10 Secret Ways To Turn The Panic Room Into A Bunker

Even if you travel to the ends of the Earth to reach the perfect bug out location, or you think you have everything accounted for in a bug in scenario, your survival may depend on the contents and security of a single room.

Some people feel panic rooms are useless, or that escaping is always a better option, but a panic room is really useful until immediate dangers pass.

When used with awareness of the pitfalls of panic rooms and within the context of a comprehensive survival plan, panic rooms can save your life. Here are the right answers that will help you turn your panic room into the safest location on earth.

You Need Safe Entrances and Exits

Some preppers disregard the usefulness of panic rooms because once you go into the room, there is usually no other exit. If someone that intends to cause you harm finds the entrance or manages to break in through some other part of the room, you will have no way to escape.

Is there any way to solve this issue? I think there are some ways you can try to mitigate this problem and still have a panic room located close enough to where you live. Here's what to do:

- Have at least two entrances or exits to the panic room. One should be well hidden in a wall or some other area where it will not be easily found. The other entrance should lead underground or through some other route that would not be easy to follow.
- Both entrances should be booby trapped so that they are

destroyed once you pass through them (use the traps only if you want to prevent others from reaching you.) For example, if you have an entrance behind a closet in your home, set traps so that the building or parts of it near the entrance collapse. Even if someone enters the home looking for you, it may take a few hours, or even a few days before they are able to find the doorway or the panic room. If you must exit the panic room by the second doorway, make sure that no one can follow you by setting the entire room to collapse.

- If you are escaping through an underground tunnel, or moving from tunnels, through crawlspaces, or other unusual routes, do not forget to booby trap them as well. Remember, you won't be trying to go back along the way you came, but you may need to slow attackers down as they pursue you.
- City dwellers and others that rely on building shafts or underground tunnels should travel through these areas at least 3 – 4 times a year. Make as many diverse routes and maps as possible, plus be aware of all risks associated with being or surfacing in certain areas.

Get Electronic and Manual Surveillance

If you are going to box yourself and your loved ones into a room, you still need to know what is going on in the world around you. Cameras and surveillance equipment may seem important, however, they can fail at the wrong moment, be tapped into by adversaries, or even alert others to the fact you may be hiding somewhere nearby.

That'why, before purchasing and setting up these devices, always make sure that you know what their vulnerabilities are, and whether or not you can get around them.

Rather than rely solely on electronic surveillance equipment, consider some manual methods that can be used regardless of the situation. When building your panic room, look into

different natural acoustic systems that will enable you to pick up different sounds around you without revealing your presence.

Use these listening posts in combination with dogs, insects, or other animals that will either make noise, or stop making noise when someone else is around. You can also use mirrors set at different angles to see further into nearby rooms that are located near the entrance of your panic room.

Don’t Forget About Secure Communications

Great care must be taken when choosing communications equipment for the panic room. Not every situation will be one in which you don’t want others to find you.

For example, if there is a tornado or other natural disaster, you’ll need to be able to call out to rescue teams or anyone else that can get to you, so keep a cell phone with you, and also a ham radio.

When setting up the panic room, make sure that you can get a signal out so that you can call for help. Or you can install phone lines and other communication lines in such a way that they won’t be destroyed in a disaster scenario.

Considering the way the world is going these days, there may be times when you need to reach out to other survivors without drawing attention from rioters or others that might harm you.

In these cases, cell phone, radio, and most other signals can lead attackers right to you, so you could try using trained carrier pigeons or other animals that can be relied on to deliver messages. It will take more time than you like, but it may be better than doing nothing at all.

Depending on the distances involved, spark gap generators combined with unique codes similar to Morse Code may be of use. If there are other survivors that may take to panic

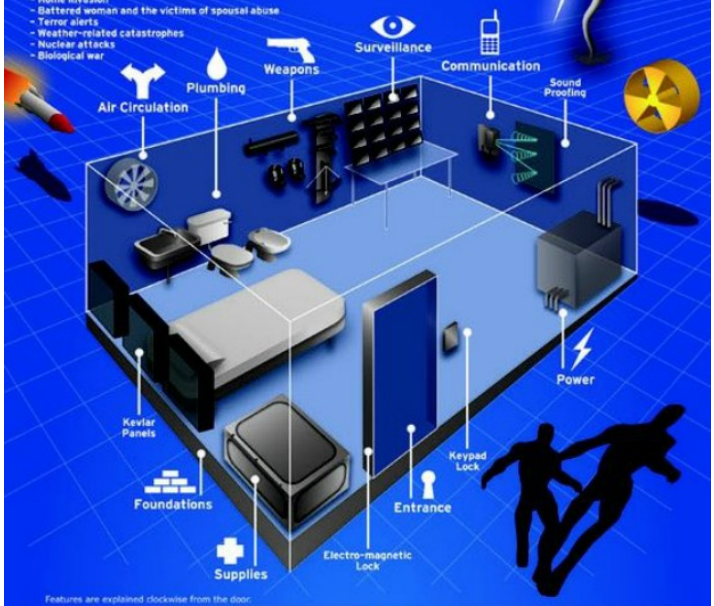
rooms in your local area, you can set up acoustic pathways between buildings or along underground paths that can be used to transmit tapping or banging sounds.

Trained animals may pick up these sounds at greater distances and be used to draw other survivors to a place where they can better hear the signals being sent. Just remember that prospective attackers may also have trained animals available to pick up sounds. This is why working out a unique code that is only known to those you trust is very important.

HOW TO BUILD A PANIC ROOM

REASONS TO HAVE A PANIC ROOM:

- Home invasion
- Battered woman and the victims of spousal abuse
- Terror alerts
- Weather-related catastrophes
- Nuclear attacks
- Biological war



Features are explained clockwise from the door.

Entrance, Keypad Lock & Electro-magnetic Lock

Door reinforcements are critical. This could be a steel door with mortise locks built into it. Steel hinges, bolts and door jambs make the door less able to be kicked in. The door lock could feature interior deadbolts, combination keypads or retinal or fingerprint scanning devices. Electro-magnetic locks bond the door and frame together.

Supplies

Supplies such as food, water and first aid equipment help occupants survive an attack. Some panic rooms even include items like chemical wash basins and gas masks.

Foundations & Kevlar Panels

The ground floor offers the best protection against natural catastrophes such as tornadoes and hurricanes. Concrete floors are the ideal foundation which provides a stable base for blast proof Kevlar panels and a steel ceiling with optional Kevlar panels. A plywood reinforced closet can provide a storm shelter but won't give protection from invaders.

Air Circulation

Expensive panic rooms are air tight with temperature and humidity control. They may have air-filtration systems to protect from biohazards. Some panic rooms may include oxygen masks and dummy vents to throw off invaders.

Plumbing

Basic plumbing is simply a portable toilet but a separate plumbing system and septic tank can be installed. A gallon of water per day is recommend for each occupant.

Weapons

Weapons can range from pepper sprays to a gun for each occupant. High voltage stun devices can be installed under the carpet in case an intruder gets in.

Surveillance

Not all panic rooms have surveillance, but a typical panic room will have moniters connected to hidden cameras. Heat-sensing cameras can also be used for night attacks.

Communication

A cell phone or ham radio is recommended inside the panic room. If the panic room is too reinforced for a cell phone, a phone line could be buried or an intercom or alarm button directly connected to a police or secutiy team.

Sound Proofing

If the panic room is sound proofed, this will prevent intruders hearing your conversations.

Power

Self contained generators power most panic rooms, but good ventilation is needed to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning. Battery powered or hand-cranked lights and phones may be enough.

Panic Room Costs

Construction of a high-end panic room typically starts at $50,000 and can reach beyond $500,000, depending on amenities. On the low end, converting a closet orextra room into a panic room usually starts around $3,000.

Plywood reinforcements for a closet cost about $2,500.

Bullet-resistant electronic doors start at $22,000

Adding bullet-resistant Kevlar, a dedicated phone line, backup generator and keyless entry to an existing room can cost $40,000 to $60,000.

Add another $3,000 to $10,000 if it's professionally designed.

Panic Room Supplies

- Non-perishable food
- Safe water supply
- First aid kit with necessary medications
- Flashlights and extra batteries
- Battery-powered radio and extra batteries
- Clothes
- Sanitation supplies
- Important documents
- Extra pair of glasses
- Blankets
- Credit cards and cash
- A roll of duct tape
- Potassium-iodine tablets (to prevent radiation sickness)

TIMELINE

1600s
"Priest holes", were designed to hide Catholic priests, when persecution was at its height in England.

1800s
Underground Railroad, USA, when secret rooms hid escaping slaves.

1920s
Hidden rooms stashed Prohibition-banned booze.

1930s
Safe rooms for weather protection have their origins in storm cellars (remember Dorothy in The Wizard of Oz).

1960s
Fallout shelters, which were created in response to the fear of nuclear attacks.

1970s
The modern residential panic rooms began appearing on the West Coast.

Present Day
Modern panic rooms are increasing in popularity among those desiring security in a post-Sept. 11, post-Katrina and post-Enron world.

Sources: bankrate.com, howstuffworks.com

Developed by
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Basic Daily Living Need Supplies to Store

Food, water, hygiene products, medications, first aid kits, clothing, and other basic items are important to be stored in your panic room. Since you may be staying in for days, weeks, or even months, there are some other things that could help you survive:

- Blankets and other equipment that you can use to keep warm or cool off
- Weapons for your defense
- Verified safe mushroom starter kits for mushrooms that will mature in just a few days or weeks, and seeds for sprout gardens
- Insect farms and necessary eggs for growing and maintaining successful colonies
- Lighting and soil sufficient for growing key herbs that can be used to manage medical and first aid needs.
- Zeer pots and ice/salt chests that can be used for refrigeration. You might be preparing most of your foods from fresh sources, and you'll need at least some refrigeration onhand.
- Printed reference or "how to" materials that can be used to help you manage different needs while in the panic room. Since modern computers and cell phones all contain tracking chips, keep them off and with the power source (including backup batteries) disconnected to protect your location. Rely on printed materials as opposed to looking them up on an electronic device.
- Fire starting and other basic emergency gear that you can take with you if you have to leave the panic room. Try to fit everything into a single "bug in" bag so that you can live mainly from that bag and travel at a moment's notice.
- Simple hand tools such as screw drivers, hammers, nails, wrenches, measuring tapes, sewing kits, wrenches, crowbar, ax, and saws, and maybe goggles, ear plugs, and

dust masks. You probably won’t be doing much with these tools while you are in the panic room, but they might become useful if you have to plan your way out.

Is It Secure From Information Gathering Methods?

One of the most important things about a panic room is that it must be difficult, if not impossible to detect. Unfortunately, most people stop at sound proofing and do not consider other technologies that can be used to find panic rooms above and below ground. Since this technology is always changing, do you research to figure out how to best secure the room.

For example, not so long ago, an underground bunker or panic room was considered best because few things could detect the outline of the room or what was inside. Today, ground penetrating radars can easily reveal the location of a panic room and also the exact location of the exits.

If you decide to have the panic room above ground, be aware that there are now systems that can “see” inside houses and reveal the presence of guns, people, and anything else of interest. Make sure that the room will not reveal itself on thermal imaging sweeps as well as ones designed to pick up different kinds of objects within a location.

In just about every case, the way things are distributed through the room will be a key factor. For example, if you have water stored in the panic room, break up the locations so that the box-like shape of the cases doesn’t register. Always try to make everything either look like a natural formation (for the setting in question) or so small that a single item would be mistaken for some kind of debris or simply seem to belong there.

Make the size and shape of the room as irregular as possible. For underground panic rooms, study how underground caves and caverns look. Think about how entrances, exits, and tunnels can be disguised so that even if they are detected with

various kinds of equipment, they will be overlooked.

If the panic room is located in a wall or some other part of a building, make it look like a space that no person would be living or hiding in. If necessary, store your caches of equipment in different areas that you can get to easily enough. Make sure that all paths between caches are also protected from different kinds of surveillance equipment.

Choose Walls, Floors, Ceilings, and Doors that Cannot Be Breached

Do you fear the panic room won't resist? Here are just a few things that the walls of a panic room must be able to withstand:

- Bullets, grenades, or any other propelled munition – sand bags, earth, and thick layers of cement may be your cheapest and best options.
- Nuclear radiation – earth and water will be your two cheapest options. While lead can also stop nuclear radiation, it takes very thick walls to be useful.
- Electrical discharges or EMP waves – surround the room with a Faraday cage. Contrary to popular belief, underground rooms can also be susceptible to electricity. When hunting for earthworms, all you have to do is stick electrodes in moist ground, and the electricity will cause them to surface. If someone is determined to harm you or drive you from the panic room, consider that they may decide to use high voltage.
- Flooding – in a natural disaster or some other situation, flooding may be the biggest threat to your safety. Make sure the room is waterproof and can also withstand large amounts of water flowing around it.
- Mechanical force – no matter whether your panic room is in a building or underground, earthquakes, bombs, or other powerful mechanical forces can easily cause everything around you to crumble. The panic room needs

to be well fortified so that the walls, ceiling, and floors do not give way. If at all possible, try to make the outer area of the room somewhat egg shaped and not tethered to anything around it. At the very least, if something comes crashing down or around the panic room, it may be pushed out of the way instead of absorbing the entire crash. You can also use extended walls as energy absorbers much like the way crumple zones are used to absorb the force of a crash in modern cars.

- Temperature fluctuations – when you are stuck in a room with no place to go, it may be harder than expected to control the temperature. Choose materials that insulate well so that you need as little fuel as possible to change the temperature. Together with that, at least the inner layers of the panic room walls, ceiling, and floors should be able to disperse humidity that gathers up in the room. You may want to keep the humidity in the room and condense it to form water, or let it escape through an intermediary layer in the wall system. Aside from being very uncomfortable, excess humidity can also lead to the buildup of mold, mildew, and algae. Making sure the walls can vent properly is very important if you wish to stay healthy while in the panic room.

Capacity to Renew and Recycle

One of the most important, but overlooked part of panic rooms is the capacity to renew and recycle everything that is used or produced in the room. Water, food, and medicine usually run out sooner than later.

You must be able to grow your own foods, produce herbal medicines, and produce water. As icky as it may sound, that means you will need to be able to recycle urine and feces as opposed to simply looking for ways to dispose of it.

Learn about different composting systems and also water purification methods, which includes making sure that you know

how to eliminate pathogens, and also work safely with waste materials. If at all possible, put an annex onto the panic room where you can take care of these matters. Some other things you should be able to do in the panic room include:

- create compost from cooking waste and scraps
- make paper from scraps and bits
- use tin cans, plastic bottles, or anything else found in the room to your advantage.

Power and Lighting

If you build your panic room to be as secure as possible, chances are there won't be any windows, so you will need a secure and renewable source of lighting that does not include making fires. Here are some things you can try:

- Generate electricity using exercise equipment, body motion gear, and gravity fans.
- Know how to use tin foil and other reflectors to concentrate light so that you can grow a larger range of plants.
- Keep LED bulbs on hand and make sure that you have the proper sockets and power supply boards for them.
- Make sure that everything in the room can run on 9 volts or less. You should also know how to make earth batteries and other low-tech batteries

If you can make light and mirror tunnels, maybe you can get light from the outside into the panic room. Remember that even one small mirror or what looks like an air or access shaft can give away your presence or allow toxic fumes, pathogens, or other dangerous materials into the panic room.

No matter how secure you feel about your store of flashlights and batteries, make sure that you can improvise every single part of a lighting system from within the panic room. Light is absolutely essential for plant growth, and also for carrying out many daily activities.

Along with electricity, you may need some other fuels for cooking and keeping the room at a comfortable temperature.

You Need Air Purification

No matter how large or small the room is, you must be able to renew oxygen levels in the room, otherwise you will suffocate. Use multiple methods so that if one fails, you have another means to achieve this goal:

- Choose plants that absorb carbon dioxide and release oxygen regardless of whether it is day or night.
- Use a combination of ventilation shafts and filters so that you can remove contaminants from air that will be released into the room. You can study the filters used in biohazard, nuclear, chemical hazard, and dust respirators to see which materials to use in the air purification system. Since many of these materials need to be replaced on a routine basis, you should either know how to recharge the materials or make replacements from scratch
- Keep chemicals on hand that will release oxygen when mixed. This would be an emergency system that may give you a few extra hours while you repair other systems or prepare to exit the room.

Remember that oxygen concentrators do not produce oxygen. Rather, they take oxygen from the air and deliver it through narrow tubes so that more reaches the person in need of extra oxygen. In an airtight panic room, an oxygen concentrator will not be of use unless it can actually produce more oxygen, and then release it into the room.

It Has to Be Defendable

The basic idea of a panic room is that you will be safe from anyone that might try to harm you. On the other side of the equation, thousands of people that have hidden out in panic rooms have been captured or died because the location of the

room was discovered.

As a last ditch resort, you should have some kind of weapons on hand so that you can stave off attackers long enough to escape, or take out as many as possible before they capture or kill you. You will also need weapons that can be used once you leave the panic room. Here are some things that may be of use:

Since the panic room is going to be fairly tight and cramped, you will need to lead intruders to kill zones where you either have traps set up, or where you can attack with ease.

A low caliber handgun may be more useful than a rifle or other gun with more stopping power. Remember that if the walls, doors, ceiling, and roof are well fortified, bullets are also likely to ricochet off them. You can try building in a bullet absorbing layer, however lower caliber rounds may still be your best option.

Have bullet proof helmets, vests, and other gear for you and everyone else in the room. If you do have to shoot, or you wind up being shot at, this gear may keep you from getting killed. If you are hit while wearing bullet proof gear, you can expect bruises, broken bones, and other injuries.

Swords, knives, spears, bow and arrow, slingshots, monkey fists, axes, poison darts and other hand combat weapons may be of use. Be sure to carefully study different kinds of bullet proof and weapon proofing gear so that you can get through any kind of armor with your weapons.

Depending on your outlook, you may also want to rig the panic room up so that it will blow up and take everyone with it. As a last resort, if you cannot escape, and do not want to be captured, this may be your last and final option.

A number of things must be carefully considered when building a panic room, where you can recover, regroup, and gather

strength after a major disaster. A panic room can also be a serious liability if you do not prepare for all the problems that can occur. From mold build up on the walls to cell phone signals revealing your location, even the most minute details can spell disaster.

If you do decide to build a panic room, try living in it for hours, days, weeks, and months. Once you know that you can live in the room for extended periods of time, and escape if needed, the room will truly be a key survival asset instead of just providing a false sense of security.

This article has been written by ***Carmela Tyrell*** *for Survivopedia.*