START PREPARING!

Introductory Prepper Guide

INTRODUCTION

Hi, my name is Kris (aka City Prepping) and I have been involved with emergency preparedness for several decades now. Between achieving Eagle Scout in my youth, doing humanitarian work in impoverished areas of Mexico and in 3rd world nations such as Afghanistan, and receiving C.E.R.T. training, I've come to learn the foundations of preparedness that I'll outline in this document.

Over the last several years I've developed close to 700,000 subscribers on my YouTube channel and during that time, I've both gained a new level of appreciation for being prepared during these times of uncertainty and have learned from the community's insight.

I've created this quick guide to get you started. When you start on your path as a prepper, and even if you have been prepping for a long time, it can seem overwhelming and can be more than a bit of stress and anxiety-ridden. Questions about what you need, what is best to have, calories needed, water required, type of disaster, and more can make it challenging to understand which direction you should be methodically plodding along. As a result, you either feel overwhelmed with anxiety and miss living your life today, or you purchase things you probably will never use. Hopefully, you will never use any of your preps to survive, but it may be the difference between life and death if you ever do.

In this City Prepping Getting Started Guide, we will try and simplify what you need and get you moving in the right direction. Our approach here is to break down the types of disasters you may face and provide you with a basic understanding of the minimal things you may need to survive them. Just like you will never have everything you could ever need to survive any disaster, by completing the checklists here, you will have what you need to get by and survive through the broadest range of plausible disasters.

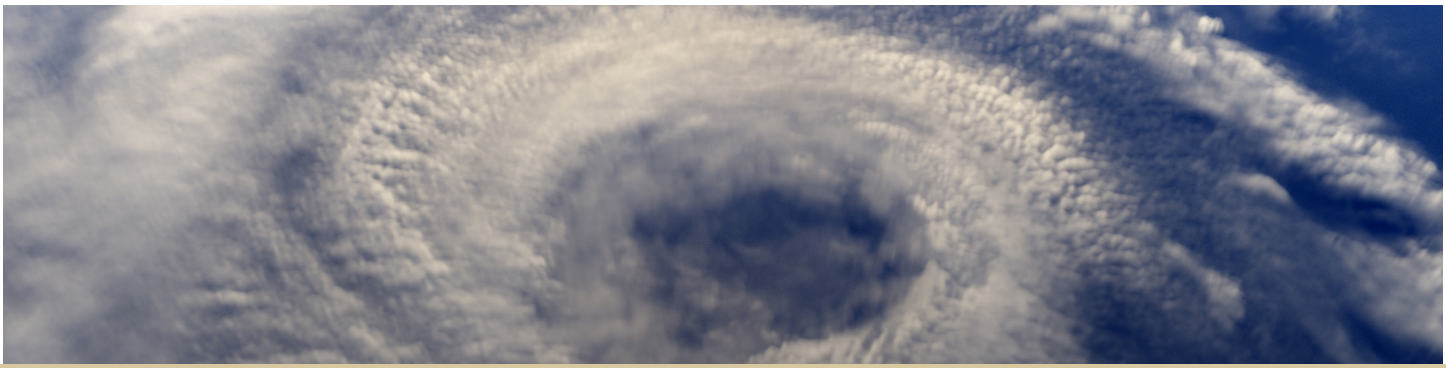
LEVELS OF DISASTERS

Of course, disasters can range from something as simple as losing a job to an extinction-level event like a comet strike. In between are floods, heatwaves, earthquakes, tornados, tsunamis, wildfires, volcanoes, wind storms, hurricanes, mudslides, drought, supply chain failures, civil unrest, blizzards, solar flares, violent revolution, comet strikes, war, crime, mobs, looting, shootings, electrical storms, terrorist attacks, cyberattacks, EMPs and the list goes on and on. -The facts are that on a long enough timeline, some tragedy or disaster will befall you. The prepared are better equipped with the resources and skills they need to persevere. After all, even being prepared is no guarantee of survival, and it simply puts the odds better in your favor. The unprepared are at the mercy of others or are likely to take what they need rather than starve or succumb to the elements. They are also the most shocked that the world around them has fallen apart. Often they are crippled with fear because they never took the time to consider that the worst could happen and how great the present is, even when sometimes cloudy, dark, and complicated.

With so many possible disasters, getting started is hard. Our recommended approach is to break the disasters you most likely face into three levels. Picture it on a scale of sorts. **Level 1** disasters are those that tend to be confined to your area, are of a limited scope of time, and have a reasonable, even if complicated, recovery phase. A **Level 1** might be a tornado ripping through your community where the destruction is extensive, but not all houses are affected. There are plenty of helping hands. Federal entities like FEMA and other organizations like Operation BBQ and even businesses like Lowe's come in to help citizens recover.

A **Level 1** disaster is a disaster nonetheless. It can still go south. Looting and crime could still occur. Neighbor could steal from neighbor. For the most part, though, you simply need enough to get by until things clear up. The extra food, water, camp stove, tent, sleeping bag, and simple, inexpensive basics can carry you through.

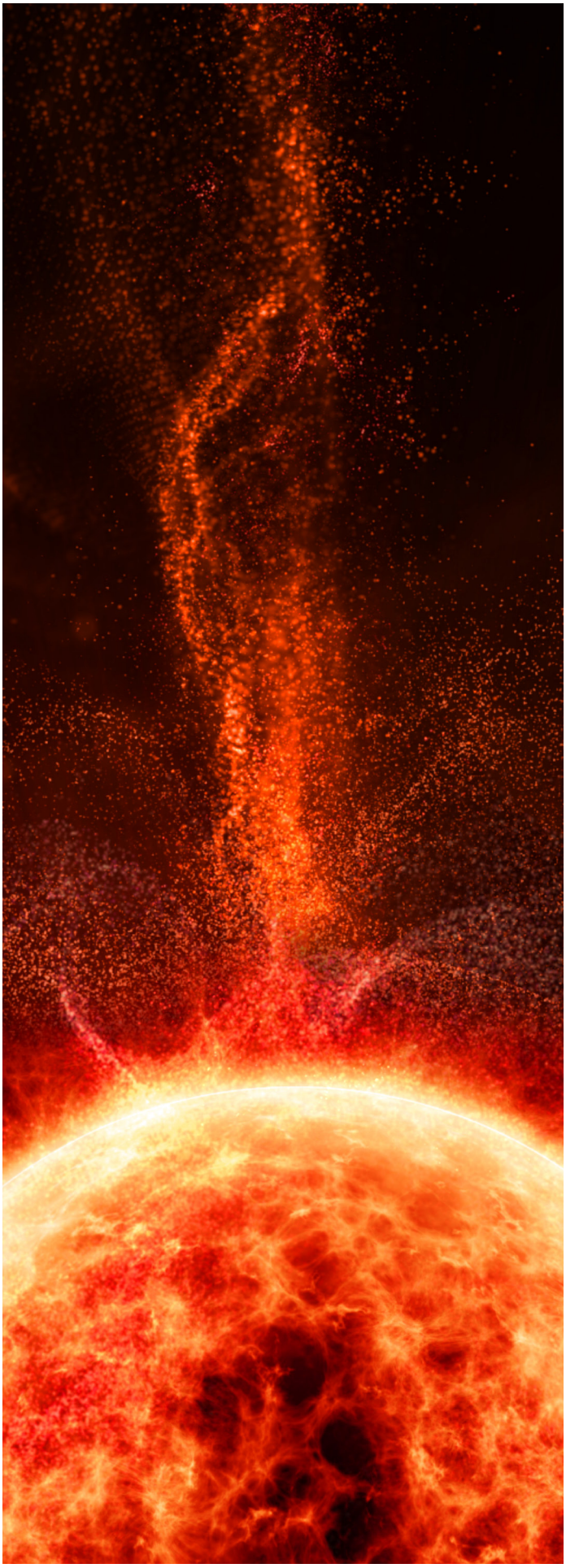
The Snowmageddon that hit D.C in 2010 and left millions stranded in their homes is a type of Level 1 disaster. The Texas Power Crisis of 2021 that left 4.5 million homes without power and directly and indirectly led to the deaths of between 200 and 700 people, although deadlier, was still a level 1 disaster in our scenario.



A **Level 2** disaster is larger in scope and has a less specific conclusion. This may be your regional disaster that is more than just a blackout. Something like a major earthquake, hurricane, radiological release, major flooding, or wildfires in all directions fit this category. In a **Level 2** disaster, you are significantly cut-off from outside aid sources, and it may not be apparent when relief efforts will come for you or to bring you water or food. Sanitation systems may be offline, and general movement outside may be treacherous. It sounds terrible, and it is. The level of desperation in the non-prepared will be much higher. The likelihood of looting and the need for personal safety increases, as police, EMS, and fire services will likely be offline. You will need more supplies on hand and may need to ration those until an end to the disaster is in sight. **Level 2** disasters can lead to other disasters as well. The sewer systems being flooded and running into the streets could lead to an outbreak of dysentery. Downed power lines could spark out-of-control fires. Hurricane Katrina fit this category. Had the Texas power outage and frigid cold extended into a second week, it may have risen to **Level 2**. The atmospheric river that hit British Columbia, wiping out roads, bridges, and railways and causing stores to be cleared out of panic fits this category. Beyond natural disasters, regional civil unrest can easily fit this category.

The third category is a **Level 3** disaster. This may not be confined to a single region and can spill over to other areas. These tend to be at a national or global scale. A world financial crisis, the supply chain stopping, a plague of an undiagnosed nature, the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami, the fall of Afghanistan, the Argentine or Venezuelan economic collapses, Fukushima and Chernobyl, the Haitian, Izmit, and TĐhoku earthquakes all fit this category. History is littered with these events ranging from death tolls of just a few hundred to millions. An EMP or solar flare today would definitely be a **Level 3** disaster. War in or around your area fits the **Level 3** category. Getting to safety out of a **Level 3** disaster may not be possible.

Getting to safety while amidst a **Level 3** disaster may be challenging. Even getting home in the aftermath of a **Level 3** Disaster may be improbable. Your need for personal security is higher, and you should have some type of Everyday Carry (EDC) bag in your car or on your person.



LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3
• Localized disaster zone • Help on hand or on the way	• Regional disaster • Unknown timeframe for relief • May spurn secondary disasters	• Wide geographical scope • No relief is probable • Secondary disasters are inevitable • Requires lockdown or exodus
NEEDS: • Food • Water • Energy • Light Medical	NEEDS: • Food • Water • Energy • Moderate Medical • Personal Security • Secure Shelter in Place or need to Bug-Out	NEEDS: • Long-term food and water • Permanent energy and -Biofuel needs • Major ongoing medical • Personal security • Bunker-like lockdown or exodus

FIRST STEP FOR PREPAREDNESS

#1 Your first step is to list out all of the disasters that are likely or probable in your area. Then you should list them from the most likely to occur to the least likely to occur. If you live in a tornado alley in a town of just a few hundred people, obviously, preparing for a tornado would be much higher than civil unrest or a terrorist attack. If you live in the path of hurricanes and there are enough historical records to show that there is a very high likelihood your area will be hit again, obviously, that would be top of your list. Preparing for an Earthquake might not even be on your list. When you prepare for the possibility of one disaster, you actually end up prepping for a host of possible known and unknown disasters. Pick your top 3 probable disasters from your list and make those your priorities to prepare for. If an even more significant, unpredictable disaster befalls you, you will still be well-equipped by your focusing on these three.

#2 Define the length of duration and multiply by 3. By duration, I mean from the time the disaster occurs until typical relief rolls in. If you are prepping for an event with an unknown relief time frame, use 3-weeks as your minimum. Some people prepare for 72-hours and call it done. That is the standard suggestion from most government organizations. 72-hours is an excellent minimum goal, and it might be enough for most people if ALL people met this minimal goal; however, most people don't have a day's worth of food or water in their home. If the municipal water supply ever stopped, they would immediately be thirsty. Minimally, you should assign any Level 2 or 3 disaster three weeks. When you have met that goal, multiply by three and make your new goal 9-weeks. When you meet that goal, multiply by three and set a new goal for 27-weeks. That's a half-year. If you can live a half-year through a grid-down disaster with no relief on the horizon, you're probably going to make it overall.

#3 Assess the preps you need and make a list accordingly. There are a few preps that are common to all disasters-- natural or human-caused. The need for food, water, medical, hygiene, and energy, be it electrical or biofuel like wood which can be burned for heat and light, are common to all disasters. So, if you need a place to start, these are the preps to begin with.

FOOD

Make sure to build enough of a non-perishable, shelf-stable food supply to last you for the most extended duration. Make sure you have the calories you need for yourself and every member of your family (and don't forget your pets). The average human requires a 1,200 minimum level of calories before the body goes into starvation mode. Obviously, you want your calories to be higher than the starvation threshold. Make sure you have a range of calorie and nutrient-dense foods. One big mistake for beginning preppers is simply looking at calories and then stocking up on beans, rice, and Ramen. The human body probably can't process the two cups of pinto beans per day required to meet that minimal threshold, and those three items, while cheap, will lack the necessary nutrients to sustain you over the long haul.

Look for freeze-dried, canned, pickled, and dehydrated options for your food supplies. Commercially produced freeze-dried emergency kits, while expensive, can have a shelf life of 25-years. Freeze-dried vegetables in an oxygen-deprived package will keep for 15 or more years. Commercially canned foods have a maximum shelf-life of 5 years, and a bag of dried pasta has a shelf-life of about one year. In addition to the disaster duration, you have to determine how long your stored foods will last.

I encourage people to eat their supplies and get in the habit of regularly rotating them and cooking with them. If a disaster strikes and the majority of your food has never been rotated and is out of its usable dates, you will have a much bigger problem on your hands. If you are suddenly shifting your diet to beans and other heavy carbs, you will have other issues.

Make sure you have a range of foods to ensure you have a variety of nutrients. Then assess the calories. Allow for a minimum of 2,000 calories per day to stay above the starvation threshold. Then actually write out some meal plans. And believe me when I say, that is the minimum calorie count. After a disaster, you are more likely to be on your feet and exerting effort to do more manual labor such as lifting and carrying items. This final step of meal planning will inform you as to how usable your foods are. It is excellent to have wheat berries on hand that you plan to grind into flour for bread, but what if you can't grind them or you can't bake bread. It's great to have some quick protein shake mixes on hand, but you probably won't be able to drink more than once per day. A ton of jerky, nuts, dehydrated fruits and vegetables, and freeze-dried food will be great, but they will require an even larger amount of water per day.

WATER

Make sure you have stored water. Ready.gov reports that only 17% of Americans claim to be prepared for a disaster, and I suspect that number is a little high. Even if we accept that number as accurate, it means that 83% of the people don't have a plan if the water should stop flowing to them. 90% of Americans rely upon the public drinking water system. By doing the math, in the event of a national-scale disaster that taints the municipal water system, 296.5 million people will be thirsty and dehydrated within 72-hours. Most of those people will lack the means to treat or purify water in the wild, so many will suffer from dysentery or water-borne illnesses if they drink water in the wild. The hours leading up to and following any major disaster will deplete stores of bottled water. To be prepared, you absolutely need to store water, but you also need to be able to harvest, filter, and treat water to render it safe for drinking. A Level 1 disaster might just result in desperately thirsty masses. A Level 2 disaster will require you to have the means to get water from the wild and render it drinkable. A Level 3 disaster will require you to have an ongoing means of harvesting, treating, and filtering water.

The general rule for minimal preparedness is one gallon of water per person (don't forget your pets) per day for 3-days. Sixteen cups are in a gallon, and that's also the minimal fluid intake for men to avoid dehydration and eventual death. So, this 1-gallon would provide the bare minimum for drinking and not sanitation. The second goal is extending this bare-bones minimum out to a two-week supply. So a family of 3 with one dog, even though the dog probably isn't likely to consume or use 1 gallon, we calculate it as doing so, would require 4-gallons per day at the minimum. Two weeks would be 4*14=56 gallons. This can be accomplished with one 55-gallon water barrel stored properly in a garage or 16 WaterBricks stacked and lining a closet wall or stored under a bed or 10, 5-gallon water containers. These more comprehensive storage solutions are favorable to stacks of bottled water because of their larger capacity and are easier to store for longer periods of time.

For your calculations, take it a step beyond the government suggestions. Consider that the one-gallon mentioned above is really just for drinking. You need water for cooking, personal sanitation, and household hygiene. Some suggest 3-gallons per person per day. Examine the length of duration you defined earlier for the number of days supply you will want, then shoot for at least 2-gallons per person and animal. This will guarantee you enough resources to exceed by rationing the majority of disasters. This is an easy formula to follow:

Estimated Length of Disaster * People/Animals * 2 = Gallons of water required.

Take your preps a level further, as well, make sure that you can harvest water from the wild and filter or treat it. It's not feasible for most to store a 3-month supply of water. Do you have the means to boil water if the gas and electricity lines are down and a boil order is issued, or do you suspect the water is contaminated?

Do you have a personal filtration device like a LifeStraw in case you are separated from your stored water or your stored water is destroyed in the disaster? If you are forced away from your home base indefinitely, do you have the means to collect, treat, or filter water, and for how long? A 100-count of potable water treatment tablets would be great for the on-the-go treatment of water and to protect you from ingesting deadly bacteria, but what's your plan after you have used them up? They are only suitable for a few days of water, at best. Do you have a pool and have a PortaWell in your supplies? That's 10,000 gallons right there. A life straw can usually filter the same amount, but it can't filter out chlorination and other chemicals. Whatever solution you have for obtaining water from wild sources or rendering it drinkable from tainted municipal sources, make sure you can boil it, pasteurize it, or filter it to a drinkable state.

MEDICAL

After a disaster, an untreated cut can lead to infection and death. An untreated broken bone can also result in death or improper healing. Exposure to higher levels of bacteria without proper sanitation can result in sickness or death. Depending upon the disaster's extent, medical services, even medications, may not be available to you for an indeterminate amount of time. The need for medical attention can be immediate, as in the early moments during and after a disaster, or it can be more long-term, as in a cracked tooth that happens a week or more after the disaster. The first requires knowledge of first-aid treatments. The latter requires more extensive knowledge and tools. Think of it as first aid being the emergency, quick fix to get you through until relief arrives, while long-term medical care is the routine maintenance you will need to get you through an extended grid-down situation. In this way of thinking, it's obvious that you need a little skill and knowledge with each. You may not need dental care right now, but sometime in the future, you will. You might not be sick now, but sometime in the future, you will be.

The second aspect of the medical category is criticalness. A broken bone, laceration, contusion, or concussion needs immediate attention. A scratch, bump or bruise you may have to endure through until things are calmer, but realize that these can rise to a more critical nature if left unattended.

The basis of all medical prepping is knowledge and a first-aid kit. A store-bought kit is a starting point. You should know how to use everything in that kit, and you should know what you need to get in your medical bag as well. Often, first-aid kits use cheap ingredients. Upgrade your kit to better bandages, band-aids, and gauze. Consider adding a snakebite kit, suture kit, or Epipen if those are realistic to your assessed needs. If you have latex allergies, the latex gloves in a standard kit won't do you much good.

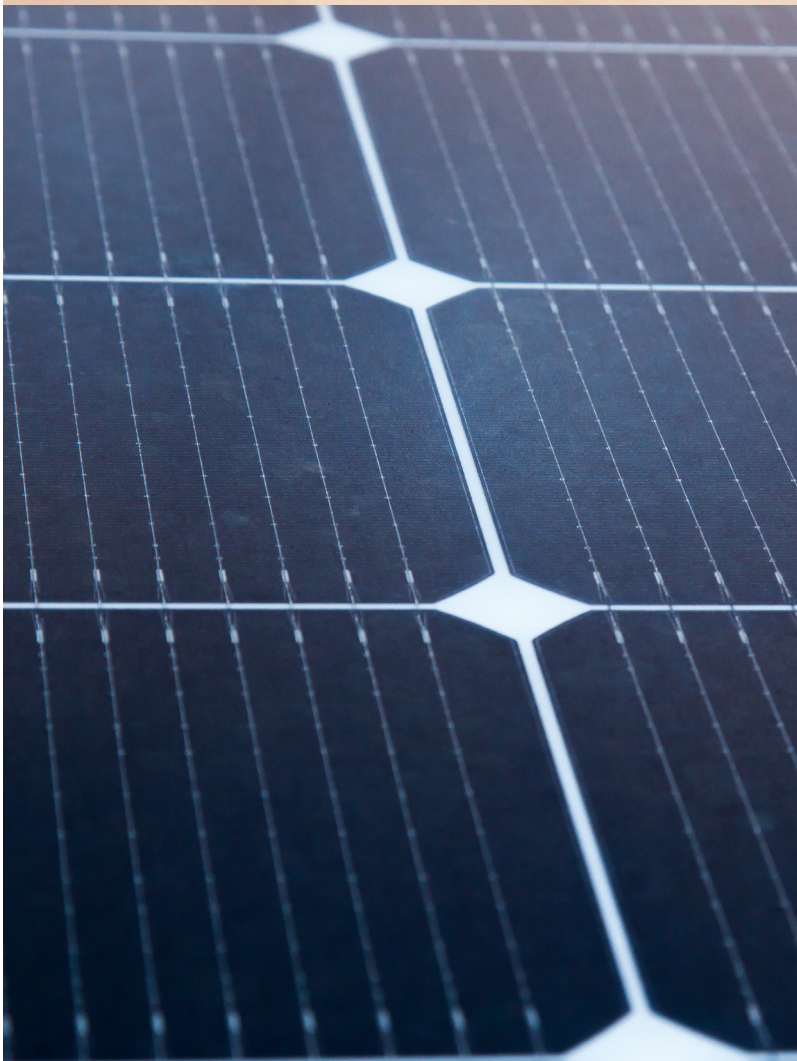
What medical supplies or medicines can you not live without? Do you have bad allergies? Do you take daily medicine? Do you have unique needs to maintain your health? If you answered yes to any of those questions, you want to ensure your emergency kit addresses these individual needs. Then do the same for every member of your family, again including your pets. Beyond the equipment and medicine you will need for both the short and long term, you will need medical reference materials. After a disaster, you won't be able to look anything up online. A basic medical manual will be helpful, if not a life-saver. I can not recommend the Survival Medicine Handbook enough. This is a well-thought-out medical handbook specifically designed for the preparedness community.

HYGIENE

Hygiene is the conditions or practices conducive to maintaining health and preventing disease, primarily through cleanliness. Most of us only think of it in the personal sense of bathing, brushing our teeth, and combing our hair, and it's much more than that after a disaster. You will still need a way to remove solid and liquid waste away from your home if the toilets ever stop working. You're not going to want to pour water into your toilet to flush it if you only have so much water to drink. Prepping supplies of toilet paper, wipes, plastic garbage bags, durable plastic gloves, bleach, face masks, eye protection, and the like are vital. Soap, deodorant, toothpaste, and those day-to-day sundries are also just as important. You want to keep clean and protect yourself from exposure to contaminants that could make you sick.

ENERGY

Energy is meant for any electrical needs you may have, like a mini-refrigerator for medications. It also means fire. You have to be able to cook and boil water. Sometimes an open fire can make you even less safe in the aftermath of a disaster. It telegraphs your location to the world and could be dangerous because of natural gas leaks, debris, or flammable chemical leaks. If the solar panels on your house were part of your plan, realize that these shut down after a disaster to prevent electricity trickling down the line to workers who may be repairing lines. If you do go with a solar option, you will need a backup battery and power management system.



The fact is that your energy needs have to drop after a disaster to the bare minimum and the basics. This can be a portable solar panel, a battery backup system you keep plugged into the wall for just such an emergency, or a fuel-dependent generator. Whichever you choose, each will have its own length of usability. A battery backup that is not replenishing will only last as long as its capacity. A solar panel will only work if you have adequate sunshine and the means to spread it out. A fuel-dependent generator is limited to the fuel on hand. Even a propane generator tied to the municipal system isn't a sure bet. Though the pumping station may operate by electricity generated at the site from the natural gas extracted, natural gas getting to your location depends on other pumping station valves and uninterrupted lines. It would not be out of the ordinary for the gas company to cut off lines in the aftermath of a disaster until they could ensure the line integrity.

Your energy needs may have to be met at some point by an open flame, even a candle. If that is all you can safely use to create light and heat, that's all you have. Make sure that you have the basics to start a fire, keep it small, keep it going, cook with it, and heat with it. A tiny candle can heat water and render it safe to drink, given a long enough time. It can sterilize a needle before you have to sew a rudimentary suture. You don't need to know how to start a fire with two sticks, though that is helpful. You do need reliable means to get a fire going and adequate resources to keep it going. Even with the most elaborate and expensive solar battery systems, make sure you still have the means to create the vital energy fire.

BUGOUT & EVERYDAY CARRY BAGS

Make sure you have a bugout bag and an Everyday Carry (EDC) bag. Make at least one for each of your family members. Make sure you have the basics I outlined in each.If your bag is in the trunk of your car and the roads get wiped out with you several miles from home, your bag is the equivalent of a life vest when you are drowning. Don't throw out those old sneakers. Put them in your bag. Put a utility tool in there along with at least a pocket knife. Put a length of paracord, a basic camp cup cooker, and a light windbreaker or small tarp. Put sunscreen and insect repellent in there. Ask yourself what you will need to survive 72-hours away from home.

Even longtime preppers don't always take this step. They assume that their preps in their home will get them by. Unfortunately, disasters can decimate your home supplies, and they can rip the roof off your home or burn it to the ground. The possibility of you being displaced after a disaster is genuine, and the possibility of a disaster striking while you are away from home is very real. Your 40-minute commute to work is a multi-day journey back home if the roads are impassable. If your house is on fire, you won't have time to gather up what you need, carefully pack it in a bag and then get to safety.

Make sure you have copies of essential documents or a USB thumbnail in a ziplock bag in this bag, as well. This will force you to keep a closer eye on the bag, and it will help you rebuild or re-establish yourself after a disaster. Minimally, make sure you have what you need to survive for 72-hours in the elements. That will depend a great deal upon your environment. If the bag never leaves your closet or the trunk of your car, that's great. If you need it even once and have it, you will be thankful you didn't skip this step.

NEXT CONSIDERATIONS

If you focus on these five preps: food, water, medical, hygiene, and energy, and you look at them from the perspective of most likely disasters and most likely durations, you will have the basis of what you need to survive a variety of catastrophes. Start small by building your supplies for a 3-day supply, then 3-week, then at least 3-months. This will put you better positioned than 90% of the population. Even with no other things considered, you will be better capable of surviving most disasters. Build a disaster plan just as you attempted to build a meal plan to understand your food preps. What is the step-by-step you need when the disaster occurs? Develop a checklist and review it with all family members. Let your discussion lead you to prepare better for more possibilities.

There are other considerations, and those will depend on the type of disaster you think you will or will face. If you live far off the main roads in relative seclusion, personal protection is important but less critical than it may be for someone who lives in a high-rise apartment in the inner city. Skill-building and knowledge are vital prep.

If you know how to hunt, fish, make soap, brew, can, pickle, sew, knit, mechanics, medical arts, gardening, herbal remedies, foraging or scavenging, and you have put these skills into practical use from time to time, you're going to be better equipped to survive the aftermath of a disaster. The phrase 'knowledge is power' could not be more accurate. After just a few generations, we have become accustomed to getting our needs met with a few clicks of a keyboard or with a few words and a little money. Our ancestors made their soap, cooked their food, preserved their harvests, hunted, gardened, bartered, and traded to meet their needs. Adopt a mindset of continually improving your skills. Build a physical library of a few forgotten skills, crafts, and sustainable activities of the past. You may not need a Dakota Fire Pit now, but it might not hurt to know how to build one later. Don't rely on gear that you have never pressed into service to work correctly in a disaster. Your best prep is your skills and knowledge.

Finally, focus on your health. If you live on the 20th floor but can't take the stairs up or down to save your life, you need to move. If you can't walk 40-miles over several days, you need to achieve a higher fitness level. We all have genuine limitations and health issues, but make a plan to address your health concerns and commit to doing a little more each day. In a short amount of time, you will have at least a little better fitness level. You may not be going on any mountain hikes, but you have to be able to get from point A to point B without entirely relying on a car, bus, or subway. The physical demands during and after a disaster are great. A significant key to your survival is if you are fit enough to rise to those demands and endure.

Future releases I will make available from City Prepping will dive much deeper than this "Getting Started Guide." I will release more information about that as these resources and deeper dives become available. For now, use this guide to get started. You have to start now and not just contemplate getting started prepping. If history is any indicator and the present world is any sign of things yet to come, failing to prepare is preparing to fail. There will be a time when your lights are off. There may be a time when your water is unfit to drink. There may be a time when the air or weather outside is unsafe for you. Whether the disaster that befalls you is one of your three most likely or some other unknown, you have to take the steps now to prepare to survive it.

Take a look at the content on the City Prepping YouTube channel and the CityPrepping.com site for a more in-depth look at some of the things I have covered here, and watch for future releases. Get busy prepping, set some goals, and make a plan.

And, as always, stay safe out there.

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