

9 Ways To Compromise Your Survival Stockpile

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There are a lot of foolish people in the world today. Sadly, we even find some of them amongst the ranks of preppers. These people are doing what they need to do, in order to be ready for a disaster, but they're not necessarily doing it right. In many cases, they are letting others know what they are doing, or they are doing it in such a way as to not protect their preps.

This became eminently clear to me in the recent spate of hurricanes we've had.

While I don't know any preppers who were caught in those hurricanes, simply examining the devastation caused by them, as part of my typical post-disaster review, showed me a number of weaknesses that could apply to just about anyone's survival stockpile.

But we don't need a disaster to show up, in order for us to find that we've made some major mistakes in how we stockpile for an emergency. Some of these mistakes can show up long before a disaster does.

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A neighbor dropping by or an accident causing supplies to be destroyed is not all that uncommon. So let's look at the various mistakes that many people make, in order to ensure that we don't fall into the trap of becoming foolish preppers ourselves.

Poor OPSEC

The first and most obvious mistake that many people make is [poor OPSEC \(operational security\)](#). More than anything, this means not hiding what they're doing from friends and neighbors. This requires actively thinking about how you will keep people from knowing what you are doing, rather than just thinking they won't know, if you don't tell them.

I guarantee that if you show up at your home some afternoon, with a truckload of food that you picked up at Costco, your neighbors will see it and be curious. Even if they never ask you about it, they'll remember that you buy things in bulk, so when things go bad and they need food, you'll be the first one they'll think of.

Hiding things from neighbors can be very difficult, simply because people are curious and they see what's going on around them. If you have a vegetable garden, they know; likewise for a swimming pool.

Even if they aren't thinking in terms of disaster preparedness, they will remember that those resources are in your backyard. They might even try to tell you that your swimming pool is a great source of water and isn't it fortunate for the neighborhood that you have it.

The best you can do sometimes is to disguise what you are doing or mislead them as to why you are doing it. My neighbors know that I have a wind turbine and solar panels. Those are rather hard to find. But they also know that I'm a retired engineer, who likes to tinker around in my workshop. So, they see those things as signs of my tinkering, nothing more.

Of course, when the power goes out, they might show up at my door with a cell phone to be charged, but at least I've made it harder for them to realize what I'm really doing.

Storing Everything in One Place

If you lived in Southwest Houston when Hurricane Harvey hit and had all your prepping supplies in your home, they would all have been waterlogged by the flooding that the hurricane caused. The same sorts of things can happen with just about any type of natural disaster, from fires to earthquakes.

You should always have multiple caches of supplies, so that if your main stockpile becomes compromised in some way, you'll at least have something to use.

Likewise, you shouldn't keep your whole stockpile in one place in your home. Rather, spread it out some, so that if part of your home becomes damaged in a disaster, you'll still have supplies in other parts of your home. This could also protect you if [the government starts going door to door collecting](#)

[things](#).

Some types of supplies should be spread around for safety as well. If your firewood stockpile is all in one place, then a fire could destroy it all. Likewise, if [you're storing gasoline](#). Not only that; but in both of those cases, destruction of the stockpile would also endanger your home and family.

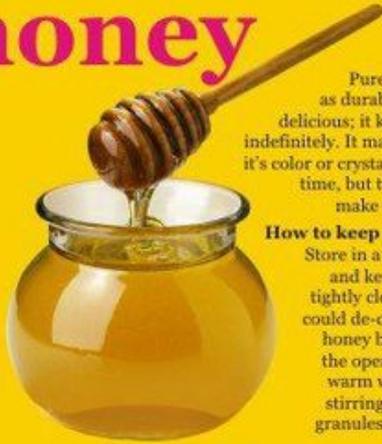
Not Ensuring it is Ready for Long-Term Storage

You have to assume that anything you're storing is going to be in storage for 20 years. While it may not be, making that assumption will help you to avoid making the mistake of not packaging it correctly for long-term storage.

9 Foods That Last Forever!

Do you know that when stored properly and carefully, these everyday items will last for years — sometimes decades — even after they've been opened. And they'll lose very little, if any, of their original quality as time passes. So think twice before throwing away one of these

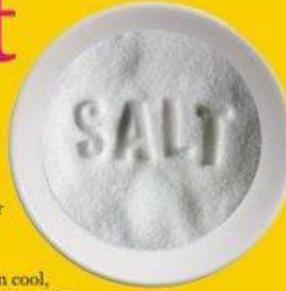
honey



Pure honey is as durable as it is delicious; it keeps safe indefinitely. It may change its color or crystallize over time, but that won't make it unsafe.

How to keep it fresh: Store in a cool area and keep the lid tightly closed. You could de-crystallize honey by placing the opened jar in warm water and stirring until the granules dissolve.

salt



Whether it is the basic salt on your table or the more luxurious, kosher or sea salt, salt is a flavor enhancer that never spoils or goes stale.

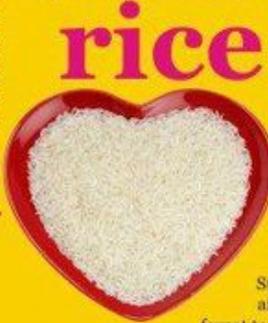
How to keep it fresh: Just store in cool, dry area, away from sunlight.

cornstarch



No sauce, gravy and pudding will have its slow, lazy consistency without cornstarch. It will keep almost indefinitely if it's kept dry and free from contaminants.

How to keep it fresh: Store in cool, dark, dry area and don't forget to pack it tight after each use.



rice

All the white rice varieties like wild, arborio, jasmine and basmati rice, will have an indefinite shelf life, when kept free from contaminants. The only exception is brown rice. Due to its higher oil content, it won't keep nearly as long.

How to keep it fresh: Store in a dry, cool area in an air-tight container, and don't forget to toss a few pest-safe pills, to keep away those tiny insects.

All types of sugar, white, brown or powdered never spoils because it doesn't support bacterial growth. Though it might easily crystallize and become rock-hard.

How to keep it fresh: Besides keeping it in a cool, dry place, also put it in an airtight container or seal it tightly in a heavy-duty plastic bag to prevent crystallizing.



sugar



Your marinades, salad dressings, sauces won't be the same without distilled white vinegar; but don't worry, they are meant to last for a long time.

How to keep it fresh: Best way to store vinegar is tight-capped bottle, placed in a cool, dark area.

hard liquor



Distilled spirits, like vodka, rum, whiskey, gin, tequila don't spoil, even after opening. The taste and aroma may fade gradually, but it'll take ages before you notice.

How to keep it fresh: Store in cool, dark area, away from direct heat or sunlight. Keep bottle tightly closed when not in use.

pure vanilla extract



More expensive and highly precious than its imitation counterpart. But since pure vanilla extract keeps forever, so you'll never have to waste a drop.

How to keep it fresh: Preferably in a cool, dark cupboard and keep tightly closed when not in use.



maple syrup

An all time favorite, pure maple syrup not only makes your pancakes special, it adds tremendous flavor to a whole range of dishes. And the cherry on the top is, that it keeps forever in the freezer!

How to keep it fresh: Refrigerate after opening. For long-term storage, freeze maple syrup in airtight plastic containers.

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We usually think of food when we are saying this, but it doesn't just apply to food. Some things, like gasoline, don't store well. Storing a 55 gallon drum of gasoline isn't going to do you much good, if that drum of gas goes bad or evaporates due to a poor seal. You need to add the necessary additives and make sure that the container is well sealed.

Another simple, but critical part of packaging for long-term storage is labeling. Adhesive labels don't necessary stick for 20 years. In fact, many will fall off in a year or less, especially if the item is stored in a hot or humid area. In those cases, you need to make sure that you're not using a label, but rather writing the contents directly on the container with a permanent marker.

Forgetting to Waterproof

Perhaps the most obvious thing I saw from these hurricanes was [the need to waterproof everything](#). What good is a year's worth of toilet paper going to do you, if it ends up soaked in water? While much of our food stockpile is already in waterproof containers, much of our other supplies aren't. What can you do to make sure that they are properly waterproofed to protect them?

One of the hardest areas to do this is with a pile of firewood. I've got a couple of cords of split firewood in my backyards, stacked in racks. But if it flooded here, that wood would certainly get wet. For that matter, it's not even well protected from the rain.

There's no practical way I can protect all that firewood from the rain or from flooding. But I can take a small quantity of it, say enough for a few days, and store it inside, where it will be protected. If there is flooding and the power goes out, I can then start a fire and stack some of the wet wood near it to dry off.

Leaving Out a Critical Item

There's always something you forget to stockpile, I don't care how long you've been at it. I recently realized that I don't have a boat; any sort of boat. Granted, I don't have much need for a boat, and I have much better things to spend my money on. But I also live in a hurricane zone. So without a boat, I'd end up just like all those other people, sitting on my roof, waiting for someone who has a boat to come by and rescue me. Duh!

This is easily resolved, without spending a fortune. All I need to do is buy an inflatable rubber raft. You can find those for as little as \$100, allowing you to have the means of rescuing yourself, rather than waiting for others to do it for you.

Always be reviewing your stockpile, looking for that critical missing item. You might be surprised when you find out what it is.

Not Protecting from Heat and Cold

Many things are damaged by heat, cold and dampness. Yet the places we tend to put our stockpiles in are either hot, cold or damp. Not a real good combination. We need to think our storage plans thoroughly, taking into consideration the effects of heat, cold and dampness over a long period of time.

Dampness [can cause mold and mildew to grow on things](#), even things like that rubber raft I was just talking about. Should that happen, it would be a very unpleasant ride out on that raft. But heat can damage it as well, if I were to store it in my attic.

So the basement isn't a good place to store it, nor is the attic. I need someplace where I can put it, like the garage, where it won't be damaged by environmental consideration.

Leaving Your Stockpile Unguarded

Probably one of the worst things you can do is to leave a stockpile of supplies somewhere that others can get to it. I think of this, every time I talk about [a survival retreat in the woods](#). Like many, I'd love to have that retreat; but I haven't been able to afford it yet.

Leaving six months worth of food in a cabin in the woods, so that you'll have it there if you have to bug out, sounds like a great idea. But cabins in the woods can usually be broken into fairly easily. If that were to happen, you might show up at your survival retreat, only to find a pile of empty packages, left behind by some bum that was squatting in your cabin.

Ideally, you'll have your supplies someplace where you can keep an eye on it. But if you can't make sure it is extra-secure. If it were me, I'd move a shipping container onto the property, parking it next to or behind my cabin. Rather than stocking my supplies in the cabin, it'd stock them in the container, ready at hand, but well secured against theft.

Prepping in the Wrong Place

This one's a bit controversial, but I don't think that everyone should build their survival stockpile in their home. While I'm a big proponent of bugging in, rather than bugging out, especially for those in the suburbs, rural towns and out in the country, I also recognize that not everyone should bug in.

If you live in the inner city, especially in an apartment building in the inner city, you should probably get out of there fairly quickly before society can break down. No matter how many supplies you have stockpiled, you won't have enough water. What water exists will not meet the needs of everyone there and there is no way that you will be able to harvest water and protect it from being stolen by others.

For people in this sort of situation, I highly recommend finding a survival retreat in the suburbs or some rural town. That's where they should build their stockpile. That way, they can escape from the dangers of the city and get to a place where it will be much easier to survive.

Not Checking Your Stockpile Regularly

Whatever you have stockpiled, whether it is food, ammunition, gasoline or firewood, you should check your supplies regularly. Things left alone tend to deteriorate and you have to assume that your stockpiled supplies can do so as well. Checking them regularly will protect you from the bad surprise of going to look for something and finding that it's not usable.

One way to avoid this problem is to rotate your stock, buying new things and using up the old. Some food items are best stockpiled in this way, as they really don't keep well for more than a year. Gasoline is another thing that should be rotated, as the shelf life of gas is only about six months.

By checking your stockpile regularly, say once a month or so, you can find things that are not packaged well enough or that need to be replaced. That way, you can make use of those items, rather than having them go to waste. You've got too much money invested in your stockpile, to just have things go bad on you. Better to use it and replace it, so that the money isn't wasted.

Checking your stockpile also allows you to check for security problems with things that are stored off-site. As with the survival retreat I was talking about a moment ago, you want to make sure that the supplies that you have cached in other locations are safe from thieves and from destruction.

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Now check your stockpile again and be honest: how many of these mistake do you make?

Would you stockpile be good enough to help you and your family survive?

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