

# STORM SEASON

MAKING THE CHOICE  
**TO LEAVE** .....



PREPARING  
YOUR HOME  
**FOR A NATURAL  
DISASTER**



LIVING WITHOUT  
POWER DURING  
**STORM SEASON**



HIDDEN  
DANGERS  
**AFTER A  
STORM**



**THE 10 ITEMS** THAT DISAPPEAR BEFORE A DISASTER .....



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# STORM SEASON

By Chris Weatherman



As preppers many of us focus on large scale cataclysmic events. While it's important to be prepared for anything that could lead to The End Of The World As We Know It, we're far more likely to face a more localized life altering event. This edition of the Insider is dedicated to storm season.

Every year hundreds of thousands of people are affected by natural disasters. Fires, floods, mudslides, tornadoes, hurricanes, and severe storms can wreak havoc all over the world. It's likely you'll face some sort of natural disaster in the year to come no matter where you live. The bad news is that they can be the end of your world as you know it. The good news is that there is almost always some warning, even if only minutes in some cases.

While flash floods and tornadoes can strike with

little to no warning, there is almost always some other factor contributing to their occurrence. The fact that these events can manifest quickly is all the more reason to be ready to move on a moments notice. As we'll discuss later, if there is a tornado bearing down on your house, you're going to want more than just the bug out bag (BOB).

There are also a number of steps we can do to mitigate the damage from these disasters. Preparing your home or business is an important step to making sure you, your family, and your community can recover quickly. The very foundation of preparedness is taking steps in advance of a crisis to mitigate its impact. Remember that the better prepared you are, the less resources you'll consume during the recovery. This will allow those resources to be utilized for those that either couldn't or didn't.

Then there's the things we need to do after the event. The type of disaster you're faced with will dictate what those are. The response to the aftermath of a tornado will be much different than that of a fire. We need to have a plan now for what will happen after the terminal phase of a crisis has passed. Escaping with the BOB will be only the tip of the iceberg if your home is swept away in a flood.

First identify what your potential threats are when preparing for storm season. For example, this may mean you need to have supplies cached at another location in flood and wildfire prone areas. All the preps in the world will do you no good if they're swept down river or turned to ash when a wildfire consumes your home. However, our needs will remain largely the same no matter the nature of the disaster.



Have a plan in place for fresh water. The more water, the better. The rule of thumb is a gallon a day per person. If you're in a hot and humid area plus working outside to clean up, you'll likely need to drink a minimum of a gallon a day. That leaves you nothing for cooking and hygiene. You'll still need shelter. Having a fall back in case your home is uninhabitable is a must. You'll definitely need a power source. Remember that this isn't the end of the world, just the end of your immediate world. Life

will go on so you'll want to be able to use your cell phone to contact friends and family. Plus having lights and being able to gather news.

Gathering news, or intel, is something that many people overlook. Or they think their phone and the internet will always be there. Plan ahead by having an AM/FM radio on hand to listen to local sources. This can let you know where resources may be available, or what roads are blocked. It also

prevents wild rumors from spreading or you wasting valuable resources chasing them.

In this edition of the Insider we hope to help you develop your plan. Then you won't be one of those poor people we always see on the news after an event. We've all seen them on TV asking when help is coming. Often with crying children who are scared. Take the information here to heart so it's not you and your family wondering when help will arrive.





# 10 ITEMS THAT DISAPPEAR BEFORE A DISASTER

By: Candi Hanson



It's the time of year that need to start thinking about spring and summer storms. We're fortunate to live in a time when we get plenty of advanced warning of a major storm is headed our way. It could be a hurricane, tropical storm, or severe thunderstorm that kicks up some wild tornadoes.

## **THE GOVERNMENT RECOMMENDS EVERY FAMILY HAVE ENOUGH FOOD, WATER, AND EMERGENCY SUPPLIES TO LAST AT LEAST THREE DAYS.**

That's based on how long it takes to mobilize aid to a hard hit area. Three days may not seem that long right now, but three days with no power, running water, heat, or shelter is no joke. Imagine telling your children you don't have a blanket for them to lie on, food to give them, or something as simple as a flashlight when it's completely dark outside.

Don't count on the government showing up in exactly three days. Prepare now! Don't wait until you hear the warning on the radio. It will be too late at that point. Everyone else would have heard the same announcement and will be rushing out to buy the things you need to get by until help arrives. It can get ugly in stores just hours after one of those warnings rings out. People are crazy and, in some cases, violent. Protect yourself and your family by preparing now.

## **THE FOLLOWING PAGES ARE THE TEN THINGS THAT ARE GOING TO DISAPPEAR FIRST WHEN THE STUFF IS ABOUT TO HIT THE FAN:**



## 1 - BOTTLED WATER

Bottled water is going to be flying off the shelves. Don't wait. Get a few cases tucked away now. You need water to drink and maintain good personal hygiene. You cannot drink the water that comes from the tap after a major storm. There is a good chance the water treatment plants aren't going to be functional. If you're on a well, you may be without power. You'll want to plan on having a minimum of one gallon of water per day for each family member. It is better if you store a little more than that to ensure you have enough water to wash your hands, dishes, and for cleaning up around the home. If you have pets, store water for them as well.



## 2 - BATTERIES

Batteries are another important item to stock up on now. You will need batteries for your flashlights and radios. Reduce the amount of batteries you'll run through by using LED flashlights and lanterns. These are extremely bright lights and use very little battery power. Have at least one flashlight for each family member and a lantern on standby. Having portable battery packs for your cellphones is also a good idea. You'll want to be able to be in touch with family members that aren't in your house. Portable chargers should be kept charged and ready to use. Have several on standby to make sure your phone will last a minimum of three days. Keeping a solar battery charger on hand is also a good idea. These are inexpensive and can charge small electronics. You'll appreciate being able to keep the kids occupied with their favorite tablet or other handheld game.



## 3 - GENERATORS

Portable generators are going to go fast. While this is a bigger purchase, it's an investment that can keep your family out of the dark and keep food safe from spoiling. You can expect to spend a couple hundred dollars on a generator, but it's well worth the cost. Buy one now, get familiar with it, and make sure you have everything needed to make it run smoothly. Make sure you have the oil that's needed to keep it running. Constant running will require you to add oil every fifty hours or so.



Because this is a high value item, it's also a good idea to have a bolt and chain to secure it. Generators can help minimize the inconvenience of a power outage. When setting it up, be aware that they tend to be loud. They're also a magnet for those who weren't prepared and are willing to steal. Keep it out of sight and locked down. Building a box out of plywood around the generator can help muffle the sound, keep the generator out of the elements, and out of plain sight.

## 4 - FUEL

Fuel for your generator and car is another hot item that's going to go very fast when people learn of a storm headed their way. Filling your car's tank is a good idea in case you need to escape a storm. You may ride out the storm at home but may need to leave after if the damage is severe. When the power goes out, the gas pumps won't operate. Keep in mind you might not be able to use a credit card even if the gas station has a working pump. There may also be caps on how much gas you can purchase. You're better off storing gasoline.

Depending on the size of generator you have and how much of a load it's carrying, you should plan to use between twelve to twenty-four gallons of fuel per day. It all depends on the size of the generator. You'll want to give your generator breaks throughout the day, which will save fuel.

You can safely store fuel for six months or up to twelve months if kept in a cool, dry environment. Add some fuel stabilizer to the tanks. Don't be one of the hundreds stuck in line at a gas station for hours trying to get a couple gallons of fuel.





## 5 - PLYWOOD

Plywood should be at the top of your list of needs to survive a disaster. If you live in an area prone to hurricanes, buy enough plywood to board up your windows now. Home Depot and other home improvement stores are going to sell out fast when it becomes clear a storm is headed your way. Spend fifty dollars now and store the plywood in the shed or garage. This can save you thousands of dollars in home damages caused by a hurricane. This is something you can store for years without it rotting. Don't forget to have a hammer, screws, and a portable drill to hang the plywood.



## 6 - BREAD AND FOOD STAPLES

Bread is going to fly off the shelves. Cooking might not be an option during a storm so you need foods that are ready-to-eat. Sandwiches are quick, easy, and require no real clean up after you make them. Unfortunately, bread isn't something you can stock up on and save for weeks in your pantry. However, you can pop the bread into the freezer and pull it out when there is an impending disaster. Canned foods along with packaged goods like crackers and jerky are good options too. The goal is to have a supply of ready-to-eat, non-perishable food items on hand.



## 7 - TARPS

Tarps are going to be very important as well. If your roof is damaged, you'll need to do your best to protect the home by covering the hole. Tarps can be used to cover broken windows as well. It can take weeks or longer to get a contractor out to fix your home after a disaster. Your home won't be the only one damaged and everyone is going to be scrambling to protect their homes with tarps. A tarp can also come in handy if you need an emergency shelter for your family. These inexpensive items are going to be extremely valuable after a disaster. Get a few stored away now. Have a few bungee cords and/or ropes to use with the tarps.



## 8 - TRASH BAGS

Trash bags are going to make your world much easier and a lot more sanitary. If you happened to miss out on getting plywood and/or tarps, big black trash bags are the next best thing. The bags can be used to seal up a broken window or a hole in a roof when combined with duct tape. You can protect items like your cameras, laptops, and precious family photos from water damage by placing them inside plastic bags with a tight seal.

They're also going to be useful when it comes to cleaning up after the storm. You may be using paper plates and plastic utensils while waiting for power and water to be restored. The extra trash generated needs to go somewhere. You also have to prepare for garbage services to be delayed for a while until roads are cleared. Garbage isn't only unsightly, it can be a serious health hazard. Try to keep your home and outdoor area clean to prevent pest infestations. Also, a heavy duty lawn bag can be used in a bucket for a makeshift toilet if the sewer system is damaged or you don't have running water.

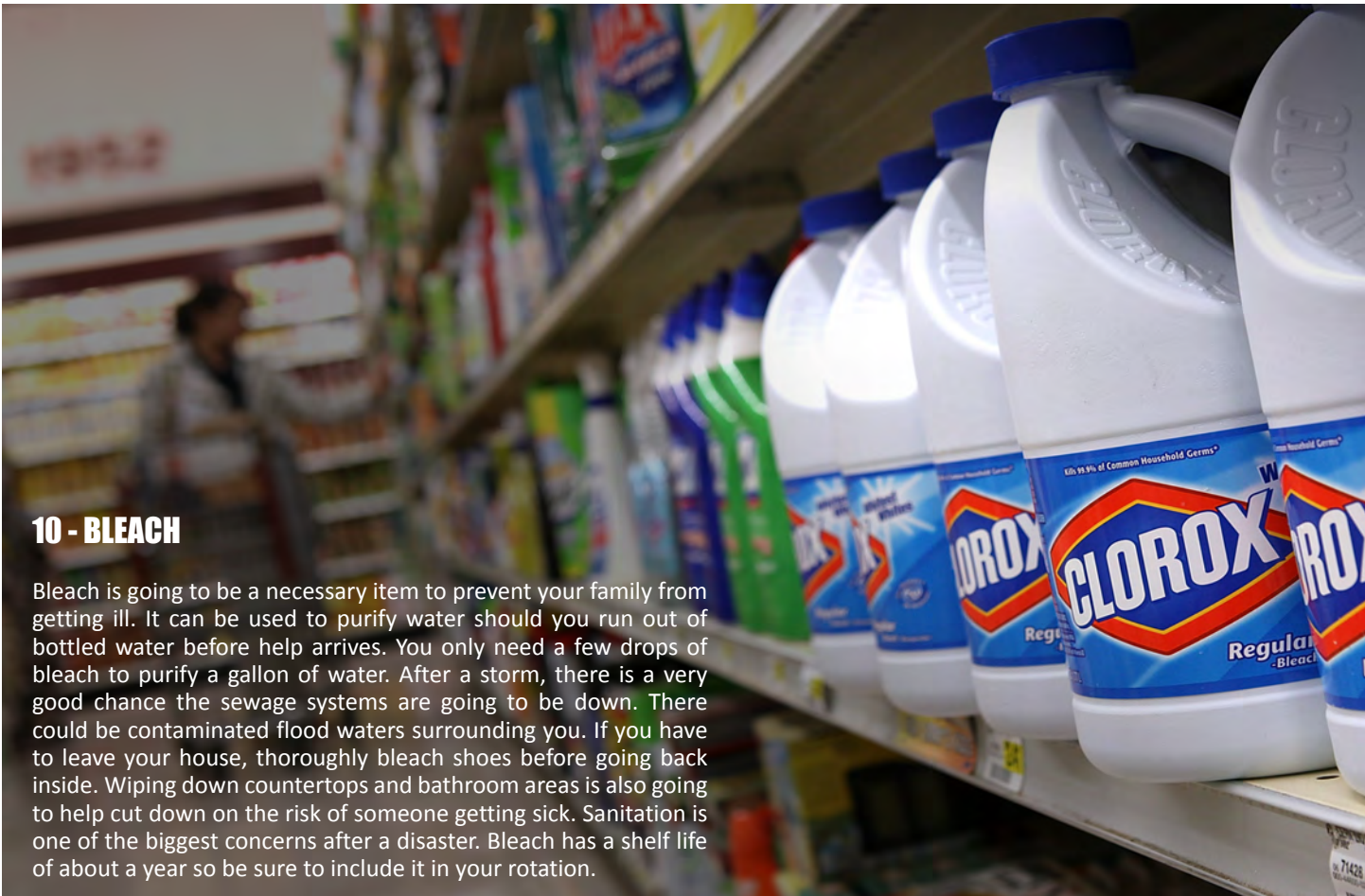


## 9 - TOILET PAPER

Toilet paper isn't something many people think of when they rush to the store hours before a major disaster. Just because there is a raging storm, it doesn't mean the human body stops working. Save yourself a lot of trouble by stockpiling the stuff now.







### 10 - BLEACH

Bleach is going to be a necessary item to prevent your family from getting ill. It can be used to purify water should you run out of bottled water before help arrives. You only need a few drops of bleach to purify a gallon of water. After a storm, there is a very good chance the sewage systems are going to be down. There could be contaminated flood waters surrounding you. If you have to leave your house, thoroughly bleach shoes before going back inside. Wiping down countertops and bathroom areas is also going to help cut down on the risk of someone getting sick. Sanitation is one of the biggest concerns after a disaster. Bleach has a shelf life of about a year so be sure to include it in your rotation.



### CONCLUSION

Buying these items now helps lessen the hit to your wallet and ensures you have everything needed to get through the next storm. A good strategy is to buy at least one item every week and set it aside in a closet or pantry. A little preparation can go a long way to ensuring your family has what they need until help arrives.



# GATHERING WEATHER INTEL

By: Nick Meacher



Spring usually brings severe weather in many parts of the country, sometimes with very little notice. I think most would agree that tornadoes are one of the worst in terms of little or no notice. In contrast, hurricanes or blizzards come with at least several days' notice.

In normal situations we all probably have at least one app on our phone to track weather. In addition, we probably have our phones set to give us news and weather alerts. As we've mentioned in previous articles, you should have radios for communications. Most VHF radios (Baofeng's, etc.) should have the ability to monitor the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and National Weather Service (NWS) weather radio frequencies. The NOAA weather broadcasts use seven frequencies between 162.400 to 162.550 and [vary by location](#). It's important to use the correct frequency for your area because NOAA sends specific messages and alerts based on geographical areas using [Specific Area Message Encoding \(SAME\)](#). Each county or municipal area has a specific code that can be entered into a weather radio. It will then alert to the county and weather type based on the code.



The same system is part of the Emergency Alert System (EAS). There are [event codes](#) for weather events and also evacuations, civil emergencies, hazardous materials, nuclear plant warnings, and others.

There are lots of options for weather radios, including some that have solar power, hand cranks, connections for USB power charging of devices, etc. Some are just weather radios and others can also pick up local AM and FM radio stations.



Local stations would rebroadcast the alerts before the days of internet based radio and TV. While they still do, a large number of people who utilize internet based services may not receive the alerts. It's important to have other means to receive these alerts. Have a weather radio in your vehicle when traveling so you aren't relying on local stations.



Most municipalities have a siren system if you live close enough to a town to hear it. However, these are usually only activated for a warning and not watches. Another source of notifications is Amateur Radio. Some ham repeaters are programmed to rebroadcast the watches and alerts.



## KNOW YOUR AREA

You should educate yourself on the weather patterns in your area. Peak tornado season is [April-June](#), although tornadoes have occurred outside that time. The U.S. averages 1,225 tornadoes each year, with 55% occurring between April through June. The more severe ones also tend to occur during this time.

Tornadoes aren't the only weather hazards as there's severe thunderstorms, hail, high winds etc. that can all cause severe damage. Along the coast lines hurricanes are a hazard. While they bring high winds, it's usually the surging water that kills more people.



# SKYWARN

A **SKYWARN** class will give you some basic understanding of weather and what to look for in changing patterns. You can enhance your ability to monitor it with a weather station. Over the years a number of weather stations have developed on the market for amateur weather spotters. These can be a [simple clock with a remote](#) that's placed outside to give you temperature and also indicates a change in the barometric pressure with symbols. Other stations include complete [home stations](#), rain and wind gauges, wind speed and direction, and barometric pressure.





There are also [lightning detectors](#) which are great when doing outdoor activities.

[Hand-held weather monitor](#) are perfect when in the field, hiking, or otherwise on the move. These vary from a simple wind and temperature gauge to devices that have humidity sensors, barometric, altitude, and air density sensors. Those who do long range shooting probably have one of these already. I personally have a basic Kestrel station as well as a more advanced **EXTECH 45158** station as an upgrade.

I highly recommend that you take a Skywarn course and learn the weather patterns in your area. Your local NWS has probably scheduled their classes for the year. If you can't find or get into a local one, then at least take the [online class](#).

You should also check your local ham nets and club to see which ones run a weather net and/or provide alerts on their repeaters. The easiest way to find them is to search [Repeater Book](#) for your state. You'll find an index for weather nets and Skywarn. You can still listen in without a ham license, but I strongly

urge you to get one (see articles in the February edition of Survival Dispatch Insider). I also strongly suggest getting a weather alert radio to carry with you. Once programmed with the [SAME code for your area](#) it will remain silent until an alert is received. This is handy as it can be set up to alert you at night.

You should also identify [suitable space in your home](#) and work place that can be used as a tornado shelter. Be sure to have your family practice before tornado season starts.





# BASE COMMS MADE PORTABLE

By: Nick Meacher



The Insider has had lots of articles in the past issues that discussed how important communications are for safety and information. Here we're going to talk about how to have communication even if you have to bug out. What we are talking about is a HF capable radio, not your handheld radio for tactical communications.

## WHY?

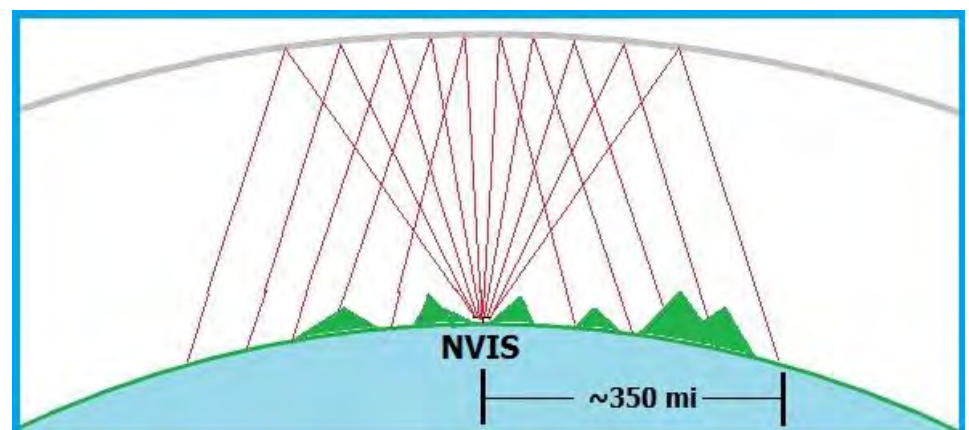
Why should you take a HF radio with you? If you have a place already set up as your bug out location then ideally the HF communications equipment should be set up or at least stored there. Unfortunately, not everyone has that or maybe they don't have everything there.

Another reason to have HF with you and not just stored somewhere is so to be able to reach out further than your handhelds. If you recall from other articles a handheld radio is going to be 5-8 watts depending on your location and what is around. You might be able to transmit up to 10 miles simplex with a ladder-line J-pole antenna up 10-

20 feet but that's greatly reduced around buildings, trees, etc. The other disadvantage with using VHF is that it is very easy to direction find (DF). HF communications with a Near Vertical Incidence Skywave (NVIS) antenna can be made to bounce off the atmosphere which makes it difficult to direction find.

NVIS antennas use low bands and low (horizontal) antennas. Generally daytime frequencies between 5-7.5MHz and night time between 1.8-5.5MHz. Typically to

reach up to 350 miles the antenna needs to be about 12-15 inches off the ground. Wire antennas make the best NVIS antennas. If the antenna is placed higher off the ground at about 20-30 feet, the signal will go about 1,000 miles. These communications distances have been seen with as low as 10 watts of power. With a basic understanding of a NVIS antenna we can use even a low power radio to communicate over considerable distances. We'll discuss more about antennas later in this article.





## WHAT RADIO?

There are few 12-volt mobile HF radios that would be suitable for being carried in a pack or in a vehicle. The **YAESU FT-818ND** is a low power (6-watt) radio that has internal batteries and covers 10-160 meters as well 6-meters, 2-meters, and 70cm. The internal batteries are 9.6v 1,900mAh. It operates on SSB, CW, AM, and FM, and is capable of digital modes. It also comes with a battery case for 8 AA batteries. The power drops to 2.5 watts when using the AA batteries. It lists for about \$850. This radio is fairly new and replaced the FT-817ND.



The **YAESU FT-891** is a full power, 100-watts radio that covers 10-160 meters and 6-meters. Like the FT-818ND it also operates on SSB, CW, AM, and FM. It will operate at 100 watts but power can be selected from 5-100 watts. Using only the power needed greatly extends the life of the batteries as well as limiting who can hear your transmissions. It lists for about \$650.



Obviously as a base radio the FT-891 would be the ideal choice because you can operate at the higher power. The drawback is that it doesn't have internal batteries so you'll need to have 12-volts available to operate when packing it. This will add considerable weight. Although if you're in a vehicle this may not be too much of a concern.

The **ICOM-7200** is listed as an entry level radio, however it's ruggedized but not waterproof. It's 2-100 watts and operates on 10-160 HF and 6-meters. It operates on SSB and CW. It lists for about \$820



When considering what radio to get think about whether you need 2-meters and/or 70cm in a higher power than a mobile is going to provide. I would contend that 2-meters and/or 70cm isn't necessary in a SHTF scenario. You have hand held radios for tactical communications. The HF has the capability to reach people 100-3,000 miles away. This will be important to be able to hear what's going on outside of your area.

## PROTECTING YOUR RADIO

Obviously you need to protect your radio as it's a valuable piece of equipment. It might be your only means to find out what's going on around the country and even the world. One way is in a hard case such as Pelican, Condition 1, 5.11 Tactical, or other manufacturer. Some ham radio folks have built very nice [portable radio stations](#) in hard cases.

a number of radios including the **YAESU FT-817**. The carries are a metal frame that bolts where the normal vehicle mounting plate are. They then extend to protect the knobs on the front and the connectors on the back of the radio. For the FT-891 it's \$79



They also make a pack for the radios as well as a 12v battery case. While the packs may be water resistant, they may not provide sufficient protection in heavy rain. Think about adding additional protection. If you consider an EMP a risk then the radio should be in an EMP proof bag until needed. The larger [EMP bags available through Survival Dispatch](#) should fit the radio with the Portable Zero frame attached.





# NVIS ANTENNA

So we have a HF radio and power, next is an antenna. As mentioned earlier, a **NVIS ANTENNA** is going to be our best option for communications. There are a number of commercial antennas on the market for NVIS communications. These are sometimes called 'EMCOMM' (for emergency communications) as typically they require getting a message a few hundred miles out of the disaster area. There are also numerous home made designs with the simplest being made from wire. NVIS works best on 40-meters for daytime and 80-meters for nighttime. A simple NVIS antenna can be made with wire and a balun, [such as this one by N6CC](#).

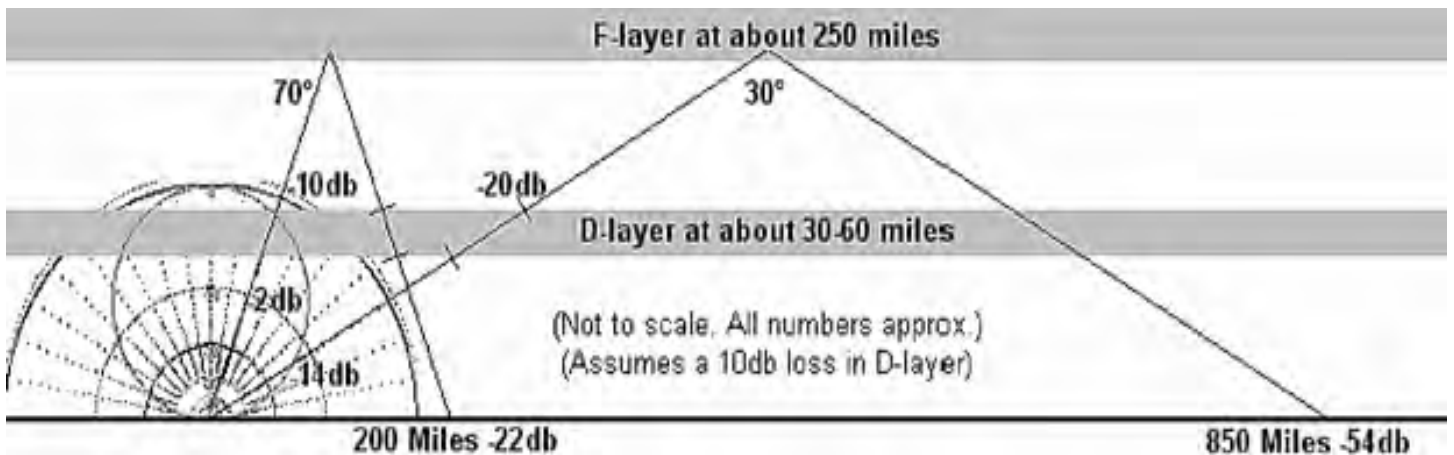
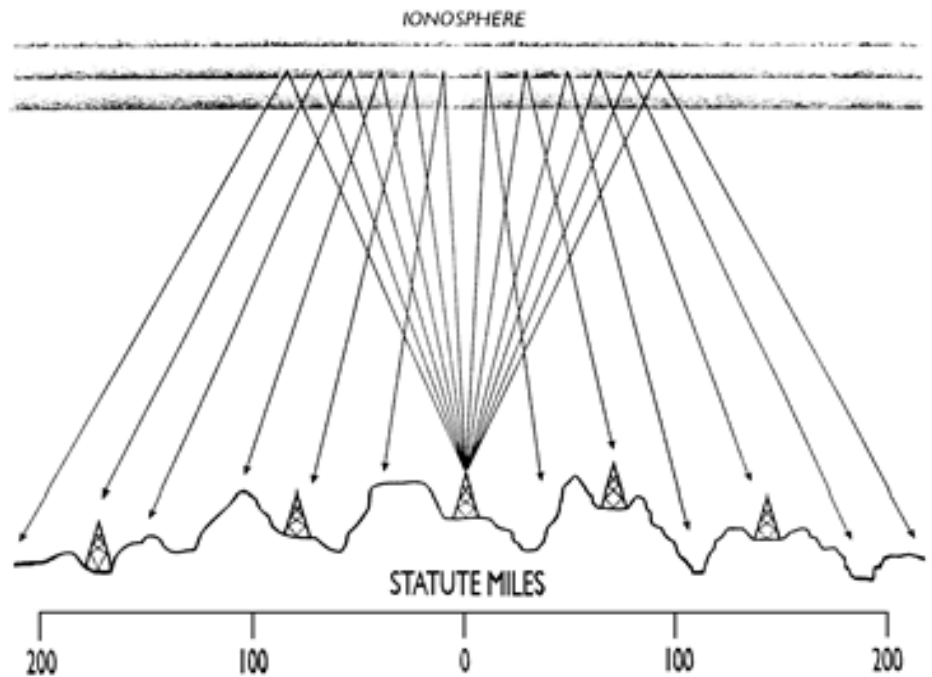


# NVIS ANTENNA

A vertical HF antenna generates a signal that will travel to the natural horizon on the right frequency, typically about 100 miles. An antenna horizontal or parallel to the ground will send the signal up. It will bounce off the F layer and back to the ground. This is inside the skip zone that a typical HF signal from a vertical antenna produces.

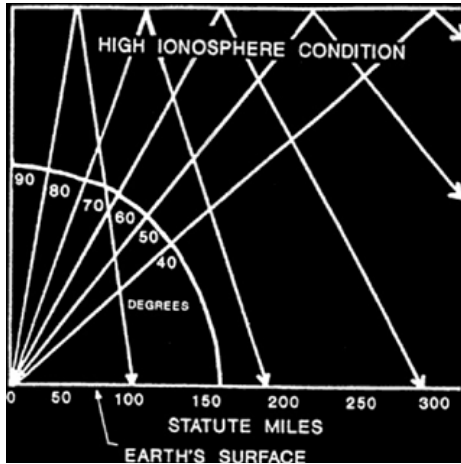
The upper range of usable frequency, before it will go through the F layer, is called the Maximum Usable Frequency (MUF). The lower end is called the Lowest Usable Frequency (LUF). The range between the MUF and LUF changes as the sun interacts with the ionosphere, hence the reason we have different bands for daytime and nighttime.

Signals above 10 MHz will go through the F2 layer into space so during the daytime we need to use frequencies between 5-10MHz (40-meters and the channelized 60-meter frequencies). Evening the frequency drops throughout the night to about 2-5MHz before dawn, so the 80-meter band is the best choice.





With an antenna horizontal to the ground the signal goes straight up and bounces back down within 100 miles of origin. If we slope the antenna the angle will determine about how far the signal can be heard.



As mentioned there are a lot of designs on the web for NVIS antennas but bear in mind we're planning be on the move. First, we'll look at a few vertical HF antennas.

The **SUPER ANTENNA** can cover all bands if you get the option 80-meter coil. It packs into a small bag. Vertical antennas need ground radials for the best efficiency and they come with the kit. (click on the picture to go to their website). This is a good, small antenna with a manual tuning card so you can use it without an antenna tuner to tune to the band.

The **ALPHA FMJ ANTENNAS** are modelled on the military whip type antennas. The kit shown comes with a tripod for mounting. Either of these antennas are great because they'll work on multiple bands.

However, we also have to consider if it's going to be in a vehicle where weight and bulk may not be an issue.



## MP1DXMAX

**Frequencies:**  
3.5 MHz ~ 30 MHz  
+ plus 144 ~ 148 MHz

**Meter Bands:**  
80m - 75m - 60m  
40m - 30m - 20m  
17m - 15m - 12m  
11m - 10m - 6m  
+ plus  
Simultaneous 2m



**MC2 SuperPlexer**  
2 meter Band Adapter  
Any HF band + plus 2 meters  
On The Same Antenna

**MC80 Coil**  
80m~75m

**MC60 Coil**  
5 MHz

**ER1 Extension Rods**  
**TW1 Telescopic Whip**

**Radial Sets**  
For All Bands

MR4010: 7-30 MHz	MR8075: 3.4-4.8 MHz
MR6066: 4.8-6.9 MHz	MR642: 40-70 MHz
MR27: 144-148 MHz	
MR28: 144-148 MHz	
MR28: 144-148 MHz	

**Ham Antenna**  
**Go Bag Package**  
**Ruggedized SuperWhip**  
**Dual Band HF + 2 meters**  
**All Band Antenna**  
**Portable Base Mobile**  
**Tripod Universal Mount**

**SW1 SuperWhip**  
Super Flexible  
Ruggedized Titanium

**MP1C Antenna**  
SuperSlider Antenna Coil  
Tunes to any HF Frequency

Insulated Grip for Manual Tuning

6061-T6 Aircraft Aluminum

Reliable Self-Locking Slider

Nickel Beryllium Contacts

High Q SuperCoil

Durable Polymer Form

**FG1 SWR Ruler**

**TM1 Low Profile Tripod**  
All Modular Parts Standard 3/8"-24 Fittings



**GB1 Super Go Bag**  
Everything Fits in the Compact Portable Antenna Carry Case

- Velcro Panel for Insignia & Flag Patches
- MOLLE - PALS Compatible Attachment System Front and Back for Interface with HTs, Gear, EmComm, Accessory Pouches, and SuperWhips
- 2 D-Rings for Attachments or Straps
- 2 Coil Pockets for MP1 Series SuperSliders and MC Series SuperCoil Options
- Cable Pocket for MR Series Radial Sets, Coax, and Connectors
- Case Size: 13" x 9" x 3.5" (33 x 23 x 9 cm)
- Antenna weight 1 pound (0.5kg)
- Total package weight 6.2 pounds (2.8kg)
- Mount Pocket for UM1 or UM2 Universal Mount, and TM1 Tripod SuperMount with Tools
- 2 Extension Rod Pockets for Extra Length or Telescopic Whips
- 2 Full Length Stealth Hidden Velcro Pockets for FG1 Frequency Guide, Mics, Keys, Manuals, Equipment, EmComm Forms, or Accessories
- Strong Webbing Handles

**UM2 Universal Mount**  
Attaches to: Table, Balcony, Bench, Ladder, Door, Wall, Flat, Fence, Pipe, Pole, Mast, Stake, Balcony, Stand, Post, Rack, or Railing

- Fits pipes up to 1.25" (32mm) diameter
- Rubberized Friction Bottom Plate
- Mounting Points for: TM4 SuperPod Tripod and 3/8"-16 Studio Tripods
- 3/8"-24 Dipole Conversion
- 1/4"-20 Camera Tripod
- Standard 3/8"-24 Threads
- Strong Aluminum Frame
- Standard SO-239 UHF Connector
- Rubberized Friction Bearings
- Mount Bracket Swivels To Any Angle
- Stainless Steel Bolts with Hex Wrench Included
- Multiple Radial Terminal Connections
- U-Bolt Clamp to 1.25" (32mm) Pipe, Pole, Mast, Railing
- C-Clamp to 1.7" (43mm) Table, Balcony, Bench, Ladder, Fence

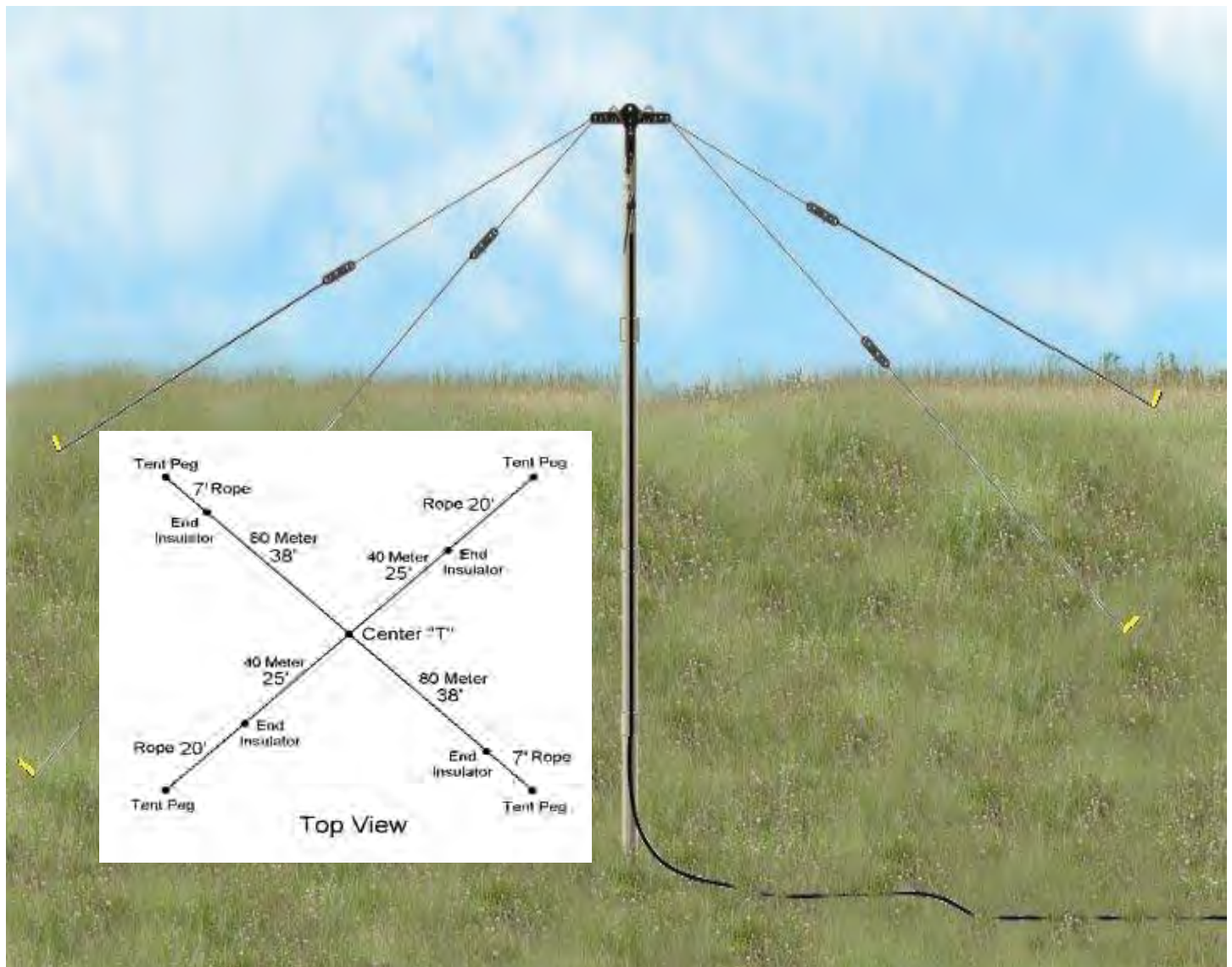
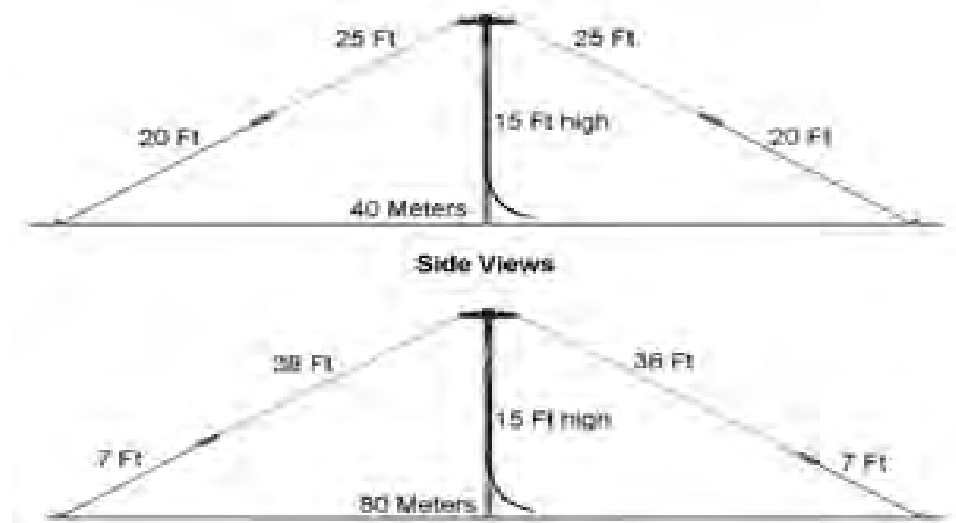


Some of the wire designs copy the military AS-2259/GR antenna kits. These use a mast about 15ft high and then two sets of antenna wire. One length is optimized for 40-meters and the other 80-meters in an inverted 'V' configuration. However, on the move just the required band could be set up quickly. Instructions for this antenna, as well as a components list can be found in [A Practical NVIS Antenna for Emergency or Temporary Communications](#) by DX Engineering. You'll find that many of the components needed can be improvised.

If you're backpacking then just get the wire and improvise the poles, or use a tree limb to suspend the center, or setup as a sloped antenna. [DX Engineering has the separate wire kits for 40 & 80 meters](#) for about \$45 each. Sometimes you can find the military AS-2259/GR antenna kits at hamfests or eBay but they're usually expensive. There are also homebrew designs by various hams.

Remember that you need insulators between the antenna wire and the guy ropes as well as tensioners. These can be made from plastic, scrap Perspex, pvc pipe, or other non-conductive material.

The military [Radio Communications Field Manual](#) (FM 24-18) contains charts on wire lengths for specific frequencies. Another chart can be found [here](#). You can cut lengths for mid-band and carry them in your Bug Out Bag/radio kit, together with rope/paracord, some insulators, and pegs.





The Chameleon has two wire antennas, but the Chameleon III is designed for a more permanent installation. The Chameleon EMCOMM II is designed for rapid deployment and taking down. It can be configured in most of the NVIS configurations.

I know a young ham who set one of the Chameleon III antennas up about 15ft off the ground using a tree at one end. He was able to make contacts in Europe, Canada, and Russia from Colorado using only 5-watts SSB voice.

Wire antennas need to be about  $\frac{1}{4}$  wavelength above the ground to be most effective, which equates to about 10-15 feet. Pat Lambert, WO1PL, did some experiments and has some very good information in his [article](#). Note that he also discusses the use of two ground wires, parallel about 12-inches apart under the antenna wire to improve the signal. This may not be something you want to set up on the move but should certainly consider for more fixed locations.

What we haven't mentioned yet is the need to tune the antenna to the specific frequency you're using for the most efficiency. This can be done with a SWR meter and the wire cut to length. If changing frequencies within the band you probably don't want to do this, see [trimming a dipole antenna by Stu Turner N0STU](#). Of course, you could tune to the middle of the band and be fairly close. Another option is an antenna tuner. There are a number of different antenna tuners on the market, some manual and some automatic. They are beyond the scope of this article but your local ham store, club, or Elmer should be able to give you some good advice.

HF antennas can seem daunting but the ability to communicate 100-800 miles can be very useful and can be done with less than 10-watts in most cases. The addition of a **SIGNALINK** and the availability of a computer running the (free) **FLDIGI** software will allow you to send digital messages. You'll have allow more detailed and accurate messages. The **SIGNALINK**

supports



RTTY, SSTV, and CW as well as today's hottest new modes like PSK31, FT8, JT65, WSPR, and WINMOR. They have cables for most radios with a simple pin configuration and you can be on the air with most digital modes. There are several advantages using digital modes.

Firstly, a complete message can be typed ready to go and then sent at the push of a button. Secondly, if you're using a pre-arranged frequency then the receiving radio can be unmanned but will still capture the message. This is a huge advantage if you don't want to give your location away.





Just as with many other preparedness skills it's important that you practice. Obtaining your General class license will give you operating privileges in the 40 and 80-meter bands (and many others). Then you can practice setting up and operating your station. The ARRL holds Field Day where clubs and individuals around the country set up portable stations in parks, fields, and other locations to practice setting up EMCOMM in an emergency. They do this every year on the last weekend in June. This is a good opportunity for you to see what others are doing. You can locate local groups at the [ARRL's web site](http://www.arrl.org). Or your group can set up its own field day to practice set up and group comms. In fact, as part of your regular group training you should have a comms training day as part of routine.

As mentioned, I strongly encourage you to get your General class license. Practice with HF to gain better skills, an understanding of what you can do, and how far you can communicate with simple NVIS antennas. For free study guides, flashcards, and practice tests go to [hamstudy.org](http://hamstudy.org). To find FREE tests near you go to [LaurelVEC.com](http://LaurelVEC.com).

I strongly encourage you to look at some of the other references to learn more on NVIS. I've tried to simplify the information in this article but there is so much more to understand. The book Near Vertical Incidence Skywave, Theory, Techniques, and Validation by David Fielder is probably the best single resource. It's out of print but you can sometimes find [used copies available on Amazon](#).





# PREPARING YOUR HOME FOR A NATURAL DISASTER

By: Ryan Dotson



**W**e're once again approaching what most consider to be natural disaster season. This past year was one of the worst hurricane seasons on record, and they were almost all between June and November. Plus, it seems like these hurricanes are more powerful than ever. These storms rip apart homes with high winds and drive families onto their roofs with flooding.

Seismic activity seems to gradually be increasing. This makes earthquakes and tsunamis more common and more powerful than ever. These forces have leveled entire countries over the past few years and caused thousands of deaths.

While it may seem strange, both droughts and flooding have increased

simultaneously. The lack of rain we've seen in the West and Southwest have dried up crops and turned the area into a dustbowl. Dried out forests have become tinder for wildfires. On the other hand, heavy rains in other parts of the country have swallowed up entire towns. In addition, sudden rains in California have caused mudslides that have swallowed homes and caused entire streets to drop into the ocean.

Since I live in tornado alley, hearing the sirens sound has been a regular part of life. However, the number and strength of tornadoes has increased over the last few years as well. Now we're seeing these storms in places they've never been seen. They seem to pop up like popcorn across the weather map of the country.

An example of the severity of tornadoes can be seen in Joplin, MO. This 2011 storm came in with 200 mph winds leveling both the school and hospital. On that day, 161 people were killed and 1,150 people were injured.

I'm sure everybody has stories like these of how natural disasters have affected their loved ones. The point is that we need to learn from these sad stories. In most cases, people weren't fully prepared for these events.

With some simple but rigorous preparations of your home and family, you can be sure that these natural disasters cause as little damage as possible. In this article, I will break down the suggested plan of action for the worst of these disasters.



## HURRICANES/FLOODING

Believe it or not, hurricanes and flooding are disasters for which one truly can prepare. People in hurricane and flood zones know that they live in areas that are at risk. In addition, these storms take days to develop. You can see them coming from hundreds of miles away. However, thousands of people are caught unprepared every time one of these events takes place. After every flood, you see people throwing out ruined furniture. Every time there is a hurricane, you see people stuck on their roofs begging to be rescued. Here are the steps you can take to prepare your household for hurricanes and flooding:

- 1. KNOW YOUR UTILITIES** – One of the biggest issues with any type of flooding is the damage to utility lines. If you know flooding is going to be an issue, shut down your power and gas. You need to know where these cutoffs are located in order to do this. Furthermore, you should have a family meeting to be sure everybody knows how to shut down your utilities.
- 2. HAVE A WAY OUT** – I recently read a story of an elderly couple that stayed in their home during Katrina. They ended up forced into the attic because of high waters below. They had no way out of their home as the waters continued to rise. Thankfully they were able to break open a vent and escape, but this scenario should never happen. You should always have a rescue axe or some other tool to bust out of your home.
- 3. PREPARE LOWER LEVELS** – Basements and ground level floors are the first to be swallowed up by flooding. Be prepared to move furniture or any valuables off of these floors if at all possible.
- 4. PROTECT WINDOWS AND DOORS** – For hurricanes you should always have plywood or particle board on hand to board up all of the windows and most of the doors. Of course, always leave yourself a way out of the house, preferably on high ground.
- 5. CONSIDER THE YARD** – Many people have furniture, grills, and toys that are left on patios and in the yard. Try to limit the value of these items, and immediately move them inside when a storm is coming.
- 6. HAVE A PLAN TO GET OUT** – I cannot emphasize this enough. If a hurricane or flooding is headed your way, you should have several days to prepare. Most people will wait for an evacuation order before leaving their home. Don't make this mistake. By this time, highways are jammed up and gas stations are dry. Have a backup location outside of the flood zone and get there before everybody else starts to panic.






## TORNADOS

Unfortunately, tornados are not quite as cut and dry. Normally you only have a few minutes of notice. However, there are preparations that can be made for this scenario. Here are the preparations you can make for tornados:

- 1. IDENTIFY A SAFE ZONE** – In this case, “safe” is a relative word. However, in any home there are rooms that are safer than others. A basement or root cellar is always going to be the best location. Moving underground has saved many people’s lives. If this isn’t an option, get to an interior bathroom. The piping in the walls and lack of windows make it your second best option.
- 2. IF YOU LIVE IN A TRAILER, HAVE A PLAN** – Trailers are death traps in tornados. If you live in a trailer, plan to have a solid structure close to your home in the event of a tornado.
- 3. WATCH THE WINDOWS** – In most cases, you’ll not have enough time to board up windows. That being said, you do need to be aware of the glass. Stay far away from windows and cover them from the inside if possible.
- 4. DISCUSS A PLAN WITH YOUR FAMILY** – The most important thing with tornados is knowing what action to take. Be sure your family knows to listen for tornado sirens, listen to weather radios, and watch the weather on TV. Ensure everybody in the family knows what room to go in. Discuss duck and cover using items like cushions and mattresses to protect from debris.
- 5. KNOW YOUR UTILITIES** – As with flooding, damaged gas and electric lines can be a huge issue after a tornado. If the home is damaged and everybody is unharmed, your next job should be to shut down the utilities.





## EARTHQUAKES

Seismic activity can't be predicted like weather. Therefore, you have zero warning during an earthquake. All of the work must be done in advance.

- 1. SECURE YOUR FURNITURE** — One of the most important preparations you can make for earthquakes is to prevent falling furniture. All tall items such as bookshelves and wardrobes should be anchored to the wall. You may also want to secure glass covered pictures on the wall and avoid having too many items on high shelves. Falling debris is one of the biggest risks of an earthquake.
- 2. HAVE A PLAN** — In the case of an earthquake, your plan of action is more important than most other scenarios. Discuss with your family how to drop, secure, and cover. Have them avoid windows, hold onto something solid, and get on the ground without trying to walk anywhere.
- 3. HAVE SUPPLIES** — There is a good chance that you could be trapped in your home after an earthquake. You'll need plenty of water, food, blankets, and flashlights along with a first aid kit.
- 4. METHOD OF COMMUNICATION** — There has to be a way to reach emergency services or family in the event that you're trapped. This could just be cell phones but having a backup such as a radio is a good idea.
- 5. UTILITIES** — Again, know how to shut off the electricity and gas.





## LANDSLIDES

These nasty events can be caused by a variety of different catalysts, but they all are related to ground structure. The best thing to do to avoid a landslide is do your research before you buy or rent a home. You can then avoid the issue altogether. If you're already living in a landslide zone, here are a few preparations you can make:

- 1. CONSIDER YOUR LAND** — To help prevent landslides, you can make modifications to your yard. Be sure to have some sort of ground cover planted on any slopes. Having trees and a thick lawn can help as well. You may also want to use retaining or diversion walls to protect your home and keep the earth in place.
- 2. MODIFY THE HOME** — There are modifications that can be made to your home to make it more resistant to landslides. Flexible fittings for utilities is just one example. See a contractor for more options.
- 3. HAVE A PLAN** — You'll need to treat a mudslide like an earthquake. When you feel the ground rumbling, get down, secure, and take cover. Stay away from glass and possible falling debris. Shut off utilities, and have a way to call for help.

## DIGGING DEEPER

The type of preparation you need to make for tornados is vastly different than what you need to do to get ready for potential flooding. The information provided above will give you some quick suggestions for basic survival, but it us by no means conclusive.

In the next few sections, we will dig deeper, taking a closer look at lifesaving tips for each natural disaster. In addition, we will cover common myths and misunderstandings that can cause more harm than good.



# PREPARING FOR HURRICANE SEASON

By: Chris Weatherman

**Y**ou're in the prime strike zone for a hurricane if your home is anywhere on the gulf or east coasts. That includes millions of people. I happen to be one of those people as I live in Florida and have dealt with hurricanes all my life. As a result, I have a pretty good grasp on what needs done to get ready.

One of the worst aspects of a hurricane, to me at least, are the days or even weeks leading up to them. With the advance of weather satellites we can see a storm when it leaves the coast of Africa and know almost immediately if it will develop into something major. Last year's onslaught by

Irma is a prime example of what I'm talking about.

For two weeks we were told that it was definitely going to make landfall in Florida. Then we were told that it was definitely going to the east and would miss the state entirely. All these predictions, corrections, and counter predictions caused massive confusion for people. They were lulled into a false sense of security and many failed to prepare until it was too late as a result.

There is a simple solution to this problem, just stay prepared! If you're in the strike zone of a potential hurricane, have the

basic supplies on hand from June first until the end of November. The majority of these supplies are things you'll use every day anyway, so it's not really a burden to have extra on hand. You can simply use the supplies throughout the rest of the year should no storm come through.

This is also a good way to rotate your stocks. Batteries will go bad. Water that's in milk jug style containers can leak as the plastic breaks down. Gas stored in cans will also go bad. Treating it will buy you some time but it will ultimately break down. By using these items up and replacing them, you'll always have fresh supplies on hand.



## PREPARING YOUR SUPPLIES

There are certain items that seem to vanish first whenever a storm is predicted. A couple of these are curious if not humorous. I've often joked that there must be a lot of french toast being eaten during a storm because bread and milk go quickly. Bottled water is another item that flies off store shelves. Last year when a storm was being predicted, some people were lulled into a false sense of security by the changing predictions and didn't stock up. I heard a woman in a grocery store worried about not having any bottled water. She had gone from store to store looking for water without success and was near tears. Water is one of the most important items we need to have and it's also the easiest to store. I'm constantly amazed at people rushing to the stores to buy water. We are fortunate in the US to have some of the safest tap water in the world. You may not like drinking it but it won't cause any health damages. Since storing water is simple, fill every container you have.

The WaterBob is a convenient way to store a large amount of water quickly. You simply place it in your tub and fill it. Using this inexpensive item, you can easily store up to a hundred gallons of safe drinking water.

Another option is to reuse two-liter soda bottles. Two-liter bottles work better than gallon milk jugs. The milk jug will break down over time and leak. The plastic the two-liter is made from lasts years longer and will provide a safe source of drinking water.

Another tip for your reused jugs is to fill them with water and stick them in the freezer. This will aid in keeping your food colder for a longer period of time and will also provide additional drinking water as it melts. The more frozen mass there is in the freezer, the better it functions. It will help those intermittent runs of the generator do a better job at keeping your freezer cold.

Water is one of the most important commodities after a disaster and it's also the easiest to store. Plan ahead and have containers on hand to fill with water. Save yourself the hassle and expense of having to run out and buy bottled water. Worse yet, needing to buy water only to find it all sold out.

Having quick and easy to prepare food on hand is another necessity. Sandwiches are great for the start of a crisis, but you'll need shelf stable food for after it passes. Canned products are easy to store and prepare.

Worst case, most of it can be eaten directly from the can without heating. Though I recommend heating anything you'll eat from a can.

Freeze dried food is another item that will store for a very long time. It takes a little more time to prepare, but you don't have to worry about it going bad on the shelf. Don't need to spend money on expensive long-term storage food. Just keep in mind the things your family already eats and store accordingly. Be prepared to feed yourself for at least a week and preferably three. The recovery from a disaster could easily keep you isolated for up to a week.

When considering our food storage, we need to think of a way to cook it. Most of the items you store will simply need to be reheated or have hot water added. This is good as it means nearly any cooking method will work. A simple camp stove would be enough to keep you and your family fed. You can upgrade to something like a Camp Chef camp stove that has an oven. It runs on five pound propane canisters or you can get an adapter that will run on twenty-five pound bottles. Even your barbecue grill could fill this role if you've stored enough charcoal. Be sure to store enough fuel to last one to three weeks for whatever cooking method you decide on.





## PREPARING YOUR HOUSE

If you're expecting to get high winds it may be a good idea to cover your windows. I use pieces of plywood with a small vision hole cut through it to give a little view of the outside. These can be numbered and reused year after year. It's even better if you can have traditional shutters installed. Just have a way to protect those openings. Once wind gets into the house it can cause the roof to blow off.

Have other materials on hand in case there is a breach to your home. Rolls of heavy plastic and roofing nails would be a good addition to a response kit. As well as duct tape. Add some N-95 masks to protect your respiratory system, especially when cleaning up. Heavy gloves and good boots

with a steel shank would also be good. There could be a number of nails in places you wouldn't expect to find one. Have some boots designed to take a hit from debris could very well save your leg.

It would be a really good idea to store some gas whether you have a generator or not. As we all know from previous experience, gas is one of the very first things to run out. People panic and rush to the station days ahead of any storm to fill their cars. This causes a strain on supply. A couple days later the same thing happens again when the new path comes out. Then we start to see stations with no fuel.

Have a couple cans on hand for your emergency fuel. You'll have enough fuel to fill your car if stations run out or

simply cannot open. This could mean the difference of being able to self-rescue or simply get out of the impacted area.

If you're going to be running a generator, then do some math. Determine how many hours your machine will run under load on a tank of fuel. Then determine how many hours a day you're going to run your generator. Plan to be able to do this for ten days and you'll know how much to store.

It's always tempting to run the generator full time. We all want to be comfortable, but we have to evaluate our needs during the time of crisis. Run the generator enough to keep the fridge and freezer cool. To charge the phones. Get some laundry done, fill water jugs, whatever needs done. Get the most out of the run time. You can even get your hot water heater warmed up and get in a shower.





## PREPARING YOUR TOOLS

The next category of items to get for storm preparation are tools. Chainsaws, pry bars, come alongs, and the usual hand tools should all be readily accessible. Make sure you have oil for mixing your two-stroke fuel so you don't have to go looking for it. I would keep a spare chain and bar for the chainsaw on hand as well. Also have plenty of bar oil stored up. You will be relying on this machine to help you get things cleaned up so treat it accordingly.

I mentioned having plastic on hand earlier. This is very important should you suffer a breach of your home. Most insurance companies require you to make emergency repairs to mitigate damage. Have plastic, tarps, roofing nails, and the like on hand

that will allow you to do just that. Not to mention it may allow you to remain in your home rather than have to leave.

If you have natural gas service I highly recommend having a valve tool on hand. As a storm approaches it may be in your best interest to turn off the gas service just in case there is a rupture in the line. Going around and relighting pilot lights is far less of a pain than watching your home go up in flames.

Lighting is another thing to consider. The storms always seem to move through at night. If it is during the day, it can be so dark out you can't really see in the house. There are so many quality LED lanterns out there that I wouldn't even bother with candles. They introduce the possibility of fire and

there's no sense in adding to an already stressful situation. Be sure to stock plenty of batteries for whatever light source you choose. Don't be cheap, lay them in deep. You will use them and it sure beats sitting in the dark.

Another necessary item that I'd like to mention is to make certain to have a AM/FM radio. So many people overlook this simple device that can keep you informed. During hurricanes cell towers can come down. The internet can be interrupted. Most radio stations will still be on the air. They'll allow you to keep abreast of what's going on and alert to any tornados that may be approaching your area. In the aftermath it can also inform you of where resources are available.

## CONCLUSION

*June is quickly approaching so get your storm preps in order now. You don't want to be one of those people standing in a grocery store lamenting the empty shelves where bottled water once sat. The last couple of years was an eye opener for a lot people. We hadn't had a storm in several years leading up to it. Use this as motivation to not become complacent. Remember that if you stay ready, you don't have to get ready.*





# SURVIVING NATURAL DISASTERS:

## TORNADOES

By: Ben Team

**T**here are few things more terrifying than an approaching tornado. The size of them is certainly intimidating enough, but the strong winds they create are responsible for most of the destruction and injuries. Despite the fear they inspire, you aren't helpless when faced with a tornado. Here are several tactics and strategies to help give you the best chance of living through a tornado to tell your tale afterwards.





# FIVE STEPS TO SAVE YOUR LIFE

Tornadoes vary significantly in terms of size, strength, and the amount of destruction they cause. However, the likely dangers are pretty consistent from one tornado to the next. This means that while you'll have to adapt these steps to suit your situation, the steps to protect yourself will remain the same in the vast majority of cases.

## 1. TAKE WATCHES AND WARNINGS SERIOUSLY.

Although tornadoes can occur without any warning, the National Weather Service has become quite good at predicting the places in which tornadoes are likely and getting the word out to the public. Officials categorize the tornado threat in one of two ways:

- Tornado watches are issued when the conditions that are conducive to tornado formation occur. No tornado has yet been spotted but that doesn't mean the storm hasn't already produced one or more. They just may not have been reported yet. Sometimes tornadoes are only documented to have occurred after officials inspect the damage.
- Tornado warnings are issued once a tornado has been visually identified. In some cases more than one tornado may have been identified.

If a tornado watch is issued, grab your Bug Out Bag (BOB) plus an emergency weather radio if you don't normally keep one in your pack. Monitor the weather carefully and prepare to act quickly if the watch is upgraded to a tornado warning. In the case of a tornado warning, you must take shelter immediately. Don't try to predict the path of the approaching tornado or second guess the authorities. It's much better to be alive and inconvenienced than the alternative.

## 2. SEEK THE BEST SHELTER POSSIBLE.

The best way to survive a tornado is by taking shelter in a protective location. However, you'll have to seek out different types of shelter depending on your current circumstances.

- If you're indoors, seek out the lowest interior most room in the structure. A bathroom, basement, or storage closet is ideal. A centrally located bedroom or hallway will also work in a pinch.
- If you're trapped outdoors, try to find the lowest area possible and preferably under something sturdy. Unfortunately, there aren't always sturdy structures located near the road. In such cases, you'll want to dive into a ditch or culvert and hope for the best.
- If you're in your vehicle, you'll have to make a split second decision on whether to leave the vehicle. It will usually be wisest to leave your car and seek shelter in a permanent structure. If the tornado is a significant distance away and there is no shelter in the immediate area, you may be better served by avoiding the tornado's path entirely.

## 3. PROTECT YOURSELF FROM FLYING DEBRIS.

The biggest danger in a tornado isn't necessarily the winds, it's the debris it picks up and hurls toward you at high speeds. Cover your head, face, and neck from flying objects once you've reached the best shelter.

Pillows, couch cushions, and blankets are ideal objects to wrap around yourself at home. If the tornado strikes when you're in your car or on foot, you probably won't have these objects on hand. In such cases, you'll need to use the best protective items available, such as a backpack or coat. If you don't have anything else, just cover the head and face with your arms.

## 4. FLEE AT A 90-DEGREE ANGLE TO THE TORNADO'S PATH.

If you're in your car and it's determined that the safest idea is to flee the tornado, do so in the most effective manner possible. Many people are tempted to try to outrun the tornado by fleeing in the opposite direction. However, tornadoes can tear across the landscape at exceptionally high speeds so this is rarely a good idea.

Instead you want to side-step the tornado and simply move out of its way. The best way to do this is by fleeing at a 90-degree angle from the tornado's path. In other words, if the tornado is traveling from north to south, you'll want to flee to the east or west. Just be sure to keep an eye on the tornado while traveling, as they can change directions suddenly.

## 5. WATCH OUT FOR TORNADO CAUSED HAZARDS.

While the greatest danger presented by tornadoes is clearly the several hundred mile per hour winds, plenty of hazards will remain long after the tornado has come and gone. This includes things like downed power lines, ruptured fuel tanks, and sharp debris scattered across the ground. Tornadoes may even start fires or weaken homes, bridges, and buildings.

Use caution when taking stock of the situation after the tornado has passed. Don't crawl under anything heavy, be sure to watch where you step, and give downed power lines a wide berth. It's also wise to avoid walking through standing water that often occurs when pipes burst in the tornado as it may obscure dangers beneath the surface.



## TORNADO SURVIVAL MYTHS AND MISUNDERSTANDINGS

Unfortunately, myths about the best ways to survive a tornado abound. While some of these myths may not necessarily decrease your chances of surviving, they'll still subject you to greater risks. Four particularly pervasive tornado myths are detailed below.

### OPENING WINDOWS

Historically, people often thought that the difference in pressure between a tornado and a home or building was what caused many to lose their roofs. People would attempt to open their windows when a tornado threatened to help equalize the pressure differences between the two.

It's true that tornadoes generally have much lower pressures than the air in your home. However, research later showed that homes don't lose their roofs because of the pressure difference. They lose their roofs because strong winds enter the homes. This means that opening windows will actually increase the chances that your home will suffer significant damage.

Additionally, the time spent running around your house opening windows will leave you exposed to more dangers. You're better off spending this time in a sheltered space.

### TAKING SHELTER UNDER BRIDGES

On the one hand, a bridge seems like it would provide you with a reasonable amount of protection in a tornado. In actuality, the area beneath a bridge is a very dangerous place to take shelter. You will need to climb up above ground level to reach the most protected portion under the bridge. In general, the higher above ground you go, the stronger the winds are.

Additionally, bridges and overpasses function somewhat like wind tunnels. As the tornado's winds reach the bridge, they are forced to fit through a restricted space. This causes the winds to accelerate, sometimes dramatically so. This raises the chances that you'll be thrown clear of the bridge, leaving you exposed anyway. There is also a lot of potentially dangerous debris under many bridges that can be picked up and carried by the winds.

### THE SOUTHWEST CORNER OF A BUILDING IS THE SAFEST PLACE TO SEEK SHELTER

It's true that most tornadoes trace a general track from the southwest to the northeast. This would seem to suggest that you're less likely to be hit by flying debris on the southwest side of a building or house than other places. However, there are a number of problems with this notion.

For starters, tornadoes may generally move from southwest to northeast but they dance about as they move. This means at any time and place, the tornado may actually be moving in any direction. Secondly, tornadoes typically create swirling wind patterns that renders this strategy ineffective anyway.



### TORNADOES DON'T OCCUR IN THE WINTER

It's true that tornadoes are most common during the warm parts of the year, particularly the spring. They aren't especially common during cool weather. However, tornadoes can and do occur in the winter. Especially in some locations like the Southeastern United States. Because the wind patterns that occur in the winter can cause tornadoes to travel much more quickly, they typically provide people with less time to react and take shelter. Because they travel faster and people have a false sense of security during the winter, these cool weather tornadoes are especially dangerous.

***Try to implement the tips listed above if you live in a region that suffers from regular tornadoes. Just remember that intelligence and sound decision making are your two greatest assets. Try to remain calm and think deliberately if you ever find yourself staring at an oncoming tornado.***





# SURVIVING NATURAL DISASTERS:

## MUD SLIDES By: Ben Team

**M**udslides are an underrated danger as they can occur in just about any place with relatively little warning. In fact, they often occur following very brief but heavy downpours. This makes them difficult to predict and dangerous to any and all of those in their path.

There are a number of things you can do to help keep your family safe and give them the best chances of escaping the event unscathed. It's important to do several of these things before a mudslide occurs. But there are also things you can do once they're underway and in the resulting aftermath.



## PREPARING FOR MUDSLIDES

Some of the most important and helpful things to do before a mudslide occurs are detailed below:

### ASSESS THE AREA AROUND YOUR HOME

One of the most effective things you can do to protect yourself from mudslides is to avoid the areas that have topographies conducive to their formation. If you can't avoid these spots, the next best thing is to identify potential problem spots to better monitor them during wet weather.

Some of the signs that may indicate an area is likely to experience mudslides include:

- Steep slopes, even if they aren't very tall, are especially likely to experience mudslides.
- Areas surrounding runoff channels whether manmade or naturally occurring. These can quickly become unstable if the flowing water undercuts or overruns the boundaries of the channel.
- Areas that are already experiencing erosion are often unstable and likely to shift suddenly following heavy downpours.
- Clear-cut areas where a majority of the trees have been removed are often vulnerable to mudslides. This is because the soil retaining plants are gone.

It's also wise to have a surveyor inspect your property and determine the relative mudslide danger. He or she may be able to spot potential hazards or routes by which the flowing mud may travel that you wouldn't notice.

### KEEP AN EYE ON YOUR SURROUNDINGS WHILE TRAVELING

Mudslides don't only occur when you're at home. They can also occur when you're traveling. There's not a whole lot of control of your fate is using some form of public transportation. If you're driving or bicycling there may be ways to mitigate the danger slightly. Try to stay aware of your surroundings, watch out for threatening landscapes, and have an emergency evasion plan when traveling in potentially dangerous areas.

### CONSTRUCT RETAINING WALLS IN LIKELY MUDSLIDE ZONES

A simple retaining wall may help to protect your home and save you thousands of dollars in clean up costs. They aren't terribly difficult or expensive to build. You aren't going to be able to build a wall that will protect your home from half a mountainside's worth of sediment, but they'll help against more modest mudslides.

### CONSIDER PLANTING DENSE PATCHES OF TREES IN MUDSLIDE ZONES

Trees can form a bit of a natural barrier to mud. They won't block all of the flowing mud and water in the way that retaining walls do, but they can divert some. They work well if you're in an area that is only likely to experience a relatively weak or small mudslide.

Conversely, trees may even represent additional hazards in areas prone to huge or exceptionally powerful mudslides. So it's important to weigh the relative risks and rewards. If you do believe trees will help, be sure to plant them far enough away from your home that they won't topple over onto it if ripped from the ground.

### ALWAYS HAVE A BUG OUT BAG PACKED

Some mudslides may force an evacuation, while others may trap you inside your home. In either case, a bug out bag packed with basic survival supplies will prove invaluable. Your BOB will need to contain things like water, food, first-aid supplies, and basic survival tools.

### WATCH OUT FOR CHANGES IN THE TERRAIN

You can often spot clues that indicate a mudslide is imminent by remaining observant of the terrain. Any significant changes such as the development of large cracks or altered water flow patterns may indicate that the conditions are ripe for a mudslide.





## STAYING ALIVE DURING A MUDSLIDE

Once the mud has started racing down toward your house, the time for preparation is over. You must act, and do so quickly. Some of the most important steps to take include:

### GET OUT OF DODGE IF POSSIBLE

Many mudslides are visible from a considerable distance. This may give you the time needed to flee the area and avoid the oncoming torrent entirely. Beware that mudslides rarely happen in isolation. Remain observant of your surroundings so you can avoid running right into other dangers.

### STAY PUT IF YOU LACK THE TIME TO ESCAPE

It's always wise to try to get out of the way of oncoming mud and water but you must have enough time to do so. Therefore, it's usually better to stay put if you're in a sturdy, sheltered location and impact is imminent.

### IF YOU'RE CAUGHT OUTDOORS MOVE PERPENDICULARLY TO THE FLOW

Don't try to outrun a mudslide, it won't happen. Instead try to give yourself the best chance of surviving by moving at a 90-degree angle to the direction of water flow. You may not escape the torrent altogether, but at the very least you'll be moving from areas with stronger flow to those with weaker flow.

### GO UPSTAIRS IF POSSIBLE

Generally speaking, it's better if you can get higher up. Head upstairs if your home has multiple stories, but you may have to settle for an attic if you have a single story home. Just be sure to store a fire ax in the attic to allow you to escape if need be. This is a good general practice, mudslides notwithstanding.

### TAKE COVER BEHIND A STURDY OBJECT

As the mudslide begins slamming into your house, get behind something that will serve as a shield. There will be plenty of rocks, sticks, and other debris riding along in the water. A table is a great option as are desks, couches, or other items in a pinch. Just try to avoid taking shelter behind objects that may be too heavy to lift in case you find yourself underneath them. Be sure to hold on for dear life.

### TRY TO KEEP ONE ARM EXTENDED UPWARD IF CAUGHT IN THE FLOW

It can be difficult to distinguish up from down when you're buried so borrow a technique that snowboarders and skiers use when caught in an avalanche. Hold one arm straight up in the air. The mud may cause your arm to move away from the twelve o'clock position, but you'll still be able to determine the general direction of fresh air and safety.

### FORM AN AIR POCKET IF YOU BECOME TRAPPED

If you find yourself buried in the mud, try to create a small air pocket around your face in order to breathe. It's also a good idea to put a hand over your mouth and nose if you're about to be buried. The space provided by your hand may allow better breathing than you otherwise would have.





## ONCE THE MUDSLIDE IS OVER

After the mud has stopped flowing, you'll need to assess the situation and snap into action. Additional mudslides may be imminent, so you'll need to get yourself and any others to safety:

### ASSESS YOURSELF FOR INJURIES

Many people fail to notice injuries, even relatively traumatic injuries, during high-intensity situations. Take a moment to check yourself out. Tend to any serious injuries you have, such as heavy bleeding, before moving on to the next steps.



### LOOK FOR OTHERS IF POSSIBLE

If you emerge from the mudslide unscathed, or at least not seriously injured, do your best to help locate other survivors. The difference between survival and suffocation is often a matter of minutes so prompt action is crucial. If you find a trapped person, work to clear their face first so they can resume breathing.

### CHECK FOR INSTRUCTIONS FROM LOCAL AUTHORITIES

Tune in to a local weather authority using your cell phone, emergency radio, or TV and heed the advice given. Authorities may recommend staying put if the roads are impassable or other hazards threaten. They may also recommend evacuating if it's prudent to do so.

***Mudslides are certainly one of the most dangerous natural disasters. They're likely to become more and more frequent due to all the developed land. The best way to avoid mudslides is by purchasing a home that isn't located near a hillside but this obviously isn't always possible. A little preparation can improve your chances of surviving a mudslide, when and if it occurs.***



# SURVIVING NATURAL DISASTERS:

## WILDFIRES

By: Ben Team

**W**ildfires are a natural force that shapes many wild ecosystems. While wildfires are important for the world's flora and fauna, they obviously represent a serious threat to those caught in their path. Fortunately, there are a few things you can do to help protect your property and keep your family safe from wildfires. *Some of the most important strategies and tactics include the following pages:*



## CONSULT WITH YOUR LOCAL FIRE DEPARTMENT

It's always wise to consult with local experts and authorities when preparing to deal with any type of emergency situation. This means chatting with your local fire department in the case of wildfires. Many fire departments in fire prone regions even maintain websites or produce literature summarizing their advice. This makes it even easier to benefit from their knowledge and expertise.

## PREPARE YOUR HOME AND PROPERTY

There are a variety of things you can do to help protect your home and property from burning when wildfires threaten. Most should be carried out before the beginning of wildfire season, which usually peaks in the summer. A few can be completed in the days immediately preceding the arrival of the fire.



### SOME OF THE MOST HELPFUL TACTICS INCLUDE:

One of the most effective things you can do to protect yourself from mudslides is to avoid the areas that have topographies conducive to their formation. If you can't avoid these spots, the next best thing is to identify potential problem spots to better monitor them during wet weather.

- **KEEP YOUR LAWN WATERED.** This can admittedly be difficult in many fire-prone regions as these places are often plagued by droughts. Often when there is a drought it forces local officials to enact water restrictions. However, it's worth investigating water efficient irrigation strategies like drip irrigation systems. You may also want to collect and use rainwater.
- **KEEP YOUR GUTTERS CLEAN.** Dead leaves often accumulate in rain gutters and all it takes is one wayward ember to cause them to burst into flames. This can cause your roof to catch fire, which will often lead to the complete loss of the house.
- **CLEAN OUT THE AREAS BENEATH PORCHES AND DECKS.** Porches and decks often become choked with dead leaves and vegetation too, which may ignite as the fire creeps closer. If possible, consider enclosing these areas with latticework or screen to help prevent vegetation and debris from accumulating.
- **MOVE ALL FLAMMABLE MATERIALS AWAY FROM YOUR HOME.** This includes things like wood piles and wicker furniture. Don't forget about propane tanks, gas grills, and similar items too. Additionally, avoid mulching flower beds adjacent to your home if you live in a fire prone area. Make sure all flammable materials are at least 30 feet but preferably 50 feet away from your home.
- **PLANT NATIVE FIRE-RESISTANT PLANTS AND TREES NEAR YOUR HOME.** Many plants and trees have evolved one or more adaptations which help protect them from fires. Capitalize on Mother Nature's efforts by utilizing these plants in your landscape and avoiding those species which are highly flammable.
- **RAISE THE CROWNS OF YOUR TREES.** Wildfires traveling across the ground can easily jump up into trees with low hanging branches. Accordingly, you'll want to remove all of the branches on the trees near your home that aren't at least 10 feet off the ground.
- **KEEP THE TREES NEAR YOUR HOME PRUNED AWAY FROM THE ROOF.** Fires that climb into the trees can quickly jump over to your roof via overhanging branches. Make sure that you trim back any branches near the roofline. Usually, you'll want the branches to be at least 10 feet away from your home.
- **COVER ALL VENTS AND ATTIC WINDOWS TO PREVENT EMBERS FROM FLOATING INTO YOUR HOME.** One-eighth inch metal cloth is the best material to use as it will still allow air to pass through the barrier while blocking embers and other debris. Make sure that you carefully inspect your home to ensure that all of the vents, windows, and openings are covered as some may be tucked away in hard to see locations.



## COMPLY WITH EVACUATION ORDERS

Part of the challenge with wildfires is that they can cut off escape routes. Some may even spread and eventually encircle entire areas leaving no safe route for local residents to use. Therefore, it's imperative that you evacuate immediately whenever instructed to do so by local authorities.

Fortunately, wildfires often provide some advance warning of their approach and many travel in somewhat predictable ways. It's important to stay informed to help anticipate imminent evacuation orders. This will give you more time to prepare your home and family.

## ESTABLISH AN ESCAPE PLAN FOR YOUR FAMILY

Evacuation orders or flare-ups often occur when you're separated from your spouse or children, forcing everyone to act independently. Design an emergency plan for your family if you live in an area that is susceptible to wildfires.

Identify a central rendezvous point that is easy to reach from work, home, and school. Also make sure it's located outside the path that fires are most likely to threaten. You'll also want to make sure that every member of your family knows two different ways to reach this point. Once you've designed the plan, schedule a few practice runs to help unveil as many unforeseen problems as possible. Ensure that everyone, especially young children, will feel confident following the plan in an emergency.



## PROTECT YOUR HOME AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE

Always prioritize your family's safety above material items. If your family is ready to hit the road and there's still time, you can employ a few tips and tricks to help limit the damage possible.

- **FILL YOUR POOL AND ANY OTHER WATER HOLDING CONTAINERS WITH WATER.** The water may be useful for wetting down flammable items. Water will also help cool and dampen the immediate area as it evaporates. These areas can also serve as depositories for important items. Place the items in a few thick garbage bags and sink them to the bottom.
- **CLOSE UP THE HOUSE AND REMOVE FLAMMABLE WINDOW COVERINGS.** Make sure that every door and window in your home is shut and locked to help prevent embers from drifting in. Also remove curtains or blinds that are often quite flammable and ignite very easily.
- **TURN OFF THE GAS, AIR-CONDITIONER, AND ATTIC FAN.** Gas is obviously dangerous in the case of a fire, so you'll want to shut off the supply to your house as soon as fires threaten. Turning off the fan or air conditioning unit will help reduce the amount of smoke that wafts into your home and will decrease the odds that an ember will be sucked into the system.

## DURING THE EVACUATION

Once on the road, you'll need to use great care as visibility may be poor and the roads will likely be choked with many other people attempting to flee the fire. Make sure that you follow the evacuation route identified by local authorities as some of the local roads may be closed or impassable.

Make sure to keep your headlights on so that other motorists have a better chance of seeing you. Close all of the windows and vents on the car to limit the amount of smoke your family is breathing in. If the temperatures inside the car soar, use the air conditioner set on recirculation mode.

If you become trapped in your car and unable to travel further, try to park in the lowest spot possible then lie on the floor. Cover up with blankets, sleeping bags, or anything else you may have and turn your car's engine off. However, you'll want to leave the lights or hazard blinkers on to help prevent collisions.



## WILDFIRE IN THE WILDERNESS

Wildfires are frightening enough when you're home or in your vehicle, but they can be downright terrifying when they threaten those traveling through natural habitats. You'll be surrounded by tons of flammable materials and unlikely to find a fire-proof shelter. Move fast to have any hope of escaping the fire's path.

Definitely try to learn as much as you can about the fire and its predicted path before heading in any particular direction. You don't want to start walking the wrong way, thereby putting yourself in an even tougher position. Start traveling with a purpose once you've identified the quickest route to safety.

If you're trapped by an encircling fire, there's only two realistic options. Try to seek shelter in a nearby creek, river, or lake. If there isn't one nearby, you'll need to find the lowest and best shielded ground possible. Dig into the ground and hope that the fire goes over you. Once you're as low as possible, try to cover yourself with a blanket or anything else that's available.

## CONCLUSION

Wildfires strike an instinctual fear in people. However, they usually come with some warning. Prepare your home, family, and an emergency plan now. Don't panic when a warning is given from authorities. Use your common sense to get out of the path. Place the priority on getting your family away from the wildfire rather than on protecting your material objects.



# SURVIVING NATURAL DISASTERS:

## EARTHQUAKES

By: Ben Team

It's hard to imagine something more profoundly frightening than the earth beneath your feet shaking hard enough to topple buildings and tear up the ground. This threat is omnipresent for people living in fault zones and other earthquake prone regions. Most of the United States is at some risk of earthquakes, although they're typically most common along the west coast.

While earthquakes are terrifying to experience, there are a number of steps you can take to improve your odds of surviving the ordeal. You'll need to do some of these things before the quake strikes, but others will be helpful during or immediately after it occurs.



## THINGS TO DO BEFORE AN EARTHQUAKE STRIKES

Make time to perform the following steps now before an earthquake is shaking your house by the foundation.

### Secure Loose Items in Your Home

Framed photos, paintings, and similar items can fall off the walls potentially injuring anyone beneath them. The glass may even shatter, which can also lead to injuries. You'll want to make sure these items are all securely attached to the wall rather than just suspended by picture hooks or similar hardware. Make sure that china sets, trophies, and heavy knickknacks are similarly secured.

It's also a good idea to secure things like washing machines and water heaters. This will help prevent snapped water lines and flooded homes. Most home improvement stores sell kits for bolting appliances to the floor.

### STOCK WATER AND FOOD

Earthquakes can tear apart roads, bend railroad tracks, and create other impediments that may disrupt supply routes. Accordingly, you may find yourself without food or water for several days. Make sure to choose non-perishable foods that can be eaten as is in case you find yourself without power.

### PREPARE A BUG OUT BAG

It's also wise to prepare a Bug Out Bag (BOB) in addition to stocking food and water. Your BOB should contain all of the items you may need when trying to flee an earthquake stricken area. You can read about the things to include in your BOB [here](#). The basic necessities include extra clothing, valuable survival tools such as knives, multi tools, and flashlights, and first-aid supplies.

### CONSULT WITH A STRUCTURAL ENGINEER

Solicit a structural engineer's assistance in assessing your home's ability to survive an earthquake. While the strongest tremors can demolish even the largest buildings, there are a number of things you may be able to do to help fortify your home enough to survive weaker earthquakes. Newer homes are often better designed to handle earthquakes while old homes may need to be reinforced in several key ways.

### REPAIR ANY ELECTRICAL PROBLEMS

Damaged wires, broken electrical conditions, and other problems can start fires during and after earthquakes. They may also serve as the weak link in your electrical service and leave you without power unnecessarily. Nip these problems in the bud by having an electrician inspect the wires in your home before an earthquake strikes.





## DURING AN EARTHQUAKE

Take the following steps when you start to feel an earthquake rumbling to help prevent injuries or worse.

### **CRAWL INSTEAD OF WALKING**

Unless you happen to be hanging out in the most earthquake safe place in your home or work, you'll need to travel to such a location when it starts. Walking is often surprisingly difficult during serious earthquakes, so drop to your hands and knees to avoid falling.

### **SEEK OUT COVER**

Ideally you'll want to crawl under some type of protection as falling objects are one of the biggest dangers in an earthquake. For example, crawl under a table, bed, or desk that will help shield you from above. If you happen to be caught outside during an earthquake, look for protection in the form of overhanging riverbanks or cliff faces.

### **STAY IN PLACE IF VISIBILITY IS POOR**

If the earthquake occurs at night when you can't see very well most authorities recommend covering your head, face, and neck while staying put. This will prevent you from running into objects that you can't see, falling down stairs, or suffering other types of injuries.

### **AVOID WINDOWS**

If you're unable to reach a protected location, do your best to avoid windows. Falling objects or toppled trees may come crashing in through a window. This could send shards of glass or other hazards flying through the room. In general, you'll want to avoid exterior walls in favor of those on the inside of the structure whenever possible.

### **FORGET ABOUT DOORWAYS**

Contrary to the popular myth about seeking shelter in doorways during earthquakes, doing so is generally a mistake. Doorways don't provide very much protection from falling objects and you'll be unable to stand in strong quakes. This reduces the efficacy of the strategy even further. Plus a doorway inherently provides less protection than a wall does, so the entire concept is misguided.

### **STOP YOUR VEHICLE**

If an earthquake strikes while you're driving, stop as soon as it's safe to do so. Try to avoid stopping next to trees or other overhanging objects. Place the car in park or neutral with the parking brake on if driving a manual transmission and remain inside. Avoid crossing or traveling beneath bridges that may have sustained damage in the quake.





## AFTER AN EARTHQUAKE

Aftershocks may occur for several hours following an earthquake, so it's always important to remain cautious following earthquakes. However, there are a few things you'll want to start doing after the bulk of the shaking has stopped.

### ASSESS YOUR SITUATION

As soon as the shaking stops, locate the loved ones with you and ensure that they're safe. Then take a look around for any obvious dangers. Try to exit the building as quickly as possible if you see crumbling walls, sagging ceilings, or any other apparent structural defects. If you're outdoors then move to a wide open area to stay clear of falling trees or other objects.

### STAY PUT IF YOU'RE TRAPPED

Becoming trapped under a heavy object is one of the most frightening possibilities that can occur in an earthquake. Keep in mind that plenty of people have survived such ordeals so it's important to stay calm and avoid making your situation any worse. Don't struggle about as this may cause the item on top of you to shift. Try to avoid kicking up dust that may make it harder to see and breathe.

### CHECK FOR AND TREAT ANY INJURIES

Whether you've reached a safe place or determined that you're trapped, it's important to check for traumatic injuries. Don't move if you're having difficulty feeling your fingers or toes as this may indicate a neck or back injury. Apply pressure to any heavy bleeding and try to treat anyone injured for shock. This includes, among other things, elevating their legs and wrapping them in a blanket if possible.

### TRY TO SIGNAL FOR HELP IF YOU CAN'T ESCAPE

In most cases you can rest assured that emergency responders will begin searching for survivors soon after the shaking stops. Make things easier on would-be rescuers by advertising your location however you can. Obviously your cell phone is the ideal communication tool, so call or text for help if possible. You can also shout, bang on pipes or electrical conduit, or even blink a flashlight if there's one handy.

### FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTIONS OF AUTHORITIES

Once you're out of immediate danger, try to check the appropriate websites or broadcasts for instructions. Earthquakes can snap gas lines, water mains, or damage hazardous chemical plants. This may present new dangers that will alter your plans moving forward. For example, they may recommend you evacuate the area. Additionally, tsunamis are always a concern in coastal areas and you may need to head inland or seek high ground quickly.

### TOUCH BASE WITH LOVED ONES

If you're separated from any of your family members during an earthquake, do everything possible and prudent to contact them following the event. Note that cellphone networks may be down or otherwise inaccessible during these times, so you may have to rely on social media, landlines, or some other form of communication. Always establish two rendezvous points consisting of a primary location and a contingency location for such emergencies. This will serve as a plan of last resort if you're not able to contact each other in any other way.





## CONCLUSION

Earthquakes present several unique challenges when compared to other natural disasters. If you prepare properly and employ the tips listed above, you can improve your chances of surviving. With a little practice, you'll probably begin scanning for safe places everywhere without even thinking about it consciously. This may help give you an extra few seconds to get under something sturdy and survive an earthquake.







# SURVIVING NATURAL DISASTERS:

## FLOODS

By: Ben Team

A number of different events can turn your world upside down but few are as humbling as floods. Water can ruin all of your belongings and can also pack enough punch to knock down structures. A flood can leave the land looking like a war zone.



You can give yourself the best chance of surviving a flood by following the tips and suggestions detailed below:

## **1. RESEARCH YOUR RELATIVE FLOOD RISK BEFOREHAND**

Flash floods occur without much warning by definition. However, that doesn't mean they're entirely unpredictable. Floods tend to occur most often near the low-lying areas along rivers and lakes. The water will try to follow the path of least resistance and reach the lowest ground. This means that some locations are at a greater risk of floods than others.

Find out the relative risk of a flood at your home, office, or anywhere else you frequent by consulting flood maps. These maps help you understand the relative risk of a flood in your area. They also help to identify high ground to which you can retreat quickly if need be.

However, it's important to understand the way flood zones are characterized. Many areas are labeled with terms like "100-year flood-plain". This doesn't mean that a flood will only occur in this area once every 100 years. Rather it means that there is a 1% chance that the area will flood in any given year.

## **2. IDENTIFY A SAFE PLACE TO STAY IN THE EVENT OF A FLOOD**

If the flood waters are tearing toward your home or car, get to high ground quickly. Making it up to the nearest hill is the immediate priority. However, you may also need somewhere to stay for an extended period of time while the flood waters drain enough to be able to return home.

Don't count on local hotels to have any vacancies during flood events. You may get lucky but everyone else in your area will be seeking out similar accommodations so most hotels are likely to fill up quickly. Additionally, emergency personnel will also be pouring into the area and taking up even more rooms. Try to make plans to stay with a friend or relative during a flood. If this isn't possible, you may need to retreat to a designated emergency shelter.

## **3. HAVE A BUG OUT BAG PACKED AND READY**

You'll want to keep a Bug Out Bag (BOB) ready for any type of natural disaster or emergency situation, but it's especially important to do so in preparation for floods. In the event of a flood you'll need to get out of Dodge quickly. There won't be enough time to gather separate supplies. Often floods occur in areas that aren't even experiencing rain. The waters often originate miles upstream and seemingly come out of nowhere.

You shouldn't need to pack any special items for dealing with a flood. The items you'll most likely need such as fresh clothes, water purification tablets or equipment, food, etc., should be included in most BOB anyway. Remember that it's very important to waterproof your bag. At the very least be sure to waterproof any electronics or other delicate items contained in it as much as possible.





## 4. OBEY FLOOD WARNINGS IMMEDIATELY

Many people put themselves in a bad and potentially life-threatening situation by failing to follow the warnings issued by local authorities. Then they find themselves in need of rescue, which puts more people at risk and diverts resources from other places in which they may be helpful. This is particularly unfortunate when adequate warnings were issued.

Prepare yourself to hit the road within minutes of seeing a flood or flash flood warning. Don't try to second guess the recommendations of authorities or stick around to see if things will get bad. Once you realize that the flood warning is serious, it'll be too late to escape. Additionally, you'll want to try to avoid becoming stuck in traffic during a flood as this will complicate your escape significantly. So be ready to beat the crowd by leaving at once when authorities issue a warning or evacuation order.

## 5. SECURE YOUR HOME IF THERE'S ADEQUATE TIME TO DO SO SAFELY

If floodwaters are imminent, you should prioritize your family's safety above all else and evacuate. In some cases you'll have advance warning that a flood is likely. In such scenarios, you'll want to take the time to prepare your home and property to help mitigate the damage. Aside from the tangible and materialistic reasons for doing so, protecting your home will help you survive the days following the flood.

Bring any loose items like outdoor furniture inside so it doesn't get washed away or picked up by the water and hurled into your home's windows. Be sure to lock your doors and windows to help keep the rising waters at bay and discourage looters. Finally, you'll want to turn off your electricity to help prevent short-circuits and fires.

## 6. NEVER TRAVERSE FLOODED AREAS.

Whether you're traveling by car or foot, try to avoid areas covered in standing water. You never know what types of hazards are beneath the water. Don't risk a flat tire or broken ankle when you're trying to flee a flood. The flood waters are often swifter than expected and can knock you from your feet in less than a foot of water if the current is strong.

It's also important to realize that many people underestimate the depth of waters, especially when they're clouded by the sediment they've picked up. This represents obvious problems for those trying to escape on foot, but it can also be very dangerous for those traveling by car. It doesn't take very much water to float a car and leave your tumbling powerlessly in the water.





## 7. KEEP THE WATER OUT OF YOUR NOSE, MOUTH, EYES, AND EARS

Flood waters will pick up a variety of pollutants and pathogens as they flow across the land, many of which can be quite dangerous. While you'll always want to stay as dry as possible during a survival situation, this is obviously a significant challenge for those trying to escape floods. While you may not be able to keep your feet or legs dry, do your best to keep the flood waters out of the mouth and mucous membranes.

Gasoline, oil, pesticides, insecticides, and other chemicals can certainly make you very sick and that will complicate your efforts to reach safety. The biological threats in the water like bacteria, viruses, and other pathogens are likely the biggest threat to your health.

## 8. ONCE YOU'RE OUT OF HARM'S WAY, STAY THERE

People who have fled floods are often eager to return home to inspect the damage and start putting the pieces back together. However, you should always stay put until authorities have announced that it's safe to return. Floods are extended events, meaning that the water takes some time to drain from the area. You don't want to have a successful escape only to find yourself stranded because you returned home prematurely.

It's also important to realize that floods can occur in waves. They may end up dumping even more water in an area as lakes and rivers crest their banks upstream. This can occur hours or even days after the flood appears to have peaked.

## 9. USE CAUTION WHEN GOING BACK HOME

Just because the local authorities have granted permission for residents to return to their homes doesn't mean all of the dangers has passed. Flood waters can cause damage that isn't immediately apparent and you don't want to run into trouble once you return home.

For example, flood waters can undermine bridges, roads, and structural foundations creating the potential for collapse. Power lines may also be strewn about causing a huge electrocution hazard. Floods also displace local wildlife, including potentially hazardous animals such as snakes or alligators. Be sure to remain observant and avoid putting your hands or feet in places you can't see.

You'll also want to be careful to avoid breathing in any mold spores that have developed as your home and belongings sit in perpetually damp conditions. Use a breathing mask when checking out your house. If you have any suspicion that your home may be infested with mold, have it inspected as soon as possible.





## CONCLUSION

Floods are frightening events and given the damage they can cause, you're wise to treat them seriously. Do your best to remain calm if you see flowing waters headed your way. This will help prevent panic and give you the best chance of surviving the ordeal in one piece.







# MAKING THE CHOICE TO LEAVE YOUR HOME WHEN A STORM IS COMING

By: Travis Pike

**Y**ou can feel it coming. There have been warnings about it for days now. A storm is coming. Maybe it's a hurricane like the recent Irma and Harvey that demolished portions of Florida and Texas. We know when it's coming in the modern world and can usually know what it's going to do. No prediction is 100% but the warnings are there. How you react to warnings like this could mean the difference between life and death.

If a storm is bearing down on you, how do you make the choice to leave? If you make a choice to leave, how do you execute the plan?

SURVIVAL DISPATCH INSIDER

## IT'S JUST STUFF

The biggest hang-up most people have in leaving home is the idea that they're leaving their life. When you work decades to own a home then fill it with love and memories it can be hard to leave. Many feel they need to stay and that will somehow save their home. This is far from true. You can't stop the storm by simply being home. Prep your home to deal with the worst but beyond that what can you do? You can't stop trees from falling, tornadoes from ripping your roof off, or flood waters from coming through the doors.

**STEP 1** is realizing you're powerless in the face of nature. She's a cruel mistress and won't spare you.

**STEP 2** is realizing it's just stuff. Homes, rooms, and furniture don't carry your memories, you do. Stuff can be replaced but people cannot. Recognize you can't fight it and accept that stuff is just stuff. Be prepared to leave it behind to save your family at a moment's notice.





## WHEN TO MAKE THE CHOICE TO LEAVE

The question of when to make the choice to abandon home and bug out for safety reasons isn't one that has a standard answer. Each situation is different. You need to take the data being provided and make an educated decision as a prepared individual. Gather the facts and the information from as many sources as possible.

If a hurricane is heading your way research it's potential paths as well as the most likely one. You should look, learn, and understand what kind of destructive force this event can have, and has had. The best way to learn is to see what it's already done or what similar events have done in the past. This will probably lead you down a rabbit hole. You'll see how it treats buildings, infrastructure, and even how emergency response has historically responded. All this data will factor into your need to evacuate. Websites like [USFA.fema.gov](http://USFA.fema.gov), and [jointcommision.org](http://jointcommision.org) can offer some interesting perspectives. These websites often post after action reports on disasters. You can also easily find historical data based on similar events. You'll also need the data on the most modern events coming your way. This data includes news reports on speed, path, and predicted timeline. Then consider the gathered data to decide when and how to bail out.

## YOUR SITUATION IS UNIQUE

I'll say it over and over, everyone's situation is different. Depending on where you live, what you live in, and if the dangers associated with bugging out are worth it. If you live in a mobile home or an older home, consider evacuating at the first signs of a watch or warning being issued. If you live in a low lying area or on the coast, consider evacuation immediately. If you live at the top of a hill in a house made of brick with bulletproof windows, maybe evacuation is less of a concern.

Also factor in the health of you and your family. Health conditions that require home health aid need to be addressed. Make a plan to consider when you evacuate.

## BUGGING OUT SUPPLIES

This isn't an article about Bug Out Bags (BOB) or supplies in general, so

**SURVIVAL DISPATCH INSIDER**

we'll briefly touch on this. Plan to load yourself down with regular bug out supplies. Food, water, clothes, blankets, firearms, and more. Remember to pack specific event preps as well. If it's a hurricane, packing a raincoat or two may be necessary so plan for the event itself on top of standard bugging out.

## LOGISTICS AND PLANNING

Planning and figuring out the logistics of your bug out plan shouldn't be something you wait to do. You need to do that now and make multiple plans for different events. Now we don't have to plan for every little situation, but prepare for the most common events and how to escape from them.

A basic plan will involve when to evacuate and how you'll do so. One of the most significant parts of this plan is the route you'll be taking to escape. If Irma taught me anything, it's that traffic sucks. With enough people evacuating you're bound to hit some traffic. This ties back into when you need decide to evacuate. Be sure to factor in the distance you're traveling and how long it could realistically take. It will also tie into the route you're taking. What's critical is knowing how long the trip is plus what's between you and your destination. You'll want to see the amount of Red Cross and community storm shelters on the route to your destination. If traffic slows down to a grinding halt, you need to know safe options. The Red Cross has an excellent mapping system that details where shelters are around the country. This could be invaluable to know if you're traveling and get stuck in traffic or can't find gas. A printed map with these locations marked with addresses could save you and your family's lives.

Speaking of fuel, know where to get it and how far you can go before needing it. Fuel dries up quickly in a panic. You need to be ready and willing to escape with what is in the tank. Don't plan to get gas on the way, but always fill up if you see a gas station and have an opportunity.

Don't forget food, water, and waste. Of course you need to bring quick and easy to eat foods for the road. Plus you'll want it for wherever you're planning

to hold out. These should be separate from your general bug out supplies and be dedicated road foods. Stick to the basics in your vehicle such as easy eating foods, preferably those that don't require refrigeration or even utensils. You need enough to keep your strength up and mind running clear. Good foods high in fats are perfect. Peanut butter, crackers, nuts, are all excellent. Lay off garbage junk food. The right diet will help you stay awake, keep your mind sharp and body healthy.

It should go without saying that you need water and staying hydrated is essential. Even when you're just driving, staying hydrated will keep your body working right and thinking sharp. Bring easy enough to access food and water for not only the trip, but the potential traffic. I follow the rule of three. If the trip takes 3 hours usually, I bring enough food for 9 hours.

Lastly, you need to address waste. Stuck in traffic and you have to do your business? I'd suggest keeping something to do your business in when possible. Don't forget toilet paper or wet wipes of some kind. You may be getting acquainted with nature.





## LIMITS OF ESCAPE

When making the decision to leave home recognize your ability to escape may be limited, especially if you wait too long. Traffic will clog up roads, airports will shut down, and you're going to have to plan and adapt to that situation. This may shorten your effective driving range and change your timelines significantly. Plan and account for that.

The worst case scenario is that you're forced to flee on foot. Only flee if it's safe to do so of course. Planning for being on foot means packing and dressing correctly. Packing your bug out supplies in an easy to grab and go way is critical to bailing out on foot. You need to have a BOB packed and ready to go at all times. This pack can easily be just a standard BOB. Three days of food, water, clothes, etc. Yes, some supplies might be left behind but you should be able to escape with the bare minimum BOB.

Dressing the part means good boots, pants, and an overshirt. You may also need to bring a poncho, a hat, bug repellent, and sunscreen. As comfortable as it is to drive in shorts and flip flops, these aren't the proper clothes to escape with.

## PREPARATION PHASES

Prior to evacuation, you need to break down the situation via phases. In most cases, you'll have time to start preparing for an evacuation while the situation is developing. You may not end up evacuating, but don't wait until the last minute to prepare for it.

### MORE THAN ONE WEEK OUT FROM THE STORM

Anything more than a week is just general prepping. No need to do anything fancy, but if situations start developing you may want to start a little research. Look in to evacuation routes, shelters, and your means to escape. In fact, if you haven't done this do already it then do it today.

### ONE WEEK OR LESS OUT FROM THE STORM

If the news starts talking about the potential of a storm to impact, or a wildfire to spread, or any other disaster situation being within the next week it's time to perk up. Significant research needs to start. Planning for an actual evacuation needs to be discussed. At this time you can also begin prepping your home for potential evacuation.

If you have gaps in your supplies now is the time to start filling those. Get fuel in cans, situation necessary gear, as well as any potential creature comforts you want to bail out with. Make a checklist and stick to it. Supplies will dry up as the event approaches.

### THREE DAYS OUT FROM THE STORM

Once an event hits the three days out or less category, you need to start getting serious. Supplies should start finding their way into your vehicles. Keep a full tank of gas and fill up at every opportunity.

At this point, the data on what the event is doing in other areas should be available. Study this and learn from it. Start paying attention to evacuation orders in the areas surrounding you. These orders will affect traffic along your route too. The evacuation of communities nearby may be the trigger you need to get moving. Don't ever wait simply hoping things will get better.

### DAY ZERO

Day Zero is the day you evacuate, not the day the event hits home. On day zero the majority of your prep work needs to be complete. You should be ready to grab those last few items and get on the road. You need to be packed up, mapped up, and moving on.





## LEAVING

Leaving home is never easy, especially when you don't know if you're coming back to what you left. You need to realize your life is more important than anything. If you believe that, then plan, pack, and prepare to leave everything behind. There is no right answer to the question of when to leave? There is a wrong answer though. Developing a plan is the most critical thing you can do. You need to start your planning now. Anything you plan for now won't be an issue down the road. Educate yourself and your family, keep your eyes open, and remember:

**PROPER PLANNING PREVENTS PISS POOR PERFORMANCE.**





A glowing lantern with a metal frame and a glass lens, set against a dark wooden background. The lantern is illuminated from within, casting a warm glow. The background is a close-up of wood grain.

# LIVING WITHOUT POWER

## DURING STORM SEASON

By: Tim McWelch

**M**ost people never stop to consider their emotional attachment to the electrical grid, but I think it's safe to say that we are in love with it. It's not fleeting like the way you love that new song, rather it's a lot deeper than that. We LOVE that million miles of tangled wires, poles, and all of the power plants that feed it. Maybe that's why we get so emotionally distraught when the lights go out. Our love has left us and we feel spurned! This situation may happen when a summer storm knocks out the neighborhood distribution lines or to an entire region when a disaster strikes. If you live in a rural area, it may even happen on a sunny afternoon. Either way, you've got to figure out what to do with your giant freezer full of melting ice cream and thawing TV dinners. You've also got to come to terms with reality. Unless you're hooked up to an electrically powered machine that's keeping you alive, you don't need power to live. Power is a luxury. I know that's not a lifestyle concept that the average modern push-button person wants to explore because it rubs their nose in the fact that we are spoiled rotten by electricity. But there you have it, you (probably) don't need electricity to live, and I'm going to prove it to you! Or at the very least, make it bearable.

### PRE-GAME BEFORE THE LIGHTS GO OUT

A lot of preppers are worried about an EMP taking out the power. You've probably already had the unsettling realization that an event like that could happen in any season, day or night. Similarly, hackers and solar flares could knock out our power at any time. While these threats are on the radar, we also need to focus on natural disasters as they're the most likely to take down the grid. All major weather events can kill the power, but for the purposes of this article we'll focus on the Atlantic hurricane season (June-November) and tornado seasons (spring and summer). Before or at the start of these seasons, it's a smart move to make a plan for when the warm glow of electricity is cut off.







- **WEIGH THE PROS AND CONS** – Yes, you could buy a generator powered by a noisy gas engine or strap some very obvious solar PV panels on your roof. These will certainly allow you to provide your own power in an outage but there’s a catch. These items along with the fact that your house is lit up at night will advertise to the whole community that you have a major power source. As desperate people become more frantic, they’ll begin to wonder what else is in your home if you’re prudent enough to have the equipment to make power. I’m not saying don’t have self-reliant power, I’m simply reminding you of the age old strife between the haves and have nots. You’ll need to determine whether it makes sense to even have power when your neighbors don’t have it. If you decide the answer is yes, consider if that power should come from a high profile source like that loud generator. In my mind, low profile is better than something attention grabbing.

## PRIORITIZE YOUR POWER FAILURE

Once the electricity is out, it’s time for you to make thoughtful choices and follow a practical plan of action.

- **DAY 1** – Hopeful that the power will return soon, work your way through the house unplugging appliances and equipment powered by electricity. This includes your electric range, refrigerator, computer, TV, sound systems, etc. Doing this will protect them from an electrical surge which may occur when the power is restored. Check your phone or listen to your battery powered radio for local and regional news pertaining to the disaster. Plan a meal from your most perishable foods such as fresh meat, cut vegetables, and so forth. Have an epic dessert after the meal with all of your ice cream, popsicles, and other frozen treats. Keep the fridge and freezer closed

as much as possible to keep them cool. Get creative with your menu as long as it keeps food safety in mind. Cook your frozen pizzas outside on a propane grill or make a big pot of stew in your Dutch oven with charcoal briquettes as fuel. Plan additional meals that use up all of your remaining fresh foods quickly. As the hours tick by, periodically move some of the ice blocks you made in your freezer onto the top shelf inside your fridge to keep things cool. Place a thermometer in the fridge so you can keep track of the interior temperature. Try to keep it around 40F if possible, adding more ice as needed. If you have municipal water for your home, fill up as many buckets, plastic bins, and jugs as you can. There’s no telling when the water will stop flowing. In rural areas your well pump stopped running with the power, so you’ll have to provide your own household water once the pressure tank, the pipes, and the water heater have been drained. I’m on a private well and so are most Americans. I keep several 5 gallon water cooler jugs on hand to kick start my water supply, and have several back-up plans for water procurement and disinfection. You should too.

- **DAY 3** – Your family should have polished off everything in the fridge and freezer by now. Dry goods, canned goods, and other staple foods should be the main ingredients for meals along with any food grown on your own property. Throw away any questionable fresh foods that have a funny odor, off color, or odd texture at this point. The municipal water tower may be empty. Without generators running the pumps to refill it you’ll have to source your own water as your cousins will do in the country. If the outage is localized and severe, you may consider leaving the area for a destination that hasn’t been affected. If it’s regional and severe,

you may not be able to escape your fate. Fuel is likely to be running low in your propane grill, so it might be time to figure out alternative cooking methods. The average household will also be running out of food, candles, batteries, and sanity by now. Hopefully you’re better prepared than them.

- **DAY 10** – Desperate neighbors will be banging on your door because they’re out of food and not sure how to take care of basic needs. You’ll have tough decisions to make as to who you’ll help and who you won’t. The people you refuse to help won’t forget it. The people you do help probably won’t keep their mouth shut about it. Most people will spend all of their time trying to beg, borrow, barter, or steal food and bottled water. Aid may have come in from other areas by now, but it will be slow to reach smaller communities and spread too thin in larger communities. However, you don’t need to go stand in line for care packages. You’re sitting on top of several weeks or months’ worth of food and supplies. Your main concern will be the behavior of the people around you who were woefully unprepared. Will they try to take what you have carefully put aside? When and how will things take a turn from civility to bedlam? This is a much darker and more nebulous issue than picking which water filter to buy or deciding how many sacks of rice to get. You need to plan for this grim issue as well as for all other aspects of self-reliance. Hopefully you’ve built a group of trained and motivated individuals and families. You’ve all kept your mouths shut about your preparations and rallied at the most defensible home. This will make you much better off than the lone wolf prepper who has bragged to all the neighbors about all of his supplies and food stockpile.





## ADJUST TO THE "NEW NORMAL"

Once the electricity is out, it's time for you to make thoughtful choices and follow a practical plan of action.

After a few days of involuntarily living off-the-grid, you'll probably have your system of self-reliant chores down to a routine. Your neighbors will either start catching up to you or they'll be a total wreck. I fear that most people will fall into the latter category. They'll be sick from eating bad food. They'll be dangerously dehydrated from going without water. They'll have filled their toilets up with piss and shit, then started crapping on the floor since they don't know what else to do. You'll definitely have to protect your family and team from people who are desperate, off their meds, or just plain evil. You'll also be able to see who's getting their act together and figuring out how to live with the new normal. They'll be fishing in the local creek and carrying buckets of water back to their houses. They'll be setting up fire pits in their backyards and burning wood to cook their meals. The people who knew how to go camping or just paid attention in history class will be putting the pieces together. Maybe you can help them figure out the parts that they've missed, rebuild your community, and get strength in numbers in the process.

***In summation, you don't have to grow a ZZ Top beard and try to infiltrate the Amish to live without electrical power. You simply need to gather the tools and supplies to provide for your family. It's good to gather together with some like-minded people, and live like they did 150 years ago until the lights come back on. Or they don't. That's it.***





# GEAR REVIEW

## SB Tactical SBA3 Pistol Stabilizing Brace

By: Jon Faulkner

There are only a few times that I can remember where a single product has completely changed an industry sector...pistol braces have done just that in the AR15 industry.

Just a few years ago SB Tactical turned the gun world upside down, changing the way we look at AR15s with barrels shorter than 16 inches. Before SB Tactical, customers had only two options. Option one, you could place the buffer tube against your cheek to fire (highly uncomfortable). Option two, you could file your AR15 with the ATF and register it as an SBR (Short Barrel Rifle)...a painful process.

Now with the current rulings of the ATF, pistol braces are more popular than ever. There are many advantages to using a pistol brace over going the SBR route.

First, you do not have to turn your AR15 into an NFA item. This not only saves you \$200, but you also don't have to deal with issues like traveling across state lines or allowing others to borrow your firearm.

Travelling across state lines with an SBR is especially challenging, as you have to contact the state which you are travelling into in order to get permission to bring the firearm with you.



With an SB Tactical SBA3 brace on your firearm, you can stow it in a backpack or conceal it in your vehicle.

The new SBA3 takes the pistol brace to a level it has never been before, because it is the first brace that can be attached to a standard Mil-Spec buffer tube.

This allows you to position the brace where it fits you the best, then you can collapse it for easier storage. The brace uses a standard 5 position buffer tube.

Don't worry, SB Tactical has spent countless hours with the ATF, and this brace passes all of their regulations and rulings as of this publication date.

Another benefit to the SBA3 is if you ever decide at a later date to register your firearm to convert it into an SBR, you can slide the SBA3 brace off, replacing it with your favorite rifle butt stock!

I was able to get my hands on a pre-release SBA3, and have been using it now for several months. I can't find one bad thing to say about the brace.

I now have them on three of my AR pistols, and can't see why I would ever change them.

Some might think that the MSRP of \$159 is a bit high, but that also includes a buffer tube. This is hands down the best pistol brace on the market at this time.

The SB Tactical SBA3 is designed for all platforms capable of accepting a mil-spec carbine receiver extension. The SBA3 is 5-position adjustable, dramatically enhances versatility, and features a minimalist design with an integral, ambidextrous QD sling socket.

#### **FEATURES:**

- ***Minimalist design***
- ***5-position adjustable***
- ***Includes 7075 mil-spec carbine receiver extension***
- ***Integral, ambidextrous QD sling socket***
- ***ATF compliant, US veteran designed and proudly made in the USA***
- ***Product includes: brace, mil-spec carbine receiver extension, adjustable nylon strap***

#### **FIT: ALL PLATFORMS CAPABLE OF ACCEPTING A MIL-SPEC CARBINE EXTENSION**

- ***LENGTH: 6.75 in, 7.5 in, 8.25 in, 9.0 in, 9.5 in***
- ***WEIGHT: 6.75 oz***







# DEALING WITH LOOTERS

By: Travis Pike

**T**he idea that someone can come into your home or business and just steal what is rightly yours is infuriating. That's exactly what looters do. These brazen thieves love to kick down doors and simply take. The idea of looters should piss you off, but it shouldn't be scary. You can prepare for looters. It can't be completely prevented, but you can help discourage looters from making your home or business their next target. The most important step is having a plan and making it realistic enough to easily follow.

## WHAT BRINGS LOOTERS OUT

Opportunity, desperation, and disaster bring the worst out in people. Looters are a diverse bunch and in order to make a good plan to discourage looting you have to understand them. Some looters are nothing but opportunists. We see them at events where civil unrest is present and these opportunists will steal anything not bolted to the ground. These people steal TVs, video games, shoes, liquor, cigarettes, and really just anything they want. The opportunist

type of looters will crash, destroy, and take with little regard to anyone but themselves.

Other looters come out in desperation. They are trying to survive and potentially feed their families after a disastrous event. While it's easy to sympathize with this type of looter you still need to be wary of them. Desperate people are unpredictable and potentially violent. Even offering them aid could turn you into a target. Offer a man a fish and he'll want another, and another.

You'll be a target for looters as a prepper, especially if word gets out that you're stocked up and ready for a disaster. Expect to be a target for looters who will take anything they can if you own a business.

## THE LOOTER'S MENTALITY

Looters aren't mastermind level criminals. They're often unorganized opportunists looking for an easy score. Easy being the keyword. Many of them may resort to violence, but only up to a point. They're fighting for free stuff, you're fighting to defend your home or livelihood. Who has the better motivation?

A large portion of looters are simply following the mob. Mob mentality sets in and people begin to compromise their own ethics because everyone else is doing it. Mob mentality is easy to follow, but also easy to break among looters. It's easily broken at the first sign of resistance. People will commit violence to take things but rarely engage an armed and ready defender.

We saw this in Ferguson. Businesses who armed up or accepted the help of the Oath Keepers made it through. Being armed and ready should be the last resort of the plan. Our ultimate goal to deal with looters is to prevent them from ever even trying you.

## YOU'RE ON YOUR OWN

Realize that in times of civil unrest and disaster scenarios you're on your own. The police will probably be unable to help you, even if the phone lines aren't down. You're going to have to deal with looters on your own. Realize and recognize that there is no cavalry coming to save you. Don't count on the police as any part of your plan.



## HIDING IN PLAIN SIGHT

Our goal is to make looters completely avoid you. Have them pass by in the night and leave you completely alone. The first step is to make it appear you have nothing worth taking in the first place. This means creating a low profile. You want to limit people's ability to see your goods in a disaster situation. This includes hiding gardens behind fences, disguising water tanks, and avoiding advertising the fact you have a mountain of bottled water, MREs, and more.

This means trash discipline. Disposing of goods in a way that doesn't attract attention. It also means limiting eating and drinking in front of others. If your family is fat, happy, and clean in a disaster scenario it will draw attention.

Close the blinds, shutter the windows, and practice proper operational security. No one needs to know you and your family are well prepared for a crisis. This comes into play well before the crisis starts and stays in place long after it's over.

If you own a business and civil unrest is coming it's time to load up your most expensive inventory and get it out. Take displays down and black out the windows. Operating a business during a riot is difficult, so hiding what you have is definitely worthwhile.

## IS THE JUICE WORTH THE SQUEEZE?

Whenever there was a mission and an order as a Marine we always wanted to know at the end of the day, was the Juice Worth the Squeeze? This simply means would our end result be worth the time, effort, and risk we were putting forward? Looters aren't planning mastermind level heists, they're looking for quick and easy opportunities to steal and pillage.

Making this simple task difficult will dissuade the majority of looters. To make this unappealing you need to harden your home. A defense is best done in layers.

In most disaster scenarios it's normal to cover the windows with plywood, and that works to some extent. However, plywood can be defeated by a crowbar. Consider security window film to back up your window covering. This film comes from companies like 3M and is incredibly effective at keeping home intruders out.

Next, you need to have quality locks on your doors. Don't just go for the Walmart special, get hard locks that are difficult to break through. On top of that, you should

add something like a burglar bar. This will make the door nearly impossible to take down without some serious breaching tools. If you can, consider beefing up your doors in general. This is an expensive investment but worth it. It won't just help against looters in a disaster situation but against any intruder. It also adds value to your home.

A solid wood door or one with a metal plate in the middle is an excellent means to show that no means no. Also, don't forget to lock the garage. Most garage tracks have built in lock holes that make it impossible for thieves to shove the garage door upwards. If you're missing these holes, drill some out and attach a padlock to the track.

A major defensive statement is a big dog with a mighty bark. Add a few beware of dog signs and you have an active, potentially aggressive alarm system. Obviously, this is a big investment for situations that are rare. At the very least, beware of dog signs are cheap. There is even recorded CDs and alarm devices that play the sounds of dogs barking. It's nothing like the real thing but may discourage the passing looter.

Lastly, don't be afraid to make an offensive statement. By offensive, I don't mean something rude but rather a statement of your intent to be offensive. A sign saying "we shoot looters" is a powerful statement. How many looters are willing to risk life and death trying to find out if you're serious or not? I doubt there are many.

## YOU ARE STRONGER WHEN UNITED

Communities are much stronger together during these events. Neighbors and fellow business owners that are prepared to defend each other's property is invaluable. The LA riots saw many Korean communities coming together armed and ready to respond to rioters. They weren't completely spared, but they stood together and fended off the majority of the threats.

Coming together as a community allows you to establish watch schedules, reinforce each other, and most importantly obey the number 1 rule to gunfighting. Bring a gun and bring friends with guns. A group of people united for the common defense of property could be enough deterrent to change the mind of any looter.

Communities coming together can be one of the highlights of a disastrous situation. When men and women work together for a common goal they're much more likely to succeed. Not only that, but you'll be welcoming in different skill sets and tools.





## WHEN IT ALL GOES WRONG

Let's say you do everything listed above. You hide anything that makes your home or business appear valuable, harden your home or business, and unite your community. In a perfect world, this would be more than enough to deter your common looter. Since we don't live in a perfect world we need to be ready in case everything fails.

You have a right to defend your life with speed, surprise, and violence of action. The best means of defending your home is with a firearm, and looters often come in groups. The best weapon to defend against groups of people is a semi-automatic rifle. Something like the AR 15 or AK series of rifles is perfect. These rifles are easy to use, low recoiling, and offer a substantial advantage over a handgun or shotgun when dealing with multiple attackers. When it comes to shooting you need to have a home defense plan that's understood by everyone in your family. I suggest having a plan inside your home for what may essentially be a siege. This means having open fire lanes and fortified positions inside your home.

You'll want to bottleneck invaders in doorways and hallways. This has allowed smaller forces to fight larger forces since the beginning of organized militaries. There's a reason that a few thousand Greeks could hold off the might of the Persian Empire for days. They held a position that eliminated the advantage that superior numbers offered.

Attacks succeed and fail based on the momentum of the attacker. The faster you can reverse the momentum the better. In the military, our defensive positions would have us establish positions then use C Wire and other obstacles to funnel the enemy to our machine guns. You can use the same tactics in your home.

My personal plan includes moving obstacles in front of the front door to funnel targets to me. I would simply block the path into my house with furniture and give them only enough room to maintain the bottleneck the door offers.

A rifle, some extra magazines, and grim determination can get you through a lot. This final line of defense is often enough

to change attacker's minds. When a looter starts seeing his fellow violent criminals get shot, they're likely to turn tail and run. No one wants to die for some food or a TV.

## WHEN TO RETREAT

No one wants to die for some food or a TV, and that includes you. Should everything fail, you need to consider retreat. Yes, it's terrible to think about giving up what you've worked so hard for but none of it's worth your life.

Should fighting fail or for whatever reason you're overrun, then you need to flee. This final portion of your plan should be to flee somewhere safe. A pre-planned destination is a must. This could be a friend's home or just someplace away from the crowds and the city or town you're in. Places like public campsites are great because there isn't much to destroy or steal there.

Have a Bug Out Bag (BOB) ready and accessible. Make sure it's stocked up and on hand well before any kind of crisis hits.







## CONCLUSION

No one likes a looter, and hopefully, you'll never have to face one. Unfortunately, we've seen over and over that innocent people can lose a lot to rioting crowds. Being prepared for a disaster situation means being prepared for looters. Harden your home, harden your heart, and be prepared to fight when necessary.



# HIDDEN DANGERS AFTER THE STORM

By: Ryan Dotson



**T**he storm is coming so you gather your family and head for cover. It hits like a semi-truck but then everything is quiet. Thankfully you and your family are unharmed although the same cannot be said for the surroundings. Everywhere you look there is damage. It doesn't matter if we're talking about a tornado, a hurricane, or an earthquake. Your initial reaction will be that your just happy that everybody is safe. But are they?

Of course, your main concern in a natural disaster is the initial impact. However, many people will be injured or killed after the initial impact is over. Damage from storms and the aftermath can create many different hazards most people never even consider. The average person walks out of their home and starts moving to shelter or to check on other people. First though it's vital to be aware of the additional dangers created after a natural disaster hits. In this article we will cover the primary dangers you

should avoid plus how to stay safe in this new and dangerous environment.

## **DISCLAIMER**

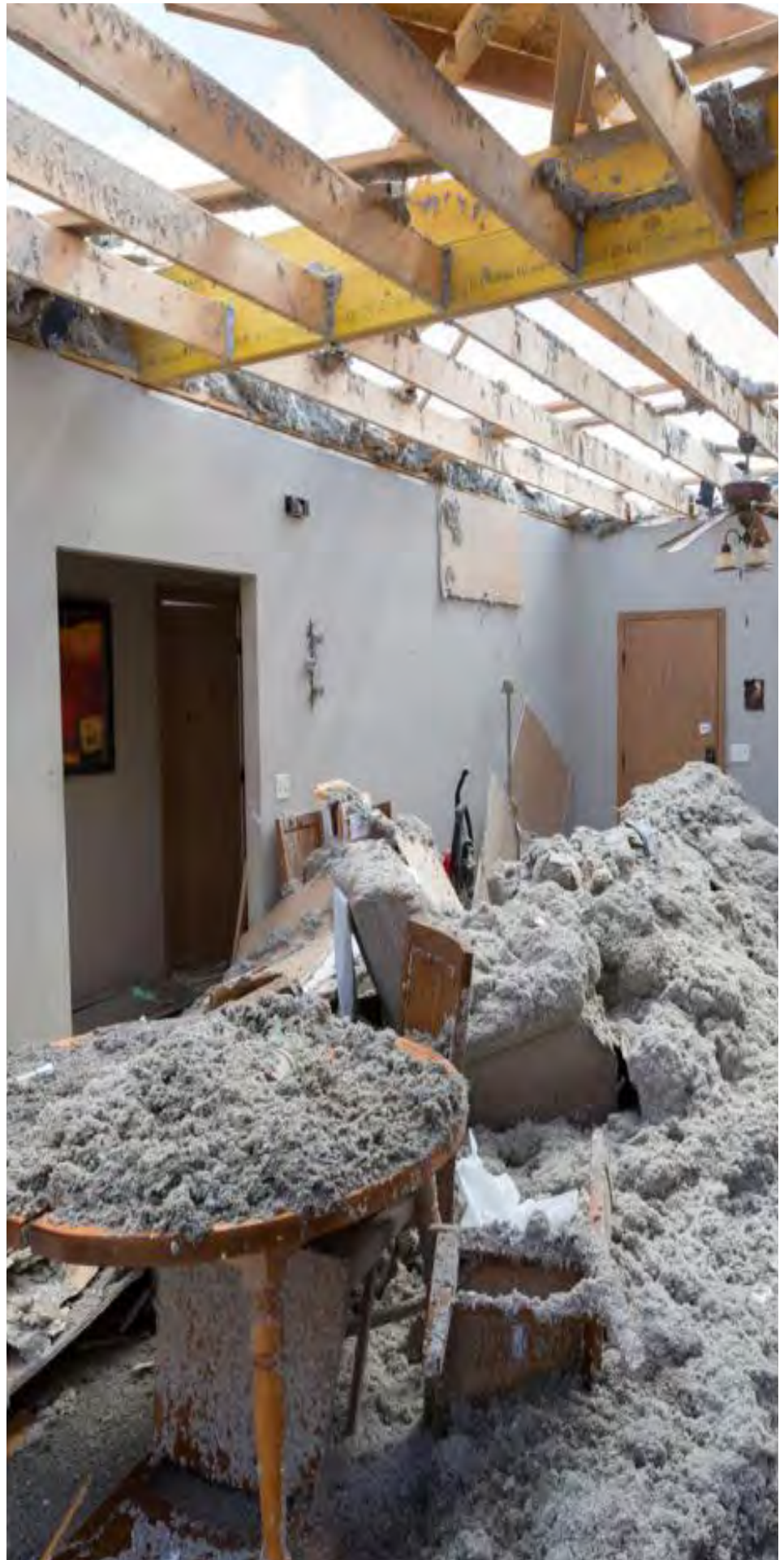
*The steps listed in this article are specifically intended for scenarios in which nobody's life is in imminent danger. If that's not the case, you may need to skip some or all of these steps. Specifically, I am referring to life threatening injuries, fire, the smell of natural gas, or water levels quickly rising. You'll have to make that call when the time comes.*



## DEBRIS INSIDE THE HOME

There is bound to be some clutter inside your house after any natural disaster. Don't underestimate how dangerous this debris can be. Take the time to be wary of this debris unless the home is on fire, you smell gas, or you have rising water. Here are some steps to take as you shake off the clutter to leave.

- 1. DON'T OPEN YOUR EYES** – The windows are the first damage you'll see in most of the natural disasters that we're considering. This means that tiny shards of glass could be all over you, including on your face. Most people will probably close their eyes as the storm hits. After the storm, just give your face a quick shake to knock off most of the glass. Do NOT rub your face or eyes. This will just drive the glass into your skin if you're not careful. As a further step, shake off the rest of your body before you try to stand up.
- 2. LOCATE EVERYBODY** – Be sure you know where each person is located before you stand up. Call out to each person by name and wait for a response before you stand. Communication is vital in this scenario. Let's say there's a dresser on top of you. If you're not careful and stand up right away it could push the debris on top of somebody else. In addition, you need to take charge and instruct everybody on what moves to make. This goes double for children. They'll want to run to the adults without caution. Your first command should be to tell everybody to stay put so you can instruct them further.
- 3. BE CAREFUL LIFTING** – You'll have a ton of adrenaline coursing through your veins in the chaos of a disaster. You may be injured and not even realize it. Check yourself for injuries before doing any heavy lifting. Then slowly lift with your legs and not the back. The goal is to get items upright, not to throw them across the room.
- 4. CLUSTER THE GROUP** – Once you've located everybody and they're able to stand, come together as a group. It will be much safer to move through the house together than scattered apart. Once in a group, take the lead and keep everybody close behind you. It's best if another adult behind you does the carrying if there are small children that need to be carried. This lets you take extra caution to protect everybody.
- 5. WATCH FOR GLASS** – There will likely be glass everywhere from windows, picture frames, tables, or dishes. Watch your step and be careful where you put your hands. Broken glass is one of the biggest concerns in an after-storm scenario.





## STRUCTURAL DAMAGE

The next concern you have when exiting the home is structural damage. This could appear in several different ways depending on where you're located. Although you must be cautious of all of these scenarios wherever you live. Here are the dangers to avoid:

- 1. DAMAGE ABOVE YOU** – In many cases people will move to the lowest level of their home during a storm. This means that it's likely any structural damage will be above you. The entire home could cave in on your head in some cases. If the primary load bearing walls are damaged, that's a great deal of weight ready to collapse. Look for cracks or other damage along the walls or the ceiling above. Move to the closest solid load bearing wall if you're concerned about structural damage above. Move along that wall until you can get to an exit.
- 2. DAMAGE BELOW YOU** – If you're on a higher floor, there may be at risk of falling through. A fall to a floor below may not kill you, but think about what you might be falling onto. You could also become injured to the point of becoming immobile. If you see damage on the floor, move to the closest load bearing wall. This is the one scenario in which you and everybody else should space out to reduce the amount of weight on any weak spots.
- 3. DAMAGE ON SIDE WALLS** – This is a rare scenario but sometimes walls that aren't load bearing could be damaged and leaning. In this case simply go to the other side of the room to get to safety.

## GAS LEAKS

Natural gas leaks are fairly cut and dry. If you smell gas, get out of the house immediately. Gas has an element added to make it smell like rotten eggs. At any point a spark could ignite the gas and cause an explosion. That being said, gas leaks can also occur after the initial disaster. It could break a line if a damaged structure shifts. Once everybody is safe, it's a good idea to get to the gas shutoff valve and shut it down.





## POWER LINES

One of the most dangerous hazards after a storm is downed power lines. There can be exposed live wires inside your home as well. Here are a few suggestions to help you avoid electrocution.

- 1. THE LIVE WIRE RULE** – There's only one way to determine if an exposed wire is a live wire. Unfortunately, that way could kill you. Your rule #1 should be to consider every exposed wire to be a live wire.
- 2. STAY AWAY** – Keep your distance if you see an exposed wire. You might stumble on loose debris and fall into the wire. Stay as far away as possible.
- 3. WATER** – Be cautious of puddles, standing water, and spraying water. Water is a conductor, so the electricity can easily transfer through it to your body. Move quickly if you have no choice but to move through water.
- 4. WORST CASE SCENARIO** – If somebody touches a live wire, don't touch them. They could be stuck to the wire from

the electricity but touching them could get you electrocuted as well. Find an insulating material such as rubber and use that to try to push the person off of the wire.

- 5. IN A CAR** – If you're in a car during a disaster and a wire falls across your vehicle, do NOT get out. The rubber from your tires is keeping you safe. Try to call for help and wait until the wire is removed.
- 6. ONCE SAFE** – Once you and your family have gotten clear of any live wires, shut down the power. Find the power shut off and shut it down.

## STANDING FLOOD WATERS

One of the easiest ways to get sick in a hurricane or other flood is to spend time in standing waters. You may not think about it, but flood waters are contaminated with all kinds of nasty waste. This carries bacteria that can make you incredibly sick. In addition, you typically can't see what kind of debris is below the surface. What typically happens is a person starts wading, scratches or cuts themselves, and then gets a nasty

infection. Use extreme caution if you have to wade through flood waters. Try to stay in the shallowest water you can find.

The other risk with flooding is running water. A full-sized vehicle can be swept away in as little as one foot of running water. That means you don't stand a chance on foot. If you have to cross running water, try to use a rope or walking sticks for support. You can also link hands with other people to keep everybody stable. However, if there is any way to avoid running water then take another path.

## IN CONCLUSION

*As you can see there are plenty of dangers lurking after the initial impact of a natural disaster. However, most of them can be avoided by using some common sense. Just slow down and take everything one step at a time. Communicate with anybody else in your home and gradually get everybody to safety. Then go back to take further precautions with your utilities if it's safe to do so. Everybody will get out fine with a little knowledge and a clear head.*





# GEAR PREVIEW

## BaroCook Thermal Cooking Pot

By: Jon Faulkner



**WHEN STORM SEASON ROLLS AROUND, IT IS ONLY A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE THE POWER GOES OUT.** Most houses these days have kitchens that are 100% electric so when the power goes out... so does your ability to cook food.

Sure, you can go outside and fire up the grill, but in a storm scenario the weather can often make this impossible. Every try to light a grill in a rain storm?

Another alternative for power down situations is to pull out a camp stove to heat food. However, dealing with carbon monoxide and fumes in an enclosed area is horrible if you don't have good ventilation.

### SO WHAT'S THE SOLUTION?

A few weeks ago, Chris Weatherman showed me his BaroCook Thermal Cooking Pot...and I just had to get one. This cooking system does not require you to store any harmful fuel in your house, and there are no odors put off while you are cooking.

The BaroCook 28 oz. medium-size stove is perfect for cooking two-person meals such as those provided by Campfire Meals dehydrated foods or Mountain House freeze dried foods. You can also open any type of canned food, MRE meal or the like for a hot meal within minutes.

### COOK A MEAL ANYTIME, ANYWHERE!

The BaroCook Thermal Cooking System is a revolutionary stove for campers, outdoor enthusiasts, first responders and railroaders. The options are endless. No matter where you are going, you can always have a hot meal with his stove on board.

With the supplied heating packs, you can carry, cook and heat your meals easily. Just place the heating pack and water into the outer container. Then place the inner steel container with your meal inside, seal the lid and let the combination of hot water, steam and the heat pack warm up your meal.



This cooking system is also a great addition to your car survival kit. If you get stuck because of a bad traffic accident or severe weather, you can have a meal ready in just a few minutes.

**\* Also available in three additional sizes: 11 oz (320ml), 40 oz (1200ml) rectangular and, 30 oz (900ml) round**

- BaroCook BC-003 D 28 oz (850ml) stove, one 50g heating pack, instruction
- No fire or electricity required, water is your fuel. The heat pack reacts with a small amount of water to heat for up to 30 minutes
- Eco-friendly, non-toxic, odorless and biodegradable heat packets available in multiple sizes
- The stainless container is great for storing & traveling with food with its airtight and leak-proof lid
- Reheat foods safely with high-quality rust-resistant type 304 stainless steel
- BPA, phthalate, pvc & lead free
- For best results use large 50g heat packs
- **CAUTION:** Contents will become very hot when heating your food. Please read the instructions first before using the cooker.





Family First Aid Kit

# HOME FIRST AID KIT

## FOR DISASTERS

By: Nick Meacher



**L**et's discuss some contents for a first aid kit you should have in your home in the event of a disaster. We're not talking about minor cuts and scrapes, bumps and bruises. We'll be talking about the types of injuries and illness after a tornado, flood, hurricane etc. when you'll be on your own for some considerable time. You'll have only your family and neighbors to rely on until professional help can get there.

Start by taking a first aid course and not just a basic course but one that is more extensive. It should be at least 16-hours and look for one called advanced, remote, or wilderness first aid. Some of the wilderness classes have outdoor exercises and focus more on extracting a patient from a remote area. There are others such as those by the National Safety Council that cover remote care for situations where care is delayed. Look at the curriculum when looking for a class

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and make sure it covers what you're looking for with hands on practice.

As an aside, you'll find that the term certified isn't used on most courses. Most will say only that you'll get a Certificate of Completion. You don't need to be certified to provide basic first aid to someone. Every state has some form of Good Samaritan law that provides a level of protection to anyone helping others. As long as you aren't grossly negligent and only do what someone with similar training would do in the same situation, you're afforded a level of protection. Having said that, check your own state's Good Samaritan Act.

You should take into consideration the types of events that can occur in your area when considering what to have in a kit. For instance, are you in an area that can be impacted by a hurricane or a tornado? You should also consider any

medical requirements that your family members have.

If you have unlimited funds, definitely stock up on a large number of items. If that's not your situation, look for items that can be used for more than one purpose and for things that can be improvised. One very good example I read about the other day was someone who needed to splint a child's arm after an obvious broken bone. They were unable to find their purpose made splint so improvised one out of a metal coat hanger. It achieved the purpose of preventing movement of the arm.

While I've created categories, remember some things can be used for more than the listed purpose. In some instances, I've included some basic first aid instructions, but you should seek some additional training.



## BASIC ITEMS

**HEADLAMP** – There are hundreds of headlamps if you search the web. It doesn't need to be expensive. Even a cheap headlamp will be invaluable if you're in the dark and allows for both hands to be free to provide care. If the batteries are in it, put a small piece of plastic over the connector to pull out when needed. This will prevent the lamp accidentally being turned on and then being dead when you need it. These can be found in large chain supermarkets for under \$15.



**SCISSORS** - The most general purpose kind of scissors are trauma shears. They will cut through most clothing so you can expose the area to see what the injury is. They can also be used to cut bandages. They can be found for less than \$5.

If you're really into getting the top of the line then get the Leatherman Raptor trauma scissors. These also have a seat belt cutter which can also be used on clothes very effectively and a glass cutter. You can also get a holster and a keeper so you don't lose them which is very handy in low light.



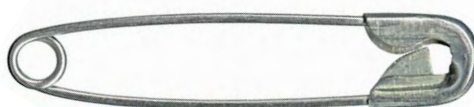
**STRING OR DENTAL FLOSS** – Whenever an injury involves the hand or fingers and the person has any rings on, you'll need to try to get them off. If the finger has already swollen, there is a very simple method using string or dental floss. There are [YouTube videos](#) you can search for that show the technique. There are ring cutters on the market, however, these won't cut rings made from titanium and other metals.



**TWEEZERS** – These can be used to get small items from wounds such as glass and other debris. Flat and pointed tweezers are useful. I've found that there is usually someone at gun shows selling a variety of these types of tools fairly cheaply. They aren't the highest quality but are perfect for a disaster kit. In an area that has a lot of ticks you might want to also add a tick remover tool such as TickEase, Tick Twister, or Tick Key. I've not evaluated any of these tools as fortunately I don't live in a high tick area. I did find this evaluation of a number of tick removal tools though.



**SAFETY PINS** – While there are usually other ways to secure bandages, safety pins can sometimes be quicker especially if you've not practiced in some time. Triangular bandages usually come with a safety pin. Be aware that when opening the package it usually goes flying across the floor, so good to have some extras on hand!





**TAPE** – There are lots of types of tape of all different widths. Tape has multiple uses ranging from taping bandages in place to holding splinting materials together. The surgical type tape is good for light bandaging but easily comes off when wet. Cloth tape has better adhesive properties when wet. I've seen comments about using duct tape, which would be fine to use to keep an end of a bandage from unrolling. However, it shouldn't be used against the skin. It can adhere to the skin, especially if it gets warm. This can make it very difficult to remove and can even rip skin off, not the best way to make friends



## WOUND CARE

**ADHESIVE BANDAGES** - These should always be stocked in large quantities and in different sizes. It's a good idea to repack them into plastic ziplock type bags so they have protection from water.

[Moleskin](#) should also be included for blisters and [Tincture of Benzoin](#) is very useful for getting adhesive bandages to stick. I recommend the Benzoin especially in wet or high humidity environments or when there is a lot of sweating due to heavy work.



**DRESSINGS** - There are a number of different types of dressing but look for pressure dressings for larger wounds or those with active bleeding. The most common pressure dressing is the Israeli bandage. Most of the pressure dressings come in both 4" and 6" sizes.



**GAUZE SPONGES** - Used for minor cuts that need to be kept clean and for abrasions etc. They're usually held in place with tape or gauze rolls. They come in a paper style wrapper so again you might want to put them in a plastic bag for extra protection. You will need lots of these!



**GAUZE ROLLS** - Are usually used with sponges but can also be used by themselves to cover minor wounds. Rolls come in a number of different widths, but you can always go with 4" for most things.



**COMBINE ABD PADS** - A very absorbent sterile dressing and very versatile. They can be used to wipe blood away to expose a wound, for stopping bleeding, and even as an eye pad.

**ELASTIC WRAPS** - Can be used for a variety of purposes. This includes holding splints and bandages in place, as compression wraps for sprains and strains, and also for holding hemostatic dressings in place. Cohesive wrap is an elastic wrap what adheres to itself.



**SPLINTS** - Can be made from any object that will provide some rigidity such as wood, rolled magazines, coat hangers, etc.

A commonly commercially available splint is the SAM splint. It can be molded into whatever position is needed to immobilize the limb.



**TRIANGULAR BANDAGES** – If there is one first aid item that can be used for more things than any other, it has to be the triangular bandage. It can be used as a sling, to tie splints in place, as a pressure dressing, an eye patch, to wipe blood away, and don't forget as a bandana. You can buy these in bulk from a lot of vendors on Amazon for less than \$1.20 each. Make sure you get the larger ones (40"x40"x56") and made from cotton. I would have at least 20 in a kit.



**TOURNIQUETS** – You need one for severe arterial bleeding. Ideally everyone has one on their person but having several extra ones in a kit is a good idea. There are a number of different tourniquets on the market. However, the only two recommended by the Hartford Convention and the Committee on Tactical Combat Casualty Care are the C-A-T and SOFTT-W tourniquets. It's my experience that the CAT is easier to apply to yourself. Be aware of cheaper tourniquets being sold from someone other than a medical supplier. Although I've not got any independent verification, there are reports of them failing when used in an emergency. I've bought some for under \$10 for training and haven't managed to break them yet. In my opinion it's not worth saving a few dollars for a life saving device.





**HEMOSTATIC DRESSING** - Are impregnated with an agent to promote clotting. There are a number of different brands on the market, with QuikClot and Celox being the two most commonly found. They come in a variety of applications such as 4x4 gauze dressings, rolled bandages, Z-fold gauze, and a liquid applicator (Celox-A)



**AIRWAY CONTROL**- If an unconscious or semi-conscious patient is struggling to breathe, it can be cleared with a nasopharyngeal airway (NPA). It's fairly simple to use but you should be shown how to use it properly. These are invaluable as they allow you to assess other patients knowing that the one you've put the NPA will maintain an airway. Each NPA should have a packet of water soluble lubricant. This is an item that should be in each person's individual first aid kit (IFAK), along with a tourniquet and hemostatic dressing.



**BURN DRESSINGS**- Usually initially cooled with water. In a disaster a lot of water and prompt medical care may not be available. In the case of burns from dry chemicals, make sure the powder is brushed off before applying copious amounts of running water. Take care not to get any on you. Clothing should be removed as well. If only a small amount of water is available, it should probably NOT be used to wash the chemical off as many chemicals react and create heat when water is applied.

Water Jel is a product designed for first aid care of burns and is available in different size packages.

Silver Sulfadiazine 1% cream is very effective at cooling burns. According to some references lavender essential oil can help heal burns as can aloe. However, the primary initial care is to cool the wound. Wet bandages can be used but take care that they don't adhere to the wound.





# MEDICATIONS

Having basic over the counter medications on hand is always a good idea. This should include:

**Diphenhydramine** (Benadryl) - For allergic reactions.

**Acetaminophen** (Tylenol) - A pain reliever and fever reducer.

**Ibuprofen** (Advil, Motrin) - A nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID). It works by reducing hormones that cause inflammation and pain in the body. Ibuprofen is used to reduce fever, treat pain, and reduce inflammation.

**NAPROXEN** (Aleve, Midol)-Also a nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID) for reducing fever and treating pain.

**IMODIUM** (Diamode, Imodium A-D, Kaopectate)-Used to treat diarrhea.

[Single dose packets](#) are the most convenient and probably the safest from a disaster standpoint. It means you aren't handing a bottle around to people who may not (ok probably not) have clean hands.

Be sure to include children's dose medications if needed.

**GLUCOSE** - For treating diabetics or others with low blood sugar. This is likely to happen if people are exhausting themselves after a disaster and regular meals might be skipped.

**HYDROCORTISONE CREAM** - For itching, insect bites, etc. It's available in a variety of different names but is all the same product. I've found it available at Dollar Store.

**ORAL REHYDRATION** - Always important after a disaster. Adding rehydration salts to a drink is a quick way to provide important body chemicals. These chemicals can be lost when working heavily, especially if you're in a hot environment.

Include any other medications that you normally use or members of your family take on a regular basis. You should keep some in a disaster medical kit because a pharmacy may not be available for some time. If you can't get your doctor and/or insurance to approve an extra 30-day supply then a pharmacy will usually give you an extra bottle and appropriate label. Just tell them you want to keep a few in your bag in case of travel or an overnight stay. That way you can put a few days' worth in. Make sure they're regularly rotated.





**ANTIBIOTIC OINTMENT** - Useful for small cuts. Although keeping a wound clean and exposed to the air is the best way you don't want to do this in a disaster as it will be difficult to manage. Single use packets ensure that you don't open a tube and then leave it unused for considerable time

**DENTAL CARE** - I've seen grown men incapacitated with tooth injuries! Obviously in a disaster there is the potential for someone getting hit in the mouth or because it's been put off for months that bad tooth will now act up. Emergency dental supplies such as a dental extractor, Oil of Cloves, and a temporary filling kit should be included. I've not found a single kit with the basics in it so you'll have to get them separately. If you want the nuclear dental kit option then [DoomandBloom](#) has one of the best ones I've seen.

**EYE CARE** - Keep a spare (new) contacts case and eye solution if you have anyone in your family who wears contacts. Also having eye wash is a good idea.



## ADVANCED CARE ITEMS

I get into a lot of discussions when teaching classes about advanced care such as suturing and chest needle decompression.

**SUTURING** in the field isn't always the best way to go. If a wound isn't cleaned, and I mean sterile clean, then suturing it will just create a pocket where infection to grow. It also has to be closed within a few hours. In most austere situations your best option is to clean the wound as best as you can and pack with clean sterile gauze. You should then clean and redress the wound about every 4 hours. Reinforced skin closures (Steri-strips™) can be used when the wound is not deep. Again, it should be thoroughly cleaned first and closely watched for signs of infection. These include redness and warmth at the sight along with fever in the patient.

**CHEST DECOMPRESSION** is an advanced skill usually performed by a paramedic or higher qualified medical personnel. It's used when air is trapped in the chest cavity increasing pressure, causing the patient great difficulty in breathing. It can be seen when there is any penetrating injury to the chest, such as a gunshot, stab wound, or when someone gets crushed. Many military personnel are taught this skill in combat care or other medical courses.

If you've not been trained to perform the skill don't do it. However, it makes sense to have several in your kit in case there is someone around that knows how as it's a lifesaving skill.





## MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS

**CONTAINER** - Your disaster medical supplies need to be in a suitable container. I would suggest a hard sided, waterproof case such as Pelican. There are any number of [other brands](#) that a simple search on the web will bring up.

**BLANKETS** - Include thermal or wool blankets in your disaster kit. My preference isn't for the emergency blankets. These space blankets are too flimsy and won't provide good protection from the weather. Wool blankets are the best type of blanket for keeping warm, even when wet. I've found that Harbor Freight usually has them for about \$10. Remember that these will probably be thrown away after any emergency use.

**GLOVES** - You should also have personal protective equipment (PPE) in your kit. This should include non-latex gloves. I buy the 5mil gloves from Harbor Freight. I also get some of the 9mil for use when there is heavy trauma.

**EYE PROTECTION** - Should be a must in any disaster situation. Have a pair that are clear as well as smoke for use in the sun.

**FACE MASKS** - Should also be available, especially when there is dust or other particles floating around.





## MANUALS & REFERENCES

There are lots of different books and manuals on austere first aid. These are my personal recommendations:

### [THE SURVIVAL MEDICINE HANDBOOK](#)

Dr Alton and Amy Alton

This is probably the best book for SHTF medicine. Includes uses of antibiotics and essential oils. There's also a lot of very good information on their [website](#).

### [COMBAT LIFESAVER COURSE: STUDENT SELF STUDY GUIDE](#)

This covers the basic emergency care for trauma patients. Be aware that this is intended for military personnel and some skills aren't considered first aid in the civilian world.

### [SURVIVAL AND AUSTERE MEDICINE](#)

This is a very extensive manual, more for an extended SHTF situation than first aid but useful to have in your library. Available as a free pdf download.

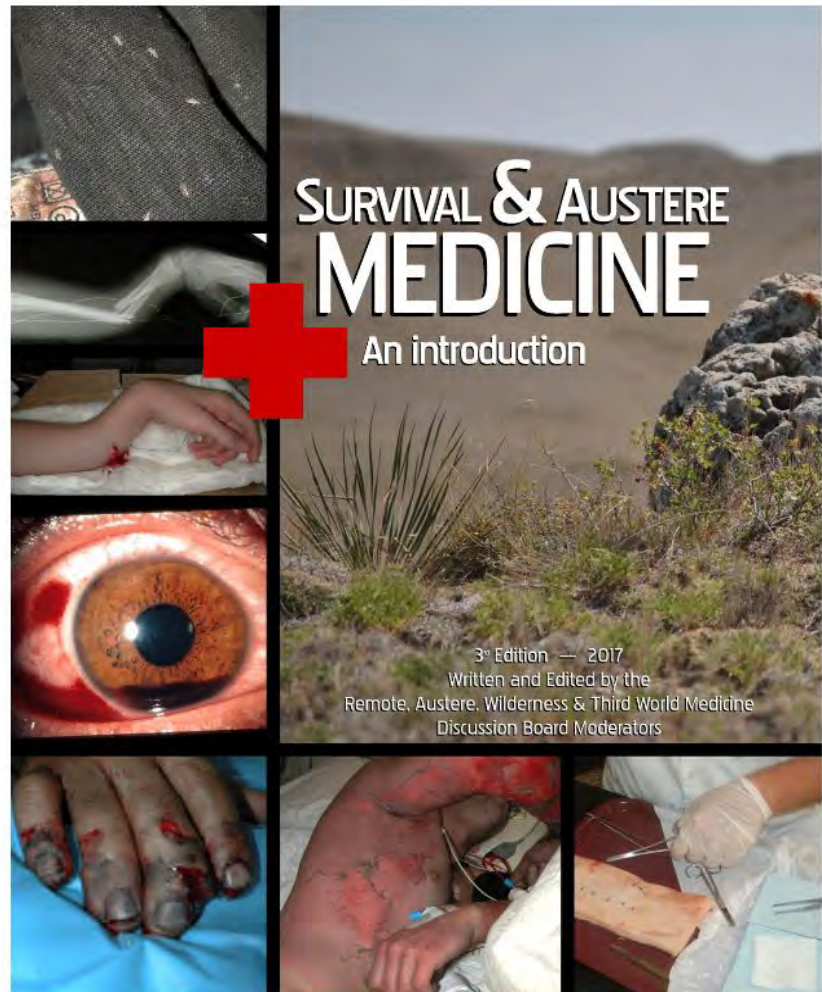
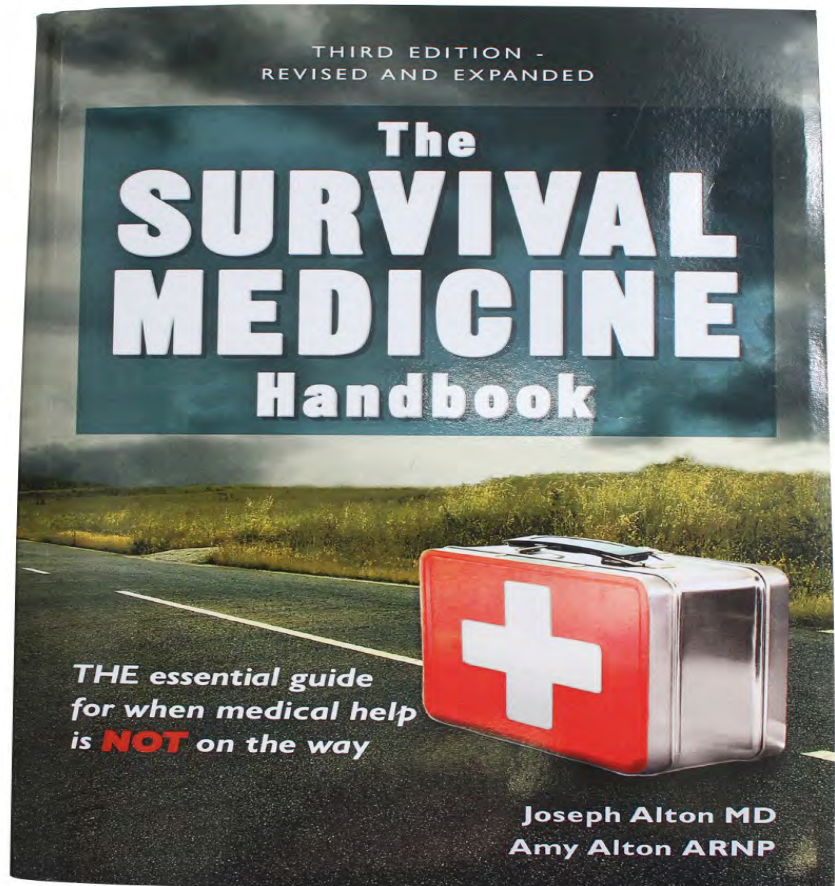
### [DHS AUSTERE EMERGENCY MEDICAL SUPPORT \(AEMS\) FIELD GUIDE](#)

I came across this field guide while searching for the link to the other manuals. It has both basic and advanced information in it.

### [INFORMED HOME EMERGENCY POCKET FIELD GUIDE](#)

The Home Emergency Pocket Guide takes an all-hazards approach. It's organized by event type with tabbed and color-coded sections to help you make decisions fast. Photographs and illustrated steps walk you through planning, response, recovery, and survival for common and uncommon events. It has before-during-after guidelines for home preparation, first aid, and survival tactics for storms, fires, floods, hurricanes, earthquakes, and homeland terror attacks. Like all Informed® guides, it's spiral-bound and printed on high-quality plastic so it's waterproof, tear-resistant, and alcohol-fast.

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## CONCLUSION

This article is intended to give you some ideas on what to have in a disaster first aid kit. It's by no means exhaustive and isn't intended to provide specific instructions. I urge you to find some classes to enhance your skills and then practice them regularly. If you have a group or team with someone who has medical training, ask them to provide you training.

Every member of your family and group should have basic immediate care training that includes the treatment of severe hemorrhaging (tourniquets and hemostatic dressings), airway management (nasopharyngeal airways), direct pressure and pressure dressings, and care of hypothermia. CPR training is also important. In a major disaster there may not be an ambulance available for some time or it may not be able to get to you. If you have family members with known cardiac problems be sure to look into getting an Automated External Defibrillator (AED). They have come down in price considerably and are very easy to use.

## REMEMBER M-A-R-C-H

**M – MASSIVE HEMORRHAGING**

**A – AIRWAY**

**R – RESPIRATIONS**

**C – CARDIAC, HEART BEAT**

**H - HYPOTHERMIA**

Every member of your group should always carry an individual first aid kit (IFAK) and the very minimum of a tourniquet at all times. You never know when they might be needed.





# NEW GEAR RELEASES

HERE IS WHAT CAUGHT OUR EYE THIS MONTH

By: Jon Faulkner

## STASH 750ml Collapsible Water Bottle

[Learn more about the STASH 750ml Collapsible Water Bottle](#)

This high tech water bottle can collapse down into a quarter of its size. Flexible walls and a thermoplastic urethane handle and grip create a comfortable carrying experience while a rigid top and bottom keep the bottle sturdy. The STASH is made of ultra-durable materials while still being 50% lighter than most hard bottles and is BPA and PVC free.



## Gerber Vital Pocket Folder

[Learn more about the Gerber Vital Pocket Folder](#)

Featuring one of the safest Exchange-A-Blade options out there, a surgically sharp blade cuts through game easily, requiring no extra tool if you need to replace the blade on the fly. The orange handle is easily spotted and a large finger choil adds stability.

The folding version of the original Vital Fixed Blade Knife, the ingenious Vital Pocket Folder EAB features one of the safest Exchange-A-Blade options on the market. A smart mash-up of a replaceable utility blade with a high-visual orange rubber handle that won't quit, this knife travels to the field and on the hunt with ease.

### **SIMPLE AND FAST**

The innovative marriage of Gerber's hunting savvy along with our exchangeable razor blade history has given birth to the Vital Pocket Folder EAB. Containing a punishingly

**SURVIVAL DISPATCH INSIDER**


sharp blade that mimics a surgical knife, the ingenious tool cuts through the cape of your game like a hot blade through butter. The inclusion of its several replacement blades means you won't get caught in the middle of skinning with a dull tool. This is a knife that works fast and smart, and when the blade is burned out, can be replaced easily on the fly. It requires no extra tools for its blade replacement, so it doesn't slow the action of field dressing, while offering super-safe operation as an exchangeable blade knife.

### **STAINLESS STEEL STURDY**

With a bright orange high-visual Vital handle it's easy to spot this knife if you should drop it while out in the field. The Vital Pocket Folder's large finger choil and larger width give it a solid, comfortable grip. Functioning beautifully in its simple role using utility blades that can be easily replaced as necessary, the Vital Pocket Folder EAB includes a #60 industry-standard attached razor blade and six #60 replaceable razor blades.







## Outland Equipment Inc. Multi-Mission Axe 1502

### [Learn more about the Outland Equipment Inc. Multi-Mission Axe 1502](#)

*The Multi-Mission Axe is a rescue and survival tool built for the unforgiving environments encountered by military, law enforcement and emergency response professionals. The core of the axe is a single piece of hardened S7 tool steel, a steel formulated to withstand extreme shock and impact.*

*From head to tail, the MMA has function and performance in mind. The head features a 3.9" cutting edge, bolt-on hammer and hex nut tool. The tail has an angled pry bar, seatbelt cutter and sheet metal cutter. The handle offers multiple hand positions for optimizing your grip for the particular chopping, hammering or prying job at hand. It utilizes shaped G10 handle scales designed to keep your hands in place even in extreme conditions. Wet or dry, your grip will stay secure.*

*Portability is a factor in any operation, and Outland has you covered with the Modular Sheath. The sheath securely holds the axe using internal latch features and two BioThane® Coated Webbing straps. It allows for both easy access and deployment. The Modular Sheath can accept accessories for mounting on a belt or MOLLE gear, hang from a shoulder strap or bolt to a vehicle. The carry options are endless.*

**The Multi-Mission Axe will prove useful and dependable on any mission.**

- Full tang S7 steel construction
- 3.9 inch blade
- S7 steel hammer
- Sheet metal cutter for vehicle extrication and industrial door breaching
- Pry feature at the bottom of the handle uses the length of the handle for leverage
- Seat belt cutter is positioned at the bottom of the handle to extend reach into vehicles
- Hex nut tool in the head
- G10 handle grips
- Multiple grip positions
- Comes in a custom zippered case



# WHAT WE'RE READING NOW

By: Jon Faulkner

## WILDERNESS NAVIGATION: FINDING YOUR WAY USING MAP, COMPASS, ALTIMETER & GPS

BY: BOB BURNS

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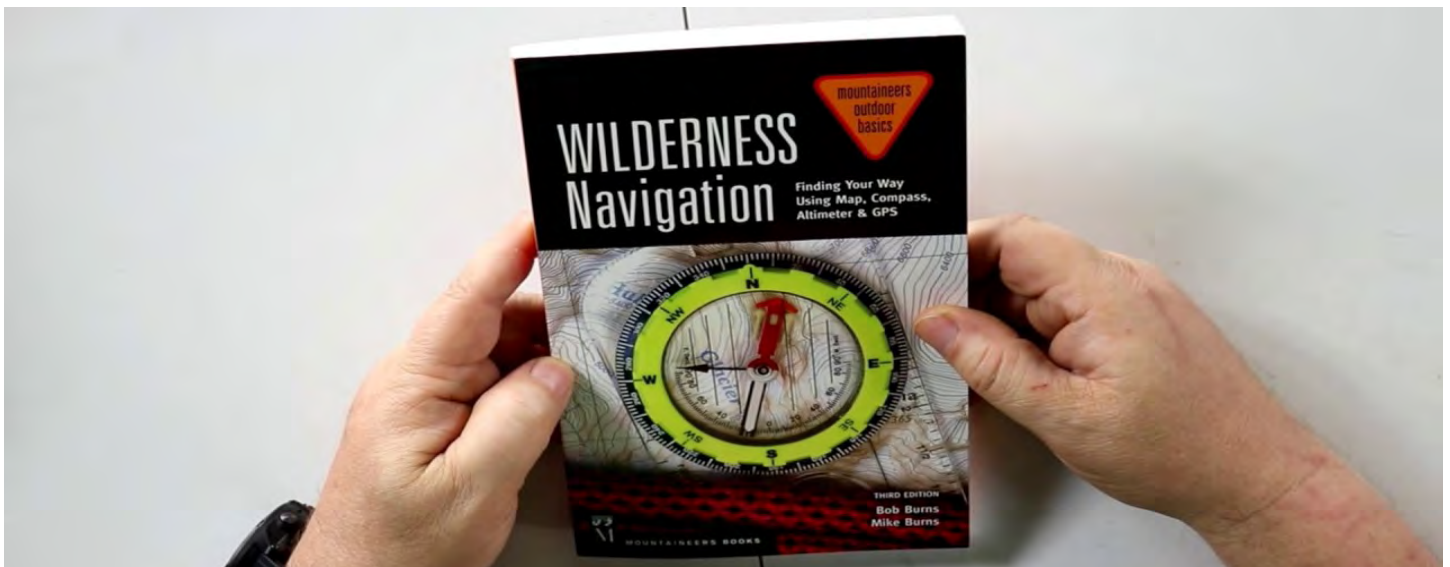
THE OFFICIAL NAVIGATION TEXTBOOK USED IN OUTDOOR EDUCATION COURSES BY THOUSANDS OF STUDENTS.

Goodreads.com readers rated the previous edition 4 out of 5 stars (and now it's even better!)

Map and compass skills remain the foundation for traveling safely in the wilderness

THIS NEW THIRD EDITION IS A MAJOR AND COMPLETE UPDATE OF THE POPULAR TEXTBOOK:

- Improved throughout for clarity, with chapter objectives presented at the beginning of each chapter and summaries, "skills check" mini-quizzes, and practice problems listed at the end
- Updated descriptions of the most current maps, compasses, altimeters, and Global Positioning System (GPS) receivers
- Updated declination maps for the United States and the world (declination changes over time and compasses must be adjusted for a specific location to provide correct readings)
- Much-expanded GPS chapter, including interfacing the GPS receiver with the home computer, maximizing battery life, and using the GPS function on a "smart" phones (along with a description of their limitations)
- Additional information on non-GPS navigational techniques
- Recommended websites, apps, and other sources of useful navigational information





## 299 DAYS: THE PREPARATION (VOLUME 1)

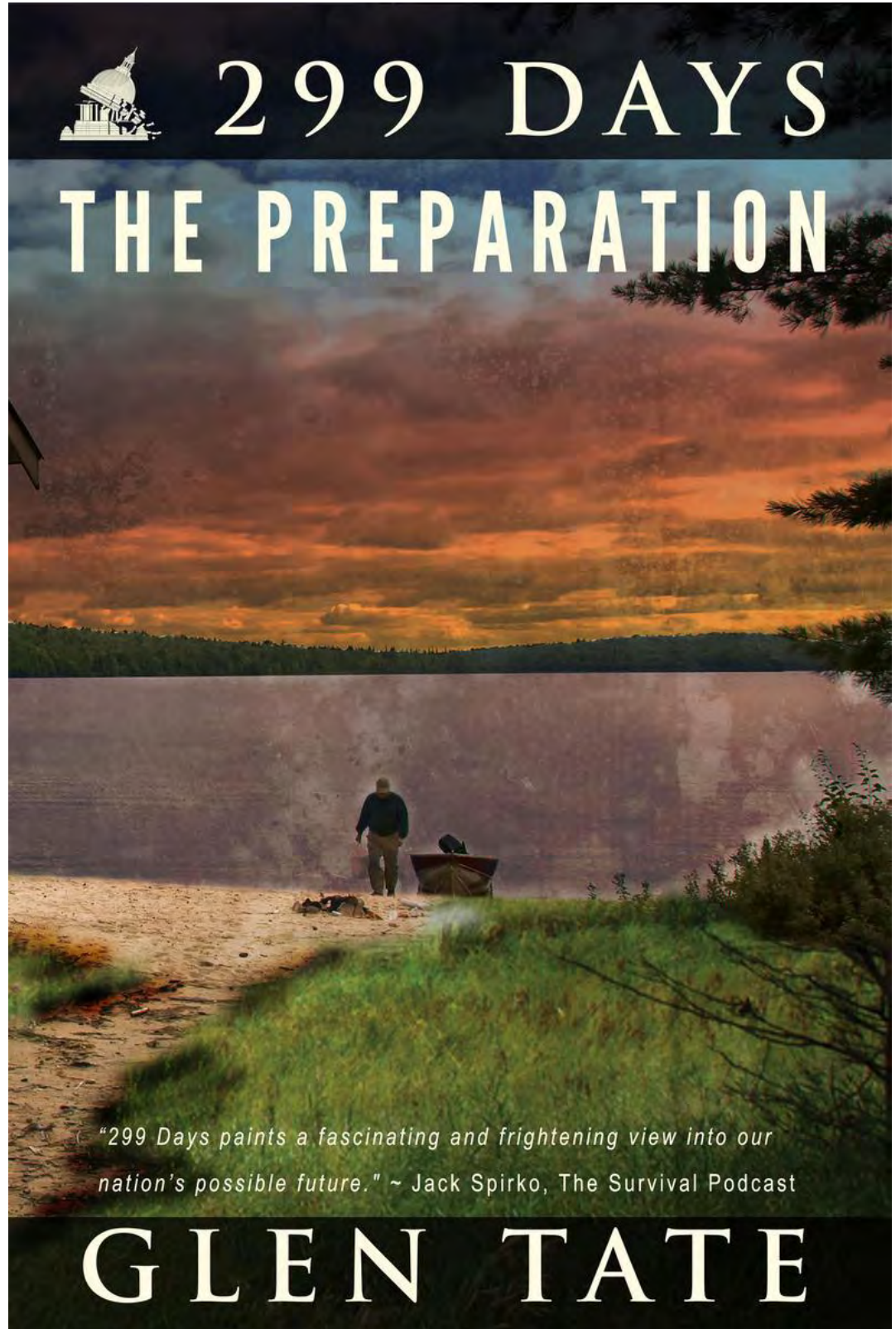
BY: GLEN TATE

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Meet Grant Matson: lawyer, father, suburbanite husband who awakens to the fragility of modern society and embarks on a personal journey that introduces him to a world of self-reliance and liberation. **299 DAYS: THE PREPARATION**, the first book in the 299 Days series, depicts the inner struggles Grant must face as he exists in a social system he recognizes as unsustainable and on the verge of collapse, but one in which he has built his life around. What begins as a return to his roots, self-sufficiency and independence, becomes a full blown move to prepare for what may come.

**ENGAGING, INSIGHTFUL AND A BIT SUSPENSEFUL, FOLLOW GRANT'S TRANSITION FROM A SELF-PERCEIVED "SHEEPLE" TO A FULL-BLOWN "PREPPER."**

Will his fears come true? Is he an extremist? What if nothing happens? What if something does?







# SARGE

## A “GOING HOME” SERIAL PART 6



BY: ANGRY AMERICAN

### SARGE - PART 6

Linus spent a little time listening to the radio. The propagation was and he was able to pick up transmissions from several places around the globe. He listened as a couple of Brits lamented the suffering they were sure was taking place in the US at the moment. Most curious was their talk about the BBC reporters who wanted to and document the situation. Their request was ultimately denied by the British government.

In our modern world journalists, if you could still call them that, were always at the forefront of suffering. It makes good TV. Linus wondered if anyone was recording what was going on in the country. If, when things were stabilized and brought back to normal, there would be any video record of it all. Or if what was certainly the largest disaster in modern times would go unrecorded.

That thought in and of itself was sobering. All that happened was the power went out. How could it possibly turn into the largest disaster in history? In World War II it's estimated that upwards of eighty

million people died, combatants and noncombatants combined. The figures tossed around in the days before, The Day, was that upwards of ninety percent of the US population would die. That means nearly three-hundred million people will perish. Thinking of that number Linus sat back in his chair and shook his head. He ran a hand through his hair and felt tired, weary, and it'd only been a couple of days. He decided a shower would make him feel better, so he shut down the radios and secured them for the night.

First, he went to the kitchen for a beer and carried it to his bedroom where he turned on some Jonny Cash. He had speakers throughout the house and could hear the Man in Black in every room. After making a quick round through the house to ensure it was secure, he returned to the bathroom where he took a long hot shower while he drank his beer. It was a luxury and he knew it, but also knew he needed it.

After getting ready for bed he thought about tomorrow and what needed done.

The people of his community were going to starve to death if he didn't do something. From what he saw, none of them had any plan at all. They were all just sitting around waiting for someone to come to their rescue. Only rescue wasn't coming this time. Everyone was now responsible for themselves in a way they never could have imagined only a few short days ago.

He was stuck, sitting on the bed thinking about these things, how the march of progress, technology, medical, engineering, farming and all the other things that made the modern world, also had negative effects. It made people weaker, physically and mentally. Machines now did most of the work, thus removing physical labor from the lives of the developed world. Technology made us dumber. Why learn calculus when you could get a calculator for a few dollars that would do it for you? No one, except a small few who were looked upon the rest of society as odd or even hippies, grew their own food and most people wouldn't know where to even begin in planting a garden.



While these skills were mostly lost in the developed world, they were still in active daily use in the developing world. But then, who would use an EMP against such people? Their very lack of development renders such a weapon useless against them, where as the opposite is true for a highly developed society. And as a result, hundreds of millions were sure to perish. It was a sobering thought and Linus knew he couldn't save everyone. But he would do his best to help as many as he could. Hopefully, they would take the cue and start helping themselves as well. But he'd worry about it tomorrow. Now, he was tired and needed some sleep.

As was his custom, Linus woke before sunrise. He quickly dressed and headed for the kitchen, he needed coffee. Getting the coffee going was a practiced and efficient proposition that took no more time than the thought itself. As the pot began to heat he went about his breakfast routine. There was still bacon in the fridge, plus more in the freezer, so he laid three pieces in a skillet already sitting over a blue flame on the stove.

Linus had done considerable calculations on how much food he'd need and spent considerable time and money laying it in. As it was just him, he could easily feed himself for a year before he'd have to dip into his iron rations of buckets of beans and rice and other long-term storage foods. As the bacon began to pop in the pan Linus went out to his garage. There was a small chicken coop attached to the back of the building. In normal times, he let the birds roam freely. But since things had turned, he kept them in the small run outside the coop during the day. He checked the laying boxes and found five eggs. As a thank you he tossed a couple handfuls of scratch to the birds which they eagerly set on.

Taking the eggs in the house he washed them in the sink quickly and placed three of them in a bowl. The other two he put on the stove. Once the bacon was cooked, he cracked the eggs in and cooked them up. With breakfast ready Linus carried it and a thermos of coffee to the comms shack and connected the radios. He ate his breakfast while he surfed the radio bands. The sun was beginning to break the horizon and as a result the bands were fading in many cases. But it gave him something to do while he ate.

With breakfast done, he tended to some housekeeping. He had laundry that needed done and put a load in the washing machine. With the sun coming up, his solar array was more than sufficient to carry the load. Of course, he'd have to hang them on the line, the drier was out of the question.

As the washer began its job Linus went out to the garage again. He opened the big doors and flipped on the lights. He pulled the wagon for the ATV over and rolled a large bundle of net into it.

Backing the ATV up he connected the cart to the machine and rode it out of the garage. Going back in the house Linus grabbed his carbine and slung it over his shoulder. Stopping in the kitchen he filled a small cooler with beers and headed out. After pulling the cart to the dock he loaded the net, with much grunting, cussing and associated gyrations, into the boat. That's the thing about nets, they'll catch on everything you don't want them too. Every nail, screwhead, splinter on the dock and cleat on the boat.

Cussing, Linus finally fell into the seat of the boat. The outboard fired up immediately and sat purring as blue smoke drifted out of the water. Linus lived on the outside of a bend in the river. The opposite side was the inside of the bend. He motored over and to the far shore to an old sand pine that had fell into the river during a hurricane a couple years ago.

Linus tied the boat up to the tree and let it settle in the current. He opened the cooler and took out a beer and cracked the top. Taking a long pull on the bottle he leaned back against the outboard and looked out at the river. From out here everything looked normal. You couldn't tell anything was wrong. He could see civilization from where he sat but was just far enough outside it that it didn't exist.

Of course, the boat motor needed gas and he was enjoying the brewing efforts of Budweiser and he was looking at his own house across the river. But for all that was wrong with the world at this moment, none of it mattered. He could cruise the river until the gas ran out and then switch to his canoe. He could still fish and, if he got creative, could probably still enjoy a beverage while doing so. Linus smiled and opened another beer. It was a good day, but there was work to do.

After draining the second beer Linus undertook the monumental task of trying to find the end of the net. He was quickly cussing himself for not doing so before he put it in the boat. It took a while, but he finally got it sorted out. Tossing the freed end into the river the current carried it downstream away from the boat. This made the task of unrolling the mass of monofilament much easier. Once all of it was in the river, Linus untied the boat and let it drift down to the free end.

He caught it as it passed and started the outboard and motored slowly upriver while holding onto it with one hand. Not

wanting someone to come along and hit the net with their boat, he set it at an angle running upstream. Once the net was stretched out Linus attached a coffee can full of cement to the end and dropped it into the river. With the net now set he decided to do a little fishing. Not that he needed the meat, but he still had beer and it was a nice cool day.

Linus spent most of the day on the river. Fishing, drinking coffee or having a beer and just enjoying the solitude. He'd seen one boat go by. It's captain waving in the usual way people on the river do. But he didn't stop and showed no intent, hostile or otherwise. By the end of the day he had a couple of large catfish. The net had been out for several hours and on more than one occasion he saw fish flipping in the it. So Linus decided to check the net before heading in.

Gripping the net he lifted it up over the boat, pulling the craft under the net so that it ran across the boat. Using a hand over hand method he pulled the boat along the length of the net. By the time he reached the end of the set the catch was three large gar, the biggest over three feet which did a hell of a number on the net, and three large catfish.

The fish were tossed into the bottom of the boat and he motored back across the river to the dock. Linus went up to the house and brought the fish cart down to load the fish into. Once the boat was secured he pulled the fish over to the cleaning station. There are a number of jokes about cooking gar. One of the best being, to cook a gar get a pine board as long as the fish. Split it down the middle and tack it to the board. Put the board in the at 300 degrees for thirty minutes. Remove from the oven, scrap the gar into the trash can and eat the board!

But there is a considerable amount of meat on these fish. However, it will take a little work to get to it. Instead of a fillet knife, you'll need a pair of tin snips. Force the snips under the skin at the tail and cut the back of the fish. The reason for this is the scales of this prehistoric fish are very tough. They are large, hard and very secure. The only way is to cut them in half with a sturdy pair of snips. Once opened in this manner two tubes, for lack of a better word, of meat are exposed. You can run your finger under them to free them and pull them out. The rest of the creature is of no real use.



The catfish were gutted and the left whole. He wasn't going to keep them. All these fish were for people in his community. They represented the first step in the direction of self sufficiency for his community, whether his neighbors knew it or not. But that would be tomorrow. It was already getting late and he wasn't in the mood to visit with anyone. So he went inside and turned in early.

The next morning he was up early again and went through his morning routine efficiently and quickly. Once he was ready for the day Linus took the fish he'd cleaned the day before and put it in a small cooler which went onto the front cargo rack on the ATV. On the rear rack he put two milk crates secured with a bungee cord. Water was in short supply for people living on wells with no power and he was going to deliver some water and fish to some of his neighbors. Once everything was secure he headed for Joel's house again. The little ones were in the front yard playing a small inflatable pool. Their parents sat in folding chairs in the shade of an oak tree.

"Mornin'," Linus greeted them as he rolled to a stop. He looked in the pool and saw there wasn't much water in it. "Looks like the creek is drying up."

Joel stood up and walked over. "We filled it the day before the power went out. I've been using the water in it to flush the toilets. Figured we could give them one more day to splash around a bit before it's gone."

Linus smiled. "Little ones always like the water. I don't think I've ever seen one that didn't."

Joel offered a half-hearted smile. "Yeah, I guess so," then changed the subject. "Have uh, have you heard anything? You know, about what's happening?"

"I listen on my radios when I can. It's bad though. Ain't just here. Entire country's in the dark. Some one turned the knob back about a hundred and twenty years I reckon."

Joel looked forlorn and scratched his head. "That's what I was afraid of. That this isn't something local or short-term."

"I'm sorry son, but I don't think it is. We'll just have to get along as best we can." Then Linus smiled. "Which is why I'm here." He took three of water jugs from the crates on the back of the ATV and handed them to Joel. "Brought you some water." Then he opened the cooler and looked in, asking, "You like catfish?"

Fumbling with the three water jugs Joel mumbled, "Yeah," before losing one of the bottles to bounce off the ground.

Linus climbed off the machine and picked up the jug. Then reached into the cooler and took out three catfish wrapped in newspaper. "Come on, let's take this up to the house. These fish are fresh, I caught them last evening."

"Thanks. We'll cook them up later," Joel replied standing on the porch with the fish under one arm. He looked out at his kids splashing and laughing in the little pool and half moaned, "What the hell are we going to do?"

Linus pointed to a couple of chairs on the porch and said, "Have a seat."

Joel looked at the fish and said, "I should put these in the fridge."

Linus laughed, "Not a good idea."

Realizing the fallacy in his thought Joel replied, "Oh yeah. You're probably right. We have the door propped open anyway."

When Joel sat down Linus waited a moment to speak. "You know. I was sitting out on the river today thinking about things. And you, from out there it looks the same as it always does. Nothing looked different. Sure, we're going to have to adapt a bit. Change the way we did things. But people lived for thousands of years before electricity and so can we."

Still looking at his children Joel nodded. "Adapt. Those most able to adapt to a new environment will survive."

"There you go, Darwin said it best."

Caught off guard Joel looked over, "Huh?"

"Darwin. You got the gist of the quote right. But I prefer George Bernard Shaw's quote on adaptation. The reasonable man adapts himself to the world; the unreasonable one persists in trying to adapt the world to himself. Therefore all progress depends on the unreasonable man. Well, progress has come to an ass blistering halt and the ones that can best adapt themselves to the world we now live in will survive; those that can't or won't, will die." Linus looked out at the kids and asked, "So, which kind of a man are you?"

"I see what you mean."

"Not to mention, you can't just sit down and wait to die. Because you have three other people relying on you. So if you die, they die. Are you willing to sentence your family to death because you're scared? Suck it up Buttercup, there's fuckery at hand."





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# SURVIVAL DISPATCH INSIDER

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