

Make A Plan/Prepping 101 by Jerry D Young

So you have realized that becoming prepared for whatever might occur in the future is something you want to do. But how to go about it? It can be an overwhelming subject. So it is almost imperative that you make a plan on how to proceed. You are more likely to save money and get what you need as quickly as possible if you sit down, think things out, and come up with a flexible plan suited to your particular circumstances. Plans will be different for every individual or family.

How do you make a plan? One step at a time. Reading this is your first step. The next ones will guide you through the process of putting down on paper, or in the computer, those things you will need to do to get to the state of preparedness you want.

Some assumptions that I think are reasonable that should be taken into consideration when you make your plans:

- The overwhelming majority of preps will be needed for situations that occur at home.
- Most disasters will not be Doomsday, The Apocalypse, TEOTWAWKI or WROL situations.
- Most disasters will still have police and National Guard units enforcing law & order.
- People will still be responsible for their actions legally and morally.
- There will looters and violence in some major disasters, but the proportion of life & death incidents will be much smaller than the number of incidents requiring basic human needs.
- Most households will have some basic items at home that can be used during a disaster. Not everything has to be purchased for use only during one. You can often incorporate into the preps items you already have. (Basic First Aid kits including some OTC & any needed prescription meds. A flashlight or two & some candles. A knife. Bedding)

The actual plan:

1. Threat Analysis:

Sit down with your loved ones and have a discussion about the current situation and what fears and concerns everyone has. No one can prepare for everything, especially in the beginning. Make note of what the things brought up in the conversation. Don't need to scare anyone, and it could be difficult to get them to admit to any fears, especially the younger ones. But it is important to include them, because not everything you will want to prepare for is life and death.

Forget about Doomsday Preps, Armageddon, or TEOTWAWKI for now. Keep it real. Do the best you can to decide what reasons you would bug-out as opposed to bugging-in. Bugging-in is the much preferred action, but there are very good reasons to bug-out. Consider what would drive you from your home, based on your location and situation.

2. Prioritize:

Once you know the things you want to prepare for, put them in a general groups of what you want to start with, what can wait a while, and what should be put on the back burner for the moment. Trying to do everything at once is likely to overwhelm and discourage everyone. You don't want that. A steady progress to each goal you set will get the job done. And I will suggest a couple of goals right off the bat. One is learning and getting all the training you can. Classroom, internet, and book as well as hands on. The other is part of the first. Begin acquiring a good library of prepping books and magazines to read and learn from as part of your educational program, as well as storing them for future use.

3. Goals:

And keep things goal oriented. Set the goals, realistic ones. Goals that can be achieved. Leave the pie in the sky super deluxe bunkers and Mad Max vehicles to the fiction writers. You want something that you can achieve, on a timely basis. Set the level of preparedness you want for the first group of priorities. Once you know where you are going, you can start getting ready to get there. Set some general achievement goals on a timeline to get started. And remember that goals should be realistic to start with, but can be adjusted as things change, you learn more, or things happen that call for a change in the plan.

4. Budget:

This is an extremely important part of the process. A budget is a good idea for all financial matters, but is even more so when trying to get ready for things that might just happen before you are ready for them. You will need to spend some money. But you can't let other things go, either. Still have to pay the mortgage or rent, the auto loan, and on and on. Get them in the budget. Everything you must pay on a weekly, monthly, quarterly, or yearly basis.

Don't forget taxes, and the unexpected. And don't give up everything you like to do. You still need to live a life, especially with a family. Once you have a household budget, you can determine how much you can spend on preps for given timelines. Then you start doing a separate budget, using those numbers, to get the things done you need to do.

Before you put many numbers in, you are going to have to decide on the items you want first, but get the budget set up, and keep it flexible. It will change over time. Once you have a reasonable budget lined out, add the timeframe and amount for the long lead items that you plan to purchase and start saving a budgeted amount per month for that item/those items.

5. Start Prepping

Once the basic plan is in place and the budgets set up, start prepping.

The best place to start is usually getting the basic human needs taken care of first, no matter what scenario you are preparing for. First you need to figure out what those are, but that is pretty easy. I have a list. The rest can come when you have learned more and not only have, but have practiced with, the initial items.

Begin to study and learn all you can now, and as you go along. Preps without knowledge aren't nearly as effective as they are when you know the why-to and when-to in addition to the how-to. Do not feel like you must do everything in the order listed. You will need to do many of the things, especially these first

ones, concurrently. Some things can wait, depending on your specific situation, but the basic human needs should all be met as quickly and completely as possible.

1. Air:

Fortunately, it is still free and available, for the most part, for most scenarios. If there is a problem with air supply, special equipment and supplies are necessary. Not a beginner's subject.

2. Water:

Has to be contaminate free, naturally or with other means. And a lot of it. Store a lot, locate a reliable future source, get water treatment/purification. A few 15-gallon water drums, a couple of stainless steel water bottles with cups for the BOBs, a quality water purifier, either a high cap camping filter or a combination of a drip filter for the BIB and a smaller hikers filter for the BOBs. Scout out locations for long term supplies of water.

3. Food:

You can go for a while without it, but not long or you become useless. No cook, add hot water only, & easy-cook shelf stable foods, heavy on meats, fruits, and comfort foods. For both BOB and BIB. Buy in bulk or in case lots when possible. At the least, buy extra of the things you want and use on a daily basis when they are on sale. To build up longer term supplies, double buy each grocery day. Soon you will have a good pantry.

Learn to garden and grow as much as you can as soon as you can. Ditto home canning when you get the garden going. Don't be afraid of the commercially produced crops like wheat and oats. You can grow non-hybrid/organic types in a home garden.

4. Sanitation:

You gotta go when you gotta go. You need the safe means to do so. Chemical toilet, TP, hand washing means, bug spray, antiseptic cleaners, shovel to bury wastes. Toiletries. Charmin camper's toilet paper and cleansing wipes for the BOBs. Infectious diseases protection supplies, face mask, gloves, goggles and hand sanitizer. And the ladies, and especially soon to be ladies, need large supplies of their needs on hand.

5. Environmental protection:

You need appropriate clothing as well as housing. Sometimes it is more important than food or sanitation in extreme circumstances. This includes being able to make and control fires. The right clothes for the season. Basic camping gear in case the house becomes unlivable.

You are probably already doing the right clothes for the given season, though here in Reno I see people going from heated homes to heated cars, to heated business and back again wearing a T-shirt, shorts, and flip-flops in 20 degree weather with snow on the ground and coming down hard (I am not joking). Have what you need to keep you comfortable in the weather.

And the camp gear is for when the house cannot be lived in and you need to camp out in the back yard or evacuate. Or even stay in the house when nothing is working. Fallout/blast shelters, like air purification, are another specific topic that deserves separate consideration. Put it in the budget, and start saving, but don't short the other equipment and supplies unless war is imminent.

6. Security:

Beside protection from the elements, there can be a need for protection from dangerous animals, including other humans. Light is your friend. If you cannot see the threat, you cannot protect yourself from it. Lights and vision devices are an important part of a security plan, as well as all around useful. Once you know you can see it, you can get the actual means to protect yourself from those things in your threat analysis you decided were the biggest dangers. From wild domesticated animals, wild animals, and self-defense in those cases where it might be needed. Training, weapons, defensive measures. For some this is a much higher priority. Evaluate your needs and make the decision.

They tend to be expensive, so set up a long range budget and start saving money for them now, even if you can't get it yet due to the overall expense. But as soon as you can, get something that is at least reasonably effective, even if you prefer something else in the future. Don't put off protection items to get the penultimate weapons system. Train, train, and train some more with them. And don't forget Operational Security. Be very careful who you let know you have preps. There can be repercussions if other people do know.

7. Fire/Lighting/Sharps:

These are important for safety and utility. You will want several means to start a fire, and a couple of items to contain fire. Fire steel, Lifeboat matches, lighters with some tinder for the BOBs. To heat one room in the house, an indoor safe propane or kerosene heater with a supply of fuel stored outdoors.

You will need lighting for indoors & outdoors. A couple of crank flashlights for both BIB and BOB, candles, propane lanterns, battery lanterns. Tactical lights for defense. Get some lighting specifically for preps, even though you probably already have a couple of flashlights with weak batteries and non-working bulbs.

You will need sharps to cut with. Knives/SAK/Multi-tool, axe, saw, etc. I'm fairly sure you have a knife or two in the house. Probably suitable for most uses, except lacking a sheath. But there are some blades that are better for field use and Swiss Army Knives (SAKs), and multi-tools can be handy, and if you need to build shelter or an outdoor fire, axes and saws will save you much labor.

8. Heat/cooling/Cooking:

There quite probably will be a need to maintain acceptable temperatures in home and in the field such as indoor safe propane and kerosene heaters. Gas grill w/tanks, various camping stoves for home or field to cook food when possible (but not in the house). No-cook, and add-hot-water-only foods are desirable in the early stages of a situation. But a hot drink and hot meal can raise the spirits and supply needed warmth in many situations. Not critical at first in some climate, but nice later on.

Others will need to up this on the priority list if in a cold climate and suitable clothes for the weather won't be available. This could include a generator in addition to non-electrical means so a refrigerator, freezer, AC, stove, medical equipment, fans, etc. can be operated.

9. Medical:

Maintaining everyone's good health should be a priority all the time. But in some of the scenarios you probably came up with include medical emergencies. Knowledge and the right tools are literally life and

death in some instances. Extensive first-aid kits, heavy on the trauma treatment for at the scene and in both BIBs & BOBs and the rest of the alphabet.

These are supplemental kits to your regular home first aid kit. It's fine for minor cuts, abrasions, stings, and bruises. In a disaster the injuries are likely to be not only worse, but in great numbers. Stock up with quality in mind and with as much quantity as is possible. Another item to budget early on to get a bit later. And get some training.

Make sure to rotate items that have expiration dates. You can use some of the outdated items in training exercises. Dispose of over the counter medication and any sharps safely.

A note on prescription medications. Unlike OTC meds, prescription medications are limited to how much that can be obtained and stored. Some things, like narcotics, are limited to a single 30-day prescription. Other prescriptions can often be written for a 90 day supply. Work with your doctor to get as large of a supply of your prescription medication as you can get and can afford.

10. Morale/Welfare/Recreation:

If you need to be using preps, that means there is a lot of stress involved. The means to help relieve that stress can be very important. Games, some small toys and some paper and pencils, religious books, movies, books. Something to keep the kids quiet and busy, adults entertained or comforted, or just to break the monotony.

There are many more things on the list, but the first ten are the most important, in most circumstances. If your threat analysis includes certain scenarios, things like HAZMAT preparations climb up into those first ten

Some of the additional needs:

11. Information/communication:

We live in a society. You need to know what is going on around you. Radios can provide that service, though there are a few other ways. A wind up radio with NOAA weather alert (this could easily be the first item you should get if you're in tornado alley or where coastal hurricanes occur), AM/FM, Short wave & a set of FRS/GRMS or MURS radios works for both BIB & BOB, Amateur Radios for LR comms, Binoculars, maps, compass, GPS, flares/mirror/smoke/whistle.

Forewarned is forearmed. If you know it is coming the better you can deal with it. And if you are lost or separated or trapped, having the means to signal will get you back a lot faster.

12. Transportation:

You may or may not be able to stay where you are, though it is usually the best in many scenarios. But some call for evacuation, often suddenly. Not only vehicular, but alternative means, with a way to carry the gear in addition to the people. A vehicular BOV if possible, Motorcycles, bicycles, animals, on foot.

Since, in my opinion, the majority of disasters do not call for bugging out long distances, if at all, transportation is down here on the list. If you live in a tsunami zone, near an active or soon will probably be active volcano, you might want to up the priority level. And if you have children or pets or both, evacuation on foot is very difficult and calls for some more sophisticated measures.

I consider LBE (Load Bearing Equipment) part of transportation. This is equipment to carry your gear and supplies when in the field. BOB/BIB/GHB/INCH bag/GOOD bag, etc. Packs, travois, game cart, bicycle. I am a proponent of taking more than what you can comfortably carry in a back pack. Especially if you have children. Definitely consider having some type of cart to carry heavier weights than you can on your backs, and give the little ones a chance to get off their feet.

13. Tools/Hardware/Cordage:

Besides fire/lighting/and sharps, you will need tools to fix things with, and some hardware to make the repairs to keep the above items in good repair, available, and useable. To get you out if you're trapped in, to get in to someone that is trapped. Tools and parts to make and repair items. 100+ feet of 550 cord for the BOBs, plenty of rope of several types for general use.

Not everyone knows how to use many of the specialty tools, or are physically unable to. These are primarily for at the scene of a disaster, but some items can be carried in the evacuation kits for minor things on the road. This also includes fishing equipment/hunting equipment/traps/game prep equipment, wild edibles books and gathering equipment, etc for gathering wild foods.

14. Camping gear:

You may not be able to stay in your home, for a variety of reasons. Having adequate camping gear for the family, whether staying in the back yard or when bugging out, can keep you out of a community shelter and simply make life easier. The gear addresses most of the basic human needs, just in a relative portable package. And much of the gear can be used indoors if need be if the power and other services are out. And if you do need to bug out, in bad weather, the gear can be lifesaving.

15. Important Documents:

Having documentation after a major event can be critical for getting help, or avoiding problems. You will need to have originals or copies of IDs for everyone, contact lists, copies of insurance cards, etc. There are several lists of what you need to have. This is another thing that, though probably doesn't need to be budgeted for (except to get replacement birth certificates and passports) does need to be planned out and executed over time.

You will be working with agencies of the government and big business with some of them and it just takes time. Start early and finish when you can will hopefully be good enough. It is serious enough for me to remind parents about children's immunization records. Those could be a big deal.

16. Education & Reference Works:

You are going to need to know how to do a lot of different things during and after a major event. Start accumulating as you see books and things on sale. Read over them and then put into good storage. Practice those things that are advantageous for ordinary times. Gardening, home canning, auto repair, and wild food gathering and the list goes on. This is long range planning. If you don't already know how to hunt and fish, and process wild foods, you might want to work it into your schedule as you get more prepared.

17. Finances:

You will need assets during and after an emergency situation. Cash, gold coins, silver coins, a debit card. This is special disaster related finances, not your everyday household budget, which should already

include an emergency fund for every day happenings such as car repairs. The things listed can, in various circumstances, be of great help. Or not. It is all situational. Some will take cash but not PMs, and some will take PMs but not cash, some won't take either. Try to have something set aside if you have to evacuate.

And then there is barter: After a major event, there may be times when cash or precious metals just won't do. People will be wanting things. This is quite low priority, compared to most of the other things on this second list, but you might want to stock some items to barter/trade to get things you need. For those that don't think precious metals or cash will be any good, and to just have when having is better than not having. Don't tie up junior's college fund for it, but look at some of the many lists on the forums that address trade and barter.

18. Spares:

Don't forget spares. Spares for everything that uses consumables plus spare parts for critical items. Once you get 'things', it doesn't end. Some will need routine maintenance, some rotation, and some spare parts and extra consumables such as batteries, bulbs, wicks/mantles, fuels.

19. Special Situation Gear:

There are several situations that might come up, depending on what actually happens in the particular disaster, that the more or less normal preps don't address. Things like the need to climb or rappel, either in the field or within high-rise buildings. Special medical supply and equipment needs for a member of the family, including pregnancy and birthing gear. Specific wild animal threats in an area. Specific climatic/weather threats in an area.

Some of these special situations require specific plans and gear that should be analyzed and budgeted for, then acquired, especially HAZMAT/CBRNE (Hazardous Materials/Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, and Explosive) CBRNE gear. Chemical can include transportation accidents, fires, and chemical weapons. Biological can include the common cold up to epidemics, pandemics, to biological weapons. Radiological can include radiation leaks at nuclear power plants, and "Dirty Bombs". Nuclear includes all the "Atomic War", "Nuclear War", and "Global Thermonuclear War" scenarios that include direct radiation, blast, thermal radiation, fallout, and several more. Explosives are pretty much conventional bombs and pyrotechnical devices, including Molotov cocktails and IEDs.

HAZMAT/CBRNE gear is extremely important if needed, but expensive and requires training. Radiation sensors, Respirator, protective suit, other PPE. Bucket, brush, bleach to decontaminate. The cleansing items you probably already have. The PPE items are very important if needed. As stated above, if you live in an area where you have to think about nuke plants melting down, up the priority and get them in the budget for acquisition as soon as possible.

20. Humanitarian Aid:

This is a tough subject and tied closely with Operational Security. Should you spend your hard earned dollars on supplies for other people not in your immediate family? Or even your immediate family if they have made the decision to not prep? If you do decide to have things for other people to use, there are risks.

One is that once people know you have supplies, they will want more than you are willing to give. Another is that the authorities could confiscate them. If you do decide to set aside some supplies for others, you must decide how you will get them to the people that need them. One way is to just give the supplies to the people face to face. Might not be a good idea unless they are very close friends and you know they will not be giving out the location of where they got the supplies.

Another is to clandestinely leave the items and hope the right people get them. Another method is to anonymously present them to your local church, soup kitchen, the Salvation Army or other humanitarian agency for distribution.

Yet another consideration, especially if you are giving out the things directly, is do you do the very basics, such as rice and beans, while you are eating canned meats, fruits, and comfort foods? How will people react if they know you are eating better (or have a better situation in many ways) than what you are providing for them? A very difficult situation. You will have to make your own decisions

21. Special Needs:

Don't forget those with special needs. That includes pets, livestock, babies, the elderly, and the disadvantaged. They have the same basic needs that everyone else does which must be met in ways appropriate to their situation. Special foods, medical needs, special clothing and housing. Evaluate occasionally and then obtain, store, and rotate as necessary items for those in your group that have these special needs.

Once into the process of following the budget and the plan is underway, continue to re-evaluate everything on a regular basis. You might need to adjust the budget based on less income, or even higher income, or situations might change that require a change in plans. Prepping isn't static. You aren't ever 'done'. It is a continuing process, just as everything else in life is. Keep it in the back of your mind at all times, and your chances of surviving even some very desperate situations are much higher than the norm.