

# AMERICAN SURVIVOR

Survival Information For The Prepared Citizen

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**IN THIS ISSUE: Emergency Shelter, The Unthinkable, Coat Pocket Survival, Dwellings Portable, Taurus' new Judge Revolver, Camp Liberty, New "Live Free" Flag**

## EMERGENCY SHELTER

Water is generally accepted as the most basic need in survival. You can generally survive about 3-days without water, but under many conditions you will die in less than a day without effective shelter. Adequate shelter can conserve water and prevent sunburn and hypothermia in hot conditions. A good shelter can conserve body heat, contain heat from a campfire, keep you dry and prevent hypothermia in cold conditions. Shelters can also camouflage you from view, protect you from hostile gunfire and even reduce the effects of radioactive fallout. Along with water, food, first aid and defense, shelter is one of the prime components of every emergency plan and survival kit. The shelter we carry, the shelters we build and the shelters we find are seldom going to be as adequate or effective as the one we normally occupy. This is one of the reasons why; evacuation should always be a last resort. Nevertheless, one must have that option in the event that home is untenable, destroyed or unreachable.

### Sheltering at Home

Before we talk about shelters on the road and in the woods, lets consider the challenges of maintaining your home as an effective shelter through a disaster. A

storm, bomb blast or civil disorder may damage your roof and blow out your windows. Nearby fires may throw sparks and embers to ignite your home. Looters may attempt to invade your home or set it on fire. Interruption of gas, water, sanitation and electrical supplies may make your home difficult to live in. Assuming that you have plenty of water and food stocked at home, you will need to be prepared to:

- (1) Replace all "normal" services with alternative methods. Have water gathering and water filtration methods. Stock plenty of food and medical supplies. Have a generator and fuel. Have a safe alternative heating system for heating part of your home.
- (2) Replace fire and police services with your own capabilities to extinguish small fires and deter would-be looters and miscreants. You can only hope to deter random small bands of criminals and extinguish small accidental or spark created fires. General mass disorder and/or spreading unchecked structural fires in your community will be beyond your capacity to stop. This is why you

should be ready and able to evacuate with what you can carry. If these two scenarios are developing, don't wait until it's too late and safe routes are no longer available. Multiple fire extinguishers and adequate firearms may be enough to secure your home against limited threats. The fewer adults or children over the age of 14 you have, the harder it will be to fight fires and defend against intruders. Anything less than four active defenders will probably be overwhelmed and should consider evacuation in all cases.

- (3) Repair and reconfigure as needed to prevent damage and provide shelter throughout the crisis. This means having a good supply of heavy-duty plastic sheeting, lumber, nails, tape and tools. If you have room to store plywood that would be recommended. You will also need a ladder for reaching the roof. Have a plan and supplies needed to seal-off and heat just one or two rooms. If flooding is a danger or you depend on a sump pump for a dry basement, you should have a generator just big enough to maintain the pump or have a plan to clear out and write-off the basement.

### **Worst Case "I got nothing"**

So, if all efforts to stay at home fail or you were caught away from home in some kind of emergency such as a storm, terrorist event, or you just got lost out there, you need to know how to find or make a shelter. Lets start with the "worst case" scenario. You were out to a "suit and tie" event and then you know what hit the you know what. You have no survival kit, no Space Blanket™, no cordage, no fire starter. You just have a

small pocketknife because I told you ALWAYS CARRY A KNIFE. Lets say its cool, calm with rain in the forecast and you will have to cross country gathering supplies as you go. Since you are obviously still in a developed area, all you need to do is start looking for dumpsters, junk piles, construction sights, etc. where plastic sheeting, tarps, awnings, etc can be found. This is also where you can find a variety of rope, string, wire and other survival materials. A 12 x 12 ft section of plastic or canvas and some cordage and you are in business. If that option fails look for unoccupied buildings and vehicles for temporary shelter. Remember that in survival situations you may have to break-in to live. Other sources of shelter may include underpasses, bridges, culverts, open barns; storage sheds, even burrowing into a haystack.

### **What About The Car?**

The automobile is the most ubiquitous and available shelter to be found in any part of the populated world. In many scenarios you would already be in a motor vehicle when the survival emergency begins. They are waterproof and windproof and usually fairly comfortable. But, they are poorly insulated, cramped metal and glass boxes that radiate away your heat in cold weather and become solar ovens in hot weather. Still, they will provide better and faster wind and rain/snow protection than most improvised shelters you could build so unless you have the alternative of a shelter and fire combination or a good tent, a vehicle is a good shelter. You can use your survival kit items (Space Blanket™, blankets, etc.) to improve warmth and a few candles will raise the temperature significantly. The location of the vehicle is also critical. If you want to be rescued stay on main roads and stay with the vehicle, but if things have gone very bad, you want to

get off of and out of site from any main road. Then camouflage it with snow, foliage etc. Under civil disorder conditions, don't even consider staying in your vehicle or an abandon vehicle on a main road or urban/suburban street. You are in a big flammable tin target. In hot weather use the vehicle only for shade and to tie your shade canopy to.

### Building Survival Shelter

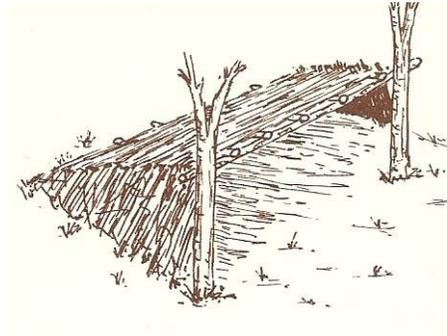
Assuming that you have nether a building or a vehicle as shelter options, you are going to have to use material you have with you (e.g. tarps, plastic, etc.) or natural and man made materials at hand. Select your site with care. Avoid hill tops that catch wind and avoid low areas that may flood and will hold cold air. Take advantage of any natural windbreaks such as thick trees, bushes or rock outcroppings. Below are a few shelter illustrations. There are many more possible designs. Use your imagination.



Live Free member demonstrates a small canvas lean-to shelter. Note the prepared fire reflector in foreground.

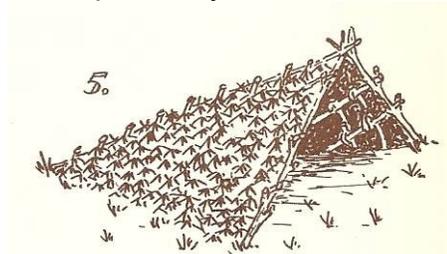
The lean-to shelter is the most common form of shelter. This shelter can be thatched with natural materials (branches, pin boughs, grass) or a tarp. If a tarp or plastic sheet is used no frame is necessary. They are best when you are able to put a campfire and reflector in front of them. The ideal use is to build

two opposite facing lean-to shelters with the fire in between. This captures much more of the heat and provides good shelter for several people.

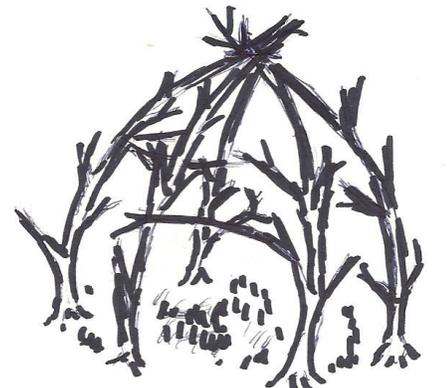


Typical lean-to shelter made from natural materials

Tripod shelters are strong and fast to put up. They are better at conserving body heat, but do not reflect and gather heat from a campfire very well.



The dome shelter is strong and can be built with or without an open side depending on whether you will have a fire or be conserving heat inside. All you need to do is find bendable saplings. You can cover it with natural or manmade materials. One of these that I built lasted over two years.



The teepee is strung, but you need to find or cut a good number of long poles and they will leak at the top/center. Of course you can put a small fire in the center for warmth, insect repellent and the updraft tends to deflect light rain



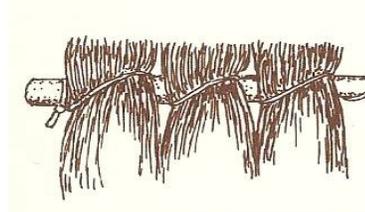
Live Free member with branch covered teepee shelter. Note smoke from fire inside

Most debris and bough shelters will leak in a heavy rain. If large sections of bark or very large leaves (tropical) are available, they can be overlapped 50% from bottom to top to provide a fairly dry shelter. Remember that rain usually comes with wind. Your shelter must face away from the most likely storm winds and be sturdy enough to survive. Material just spread over a frame or a tarp just strung between trees is not going to survive. True thatching will provide a good waterproof shelter, but takes a great deal of time and material.



Classic example of tight thatching on a hut I photographed in Hawaii

Thatching with grass



Conclusion

While you can carry a knife, flashlight, whistle, fire starter and many other survival items in your pockets, shelter materials are not so convenient. Shelter materials such as tarps, tents, plastic sheeting, and Space Blankets™ should be part of every survival kit, evacuation pack and vehicle emergency kit, but you need to be able to find shelter or make shelter from what you can forage. The choice, location and design of a shelter depends on the nature of the hazards (e.g. heat, rain, cold, hostilities, etc.) the material at hand and the time and manpower available. We have only explored a few options and a few basic methods here.

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Book Review

## **The Unthinkable Who Survives When Disaster Strikes and Why**

By: Armanda Ripley

Survival goes deeper than just knowing how to do all of the things you need to do to survive. You should also understand how the brain works under extreme stress and imminent death situations. Being able to anticipate and manage your own reactions and those of other is critical to personal survival and leadership in an emergency. Amanda Ripley has done a good job of explaining what happens to people when suddenly

faced with the unthinkable reality of impending doom. We are taken through the detailed personal experiences of people who escaped the World Trade Center, the Manchester Boeing 737 Crash, the Flight 90 Potomac Rive Crash, Hurricane Katrina and many other disasters. We even find out that people who qualify for Special Forces have a predisposition to react differently than “normal” people to stress. We look at the backgrounds of those who froze and perishes in comparison to those who acted and survived and in many cases saved others. We come to understand that chemicals within the brain can interfere with logical thinking. I will review some of the major points of this book as it relates to survival and self reliance

### **Three Stages of Reaction to Disaster**

The books main thyme is that we go through three stages of reaction to any disaster. First we are in “denial” unable or unwilling to accepted the new danger while clinging to the hope that everything will be okay. If we live long enough, we get to the stage of “deliberation” where we acknowledge the danger and try to figure out what we should do. Finally we get to a “decision” and action stage that hopefully saves us. The main point of course is how fast and effectively different people move through these phases under different scenarios.

### **High and low dread people**

The author establishes that there are two kinds of people; those with a “high level of dread” (that’s you my dear reader) and those with a “ low level of dread”. People who have a high level of “dread” and are constantly anticipating possible trouble (e.g. fire, assault, storm, crash) and tend to move from denial to deliberation and then to action far faster and more effectively than those who

have low levels of “dread”. Those with a “low level of dread” go through life no thinking about unthinkable events. Their minds are locked on normal and safe. When smoke starts coming in or shots are fired it takes too much time to accept the new reality and shift to a “what should I do ?” (Deliberation) phase. Some just freeze up some take too long and die. The difference between “high dread” and “low dread” survival chances are magnified by the fact that most “high dread” personalities have already made a plan (what if?) and acquired some survival knowledge so they can move quickly through the deliberation phase and act effectively. The “low dread” individual is hardly apt to have thought about the unthinkable, much less prepared for it. Most of the people who survived in the book had checked out the exits, read the emergency instruction cards, or had previous experiences with disasters.

### **Training and leadership**

Training is another big advantage in survival that is emphasized throughout the book. The brain often tends to “go blank” when plunged into a high stress situation. Even experienced emergency responders and military personnel have this problem. If you asked them to describe how and what had to be done as they entered the burning building, tried to save in injured victim or mounted there fighter jet. They might well not be able to verbalize it., but they will perform flawlessly because “the training takes over”. While just anticipating (high dread) (e.g. fire, crash) may be enough to save one from a simple disaster more complexes survival situations such as an assault, escape from a high-rise, terrorist attacks and life saving require scenario based hands on training to assure that the survivor/rescuer will do the right thing automatically when needed. The “low

dread” untrained potential victims in a disaster situation have only two chances to survive: luck and leadership. It has been found that people can be jarred out of their denial (froze) and pushed through their deliberation phase only through loud decisive leadership. Flight attendants are now trained to shout order not politely request action in an emergency.

### Immediate “Disaster” vs. Long Term “Emergencies”

I read this book and a book titled The Long Emergency by James Howard Kunstler (review to come) simultaneously. That book is focused on the inevitable long-term disaster developing right now rather than the smaller disasters addressed in The Unthinkable, but there are parallels in how people react and are reacting to both kinds of emergencies. We can see how the masses of “low dread” people remain in stubborn denial of the obvious facts while clinging to the false hope that there is some political or technological solution to the looming degeneration of the economy and society. We can also see how the “high dread” people are increasingly moving to deliberation and decisive action through preparedness and education. Perhaps the mission of Live Free USA can be defined as four tasks. Fight denial, raise the sense of dread, provide training, and develop leadership.

This is one of the best books on the psychology of extreme stress and disaster that I have read. The Unthinkable, Who Survives When Disaster Strikes and Why, By: Armanda Ripley, 265 pages, hardcover, Crown Publishing, \$24.95, ISBN 978-0-307-35289-7

## Coat Pocket Survival

There are all kinds of “survival kits” There are big tote bin kits for the home emergency, survival backpacks for when you need to head for the hills, survival kits for the belt, purse or briefcase. But no survival kit will help you if you don’t have it with you when you need it most. There are four very inexpensive items that should always be in your pockets. These are the “very least” you should have with you “just in case”. The first item is a pack of common safety matches or a butane lighter. This is the only case where smokers have a survival advantage. Yes, waterproof camp matches are better but the box is bulky and you may not want to have them in every coat and pair of pants you have. The second item is a few paper napkins. These are always handy, cheap and have many emergency applications. Third is a small plastic sandwich bag. The bigger the bag the better but we are talking about your pockets not a backpack. Finally have a few heavy-duty rubber bands. You can distribute these items throughout your pockets so you hardly know they are there. There is nothing here that should cause any problems going through security inspections. Here are just a few of the emergency uses for these items:

#### MATCHES

- / 20 chances to make a fire
- / 20 emergency flairs or on big one
- / 20 x 20 second lights

#### PAPER NAPKINS

- / Improvised dust, mist and soot mask
- / Improvised water filter
- / Wound dressing / blood stopper
- / Fire starter / torch

lights

torch

- / CPR mask

**PLASTIC BAG  
(small)**

- / Water container
- / Keep matches and wallet dry
- / Wound cover
- / Eye protection
- / Hand cover for blood, etc

**RUBBER BANDS  
(heavy Duty)**

- / Hold napkins over mouth
- / Hold plastic over eyes
- / Hold wound dressing in place
- / Burn hot and smoky

Of course a few more items would help. Any kind of small pocketknife could be important in a survival emergency. Larger trash pages can be used to protect against wind, rain, and chemical agents and even keep radioactive dust off your clothes. A few Band-Aids are a good pocket item. A small square of folded heavy aluminum foil can also come in hands. But the four items listed are dirt cheap, easy to carry and just enough to give you the survival edge in a number of emergency situations. Don't leave home without them!

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## Dwelling Portably and Light Living Library

A Review by Jim Jones

The great majority of "survivalist" or "preparedness advocates" tend to live "normal" lives. That is to say that they are part of society, have a home address, jobs and affiliations with the community. They are defined by their level of emergency preparedness and *potential*

independence from the system. There is a subculture that actually practices a minimalist and mobile lifestyle. These folks go far beyond survival preparedness or even the level of independence seen in Mother Earth News. Live Free has maintained a good relationship with these folks for many, many years through their publications. While the majority of our members would not undertake to live on the road and off the land unless it was necessary it is precisely the capacity they seek to acquire for emergencies. They folks have elected to abandon most of the goods and services provided by the economic system and the state in exchange for greater freedoms. They live in vehicles or camp as they scrounge, forage and minimize needs. They are not vagrants or beggars. They live "off the grid" on "off the record". They pay no taxes, have no cell phones, need no credit cards and hardly worry about identity theft. In order to survive they have acquired a great deal of experiences, skills and knowledge that would be of great value to anyone forced to get along without the support of what we call civilization.

Dwellings Portably is a small newsletter packed with information about how to live off the grid to varying degrees. There are all kinds of money saving ideas, alternative methods and improvised devices. As far as I can determine it is produced on a typewriter not a computer and the print is small and jammed tight to save paper. I don't expect to see a web site soon! **The publication sells for \$3.00 per 3 issues, \$5.00 for 6 issues. from: DP c/o Lisa Ahne, P.O. Box 181, Alesia, OR 97324.** You will also want to send an extra \$1.00 and request a list of their **Light Living Library** publications. This includes scores of low cost papers on all aspects of alternative living

technology. Something you should checkout.

## Do The Math!

The world population increase by 150 people each minute, 9,000 per hour, 216,000 per day, 78,840,000 per year and the rate increases geometrically. The supply of energy, water, food, land, and raw material increases at ----- Oh Oh!

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## New Taurus “Judge” Revolver Raises The Bar

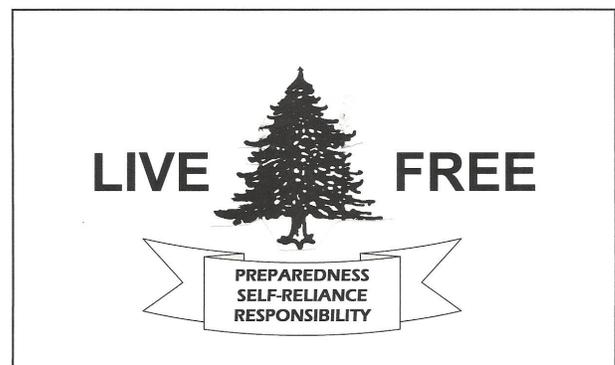
As the world get more dangerous and concealed carry becomes more popular, handgun manufacturers have been introducing many new and innovative weapons designed for home and street defense. The recent revival of compact 380 caliber automatics is one example. While modern automatics are reliable and compact, revolvers continue to be popular. Revolvers are generally a bit more bulky for concealment, have a limited capacity and are slow to reload. They are, however simple and reliable and require less maintenance. Taurus’ latest creation is a long cylinder, short barrel, polymer revolver that fires 45colt and 410 shotgun shells interchangeably. You can also get it chambered for 38-special, but the 45/410 combinations make it a truly awesome self-defense and survival weapon. While the cylinder provides only 5-shots, it can put a tight pattern of 000 buckshot into a target at 7-

yards. The polymer construction makes this gun light and durable, but the recoil is going to be significant with self-defense loads. The rather hard hammer pull is to prevent snagging on clothing. You *really* do not want this thing going off in your pocket. The trigger pull is a bit hard, causing your grip to tighten for the recoil. This is a close range multi purpose self-defense weapon that offers the shooter choices in penetration and stopping power. Bad guys who meet the wrong end of this “Judge” probably wont make it to court.

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## Live Free’s New Flag

Our original flag had been in storage for so long that it literally fell apart when we unpacked it last month. It was an older design so we decided to redesign it. The new flag features the words “LIVE FREE” and the pine tree in dark green on a gold background (field). The logo banner is a light blue with green letters. Members and chapters can order a 3’ x 5’ flag for \$110.00.



### Live Free, USA Is Tax Deductible!

Live Free, USA is incorporated in the state of Indiana and is exempt from Federal income tax under section 501c (3) of the Internal Revenue Code. We are qualified to receive tax-deductible bequests, devices, transfers or gifts under section 2055, 2106 or 2522 of the code. Contributions of money, equipment, services, property and rental facilities are much needed to continue our mission. We will gladly provide the necessary documents to establish deductibility.

# CAMP LIBERTY 2011

For

Live Free, USA Members, Family and Guests

Saturday & Sunday, July 16 & 17

At

Willow Slough Fish and Wildlife Area Campground  
Just West of US-41 near Morocco Indiana

**CAMPING, SHOOTING, SWAP MEET,  
SKILLS SHARING, HIKING, MORE**

## CAMPING

We will be tent camping in a very large wooded campground with fire pits, picnic tables, parking pads, and nearby water and sanitary facilities. There are good hiking trails and a large lake available.

A campsite fee of \$12.00 will apply.

## TARGET RANGE AND PRACTICE

This facility has a full outdoor shooting range. We recommend that you bring your own targets and cardboard. No bottles cans or other targets are permitted. A State range officer will be on duty at the range. Illinois residents are not permitted to bring handguns, but long guns are permitted.

You can call the park at 219-258-2704 for further information

## DIRECTIONS

Take US-41 (North or South) to State Rd. 14 (at Enos) turn east into the wildlife area. Follow the signs to the rifle range or go straight east to State Line Road, then left 3-miles to the campground entrance. Look for the Live Free signs and flags. We cannot reserve camp sights. We will camp towards less occupied the south end of the campground, but we cannot assure a contiguous camp. Come early or on Friday for best the sites

**For further information write to: Live Free, USA, P.O. Box 3295,  
Munster, IN 46321 or e-mail [lfinow@aol.com](mailto:lfinow@aol.com)**

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