

How to Build a Get Home Bag



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You can hear the sirens in the distance. Your electricity is out, and your home phone has no dial tone. When you try to use your cell phone, you get the same message over and over: "All circuits are busy." You know a disaster is quickly approaching. And you know that waiting this one out is not an option. In the breath-taking stillness, you can hear the clock on the wall. Tick-tock, tick-tock. The eleventh hour is here.

Now, imagine this... YOU ARE AT WORK! As you reach under your desk to grab your Get Home Bag (GHB), thoughts of your wife and children rush through your mind. Then, you quietly say to yourself, "This isn't going to be my typical commute home today."

As a whole, we spend surprisingly little time at home. Between our time in a vehicle, at work, in school, running errands, visiting friends, attending meetings and making appointments, some of us spend more time AWAY from home than AT home. Many of you are nodding in agreement. These countless hours away from home **must** be considered when developing your disaster preparedness plan.

What Is a Get Home Bag?



The name says it all. It is a survival kit designed to get you home in the event that a catastrophic disaster occurs while you are away. I sometimes call this bag my 24-hour bag, and you'll rarely find me away from home without it. A Bug Out Bag is a much more substantial supply kit (typically 72 hours) and stays at home. It's not practical to tote your BOB back and forth to work every day. Your Get Home Bag bridges that preparedness gap. Depending on the situation, just getting home can be a survival journey in and of itself.



A GHB can take a variety of forms depending on your personal preference.

My GHB is a small backpack and that is what I recommend. However, I have friends who use duffel bags, fanny packs, web-gear, sling packs and even spare briefcases. Ultimately that is your decision, but I prefer the hands-free utility of a backpack.

Is a Get Home Bag Even Necessary?

There is an infinite list of events that could warrant the use of a Get Home Bag. Many are regular occurrences. A GHB doesn't have to save you from TEOTWAWKI (the end of the world as we know it) to be a worthy investment. Even if never put to that grave test, a GHB can provide for you in countless other less catastrophic scenarios. Below is a short list of events from the news headlines in the past few years that could possibly interfere with your immediate and uninterrupted commute home. I'm certain several people reading this article can account for some of these from personal experience.

- Severe weather
- Power grid failure (black-outs)
- Vehicle Break-Down
- Terrorist Attack
- Acts of war
- Bridge collapse
- Tornadoes
- Tsunamis
- Flooding
- Winter storms

- Zombie apocalypse!!!

Certainly, some disasters are more devastating than others. Millions of people have found themselves in need of a Get Home Bag at some point in their lives. For some, not having one has cost them their future.

I was watching a documentary the other day which interviewed survivors of the 9-11 terrorist attacks years later. I was surprised at the severe lung problems people have developed from inhaling the dust, fumes, smoke, and pulverized building material while escaping from in and around Ground Zero. It was an after effect I had never considered. An N95 face mask (mentioned later) in a Get Home Bag could have eliminated these ailments.

Assembling a GHB is not a daunting task and can easily be done in one afternoon. For the investment of time, money, and energy, I know of very few other things in life that can have such a dramatic and lasting effect on your future than a Get Home Bag—should you ever need to use it.

Your Get Home Bag Packing List

Below is my list of recommended GHB supplies. I fully expect for you to make your own additions and subtractions from this list. After all, it is YOUR kit. Different lifestyles, careers, and environments are all factors that will dictate the items in your kit. These kits are very personal.

1 Liter of Water in a Metal Container. I suggest a metal container because it gives you the option to boil water and/or cook in if necessary. I also carry [a metal cup](#) that fits snugly on the bottom of my metal Nalgene.



Food + Water

3-6 Energy Bars. Don't over pack with elaborate meals. High calorie bars are simple and sufficient meal substitutes. They require no heating or preparation—now that's my kind of meal!



Rain Poncho + Tarp

Rain Poncho. I personally use a military version with grommets in the corners which can be used as an improvised shelter if necessary. Being wet is not only miserable, it's deadly. Hypothermia is the # 1 outdoor killer, and your vulnerability skyrockets when you are wet—even in temperatures as high as 50 degrees.



Lightweight Tarp. I pack this to use as a shelter canopy. It can also be used as a ground cover and many things in between.



Boots + Change of Clothes

Walking Shoes / Hiking Boots. Especially for people who wear dress shoes to work, this is a really important addition. Pack a comfortable pair of tennis shoes at the very least. A good pair of wool hiking socks isn't a bad idea either.



A change of clothes and a pair of leather gloves allows you to change out of your suit and into something that offers more protection and maneuverability.

A Change of Weather Appropriate Clothing. Trade out your 3-piece suit for a more practical survival outfit. This should include a durable pair of leather gloves and a hat.



Lighters + Fire Starting Tinder

Fire Starting Tools and Prepared Fire Tinder. Pick up a couple of bic cigarette lighters. They are inexpensive and dependable. Also pack some fire starting tinder. I prefer the [WetFire](#) brand but a quick do-it-yourself substitute is cotton balls soaked in petroleum jelly. If you need to start a fire, these 2 items will get you 98% of the way there.



A quality multi-tool is an essential.

Quality Multi-Tool. This tool should have a solid knife blade, a saw blade, pliers, flat head and cross point drivers, and wire cutters. When you need one of these tools, no substitute will quite do the trick. Many will add a fixed blade knife as well. (Machete is optional.)



Pack a headlamp along with an extra battery.

Headlamp. Pack a good quality, hands-free, water-resistant headlamp flashlight. Toss in an extra battery while you're at it.

First Aid Kit. This kit should include basic first aid supplies such as bandages, gauze pads, medical tape, splint, tweezers, lip balm, moleskin, insect repellent, sunscreen, small mirror, and a variety of basic medications—Tylenol, aspirin, antacids, Dramamine, etc. If you wear contacts, be sure to include a back-up pair of glasses as well.



Hygiene + First Aid Kit

Hygiene Kit. This kit should include items such as a small towel, toothbrush and paste, bandana (multiple uses), toilet paper, and soap. A pack of disinfecting wet napkins are perfect for quick “spit-baths.” Hand sanitizer is always a winner.



Emergency Blanket

Emergency Blanket. Emergency mylar blankets are cheap, lightweight, and compact. Not only can they save your life in a cold weather environment, but they can also double as a quickie shelter, waterproof gear cover, and rain poncho. I prefer the [Heatsheet brand from Adventure Medical Kits](#).



Face Mask

N95 Face Mask. Whether from debris, dust, or sickness, protect your lungs with a [N95 face mask](#). Your t-shirt is not sufficient.



Pepper Spray + Pistol

Self-Defense Items. Disasters are a breeding ground for frustration, desperation, and confrontation. Violent crimes skyrocket in the wake and aftermath of any large scale disaster. Ideally, your self-defense items should keep some distance between you and an attacker. Avoid hand-to-hand combat at all costs. I pack some pepper spray (attached with Velcro to the shoulder strap of my pack) and a compact Kel-Tec P-32 Pistol with 4 extra clips (28 rounds) in my Get Home Bag.

Paper Map and Compass. Having a paper map of your surrounding area can be invaluable—especially in large cities. If you are trying to get home—so is everyone else. Expect and plan for detours. Ideally, you will have marked several alternative routes home from your place of work. Do not rely on your cell phone or GPS system. Your brain is more impressive anyway.



Map, compass, cash, pencil, and paper

Cash Money. Cash doesn't need to communicate with the power grid and it speaks everyone's language. Pack small denominations in a variety of places. Never reveal all of your duckets at once.

Paper & Pencil. Perfect for recording information or leaving notes. I use the [Rite-in-the-Rain](#) brand.



Paracord and Emergency Radio

100 Feet of Paracord. 1000's of uses, only a few ounces. Trust me on this one—just pack it.



USB cell phone charger for radio

Emergency Radio. Pick up a small Dynamo hand-crank emergency radio. Make sure it receives NOAA All Hazard Weather Alerts. I picked mine up at Radio Shack for \$40. This could be your only source of disaster-related information in an emergency. [Get a model that has an integrated USB cell phone charger](#)—very cool feature and highly recommended.

Rescue Signal Items. Small signal mirror (mentioned in First Aid) and a whistle.

The weight of my GHB is only 14 lbs. The items could easily be packed into a smaller bag, but I like the flexibility of more space—especially in cold months when I toss in a heavy fleece, gloves, hat, and shell.

Yes, That's a Tampon in My Mouth: The Swiss Army Survival Tampon — 10 Survival Uses



Do me a favor for the next five minutes. Try to forget everything you know about tampons. I know, it's hard. But pretend that this is the first time you have ever seen or heard of the item below, and it is a new survival product on the market: the Tactical Adventure Medical Preparedness Outdoors Necessity (T.A.M.P.O.N.).



All kidding aside, a tampon really does have a ton of uses to a survivor. One could even argue for including a couple in your survival kit. Ultimately, I'll let you be the judge.

Before I get into the details of this post, a brief history of the tampon might surprise you.

The tampon is actually regulated in the US by the Food & Drug Administration as a Class II Medical Device. The word "tampon" is a derivative of the French word *tapon* which means "a little plug or stopper." My research indicates that tampons were used as early as the 19th century as battle dressings to plug bullet holes. There are even accounts of tampons being used as wound plugs in modern warfare. A friend of mine told me that it's not uncommon for Army Medics to carry tampons in their med kits. They are also the perfect product for a bloody nose. There seem to be mixed accounts of whether the tampon was used as a feminine product before or after its use on the battlefield.

Regardless of intended use, the common tampon has many practical survival uses. I've highlighted a few survival uses below

TAMPON Survival Use #1: Medical Bandage



Tampons are sterile, come very well-packaged in their own waterproof sleeves, and are designed to be ultra-absorbent — making them the perfect first aid bandage. They can be opened and then taped or tied over a wound as an improvised dressing. And, as I've already mentioned, they can be used to plug a bullet hole until more sophisticated medical attention can be administered. Accounts of this use date back to World War I. Many items in modern society were first developed as a facet of military research — tampons may very well be one of these products

TAMPON Survival Use #2: Crude Water Filter



Another excellent tampon survival use is as a crude water filter. While it will not filter out biological, chemical, or heavy metal threats, it can certainly be used to filter out sediments and floating particulates. This would be considered a 1st Phase Filter, which can drastically increase the life and efficacy of your main water filter. You can also use a filter like this before boiling to filter out larger particulates. In this example, I've pushed a tampon into the neck of an empty water bottle. I poked a small hole in the cap and then poured in dirty water to filter through the tampon and into the container below.





The water dripped out nearly crystal clear.

TAMPON Survival Use #3: Fire Tinder



Nearly everyone knows that cotton makes excellent fire tinder. When the dry cotton fibers of a tampon are pulled apart and hit with a spark or flame, they will burst into a nice steady fire. If you've done the right amount of fire prep work, you can easily split 1 tampon into 3 or 4 fire-starting tinder bundles. Add in some chapstick or petroleum jelly, and you've got an even better fire-starting tinder.



TAMPON Survival Use #4: Crude Survival Straw Filter



Yes, I have a tampon in my mouth — don't laugh! As a last ditch water filter, you can make an improvised Survival Straw from the plastic housing and cotton from a tampon. As you can see in the photos below, just tear off a bit of the cotton and stuff it into the plastic housing. I find it better to leave a little bit sticking out to make the housing pieces wedge tightly together.



Again, this filter will not PURIFY your water by removing biological, chemical, or heavy metal threats, but it will filter out sediments and particulates. This would be a last ditch effort if no methods of water purification were available.

TAMPON Survival Use #5: Wick for Improvised Candle



In the photo above I used the string on a tampon as a wick in an improvised candle which I made from rendered animal fat and a fresh water mussel shell I found down by the creek at Willow Haven. After the string soaked up some of the fat, this candle burned solid for 20 minutes while I took the photos and still had plenty of wick left. Pine sap would have also worked as a fuel.

TAMPON Survival Use #6: Cordage

The string attached to a tampon is a cotton twisted cord typically made up of several 4-6" pieces of twine. Though it's not much, it is usable cordage. This amount of cordage could easily be used to make a Paiute Deadfall Trap.



I'm sure there are also numerous other uses for small amounts of quality cordage. For example, I also use this cordage in the next Survival Use below...

TAMPON Survival Use #7: Blow Dart Fletching



The blow gun certainly has its place in survival history. From Native Americans to tribes in New Guinea, the Blow Gun and primitive darts have put food on the table for thousands of years. They are silent and deadly hunting tools, especially for small game. Oftentimes, especially here in the US, natural cotton was used as blow dart fletching. Thus, the cotton from a tampon is a perfect candidate to make cotton-fletched blow darts. I used the string on the tampon to lash it into place on this bamboo skewer.



Watch out birds and lizards — you may get shot by a tampon-fletched blow dart!

TAMPON Survival Use #8: Blow Tube for Coal Burning Containers



Yes, I have a tampon in my mouth — again. This time, though, I'm blowing instead of sucking. Wow...this section is off to a really weird start. In a survival scenario, a simple container can make the difference between life and death. A water-tight container can be used to carry water, boil water, and cook meals. Natural water-tight containers aren't easy to make or find. A very practical and useful improvised container can be made by using hot coals to burn out a cavity in a log or stump. A blow-tube (in this case the plastic tampon applicator) can be used to intensify the hot coals to burn the cavity.



Using the tampon applicator blow-tube, it took me about 30 minutes to coal burn a cavity large enough to hold 2 cups of water. If necessary, I could then boil and purify this water by adding in several red hot stones that had been heated in a fire.

TAMPON Survival Use #9: Waterproof Match & Fire Tinder Case



In wet and damp conditions, keeping fire-starting tools such as matches and tinder dry can be a challenge. The waterproof tampon package/sleeve makes an excellent improvised “dry-sack” for any items that are moisture sensitive. Just fold over the top 2-3 times and tie it off with the tampon string and you’ve got a great waterproof match case.



TAMPON Survival Use #10: Survival Fishing Bobber



Fishing with hook and bobber is an incredibly effective method — especially when using live bait such as grubs and worms. A thorn hook, some natural braided line, and a tampon bobber make the perfect combination for a survival fishing rig. Watch out Blue-Gill!





Make the bobber with the tampon package/sleeve by folding over and tying off the top to create a little bubble that will float your bait. If the package isn't water-tight, just put some of the cotton inside and it will float just fine. Then, simply tie it to your fishing line.

How to Make a Bug Out Bag: Your 72-Hour Emergency Evacuation Survival Kit

The term 'Bugging Out' refers to the decision to abandon your home due to an unexpected emergency situation—whether a natural disaster or one caused by man. A 'Bug Out Bag' is a pre-prepared survival kit designed to sustain you through the journey to your destination once you've decided to 'Bug Out' in the event of an emergency evacuation. Typically, the Bug Out Bag (BOB) is a self-contained kit designed to get you through at least 72 hours. This kit is also referred to as a 72-Hour Bag, a Get Out Of Dodge Bag (GOOD Bag), an EVAC Bag, and a Battle Box.

The thought of having to evacuate your home due to a sudden and imminent threat is not at all unrealistic. The reality is that sudden and uncontrollable events of nature and man do happen. Natural disasters such as hurricanes, storms, earthquakes, floods and volcanic explosions can strike fast and hard—wreaking havoc on homes, vehicles, roads, medical facilities and resource supply chains such as food, water, fuel, and electricity. When Hurricane Katrina struck the Southern US Coast just a few years ago, tens of thousands of people had to evacuate their homes with little warning. Unprepared and with no emergency plan, many of these people were completely dependent on scavenging and hand-outs while living in make-shift shelters—fending for themselves in a time of complete chaos and disorder. A 72-Hour Emergency Kit packed with survival essentials would have been an invaluable and priceless resource. In our unstable and unpredictable world economy, we would be foolish to think there is also no chance of a terrorist or military attack from forces domestic or foreign that could possibly force us to evacuate our own home. An act of war is not the only threat from man. Dams burst, power plants go down,

pipelines explode, oil spills occur, and other man-made structures and facilities can fail, resulting in disaster. Outbreaks of sickness and disease could also warrant an evacuation.

We cannot control when, where, or how disasters strike. But we can control how prepared we are to deal with a disaster. There is a fine line between order and chaos and sometimes that line can be measured in seconds. When every second counts, having a plan and the tools to see that plan through are crucial to survival. The Bug Out Bag is your #1 resource in your overall Bug Out Plan and may very well be your key to survival one day.

There are 10 supply categories that need to be considered when assembling your Bug Out Bag. Before we dig into each of these categories it is important that I discuss the bag (or pack rather) itself. Your Bug Out Bag needs to be a backpack. It needs to be large enough and sturdy enough to contain the gear necessary to get you through 72 hours of independent survival. You need to be comfortable carrying it for extended periods of time. And, in my opinion, you don't want to APPEAR TO BE PREPARED and STOCKED with gear. A 'tricked-out-pack' can make you a target of people who want the supplies that you have. Try not to let your pack send the message that you are stocked to the brim with all kinds of survival necessities. Keep it basic. I personally use a [SnugPak Rocket Pack](#) as my Bug Out Bag.



Once you have chosen your pack, below are the 10 supply categories that need to be considered when assembling the contents of your Bug Out Bag:

Category #1: WATER

You will need at least 1 liter of water per day for proper hydration—preferably more, especially considering hygiene concerns and certain weather conditions. Since this is a 72 Hour Survival Kit, that means it needs to contain 3 liters of fresh drinking water—minimum. This water should be stored in 2-3 durable containers with at least one of them being collapsible to reduce bulk as the water is used. A metal army canteen is another good choice because it can be used to boil drinking water that is collected 'in the field' if your immediate supply runs dry. I carry a [collapsible Platypus water bottle](#), a [32 oz. Nalgene water bottle](#), and a metal US Army issue canteen.



Because water is so critical to survival, I highly recommended also packing at least 2 water purification options. Boiling water for 10 minutes is an option but is not always the most convenient. I suggest packing 1 water filtration system and also some water purification tablets. I personally pack a [Katadyn Hiker Pro Filtration System](#), an [Aquamira Survival Straw](#) (as a backup) and sodium chlorite water purification tablets. The 3 options of boiling, filtering, and chemical treatment will give you more flexibility in securing one of your most basic survival needs: clean water.



Category #2: FOOD



Don't worry about planning for three well balanced meals per day—this is survival, not vacation. I've gone on many survival trips where I haven't eaten for a few days, so you can live without any food at all for 72 hours. However, it isn't pleasant. You should pack simple & easy to prepare meals. Canned meats and beans are great options. Canned beef or chicken stews are equally as effective. If the weight of your Bug Out Bag is an issue, dehydrated camping meals are excellent choices. Remember, though, they require hot water to prepare—so that means a stove or fire and valuable time (if you are traveling). Military MREs are also good options. They have a long shelf-life, contain their own heating systems, and are very packable. They can be expensive, though. I would also suggest tossing in a few energy bars and candy bars. These are packed with calories and carbs—both of which are extremely important.



When we discuss food, we also need to discuss preparing it. A very simple cooking kit is all you should need. It should contain at least 1 small metal pot, a spork, a metal cup and maybe a metal pan or plate. Anything more than this is overkill. In many instances, preparing food requires heat. A fire will always work but may not be practical in every situation. I would suggest packing a lightweight backpack stove with 1-3 fuel canisters. I'd rather have it and not need it than need it and not have it. I personally carry a self-igniting [MSR Ultra light stove](#) in my BOB with 1 fuel can.

CATEGORY #3: SHELTER

I include clothing in this category. Regardless of climate, I recommend packing the following (some of these items can be on your body when you leave): 2 pair of wool hiking socks, 2 changes of underwear, 1 extra pair of pants (NOT BLUE JEANS AND PREFERABLY NOT 100% COTTON), 1 base layer thermal underwear, 1 warm fleece hat, 2 extra shirts (1 long sleeve, 1 short sleeve), 1 mid-weight fleece, 1 warm rain jacket, 1 heavy duty military poncho (can be found at any Army/Navy Surplus), 1 pair of comfortable waterproof hiking boots.



What to pack for an actual shelter is a heavily debated topic within the survival community. I like having options and I like redundancy—especially when it comes to shelter. Protecting yourself from the elements, whether rain, cold, or heat, is incredibly important.

Your first emergency shelter option is the military poncho listed above. These are designed with grommets in the corners to be used as a make-shift emergency tarp-tent and are actually quite effective. I've spent many nights in the woods during all kinds of weather conditions with nothing more than a wool blanket and a military poncho...and have been fairly comfortable. Practicing the set-up is the key. Know HOW to use it before you need to.

A second emergency shelter option is a simple reflective emergency survival blanket. There are many different kinds and brands of these on the market. I prefer one from [Adventure Medical Products](#) called the Heatsheet. Not only can it be used as an emergency survival sleeping bag, but it can also be used as a ground tarp or as a tarp-tent shelter. These are lightweight and cheap.

Besides the poncho and the heatsheet, I also carry a 6'x10' waterproof rip-stop nylon tarp. I use this style of tarp as a year-round camping shelter, so I know it works. It's lightweight and really effective if you practice setting it up. You can also bring a lightweight camping tent. These can be pricey, but they are really nice.



Lastly, you will want to include a very packable sleeping bag. If I had to give a general degree rating I would say a safe bet is a 30-40 degree bag. This pretty much covers all of your bases. Sure, you'd be cold at 20 degrees, but you would live. If you have the room, a nice wool blanket is a great addition. Wool maintains 80% of its warming properties even when soaking wet and is a very durable survival fabric with incredible insulating properties.

CATEGORY #4: FIRE



Making fire is one of the most important survival skills of all time. You need a minimum of 3 ways to make fire. Because you are preparing this Bug Out Bag in advance, you can toss in a few of the easy options like lighters and waterproof matches. You will also want to include a [fire steel](#) which can generate sparks in any weather condition. Besides these items, you will need to pack

some tinder for fueling your initial flame. You can buy tinder from any outdoor store, but cotton balls soaked in petroleum jelly is the best I've ever seen.

CATEGORY #5: FIRST AID



Whether you build your own kit from scratch or buy a premade kit, make sure it includes the following items at a minimum: 1" x 3" adhesive bandages (12), 2" x 4.5" adhesive bandages (2), adhesive knuckle bandages (3), butterfly closure bandages (2), gauze dressing.

My personal gear for this category includes: [Adventure Medical Kit's First Aid Kit 1.0](#) and, I've added 3 suture kits, more alcohol pads, 2 rolls of 2" gauze, CARMEX Lip Balm, and some larger butterfly bandages.

CATEGORY #6: TOOLS



The first and most important tool in your Bug Out Bag is a knife. Choosing your survival knife is a very personal decision, and besides your knowledge, it will undoubtedly be your most useful survival tool. I suggest carrying a full tang fixed blade all-purpose survival knife. It should be large enough to use for chopping, splitting, and self-defense but also small enough to use for more delicate camp chore tasks such as carving feather sticks and preparing food. The right balance is a personal decision. In my opinion the overall length needs to be around 10" –not too much over. Any larger than this and the knife becomes more difficult to use as an effective tool and starts to get bulky. I have made the decision to carry 2 knives in my Bug Out Bag. I carry a [Ka-Bar US Army Military Fighting Knife](#) and also a [Mora 840 MG Clipper Knife](#) which I use as a smaller all-around camp knife. Mora knives are very reliable all-around camp knives, and a good Mora can be purchased for under \$15.

Besides a knife, one other item you will want to consider is a good multi-tool. A multi-tool comes in handy for all types of projects—from cutting wire to complex mechanical chores. Your multi-tool should have a screwdriver (both phillips and flat-head), pliers, a knife blade, and wire cutters at a minimum. Leatherman makes all kinds of great multi-tools which can be purchased at almost any sporting goods store. I personally carry a [Leatherman MUT Military Multi-tool](#).

CATEGORY #7: LIGHTING



You need to pack at least 2 light sources. I would suggest having 1 flashlight that will throw light some distance like a mini mag light or a mini LED flashlight. The 2nd can be a smaller one to use around camp or while fixing meals, etc. Mini keychain LED lights are lightweight, cheap, and last a long time. Other ideas are glow-sticks, candles, and LED head-lamps. I personally carry the following light sources: [Gerber Firecracker Flashlight](#), a lanyard multi-function tool with small LED light, 1 glow-stick & 1 package of 9 hour candles. Again, I like options.

CATEGORY #8: COMMUNICATIONS



A fully charged cell phone is at the top of this list. In an emergency, cell phone service will probably be jammed up. However, text messages typically still go through, so having a cell phone is a necessity. You should also have either a fully charged EXTRA cell phone battery or a means of charging your cell phone. There are several options for charging your phone in the field without electricity. Some include solar charging units, hand crank chargers, and aftermarket battery boosters. You need to research and determine which solution is best for your current phone make/model.

In addition to a cell phone, you should also pack a small battery powered or crank powered AM/FM radio. This could be an important source of information and for the price and weight, you can't go wrong. I personally carry a [hand-crank FR-300 Emergency Radio](#). The hand-crank also has a cell phone charging feature.

Under this category I will also include IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS. In the case of emergency evacuation, you should carry with you certain important documents. Among these should be your driver's license, passport, social security card, medical information, important phone numbers and account numbers (bank, insurance, credit cards, etc.), and your gun carry permit.

The last item in this category is to pack a detailed map of your surrounding area, your state, and any area in-between your location and your Bug Out Location (your predetermined destination in case you have to Bug Out). You would be foolish to depend on a GPS in an evacuation emergency. PACK MAPS!

I personally carry all of these documents in a sealable waterproof map case.

CATEGORY #9: PROTECTION & SELF-DEFENSE



You can almost certainly guarantee that in an evacuation emergency there will be chaos and disorder. Events of this magnitude inevitably overwhelm normal police and public safety measures—at least for a short time. History tells us that rioting, looting, rape, and violent crimes will occur. You need to be prepared to protect and defend yourself and your resources—especially if you have a family. You would be naive not to take this category seriously. The best measure of self defense is a gun—period. Besides the intimidation factor, a gun has reach and stopping power. A gun can also be used for hunting if necessary. What kind of gun to pack is a lengthy topic all by itself. Some like shotguns, some prefer rifles, and others choose handguns. I have chosen to pack a 357 Ruger Revolver. I chose a handgun because it is easy to conceal and is fairly lightweight. I chose a 357 because of the stopping power, and I chose a revolver because I know beyond the shadow of a doubt that every time I pull the trigger a bullet will fire. I’ve had automatic pistols jam on me enough times to know I don’t want my life to depend on one.

Other formidable weapons of self-defense can be your survival knife, a machete, or even a walking stick. I, though, would hate for anything except a gun to be the only thing between me and a gang of thugs.

CATEGORY #10: MISC. GEAR



Just in case you have to Bug Out on foot, the weight of your pack should always be a consideration. You should be comfortable carrying your pack for up to 3 days. Because of this, everyone's pack load will vary depending on their comfort level. Below are some additional items that I have packed in my Bug Out Bag that you will also want to consider when building your own:

- CASH – \$1000 minimum (because cash talks)
- Toilet paper
- 200 feet of paracord (building shelter)
- Duct tape (100s of uses)
- 100 feet of Army issue trip wire (misc. projects, snares)
- Pad of paper & pencil (leave notes or record information)
- Small Bible
- 2 Bandanas (because they are so dang multi-useful)
- Leather work gloves
- Small knife sharpener
- Machete (clearing brush, chopping wood, self-defense)
- 4 spare AA batteries for my Gerber Firecracker
- 2 dust masks (can double as crude filters)
- Bar of soap & small bottle of hand sanitizer (hygiene)
- Travel toothbrush w/ tooth paste
- 36" length of rubber tubing (siphon, tourniquet)
- Small sewing kit
- 2 heavy duty 30 gallon garbage bags (water storage, shelter, poncho)

- P38 can opener
- Binoculars
- Small fishing kit
- Stakes
- Sunglasses (can double as safety glasses)
- Whistle
- Insect repellent
- Earplugs
- [Compass](#)

At the end of the day, there is no perfect Bug Out Bag. Even my own BOB changes and evolves with my needs, thoughts, wants, and tastes. An incomplete and imperfect Bug Out Bag is better than nothing at all in an emergency. For me, the peace of mind in knowing it's there on the shelf to grab if I need it is reason enough to have taken the time, effort, and money to build it. I hope that my thoughts about the Bug Out Bag have been informative and helpful (and maybe inspirational) as you consider building your own.