

The 7 Rules Of How Not To Become A Target

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There's a military axiom which says, "The best defense is a good offense."

I have my own, modified version of this. It goes, "The best defense is not becoming a target." What I mean by that is that if nobody has a reason for attacking you, you won't have to worry about being attacked.

You've got to realize that in the aftermath of any crisis, people are going to be on the prowl. You've seen it on the news reports; people looting, stealing, breaking into homes, even rooting around in garbage dumpsters for the things that they need to survive.

You're going to see it again; only this time, you'll see it much more up close and personal. That's why you need to learn how not to become a target.

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While there are no accurate figures as to how many preppers there are in the United States, estimates put it at somewhere between two and three million people. The rest of the people out there are expecting [FEMA](#) to come to the rescue, riding on a white horse and with federal government funds (otherwise known as your tax dollars) in their hands to solve all their problems.

Since most people only have less than three days' worth of food in their homes, it won't take long for all those millions of people out there to get desperate. Then they'll start hunting. Their first stop will be the stores, which will be cleaned out of anything useful. Then, they'll start preying on each other.

There will only be two basic ways to prevent being attacked. The first is to look so strong to the attacker that they decide to leave you alone and find somebody else to pick on. Not only is that rather expensive to accomplish, it's just about like putting up a billboard on the roof of your home that says, "Preppers Live Here!".

The other way is to fool people into thinking that there's nothing to be gained by attacking you. Poor people generally don't think of stealing from other poor people, unless they see that the other poor person has something that they want.

The general assumption is, "They're as poor as I am, it's not worth attacking them." Instead, they go looking for somebody who's going to have something worth stealing. That somebody else is you, unless of course, they don't realize that you have anything worth grabbing. Therein lies the secret; making it look like you're not worth bothering with.

Your home defense problems are going to be greatly lessened if they don't come to attack you. So,

it's important to do everything you can to make sure that they don't know who you are, what you have, or that you are living any better than they are.

If you're living like everything is hunky-dory, that will be like putting up that billboard again. Many of the things that you are doing to prepare for a disaster can very easily make you and your home stand out, making you into the target that you don't want to be.

Even while you're enjoying your stockpile of food and drinking from your well, using the light produced by your solar panels, you don't want others to know.

[Find out more on how to improve your layered home defense to survive disaster!](#)

How Does OPSEC Help You?

All this is called Operational Security, or OPSEC. In the military, it's the idea of denying the enemy information about who you are, what you're doing, what your capabilities are and what your plans are. That's really no different than what you need to do with your prepping. You need to deny the same information to all the people around you who might want what you have.

Light Discipline

One of the easiest giveaways that you are in better shape than your neighbors is having lights shining out of your windows, when everyone else's power is out. Most preppers have alternate sources to provide their home with power in the case of an emergency.

Even so, if people see that light shining through the windows, they're going to be wondering where it is coming from, and why you are the only one who has electricity. To stay safe, use low wattage electric lights, that won't be so obvious.

If you have a battery backup system, you can run wires through your house to run 12 volt automotive lights. These may not be as bright as what you're used to, but they will provide enough light for most activities.

The best thing to do is to install blackout curtains. These are dark, heavy curtains, which are designed to prevent light from escaping through the windows. They need to be made of heavy fabric and be larger than the window, so that they cover the window and can seal the space around it.

Don't forget about flashlights either. While there will be other people with flashlights, the longer the disaster lasts, the less batteries there will be available for them. If you have to use a flashlight, use it sparingly, and do whatever you can to hood the light and keep it from being obvious.

In the military, they use a red lens on flashlights, with a light blocker behind it. The light blocker is a solid plate, with just a pinhole in the middle. Between the two, very little light escapes, keeping it from being seen from far away.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_D2AiIO4fWw

Cooking

Unless you're one of those fortunate people who has a propane stove or a cast-iron one, you're probably going to be doing your [cooking outdoors](#), which means cooking on your grille or in a fire pit. There's nothing wrong with that, it's a good alternative for when your kitchen is out of order, but there is a very high risk that your neighbors are going to know exactly what you're cooking. If that's a pot of beans and rice, it won't be such a big deal, but if you're cooking steaks every night, everybody will know about this.

The longer you go without power, the greater a problem that's going to be. The first couple of days after the power goes out, you're probably going to smell a lot of steaks on the grille, as people try to use up what they've got in the freezer before it can go bad.

But once that first few days are over, there won't be too many people with steaks to grill.

This is one of those cases that you can cover up with a bit of subterfuge. Hopefully, you've got a good enough relationship with your neighbors, that you'll be helping each other out in a crisis.

So, if you go hunting and get a deer, it would seem normal that you would pass on some meat to your neighbors. Hopefully, the next week one of them will go hunting and share with you as well. If everyone in the neighborhood is grilling meat outdoors once a week, it won't seem all that strange. The rest of your meat can be turned into jerky, and used in soups and stew that way.

Spices are another thing that can give away your abundance of food. When people are eating the most basic of foods, their sense of smell for well-seasoned food can actually be increased. If they smell well-seasoned food coming from your back yard, that will serve as another indicator that you have food.

I firmly believe in stocking spices, and I like well-seasoned foods. However, if my spice rack is going to cause me trouble, I'll put a padlock on it and throw away the key. My family's survival is more important to me than having gourmet meals.

Trash

Simple things can give everything away, especially to people who are looking for them. If you have a bunch of trash piling up at the curb and somebody is going to take a look in it and find a bunch of empty food packages, they're instantly going to know that you have food while everyone else is starving.

The easiest way to solve the problem is to burn your trash. You've got to be careful about that, though, as burning trash could be a give away in and of itself. However, if you're cooking outside over a fire, there's nothing to say that you can't use your trash to start the fire and burn some more of it as fuel. That will serve two purposes for you; get rid of the trash, and save your stock of fuel.

The same can be done if you're using a fireplace to heat your home. Since you'll be burning wood in it anyway, throwing some packages in there as well won't be a problem. Once again, this can serve to dispose of the trash, while helping provide heat to your home.

If there's no other possibility, then hide your trash in your basement or backyard, being sure to separate edible garbage from trash. The edible garbage can go into a compost heap, eliminating it, which will also help cut down on the stench from storing so much trash.

Appearance of Your Home



If you are in an area that was hit by a hurricane, there will be a lot of damage to homes and other buildings. While there might be a few which avoid any major damage, they will be few and far between. If your home is the only one in the area which doesn't look like it sustained any damage, then it might look suspicious to people passing by. Likewise, if you manage to get it repaired faster than anyone else.

An easy thing that you can do to make your home look more damaged and increase your physical security in other ways, at the same time, is to put plywood over your windows. Some people who live in hurricane prone areas have pre-cut pieces which they can install whenever needed. If you have these, or can make some out of plywood, it will help make your home appear abandoned.

At the same time, those pieces of plywood will prevent anyone from seeing what's going on inside and help keep any light from your lamps indoors. Should anyone decide to attack your home, plywood is fairly hard to break, making it harder for them to come through your windows.

Any gardening for fresh vegetables or livestock you have needs to be hidden in the back yard, preferably behind a [privacy fence](#). If people don't see it, hopefully they won't think it's there.

Noise Discipline

Noise can be another dead giveaway. The average person doesn't realize how much noise they create, just doing everyday chores. That noise will show that your home is occupied. If you want to appear like an abandoned home, you've got to control the noise.

Even besides that, if you're not trying to present the image of being an abandoned home, you still want to watch your noise levels, especially any sounds made by electronic devices.

If you have music playing in your home or your kids are watching a movie on the TV, it can probably

be heard from outside your home. People hearing it will wonder how it is that you have electric power, when they don't.

It's not too much of a leap of imagination from there to wondering what else you might have that they can use.

Kids can be a real problem when it comes to noise discipline. If you have children, especially small ones, you'll need to watch them constantly to keep them quiet. The best way to do this is to keep them busy with tasks that don't make a lot of noise. Get them to help you and your wife around the house as well, making them a part, rather than just leaving them to play.

Activity

You're going to be more physically active in the aftermath of a disaster, than you are today. Just trying to survive is going to keep you and your whole family busy.

Pretty much everything you do will have to be done manually, without the benefit of modern conveniences. That's going to be a lot of hard physical work.

Trying to hide all this activity will be virtually impossible. Even so, there are a few things that you can do to camouflage your actions. More than anything, you can try and make your actions look like those around you. They'll be busy trying to survive as well, so your actions to look like you are trying to survive shouldn't look all that different.

Many things, like going to collect water from a nearby stream or lake will be the same as your neighbors are doing. Here again, you have a great opportunity for cooperation. If you can work together to collect and haul water, then you'll just be part of the group.

You'll also make the job easier for both of you, as you can help each other out. Of course, you'll be the one with the water filtration system, so maybe you can help them out with that, in exchange for them helping you out in other ways.

Keep as much of your survival activity in your house or backyard as you possibly can. That will limit the number of people who can see what you're doing to your immediate family and your immediate neighbors.

Here again you can co-opt them in your plans, by helping them. If they see you working in the backyard, growing vegetables, offer to help them get their garden started too; possibly in exchange for some labor.

Personal Appearance

With food shortages all around you, there's a good chance that people are going to be losing weight. If you're not, this could be another sign that you're in much better shape, supply-wise than anyone else. In a town full of malnutrition, a chubby person is going to stand out like a sore thumb.

Of course, if you're already thin, you're not going to have a problem with this. It's only those who are currently a bit on the heavy side that are going to end up looking a bit strange to others. They might want to go on that diet that they were talking about for years, as part of their OPSEC routine.

In addition to weight, there are other considerations about your appearance that you should keep in mind. Clean clothing, shoes that are in good condition, shaving, haircuts, and nail polish are all things that will stand out like a sore thumb, if nobody else around you has them.

Once again, this is one of those things that's going to get worse with time. At the beginning, everyone will look fairly normal. But as the lack of soap and water make an impact, people will wear their clothes longer, even though they're dirty, wash their hair less frequently, and let their beards grow.

To some extent, you can get away with not looking like everyone else in this case, as long as it is easily explainable to the people around you. If they see you hauling more water than anyone else, they won't have a problem with you wearing clean clothes.

If they see your wife cut your hair, they won't think much of it. As long as there's an explanation, they won't worry about it.

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