



SELF-RELIANCE CENTRAL

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# First Response Survival Guide

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# Preparing For...

Self-Reliance Central is proud to bring you this handy-sized **First Response Survival Guide**. Read it. Practice it. Learn it. Live it. Keep it with your survival kit.

We have become dependent on consumerism. We all agree we need supermarkets, public utilities, and many of the benefits that civilisation can offer us — but do we need them all ?

No, we really don't. In fact we have gotten ourselves into the position where we are almost incapable of doing anything for ourselves anymore.

Which is why SelfRelianceCentral.com shows you how to do the everyday things you take for granted yourself. How to solve problems without picking up the phone and asking a faceless customer service agent. How to make and mend. How to tackle personal challenges. How to plan for a future outside of the rat race. How to survive in the country, the wilderness — even the urban jungle — day in and day out.

And in this **First Response Survival Guide**, the first in our series of helpful guides, we show you how to make it through a life-threatening emergency.

So if you are the type of person who believes that the responsibility for your life lies in your hands, and not those of bureaucratic agencies, then read on. For you are the Captain of your own destiny.

Go sail your ship!

Kelly McCarthy

Editor & Publisher | Self-Reliance Central



This book is dedicated to the  
animal in all of us; that part of  
us that knows instinctively  
how to stay alive!

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# Preface

When catastrophes strike, be they natural or man-made, they show us how dependent we are and how connected we have become to the umbilical cord of society. And they reveal, too, how easily and quickly that cord can be severed, and, in the aftermath of a tragedy, how chaos and panic can swiftly permeate our lives.

Keeping things simple is not very popular these days. In this modern age of technological innovations our world has become remarkably complex. Nowhere is this more evident than in Emergency Preparedness. Shelves of volumes have been written, dozens of videos and survival kits marketed, and hundreds of informative web sites created—yours to view at the click of a mouse. Each one more complex than the one before. Each one desperate to convince the reader, viewer or buyer of the value of the product.

Yet study any one of these sources and you will find the most crucial piece of advice is missing—a statement regarding your survival priorities.

Understanding your priorities in an emergency situation can mean the difference between life and death. And the simple truth is—these priorities are always the same—in any environment, in any emergency. Quite simply, you just have to ensure that your basic needs are met.

The *First Response Survival Guide* provides the basics. Follow its guidance and you should be able to meet your survival needs until society can regain her balance and link up with you again. Our aim here is to provide you with sufficient knowledge and adequate skills to stay alive long enough for the centralized services to fix themselves. Although the skills could be used for longer, and once learned will never

leave you, this is a *First Response Survival Guide*. We would recommend further training before you embarked upon a full survivalist lifestyle.

However, regardless of the nature of the catastrophe, or the length of time you have to endure it, your first survival needs are always shelter, water, fire and food, in that order. *All the rest are wants.*

And hold this thought. You are the missing part of the survival equation. Your ability to rise to the occasion, to think outside the box, to fend for yourself, will make all the difference. Regardless of what disruptions occur, be they man-made or natural, or where you happen to be when disaster strikes, making sure your basic needs are met will diminish your fear in any survival situation and increase the likelihood of your success.

Obviously your needs will be different depending on where you are when your circumstances change. Isolated without power or water on the 20th floor of an apartment building presents practical difficulties that differ dramatically from those of a homeowner with a back yard who suffers the same deprivations. But the needs are the same—it's just the remedies that differ.

Using this book to prepare for *First Response Survival Guide* will help you, your family and your community to meet your basic survival needs when the worst thing you can image actually happens. The information contained within will help you to survive in the immediate aftermath of any emergency. So read it carefully, understand it and above all, practice and prepare.

# Introduction

Our earth, unstable and unpredictable, has the potential on a daily basis to create havoc and destruction caused by natural disasters such as floods, tornadoes, hurricanes, earthquakes and volcanic eruptions, to name but a few.

Add to that the increased risks from nuclear, biological and chemical hazards. And the seemingly constant terrorist threats that assail us, whether home, grown or imported from abroad.

Note also that our frail and overburdened infrastructure is crumbling and there aren't enough funds to adequately prop it back up. Even at home, water treatment plants are failing, bridges are falling down, and antiquated sewage systems are in a state of disrepair.

Globally, we see overpopulation and famine, disasters caused by drought or widespread flooding, entire countries ravaged by disease and war, and stock markets that are as volatile as any we have ever experienced. Now we have no limit to the number and types of potential disasters that may cause death and destruction to our earth and ourselves.

## **Sounds terrible doesn't it?**

A good point to remember here is that we have always lived with disasters. Humans have suffered at the hands of the elements and each other since time immemorial. But whether today's disasters are natural or man-made, part of our problem is that technology has lulled us into a false sense of security and we are now much less able to deal with any event that occurs out of the norm with any degree of effectiveness.

The fact is, we have become a society so ensconced in the interdependence of modern technology that we seem to have lost our personal strengths. We have abandoned nature's skill-set: self-confidence, resourcefulness and adaptability.

### **How has this happened?**

Through a process of erosion we have neglected our mental and physical health. We no longer think for ourselves. We trust that all our needs, wants, and desires will be met as if by magic—pulled out of the hat of our modern computerized society. We assume that FEMA will advise us to evacuate before the hurricane hits. We believe the Red Cross will provide comforting hot coffee and a cot. We trust that the government's low interest loans will be available to us when we begin the task of rebuilding.

We have been slowly suffocating in the comfort zone. Like frogs in water, we sat complacently in the pot as the water was heated. It was comfortable while the water was warm. But man-made or natural disasters may rapidly cause the pot to boil and overflow. We may be moments away from finding out that we are not immune to failures of technology and that government agencies, local or federal, may be ill equipped to help.

The prudent have never totally relied on governmental agencies and have always been ready and individually prepared. They are in some way conscious of the fact that society is now so interconnected that if any part of it is severed, the results could be catastrophic.

So, now you must ask yourself the important question, "Do you want to survive?" If your answer is a resounding "Yes!" read on. However, we must warn you right up front, first response survival takes energy and a positive attitude. It involves advance planning and preparedness.

Being an armchair "survivalist" would be like being an armchair pilot, you will never get off the ground.

# Survival skills as a basis for preparedness

A survivalist is not someone who has stocked up on guns and gold and built an underground bunker guarded by Rottweillers. A true survivalist has acquired knowledge and learned simple skills that will enable him or her to live with the earth. This is knowledge that can never be taken away from them.

More importantly, this knowledge has displaced the fear of the unknown. I consider it to be the best insurance anyone can have, particularly if faced with natural disasters, man-made emergencies or terrorist attacks.

Being prepared by having emergency supplies on hand in case of a disaster is sensible and we have listed essential items to keep in your survival kit in many of the chapters of this guide. Though it is important, and certainly prudent, to stock up on food, water and other supplies, it is only a partial solution. To be truly prepared for changing times ahead we need a solution that goes beyond 72-hour survival packages, gas masks or flu shots.

This Guide is designed to provide you with enough information and genuine advice to survive a period of time during which no, or very few, emergency services or everyday utilities are available to you.

The best solution to an unexpected problem is to quell your fear of the unknown by acquiring knowledge of simple survival techniques and survival priorities that give you the basic tools to deal effectively with *any emergency situation*. This method is so convincing that soon you will experience the growing realization that the things you currently fear losing the most: are actually the ones you really don't need at all.

This knowledge is not new—just mostly forgotten—for, indeed, it is the way all primitive people still live with the earth. They make their own shelters, find, collect and purify their water, build fires with a bow and drill, and hunt and gather their own food—every single day.

If you think about it, it wasn't so long ago that survival and preparedness was a way of life for us, too. Our ancestors, living close to the Earth, knew how precarious their existence was; they took nothing for granted and gave thanks for all they had. We know that the early pioneers depended on the food and supplies that they collected in the summer and fall months and put away to last through the harsh winters. It was a very natural thing to do. It was prudent to be prepared. It assured their survival.

The priorities of shelter, water, fire and food—in that order—are the same in any situation, any environment. They are your needs; basic needs that are all provided by our earth in unlimited amounts. I ask you to consider that disaster preparedness is a chance to take a simple step to once again touch the earth, respect her and trust in her wisdom.

When *you* realize and accept that you equipped with little more than your brain and your bare hands can survive any emergency situation, you will accept the challenge of the dark and the unknown. We really are remarkable creatures. We adapt. These instincts are inside you waiting to be let out.

You have to believe and accept that this is really who you are. And that when you are up against it, pushed to your limits in an emergency situation, you too will become a true survivalist.

Not the guns and gold kind, but as Tom Brown, Jr. taught us, “a true survivalist is a caretaker of the earth.”

Susan Conniry

## Keep it simple— needs not wants

**“You’ll go a long way toward increasing your mental comfort by realizing that (in a survival situation) you cannot immediately have everything you want, but that you can have everything you need.”**

Tom Brown Jr., *Field Guide to Wilderness Survival*

“Grandfather”, was an Apache Elder and Medicine Man named Stalking Wolf who taught Tom Brown Jr. Grandfather travelled the American continent acquiring knowledge of the outdoors wherever he went. He took what he learned, simplified it and tested it in the purity of the wilderness. If it worked, he kept it.

The skills shared in this book are based on those that passed the ultimate test in the wilderness. They are simple and they work. They are truly, first response survival skills.

The information may be used in any emergency situation; from the simplest—a power outage—to the most complex—an earthquake, quarantine situation or evacuation. But, remember the priorities are always the same. And, the more you prepare, the better off you will be. But, in case your supplies run out, or you are away from your supplies, or someone

needs them more than you do, remember: knowing what your survival priorities are and how to take care of your true needs with little more than your bare hands and your brain will get you through any situation.

Surviving a disaster doesn't require you to be a brain surgeon. In fact, a survival situation is really just a matter of attitude. It is just a change in the day-to-day conditions in which you are accustomed to living. It doesn't have to be frightening. How you perceive it, and how well you deal with it, are really dependent upon how well you are prepared.

A basic understanding of your survival priorities and some simple skills will ensure that you can approach any survival situation with a clear head, whether it is a disaster in the city or you have lost your backpack in the wilderness.

Children excel at these skills. They are flexible to change and besides, no one ever told them they couldn't do it! So, don't worry about them in a survival situation. If you have prepared as a family, it will probably be the kids that do the best!

# Shelter

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*“We do not care about your comfort; we want you to live through the situation.”*

Susan Conniry & Tom Beasley | *Wilderness Experts*

## Believe it or not, this is your number one survival priority!

Though many people are capable of preparing for major breakdowns in power, telecommunications and transportation it is obvious that most of us lack the skills to completely provide for ourselves once a disaster occurs. Yet even those committed to learning the basic survival skills can miss the one element in the equation that is oft times left out—that of self-confidence.

In order to weather a survival/emergency/disaster situation you must first prove to yourself that you can. Every person who is individually prepared takes the pressure off the emergency service agencies. Being unprepared is selfish. It is highly recommended that you take the time to participate in a hands-on survival course. There is nothing better than actually “doing it.” Only then will you really understand what will be required of you.

During the last few years of teaching not only wilderness survival but also urban preparedness, it has been amazing to discover that so few people understand the priorities necessary to survive an emergency situation. Recent events make a current evaluation of these priorities even more urgent.

Let me give you some examples. Recently in California, a teenage snowboarder got lost. When he was found several days later, the media coverage demonstrated the lack of understanding that the general public has in regard to survival. The headlines read, “*Lost snowboarder lived for six days without food.*” Somewhere, deep in the third paragraph was the fact that “*he died from exposure.*”

Also recently, an associate of mine asked me to review a manuscript that contained, in part, some advice about emergency preparedness. When I advised him that he had incorrectly assigned water as the number one priority, he replied, “It was my editor’s decision.” This clearly demonstrates ignorance of the survival priorities.

But, remember, ignorance is no excuse for loss of life. Be prepared. Learn now.

But first, answer these questions:

- ❖ Do you wear clothes?
- ❖ Do you live in a building?
- ❖ Do you drink liquid?
- ❖ Do you heat your home?
- ❖ Do you cook your food?
- ❖ Have you eaten today?

If you answered yes to these questions, then you are a “survivalist” day in and day out. You are fulfilling your basic needs and these are the same needs that must be met in an emergency situation.

In any survival situation, natural disaster or man-made emergency the priorities are always the same: shelter, water, fire, and food. Remember that you could survive four days without water and 30 to 40 days without food but without shelter you could die in a matter of minutes—depending on the elements.

**Fact**

You can live 4 days without water, 30–40 days without food and mere minutes without the right type shelter in an adverse environment.

**Shelter, water, fire and food are your needs. All the rest are wants. Knowledge of survival priorities and earth skills can never be taken from you. It is the ultimate insurance.**

### **Shelter – essential protection**

In fact, shelter is your most important survival priority. You always need to be protected from something: the sun, the heat, the wind, the cold, the rain, insects, and injury.

Humans are particularly vulnerable to extreme changes in temperature regardless of whether it's a move towards hot or cold because your body wants to remain in its comfort zone of about 78°F.

The effects of cold, wind, and rain can lower the body temperature dramatically resulting in a condition known as hypothermia. And once hypothermia of the vital organs sets in, they begin to shut down as they try to conserve heat by drawing in blood from your extremities: head, hands and feet. Add the wind chill factor and any rain to the scenario and very soon you will find yourself in a life-threatening predicament. Remember, hypothermia is by far the most common killer in a survival situation.

### **Emergency survival shelters**

It is prudent and makes sense to be prepared in case of an emergency situation. But what if you don't have your supplies? Maybe you are at work away from your home base, stranded on a highway, or in an airport. Maybe a bear ran off

with your pack, or someone needed it more than you. Don't panic. There are simple ways to provide shelter.

The main function of any shelter is to provide warmth, protection and security. A true shelter is one in which your body is the only heat source, in which case, make it small, the smaller the better.

### **Wilderness shelters**

In the wilderness the most effective shelter is a "debris hut." It is built like a squirrel's nest and is small (built to your body size) and well insulated with forest debris, to create dead air space. However, it is far more likely that a natural disaster or emergency situation will occur while you are in an urban setting. In that case, similar to the wilderness debris hut, emergency shelters should be built like a squirrel's nest, well insulated with material.

### **Urban shelters**

As above, these shelters are based on the principal of creating a surrounding cocoon of dead air space that does not require an external heat source. One of the most simple, immediate and affective measures to create dead air space is to simply stuff your clothes. In an urban setting you can use the pages from your phone book, Styrofoam cups, newspaper, plastic bags, or any dry fluffy material.

Without an external heat source all structures such as your home, your office, and your car are nothing more than tents. If there is a power outage, or you run out of fuel for the generator, the inside of the structure quickly becomes the same temperature as the outside air.

In addition to stuffing your clothes you can build a squirrel's nest or a fort. Pick the smallest room that is safe, dry and the least exposed to the cold. Then make a shelter within a shelter. It is best to have a room without windows or with

windows facing the sun. Pick a room that is not only convenient but also one with doors that can be opened for ventilation or closed to prevent a draft. Then go hunting!

Gather up all the insulating materials you can find: blankets, pillows mattresses, towels and clothing. Don't forget the drapes and carpeting. The padding under the carpet is excellent too.

**Make a mattress burrito** • Roll up in a mattress and stuff the inside with pillows and other materials. Don't forget to cover your head.

**Make a mattress sandwich** • Sandwich yourself between two mattresses with stuffing around the edges—this is an excellent way of sheltering two or more people.

**Make a mattress fort** • For a larger group of people, this option gives you more room. Make a rectangular box with mattresses as the walls in a corner of the room. Fill the interior with pillows, blankets, and cushions and drape a blanket, quilt or drapes across the entrance. The more insulation you use and the more people huddle together, the warmer it will be.

All these shelters are based on creating dead air space. Anything similar will work. Remember how you made forts when you were a child. That's all there is to it. Build a fort and stuff it with all the insulating material you can find.

### Activities

Once your shelter is built, confine your activities to that area. This will conserve energy and cut down on drafts. Shut all doors and windows. Insulate windows by hanging drapes or blankets, but be very conscious and careful about ventilation. And, *never* bring flames or any combustibles of any kind into

the shelter. All cooking must be done a safe distance away from the shelter, whether you are inside or outside.

### **In your car**

If your car breaks down, rip the stuffing out of your seats (remember it *is* an emergency!) and stuff your clothes. You can stuff the car itself with plant material, trash, anything you can find.

Using your car's heater on a limited basis, run the engine long enough to heat yourself up then turn the car off. *Note: always provide ventilation.*

You probably keep some emergency equipment in your car, maybe a first aid kit or snow shovelling equipment. Make sure you supplement this with the basics needed to keep warm, to feed yourself, to gather water and to make fire. See the car pack list at the back of this book to ensure you are in a good position to cope wherever you are stranded.

Always make sure you have your cell phone and a phone card or cash available in your car. If the phone networks aren't destroyed or overloaded you will need to contact either the emergency services or your family and business.

In the event of mechanical failure, you should stay with your car. It's a bigger object than you are and easier to find.

If you are buried in the snow, although snow is a great insulator, it will seal out the air. Therefore, be sure to provide yourself a vent hole to the outside world. Also, do *not* start the engine as the carbon monoxide will build up—it will have nowhere to go. Mark the location of the car for your rescuers to find you.

### **Clothing**

In the shelter war, clothing is your first line of defense against the elements. Clothing creates dead air space around your body. Too much dead air space and you become hot. Too

**Survival tip****Save a life with plastic film**

Remove your clothing, take a plastic bag or Saran Wrap, cover your skin with the plastic (direct skin contact ) then put your insulating clothes back on. The plastic film will raise your body temperature by at least 20 ° F and there is no condensation. You don't sweat in it. If you don't believe it, try wrapping up one foot and see the difference.

little and you get cold. Therefore, the layering system is recommended for cold weather conditions. This way you can regulate your body temperature by adding or removing layers as you exercise or become sedentary. What you really want to avoid is sweating inside your own clothing. The clothing absorbs the moisture and as soon as you stop moving it evaporates and cools your skin and you become cold. If you sweat in your clothes, change them! And avoid producing sweat by removing layers as you increase your movement.

The two best fabrics

**Fleece** • A synthetic material made of plastic. It is made up of millions of tiny air spaces that do not absorb water. It is lightweight, durable and dries quickly. Its disadvantage is that it is bulky, burns and is not wind resistant.

**Wool** • Natural material made up of hollow hairs. Each hair is a dead air space. Wool contains lanolin, which is natural grease that coats each hair, so protecting it from water absorption. The rule with wool is wet wool is warmer than dry cotton. It is durable material and it doesn't burn. Its only real disadvantage is that when it gets wet it is heavy and takes a long time to dry.

Clothing to include in your personal wardrobe

**Watch cap** • a hat made of wool or fleece. Did you know that one third of your body heat is lost through your head?

**Balaclava** • a full-length watch cap made of wool or fleece that completely covers your neck and head.

**Scarf** • wool or fleece.

**Long underwear** • top and bottom—wool or fleece—light-weight to expedition weight is available.

**Long pants with cargo pockets** • wool or fleece—loose fitting so you can bend and move.

**Socks** • wool or fleece—some people prefer a layer of fleece or light cotton or silk next to their skin and then a wool heavy sock.

**Mittens** • wool or fleece—long cuff to cover the wrists—some people wear a glove inside their mitten.

**Boots** • Remember, tight at the ankles, loose at the toes. You need to be able to wiggle your toes with all your socks on. If your feet are cold, loosen your laces. Boots can be made from any material. Be aware that synthetics i.e. plastic, doesn't breathe and creates condensation through your sweat.

**Outerwear** • You need a high quality coated nylon or PVC rain suit. It should be two-piece, loose fitting, with attached hood. Rain suits made of plastic are 100% waterproof and windproof. Gore-Tex is fine but it is expensive and it doesn't work any better than PVC.

**Fact**



Cotton kills! Ask any backpacker. Once wet, it holds the moisture and you will get cold.

Additionally, consider a broad brimmed fur felt hat. This will protect your head from the rain and keep your head warm. Attach a chinstrap so you don't lose it in a strong wind.

### **Clothing for extreme heat**

In extremely hot temperatures you must limit your physical activities. Wear light colored clothing that is loose fitting and made of material that can absorb and hold moisture. You want the evaporative effect when you are hot. You'll want a broad brimmed hat and eye protection. In essence, protect your entire body from direct and reflective sunlight. Cover exposed areas of body with mud.

#### **Survival tip**



Spray clothes with insect repellent, place clothes in a plastic bag, seal the bag for seven days. When removed, this set of clothing will repel gnats, mosquitoes and biting flies for several months. Once washed, you will have to repeat the process. Mosquitoes are attracted to carbon dioxide and seem to prefer the color blue!

#### **Fight off the bugs with:**

- ❖ Close weave nylon netting to cover your head and body
- ❖ Insect repellents (Deet is the best insect repellent)
- ❖ Smoke—insects don't like smoke
- ❖ Wind
- ❖ Cold
- ❖ Electronic repellent devices that buzz
- ❖ Vitamin B-12 taken orally