

11 Common Mistakes To Avoid When Moving Off-Grid

I don't know about you, but I would love to own about 25 acres of land in the middle of nowhere and live solely on what I develop from the land itself.

The sad fact is, most of people caught in a crisis will either live in bands of scavengers or wind up dead.

Even those fortunate enough to live on a homestead or in a dedicated survival group are apt to find themselves being attacked by anyone desperate enough to try and steal from them.

If you can afford to purchase land and live off grid, it offers a better standard of living and added peace and comfort in a time when just about everything else is falling apart. If you intend to succeed at moving off grid, there are 10 mistakes you must avoid at all cost.

Not Accounting for Weather Conditions and Radiation Threats

Even though you may rarely hear about nuclear events, there are ongoing situations like Fukushima, as well as potential ones that can make your homestead as dangerous as it is worthless.

For example, if you purchase or have land in California or anywhere along the western coast of the United States, including Canada, ionized radiation from Fukushima is more than likely contaminating the land, air, and water already.

While it may not seem like much now, or at "low levels", the fact remains that the leak at the Fukushima reactors is still

releasing radioactive waste into the ocean, and the currents are still bringing that radiation to the western shore of the United States.

Aside from Fukushima, every location within 100 miles of a nuclear power plant or nuclear waste facility should be avoided at all cost. If there is a major waterway such as a river that connects one nuclear area to within 100 miles of your planned homestead site, it is best to avoid the area or consider how you will best escape problems caused by nuclear contamination.

Earthquakes, floods, hurricanes, tornadoes, and droughts are all becoming more common. Make sure that you pay careful attention to how the weather patterns are changing. It does not matter what the media says is causing these changes or what they say they mean.

All that matters is you pick a safe location or know how to handle changing weather patterns in the area that you choose.

Not Having a Means of Income

Taxes, emergencies, and adapting to an off grid life can all cost a good bit of money. Even if you can meet basic needs from the land itself, it never hurts to have enough contact with the rest of the world so that you can make some money.

Together with this, you also need to diversify your currency stockpile. While cryptocurrencies such as Bitcoin can be very dangerous, it may still come in handy to have some money in this form of currency.

Just make sure that you never put so much into these currencies that it will cause problems if the currency fails.

THE TRUE STARTUP COST OF

GOING OFF THE GRID

Here are some helpful considerations for a family of 4, dreaming of building a new house/home off the grid in a rural area.



ELECTRICITY

HOW MUCH ENERGY WILL THIS SOLAR POWERED SYSTEM PRODUCE?

- 7 kWh/day IN ARID ENVIRONMENTS LIKE THE SOUTHWEST
- 6.5 kWh/day SUNNY ENVIRONMENTS LIKE COLORADO
- 5 kWh/day IN THE CLOUDIER, NORTHEASTERN STATES

YOU CAN CONSUME 1 KWH IN 5 HOURS WITH A LARGE TV

REPLACING 60 WATT INCANDESCENT BULBS WITH 15 WATT FLUORESCENT BULBS REDUCES ELECTRICITY USE BY 75%.

SOLAR

24- HOUR SYSTEM

- 6x220-watt solar panels with a pole mounting system (includes the pole)
- an Outback custom power center built around a 3,000-watt sine-wave inverter
- a 60 amp MPPT charge controller
- 8 x Trojan L-16 batteries

PROFESSIONAL FEES: \$14,000

BATTERY OPERATOR: +\$20,000

BACKUP OPERATOR: +\$4,000

= \$38,000*

Costs for solar panels have decreased by 50% since 2011.

WATER

WELL & SEPTIC

WELL: \$7,000

SEPTIC SYSTEM: \$5,000

= \$12,000*

GREYWATER SYSTEM

cost varies

WATER FROM LAUNDRY, DISH WASHING, SHOWERS AND BATHS THAT CAN BE TREATED AND REUSED FOR IRRIGATION, WASHING OR TOILET FLUSHING WATER.

WATERLESS COMPOSTING TOILETS

\$1,000 - \$2,000

BLACKWATER - CONTAINS FECEAL MATTER AND URINE AND MUST BE DEALT WITH SEPARATELY. WATERLESS COMPOSTING TOILETS CAN BE USED TO AVOID BLACKWATER ALTOGETHER.

HEAT

PROPANE

For water heating - looking south the

PROPANE

WOOD for winter heat

WOOD STOVE

- purchase cost and installation: \$3700
- Wood for the first year: The wood stove supplies 20% of heating in winter only. +\$300

= \$4,000*

ADDITIONAL WINTER HEATING FUELLED BY WOOD STOVE

UNDERFLOOR HOT WATER HEATING ON MAIN FLOOR OF HOME

\$10 - \$20* PER SQUARE FOOT

TOTAL COST FOR GOING OFF THE GRID

= \$69,400*

ADDITIONAL STARTUP CONSIDERATIONS

- EFFICIENT OFF THE GRID APPLIANCES
- A PASSIVE SOLAR WATER HEATER
- EFFECTIVE INSULATION AND/OR HEAT BARRIER IN YOUR ATTIC
- WELL SEALED DOORS AND WINDOWS

IF YOU WANT TO START AN OFF THE GRID FARM YOU MAY WANT TO CONSIDER NUCLEAR POWER

45 MW OF ELECTRICAL POWER. ECONOMICAL, RELIABLE AND CARBON-FREE POWER FOR SMALL OPERATIONS.

NUCLEAR POWER

\$30+ million*

CAUTION: MODULES CAN'T BEGIN GENERATING POWER UNTIL 3 YEARS AFTER START OF SAFETY-RELATED CONSTRUCTION.

IF OFF THE GRID ISN'T YOUR THING, YOU CAN ALWAYS CONNECT "TO THE GRID"

IN TOWN IT ONLY COSTS \$3,000 TO CONNECT TO UTILITIES.

1/4 MILE TO THE NEAREST POLE IT COSTS \$12,000 TO RUN POWER TO YOUR SITE.

ONCE OFF THE GRID, YOU'LL START SAVING MONEY

40 YEARS OF SAVINGS FOR ELECTRICITY ALONE

20 kWh/day @ 12¢ kWh** = **\$35,000**

FOR POWER YOU WON'T BE BUYING

AMERICAN RECOVERY AND REINVESTMENT ACT OF 2009: DEDUCT 30% OF YOUR TOTAL SYSTEM COST SYSTEM UPGRADES FROM THE BOTTOM LINE OF YOUR TAX RETURN, SAVING YOU UPFRONT COST!

THE LONG TERM GAINS OF GOING OFF THE GRID CAN BE CAPITALIZED IF YOU ARE WILLING TO SIMPLIFY LIFE AND NEEDS.

*All costs are estimated. Actual cost varies depending on various factors. **National average.

SOURCE: <http://www.kurby.com/article/How-much-does-a-propane-tank-cost-id1970>, <http://www.energyalternatives.ca/PDF/Micro-Hydro-power%20systems%20-%202009.pdf>, <http://www.microwatercenter.com/waternews/energy>, <http://www.offgridheat.co.uk/faq.asp>, <http://www.diy.com/2010/09/15/wood-stove/>, <http://www.cabarruscountync.gov/development/energy>, <http://www.microwatercenter.com/waternews/energy>, <http://www.off-grid.com/cost-you>, <http://www.composttoilet.com/%20the-real-cost-of-going-off-grid/>, <http://woodstove.com/woodstove.html>, <http://www.examiner.com/article/considerations-for-an-off-grid-lifestyle>, <http://like.gaan.com/article/what-a-going-cost-me-go-solar>

Lack of Experience with Growing Food Underground

If there is one common factor in all ultimate survival shelters and homesteads, building underground is it. Not only will an underground shelter protect you from nuclear radiation, it can also shield you from just about everything except earthquakes. When built correctly, an underground homestead can last for generations and remain in good condition.

The lack of light and free moving air underground can be fatal. If you do not have sufficient experience with growing foods and herbal remedies underground, then you will need to gain these skills as well as make sure that you can repair or replace every part of the lighting system used to grow plants.

Make sure that you also have a good grounding in disease management.

[This old forgotten secrets helped our parents survive!](#)

Inability to Generate Power or Communicate

Today, far too many people think that they can follow the traditions of the Amish or other groups that have never become accustomed to electricity and petroleum based fuels.

While these people do have some valid ideas about many important areas of off grid living, they do not know how to manage the kinds of waste that exist in the world today. Without electricity, it will be harder than you expect to deal with environmental toxins.

Because we have become a “global economy”, and a “global human environment”, what happens in one part of the world cannot be

ignored. You will still need radios and other communications systems so that you can find out about larger scale threats and then find ways to manage them as the situation develops.

No matter how much you may want to think you can make it in the world alone, the fact remains just as many others may have the same idea. Unless you know where they are and what they are doing, you will be in very serious danger of building a false utopia that will crash around your ears.

At the very least, make sure that you know how to generate electricity underground and using solar and wind based methods.

You should also know how to build a foxhole radio and a spark gap transmitter. It is also very important to know how to build electronic communications devices with or without solid state technologies.

Lack of Knowledge and Ability to Manage Sanitation Issues

Chances are, if you have been doing your research on prepping and off grid issues, then you already know that poor sanitation can lead to serious disease outbreaks.

While a composting toilet may seem very useful, you must still consider what to do with bathing water, kitchen garbage, disposal of old paint or other chemicals, and managing nuisance insects if you are not able manage sanitation properly. In addition, if you decide to build a septic system, then you will still have to pump out the tank or find some other way to manage this aspect of sanitation.

Overall, you should focus on systems that recycle as much as possible without the use of dangerous or toxic chemicals. Always remember that the land you have is all that you have. If you ruin it, there won't be a way to replace it, and there

may not be a way to fix the problem.

You can try composting toilets, compost generators for kitchen waste, and conversion of other waste into some kind of fuel.

For more ideas on other kinds of waste, look to Sweden, where less than 1% of household waste winds up in landfills. Reducing your reliance on the local rubbish company is also something you can start doing now.

As you become more proficient in this area, you will have at least one part of your off grid skills in good order.

Lack of Medical Knowledge and Skills

Considering the rampant and continuous scandal around modern health care, it should come as no surprise that people are becoming more nervous about every aspect of treating diseases. While there are some parts of modern medicine that are valuable and cannot be replaced or duplicated, there are still some very important things you can do for yourself.

Perhaps most important, as an off gridder, you will need to understand and take advantage of the relationship between good health and lifestyle choices.

While your “national pride” may say have another hot dog that may have human remains in it, or your mouth may water for cheeses and meat filled with pesticide and antibiotics, in the end these decisions can cost your life and your well being.

By the same token, not getting enough exercise, not paying attention to air quality, smoking, drinking alcohol in excess, and using “recreational drugs” will all take a toll on your well being.

If you are going to live off grid, you won't have the time to

deal with health problems from these choices let alone live comfortably.

It is also very important to educate yourself as much as possible about emergency medicine, herbal remedies, and any side effects that may come from the drugs you are using right now.

Do what you can to use holistic methods and lifestyle improvements. Aside from learning a lot about how your body works, you may also gain enough improvement to reduce your reliance on drugs that will eventually stop working or cause more harm than expected to organs outside of the system being treated.

Lack of Self and Property Defense Equipment and Skills

I must admit there are definitely days when I wish I could go live on a few acres of land and never need to worry about all the crime and other hazards that come with living in a more populated setting. Quite frankly, believing that safety will automatically come when you isolate from others is a huge mistake.

Among other things, you may have to deal with criminals passing through the area looking to hide out, as well as others looking to commit some kind of crime. Unless you can defend yourself and your property even in these times, there is every chance you will wind up dead.

Inability to Store and Prepare Foods

As simple and obvious as it may sound, many people that plan to live off grid don't know how to store and prepare foods.

For example, many people think canning is easy because they see many recipes online, and the standard supplies are available in the department store each fall.

The truth is, canning takes a good bit of practice and skill. You must carefully time the water baths, and also know how to manage the hot bottles at the precise moment when they are ready to be sealed down.

Unfortunately, as with many other areas of off gridding, there is a lot of wrong and outright unsafe information around. While you can give things like oven canning, dehydration, and vacuum sealing a try, it is still best to know how to smoke and dry foods.

It is also very important to make sure you have an effective and efficient food inventory system so that you don't wind up eating something that is too old and may have become contaminated because of improper storage. This is especially important to consider if you are planning to use oxygen absorbers or other systems that will lead to different kinds of bacterial growth.

Perhaps it can be said that you would be better off taking a risk of a discernible mold or fungus growing rather than a deadly botulism strain that won't be as easy to pick up on.

Inability to Obtain and Purify Water

People that go camping or spend a lot of time outdoors may think they know all there is to know about obtaining and purifying water. While there are many valid methods for both tasks, the fact remains modern "potable" water supplies are incredibly dangerous.

Aside from medications, fluoride, and nuclear waste being found in most surface level water, heavy metal contamination

is also a serious problem. In fact, unless you go down to the south pole and melt off some glacier ice, chances are you don't have access to clean, let alone safe water.

For some people, the short answer is to distill all water used for drinking and cooking. Even though distilling will get rid of pathogens and most chemicals, it will not get rid of tritium.

In addition, drinking distilled water over weeks or months increases your risk of electrolyte and mineral depletion. Therefore, you will need to know how to compensate for this loss using foods and other beverages.

Today, many people also give very little thought to the safety and cleanliness of the water they wash with. Many chemicals can be absorbed by the skin, or wind up being absorbed through mucus membranes.

It may take a lot more work to purify all water that you use for bathing and washing, however it will be well worth the effort in the long run.

Inability to Make Clothes

Even if you normally go to the goodwill store for second hand clothes, chances are you have more garments than you know what to do with.

When you have to tend your own farm, or carry out a lot of intensive physical labor chores, your garments are bound to wear out much faster. To add insult to injury, the detergents you use to wash your garments can also spell disaster. Sadly, there are many recipes online for "natural laundry detergent" that can actually ruin your clothes in a very short period of time.

The best thing you can do to solve this problem is make sure that you know how to make your own clothes from the ground up.

Learn how to grow cotton, shear sheep, and spin these fibers into fabric or yarn.

At the very least, even if you do make a mistake on washing and garment care, or your clothes get ruined for some other reason, you will be able to make new ones.

There is no question that off grid living comes with many rewards and opportunities. If you are going to live comfortably and peacefully, however, there are a number of common mistakes that you need to avoid. Take the time to learn and practice as many skills as possible so that you are ready for any situation that comes up. Even if you wind up needing to rely on goods and services for a short period of time, make it your business to learn what you need to know so that you don't wind up having to look to others because of repeated failures.



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This article has been written by Carmela Tyrell for Survivopedia.