

THE BUG OUT BAG BOOK

**Create a Personalized
Emergency Gear Kit**

By Caleb Rogers

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Preface to the Second Edition

In 2008, I wrote the first edition of *The Bug Out Bag Book*. I had recently become interested in the subject and was surprised that there wasn't a concise guide for creating a bug out bag. There were some articles online, and lots of forum posts, but it would take an individual a long time to put all that information together.

I wrote the book to help fill that need. Since then, a lot has happened. There have been earthquakes that tore cities apart, hurricanes, tornadoes that leveled small towns, and even a nuclear power plant disaster in Japan. That's really the reason why I wanted to write a second edition.

The core content is going to be the same – recent disasters won't change the basic concepts. Still, the information could use some fleshing out. There was nothing to deal with radiation emergencies, for example. If you live near a nuclear power plant, that information could be valuable.

This edition still remains true to the original's core goal: To help you create a personalized emergency gear kit. It also covers some recent disasters, the scale of the problems they caused, and how you might need to react to them.

As always, be prepared. Then you won't have to worry about it. Build a kit that works for you, and then live your life without the fear and stress of a potential calamity. You don't have to worry, because you'll be ready.

Stay calm, build a kit, and be ready. There's really nothing to fear, because you'll be ready.

– Caleb Rogers, October 9, 2011

Introduction

A bug out bag is a bag that's full of emergency gear and is ready to go at a moment's notice. Just grab it and go. Having a bug out bag is just one of the many steps every household should take when preparing for emergencies. If you think you have no need for one, take a look at the world around you.

Disasters happen everywhere, some man-made and some nature-made. Here is a short list of some emergency situations: Hurricanes, flash floods, riots, war, tornadoes, earthquakes, and fires. Why not be prepared for the possibility of disaster?

Being prepared doesn't mean you're over-zealous, or soon to be labeled a nutty survivalist by the neighborhood watch. All it means is that you are ready to take some kind of action or have some necessities ready in the event of disaster. That's where your bug out bag will come in handy.

Here's how to set up a basic bug out bag. Take an old backpack and empty it out. Any backpack will do, but the bigger and tougher it is, the better off you'll be if you ever have to use it. Fill that bag with emergency gear and then put it in your closet, or somewhere equally accessible. If there is an emergency, take it out and use it if you have the need. Put it back when everything is back to normal.

Are you wondering what kind of emergency gear you need to put in your bug out bag? It's up to you, and your specific needs. Ask yourself... How many people will it need to sustain? Where will I need to go? What is the outside environment like in my region? Will I need shelter?

Emergencies happen. If you're prepared for them, maybe they won't affect you so profoundly. If you don't have to worry about where you're going to get your next meal, you can focus on the crisis at hand. Construct a bug out bag that will meet your needs, and keep it ready to go at a moment's notice.

Common Disasters

Here is an overview of some recent large disasters that were the result of typical natural disasters.

Hurricane Irene (August 2011). On August 24, 2011, this storm became a category 3 storm. According to the Wikipedia article, winds got up to 115mph. Have you ever seen a car go that fast? It's fast. The next day, it hit in North Carolina as a category 1 storm, with 85mph winds. Though weaker, it still caused flooding and major water damage. Damage estimates were around \$10Billion USD. Source: [Wikipedia 2011 Atlantic Hurricane Season](#).

Tornado in Vilonia, AR (April 2011). A small town about 40 minutes away from where I live now was devastated by a tornado in April of 2011. I drove through there and shot some video of the damage with my phone. It was devastating. Here is a link to the video: [Vilonia Tornado Damage 2011](#).

One of my coworkers lost the top half of his two-story house in that storm, with the family inside. They have a safe room, and were in it at the time. Once the storm passed, they got out of their safe room, only to be staring at open sky. They're lucky to be alive. Many houses in that town were completely flattened.

Here's an article that contains details about the storm, including weather photographs. According to the data, this particular tornado was on the ground for 51 miles. [Read the article here](#).

Tornado in Joplin, MO (May 2011). Shortly after the storm ripped apart Vilonia, another storm caused major damage in Missouri. According to the NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration), the storm that hit Joplin was an EF-5 class tornado. This is the top of the scale. The winds were in excess of 200 miles per hour, and the tornado was $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile wide. It is said to be the 7th deadliest tornado in US history. 157 people died. Source: [NOAA 2011 Tornado Information](#).

Earthquake in Chile (Feb. 2010). An 8.8 magnitude earthquake hit off the coast of Chile on February 27, 2010. The scale measuring quakes goes to 10 – Massive Destruction. An 8.8 is devastating. According to the Wikipedia article, the quake lasted 3 minutes, and caused massive damage. “According to official sources, 525 people lost their lives, 25 people went missing and about 9% of the population lost their homes.” Source: [2010 Chile Earthquake](#).

Tornadoes and hurricanes happen every year, and an earthquake can strike without warning. I know this section is entitled “Common Disasters,” yet contains information that is of a somewhat extraordinary nature. I did this to highlight the potential for something really bad to happen.

While these types of events happen all the time, most are not so devastating. I grew up in Southern California, and got used to feeling little earthquakes (3 – 5 on the Richter scale). Since moving to Arkansas, I’m now used to reports of tornadoes being spotted in some distant, empty field.

If you’re in the path of destruction – earthquake, tornado, and hurricane regions – you need to be prepared to deal with the extreme versions of these disasters. Every so often, one of these regular events becomes a big deal.

Instead of a little tornado in a field, you get a huge storm ripping apart your home town. Instead of a tropical storm headed your way, only to turn before landfall, you get massive rain, wind, and flood damage. Instead of a small tremor, you get a large quake that knocks over buildings around you, causing massive destruction.

I don’t tell you any of this to scare you. I tell you so you know. I tell you so you can do what you need to be prepared.

Hurricanes

“Hurricanes are classified into five categories based on their wind speed, central pressure, and damage potential.” According to the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale, the storms are ranked as such:

- Category 1: 74 – 95mph winds
- Category 2: 96 – 110mph winds

- Category 3: 111 – 130mph winds
- Category 4: 131 – 155mph winds
- Category 5: 155mph or greater winds

Source: [Ready.gov](https://www.ready.gov)

Here are the hurricane seasons by region.

- Northwest Pacific: April to January
- South Indian: November to April
- Northeast Pacific: May to November
- North Atlantic: June to November
- Australia Southwest Pacific: November to April
- North Indian: April to December

Source: [Hurricanes and Tropical Storms Wikipedia page](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hurricane_seasons)

Tornadoes

Tornado Alley is loosely defined as the area between the Rocky and Appalachian mountain ranges. This is huge region, and some areas are more prone to them than others. They are most frequent in the *great plains* states.

The most common tornado activity states are:

- Texas
- Kansas
- Oklahoma

Source: [Tornado Alley](https://www.weather.gov/tornadoes)

Other states, such as Florida, Missouri, and Arkansas also report regular tornado activity, even though these states aren't known for their vast, rolling plains.

Earthquakes

If you live in the Ring of Fire, you know it. The Pacific Ring of Fire “is an area where large numbers of earthquakes and volcanic eruptions occur in the basin of the Pacific Ocean.” (Source below.) If where you live borders the Pacific, you’re going to get some earthquake activity.

California, where I grew up, has a lot of earthquakes. Hawaii, in the Pacific, has volcanoes that still erupt to this day. Japan – on the other side of the Pacific from California – is regularly rocked by quakes. Some devastate Japan, and we’ll get into that in the next section.

There are other earthquakes in the world – other fault lines and such. However, you should note that a majority of them happen in the Ring of Fire. “About 90% of the world’s earthquakes and 80% of the world’s largest earthquakes occur along the Ring of Fire.”

Source: [Pacific Ring of Fire](#)

Uncommon Disasters

While there are many disasters that could possibly strike – asteroids, pandemic, and anything else you can think of – I want to focus on just two. War and radiation disasters are real events that can and have happened in our world. While we cannot let the possibilities of these events rule our lives and generate unnecessary fear, we must recognize that they happen.

Since they are uncommon, you might not think that you need to prepare for them specifically. While this is basically true, there are a couple of things you should do. You'll want to create a long-term action plan, and maybe pack a couple extra items in your gear bag.

War

If you are reading this from a developed first world nation, then the chance of you getting involved in a local war is pretty slim. These days, most wars are fought in far off lands filled with sand. So why even bother?

Take a bit of time to think about it because, though uncommon, it can happen. It seems like everyone is trying to get into or out of a fight these days. What if protests and riots build into a movement that evolves into a civil war? Therefore, it can't be ruled out as "it's just not gonna happen."

War is a terrible thing, filled with suffering. It's not something that you can prepare for with an emergency gear kit. You could, however, make some plans. In the rare event that war finds its way to your soil, you'll need to at least have thought about these kinds of things:

- How to contact family who lives far away?
- Where to meet up (in what region) should war come knocking on your door?
- Should you be forced to flee, where would your ideal destination be?
- What if you decide to stay and participate in the war?

War is common in some areas of the world, and uncommon in others. Don't obsess over the likelihood of facing war, but know that it's not outside the realm of possibility.

Survival has always been a mental game. So think about it.

Radiation

Radiation threats, while still rare, need more direct action. According to a Mayo Clinic article entitled [Radiation Sickness](#), "The severity of signs and symptoms of radiation sickness depends on how much radiation you've absorbed."

Doses of radiation are measured in units called "Grays" and are denoted as Gy. To put this unit of measurement in perspective, a typical X-ray results in a 0.1 Gy dose of radiation, directed at a particular point on the body. Radiation sickness usually occurs when the entire body gets a dose of 1 Gy or greater. According to the Mayo Clinic, doses greater than 6 Gy to the whole body typically result in "death within two days to two weeks, depending on the dose and duration of the exposure." Source: [Mayo Clinic](#)

Symptoms of radiation sickness can include diarrhea, headache, fever, vomiting, and fatigue. Unfortunately, these symptoms can also mean a variety of ailments. It's up to you to find out if these symptoms are the result of radiation exposure, food poisoning, or simply the flu. Radiation disasters should be widely reported so people will know what's going on and can evacuate quickly. The further you are from the radiation, the better off you'll be.

If you think this threat could only occur as the result of a dirty bomb attack by militants, you're wrong. There's another way this can happen. On March 11, 2011, a 9.0 earthquake struck Japan. According to [Wikipedia](#), "It was the most powerful known earthquake to have hit Japan, and one of the five most powerful earthquakes in the world overall since modern record-keeping began in 1900."

This quake resulted in wide-spread devastation and a tsunami (tidal wave). The event also caused a nuclear disaster. According to an article on the [Huffington Post](#), “Japan declared states of emergency for five nuclear reactors at two power plants after the units lost cooling ability in the aftermath of Friday’s powerful earthquake. Thousands of residents were evacuated as workers struggled to get the reactors under control to prevent meltdowns.”

This is a huge disaster. Radiation is very dangerous, and if something like this happens in your area, you need to act fast to get out of harm’s way. Don’t panic and trample over people, but be aware of the danger and evacuate.

A total disaster at a nuclear power plant would not be as devastating as a nuclear missile. However, you should note: “It is impossible for a nuclear power plant to undergo a nuclear chain reaction that results in an explosion of power comparable with a nuclear weapon, but even low-powered explosions due to uncontrolled chain reactions, that would be considered “fizzles” in a bomb, may still cause considerable damage and meltdown in a reactor.”
Source: [Nuclear Chain Reaction](#)

There are nuclear power plants all over the world. I’m in the US, and I’ve got one about 2 hours away (by car) from where I sit writing this. According to the United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission, there are many nuclear power reactors across the nation. Example: Russellville, AR, Joliet, IL, Wilmington, NC, Pasco, WA, Fort Worth, TX, Dothan, AL, Wilmington, DE, Green Bay, WI, Oswego, NY. There are several more in the list. It’s worth noting that these are 3.5 – 90 miles away from the city listed. See the entire list and distances here: [USNRC Reactor List](#)

If there is a nuclear or radiation emergency in your area, the United States CDC recommends the following actions:

“If a radiation emergency happens near where people live or work, you can take immediate action to protect yourself, your loved ones, and others around you. This kind of emergency could be a dirty bomb or nuclear explosion, a nuclear power plant accident, or a transportation accident. These actions will protect people in a radiation emergency:

- Get inside and stay inside an undamaged building.
- If possible, shower and change into clean clothes.

- Stay tuned to television or radio for updates and instructions.

Emergency workers and local officials are trained to respond to different types of situations and will give you specific instructions to keep you safe. “

Source: [US CDC Radiation Emergencies](#)

It's important to minimize radiation exposure. If you can get out of the area without exposing yourself to more radiation, that might be the best course of action. Staying put might be best, depending on a variety of factors. Don't be foolish, and do what you can to stay out of the radiation.

Choosing a Bag

The first step in building a bug out bag is to select a good bag. When choosing a bag, look for these three traits: Durability, versatility, and size.

There are many bags out there in the world, but when selecting a bug out bag, you need to make sure that it fits you in particular. I'm referring both to the size of the bag in relation to your physical frame, and also your particular needs.

Your needs might differ from the person next to you, your neighbor, and the guy sitting in his recliner all the way across the country. What is the general climate like in your area from season to season? Does it ever snow? What about rain? Excessive heat or dangerous wildlife?

No matter who you are or where you live, your needs may be different from those around you. Take your health, for example. Are you diabetic? Do you have a child who has special needs, or is still in diapers? Considerations such as these need to be taken into account when you sit down to design your gear kit.

I'm not going to design your entire bug out bag for you, but I am going to give you some guidelines and a basic framework. The rest is up to you. You decide what you need, and stick it in your bag.

The Bag Itself

The bag you choose for your emergency gear kit should be a tough one. There's one simple reason for this: You don't want it to fail you at a critical moment. Your bag should be rugged, constructed of strong materials, and have the ability to take a beating and not fall apart. No \$20 bag from some discount super-store is going to cut it. Price is relative, but if your bag costs less than \$50, you might need to shop around. Better bags cost more money.

That being said, used military gear is easy to come by, cheap, and tough. I'm not talking about after-market knock-offs that cost \$15 new, but actual military

issue (surplus, used, etc.) gear such as ALICE packs or a CFP-90. These bags are tough, abundant, and affordable.

You can also get great civilian versions of these bags, but then you get into the price to quality issue. This is not a life-rule, but if something is cheap, it's probably cheap (as in poorly constructed and might fail you when you need it to help keep you alive).

Whatever it is, the bag you select should have enough room to carry your gear. How much gear you need will be determined by your own individual needs, but there are some general guidelines you should follow. Typically, a bug out bag should hold enough gear to sustain you for three days. This is usually enough time to get out of a trouble-spot, even on foot, and find a safer place to wait out whatever disaster landed in your area.

Remember when hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans? Did you watch the news when that was going on? I remember seeing an aerial shot of thousands (I didn't count, but it looked like thousands) of people were just milling about on a freeway overpass. These people were just sitting around, waiting for help. Don't be like that. Help yourself instead. Had I been in that situation, I would not have stuck around and waited for rescue.

Situations like hurricane Katrina is when the bug out bag should come out and go on your back, be in your hand, etc. Do whatever you have to do to get out of there. People get angry and dangerous when there is a crisis going on and they have no food or water. If all of those people had a bug out bag, then maybe there would have been fewer stories of violence during the refuge and rescue time frame. Don't be one of those people stuck in a bad place. Make sure you have enough gear to get out.

The same advice applies whether you were in hurricanes Katrina or Irene, or fleeing the disaster after the Japan quake that killed thousands. When there's a disaster, you might need to leave in a hurry, so it's important to have the gear ready.

How Big of a Bag Do I Need?

The size is subjective to your needs, wants, and personal style. Generally speaking, you should pack for at least three days. Some people will need quite a large bag, while others can get by with something as small as an average school backpack.

Your environment will also affect the size of our bag. For example, if you live in a very cold climate, you will need to pack some weather-appropriate gear into your bag. If disaster happens during the winter, you don't want to freeze to death while bugging out. Make sure to account for such possibilities when deciding on the size of your bag. You might need room for a jacket, a wool sweater, and extra socks, while someone in a very warm climate might only need a light jacket.

Clothes aren't the only things you're going to put into your bag. I'll get into the specifics later, but you'll need such items as food, water, tools, shelter, first aid items, and more. Is your bag – or the one you plan to buy – big enough for all that?

Another consideration, directly related to the size of the bag, is the comfort of the bag. Fortunately, most modern hiking and outdoor equipment is designed to be as ergonomic as possible while still doing its job. This goes for military gear, too. Backpacks with frames, padding, and modular attachments are the norm, so you shouldn't have much trouble finding one that can hold your gear and not strain your back too much.

The bag you choose should be as large as necessary to carry the gear that you determine you'll need according to your particular situation. It should be comfortable and durable, and should withstand the elements as much as possible. The bag you choose can be of either civilian sporting origin or military applications. Just make sure it isn't some cheap knock-off. Do not spend your money on a bag that will fall apart when faced with the slightest stress. See Appendix B for shopping and research resources.

Food & Water

While in the middle of a crisis, the last thing you should be thinking about is that rumbling in your belly. Food is something we should have every day, at least a couple of times, to remain healthy and keep our energy levels up throughout the day. When bugging out, energy is important.

Food will keep you going when other energy sources are spent. For the sake of discussion, let's say that the disaster is a very large earthquake. Not only is it powerful, but the damage is so widespread it stretches out for miles and miles. During the quake, your adrenaline will spike and you'll be able to perform physical feats you've never done before.

Food and water will be fuel when your adrenaline runs out. Bugging out to a safer place can take days, so you'll need enough energy to sustain you until you reach safety.

The amount of food you will need to carry is somewhat dependent on your situation, location, and how you are going to get to a safer place. Sometimes, getting to a safer place will take a lot of energy. If you have to hike through the mountains to escape danger, you might need more energy than someone who drives an hour up the road to get to the family cabin.

The situation is further complicated by the fact that people need varying amounts of water. If it's really hot, you're going to need more water to sustain your energy levels as you travel. Likewise, you'll use more water hiking up a mountain than you would walking down a road. Pack enough water to get you through to safety.

Water is heavy. More weight to carry means more exertion, which leads to greater water consumption. A simple solution here would be to carry some water, and then some method of water purification. This, however, is dependent on having another source of water. If you're in a desert, you might just need to carry all you need. Research your area, make appropriate plans, and then pack your bug out bag accordingly.

Food is also heavy, but the military solved that problem long ago. MREs. MRE means “Meal Ready to Eat,” and it’s a self-contained plastic package of vacuum-sealed food designed to sustain troops in the field. They are cheap, relatively small, easy to come by, and fit nicely into a bug out bag.

They also taste pretty good. I eat mine (when I eat them) at room temperature, but they can easily be heated up inside their plastic pouches, or in a camping cookware set over a fire. There are a few different brands of MREs, each coming with some variation. However, they all have these basic elements: Entrée, side dish, snack item, drink mix, and condiment pack. Some even come with coffee and toilet paper. They are also reasonably priced. Typically, one meal will cost anywhere from three to eight dollars. Buying them in a case usually costs less than purchasing the same amount individually.

MREs were originally designed to sustain soldiers in the field, so they should do the job if you find yourself in the middle of a disaster. They are calorie-dense, which will give you more energy, and a little high in sodium, which will help you retain water. They’re tasty, they give you energy you’ll need, and they fit into your pack.

Make sure you have enough food in your gear kit. If you go with MREs, I recommend at least three. That’s one per day for a three-day bug out situation. You might need more food – let your own individual needs guide you. Personally, I would probably pack four or five for three days. Having a little extra, if you can carry it, won’t hurt.

Beyond MREs, you might want to consider throwing in a few energy or protein bars. They are light, cheap, and provide more nutrients than the average junk-food snack items. Protein bars, however, need a little bit of maintenance. While MREs will last up to five years if stored in the right temperature (which is basically a cool room temperature), protein and energy bars don’t last as long before they go bad. I recommend keeping some in your bag, but cycling them out once per month or so with new ones. You can just eat the old ones, which should not be expired when you pull them out. If they are expired, you waited too long.

Why is it important to keep yourself fed and hydrated in a disaster? Shouldn’t you be concerned about more important things, like staying alive? While

staying alive is very important, that task becomes much easier if you have food and water to keep you going. They are two of our three most basic needs (the other one being shelter). Not only are they basic to our survival, but, in an emergency situation, having food and water makes everything easier.

Having the food problem solved will allow you to focus on the really important stuff. Like staying alive. That task is easier when you don't have to worry about food and water. When you're not thinking about how much your hands are shaking from hunger, or how fatigued you are because you haven't had anything to drink for an entire day, you'll be able to think clearly and get yourself out of the danger zone. Being as comfortable as you can be in a disaster will help you get out of it. Sure, you'll be stressed and scared, but you won't be hungry, thirsty, or overly-tired. Keep yourself fed and hydrated and you'll be one step closer to getting out of a disaster in one piece.

Shelter & Clothing

Another basic human necessity is shelter. We need some form of shelter to survive in the world. Even ancient nomadic cultures slept in tents and non-nomadic people slept in caves. Our bodies do not withstand weather extremes, hot or cold, very well.

Keeping a shelter in your bag, however, is a bit problematic for one simple reason. They are big. Even the smallest pup tent takes up a lot of space in a pack – space you may need for food, water, or other gear.

Even though shelter is vital to survival, some people skip over it when packing a bug out bag. There are a variety of reasons for this – they don't have a tent, they plan on staying in a hotel or their car, etc.

To be perfectly honest, most tents on the market today are just too big to fit into a pack and still leave room for other gear. To solve this problem, you just have to assess your situation, your needs, and your personal bug out plan.

A tent might not be what you need at all. Maybe you need a tarp, a poncho, a bivouac shelter, or something else entirely. Perhaps your plan is to build a shelter from items in your environment, should the need arise. Regardless of your plans or your needs, know that there are alternatives to carrying a tent.

I like tents. Some are so easy they just pop up and are ready to go. Others are so well-made that they can protect you in some very harsh environments. If you know that you will definitely be with someone (like a spouse or child), pack part of the tent into their bag. For example, you can carry the poles and stakes in your bag, and your partner can carry the tent itself. Deciding to carry a tent or not is your decision. If you choose not to, there are alternatives.

Using a Tarp

Tarps are a great option for portable shelter in the wild. A tarp is a flat piece of material – usually polyethylene (plastic-like and cloth-like at the same time) – that can be used for a variety of purposes. They are often seen strapped over

the back of a pick-up truck so the load stays in place and dry. Sometimes they are used to cover up items in people's garages or sheds. Sometimes tarps are used as effective shelter against the elements.

Using a tarp as a shelter is not as fool-hardy as it might seem. True, a tarp does not cover you as much as a tent does, but it will get the job done. In a survival situation, a tarp might be enough to save your life, and even make you comfortable. When used properly (and there's more than one way to do it), a tarp will shield you from the cold, rain or snow, and even excessive heat.

Some ways that you can use a tarp to protect yourself from bad weather:

- As a basic, A-line tent
- A simple roof strung up on surrounding trees
- A lean-to
- As a blanket
- A door to a cave or other natural shelter
- Use your imagination...

There are many ways a tarp can be used to save your life. Having shelter can be a matter of life or death. How many times have you read a news article about hikers who got lost in the woods only to die from exposure during the night? Dying from exposure means dying from the elements. Typically, this is hypothermia, which "is a condition in which core temperature drops below the required temperature for normal metabolism and body functions which is defined as 35C or 95F" ([Wikipedia](#)).

Fortunately, a tarp can be a basic shelter for you to protect you from varied climate conditions. Keep your body dry, shielded from the wind, and at a decent operating temperature, and you'll be much better off.

Making a shelter with a tarp is simple. The most basic use is just to wrap it around yourself. When used as a blanket, it will reflect some body heat, but it is mostly useful against the wind and the rain. Keeping dry will help to keep your body temperature up, but if it's too cold around you, you should take the time to make a more robust shelter with the tarp.

The next step up from using the tarp as a blanket is to use some sticks to make it into a kind of mini-awning. One end of the tarp is on the ground, and the other end is propped up with two sticks jammed or hammered in the ground. This setup will keep the rain and wind off of you from the back and two sides, but you will still have an opening in the front. The advantage here is that you can then curl up inside a sleeping bag, wool blanket, or similar.

A tarp can also be a great way to make a lean-to shelter. Start with a tree, boulder, or natural hill that's similar to a wall. Lean large branches up against your base (the tree, boulder, etc.) and then wrap your tarp around it. Then take some leafy branches and stack them on top of the tarp.

Make sure you tie everything down, weigh it all down, or secure it somehow, otherwise a strong gust of wind will come by and knock your hard work to the ground.

Another use of a tarp is to make a tent with it. There are two basic ways to do this: One with sides, and one with just a roof. Whichever basic style you choose will depend on the weather, how much gear you have, and your own personal needs.

To make a pup-style, two-man tent, you'll need some cord (I recommend paracord, though most any cord or rope will do), a tarp, and two trees that are about 8 – 12 feet apart with level ground between them. Sounds easy right?

Depending on the area you're in, it may take a while to find the right place. Soft, level ground is ideal because you want to be as comfortable as you can be under the circumstances. Clear any rocks from the area, and try to pick a spot that's dry and doesn't have many roots sticking up from the ground.

Tie your cord around five or six feet up on each of your two selected trees. Make sure you tie them tight. If you can find a branch on the trunk that is at about the right height, tie your cord above that. Then the cord won't slide down the trunk. Your tarp may get heavy if it is pouring down rain, or if it gets a lot of snow dropped on it.

With your cord tied tight and secured as best as you can, just take your tarp and drape it over the cord. Next, take each side of the tarp and pull it out some. Secure it either with rocks, a fallen tree trunk, or use some kind of stake in the grommets (the holes along the sides) of the tarp. In the end, you want it to look similar to an A-line pup-tent. Both ends will be open, but you can snuggle up with a warm sleeping bag, have a meal, and get some sleep.

The other kind of tent you can make with a tarp is just a basic roof structure. Start off with two trees just like the other tent, but you need to make sure there are some other trees close by. If you can find a spot where some trees circle a 10-12 foot area, you can use that to create your tarp roof structure.

String up your main line between two trees, just like you would with the pup-tent structure. However, this time you will want to make it higher – at least so you can stand (or stoop) in the shelter in the middle. From there, take some cord and tie it through one of the eyelets on your tarp. Take the other end of the cord and tie it to a tree that is surrounding your area, and is on the same side as the eyelet. Tie it to the tree a little lower than the main center cord. Repeat this with at least two trees on each side of the center line.

Since trees are not laid out in a standardized grid, you may have to improvise. In the end, you want a tight roof with enough of a pitch that the rain rolls off and any snow doesn't bunch up and make the roof collapse on you.

This type of structure doesn't shield from the wind very well, since the sides are open. You can tie the sides down a little lower – say, so that there is only a two foot gap between the roof and the ground and the sides – to block out some of the wind.

Regardless of whichever tarp structure you choose to build, it's not going to be perfect. The point is that you are making some form of shelter – some protection from the elements. It doesn't have to be perfect, it just has to work. In an emergency, comfort is going to have to take a back seat to safety. That means you may get cold and your gear might get wet, but you'll protect yourself from the elements enough that you're likely to stay alive.

Fire

No matter what kind of shelter you make or use, you should be prepared to make a little campfire. A small fire can provide enough warmth to keep you alive. It can cook game that you've killed or caught, and it can even bring a small sense of normalcy to an otherwise stressful situation.

Unless you plan on roasting large game over an open fire pit, you won't need much. The basic setup is to have a lighter or waterproof matches in your bug out bag, and then just collect kindling and wood to make a fire.

Another option is to carry a little camping pocket stove that uses fuel tabs. What I'm talking about is a little fold-up metal stove that is only a few inches wide, and little tabs of combustible fuel that looks like soap. Take your lighter or matches and light one of these tabs in your pocket stove and you'll have a little heat. With it, you can light other kindling, cook a can of beans, etc.

Other methods of starting a fire include: Dryer lint, magnesium fire-starter blocks, or just some simple waterproof matches. I carry a couple of disposable cigarette lighters and some compacted dryer lint in a waterproof container. Here's a short video example of using dryer lint (on YouTube):

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EMBGy8kKdvA>

There are many options for fire, so don't limit yourself. Just be sure to be careful when you do create a fire out in the wild. Remember, fire spreads. Take some basic precautions to prevent injury or forest fire. Dig a shallow pit, or place a ring of rocks around the fire area, or do both. Fire is dangerous, so play it safe.

Sleeping Accessories

A good sleeping bag will go a long way keeping you alive and comfortable in the wild. However, there are some other things you should think about when packing your bug out bag. Many sleeping bags take up a lot of space, while

others pack down into a small package. Regional environment can also play a role in determining your sleeping bag choice.

If, for example, you live in an area that never gets below sixty degrees, it is possible that you could do without a sleeping bag. In this scenario, though, you will still need something for warmth. A blanket will typically do in a situation like this. When coupled with a fire and thrown over your clothes, you'll start to warm up. Sometimes a sleeping bag isn't necessary, but you need to think about your regional environment and typical climate to determine how much warmth you may need at any time of the year. Pack your bag as if you were going to need it during the coldest, wettest part of the year.

Whether you use a sleeping bag or a blanket, you should also have a sleeping pad. These are the thin, dense foam pads that are anywhere from half an inch to an inch thick. They will typically roll up and you can strap them to your backpack. These pads serve two basic purposes. First and foremost, they provide comfort. You'll get more restful sleep if you don't have to fight with that rock or root poking you in the kidney all night long. Even on clear and level ground, a little padding can add a great bit of comfort.

The other reason to use a sleeping pad is warmth. The ground can get very cold during the night, and sleeping on a pad can put some distance between you and the cold. Hypothermia can kill, so even the little things you do to keep your body warm is worth the effort.

Whatever you decide to use, remember that these items take up space. This is space that you might want to use for extra food or water. You may have to get creative with your packing – just make sure that you have what you need to survive.

Clothing

The clothing you pack will vary greatly depending on your particular climate. Some people will want to keep a heavy parka draped over their bug out bag, while others just put a light sweater or windbreaker in their pack. What you carry depends on your particular needs.

Keep an extra pair of socks in a zippered plastic bag. Fungus growing on your foot will impede your travels. Ideally, you should have one full change of clothes – stored in some type of waterproof bag – packed into your bag.

When faced with disaster or some type of emergency, keep your clothes functional. If you are using your bug out bag, and the included clothing, then there's a pretty good chance that you're in the midst of an emergency. That means your bug out clothing should be rugged, protective, and appropriate for your environment.

Your clothes should be loose-fitting, allowing for maximum range of movement. During an emergency, you might have to run, climb, fight, or do any number of things involving physical exertion. The more comfortable your clothes are, and the more range of movement they offer, the better off you will be.

You could find some tactical clothing, or get some extreme-use outdoor recreation apparel. Both of those classes of clothing are designed to withstand abuse and not fall apart. That means that if you find yourself in a rough situation, these clothes will serve you better than any you get at a local department store. Remember, your goal here is survival, not to be a runway model.

Your footwear will also need to match your environment. If you are in a city, and plan on staying in a city-like area, athletic shoes will work just fine. However, if you plan on going out into the wild, you'll need something sturdier. A good military combat boot or some rugged hiking boots are a good choice. If you will be in a very cold area, make sure your boots have some type of insulation. Feet can get cold, and that will make your whole body cold.

Some items you might forget about are gloves, a hat, and a sturdy belt. You will need gloves if you are, or will be, in a cold climate. It's just another thing you will do to stay warm.

A hat is also a necessity, and serves two purposes. They keep the sun off your head and keep your head warm when it's cold out. You lose body heat through your head, too, so putting on even a simple cap can help protect against the cold.

A sturdy belt should find its way into your bug out bag because you never know how many things you'll need to strap to it during an emergency. Multi-tools, pistols, hunting knives, and so on get heavy. A fashion-oriented belt just won't hold up.

Whatever you decide to do about clothing for your bug out bag, keep two things in mind: Ruggedness and your environment. Pack appropriately for the weather – making sure that you pack for the worst weather you typically find in your region – and make sure your clothing can handle rough use.

Bringing it all Together

Shelter and clothing are all about keeping you warm, dry, and alive. You need to make sure you have some basic tools to help you during an emergency. Having minimal shelter and warm clothing can fight off hypothermia and keep you from dying from exposure to the elements.

These are all just suggestions. Your bug out gear and plan must meet your particular needs. If, for example, you have a family of six, a little pup-tent tarp setup might not be sufficient. Take the basic ideas I've mentioned, and create your own plan for shelter.

Tools & Weapons

If you're going to be out in the wilderness, building shelters and hunting wild game, you'll need some tools in your gear kit.

Don't be stupid. During all but the most drastic of emergencies, police are still on the job. Whatever you do for the tools and weapons area of your bug out bag, make sure you follow the laws of your region. **Don't carry anything that you are not legally authorized to carry.** Plan for the worst, but don't use that plan to its full extent if it's not necessary. Otherwise, you're just asking for trouble.

That being said... having a plan for defending yourself, and keeping all the necessary tools you might need for bugging out, is important. Some items you may consider for your bug out bag are:

- Knife
- Pistol
- Rifle
- Multi-tool
- Axe, Hatchet, or Machete
- Screwdriver – may be on multi-tool

Each one of those listed is a tool that can be used to make your bug out experience more comfortable, and they can also save your life if faced with danger.

In a survival situation, you will probably have to do things you don't normally do in your day to day life. That's when these tools will come in handy. Tasks you might find yourself having to do include: Digging, chopping, hunting, building shelter, and fighting. That's not an all-inclusive list by any means, but it's there to show you that you should be prepared to do some things you don't normally do. Having tools and weapons ready to go can save your life. Keep that in mind.

The Knife

In my opinion, there has been no invention more significant to the development of man than the knife. A knife can do many things for you. It can help you hunt, make shelter, create splints and bandages, make tools, and even save your life. A good knife should be a staple in any bug out bag.

An example emergency situation where a pocket knife would be useful is a car accident. If a seat belt gets stuck, you're stuck. What if you're not the one who's stuck, but your spouse or child? What if the car is on fire? You have got to get out fast, so the ability to cut through a stuck seat belt would be handy.

For your bug out bag, you might want to consider also packing some type of fixed-blade field knife. Again, nothing fancy, but it should be sharp and very sturdy. Make sure this knife has a full-tang blade construction (the blade goes all the way through the handle) and its steel is at least 440 stainless. That particular metal is relatively soft, but it's the minimum necessary to be a serious knife. Talk with a knife dealer or research online about the different steel hardness levels and usability.

A fixed blade knife will be used more as a tool in a survival situation. A folding knife is handy, but sometimes you need something more substantial. When making tools, a sturdy, heavy knife will make the job easier. For example, you can use a knife as a spear point for hunting or defense. Tightly strap your fixed-blade knife to a staff, and you've got a usable spear.

Guns

Firearms are a tricky subject. Not everyone has a firearm, and in some countries civilian ownership is not allowed. If you can't have guns in your area, then this section won't apply to you directly. However, you should still read it and think about it because there are some valid survival issues I'm going to bring up.

There are two reasons why guns are an important survival tool: Defense and food. Emergencies make people crazy, so you might find yourself being attacked by someone else with a firearm, machete, or baseball bat. Being able

to sufficiently defend yourself is the first step when faced with such a confrontation.

During an extended bug out scenario, you may run out of supplies. If you live in a region with sufficient wildlife, you have a readily available source of food and a way to harvest the food.

Whatever you may think about hunting in general, if you run out of food, you may need to kill and eat animals to survive. If you eat a hamburger, you should have no problem killing and eating a deer, wild pig, rabbits, squirrels, and so on. If you find yourself in a situation where society has crumbled (unlikely, but possible), at least in your region, you'll still need to eat. When there's nothing else, hunting becomes a viable, life-sustaining option.

Some people choose to keep tactical-style weapons with their bug out gear, to be taken if the need arises. Others prefer hunting weapons. What you pack, if anything, is up to you and your assessment of your particular situation. Sometimes, packing a gun in your bug out kit is not only stupid, but illegal. Make sure you follow local, state, and federal laws (or your legal system's equivalent setup).

If you decide that putting firearms in or with your bug out kit is something you want to do, talk to your local gun dealer about it. Assess your particular needs and get advice on the subject. If you want something for defense and something with which you can hunt deer, you might get a 9mm pistol and a 7mm bolt action rifle.

Don't break the bank, and don't break any laws. If you decide to get something, make sure it meets your particular needs. Guns are tools, and like any tool, you only use them when you need them.

Multi-Tool

A multi-tool is an item that contains many commonly-used tools in one compact device. They come in a few different shapes and sizes, with an assortment of tools, and some even take attachments. In one little package, you can have several common tools strapped to your belt.

Many knife companies have jumped into the multi-tool market. It exploded after Leatherman hit the scene. Even though the multi-tool has been around for a long time in the form of the Swiss Army Knife and variants, the Leatherman set multi-tools apart from the knife world.

A typical multi-tool will have some of these items, and maybe some more: Pliers, wire cutters, knife blade, saw, file, Phillips and flat-head screwdriver, and a case. My multi-tool has more – each brand and model is different.

Why do you need to pack a multi-tool into your emergency pack? Because tools are handy things to have, and a multi-tool is a small, light tool package. Small and light means it's not going to take up much room in your bug out bag.

When selecting a multi-tool, pay attention to quality. There are many multi-tools out there in the market, some priced quite cheaply. They are priced like this because they are cheaply made and, therefore, may break under normal conditions.

If you are thinking of getting a multi-tool that costs \$9.99 or \$14.99, or something similar, stop. Most good multi-tools run at \$50 or more. You can get a few basic models for less, but they may not have all the features you're looking for. The number of tools you need is relative to what you're going to be doing in an emergency, and somewhat dependent on personal taste. Just keep all of that in mind when you are shopping around for a multi-tool. If it is cheap, it's probably cheaply made, and you don't want that kind of thing in your emergency survival kit.

Chopping with a Machete or Hatchet

Chopping is an important task in many survival situations, so a hatchet or machete may be something you need in your emergency kit. Cutting firewood, making shelter, and clearing paths for you are just a few of things you might find yourself doing when in some type of wilderness survival situation. A tool tailored to those activities will come in handy.

A hatchet is a small, hand-held axe that is commonly carried on camping trips. It's small enough to fit on your belt, but big enough to be useful when you need to cut something. It will take you longer to cut up a large log with a hatchet than it would with a full-size axe, but you can still get the job done.

Hatchets also go by different names, like "camp axe," or "hand axe." Any sporting goods store should have a selection of hand-held axes. They are priced relatively cheap because they are just a hunk of steel on top of a wood, plastic, or steel handle. You won't need anything really complex, so you won't have to spend a lot of money. That will leave you more money to spend on a quality multi-tool or field knife.

Machetes are another option. A machete is simply a large knife (more of a small sword, actually) that was designed for managing brush and various vegetation. A machete is great for chopping. If you are going to be out in the wild for any length of time, having one of these can be handy.

If you buy a machete that is sturdy enough, you can use it to cut down a tree. Sure, it will take longer than using an axe, but it can still be done. I've done it once myself. Machetes are useful tools, but they are not for every emergency situation. Take a look at your needs and pick one up if you think it might help.

Tools to Meet Your Needs

Whatever you decide to put in your emergency preparation kit, make sure that it meets your individual needs. First you need to assess your needs. Ask yourself questions like, "What's my local environment like?" and "Where am I going to go in an emergency?" Likely, an urban bug out scenario will mean a different tool set-up than a rural plan.

The main thing you want to be able to do is survive. Your goal here is not to pack as many tools as possible into your bug out bag. Everything in your kit should have a purpose. You have very limited space and weight for your gear, so be selective. Don't carry a machete and an axe unless there is a specific reason to do so. Likewise, if you pack three pistols, a scoped rifle, an M-4 variant, and 1000 rounds of ammunition, where are you going to put your food and water?

Think about your plan and your likely environment, and then plan your gear accordingly. If you don't do this, one of two things may happen. You can pack a backpack too heavy and wear yourself out carrying all this gear you really don't need. Or you can pack a fast and light bag only to find out that it's missing several tools you could use out in the field. Assess your plan and likely situation, pack accordingly, and you'll be better off in an emergency.

Bugging Out vs. Bugging In

Sometimes the best option is stay put. Only you can decide, but if leaving is more dangerous than staying, you might want to stay. Here's an example.

You live out in the country, on a small ranch, and society crumbles just enough to cut off normal supply routes. What will you do for food, water, and any other supplies that you need?

A localized disaster can interrupt supply routes, and it's common for water and power to be down in surrounding areas. Large earthquakes, floods, hurricanes, and similar localized disasters make life unpleasant for a little while. Wars do the same, but usually for a little longer.

If you were cut off from the world in this way, what would you do? Do you have the supplies needed to bug in? If you bug in, you will typically already have shelter taken care of, but what about food and water?

For example, what if you get stuck – have to bug in – and you have no running water? You will need to have some type of water gathering system, or you should have stockpiles of survival water. Even with those precautions taken, water runs out and it goes bad. If you have to bug in for an extended period of time, it would be wise to find a renewable source of water. This could be as simple as collecting rainwater, or getting some out of a nearby stream.

Why is water so important? The first – and most obvious – reason is that we need water to survive. Water also keeps us clean. Hygiene is important because it helps stop the spread of sickness, and it helps you clean wounds. Those two things – drinking water and hygiene – are important enough for you to keep water as a focal point when planning your gear kit.

In a situation like getting snowed in while vacationing in a cabin, it's more of a natural inconvenience than a disaster. But your needs will still be the same. You can melt snow to drink, but if you're in a rented cabin, will you have enough food? If you are going somewhere you might get stuck for a few days, either

take your bug out bag or throw some MREs into your luggage. It never hurts to be prepared.

Additional Considerations

The most important part of any bug out kit is your mind. Have a plan, and make sure that plan meets your particular needs. Many people only focus on the gear they think they might need, and neglect – to a degree – other areas of the bug out plan. Those two areas are first aid and environment preparations.

First Aid

First aid kits are important because there may not be anyone to help you if you get hurt out in the wilderness. However, only packing a first aid kit into your bag is not enough. You've got to know what to do with it, and know how to improvise. For example, how would you approach a compound fracture of the lower leg? What if you don't have the necessary items to stabilize such an injury?

Injuries like that can happen out in the wilderness, and most first aid kits aren't set up to deal with them. Sure, they'll have some of the supplies you need, but a splint large enough to deal with a broken leg might be too big to put in a first aid kit that will fit in a backpack.

What you need is knowledge to accompany your first aid kit. You've got to know how to deal with injuries. As part of your preparations, you might want to learn: The basics of human anatomy, how to control bleeding, and how to deal with common injuries, and similar.

If taking a first aid course at your local community college is what you need, then go do it. At the bare minimum, you need to know how to deal with broken bones, sprained joints, and bleeding. When trying to escape a disaster zone, excessive bleeding can kill you, and sprains and fractures can immobilize you. Since your goal is to get out of there and reach safety, it is important to remain mobile, even if just barely.

I'm not going to list first aid items here. Since we all are physiologically the same, any first aid kit you buy should work in general. You need to supplement

that kit with knowledge. Like a knife or a firearm, a first aid kit won't do you much good if you don't know how to use it.

Something else you should keep in mind is your particular situation. Are you an insulin-dependent diabetic? Do you have to take medications regularly? Do you have any physical condition that would be unbalanced if your life was turned upside down? If you have any special health considerations, you need to plan for them.

Considering Your Environment

When I say "environment," I'm not talking about a "green" bug out plan. I'm talking about planning to survive in your area. What is your environment like, and what kind of preparations do you need to make? What kind of knowledge and skills do you need to survive in your region?

Some areas require a different set of skills and a different set of gear. Taking on the wilderness is not the same as taking on an urban area. You need to be prepared for both your local environment, and that of your bug out destination.

Here are some things that may change depending on your current environment: Finding food, building shelter, what you use for warmth, and even what you use for transportation. Sometimes, packing supplies is not enough. You need to know how to interact with your surroundings.

Scout your own environment. See what's out there and what you may need to do in case of an emergency. This should be a dynamic part of your bug out plan – changing as you move from one environment to another.

Your Destination

If you have to bug out due to an emergency, have you thought about where you might go? This might seem obvious, but it still deserves some thought. When faced with a disaster – whether it is natural or man-made – you should

try to get somewhere safe. This might mean five miles down the road, or it could mean traveling halfway across the nation.

Just make sure that you have a destination in mind. I've known many people who create bug out bags and escape plans, but they have no destination. Basically, if the world around them goes belly-up, they'll leave the area. But where they end up is left to the moment.

I suggest coming up with a relatively safe destination – a cabin in the mountains, your aunt's house in a different state, or something similar. Ideally, you should choose a place that is far from disaster and far from scared, crazy people. Remember, as history has shown us, disasters can make normal people quite crazy.

If you plan on going somewhere, try to make it someplace safe, and know how you are going to get there. Watch out for crazies and look for functional infrastructure.

Entertainment

Entertainment is something you need to consider when packing your emergency kits. It can get pretty boring out there when everything in your area is turned upside down, but you have some downtime. This is especially true for kids, so a little distraction can go a long way.

Before you start shouting things at the book like “presence of mind,” or “we're in the middle of a crisis,” I know...I know. Do not take the time to distract yourself if, at the moment, it would be stupid to do so. If you're in a tall building that is the only one left standing after a major earthquake, don't sit down to play some poker. Take care of what you need to at the moment.

If there's nothing to do, however, there's nothing to do. That can lead to boredom, which can turn into irritation, which, in turn, becomes trouble. Part of keeping focused during a crisis is knowing when to relax and distract yourself. Soldiers have known this for thousands of years – use distraction to pass the time and lower your stress levels. Getting your mind off of war, or some other disaster, can keep you sane.

A little distraction goes a long way.

If you have kids, put fun stuff into their bug out bag. You're packing a bug out bag for them, right? Put in simple distractions like a coloring book and crayons, playing cards, or similar.

Kids are resilient, but they are also inexperienced and prone to panic. Keeping their mind off the current troubles will help them cope and stay focused when you need them to focus.

Parting Thoughts and Tips

Having a bug out bag is a simple precaution that can help you stay alive if things go wrong in your area. Not only will a properly constructed bug out bag keep you alive, but it can also keep you fed and relatively comfortable.

Tip #1: Cycle Your Gear

It's important to cycle your gear from time to time. Even survival food and water goes bad after a while, so you'll need to eat and drink it, and then refill your bag. And don't wait around three weeks in between eating your MREs and adding more to your pack.

It's normal to get into your bag from time to time to get some stuff, but it's equally important to put back what you take out. If you need a tool, put it back when you're done with it. If you want to use some paracord for something, go ahead and use it. If you are hungry and eat some emergency food bars, be sure to buy some more.

Keep your bug out bag stocked, and it will be ready when you need it.

Tip #2: Account for Everyone in Your Family

How long will your bug out bag last if you are the only one with a pack in a family of six? Everyone in your family should have their own bug out bag if they are physically able to carry one. Infants, the elderly, and the infirm are exceptions. In this case, everyone will have to share the load of the extra gear.

When going through the checklist of your family's needs, make sure you plan well. If there is something you cannot pack, like medicine that is taken daily, make sure you can grab it quickly. It helps if you always keep it in the same place.

For example, if you have to get out fast, run to your closet and grab your bug out bag, then head to your bathroom and grab the pills. Your escape will last a few seconds longer, but you will have what you need.

Tip #3: Control Fever and Diarrhea

Fever and diarrhea might not be that much of a concern in civilized society, but in an emergency, they become dangerous. Fevers can severely incapacitate someone, and even kill them under just the wrong circumstances. Diarrhea can leave you dangerously dehydrated.

The simple solution is to carry over-the-counter medicine for these conditions in your bug out bag. Taking ibuprofen at the recommended doses will help control your fever and keep you in the safe zone (typically...talk to your doctor for the specifics). In addition to that, it's great as a general anti-inflammatory – which means it will be good to have in case of a sprain.

Diarrhea can be similarly controlled with over-the-counter drugs. When faced with excessive diarrhea, you could end up severely dehydrated, which leads to fatigue, sickness, and in the worst case, death. A little pill can save you all this trouble. Just grab some at your local drug store and follow the directions on the box.

Tip #4: Do Not Loot

Looting is stupid. Don't do it. Unless there has been a 100% breakdown of society with no chance of recovery, there will be consequences. If there's a large earthquake and you grab your bug out bag, don't grab a Playstation on your way down the street. It's stupid, illegal, and dangerous.

Even if society completely breaks down for a while, each of us still needs to maintain a sense of morality and personal ethics.

Tip #5: Help Your Fellow Man

I know that in normal, everyday life, we all hate each other. We don't care whether our neighbors live or die. Some don't even know the first name of the neighbor they've had for 10 years. I'm speaking generally here, but that makes it no less true.

When disaster strikes, people will need help. Help them. It's my belief that if you have the ability to help someone in need, then it's your duty to do so. If there is an emergency going on, and you see someone who needs help – genuinely needs help, not just someone flailing all crazy-like through a crowd – then stop to help them. Use your judgment here...I can't tell you who really needs help or not.

Tip #6: Have a Plan

I know I mentioned this earlier, but I felt I should say something more about it. Have a plan. Your plan doesn't have to be very precise, and it doesn't have to be dramatic. You just need to have a plan.

And your plans can even be created to deal with certain circumstances. For example, you might plan to go to your mom's house during a tornado warning because she has a basement or storm shelter. Or, you might plan to travel to your brother's place in case forest fires sweep through your area.

Have a general plan, and then make specific plans depending on what type of emergency you might be facing. Like I said, they don't have to be very detailed. They can be like a formula: If A happens, go to B.

Tip #7: Remain Calm!

You won't be able to do anyone – including yourself – a bit of good if you're in a panic. The first step to staying alive in any emergency is to keep thinking rationally. Remain calm and you will be able to think of solutions instead of flipping out about the problem.

Parting Thoughts

Make your bug out bag your own. Get a backpack that's rugged but comfortable. Customize the contents of the kit to meet your individual needs. Keep your pack ready for action by stashing it in an easy to get to place. This is usually a closet, or just under the bed, or in the corner behind a door. It's up to you, but you should make sure the bag is not piled under stuff.

It's also a good idea to have some back-up gear in other locations. For example, it's wise to keep some emergency gear in your vehicle. It's even a good idea to keep a little something at work if you have the space.

And then there's the mini bug out bag, commonly known as a "get home bag." It's typically a smaller version of the bug out bag you have at home (or will have after you build it), and its purpose is to get you home. You might have to walk, or there might be some need for you to use your gear. Get some supplies together that can help you get to your main bug out bag, so you can really bug out if you need to.

Think of what you might typically need from day to day, and throw it in a shoulder bag or another backpack. Stick that in your vehicle and you're good to go. Just remember to follow the same principles you do with your bug out bag – like cycling out your food so it doesn't go bad. And you'll probably have to do this more often, since MREs and similar survival food lose some of their shelf life in the heat of car trunk.

Survival is YOUR responsibility. Do not rely on local, state, or federal governments to come to the rescue. Remember hurricane Katrina, the one that wiped out New Orleans? Do you remember how long it took for help to reach those people?

Don't be stuck in a situation like that. Take control of your own life and use your survival gear. Instead of being stuck, you can get out of the area...even if you have to walk out.

Prepare yourself for disaster, and hope it never finds you.

Appendix A

Example Bug Out Bag Gear List

Here is a sample list of gear for your bug out bag. This is not meant to be an exact recommendation, but rather something to get ideas into your head. Get the ideas flowing, then build your own customized bag.

- Backpack
- 3 MREs
- 8 boxes of survival water or a couple of retail bottled waters
- 1 pocket knife or field knife (or both, if you want)
- 1 multi-tool
- 200 feet of 550 pound (strength) paracord
- First aid kit – with general first aid supplies
- Waterproof matches
- Lighter
- Dust masks
- Poncho
- Emergency blanket
- Zippered baggies (sandwich and freezer sized)
- Foot powder
- Extra socks in zippered bags
- Spare glasses if you wear them
- Sunglasses
- Lip balm
- A hat
- Ammunition if legal and appropriate
- Water purification tablets
- Canteen or water carrier of some kind
- Flashlight with batteries (or some kind of rechargeable light)
- Emergency candles (provides light and warmth)
- Wind-up style emergency radio (so you can find out what's going on)
- Compass
- Whistle
- Deck of cards or other similar distraction

- Shelter – carry it or make it...it's up to you
- Duct tape, electrical tape, or both
- Fingernail / toenail clippers
- Dryer lint in waterproof container (a fire starting material)

Appendix B

Resources

Note: The Internet is an ever-changing landscape. As a result, there may be a time when some of the links presented in this book no longer work. I have no control over that, so I just want to make you aware of it.

The Internet is full of information. Use it to expand your knowledge.

[The Ready Store](#) – MREs, food and water storage, kits

[Maxpedition](#) – Rugged packs, shoulder bags, and other gear

[Zombie Squad](#) – Survival and emergency preparation forum

[AR15.com](#) – Information about the black rifle

[Kifaru](#) – High quality expedition gear

[The Sportsman's Guide](#) – Inexpensive gear with a wide selection

[REI](#) – Outdoor, expedition, and camping gear

Legal Disclaimer

Use the advice in this book at your own risk. Your life and your safety is your responsibility. Likewise, it is your responsibility to follow the laws of your land. If some idea presented in this book violates the law of your land, then just skip it. Don't do anything illegal.

You are not guaranteed to survive. I wrote this book to help you create your own plan. There are far too many variables in an actual emergency to dictate a course of action from these pages. Use your head.

Consult a physician with any questions regarding medicine, wound treatment, or any health-related issue.

I shall not, in any way, be held responsible for anything you do with this information. This book is for educational purposes only.

About the Author

Caleb Rogers is a writer, entrepreneur, and outdoor enthusiast. He lives in Central Arkansas with his wife and kids. You can learn more at calebrogers.com.