

# Survival Defense For Uncommon Shelters

How do you protect your home, retreat or homestead if it is underground or if it is of different design and construction than a regular house? What about improvised shelters in the woods or temporary camps?

Many self-reliant people build homes of unconventional materials such as CONEX container houses, underground houses, earthbag domes or [earthship houses](#) to make use of their passive solar features, insulation, low cost, non-flammable properties, or the fact that they provide better hard cover against small arms fire than wood-framed homes.

Many readers have also asked about how to defend campsites or improvised wilderness shelters.

Tactics and strategy for the two scenarios have some differences, but correct principles of home and retreat defense apply to both, so I will lay out some pointers for retreat defense then and list some specific tactics for camps.

## Defense of Irregular Shelters

### Maintain Mobility

Do not let yourself become boxed-in. This is common mistake in bunker design. Building a safe room or bunker with a single point of entry and exit is a grave mistake. Unless you maintain the option of mobility, your shelter could become a death trap.

Building multiple hidden escape routes will allow you to bypass the fatal funnels created by doorways, window and hallways and improve chances of escaping undetected. Make sure that personnel can also reach your LP/OP (Listening

Post/Observation Post) and return to barracks undetected. Obvious changing of the guard according to schedule can give away your LP/OP's location.

In addition to making sure that the design of your unique structure does not limit your own mobility, you want to design your shelter, outbuildings fences, fields and unimproved land to deny mobility and tactically advantageous ground to your enemy.

### Leverage the Inherent Defensive Characteristics of Your Building Materials

[Make the most of your materials](#) and construction method starting in the design phase. Many less-conventional construction materials such as containers, earthen berms, earth domes, earth bags, stone and concrete, are largely non-flammable and highly resistant to small arms fire.

With relatively small investments in the design and construction phases, many can non-conventional structures can be engineered and built in a fashion that will enable them to absorb much more kinetic damage than traditional construction.

While burning defenders out is an ancient tactic that is difficult to defend against in a wood framed home, defending a home against fire becomes a reasonable goal if you construct your home of primarily inflammable materials such as containers, earth, concrete, brick or blocks.

Containers lend themselves to the construction of fort or motor court style homes where an inner courtyard can be enclosed by containers arranged in a square instead. Some of my pioneer ancestors built their homes and dugouts in a similar fort style when they colonized the West and made double use of the tactic in route by circling their wagons.



In fort-style structures, outbuildings extend into the courtyard and fields are cleared and planted outside the forts to afford an unobstructed line of sight and fire and provide a firebreak between the dwellings and forested areas.

Containers can be stacked or up-ended to gain the advantage of height. The walls of an up-ended container form a structure not unlike a square castle tower. In some cases, certain container homes may not need a building permit, which can go a long way toward keeping your “hidey hole” hidden.

Many underground and earth berm homes have soil rooftops that can be planted with vegetation to prevent erosion. A little attention in the design phase can break up the outline of the home, and camouflage it. An earth roof and mature vegetation can also help hide the shelter from the air, satellite imagery and IR sensor technology.

Compensate for Any Vulnerabilities Inherent to Your Chosen Building Method

[Subterranean structures](#) are often vulnerable the introduction of water, smoke, gas, accelerants and grenades. Compensate for

these vulnerabilities making provide good situational awareness and respond to a threat or escape before enemies are able to trap you in an underground shelter.

Install defensive works such as hidden escape tunnels, drains, security doors, fighting positions, an LP/OP, cameras, microphones and well-concealed, tamper-resistant air intakes.

Depending on the strength of the enemy you face, it may or may not be advantageous for your home to look like a bunker.

## Camp Defense

### Choosing Your Camp Site

First of all, you need to exercise great care in your choice of campsites.

- Choose sites that are unobservable from lines of drift. (Lines of drift are trails, roads, rivers, riverbeds, fence lines, bridges, ridges and other places people are most likely to walk.) Dense foliage and forest can work to your advantage here.
- Pick sites that are not observable from higher ground or other dominant terrain features. Avoid campsites near key terrain that could be used to locate you, correct fire or pour direct fire down into your camp.
- Make sure the sites you choose have more than one route of egress.
- The best sites have good cover and concealment.
- Select sites that have terrain obstacles or other obstacles between them and major lines of drift.

*Video first seen on [North Survival](#).*

### Campsite Security Pointers

- Assess the threat you face before you create your strategy. Consider whom you will be defending the camp

against, their resources and their mode of operations.

- Maintain combat tracking discipline. Most camps are discovered because of a poor choice in bivouac site or a failure of spore (track), scent, light or noise discipline.
- Your camp must train together as a unit. Everyone in the camp should train in small unit tactics as a group. Regardless of how fast you hose down targets, if you only train standing in one place, on a square, one-way shooting range, you need to improve your training in order to achieve any degree of effectiveness in combat. For a security element to become effective in combat, they must shoot, move and communicate as a unit. They should train in a 360-degree environment, in uneven terrain, against an OPFOR (opposing force.) If your group engages in regular, realistic, stressful, dynamic, 360-degree, group training, has competent training and competent leadership, they will enjoy a decisive advantage over most other groups their size, greatly improving the individual odds of survival for each member.
- Equip your group with combat multipliers. Force or combat multipliers are specialized equipment and personnel with specialized training who can give a smaller group combat effectiveness equal to a larger one. Appropriately armed and equipped sniper/spotter pairs, designated marksmen, a security element equipped with night vision equipment, heavy caliber anti-material weapons, SAWs, IEDs, trained canines and communications gear are all examples of combat multipliers provided you have them and your enemy doesn't. By engaging the enemy with highly accurate fire from beyond the range of his weapons systems, a sniper spotter pair or even a single designated marksman can decapitate an enemy patrol's leadership or long-range communications, crush the patrol's resolve by making them take casualties. They can even pin down the entire patrol long enough for your

group to escape if they engage the patrol from key ground and patrol lacks ready access to air support or indirect fire weapons. Night vision equipment can deliver a decisive advantage at night, denying your enemy mobility at night and delivering the same to your group.

- Prepare fighting positions for pickets behind existing hard cover in positions where they can see the enemy coming from far off and then ambush him on lines of drift with enfilade fire (striking the enemy's flank to put as many in the line fire as possible) from defilade (positions not observable until they are at the flank.) Then improve your fighting positions by digging them in and camouflaging them. Pickets must be able to silently warn the camp of enemy approach so the camp can man a layered defense. Everyone should carry a whistle as a backup to communications.
- Establish a 360-degree perimeter to maintain security.
- Make sure everyone in your camp keeps your camp's OPSEC tight and knows their E&E plan and rally point. All persons in the camp should wear basic SERE gear in their pockets at all times and keep their weapon, battle belt and fighting load carrier or plate carrier and go-bag within arm's reach.
- Use a combination of natural and very well camouflaged improved obstacles outside your perimeter to channel the enemy away from your camp along lines of drift. Using trip flares or noisemakers too near your camp will let the enemy know they have found you. Booby traps far from camp slow enemy movement and soften resolve but they are a double-edged sword. They will turn the locals against you endanger or harm their loved ones, so they need to be command detonated ... which makes the guy pushing the button a target for snipers, artillery and aircraft.

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to own a crisis bunker for \$287**

**Watch the video** 

*This article has been written by **Cache Valley Prepper** for [Survivopedia](#).*