

SURVIVAL Guide

Chapter 1: OK, But What Do I Prepare For?

- [Questions to Ask Yourself](#)

Before you can prepare, you must determine what you are preparing to survive and how each disaster threatens you, your safety and survival. That will give you the parameters necessary for the following steps.



This initial exercise isn't tough, it only takes a few minutes of thought. We suggest you jot notes or switch into your word processor while you work.

But first, it's important to realize that you cannot prepare for everything -- only the army tries to do that, and we've yet to meet anyone with their resources. Captain Dave suggests you prepare only for those potential disasters that are likely to occur within the next five years. Sure, you may wait seven years for the next earthquake, but remember the survivalists creed: *better safe than sorry*.

What's going to happen in the next five years? If we knew, our web page would look different. You'll have to extrapolate, evaluate trends, read the newspaper, conduct your own research. At the very least, take a few minutes and consider your location. Pull out a map and look what's within a two-mile, five-mile 10-mile and 25-mile radius of your home and place of work. Put on your pessimist hat and consider what might go wrong that could directly impact you. Decide if that's something you want to prepare for (see questions one and two, below).

For example, if you live a "safe" distance outside of a flood plain, your house might still get flooded in the 100-year flood, should you prepare for it? We would, but it's your call. It's your ass on the line, so you have to decide.



That nuclear plant 20 miles away has an excellent safety record. Should a nuclear disaster be on your list? Again, you make the call.

Are you worried about a meteorite crashing into your house? Well, it has happened, but it's probably not worth preparing for.

Finally, if you've been afraid of something since you were a child -- whether it's a raging fire or nuclear war -- prepare for it. At the very least, you'll sleep better at nights knowing you have done all you can.

Here are some questions to ask yourself:

1. *What natural disasters or extreme conditions am I (we) likely to face in the next five years?*

Make a list and rank them in order of most to least likely to impact you. You can review our [list](#) of possible natural disasters if you need to.

Your list might look like this:

- Heavy thunder storms
- Severe winter weather
- Nearby flash flooding

2. *What other disasters or emergency situations might I face?*

Add to your list the man-made or other disasters that you might face in the next five years (again, you can refer to [our list](#), if necessary).

Let's say you have added these categories:

- Toxic material emission/spill (from a train derailment)
- Riot or other civil disorder
- Nuclear plant problems
- Terrorism

3. *What are the ramifications of each item on my list.*

Now, take your list and create a second column (bet those of you using a word processor are wishing we'd told you this before, huh?). Put the ramifications of each disaster in the second column. What do we mean by ramification? How the disaster or emergency situation could affect you. Think this one through very carefully, as everyone's situation is different. For example, families with children have different concerns than those without or singles.

Finally, note if the ramifications could require evacuation (our [next](#) topic).

To keep using our example results in a table like this:

Potential Disaster

Thunder storm with electrical outage for 2 (average) to 48 hours (severe)

Ramifications

- Food spoilage possible
- Lack of air conditioning/furnace
- Damage to house or car from nearby trees
- Possible local flooding (see below)
- Local transportation impaired by fallen trees, wires
- Lightning damage/fire potential

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|------------------------------|--|
| Severe winter weather | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Electrical outage for 4 (average) to 72 hours (severe) would affect furnace operation• Exposure problems• Frozen pipes• Disruption of travel, transportation• Self or family members possibly stranded away from home• Possible food shortages and empty shelves at local markets |
| Nearby flash flooding | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Local transportation disrupted• Danger while traveling in car or by foot• Possible loss of some utilities |
| Nearby train derailment | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Possible leak or spill of chemicals• Short-term exposure problem• Long-term cancer concerns• Evacuation may be necessary |
| Riot or other civil disorder | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Disruption of commute (ala Los Angeles)• Stranded in car or office while family is at home and/or school• Danger of riot spreading to my neighborhood• Danger of local kids/low lives taking advantage of situation• Attack or threat to personal safety• Looting and rampaging by otherwise lawful citizens• Fire with potentially no response by authorities• Police are overwhelmed, cannot protect law-abiding citizens |

Nuclear plant problems

- Reactor vessel damage could result in release of radioactive chemicals to atmosphere
- Evacuation necessary

Terrorism

- Threat to safety at work and during business travel
- Disruption of commerce, travel
- Less personal freedom, privacy as a result of government reaction to terrorism

Once you've created a chart like the one above, you know what situations you are most likely to face and can prepare your survival plan. For next steps, go on to [Chapter 2](#).

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