



SURVIVAL PAPER #SP92-9

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URBAN SURVIVAL – I

In 1992, Mr. Douglas P. Bell first submitted his article, “Urban Survival”, for the Survival Papers Program. It was an immediate success and was published ever since. This article hopes to update his article and to provide new insights into this popular topic.

FIRST STEPS

Not everyone has a country retreat set up and stocked with survival gear. Not everyone will be able to afford this luxury. In fact, the vast majority of our readers, myself included, need to be in or around the cities to earn our living. So what is a survivalist to do? What are you to do if you do not have time or the inclination to leave the city life behind and move to the middle of the country somewhere? THE FACTS ARE THAT WITH A LITTLE PREPARATION AND A LOT OF PLANNING, SURVIVING IN THE CITY MIGHT ACTUALLY BE BETTER, OR IN SOME CASES EASIER, THAN SURVIVING OUT IN THE COUNTRY. The first preparations involve the basic requirements of life: Air, Shelter, Food, and Water

AIR is a necessity of life. If you do not believe me, try going without it for a while. You will get the picture fairly quickly. Air in the cities is often polluted. In many cities, smog or other pollutants can cause respiratory difficulties and can even bring on asthma attacks or other physical problems. Air is also necessary in certain environments. Scuba diving, for instance, is one environment that if you do not bring your own air, you will not breathe. Another specialized environment to consider, especially in the city, is fire. Firefighters wear Scott Air Packs to fight fires in buildings. How are you supposed to breathe in the building until the fire is put out? On the market nowadays are several brands of fire hoods you might buy instead of the Scott Air Packs. These fire hoods are good for a short while and will allow you to escape from a burning building. These fire hoods are basically charcoal-activated, temporary gas masks. If you have a gas mask, this would probably do as good a job as these hoods would.

Air is not only affected by air pollution and fire. Industrial accidents could cause problems as well. Health problems might force you to have pure oxygen. This is often the case in sports injury cases or for quicker recovery from fatigue. Oxygen is also useful in First Aid type cases as the body often needs easy oxygen to help start the healing process and prevent shock from setting in.

First aid type of suppliers:

Dixie USA, Inc.
P.O. Box 55549
Houston, TX 77255
1-800-347-3494

Life Assist
11355-B Pyrites Way #15
Rancho Dorova, CA 95670

Costs for emergency oxygen kits start around \$50 and go up to over \$500, depending on how fancy and how many bottles you buy, etc. Scuba equipment costs around \$50 to \$100 for basic scuba tank, regulator and pressure gauge.

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Scott Air Packs cost around \$300 to \$500, complete with warranties, etc. With a little searching used ones can be bought for under \$200. Fire hoods start at about \$30 and go up from there. Gas masks can be found at most surplus stores or catalogs and their cost varies from about \$20 on up. Extra filters usually cost \$5 on up.

WATER is our next basic necessity. Without water we will die in 3 days (under the most extreme conditions) or 7 days under normal warm weather conditions. Water must be stored for the future. If you have a water source available, you might want to use water filters/purification techniques to get usable water in the future. Some examples of water sources that do not dry up are rivers, large lakes, and streams that flow year round. Some cities do not have these water sources. If yours does not, you need to store water for your use. You can store water in used 2-liter soft drink bottles. Some folks prefer milk jugs, but the soft drink bottles usually are tougher and easier to come by than the milk jugs. Good water filters, if you do have a water source, are a necessity. The best water filters filter out bacteria, organic chemicals, protozoa (giardia), and viruses. Iodine tablets help purify water also.

Water filter suppliers:

General Ecology, Inc.
151 Sheree Blvd.
Exton, PA 19341
1-800-441-8166
model first need trav-L pure
cost around \$120

Katadyn USA
3020 N. Scottsdale Rd.
Scottsdale, AZ 85251
1-800-950-0808
Most any models, from \$85 to \$725

Mountain Safety Research MSR
P.O. Box 24547
Seattle, WA 98124
1-800-877-9MSR
any model - \$125-\$140

Outbound
1580 Zephyr
Hayward, CA 94544
1-800-866-9880
any model - \$35 to \$65

PUR
2229 Edgewood Ave., S.
Minneapolis, MN 55426
1-800-845-PURE
any model \$45-\$140

SweetWater, Inc.
4725 Nautilus Ct. S.
Boulder, CO 80302
(303)530-2715
Any model - \$50 range

SHELTER is our next consideration. For the most part, this will be your apartment, condominium, house or place of residence. The walls are paper thin, the rent is probably high, your space is probably limited, and the utilities are sky high because there is little or no insulation in the apartment. But for all this, the space does provide a bit of privacy and a place to lay your head down at night. The average apartment dweller moves every 4 to 5 years. This means that your shelter will change with your differing circumstances. It probably also means that the apartment needs repairs or improvements. Just remember whatever you do, if it is permanent, you must leave the repairs when you leave. So do not invest a lot of time or money improving your apartment.

What improvements pay off? Replacing the front door with a steel security door. (Keep the old one so you can replace it in its old place when you leave. Yes, apartment size doors are generally the same size with few variations). Be sure you have deadbolt locks for this door. One inside door needs to have a lock on it to prevent break-ins from getting to you if you are in the back safe room. Again, save the old door and replace it as you leave.

Most apartments have smoke detectors. If yours does not, get one put up. It is also nice to have a fire extinguisher handy in the apartment in the event of fire. The doors can be bought at any building supply

place and the smoke detectors and fire extinguisher can be bought there or at places like Wal-Mart. Peepholes in the doors might be nice to keep from letting burglars in. A security system is also a good idea. Motion detectors, door alarms and a panic alarm, whether it be a local-alarm only system or a central station alarm, calls police and fire departments in the event of an alarm going off. The easiest and simplest are, of course, the local alarm systems. (Some of these even operate off of batteries and will work even in a power failure.)

Shelter should, of course, keep out the elements, rain, hail, hot or cold. In most cases, apartments are not insulated very well. You might have to insulate the room you sleep in or the whole apartment. If you do not want to leave your insulation inside the walls after you have moved out, you might want to make some sort of insulated pouches and connect them together. The best insulation scheme of this sort that I have ever seen is where a young couple sewed insulation into pouches and attached Velcro to the walls and the back of the pouches. The pouches were about twice the size of pillowcases and were only as thick as they needed to be for the insulation. They were made of cotton and were washed every 3 to 6 months to keep the dust build up from being too bad. Color scheme could be any combination you desire.

When they left, all they had to leave was the Velcro strips glued to the wall. I can tell you this often confuses the devil out of landlords, especially if they do not know what the strips were for. Also, these strips are very difficult to get off, being put on with "liquid nails" type of glue. It is extremely difficult to take off without damaging the walls. Afterwards, a sheetrock man is required to come in and fix up the walls. SO IF YOU DO THIS, EXPECT TO LOSE YOUR DAMAGE DEPOSIT. (You didn't think you were going to get it back anyway, did you?)

FOOD is the last consideration. We are going to have to eat no matter what else happens. Some folks think of food as unemployment insurance. You have to eat when you are unemployed, don't you? Well, to the survivalist, food is insurance for unemployment, natural and manmade disasters, and a host of other conditions. Since space is usually at a premium in the city and in an apartment, you should have enough food stored for yourself. Food staples include, rice, beans, honey, and wheat. Things like sugar, tea, coffee, salt, pepper, and other condiments are necessary also. If you look at most food storage plans or food storage units for sale, you will find that they usually recommend a pretty diverse diet. Dehydrated food is often packed and sold as survival foods and are one good option for the survivalist. Dried beans, wheat, rice and honey will have a shelf life of about one year without any treatments or special preparations. Stored in dehydrated vacuum-packed pouches, their shelf life extends into infinity. All this food can be bought at the grocery store and can be stored with available vacuum packing technology. Food packed this way can conform to any size, shape or container you decide to store this stuff in. Other options include trail foods found at many outdoors stores. These foods usually are very expensive, but if acquired over a period of time, are not too bad of buys. These foods are also dehydrated foods. Their shelf life is near infinite also, if properly stored.

Another food option is the MRE (Meals Ready to Eat), developed by the U.S. Military. These meals are called Retorts and mostly come complete for eating. Only heating is required. If you are concerned with irradiated foods, then this might not be a good buy for you as all these foods are prepared this way.

FOOD SOURCES:

ANDY STAIRRETT
RURAL ROUTE #2
JETMORE, KS 67854
(316)357-6544

THE SPORTSMAN'S GUIDE
411 FARWELL AVENUE
P.O. BOX 239
SO. ST. PAUL, MN 55075-0239
1-800-888-5222

BRIGADE QUARTERMASTERS
1025 COBB INTERNATIONAL BLVD
KENNESAW, GA 30144-4300
1-800-338-4327

U.S. CALVARY
2855 CENTENNIAL AVE.
RADCLIFF, KY 40160-9000
1-800-777-7732

NITRO-PAK
13309 ROSENCRANS AVE.
SANTA FE SPRINGS, CA 90670
1-800-866-4876

READY RESERVE FOODS
1442 S. GAGE ST.
SAN BERNARDINO, CA 92408
1-800-453-2202

RESOURCEFUL FOODS
P.O. BOX 8100
RICHMOND, IN

SPORTSMAN'S GUIDE
965 DECATUR AVE. N.
N. GOLDEN VALLEY, MN 55427

ALPINE-AIRE FOODS
PO BOX 926
NEVADA CITY, CA 95959
1-800-322-6325

HOME CANNING SUPPLY & SPEC.
P.O. BOX 1158
ROMANA, CA 92065

SAUSAGE MAKER, INC.
27-114 MILITARY
BUFFALO, NY 14207
(716) 876-5521

WHEELER ENTERPRISES
7855 S. 114TH
SEATTLE, WA 98178

In addition to food stored, you might need food grown hydroponically or food from seed sprouts. Both these things can be accomplished in your apartment space to offer a diversity in your food supply and can definitely improve your lifestyle.

SOURCES:

WORM'S WAY
4 LOCATIONS – FL., IN, MA, MO
1-800-274-9676

FARM WHOLESAL, INC.
2396 M44 PERKINS ST. N.E.
SALEM, OR 97303
1-800-825-1925

Lastly, you will need something to cook your food on. Some sort of stove would be nice. Three types come to mind immediately. First is the camp stove variety – Coleman camp stoves. In these I prefer the multi-fuel types that can use gasoline, kerosene, Coleman fuel, or propane. The second is the gas type of ranges some apartments come equipped with. These can often be converted to run off propane and offer the conveniences of home. Lastly is the natural material type of stove. These burn wood, leaves, paper or anything else to produce fire for cooking. The Coleman type stoves can be the large variety or the individual backpacking variety. The prices are similar and the quality for both is good. If you are planning to cook only for yourself, the backpacking type stove might be better suited than the large two-eyed camper variety.

SOURCES – COOKING STOVES

THE COLEMAN CO., INC.
PEAK 1
P.O. BOX 2931
WICHITA, KS 67201
1-800-835-3278
MOST ANY MODEL PRICES \$40-70

MOUNTAIN SAFETY RESEARCH MSR
P.O. BOX 24547
SEATTLE, WA 98124
1-800-9MSR
MODELS TO CONSIDER:
WHISPERLITE INTL 600
XKG II PRICES - \$60-80

OPTIMUM/SUUNTO USA
2151 LAS PALMAS DR., SUITE G.
CARLSBAD, CA 92009
619-931-6788
MODEL-HIKER-PRICES \$155

ZZ CORP.
10806 KAYLOR ST.
LOS ALAMITOS, CA 90720
310-598-3220
MODEL – SIERRA – PRICE \$54.00

Remember, when using stoves like these indoors, their exhaust fumes MUST be vented outside. If not, carbon-dioxide builds up and can and will kill you! Vent your cooking spaces for safety's sake!

Some apartments and most condos have cover for your personal vehicles. This is real handy in the event of bad weather to keep your vehicle safe. If you can get an enclosed garage, usually only available in luxury apartments and most condominiums, then by all means get this. This will provide a safe place and a bit more storage for your survival preparations. Vehicles should be secured against intrusion with alarm systems and possibly camouflaged with dirt or dents as well.

Some folks feel weapons are necessary. I am one of these. I am not the tallest or the strongest fellow around, and it is nice to know that I have an equalizer handy in the event I need to protect myself or my family. The old saying that God created man to be equal, but that Colonel Colt made man equal to all other men, is true in my book.

For city work, I prefer shotgun or pistols. A rifle is nice to have if you have lots of room. In cities, this is usually one commodity that is not available. I prefer pump action shotguns or even semi-automatic shotguns to single or double barrel types. In a city I prefer a shotgun to a pistol. Winchester, Remington or Mitchell brands are good brands. (Because of their past anti-gun stances on gun ownership, Mossberg & Ruger brands should be avoided. If they do not feel you are responsible enough to own their guns, then why should you buy from someone who will use your money to try to take your second amendment rights to keep and bear arms away from you? – THIS IS NOT THE OFFICIAL POSITION OF LIVE FREE, INC., BUT IS MERELY THE OPINION OF THIS AUTHOR.)

It is often difficult to carry shotguns every place you might want to. So a pistol should be considered. I prefer any caliber .32 or above. This includes the .380, the .9mm Makarov, or the .9mm Luger brands. .38 caliber and .357 caliber are also calibers to consider. Some folks like the knockdown power of the .45 cal ACP cartridge, and others like the penetration and knockdown trade-offs of the 41 or 44 Magnums. I like both revolvers and semi-automatic pistols. Revolvers I like because you do not have to worry about bullet feeding problems or spring fatigue in the magazine. The biggest drawback is that you are limited to 5 or 6 shots. But if you train yourself properly, then you can make those 5 or 6 shots counts.

Semi-automatic pistols can often hold more bullets so this is why I like them. They can also be problems what with bullet feed problems, spring fatigue problems and a more complex pistol. However, when operating properly, they are wonders.

Other weapons you might consider: Martial Arts training. This provides for a good workout and gives a positive mental attitude for possible confrontations. It can also give you good balance and a better than even chance in unarmed combat scenarios.

Knives, bolas, garrotes, ropes, tools and weapons and a whole host of other items can be useful to a person in an urban environment. Train yourselves to look around and identify weapons in your room. Pens and pencils, paper clips, TV antennas, wires from a lamp, broken light bulb, chairs, even papers rolled tight can be good clubs. YOUR MIND IS YOUR MOST POTENT WEAPON. Develop it and hone it to be ready ready for a future conflict. . Do not forget. Keep your weapons clean and ready for use – gun cleaning kits, knife sharpening and polishing kits, etc, are all available.