

# Improvised Fallout Shelter Tips

*The world came terrifyingly close to nuclear war on several occasions during the Cold War.*

- In 1962, a black bear climbing a fence at a military base during the Cuban Missile Crisis caused the U.S.A. to scramble planes armed with nuclear weapons, their pilots believing WWII had begun.
- In 1995, Yeltsin activated his nuclear briefcase in response to a scientific rocket launch that they had been advised of a month earlier.
- In 1994, an attempted coup in Russia resulted in coup leaders gaining possession of all three of Gorbachev's nuclear briefcases containing launch codes until he was able to regain control.

All told, there have been at least 22 high pucker factor nuclear close calls so far. Today, China is building a nuclear arsenal, building artificial islands and claiming the waters around them, and has publicly declared its intention to invade Taiwan. China has also made clear its intent to use nuclear weapons against the U.S.A. in a HEMP attack when we defend Taiwan, which multiple presidents have assured the world we will do when China attacks.

This time around, the world is much more complicated, and therefore much more fragile, than it was during the Cold War. There are exponentially more cheap semi-conductors to potentially fail and usher in nuclear Armageddon.

In response, the current administration appears to be asleep at the wheel. In 2013, Obama became the first POTUS to allow Russia to surpass the U.S. in nuclear strength for the first time in 40 years. As I write this, Biden is allowing China to build a suite of modern nuclear weapons at a rapid pace.

Your government has gone to great length to preserve itself against nuclear attack, but has done virtually nothing to protect you, the American citizen. Our communist, and formerly communist, enemies, built [fallout shelters](#) to protect their citizens. Russians living in Moscow could take shelter in the subways in a nuclear attack as some of the stations have been fitted with “tight gates and life-sustenance systems to function as proper nuclear shelters.” You need not bother looking for a [list of public fallout shelters in the U.S.A.](#) You’re on your own.

What can you do about it? It’s not the 50’s anymore. There are no more cheap home homes, cheaper cars, and lucrative life-long careers virtually guaranteed upon graduation from college. Today the average American has less than \$1,000 in savings and lives paycheck to paycheck.

If that’s you, do not despair. If you can lay hands on a shovel, sandbags, and dirt, you can improve your chances of surviving the nuclear fallout that would cause most deaths in the immediate aftermath of a nuclear attack on the U.S..

Most people would die from radiation exposure from fallout, not the blasts themselves. If there is warning of impending attack, or in the hours or days immediately following an attack, but before fallout arrives on the wind, that’s time that people could be constructing simple shelters or improving what meager fallout protection most structures offer.



**US Nuclear Target Map.  
Do You Live In The Death  
Zone?**

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Most people won’t know what to do. If you decide on a plan for

a simple shelter or improvements and stockpile the needed tools and supplies then you may very well be able to protect your family. Don't worry that the protection is imperfect. People have survived nuclear lethal levels of fallout and even nuclear blast, with imperfect protection.

## DIY Fallout Shelters

If you own your home, consider building a [fallout shelter](#).

A fallout shelter need not be a prefabricated bunker and air filtration is not the priority in a nuclear attack. Simple fallout shelters don't have to be expensive or require much in the way of construction skills to build.

Fallout particles are radioactive material that gets lofted into the atmosphere by a nuclear blast and falls back to earth as soot, dust, or sooty rain. Size varies, but the largest, heaviest, and most dangerous fallout particles will fall to earth nearer to ground zero and will fall within hours.

It is necessary to take shelter from these heavier concentrations of fallout. Finer particles may be microscopic in size and will take longer to fall to earth, but they will be greatly diminished in potency by the time they are deposited. These finer particles can stick to parts of the body where sweat accumulates or can accumulate in the lungs, but they are the least dangerous fallout particles.

There are several shelter designs in Nuclear War Survival Skills by Cresson Kearney that can be built by two people in a day or two, even if they are not athletic, for just a few hundred dollars in materials.

If it is a full-scale attack, the bad news is, that, provided you survive the blasts (most people will), fallout could cover most of the USA within about 12 hours. The good news is, that, fallout is survivable, and you can fill a lot of sandbags in a couple of hours.

Many people will leave their shelters too early because of ignorance or curiosity. Many others will leave in search of medicine, fuel, water, food or information, and their illnesses or deaths will have been preventable.

Most Americans have a 50% of being at home, a 25% chance of being at work and a 25% chance of being somewhere else. Understanding this, it is important to have a stocked shelter at home, at work if possible, and to locate sites with shelter potential near places you and members of your family spend time.

## **Expedient Fallout Shelters**

If you can't build a fallout shelter and there is no place nearby that provides adequate shelter (think subway station, cave, or mine), because, for example, you rent an apartment, then create a plan to build or improve your existing shelter and identify sources of building materials to improvise a fallout shelter by placing as much material as possible between the people inside and the fallout outside.

Even if you live in a three-story building, with the ground floor partially protected by meters of packed earth, as one survivalist couple I consulted did, you might still be able to store gloves, shovels, a pick, a wheelbarrow, hammers, boards, lathe, nails, sheet plastic, and sandbags to improve protection to the ground floor (with the help of neighbors), so residents could double or triple up until the danger passed or they were relocated to a safer area.

Once citizens hear that nuclear attack is likely you can get ready by filling sandbags and pre-positioning them in a pickup bed, garage, or anywhere you can. Once they have heard attack is imminent or has begun, you may find that at least one of your neighbors on the ground floor is suddenly cooperative and very glad to learn that you have prepared a plan and stored the tools and materials to execute it. With any luck, you'll

be able to complete the improvements before fallout arrives on the wind.

Boarding up windows not needed for ventilation and adding just a 24" width of sandbags between [the fallout and the sheltered space](#) will provide nearly 7 halving thicknesses of protection, offering a protection factor of 1:128 against Gamma rays, and will block all radiation from alpha and beta particles. That would be a wall of sandbags just 3 sandbags wide.

Double or triple that would be wonderful but may not be possible in your timeframe and the materials available.

Sandbags can also be used to improve protection to basements by blocking openings such as windows and raising the height of protection to walls where the earth outside doesn't reach the ceiling.

If you don't have a basement, you can stack sandbags outside a wall up above kitchen table height and push the table against the wall and layer sandbags on top of the table. Just don't exceed the weight capacity of the table.

Adding protection to existing basements makes use of the earth outside the basement walls. If the earth outside the exterior walls of the basement extends up beyond the ceiling or can be extended up beyond the ceiling, sandbags can be laid on floor of the ground floor above the sheltered area to provide overhead protection from gamma ray scattering known as skyshine.

Another method you can use if you don't have a basement to work with is to construct a small shelter within a shelter in the center of the home or building using bookcases laid on their sides, gorilla racks, or tables to form walls between waist and chest high. Then take interior doors off their hinges and lay them across the gap between the tables, bookcases, or other sturdy furniture. Finally, stack sandbags outside the walls and on top of the doors to provide overhead

protection against skyshine and fallout buildup on the roof.

Constructing simple baffles of lath and sheet plastic from the FEMA document Radiation Safety in Shelters will allow air in while keeping most fallout particles out. These simple modifications could easily make the difference between dying a terrible death from radiation sickness and feeling a little tired.

I, for one, would choose the latter.



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You Bury A Shipping  
Container?**

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