

Are You Prepared For Basic Survival?

January 14, 2013 by Peggy Layton



What if a natural disaster, food and water contamination, or any other type of emergency disrupted your life? Do you have the essentials for you and your family to survive? Do you have a plan in place in the unlikely event that the power, telephone, water, gasoline and food supply were cut off for an extended period of time?

The start of a new year brings resolutions and new commitments. I challenge you to evaluate how prepared you really are and recommit yourself to getting more prepared during the year.

Understanding basic preparedness concepts and ideas, as well as practicing those skills, will help you develop confidence in dealing with any disaster or emergency situation that might arise in your family or community. Preparedness is the ability to take care of your own physical needs, as well as those you are responsible for and anyone else in need, during a crisis. You will be the one helping others rather than asking others for help.

It is easy to get overwhelmed with all the media hype about the end of the world, natural disasters and the problems we are all facing with the pending economic collapse and problems with the government. I advise you to take it one step at a time and concentrate on basic, short-term needs first before you move on to long-term needs. Getting prepared for anything is a journey. It takes thought and preparation. It may even feel like a step back in time as you learn the skills your grandparents knew and practiced on a daily basis.

Basic Survival Needs Include Food, Water, Shelter

Basic needs are those things that are necessary to sustain life. In your preparations you will be maintaining enough food, water, clothing, bedding, fuel and other necessities for warmth and shelter. This is a very simplistic way to look at preparedness, but it is a starting point. And it must be achieved first before moving onto other more complicated preparations.

Food

I keep on hand ready-made meals that are simple and easy to prepare. In any short-term emergency, no one wants to fix anything complicated. I also store food such as canned meats to add to any packaged meal, as well as dehydrated vegetables that can be reconstituted. Soup and premade mixes are great for quick-fix meals. Store anything easy that you can open and eat right out of the can or is simple to prepare by just adding water.

Water

One gallon of water per person per day is recommended for drinking, making meals, bathing, etc. The water can be stored in large containers in your home or garage. I own a water tank, and I keep it in a shed. It has never frozen in the winter, and it stays relatively cool in the summer. I really like the 185-gallon and the 250-gallon tanks because they are tall and do not take up much room in a corner. They fit through any standard-sized door and have two spigots on them to dispense water, as well as a hole in the top with a cap for filling the water-storage tanks. The water can be drained quickly into smaller containers, if necessary. I also keep many small containers of water on hand that I could grab and load into the vehicle if needed.



Stabilized Oxygen Water Treatment

I always use ION (stabilized oxygen) as a water treatment in my water tanks, as well as in any contaminated water. It keeps the water safe for five to 15 years, and it will treat 110 gallons of water. ION kills all harmful bacteria in the water on contact.

Shelter, Lighting, Fuel

A lightweight tent and tarps are important to have in a handy place. My husband and I have an entire shed dedicated to camping and evacuation equipment. Everything is in backpacks and totes that we could grab and load into the vehicle if we needed to. Sleeping bags and wool blankets are in duffle bags ready to go as well. We have lighting equipment such as solar flashlights and kerosene lanterns on the shelves, along with medical kits, lots of food and the equipment to cook it with.

Make A Preparedness Plan

The first thing to do is get out a notebook and start planning your list. If the power, water, gas and other vital municipalities were disrupted, what would you need to have on hand to meet your family's basic needs of food, water, clothing, bedding, shelter and warmth?

Staying in your home is the first option. Plan a list of skills that you would like to learn that would help you be more self-sufficient.

An example could be:

- Learn new gardening methods.
- Learn how to filter and purify water in the event of contamination.
- Learn how to cut and chop wood using a chain saw and an ax.
- Learn how to build a fire with a bow or flint and steel.
- Learn how to build a temporary shelter using a tarp and rope.
- Learn how to build an outdoor kitchen to prepare food without power.
- Learn how to cook using the staple foods like beans, rice and other dehydrated foods.

Turn Off Your Power, Water, Gas, Computers And Cellphones

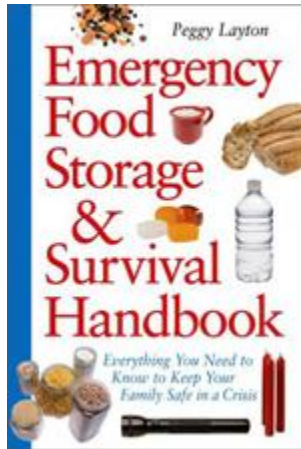
The term "shelter in place" this means stay home and weather out the disruption. If you really want to find out how prepared you are, you can take a specific weekend and turn off the power, water and gas to your home. The rules of this drill are that you cannot go to the grocery store for food or gas station. Conduct this drill as if it were a real-life situation. You must survive a 72-hour period of time with whatever you have on hand in your home and vehicles. You can use only the gasoline that is in the vehicle at the time you start the drill. When the gasoline is gone, then you do not drive anywhere else. You can barter with friends and family, but make no purchases.

Keep a journal of what you learned from the experience. Note things such as how much water you needed and how hard it was to make meals or food of any kind. What did you have too much of and what did you wish you had more of? This will help you more than anything if you are serious about being prepared.

Once you know what it takes for a 72-hour emergency, you can multiply that by 10 for a month and then by three for three months. This will help you know exactly what you will need to survive a long-term emergency where the utilities are disrupted.

Bugging Out

Bugging out to another location is the second option. If you live in an area where there are hurricanes, tornados or super storms, you will need to plan differently. Bugging out might be the best scenario for you. Every region of the country is different, and every family is different.



Think of what you would need to survive a 72-hour period of time. Plan for a camping trip, keeping in mind that you can take only what fits in a backpack and in your vehicle. This is where a bug-out bag (BOB) comes in handy. BOBs are also called 72-hour backpacks or grab-and-go bags. Take into consideration your entire family and all their needs as well. You may want to have backpacks with water bladders built into them. Again, this becomes a matter of preparing properly. If you have your planned-out list and proceed to purchase items from that list, you will fare much better than if you haphazardly purchase items without a plan.

If you are just beginning a preparedness program or if you are well on your way to being self-sufficient, you might like my book *Emergency Food Storage and Survival Handbook*. With this handbook by your side, you and your family will learn how to plan for, purchase and store a three-month supply of all the necessities, including food, water, fuel, first aid supplies, clothing, bedding and shelter. This book includes many lists for putting together different kinds of kits.

—Peggy Layton

Peggy Layton is a home economist and licensed nutritionist, holds a B.S. in Home Economics Education with a minor in Food Science and Nutrition from Brigham Young University. Peggy lives in Manti, Utah with her husband Scott. Together they have raised seven children. Peggy owns and operates two businesses: One called "The Therapy Center", where she is a licensed massage therapist and hypnotherapist, and the other an online cookbook and preparedness products business. She is nationally known for publishing a series of seven books on the subject of food storage and also lectures and teaches seminars about preparedness and using food storage products. Peggy practices what she preaches, has no debt, grows a huge garden, lives off the land, raises chickens, bottles and dehydrates food and has time left over to operate her businesses. To check out Peggy's cookbooks and self-sufficiency products go to her website www.peggylayton.com.