

TEN ESSENTIAL AREAS OF FAMILY PREPAREDNESS Chuck Reber

These ten areas represent the essentials for sustaining life in a daily routine. Normally, because they are connected to our national and local infrastructure systems, we don't think twice about their availability. However, when these systems are disrupted and no longer available, then we must have backup supplies on hand to replace them in order to maintain sustainability.

Sometimes the disruption is short-lived (2-3 days), and we make due with the few supplies that we have on hand. But, if there is a long-term disruption due to a natural disaster or a collapse of an infrastructure, then stores are quickly depleted of food and supplies with no guarantee of rapid resupply. In these situations, wisdom dictates that you have supplies on hand to sustain the life of your family until the critical infrastructures are restored.

I. THE LEVELS OF FAMILY PREPAREDNESS

Level 1: Nominal Family Preparedness - You have a minimum amount of water, food and emergency supplies on hand. You can fend off starvation for a few days in a minor disruption without electric or water. It would be unpleasant but not life threatening.

Level 2: Basic Family Preparedness – You are prepared for disruptions in utility service, transportation, and shopping shortages that occur in disasters. Families at level 2 are prepared for disasters and disruptions that occur regularly like hurricanes, tornadoes, and flooding that may disrupt services for up to 3-4 weeks. You are prepared for an extended local disaster, but not for a very serious widespread disaster.

Level 3: Advanced Family Preparedness – Level 3 families are prepared for prolonged serious disruptions in utility service and have enough food, water, and supplies on hand to provide for themselves, for their immediate family, and some for sharing with others in your neighborhood. This level of preparedness would carry you and your family through a severe crisis (multiple terrorists strikes against major cities, disruption of the nation's economy, or a pandemic) that would require supplies for up to several months. Families will usually have a generator, and long-term food storage.

Level 4: Lifestyle Family Preparedness – At Level 4, preparedness has become a way of life, even if no crisis occurs. You are not living “off the grid” but you have the means to stay comfortably independent from the outside world for a period of months, or perhaps a year. Families will usually raise animals for food, garden, and can/store their own food.

II. THE IMPORTANCE OF PLANNING

Crafting a thorough plan is the first essential step in your preparations. Always factor Christian charity into your preparation plans, keeping an “others” mindset. “Love your neighbor as yourself.” Self-sufficiency isn't *selfish*-sufficiency!

A. Know what you are preparing for:

1. You can't prepare for everything!

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2. What is the greatest threat to your family?
3. Know both your capabilities and your limitations.
4. Focus on meeting your family's needs during the most likely disaster or crisis.

B. Two Truths to Motivate Your Preparations

1. The worst place to do anything for the first time is during an emergency.
2. Failure to prepare today will increase the magnitude of your suffering tomorrow.

C. SIX KEY QUESTIONS

1. Who am I responsible to care for in the crisis?

- Family members, neighbor, church family? Who has the Lord assigned to your care? Pray and ask Him to highlight specific people to you.
- Keep an "Others" mindset. Always factor helping others into your preparations. "Love your neighbor as yourself"
- Self-sufficiency isn't *selfish*-sufficiency! We want to be self-sufficient and interdependent network of relationships.
- Don't forget to plan for the marginalized and those with special needs:
 - Persons who are elderly
 - Persons who are physically challenged, deaf, or blind
 - Single moms with small children
 - Children who may be orphaned or abandoned by their parents during the crisis
 - Persons with debilitating mental problems
 - Don't forget your Pets and Livestock

2. How many people do I envision caring for during the crisis?

- How many adults, children, or teens? Each group will have unique care needs.
- Based on the above list, calculate your total, and then factor in at least one more person.

3. How long do I expect to need provisions?

- 1 – 3 weeks, 3 months, 6 months, 1 year or more?
- What type of event do you envision coming? How long will it take to get through it to stability and normalcy?

4. What standard of living do I expect to maintain during this time period?

- 3 hot meals/day, a daily hot shower, and air conditioning?
- What kind of toilet facilities?
- The higher standard of living the more resources you will need available.

5. How much (quantity) do I need to store up in light of these answers?

- Based on the above answers, factor together the amount (quantity) of each item you will need to store to provide for those in your care.
- Begin to make your supply lists accordingly. Book Recommendation: *How To Survive The End Of The World As We Know It*, James Wesley Rawles
- Draw up a weekly budget allotment then begin purchasing items as the budget allows.
- Remember to plan for storage space for your supplies.
- Recommended book: *How to Survive The End Of The World As We Know It*, by James Wesley Rawles

6. What skill sets do I need to learn, sharpen, or acquire through relationships?

- There are knowledge and skill sets connected to each area of preparation.
- “The wise man lays up knowledge” (Prov. 10:14)
- Skill sets are a valuable commodity that can be bartered with others for supplies or labor.
- Recommended book: *Tools For Survival*, James Wesley Rawles

C. Don't forget to factor Redundancies into your preparations

When making preparedness plans, remember to factor in what I call, *The Law of Redundancy*:

In preparing for crisis, be certain you have multiple layers of supplies and backup resources for the most essential areas of need.

Or, another way of stating this is -- ***Two are one and one is none.***

For example: If you have a propane gas grill as your primary cooking source, then store a charcoal grill and extra charcoal as your backup.

III. The Ten Essential Areas of Preparedness

Here is a list of the ten essential components necessary for sustaining life in a crisis, whether that crisis last for two days or for several months.

1. Water

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Water is essential to sustain life. You need a *minimum* of 1 gal/person/day. There are three considerations with water:

- A. Sources** – Locate multiple sources for potable water; don't depend on just one source. If you have a well, consider a hand pump system as a backup. www.flojak.com or www.simplepump.com
- B. Storage** – I recommend storing 3 gal per person per day (water for drinking, cooking, cleaning)
 - 1. Have multiple means of water storage (5 gal containers, Water Bob, water barrels, pallet containers); don't forget a siphon hose
- C. Purification** – Have 2-3 methods of purifying the water that you store.
 - 1. Boiling, chemical (bleach, tablets), ultraviolet light, solar distillation
 - 2. Invest in a good, large volume water filter: Berkey, Katadyn, Sawyer System, Monolithic water filter, Survival Still, Seychelle

2. Food

There are three primary considerations: 1) Food Availability, 2) Food Preservation, and 3) Food Storage.

Availability is based on "Just in time inventory." Groceries only keep 2-3 days worth of food on the shelves. The average family keeps only 1 week's worth of food on hand.

Let's focus first on food preservation and storage.

- A. How much to store?** (Answer the six key planning questions)
Remember, a typical family of four consumes 12 meals a day or 84 meals a week, or 364 meals a month – not including snacks!
- B. Food Storage Considerations**
 - 1. Store only those items you will use – "**Buy what you eat, eat what you buy**"
 - 2. Store Variety – Fresh, frozen, dehydrated, freeze dried, canned, salted/cured, pickled, smoked, and pasteurized foods are all important
 - 3. Storage room: Store in a dry, cool, dark place (32-70 degrees)
 - 4. Rotate foods in storage as you buy more for regular use
 - 5. I recommend that you work toward at least a 3 month supply
- C. Short-term storage** – 1 to 6 months
- D. Long-term storage** – 6 months +
- E. Methods and Means of long-term storage**
 - 1. Home Canning – pressure canning method and water bath method; store extra jars, lids and rings

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2. Vacuum Sealers – be sure to store extra bags
 3. Dehydrators – for some fruits, vegetables, and herbs
 4. Mylar bags and Food Grade Buckets – store grains, rice, beans, etc.
 5. Grain Mill grinders – manual, electric – for grinding grains for bread
- F.** Don't forget these essential items: powdered creamer, milk, eggs; bouillon, condiments, detergent, cleaning supplies, herbs and spices
- G. Gardening** – I encourage you to check out the *Back To Eden* Gardening method; buy good garden tools, non GMO hybrid and Heirloom seeds
- H. Hunting & Fishing** – purchase appropriate firearms, ammo, and gear for the type of game you plan to hunt.
- I. Livestock** – raise your own protein source: chickens, rabbits, and goats
- J. Cooking Sources** – How will you cook the food you are storing?
1. Propane stove, wood/charcoal stove, solar oven, camp stove, or fire pit. Store ample supply of fuel for each cooking source. Have a primary and one or two backup methods for cooking.
 2. www.Stovetec.net; [Grover Rocket Stove](#); [Deadwood Stove](#); [Sun Oven](#);
 3. Don't forget Cast Iron Cookware!

3. Shelter & Warmth

- A.** Essential supplies: basic home repair materials, repair books, smoke alarms, CO2 alarm, fire extinguishers, tools, vinyl tarps, solar lighting, harden doors and windows against intruders, etc.
- B.** Beds & Bedding – cots, sleeping bags, blankets, comforters, pillows, towels. Do you have enough items to bed those in your care?
- C.** Plastic sheeting for covering windows – 4 mil clear for repairs, and black plastic for security blocking of windows
- D.** Warmth – heat sources and fuels
1. Propane or natural gas heaters
 2. Kerosene heaters – remember ventilation
 3. Wood stove/pellet stove
 4. Propane water heater
 5. Don't forget smoke alarms and a CO2 alarm
- E.** Clothing

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1. Extra clothes and shoes for each season; work gloves, rain gear
2. Alternate ways to wash clothes – Doing laundry will be a challenge! Plunger in a bucket, bath tub, wash board, soap, clothes line, clothes pins

F. Shelter in Place Kit – used to seal outside contaminants from coming in

1. Use a plastic container to hold the following supplies:
2. Heavy plastic sheeting (4mil) for sealing vents, ducts, windows, doors, or other openings
3. A pair of sharp scissors
4. A roll of duct tape to secure the plastic sheeting and cover cracks
5. Disaster supplies kit – bottled water, food bars, first aid kit, radio, phone, flash light, and extra batteries

4. Light & Power

- A. Types of lighting: 1) Natural light – use your daylight hours wisely
- B. 2) Electrical: 12 volt rope lights, fluorescent lanterns, shake lights, and Flashlights (You can't have too many!); have one in every room of the house, in the car and each person have one for EDC
- C. 3) Other: Solar lighting, Oil lamps, Chemical light sticks, fuel burning candles, fuel lanterns
- D. Don't forget Extra Batteries, rechargeable batteries & charger, solar charger
- E. Generators – Various Types: gasoline, diesel, tri-fuel (natural gas, propane, gasoline)
 1. Convert you gasoline generator to propane or natural gas with this kit: www.propane-generators.com
 2. Don't forget fuel stabilizers for storing your gasoline or diesel fuel
- F. Solar Power – recommend Goal 0 products; use outdoor solar lights inside

5. Medical – First Aid – Sanitation

Medical/First Aid

- A. Professional Level First Aid Kit – Amp-3 Outfitter (<http://www.amp-3.net>)
- B. First Aid Kit for car and work place (personal size)
- C. First Aid/CPR Training – Basic at least; Advanced training best
- D. Adequate Medical Supplies – extra gauze, pain medication, cold packs, trauma kit, dental kit, over the counter medications, etc.
- E. Prescription medications for 30 days +

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- F. Antibiotics – (be sure to have dosage information)
- G. Cross-train others for administering medicines or treatments in emergency
- H. Medical manuals / information printed out or stored on flash drive (PDF)
 1. <http://hesperian.org/books-and-resources/> - free PDF books
Where There Is No Doctor; Where There Is No Dentist
 2. <http://armageddonmedicine.net> - Dr. Cindy Koelker, MD
Armageddon Medicine: How to be Your own doctor in 2012 and beyond. An instruction manual
 3. www.thesurvivaldoctor.com - James Hubbard. MD. Kindle books:
Survival Doctor's Wound Guide; Survival Doctor's Guide to Burns
 4. www.medicalcorps.org - Chuck Fenwick. Advanced training, information and medical supplies
 5. www.doomandbloom.net - Dr. Joe Alton M.D. & Nurse Amy, [The Doom and Bloom Survival Medicine Handbook](#)
 6. www.zennioptical.com - eye glasses at a great price
 7. <http://www.fishmoxfishflex.com> - fish antibiotics
 8. www.campingsurvival.com - fish and avian antibiotics

Sanitation

- Personal Hygiene supplies – Toilet paper, feminine hygiene products, tissues, soap, hand sanitizer
- Portable Toilet, Outhouse – consider using a hunting blind
- Plastic bags for waste disposal; stock up on large trash bags
- Bags of powdered lime to help break down buried waste
- Cleaning and Disinfecting supplies – bleach, disposable wipes
- Proper Hand Washing is critical to good health!
- Make a burn pit; start a compost pile

6. Communication

Communication is often one of the first services disrupted when a crisis strikes. Loss of communication means a loss of information, which results in panic.

How would you answer the following questions?

- Where are my family members?
- What is the cause of the emergency/crisis?
- How long will this last?
- Is this a local crisis or more widespread?

A. Two Basic Types of communication

1. Incoming – warn of approaching danger, evacuation instructions, situation updates
2. Outgoing – contact family and friends, request help from emergency service, relay first-person updates from scene

B. Comms Considerations

1. Lightweight
2. Portable
3. Durable
4. Secure

C. Incoming Communication: Receiver only Radios

1. Short Wave (3-30 MHz) pickup broadcasts from around the globe
2. AM/FM
3. NOAA Weather Radio
4. Scanners

D. Outgoing Communication: Types of Two-way Radios

- FRS (UHF 462-467 MHz) inexpensive, but limited range
- GMRS (UHF, requires a license) longer range
- Citizen Band (40 channel SSB)
- Amateur Radio (HAM) requires license; local clubs helpful

**Keep a list of emergency numbers, call signs, and frequencies on laminated card. You can also pre-program frequencies to radios.*

E. Comms Action Plan – Following an emergency, or disaster make contact with others a Situational Report (SITREP):

1. Location
2. Condition: safe / unsafe / injuries
3. Who is with you
4. What is your plan
5. Where you plan to go next
6. When: next contact / schedule

F. Emergency To Do List

1. Call / Text Local & Distant points of contact to activate your family comm plan

2. Charge phone & radio immediately and whenever power is available
3. Conserve power by turning off phone and radio except for scheduled comms
4. Turn off unnecessary device functions

7. Transportation

Transportation can be difficult in a disaster and in a grid down event. It may be further complicated by the lack of communication and by blocked roads.

- Multiple means of transportation – Car, ATV, Bicycle, cart
- Keep vehicle fuel tanks topped-off
- Roadside Emergency Kit in each car
- Have an Evacuation Plan – be sure to practice your plan!
 - Have a least two exit routes from your home (one a non interstate route)
 - Assign jobs for each family member to do in preparation to evacuate
 - Communicate your plan to all family members and practice regularly
- Establish Rally Points to meet at in case you are separated when the crisis occurs. We recommend having two different locations established.
- Have pre-arranged places to go when evacuating (friends, family, retreat)
- Maps with exit routes marked – county, state maps (keep in sealed baggie)
- GPS with pre-programmed routes
- Pre-packed Bug Out Bag for each member of the family

8. Security and Safety Plans and Procedures

A. Develop a Situational Awareness Mindset

B. Home Security/Protection Plan that everyone knows and has practiced

1. Develop Layers of Security on your property – fences, shrubs under windows, motion detectors/lighting (solar powered), security cameras (have battery backup), a dog, night vision optics
2. *You want to be alerted to the threat before they are at your door!*
3. Some have a *Safe Room* in case of a home invasion
4. Consider a *Neighborhood Watch* plan. Recommended Book: *A Failure of Civility*, by Mike Garand & Jack Lawson

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- C. Personal Security/Protection – CCW, Tasers, Pepper spray, Knife, Self-Defense training, etc.
 - 1. Know your state and local laws concerning any of these weapons
 - 2. Recommended Book: *The Gift of Fear*, Gavin De Becker
 - 3. Self-defense Training: www.targetfocustraining.com
- D. Legal Documents & Photo ID – store in a secure place
- E. Contact Information printed and laminated or sealed in Baggie (Can also be saved on a flash drive)
- F. Develop plans for Shelter-in-Place and an Evacuation Plan
 - 1. Both plans need to be communicated to all and practiced
 - 2. Ask, “Is it safer to stay or go?”
 - 3. Be sure to have a pre-arranged place(s) to go (friends or family)
- G. Don't forget a Home Fire Safety Plan

9. Financial Security

- A. Emergency Cash – small denominations, hidden but accessible in an emergency. Determine how much you will need according to your plan.
- B. Copies of financial records, passbooks, credit card contact numbers
- C. Information saved on a flash drive and encrypted
- D. Precious metals – silver or gold
- E. Junk Silver coins – 1964 and before (dimes, quarters, halves)
- F. Construct a cache tube or use an ammo can to store outside
- G. Barter Items – well-stocked supply of commonly needed items (see Suggested Barter Item List handout)

10. Network of Like-minded People

- A. No place for the Lone Prepper mentality – isolation increases vulnerability
- B. Develop a relational network of friends – It takes *faith and friends* to survive a crisis. Don't just stock up - team up! Get to know your neighbors.
- C. Benefit from shared skills and resources become a valuable asset
- D. Provides encouragement, wisdom, experience and support
- E. Becomes a force multiplier in times of disaster and crisis.