

Survive In Place Sample Lesson

The Ultimate Step-By-Step guide to creating your Urban Survival Plan

Top 10 Mistakes Found in Most 72-Hour Kits

1. Medications. If you have medications that you have to take on a regular basis, you need to keep at least 3 days worth in your 72 hour kit. Many drugs break down in the extreme heat of a car, so ask your pharmacist how long they'll stay safe in your car and how long they'll stay effective.

As an example, if your pharmacist tells you that a certain drug will last for 3 years at room temperature, but only 2 months if you keep it in your car, then you should use the drugs that are in your car every month or two and replace them with fresh drugs.

The life expectancy of your drugs will, of course, be different depending on where you live and the season of the year.

2. Footwear/clothes. If you ever wear flip flops, heels, or dress shoes, then consider carrying a pair of quality shoes/boots in your car.

Stick in at least one pair of quality socks and underwear as well.

Remember the pictures and videos after 9/11 of people running barefoot, holding their \$500 shoes? Imagine how your body would feel after doing that for a few miles.

3. Clothes for the wrong season. You should carry clothes for both summer and winter, carry convertible clothes, or change the clothing contents of your kit every spring/fall. Shorts won't help much in the winter and insulated cover-alls won't help much in the summer.

4. Young children. If you have young children, they add a HUGE level of complexity to any survival situation. Can/will they eat your survival food? Do you have spare clothes/diapers/wipes for them? Do you have a way to manage their pain from teething/injuries?

Do you have a way to transport them? It might be worth learning how to use a regular bed sheet to create a wearable baby sling. If you have a stroller with inflatable tires, do you carry spare tires and/or a tire repair kit?

5. Pain. If you aren't good at handling pain, learn proven techniques from someone you know who has done natural child-birthing, a midwife, birthing coach, or doula.

In addition, consider carrying ibuprofen, anbesol, or even prescription pain medications. If you are concerned about a hurt pet, consider getting livestock lidocaine. (It requires a veterinarian's prescription, but costs a fraction of human lidocaine.)

6. Bad Equipment. Almost every 72 hour kit that I've bought or reviewed has had bad equipment in it. Some of the worst offenders have been multi-tools that don't work matches that are brittle and break, knives that are dull, Band-Aids/tape that doesn't stick anymore, survival blankets that are worn through, and pumps (both water and liquid fuel camp stoves) that have dried out seals. The only way to know that bad equipment won't bite you in the butt is to test out all of your equipment every 6-12 months.

7. Can you use your equipment? If your fire starter is a glass or Fresnel lens, can you make it work? Will it work in the late afternoon/evening? On a cloudy/smoky day? What would you do at night? What happens when you eat your survival rations? Can you stomach them? Do they keep you full? (If not, throw in some fiber capsules) Do you know how to start a fire with your flint and steel? Does everyone fit in the emergency shelter that you have? Can you carry your 72 hour kit/go bag if you have to leave your car on foot?

In short, you bought a 72 hour kit/go bag to keep you alive in a worst case scenario. Does it do any good to carry around a bag full of stuff that doesn't work and that you don't know how to use? Don't trust anything. Take the time to test out the equipment that you expect to save your life. If it doesn't work, find a replacement that does work. Testing your equipment will mean that you'll have to replace some and it means that you'll have to repack it, but until you know everything works and that you can use it, it doesn't do much good to carry it around in your car.

8. Water. Do you have 1 gallon per person per day and 1/2 gallon per animal per day? (2 people and 2 dogs would require 9 gallons for 72 hours. At 8.35 pounds per gallon, that's almost 80 pounds of water taking up 2000 cubic inches!!) If not, do you have a way to collect and purify more? Do you have an empty 1 liter bottle, collapsible bucket, or water bladder? Do you have one for both dirty and clean water? Do you know if your body can handle water that's been purified with iodine?

9. Pets. Do you have 72 hours of food for your pets? Are you going to feed them your emergency food? Will they eat it and can they digest it? Can you eat their food if you need to?

10. Bags that are all jumbled together. Most 72 hour kits have everything thrown in the main compartment. Every time you need something, you have to sort through all of the contents. Consider taking some Ziploc freezer bags or packing cubes like Eagle Creek to separate the different categories of supplies. Make sure to mark everything VERY plainly. I like doing this by writing on a strip of duct tape or athletic tape. One method you can use to separate everything is the following system:

Fire	Shelter	Health	Pets
Food	Security	Hygiene (toilet and washing)	
Water	Tools	Medical (prescriptions, pain, stomach, etc.)	
	Clothes	Trauma (bandages, splints, tweezers, scissors, wound irrigation, etc.)	
	Bedding		

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