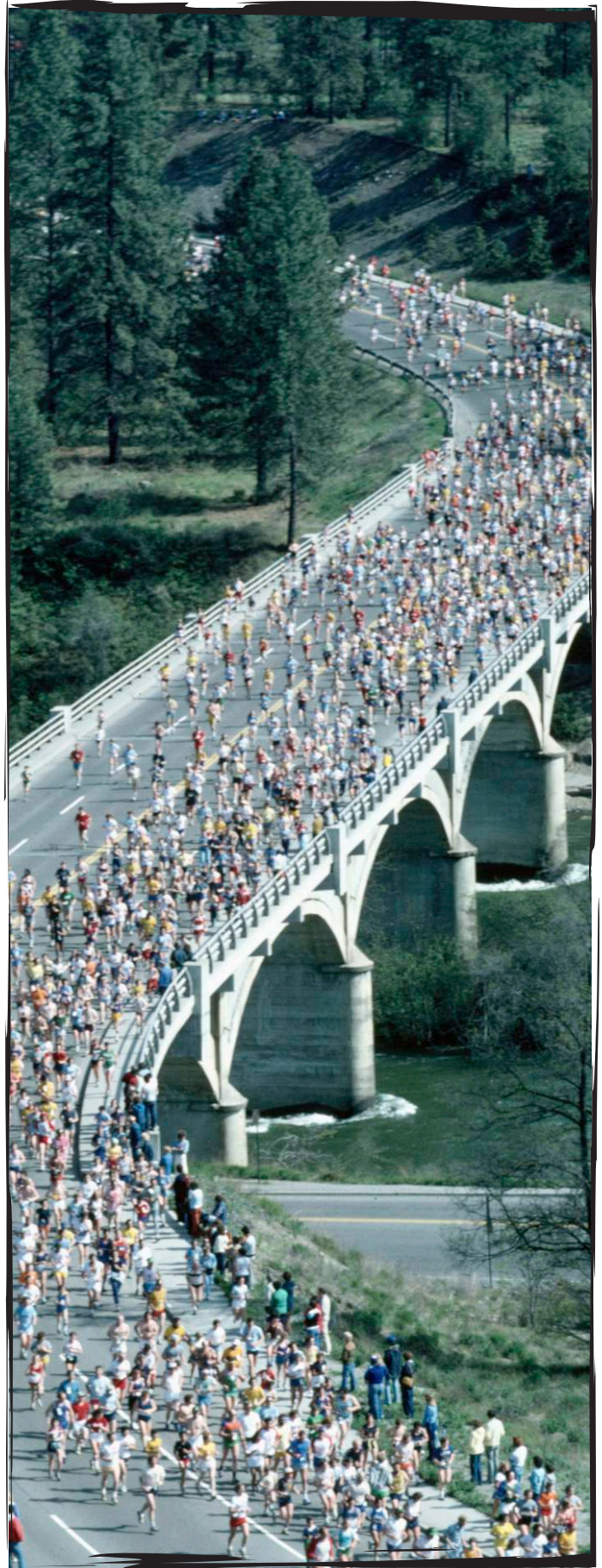
If you plan in advance, such destinations can make great rally points for larger groups of people from different areas. It all comes down to looking at the map and figuring out where the smallest number of people will head, most of the time.

AVOID THE “GOLDEN HOARD”

The “Golden Hoard” is a word play on the ancient empire known as the Golden Horde. The golden horde was an empire which conquered much of the globe between 1240 and 1500 A.D. The empire crushed and pillaged everything in its path. The only way their destruction would cease was appeasement in gold.

In terms of a modern evacuation, a “golden hoard” would encompass two connected behaviors. One would be looting, the other, a herd mentality. Both follow the decidedly unprincipled rules of anarchy. Take what you can and run as far as you can. This sort of behavior is what makes disaster scenarios worse than they have to be.

The first step to avoid is looting. Thievery



and robbery will be very tempting for many who are evacuating. Some will reason that if they stay just a little bit longer and wait, they will have their pickings of whatever people leave behind. Some will even prepare vans and trucks which they will then fill with items taken from abandoned homes and businesses. Aside from the moral and legal implications of such acts, they will only slow you down.

The second step to avoid is the herd mentality of the horde. Humans naturally flock toward each other. We are simply wired to follow the pack. It is our most basic instinct and in times of crisis we rely on instincts above all else. You will be tempted to drive in the direction everyone else is driving. You will be tempted to behave the way everyone else is behaving. You will be tempted to follow. Do not! Prepare yourself to be a shepherd instead of a sheep. Lead; never follow.

There is one final point to remember about “the golden hoard”. You don’t have to steal or follow anyone to fall victim to it. You can fall victim to “the hoard” with respect to your own things. You can spend too much time trying to rescue possessions and lose precious evacuation time in the process. Hoarding items which you may eventually have to get rid of, is both dangerous and stupid. Prepare yourself for this reaction, as it hits many people at the moment of evacuation.

Remember your 5, 15 and 30 minute G.O.O.D.I.E Bag exercises. Their purpose was to separate the things you need to take with you from the things that you want to take with you. Evacuations are not camping trips or vacations. You do not know if you will ever come back. This does create the temptation to take mementos, family heirlooms and favorite trinkets. Items which may be of fiscal value, however, should definitely be stashed somewhere. A chain, a locket, a ring or anything made of precious metals or diamonds can come in handy as a form of currency, or even a method of bribery. Just keep in mind that time is your greatest asset; so seize it.

TERRAIN MAPS

The internet is a wonderful tool. It has made everything so much easier. The problem with things being so easy, however, is that many of us are unprepared to deal with a loss of technology. In an evacuation, you likely will not be able to bring up Google Maps on your iPhone.

Terrain and topographic maps will give you the information you really need. It is great to know highways and their exits. It is great to know towns and their streets. But what do you do if a town is chopped up by a hurricane? What do you do if a highway is swallowed by an earthquake?

Terrain maps break down the geography of

an area. Living in a world of paved roads and streets we often forget that the Midwest is flat, Nevada is mostly a desert and that the Appalachians are mountainous. This is the sort of information you need a lot more than highway toll locations and street names.

When evacuating, you not only want to know where you are headed, but what you will have to go through to get there. If you study terrain maps in advance, they will help you with both your grab bag and your evacuation strategy.

Mountain ranges are a great example of how topographic awareness can affect your escape plans. The Appalachian Mountains run diagonally across the eastern United States. They stretch all the way from Alabama and Georgia in the south, to Maine in the northeast. Taking one look at a map of the United States makes it very clear: the Appalachians can be a huge roadblock to the evacuation plans of millions of people.

Depending on different weather related scenarios, the up-and-down, winding nature of this colossal mountain range can have a very trying affect on travelers. Wet roads, power outages and panicky drivers can create for deadly scenarios. Those who are forced to travel through or over the Appalachian Mountains, must have better lighting equipment, better handling vehicles and an

awareness of the large animal population.

For those who do not live in wooded areas, a deer jumping out in front of you on the road sounds like a fairy tale. In the mountainous, hilly and forest-laden areas of the Appalachians, however, animals of all sorts can suddenly appear in front of your car and cause a crash.

In spite of all the potential risks, high vantage points can offer a myriad of safety benefits. A cabin somewhere high up in the Appalachian Mountains, can be one of the safest possible rally points and evacuation destinations. If you have such a location prepared, all of the risks associated with mountainous roads, may very well be worth it. Never disqualify any option, just make sure to weigh the pros and the cons.

Terrain maps and regional awareness trump bravery and toughness. Preparation is a broad and general concept, but reveals itself as a niche market the deeper it is analyzed. Know your region well and become an expert in its topography and terrains. Only detailed terrain map study and navigation experience can aid you to this goal. Just be aware in advance, map reading is not as simple as it sounds. Some home topography study would suit you well as an added layer of preparation.





PROTECTION

Like everything else, weapons are dependent on the size of your party and your protection needs. A lone traveler may feel safe with a pocket knife and a tire iron. A larger group with women, children and the elderly in tow, should likely keep firearms.

PROPER WEAPONS TO TAKE AND BEST OPTIONS

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Whether we confront golden hordes or hoards, there may be unpleasant encounters ahead. We cannot assume that the police or any law enforcement agency will provide us with protection. As a result, we must prepare to protect ourselves.

It is wise to take firearm safety classes. Every adult in your family should do so. Guns come in all shapes and sizes. Every adult, regardless of age, gender or physical stature can safely operate a firearm.

Guns are the preferred method of protection, as they can insure defense from a distance. Pepper spray, stun guns, baseball bats and knives can all do the trick. These items, however, require confronting your attacker at close range and are rarely useful against multiple assailants. For those who have hunted throughout their lives, a powerful rifle is a natural choice.

Being able to fire off a warning shot, that will be taken seriously by potential attackers, is a great way to ward off trouble. At the same time, a powerful rifle with a scope can be a chief source of nourishment for you and your party. Nobody has ever tracked and killed a deer with a pistol, but a rifle can be a means of dinner procurement if your food supply runs out.

There are no limits to a good weapons arsenal. More obscure items like a crossbow or an axe; can do the job in a pinch. Utility items like rope and duct tape can help to subdue attackers or animals. Hunting knives and hacksaws can become kitchen utensils.

Just remember our Argentine example. Weapons should always be concealed and kept out of view. For the overwhelming majority of potential situations you will face, a small caliber firearm will do just fine. They are more accurate and easier to conceal. Carry three to four clips on you at all times and you will not have to worry.

If you are hanging around a dangerous group of people, small caliber firearms are the safest bet. They will not draw attention, while providing the protection you need. Again, remember not to be the action hero blasting away all of the bad guys. Be the supporting actor who gets away.



SITUATIONAL AWARENESS

There is one aspect of modern life which we are tempted to forget when discussing disasters; our fragile economy. Our society is directly tied to the dollar and if the dollar were to collapse, so would our country.

We have to be prepared for another financial crisis to strike and we have to know how to behave if it does. Back in 2008, banks considered not delivering money to ATMs and credit cards were on the verge of not paying out. The Federal Reserve thought long and hard about whether to print more money. We really were on the verge of another Great Depression.

If this sort of scenario were to arise, once more, the Fed may not be able to intervene. We have to be ready and prepare in advance.

You should be ready to max out your credit cards in the blink-of-an-eye. Items such as food, water, gasoline and medication should top your list. This will not be the time for prudent financial conservatism. If the financial system collapses, those who spend rabidly in its dying moments would be in the best position moving forward.

Perhaps you want to pour some cash into an emergency debit card or cash filled credit card? Maybe you want to buy some precious metals or keep a stash of gold and silver coins on hand? Throughout history, when currencies have failed, precious metals have taken their place. One of the good features of precious metals is that they can easily be hidden and transported amongst their less worthwhile relatives.

Breaking down a few dozen rolls of quarters into your tool kit and mixing them with nuts,

bolts and nails is a great way to hide them from potential thieves. Most people think to rummage through pockets and wallets, very few thieves will think to go after the nails in your tool kit.

As to cash money currency, keep it on your person. Utilizing the hurricane sewing technique mentioned earlier, can ensure that you neither lose your money by accident, nor have it taken from you on purpose. A common tactic used by defectors from Eastern Bloc nations in the 1950's and 1960's was to split the inner side of a leather belt down the middle with a blade. They would then fold money into small, flattened rectangles and line the insides of their belts. They would then loosely sew the inner sides of their belts back together. This way, they could ensure having some tradable currency once they reached their defection location.

Many creative options are available to you. Women with long hair can tie them into buns, creating tightly wound compartments for jewelry. A baby's diaper or the bottom of grandpa's wheelchair can also become great hiding locations for valuables.

Whatever method of wealth preservation you choose, be wary of automation and technology. The same tools which have simplified our lives can complicate them if we rely on them during a financial meltdown.

Even going so far as to bury cash and

physical assets of value beneath the ground at remote locations can come in handy. If you have enough supplies to survive, keeping your financial assets away from your physical location may be the only way of keeping them completely safe.

HOW TO AVOID “STANDING OUT” AMONG THE STATUS QUO

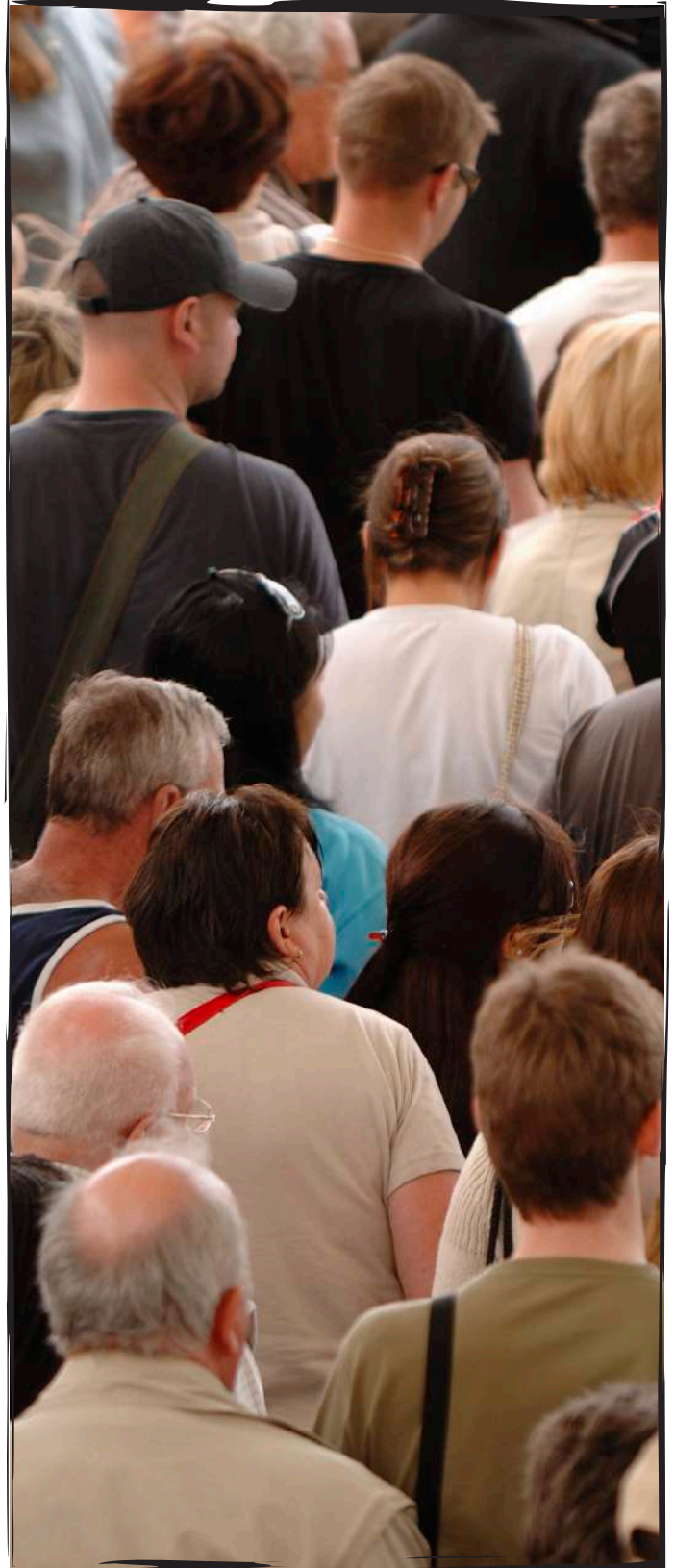
One of the biggest mistakes people making during a panic, is to panic. You can count on every man, woman and child being on edge, especially during an evacuation. There will be no friends and no neighbors. Everyone will be out for him and herself.

Human beings can smell fear and we must prepare for this, as well. We are not all meant to play the hero and we do all bleed, suffer and experience fear. It is important to remember, that this is normal and to be expected.

This is why we want to prepare to blend in and never stand out in a crowd;- whether it is our clothes, our walk or our talk. Our goal in a crisis should be the opposite of what people do on television and in film. We don't want to stand out and get noticed. We should not try to be heroes. We should try to be the extras in the background, who are not part of the story, but who live to tell about it later.

We should never show our fear.

Make sure you always walk decisively and not spend any time looking around.



Stopping and turning your head is the universal signal for “I am lost.” Those who are lost, attract undue attention. There may be people who look to help out in times of trouble, but you are better off focusing on those who want to cause harm. The best way to keep these vultures at bay is by giving them nothing to notice.

Stopping to ask for directions, turning around repeatedly or doing anything which might make you seem nervous, can cost you dearly. Always act confidently in crowds and always move directly from point A to point B.

BASELINE APPEARANCE

We want to blend in, whenever possible. This means being aware of our surroundings and of our evacuation destination. We should pack accordingly, as we do not want to look like we are better off than the surrounding population.

Wear neutral colors and try to resemble your environment. Ignore fashion trends and preferably use older or weathered clothing. Remember that it is nobody’s business to know how much money, food or supplies you have. The less impressive you seem, the less likely anyone is to ask questions.

Keep your head down, but your eyes up. Learn to scan visually, without making major head movements. You do not need to see in a 360 degree circle. Simply keeping your head

tilted towards the ground and using your eyes to scan side-to-side can tell you everything that you need to know about what is going on around you.

Stick to your companions. Regardless of how big or small your group, there is always greater strength in greater numbers. Do not get separated, especially in a foreign or hostile environment. It is also not a bad idea to stand in groups of two, back-to-back. However, this behavior should be reserved for visibly tense situations, which are already getting out of hand. This approach was once used by soldiers in battle so that they could literally “watch each other’s back.” It is, however, an extremely defensive approach that will draw undue attention if utilized under peaceful circumstances. Remember, you want to be vigilant, but you don’t want people to think that you are a vigilante. Go over the different scenarios with your cohort.

Never press anything. If you see or sense danger approaching, it is always best to leave. Regardless of how confident or capable you may feel to take on a given situation, running away is the best solution. Just keep on reminding yourself that real life is not a movie. There are no rewards for being a hero. There is only survival. If you see trouble coming, whether it is a natural disaster or a herd of human cattle, move away from it.

HOW TO KNOW WHEN TO STAY IN PLACE

If you live on high ground, away from coastal beaches, you should consider staying in place in the case of a flood or a hurricane. On the other hand, the higher up you find yourself, the greater the danger of high wind gusts. Weigh the potential risks carefully. If you are on level plains, a tornado should elicit the response to evacuate. If you have built a good fallout shelter, you may want to stay. Once again, variables and prior preparation directly come into play.

If you have planned and prepared adequately, staying in place may be the smartest move

in all but the most dire disaster scenarios. Simply put, if you have all of your ducks in a row, you can survive drastic scenarios. If staying put is your natural inclination, you should already be preparing your home, shelter and supplies. If you haven't started already; start now.

A functional fallout shelter, combined with a many months worth of food supplies and water reserves, along with power generation sources is the baseline for trenching in. You have to assume that a flood, hurricane, earthquake, tornado, riot or nuclear fallout will leave you stuck in place for days, if not weeks at a time.

If you dig in, when most locals evacuate,



do not expect authorities to come looking for you. Do not ever expect help if you plan on staying put. If you are staying put, your G.O.O.D.I.E Bag becomes everything around you. Your supplies should probably resemble one of those bulk discount super stores. Go into supply stocking with the attitude that too much is not enough.

You also have to keep in mind the human tendency to stick with our original plan. If you decide to dig in, you will be more hesitant to leave later on in the crisis. Staying in place, however, can be difficult once the fight or flight instinct kicks in. You may be tempted to switch gears, even if you are not prepared for it.

This is why stockpiling everything from food and water, to tools and weapons is the foundation of any stay at home strategy. If you are properly insulated in a protective shelter, have power and supplies, the temptation to change course and leave will lessen over time.

Evacuation requires a more tactical and strategic approach, while staying in one

place requires ample supplies and the ability to defend your position. It is the same difference as playing offense and defense in sports. If you stay, you are defending and need to be able to absorb all attacks, whether natural or man-made. If you go, you are on the attack and must consider how to break through obstacles and reach your destination.

KNOWING WHEN TO LEAVE

In general, if you live in coastal areas or near a shore, prepare to leave. River and flood plain locations are equally susceptible to water damage and require evacuation. Any region with a history of disasters should be an evacuation zone if that particular disaster arises on a massive scale. Know your precise location and its surrounding areas. Know your part of the country and the state you live in. Be aware of what the popular escape routes are and where the obscure options are located. Plan in advance, by looking back at your area's disaster history and looking ahead to your own escape plans.



Babies, Elderly, Pets & Other Needs



The old and the young present a special set of challenges. A 5 minute G.O.O.D.I.E Bag can look entirely different for a childless couple than it can look for a large clan with babies and grandparents, in tow. Once again, familiarity with your specific set of circumstances is crucial. This is why it cannot be reiterated enough: go through your G.O.O.D.I.E Bag exercises.

Babies will require formula and diapers. They will also need far more clothing and vaster arrays of them than adults. Babies are extremely sensitive to weather, at both hot and cold extremes. Car seats, strollers and baby beds will be difficult to pack and transport. Anyone with children would be wise to look into how indigenous societies transport their children. A kangaroo pouch bag is a perfect example. Many tribes place small children in sacks which can hang from fixtures, allowing the child to be comfortable while sleeping, once its neck muscles are strong enough.

The elderly also pose a problem for transport, though those issues can be handled far more easily if addressed, in advance. Any senior who uses a wheelchair should be thought of, in advance. If you know that someone in your family cannot function without a certain item, then that item must be ready-to-go at all times. Such items must also be able to fit into your mode of transportation. Folks with large families, small kids or elderly relatives, should like have a large vehicle with ample space for bulky items of need.

Other needs that may arise can be as simple as entertainment, or as complex as life-saving medication. Obviously, anything health related should take precedent over vanity and comfort items. You should always pack copies of prescriptions, medical histories or other defining characteristics for each family member.

Stocking up on medication is always a smart move. This especially holds true for prescription medication, which can be near impossible to acquire during shortages or when you are on the move. The basics, such as ibuprofen, aspirin, cough syrup and anti-diarrheal medication should always be stocked in mass and pre-packed in waterproof containers.

Prescription pain killers deserve special attention. Few people actually need these pills and many abuse them. This makes them tougher to acquire from doctors. Those who suffer from debilitating pain, however, absolutely must have access to their meds. This is worth keeping in mind if you are a healthy person who receives a pain killer prescription after something like oral surgery or the cast setting of a broken bone. If you do find yourself in a situation to get your hands on some painkillers, try and save them for a rainy day. During shortages, they can become a very valuable asset and in some cases, a valuable form of currency.



Barter Items, and other techniques



Barter has been around since Adam and Eve and was as simple as one person offering a cow to another in exchange for helping pick their fall crop. If the target family had no need for a cow, the first family would look for a different suitor. We can even say that barter is the oldest and most reliable economic system known to mankind.

Currencies and modern economies actually developed as a result of complicating barter procedures. Once third, fourth and thirty fourth parties became involved in bartering procedures, trade developed and modern economics began to take shape. If we are to return to a barter economy, we will have to learn which items will act as the greatest store of value when there are no more currencies.

Pain medication is just one of the many items that can be used in barter situations. Any item of rarity and with great functional use can grow in value during disasters. Pain and suffering are a great motivation. Anything which can alleviate pain or tension will jump in value. During many crises of the past, alcohol and tobacco have grown in value. Weapons can also be of extremely high value, as can, energy sources, from small generators to filled fuel tanks. Stored containers of gasoline and ammunition are known to skyrocket in value. A box of bullets and a barrel of oil can make some folks seem like rich men when they come to the bartering table.

Attitudes about value will change, as well. When Argentina experienced its financial crisis, the massive inflation actually created a scenario where people chose to accept coins rather than paper currency. Imagine a world where a copper penny is worth more than a \$100 dollar bill. If this doesn't sound too crazy for you to handle, you may be better prepared for the barter economy than you think.

When Zimbabwe had its economy tank, they simply took twelve zeros off of the paper currency and kept their coinage the same. If you think about it, this actually added twelve zeros worth of value to the coins, in question. Eventually, Zimbabwe moved to using foreign currency to conduct business. This example illustrates the loose and flexible nature of currencies. A currency really is anything that a group of people deem acceptable and actually accept as a means of exchange.

Not only will items be of use, but skills will become valuable, as well. Something as simple as giving a good massage or being able to plant tomatoes may become marketable skills. Seriously injured people without access to painkillers would likely trade something of value or pay for a professional massage of injured body parts. An infant with teething pains may prompt their parents to pay a high rate for a small amount of an alcoholic beverage to soothe the pain.

Diabetics may be willing to trade items of far greater value for the smallest Saccharin supply.

The key to survival once you are on the move is thinking outside of the box. Life on the move really is the furthest frontier of the service economy. Anyone who can provide some sort of service to someone else, will find a way to survive. Studying the history of various frontiersmen, indigenous cultures and thinking about all of the things you couldn't live without are a great way to get in the right frame of mind for a barter economy.

SCAVENGING

Scavenging is both a carnivorous and herbivorous feeding behavior in which individual scavengers search out dead animals and dead plants on which to feed. Scavenging among humans can also mean reclaiming parts off of one item to fix another or simply finding road kill that is still edible and consuming it. Scavenging is a low energy way of finding sustenance in an unpredictable and volatile environment.

Some people are frightened by these sorts of definitions. They imagine the worst possible scenario and actually work very hard at psyching themselves out. We should not be so hasty, or mentally weak. This is how our ancestors lived for thousands of years. This is how we still live, today.

No human being would exist today without scavenging. In fact, if you think about it, we are all still scavengers today. The vast majority of us still seek nutrition from dead animals and dead plants. Your oven roasted turkey breast, was once a live bird. That crispy green apple was once alive in an orchard. The grapes in your wine were picked off a living vine.

The only difference between today and the days when man scavenged the earth, is that today, others scavenge on our behalf. We simply consume.

Every single one of us can survive as a scavenger. In such a scenario, the weapons we bring along with us grow in value. A rifle, a gun, or a crossbow paired with a hunting knife becomes your own supermarket. Add some collected wood, the lighter you brought along, some dried leaves and all of a sudden, the woods can become your own personal restaurant.

Once again, preparation is crucial. Both the supply acquisition and mental prep sides of the coin, hold firm. We must feel confident in ourselves and our ability to survive in any environment.

Go to a campground with a few cans of food and water. Next, go out and find some animal and plant sources of energy. Prepare what you need to sterilize, cook or clean what you find, in advance. Work your way up to going out camping without food. This is the same approach used in building your go bag. It is trial and error, speed, comfort and confidence built by repetition.

Hunting and camping are hands down, the two best activities to get you prepared for the scavenger lifestyle. Children who are brought up as campers and forest lovers can become huge assets to your cause, as well.



SUMMATION

There will be no easy answers or options for you and your family. The rate of survival during disasters increases and decreases based on preparedness levels.

We can think of disaster survival and situational awareness as a test of strength and endurance. Think of the folks at the gym who spend years tightening and toning their bodies, versus those who perform hard physical labor at work and on their own.

Raking leaves, mowing lawns and chopping trees will rarely lead to anyone looking like a fitness model. These activities, however, will give people real world strength. That is not to say that bench presses and bicep curls are useless; not at all. The point is that sometimes unnoticed activities can give us strength, which is ignored by mainstream training. Disaster preparation is not any different. Do what you need to do, not what they tell you to do.

Treat your disaster and evacuation preparation as a work out. Work both your mental and your physical muscles. Realize that there is a direct connection between the two and that getting yourself prepared properly means addressing all potential situations which may arise.

Practice situational awareness and talk to your loved ones about evacuation. Make it both educational and fun for them and for yourself. The sorts of disasters that can occur go beyond the boundaries of most nightmares. Instead of living in fear or simply ignoring what can happen, take charge and become proactive in ensuring your family's safety and prosperity.

Take stock of what you have in your possession and what you will need to acquire. Know that your ultimate goal is survival and that anything else will simply not suffice. Take personal responsibility and realize that you are the only one you can depend on. There are no excuses from this point forward. It is all up to you...



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