

Are You Prepared for SHTF Situations?

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Reading the stories about what's going on around the world can be enough to cause you to lose sleep. It seems every time you turn around, there's another bad situation brewing – or happening as you watch it unfold on live TV.

It's enough to make you feel anxious and worried about the future of the world we live in. The truth is, there's not a lot that you can do to stop bad things from happening.

You can't control the weather and you can't control people with a vendetta and you can't stop a breakdown in society. You can't make sure that the government is going to be operational.

But just because there are some things outside the realm of your control doesn't mean that you shouldn't be prepared. You need to act now to handle what you *can* take care of.

There are so many areas that *are* under your control. By taking care of these elements, you can make sure that you and your family are prepared - regardless of what comes your way.

Ordinary Emergencies Versus SHTF Situations

Always prepare for the unexpected because the unexpected always happens. It just comes under various labels. Sometimes people will label something an emergency based on how it affects their comfort level.

There are many inconvenient and annoying times in life that don't actually fit the parameters of a true emergency. When an emergency hits, you need to identify what the emergency actually is, the person or group of people the emergency affects, and the potential duration of the emergency.

This will help you be able to define if it's an ordinary emergency or a SHTF situation. With every emergency, you should be able to determine if the situation is salvageable - or if it's not.

When a situation is unsalvageable, that's a good sign that you're dealing with a SHTF situation. There are four different kinds of emergencies. The first kind is an ordinary emergency.

The second is a SHTF emergency. The third is a short-term emergency and the fourth kind is a long-term emergency. There's usually a strong link between a SHTF emergency and a long-term emergency, although a SHTF one can also be related to a short-term emergency.

A flood that happens in your area where the water covers the roadways

is usually an ordinary emergency. These kinds of floods will resolve in a short term. The damage to personal property and the potential for fatalities is fairly low.

However, if the flood occurs after several days of torrential downpours, it can easily become a SHTF emergency. An example in this case would be if the flooding became so bad that the waters washed away bridges and roads and cut people off from being able to get out to get the things that they needed to survive.

It would also be a SHTF emergency if the water depth reached a point to where it flooded homes and only rooftops were visible. A power outage is often thought to be an emergency, but this is only an emergency if it affects a life such as someone who's depending on electricity to stay alive.

Losing power is inconvenient - but it's usually a short-term situation that doesn't markedly change your life. Assuming the crews will be out repairing the power, you might be inconvenienced a day or up to a week, but nothing you can't ride out.

There can be times where a power outage becomes a SHTF emergency. In a case like that, it would be an emergency if power grids went down and the blackout was going to be long term.

For those who are unprepared, there would be loss of perishable food, no ability to heat (or cool) a home and the water supply could be affected. Then, it would be a SHTF emergency.

When the power goes down long term, it affects every aspect of your life - and not just at home. When there's extended loss of electricity, it can bring a city to a halt.

Businesses can't operate cash registers. Gas stations can't pump gas. Traffic control lights don't operate and driving can become hazardous. If you have a situation where there are long term power outages, then you run into instances where people hurry to the grocery store and they fight to take whatever they can get their hands on.

This kind of behavior happens because they know that things could get worse and they realized they weren't ready. When there's extended periods without electricity, the level of crime also goes up.

This is why, after every major disaster, you always hear on the news about people who want to break in and steal and loot. These crimes of opportunity always happen when chaos disrupts daily living.

There are those who consider the lack of normal utilities an emergency. For example, if something goes wrong with the sewer system and sewage backs up into a home, people consider that a big emergency.

But even something as upsetting as sewer back up is still just an ordinary emergency. However, if that sewage is spilling out onto the streets and there's no crew coming to fix it, it becomes a SHTF emergency because whenever there's raw sewage, the risk of getting an infection or a disease from it greatly rises.

This is also why in many third world countries you'll see certain types of diseases that are associated with poor sewage management. Your immediate panic over the situation can heighten your reaction to something like this, though.

Having your only means of transportation break down can be stressful. It can place a heavy burden on you and your family. But this is considered an ordinary emergency.

But, if there's a situation where you need to bug out and can't because you have no way of escaping, then it's a SHTF emergency. If you're reliant on public transportation during an emergency, that's a big problem.

There are specific things related to your personal needs that can be considered an emergency. If someone suddenly has no access to water in their homes, that's still only an ordinary emergency.

It becomes a SHTF emergency if this lack of water supply is going to be a long-term situation. You can't survive without a clean supply of water. If you're going to be without water for longer than three days, then it can become a potentially life-threatening emergency.

A lack of food can be another issue. If you were to lose all the food that you have, this is still only an ordinary emergency as long as it's short term. If it appears that there will be no replenishing of food supplies, then that's a SHTF emergency.

Having something go wrong with your home so that the shelter it provides isn't what you're used to can be an ordinary emergency. An example of this would be if a tree limb fell through the roof and you had a hole that you suddenly needed to repair in order to keep out inclement weather.

It becomes a SHTF emergency when your shelter becomes completely unlivable and you don't have a backup place to go. This is especially true in areas when you have a lack of shelter and the weather is or becomes dangerous.

Needing shelter to get out of dangerously low temperatures or dangerously high ones is considered a SHTF emergency. There are elderly who are much more affected by extreme temperatures, too – so what might be an ordinary emergency to you can be imminent danger to them.

Fire can be both an ordinary emergency and a SHTF emergency. If you have a small fire at your home, but you can still live in it, this is an ordinary emergency. But if your home is so affected by an on-coming forest fire destroying everything in its path so that you have to seek shelter somewhere else, this would fall under a SHTF emergency.

A wildfire can easily become a SHTF emergency if it's threatening your home or the lives of your animals or loved ones. If the fire rages on and wipes out any self-sustaining things you have in store such as food, water and garden seeds for survival, then it can become a SHTF emergency.

This is why you need to have a survival garden that's some distance from your house. That way, you can also go there for a food supply when you need to. Having multiple supplies is a smart move.

These kinds of emergencies can be compounded if something extraordinary is going on in your area. These would be things like a series of dangerous storms or life-threatening temperatures are coming to your area.

When a tornado or hurricane threatens where you live, this can be an ordinary emergency if you live in a state that's known for its emergency preparedness and you yourself are also prepared.

But if you're not prepared, then it turns into a SHTF emergency. An example of this would be people who live in a beach home and don't leave despite mandatory evacuation orders. When the hurricane rushes ashore, their home is flooded and they're scrambling to stay alive as the water rises.

A landslide is an ordinary emergency unless it threatens homes or businesses or the human lives. Then it becomes a SHTF emergency. Though acts of nature have happened for centuries and will continue to happen in the future, most people are sadly unprepared with what they're going to do to take care of their basic needs.

Chemical emergencies can be both an ordinary emergency and a SHTF one. If you spill a household chemical, you might accidentally breathe in some of the fumes. This can lead to an ordinary emergency where you have to seek treatment.

On the other hand, there can be widespread chemical spills that can make an entire area of a town or city unlivable and you would need to evacuate. If you're not prepared to get out, this could be a SHTF emergency.

Illnesses are a part of life. Sometimes, though, they can be an ordinary emergency - such as needing to be treated for the flu. With the amount of doctors' offices, urgent care centers and hospitals so available, an

ordinary emergency doesn't always translate into a SHTF situation.

But, a medical problem can quickly become a bad situation if you can't get to someone who's trained to take care of the issue. If someone you love is in need of emergency aid and you can't give it and you can't get to anyone who can, then you're in a SHTF emergency.

It's an ordinary emergency when someone around you gets ill or even when groups of people around you get ill with something like the flu. However, if that illness is something that has the potential to sweep through large groups and cause catastrophic death tolls, such as Ebola, then it's a SHTF situation and you need to get your gear and get to safety.

There are terrorism activities happening all over the world. These are emergencies where people are injured or killed. When it comes to your area and impacts your family, it's a SHTF situation that requires you to get yourself and those you love to safety.

Remember that it's not a matter of if you should be prepared for a SHTF emergency but when - because they do happen. The news is full of people who get into extraordinary SHTF situations.

Some of them are prepared and survive. The ones who aren't don't live to tell their story. You can't stop ordinary emergencies or SHTF emergencies from happening to you or to your family.

No one can control the weather. Or riots. Or acts of terrorism. You don't have the power to wish away bad things. But you *can* stop being unprepared and take care of putting a plan in place right now that will ensure the necessities and survival for yourself and those you love.

The Top 3 Areas Where Most People Lack Preparedness

When it comes to being prepared for a SHTF type of situation, people will fall into one of three categories. The first group doesn't prepare at all. They live with the belief that they'll somehow be able to handle whatever happens when it happens – or that it won't happen to them at all.

They believe that there will always be adequate food and water supply to take care of their needs and the needs of their loved ones. They think that there will always be shelter for them.

They trust that in the event of a major disaster, the people in government positions where they live will have a plan to make sure everything gets back and up running quickly.

The people who do this are gambling with their lives that everything will turn out okay for them. When a major disaster hits, these are the ones who are scrambling for food and water.

They're trying to hunt down medications, desperate to get what they need to ensure the health and survivability of their family. Because they don't prepare at all, they face huge risks and will literally enter into a fight for survival because they weren't prepared.

The second group of people do prepare somewhat. They realize how important it is that they should be ready to take action or do whatever is necessary to make sure that they and their loved ones are okay.

While they're not completely prepared, they prepare enough to get by for a short term. They'll set aside a week or so of food and water. But they don't have any plans for long-term situations.

They don't prepare for the event that something will disrupt their way of living for months or even years on end. These people won't find themselves immediately scrambling for necessities, but they will reach that point eventually.

The third group of people prepares completely. If the world around them collapses into chaos, they're going to survive. They have the food that they need to make sure that they eat for months - and even years.

They have things set aside to generate future food growth. This group makes sure that they have a good supply of water set aside. The means to clean and get to a supply of water when what they have set aside runs

out is also part of their plan.

All of the medications needed for each family member are ready to go in the event of a SHTF emergency. They know who's supposed to do what and how they'll react if their plan has to kick into gear.

While they might end up in the middle of a stressful SHTF situation, it won't be a chaotic mess for them when it comes to being able to survive. There are certain supplies and some actions that you need to take that are necessary for your survival and well being.

If you don't make sure these steps are covered, when a SHTF situation does occur, you will lack the ability to have your basic short term as well as long term needs met.

But of all the steps that you need to take, there are three that you need to pay the most attention to – food, water and shelter. Unfortunately, it's these three areas that most people don't prepare well enough or don't prepare at all – because they're so used to never being without them that they take their access to them for granted.

The Importance of a BOB

Everyone should start by having a BOB onhand. This stands for a bug out bag. It means that you'll have the supplies together in a bag that will

enable you to at least survive for 72 hours.

The purpose of having this bag is so that you can get to it quickly and go. You should never wait until the last minute to pack a bug out bag. You never know if, by putting off gathering the supplies until the last minute, you might put your family in harm's way.

Here's an example of what can happen if you don't have a bug out bag.

A SHTF situation occurs and you have to get out fast. You have to leave your home in order to ensure your safety and that of your family.

You round everyone up and you jump in the car. You get going down the road only to find that the road is blocked. There's debris everywhere. You can't get out.

Or, the area has erupted into chaos, people are panicking and it's not even safe to try to get out of your neighborhood. But it's not safe to stay, either. So you're stuck.

You might think that not being prepared with a BOB isn't that big of a deal. After all, you have great neighbors and you all help each other out whenever it's necessary.

Borrowing a tool is a far cry from needing help to survive. If it comes down to saving their family or yours, which one do you think they'll pick? It's not

up to someone else to make sure you survive.

Or that your family survives. It's up to you. When you're forced to flee an area, it might come down to the fact that you have to flee too quickly to take the time to pack up even the basic supplies.

So when you rush out the door, sometimes on foot, you have the clothes on your back. And if you're lucky, you and everyone else are wearing a pair of shoes that they'll be able to walk for miles in.

The minute you're in a SHTF situation, you understand very clearly how serious it is. The first thing you might notice is that with having to rush from an area, you're in need of water.

Only you don't have any so you have to try to find some. You find some, but it doesn't look clear enough to signal that it's safe to drink. And even if it does look clear, that doesn't mean that it's safe.

Bacteria can lurk in water that you won't be able to see. With no water with you, you're forced to make a choice. Take your chances and drink the water or take your chances and keep moving, hoping you'll find a viable supply down the road somewhere.

If you have small children with you, the need to find water becomes even more urgent. Kids can't withstand the lack of basic necessities as long as

an adult can. Their bodies aren't made to handle the same rigors.

And if you have a baby who's on formula, there you are without a BOB, which means you don't have formula and you don't have water to give a baby. This means that your SHTF situation is about to get a whole lot worse.

Without a BOB, you don't have any food. When your stomach starts to growl later that day or the next, you might be able to ignore it and push on, trying to find some food.

But food is your body's fuel, so after awhile, you're not going to have the energy to keep moving forward. If your family is with you, that means your children are looking to you for food.

The agony and desperation that you'll face if you're responsible for the survival of a child and yet you don't have a way to get that for him will be overwhelming. You're trying to get away from the SHTF situation and you've walked for miles without any luck.

Now that the day is drawing to a close, you have to find shelter - only you're not familiar with living outdoors - especially without supplies. Having a BOB would ensure that you'd have shelter when you need it most.

Without it, you're exposed to the elements and so is your family. You'll

have an up close and personal experience with rain, with crawling and flying pests, and with cold or hot temperatures.

If you have children, you'll try to huddle together to keep out of the cold or try to make sure they don't come in contact with something while sleeping on the ground that could harm their skin.

While you're on the way, trying to find a way just to survive for a few days so you can wrap your mind around what's going on, you get hurt. Or someone in your family does.

You don't know if you can safely wrap a leaf around a bleeding wound, but you have to because you don't have a first aid kit. If you sprain an ankle or sustain a leg injury, you'll be forced to try to keep on going despite the pain and misery.

If it's a child that can't walk, then you'll have to carry him on your back. Suddenly, you have that added weight in addition to the weight of the world on your shoulders.

When you're forced to bug out, you'll be faced with experiences that you may not have had before in your life. It will come down to a matter of survival and how you respond will determine if you and your family will survive.

You can't live long without water, food and shelter. Those are the three basic needs that you have to cover to make sure that you and those you love are going to be okay.

When you don't have a BOB, you won't have the basic tools of survival. You'll have no way to start a fire or to defend yourself or your family. You won't have the means to survive what can be an otherwise survivable situation.

When you fail to plan, you plan to fail - as the saying goes. With some things, the price that you'll pay for not planning can fall under an inconvenience or a difficult lesson learned.

But a SHTF situation is a test of survival that, unless you've studied for it, unless you've prepared for it, won't give you a chance to make up that test. It's not a lesson you learn and fix next time because there may not be a next time for you.

Why You Need a Meet-Up Plan

When a situation arises that calls for you to bug out, you need to have a meet up plan. In situations that call for you to get out, it's usually because something extreme or even life threatening is going on.

When you don't have a plan, it's an open invitation for chaos. And

whenever chaos hits, it can cause you to panic. One of the things that happens when people panic is that they make mistakes or bad decisions.

With heightened emotions, valuable time is often lost trying to figure out what to do. The time to know where you're going to meet is before you ever need to. When a SHTF situation occurs, it will never take your feelings or your family into consideration.

This means that when it occurs, you might be in one area while your significant other would be in another. If you have children, some of them could be at school while another might be at daycare.

Without a plan, you'll waste valuable time - time that could make a difference between safety and not trying to figure out the best way to bring your family back together again.

Without a plan, you might rush out the door to pick up one child while thinking that your significant other will take care of picking up the other one. If you don't have the ability to communicate with each other because cell phone service is jammed or completely unavailable, you won't know if you should run to keep finding your family members or not.

When you don't have a plan, it will be easy to lose track of family members. If you have elderly parents that you look out for, this can

compound a SHTF situation because you'll need to make sure that you or someone else gets to them.

You won't know where to go once you do gather your family if you don't have a meet up plan. But if you do have a meet up plan, you'll know ahead of time the part that everyone is supposed to play in the event of a SHTF disaster.

Instead of wasting valuable time trying to figure out what step to take next, you'll be able to focus on what you should be doing - which is getting to safety. Once you have a meet up plan, you'll know the roads you're supposed to take to get there and the area where everyone is supposed to reconnect.

Don't forget to have a back up plan, too – because what if the place you plan to meet at is dangerous now? While a SHTF situation can be extremely stressful, you can lessen the stress of it if you're prepared.

When you know who is going to handle getting your family members and the place where you're all to meet up to be accounted for, it can make everything run smoother.

It will make a bad situation not seem so awful when you have those you love safe and accounted for. The emotional impact will be lessened and you'll be able to concentrate on survival, together.

The Danger of Ignoring Long-Term Supply Preparations

Bad things happen. That's just a way of life. But you can cause a bad situation to become an intolerable one if you don't plan ahead. It can be the difference between life and death.

With careful planning, even SHTF events can be handled with a minimum of difficulty. But if you don't plan for long term scenarios, you'll experience long term struggles and suffering for you and those that you're responsible to take care of.

Many people who prepare for a bad situation will only plan a month or two at the most in advance. The problem is that with long term situations, there may not be a solution for several months - or even years.

Without planning ahead, this will impact your life, if not in the first few weeks - it will eventually. For example, if you don't plan on a long term supply of canned foods while you can grow seeds to replenish your food supply, you'll eventually run out.

When this happens, there may not be a way for you to get food. If you don't have a long term supply of gear that can help you be able to get food - such as by fishing, then you won't be able to rely on the land to provide food for you or your family.

Without long term planning, you won't have the items that you need to take care of things like preparing safe water. Eventually, you'll run out of your water supply. You'll need long term supply items to make sure that you catch enough water to live on for awhile.

You'll need long term supplies to make sure that water is safe to use, too. When you ignore long term planning, you'll go without necessities like the personal hygiene products that everyone needs.

You might not be able to keep your shelter shored up. You might not be able to find supplies to keep your new location one that can sustain life. Without having a long-term supply preparation plan in place, you may not plan for needs like communication.

If you don't plan ahead for these supplies, you could lose the ability to get in touch with others or get the latest news to find out what's going on in the world and when and if things might return to normal.

Preparing Bug Out Bags for Each Member of Your Family

It's imperative that you have a bug out bag on standby for when you'll need it. You need to have the items within the bag all packed up and onhand at the various places where you spend a lot of time.

A BOB that's at your home won't do you any good if you're at the office and can't get home before you need to leave the area in the event of a SHTF situation. So you need to have a BOB that you keep at your place of employment (or in your car) and one that you keep at home.

There should be a bag ready made for each person. Some people also like to keep a BOB in their vehicle in the event that they're caught in a situation where they're not at home or the office and need to bug out right away.

To pack a bug out bag, some people use regular nylon bags like a bag that you would see used for a child's schoolbooks. You want to be careful with these. They're not roomy enough, they're not durable enough - and most of them don't have enough compartments to keep items separated for easy location.

Don't choose a duffel type bag that you'll have to hold onto as you leave. You want both of your hands to be free because you don't know what you're going to run into as you're leaving an area.

Other people choose to use larger, tough backpacks to hold the gear. Regardless of which type you choose to purchase, the bag needs to meet some basic criteria.

First, it has to be roomy enough to hold everything that you need it to

hold to be able to survive for the crucial 72 hours that you'll be relying on the bag's contents.

Second, the bag should be sturdy. If you spend the money on something cheap that's poorly made, you're betting your life on that material holding up. If it breaks down and rips from the pressure of the content, your items could fall out and leave you without if you don't notice the tear when it happens.

The bag that you buy should also be waterproof or water resistant. If you get a bag that absorbs water, it stands to reason that the content within will get soaked and won't be any good for use.

If you choose to get a backpack, you'll want one with wide shoulder handles. These handles are what will help distribute the weight. This makes carrying the bag a lot easier.

In the event that you'll have to travel long distances, you'll appreciate this additional comfort. When you look through the various types of backpacks, you'll want to look for ones that say they're military grade or used for tactical maneuvers.

These are backpacks that are like the ones used by the military and they're made to withstand a lot of wear and tear. These are also the bags that won't stand out. You want to make sure that you get a bag that

blends in with the surroundings.

If you're in a wooded area, you want your backpack to be difficult for others to see. A neon green or pink backpack could alert people that you don't want to know your whereabouts that you're in the area.

Not everyone fleeing from a SHTF situation will be someone that you can trust. Your best option is to choose a backpack that's made of dark material to make it easy for it to blend into a wooded area. A good example of such a bag as this is a camouflage backpack.

Food for Your Bug Out Bag

There are specific items that need to go into this bag. Remember that you're packing this bag with 72 hours survival in mind. The items that you pack need to reflect survival mode and not be geared toward pampering or high-end tastes.

You'll want to pack enough food for the three days that the bag is intended to be used for. You should not pack heavy canned food items. Not only will these weigh down your bag, but they're awkward and they also take up too much room.

If you try to pack three days worth of food in cans, you'll end up regretting it. Remember that you might not have an opportunity to get th

e time to stop, take out canned food and eat it.

You may be eating on the go. So instead of canned foods, you'll want to look for lightweight, portable foods. These are foods that have a long shelf life. You'll want meals like MREs or food that you've prepared in advance and freeze dried.

Beef or other types of jerky can be eaten quickly and so can Snicker bars or pop tarts. You can take foods like trail mix, breakfast bars or protein bars. Remember that foods that are in pouches are lightweight, easy to mix and many of it tastes fine cold.

Plus, you can simply rip open the top of it and keep on going. Emergency food ration bars are also a good idea. Look for foods that offer good protein. You can find peanut butter in pouches that can give you the energy to keep on forging ahead. Plus, tuna comes in survival pouches.

Besides being able to eat while on the go, the reason that you want to look for foods that you may not need to prepare is because it may not be safe to start a fire in order to heat something up.

While you may be prepared, there will be others who didn't and a fire draws attention. If you're in a good, safe place where you can use a fire, you'll be able to warm up food.

You want to pick foods that are easy and quick - such as instant mashed potatoes because all you need to do for those is just put some water into the dehydrated potato mix.

Any pouch packed food that says all you need to do is to add water is a good choice to put in a bug out bag *if* you know you have a supply of water onhand. It's also wise to take along a lightweight pot or pan to use to cook food.

When you get the opportunity to safely cook food, you'll need a way to do that. Remember that the bag is intended only for 72 hours. Some people do bring a folding camp stove, but you have to remember that you also have to bring a way to fuel the stove.

A better choice to make sure you choose cooking gear that can be used over a campfire. You'll need to bring a way to start the fire. You can carry matches or fire starters.

The Best Way to Bring Water in the Bug Out Bag

After you get the food supplies that you need to have squared away, you'll need to make sure that you have an adequate water supply. You need to plan to take enough water so that you have at the minimum of a gallon per day, per person.

It's important to stay hydrated, but you'll have to work within the confines of space that you have in the bag. Water, like canned foods, can be heavy. If you're carrying three gallons of water, you'll be carrying around about 24 pounds of weight.

Carrying that much additional weight can be a difficult task. What many people do in this situation is they carry enough water to make it through the first 24 hours.

They bank on being able to find a water supply source while they're bugging out. This is not the best route to go. There are no guarantees that you'll find water. Don't carry any water bottles.

These are bulky and can easily be damaged in transport. If you bring water in containers that rupture, you'll end up with a soggy mess of supplies. The best bet for this is to carry water that's not as bulky.

You can find individual emergency water packets that don't take up a lot of room. These packets have a shelf life that can last for years. You can also look for specific water packets that are listed as a 72 hour water survival preparedness.

In addition to the water, you'll want to bring items that can help you purify water such as purification tablets. The reason that you want to do this is because if you do find a water supply, you can treat that water

with the purification tablets and use it rather than using up your supply.

The Clothing Supply You'll Need

Taking along the necessary clothing supplies is an important addition to your bug out bag. Many people don't look at clothing as a necessary tool for survival, but they are.

Wearing the right clothes can make a difference in your survival. You'll want to make sure that you pack two changes of clothing. Some people count the 72 hours that a bug out bag is used for as meaning that they need to pack three changes of clothing.

But this is incorrect. You'll already be dressed as you're leaving. There's no need to pack what you can carry on your body as far as clothing goes. Even if it's summer time and the weather outside is on the warm side, you'll want to bring long pants for cooler evenings.

You'll also need to bring along a long sleeved shirt. When you're bugging out, it's highly likely that you'll need to go through areas that are heavily wooded. It's also highly likely that you'll be moving quickly.

In heavily wooded areas, it will be easy for you to brush up against poisonous plants such as poison sumac. You don't want to be dealing with the stress of an itchy rash on top of dealing with everything else

being in upheaval.

Wearing long pants and long sleeves will keep you safer from insect bites and will make it easier to spot ticks that might land on you. Bring undergarments for the 72 hours and you'll want to bring an extra pair or two of socks.

Being on the go can make socks wear out quicker than the rest of your clothing items. You'll also want to bring along boots. These will help you be able to navigate through rougher terrain.

If you're wearing tennis shoes or unsuitable shoes when the SHTF situation hits, you might not have time to change into better ones while you're rushing out, but the moment you can change, do it to protect yourself against sprains and foot injuries.

You'll need to bring something to keep dry if it starts to rain. Some people don't think of bringing rain gear along because they think that if the weather gets bad, they can stop and set up shelter.

But this isn't always an option. You need to bring rain gear - such as ponchos - to keep as dry as possible while you're bugging out. Make sure that you have a hat to protect yourself against the sun's rays.

You'll also want to bring sunglasses. Even if it's wintertime, you'll want

these. If your area is prone to snow, you'll need a way to protect yourself from the sun's rays on the snow.

A lightweight jacket that's good for warmth is a must-have for a bug out bag. This will help keep you warm and dry. And sometimes, your 72-hour bug out journey might devolve into something longer, so you want a wide range of clothing items, not those just suited for one type of weather.

Shelter Items Need to Be in Your Bug Out Bag

You can't stay out in the elements. You have to be able to get out of the wind, the cold, the heat and away from pests that like to snack on people. You need a way to keep dry.

There's a reason that people die from exposure to the elements. It's because you weren't meant to live without shelter. Being without shelter can make you more prone to infections, serious injury and death.

There are plenty of lightweight, portable items that you can use to create shelter. Ideally, it would be a good idea to bring along a tent. You can find these in a range of prices.

They have the ability to hold one person if you use a single person tent or a multi family member tent. But keep in mind that the more people who

will seek shelter in the tent, the heavier that the tent will be to carry in your bug out bag.

You can pack a tarp in your BOB and with some rope, a tarp can be used as a quick, makeshift shelter. In a pinch, you can bring along some of the extra large thick garbage bags to be cut and used as a temporary shelter.

If you're traveling in a group of family members or loved ones, then each person should at least have a couple of garbage bags. This way, if you become separated, each person will have a way to get out of the elements.

Additional Items for the Bug Out Bag

There are other items beside the basic food, water, shelter and clothing that you need for your bug out bag. These items can make a difference in how you're able to survive.

You need a folding shovel to be able to dig in the ground. You'll need this to dig a fire pit, to break through snow and to bury waste. You'll also need a multi tool device that can be used for a variety of reasons.

Pack a device that you can use to cut items. You'll need a knife or scissors, but it's wise to take both. You'll need a way to be able to cut

cord to tie off things and for other practical uses.

You'll need personal hygiene items. Remember that you need to make sure that you have enough of these items for three days. Packing a first aid kit in your bug out bag is extremely important.

You can buy a first aid kit that's already put together or you can build one yourself by adding the things that you need. A lot of people like to create their own first aid kit because they can add items in greater number or in better quality.

Make sure that you have an emergency blanket in your BOB. This can be used for warmth, but it can also be used as part of a first aid treatment in the event that someone goes into shock.

You'll need a way to get through an area if there are things in your way. Some people bring a small axe for this purpose. Bring tape that can be used to seal any leaks in a tent or a backpack. Duct tape can be used to help create a splint in the event of an emergency.

Flashlights are great to have in a bug out bag. You'll need to carry ones that are solar powered, so that your batteries don't run out. Having an emergency radio is also smart.

You can find versions of these that are small and lightweight. Many of the

solar powered ones can also be used to charge a cell phone. If you have a small baby, you'll need baby items such as formula, cloth diapers and baby medications.

There are a lot of positive and negative views on whether or not to bring a weapon in a bug out bag. That's a personal decision, but you should keep in mind that in a SHTF situation, the rules in society may have broken down.

There are already people now who wouldn't think twice about robbing you or attacking you. When situations like SHTF ones occur, it can add a level of lawlessness and human greed that's a whole new ballgame.

You could be forced to fight for your life and you need a way to make sure that if you are attacked, you have a way that enables you to defend yourself.

How Many Bug Out Bags Do You Need?

This is an area where some people are unprepared. You need a bug out bag for yourself. But you also need one for every single person in your family or those who will be bugging out with you.

Each of the bags should contain similar items for survival. The bags should all have food, water, clothing and shelter as the minimum. In the event

that you'll be bugging out with small children who are unable to carry their own supplies, you'll need to carry theirs or divide it between adults.

It's the same situation if you're traveling with the elderly who can't take care of their own supplies. Some children are able to carry a backpack and for those, you would make their bug out bag weight appropriate for their age and ability to handle the responsibility. Some kids can handle taking care of additional supplies, while others can't.

Have Your Meet-Up Plan Ready

Knowing that you need to grab your bug out bag and go is one thing. Having a place to meet already laid out is another thing. You should prepare diligently for both.

When you create a plan, you have to know where you're headed. With a meet-up plan, you need a first destination or what's commonly referred to as a rally point. This is the point where everyone will gather together.

This is an important part of the plan because when a SHTF situation happens, you and your loved ones could be separated. You need to know how to find each other again.

Knowing this will help to cut out the confusion of where to go. If you watch the news at all, you can see the importance of this in events that

have happened in third world countries.

Entire families have had to flee for their lives from natural catastrophes and man-made violence. On the journey to safety, the families became separated in the chaos.

Children were parted from parents. Brothers and sisters were separated. To keep your family whole, you need to have that rally point. Even if the unthinkable stress happens that you lose touch, having a rally point can make this a temporary thing rather than a longer, more frightening one.

You need to know how you're going to get there. Most people plan to take the family car or a Jeep. But if you take another means of transportation to work, such as carpooling with someone else or you take a train, you'll end up stuck. You need to have a clear method of how you're going to bug out.

So your plan might be something like if you're home, you'll take the Jeep – or some car that can go off road if necessary. If you're at work, you'll take the train. Just know what you'll do in the event that your first method of transportation becomes unavailable.

Having a plan of knowing where to go and how to get there is a good idea. But not ever going over that plan and doing a test run is a bad idea. Just like a fire drill, a bug out plan should be practiced.

When you practice a bug out plan, you'll be able to see potential areas that could be a problem for you or your family. You'll want to work these out before you actually need to use the plan.

While you're working out your meet-up plan, make sure that you cover communication. Many people believe that having a cell phone is all they need to have but in the event of a SHTF occurrence, your cell phone could fail you.

You might have trouble getting a call through because there are too many people calling and the system gets overloaded. Make sure that you have a secondary way in place to communicate with your family members.

You can use multi channel walkie-talkies. You want to look for the ones that have long range capabilities. You also want to make sure that you have a handheld scanner.

These devices can let you be aware of what's going on as you're trying to get to the rally point. For example, if a road is blocked, you'll be able to get this information and choose another route.

These handheld scanners also have the ability to provide you with the weather as well as any alerts for your area. With your rally point, you need a

backup rally point in case the first one is blocked off or inaccessible.

When you and your loved ones meet at the rally point, you can go from there to wherever your destination is. Just like having a second rally point is important, so is having a second destination. This is simply a smart way of having a plan B in case your plan A doesn't work out.

Strategizing a Long-Term Survival Plan

Though it can be hoped that a SHTF situation will be short term, it sometimes works out that it won't be. That means that you need a strategy to make sure that you and your loved ones can survive for however long it takes.

There are several areas that you need to focus on to make sure you'll be okay. The first area is with food. You'll have to make sure that you have enough for everyone who needs it and you'll have to make sure that you store it in such a way that it will keep for as long as possible.

Certain types of food will store well, while others won't. You need to know the difference and prepare to have the right foods onhand. You also need to know how to keep up with your supply amounts and how to make sure that what you put aside doesn't spoil.

You want to start by getting a good supply of your dry foods. These are

often said to be your basic food list. On this list, you'll find flour. You need to have both wheat and white flour.

Make sure to store yeast as well as baking soda. Grains are good to have for nutrition. You'll want wheat, barley, cornmeal, oats and rice to name a few. Grains can be used in a variety of ways and are both healthy and filling.

You need to store dry pasta - and you can find these in the large, family size bags as you can with most dry food supplies. They're easy to cook and season and will please everyone in your group.

You'll need beans and peas. Also make sure that you set aside plenty of easy, instant fix foods. These are things like macaroni, instant potatoes, noodles and any kind of packaged or boxed pastas that only require you to add water.

You'll want things to flavor the foods. These are items like sauces, salt, pepper and seasonings. You'll want to get both sweet seasonings such as cinnamon and regular seasoning such as garlic.

You'll want to have honey and cocoa powder, too. Dried milk should also be one of your staples. Dried fruits are also a good storage food. Put aside foods like jelly, jam and fruit preserves.

Protein bars and breakfast bars can stay stored for years. Plus, they make an easy, quick way to keep up your energy in an emergency. There are a bunch of flavors you can stock up on.

You'll need sugar and oils. For the oils, you'll want a variety of these. These will also usually keep for several years. Make sure that you have a good supply of peanut butter as well as a variety of nuts. Both of these are high in protein.

Store up plenty of different kinds of cereals. Have a good supply of popcorn, but buy whole kernel popcorn that you can pop with your oil. Put aside a supply of tea as well as coffee. Some families love to stock up on orange flavored Tang because the kids love it.

Create a large store of canned goods. Anything that can keep for several years should be in your survivalist pantry right now. You can use tuna and other types of meats, heat and eat pasta varieties, stews, fruits and vegetables.

Eventually your store of food could run out if the SHTF situation lingers. So you'll need a way to replenish your foods. This is why you need to set aside some seeds for planting.

These food items can be growing while you're using your survival stores. This way, you can keep ahead of your need for food. As the food you plant

ripens, you'll be able to can it and put it aside for future use as well as use the seeds to replant.

With everything that you set aside for emergency survival, you have to take precautions to ensure that it doesn't get ruined. The food needs to be protected from the light.

The light can cause food to spoil. So can moisture. Pests can be a problem, too. Because of this, you'll want to put the food in a cool, dark place where dampness isn't a problem.

Seal the food within airtight containers that keep pests out. There are some storage containers that are specifically designed for long term food storage that you can buy.

There are two important things about caring for your survivalist food storage that you'll need to keep in mind. One is that you have to know what you have. As you begin to put aside food items, you'll forget what you have.

The best way to keep up with what you have onhand is to make a master list where you have every item listed and how much of that item you have, along with the expiration dates.

The second thing is that you need to rotate the foods to keep them

viable. If you have canned goods with an expiration date of four years down the road, if time passes and a SHTF situation doesn't happen, you'll want to put those foods into your current meal plans so they don't go to waste.

Then, when you go to the store, you simply replace what you used with a fresh supply of what you need to keep onhand. Water is an important part of a long-term strategy for taking care of your survival needs.

Depending on what you use to store it, water will not only keep for many years but it can still taste fairly decent. When you store water, you want to leave what you buy in its original container.

If you switch it out to a larger container, you can run the risk of contaminating a large water supply and you don't want to do that. Any stored water has to be kept away from the light.

Water that gets direct light can have temperature changes that can make the water warm enough for bacteria to grow. You can use soda bottles to store water in once you've washed them out, but you should never use a milk jug.

This is one way that water can become contaminated. All it will take is an area where you didn't get all the milk droplets out. You can buy barrels for storing water and you can find these as large as 55 gallon barrels.

You can fill these up with water straight from your kitchen sink and the water should be fine to store. If you use water from another source, such as well water, you'll need to treat that water because ground water usually contains some microbes.

If you have well water with a good filtering and decontamination practice in place, then the water would be okay for you to use. But to be on the safe side, you might want to make sure you disinfect the water before you use it.

Water stored in 55-gallon buckets won't last you forever. So, for that reason, you'll need a way to replace your water supply. You can capture rainwater that runs off your home via your gutter.

Instead of letting that water splash onto the ground, you can place a lidded container beneath the runoff. Even if you take the utmost care when you set aside your water storage supply, you'll still benefit from testing the water.

You can buy test kits at a variety of places that will alert you if the water needs to be purified. Having a long term shelter is next on what you need as part of your long term survival plan.

These shelters take the place of a temporary one such as a tent.

Remember that when it comes to building a shelter, nature has a lot to offer you. You can use straw and rocks, stone, mud and trees.

What some people do is to set aside something that they can use in the event that they need it. They use old trucking containers and make those a survival home.

They cover the container with natural vegetation to make it difficult to see so that others won't know that it's a home. Others choose to use what's available to them on the land.

You can build a mud hut as long as you have a support foundation. A support system would need to be made of trees, logs or boards. You would use the mud to fill in the walls, which would act as a type of natural cement once it hardens.

You can also build a survival shelter from trees to create a log cabin. Just remember that whatever you do build need to have load bearing walls to keep the structure from collapsing in on you.

Weapons are an important part of your long term survival. You can use weapons to help you catch or bring in food. Weapons can be used to make someone think twice before they attack you and weapons can be used to defend yourself if someone does decide to attack you.

Guns are a choice that can be used as a long term survival weapon. Some people choose to have a rifle on hand. Others choose to get a shotgun. Shotguns can be used to supply you and your family with small animals and birds to keep you fed.

You'll want to choose a simple shotgun that can be effective for either hunting or as a defensive weapon. Shotguns in the Remington series are good for long term survival planning.

Always choose shotguns based on whether or not you know or can learn the ins and outs of the gun. Remember that in a SHTF situation, if the shotgun needs to be repaired, you'll be the one who has to do it.

A rifle is a better choice if you think you're going to encounter large animals like bears because a rifle has better long range accuracy. Besides a shotgun or rifle, you should have a pistol.

A pistol is a weapon that's light enough to be carried on you and you can keep it out of sight. When you have a weapon on you, it can easily turn a potential attack into one that doesn't happen.

Many attack situations are crimes of opportunity - and having a weapon can often deflect that crime before it gets started. Your best option is to choose a large caliber pistol. But make sure you know how to handle it and shoot accurately.

Knives can also make great weapons. If you get a fixed blade knife, you'll find that these types are more versatile. You want one that you can easily carry on a sheath attached to your belt or strapped to your leg for easy reach.

There are some additional items that can also be used as weapons. Spears can make great weapons. Some people use these for fishing, but if needed, they could easily be weapons.

A bow and arrow set can be a great weapon if you're skilled in the art of archery, but would not do as a close weapon. If someone is within arm's length, it's too late for a bow and arrow.

Anything that can pack a punch can be used as a weapon. Items like baseball bats or canes cut from tree limbs can be used as well.

Important Rules to Remember for Survival

When a SHTF situation occurs, life will change in an instant. The polite rules of society will no longer be in effect. In a world where people will have to scramble to survive, it will become an every man for himself way of life.

This is when being more of an observer and not a talker can make the difference in your survival. You don't want people to know that you have

supplies. If they know that you have them, the odds are very high that they're going to attempt to take them.

And what happens in a stressful situation is that people panic. If you get a group of people that didn't plan and don't have supplies, they're going to do things that they normally might not do.

If others find out that you have supplies, it's highly likely that they'll spread the word. Complaining and resentment will kick in among a group of people. Then the herd mentality will start up.

Before you realize what's happening, there will be a run on your supplies and there will be too many people for you to be able to defend what your family needs.

In times of panic, there will always be those who will resent you for being prepared. They will see nothing wrong with making sure that you give them what they need - even if they have to take it by force.

There will also be those who will take it simply because they want it to add to their own supplies. Difficult times always create a looting mentality. People will take things, even if they don't need it simply because it's there and they can.

You might not be the type of person who goes around saying what you

have - and that's very wise. But it's important that you make sure that your children don't talk about it, either.

Kids don't always understand the importance of discretion, and sometimes they like to brag or think it's neat - but in this case, you'll want to make sure that they understand they have to keep quiet.

Any other family member or friend who knows about your supply should also be taught the importance of keeping your supply location a secret. What some people do to prepare for a SHTF situation when it comes to their supplies is that they have two locations in case one of them is compromised.

It can be inconvenient to do this, but it will still be the same cost. You'll just have to expend energy to find another storage area and keep up with two supply lists. But it's for your benefit, because this way, if you do get one location's supplies taken from you, your family would still be able to survive.

You never know when you're going to need to defend yourself or your family from people who would think nothing of harming or killing. In a perfect scenario, there wouldn't be a SHTF situation.

But they happen, so you have to be prepared to defend what's yours. And in a SHTF situation, everything would work out for you to be able to

defend yourself and your loved ones.

But you might be off scouting. You could be cutting firewood or a number of other things to do with your survival. If someone finds your loved ones alone, without the ability to defend themselves, that could easily turn into an ugly situation.

Every single member of your family needs to know how to shoot a gun. Even a small child can be properly taught about the seriousness of guns and how to safely use them.

You want your children to be able to defend themselves from harm whether that harm is in human or animal form. If a wild animal attacks your child or other family member, you want him to be able to fight to save his life.

Your family should be trained in gun safety and use long before it becomes a necessity. You can teach them or they can take classes at a local gun range. Each member of your family should regularly practice shooting until it becomes easy for them.

Every member of your family should know how to clean a gun. They need to know how to strip it down and reassemble it. They need to understand the different types of ammunition and why each kind is used.

They need to know how to unload ammunition and how to quickly load it – and how to handle glitches in a firearm. You should practice different scenarios with each family member so they'll know what to do if there ever is a threat.

When you practice, each family member will learn what to do automatically. This will help them be able to react quickly to any threats. Sometimes, despite your best efforts to keep everything quiet, you could find yourself and your family under attack.

This is one of the most difficult situations that you'll face. When you have to defend those you love and you know that they're counting on you to keep them safe, it can raise your adrenaline level.

Some people react very well to a serious threat. Others freeze. Those who freeze usually do it because they're not sure what to do. They don't know how to react because they didn't plan on needing to react to a threat like the one that they're facing.

When a SHTF situation happens, your family could very well come under attack - even from the people that you know and currently trust. Bad situations will often rob people of their normal moral behaviors.

They'll do things they never imagined that they'd do. An attack on your family can be scary. You might be called on to use lethal force to defend

yourself and them. Remember that if you can remain calm, it will help your family.

If they see that you're okay, they'll be calmer and you need them to keep their cool, too. Prepare before the event of an attack. Know right now what you're going to do and what each family member is going to do.

The first thing that you should do is to establish a family safety or code word. The code word should be clear and not associated with anything else. You want this word to be one that in the event you have to use it, your family knows that it's serious and they know that a potentially dangerous situation has suddenly arisen.

You don't want to choose a word that's associated with anything else because it can be confusing for younger kids. For example, if you were to yell, "Run!" then your children might not realize exactly what you're talking about.

You want to give your family plenty of time to escape a bad situation. So choose a word associated with your plan. It can be something like "Go Time" or "Survive!"

Don't choose words like *fire* unless your family knows to get out of the house or the area to a predetermined safe area. You also want to make

sure that you choose one or two words.

This will help make it clear and easily understood. The more words in a phrase that you use, the greater the chance that someone won't understand what you're saying.

When you yell out the code word, each one of your family members must know what he or she is supposed to do. If you have small children, they should know that they either need to find an older sibling or a parent.

Or, you can train them to get to a predestined area and wait so that they're not in the way. What some people do is choose a room within the house that's a room where they can go to be safe.

If that's what you choose to do, this room should not be easily accessed from the outside. If it has a door that leads to the outside, someone trying to get in could very well find that door and have access to your family.

You don't want your family in a room where someone could easily break in through a window, either. Families that use a designated room in the house, know that if the code word is called out, that they're to get to that room.

When everyone is in the room, the entrance way should be blocked. But you should be aware that if someone is determined to get to you or your

family, they might not stop trying until they do gain access.

For this reason, you need to make sure that you have a weapon with you. Since you can't always plan to have your weapon on you unless it's part of your daily habit, the room in your home where everyone runs to should have an accessible weapon for the adults to be able to use as defense.

The room should also have a supply of ammunition. You don't want to lose your family to an attack because you ran out of ammunition. The room should also be fortified with a means of communication.

You would need a way to call out to alert someone else as to what's happening. In the event of catastrophic SHTF situations, you can't rely on the police coming in to fight off the attackers.

The whole 911 system could be overloaded. You'll want to have a way to reach others by having a couple of different communication devices in the room. Remember that your goal is to stay alive and keep your family alive.

If attackers breach the door of the room where you are, you'll need to be prepared to stop them from getting any closer to you. Sometimes, it won't be safe to even stay in a designated room in your home.

This is why you should always have a plan B. Every member of your family

should understand what to do if it's not safe. An adult can make the call simply by using a word that's associated with a location outside the home

.

Make sure that everyone knows they go to the outdoor location and they don't leave. It can be tempting for a family member to want to run back to try and save material possessions, but remember - it's about safety and survival - not fighting for what's inside your home.

Running to a second location can be a better defense than staying when you're outnumbered. There's no doubt that every part of surviving is going to cost you. Some of the costs will be as simple as taking the time to create a plan.

Other parts of survival is knowing what to do and when. But a great deal of the survival is making sure that you can fund your plan. This is where having a strategy can help.

You can't build a castle overnight. It's just not possible. However, stone by stone, you will get that castle built. It's the same for making sure that you have all of the survival supplies that you need.

Don't look at the big picture once you create your list. You might not be able to spend the thousands of dollars that you need to set aside a storage of food. You don't have to.

Instead, what you do is every time you go to the grocery store, you make sure that you pick up extra goods. You buy more than you need. You take advantage of the buy one get one free deals.

You use coupons. You barter for goods. Each time you get more than you need, you put it in your survivalist storage area. It might take you several months, but you can stockpile your survival needs this way.

You start out by creating a list and you work on it until you get all of the items on that list. You can also spend extra money on your supply needs. Instead of spending the gift card you get on another material thing that will only clutter your house, you put it toward buying something on your list.

Once you get all of the supplies that you need, you will have to periodically check on them. Your storage area will have to be checked to make sure that the environment is still suitable for storage.

You'll also have to rotate the supplies. This isn't something that will happen right away unless you buy foods that have a shorter expiration date. You don't want to do that.

When you shop, you always want to pay attention to the expiration date. You'll also want to make sure that you if you group like items together in a storage bin, such as pastas, that you write on the outside of the container.

You'll want to clearly mark the expiration dates. When you store foods that need to remain in a cool, dark place, you can't keep opening the storage container just to check the date.

That defeats the purpose of storing it. As the expiration dates draw near, you can use them yourself as part of your monthly grocery needs. Because of buying in bulk, it might be difficult for you to use large quantities before the expiration if you're not careful with the planning.

You might not be able to use a 25-pound bag of flour in a month, but if you pay attention to the expiration date, you'll know when to pull that flour to use so that nothing goes to waste.

Survival preparation was once an idea that very few implemented and many ridiculed. Over time, the masses started seeing horrific images unfold on live TV where natural disasters and man-made attacks caused the loss of lives.

Now, it's an idea becoming more mainstream. But there are always those who are resigned to preparing a plan to steal, rather than survive. If possible, save up for some out of the way land that you can use to build a new homestead property for a SHTF situation.

Worst case scenario, or best case, depending on how you look at the investment, is that your survival place is never needed – and you can pass the property down to your offspring.

Prepping isn't something you do at the last minute. It's also not something you do haphazardly. It requires a methodical process of stocking up and knowing what your family's needs are long before you're caught in the crosshairs of a disaster that could spell the end for many individuals.



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