



## Missing Teeth and Questionable Hygiene

When most people think of and picture a "survivalist", they think of a big, hairy man living alone in a cabin in the woods, wearing a camouflage jacket and pants. With missing teeth and questionable hygiene, our stereotypical survivalist clutches his rifle, ready to shoot any "revenooers" and government agents who head his way, all while muttering under his breath that the sooner civilization collapses, the better. Well, let me assure you - the stereotype couldn't be farther from the truth. Most of us "survivalist preppers" are normal people. We're your neighbors, your co-workers, and your friends. You see us at our kid's soccer games, or at the neighborhood movie theater, or at your local restaurant. You see us at work and at church.

We are regular folks living regular lives. I myself live in a regular house, not a cabin in the woods. I don't hunt and forage all day. Instead, I have a white-collar job in an office, and I shop at the local grocery store. I don't own a single piece of camouflage clothing. And I have all my teeth. Prepping today isn't for weird nutcases. It's for everyone. Because the bottom line is, neither you nor I will know what will happen. It might be a natural disaster. It just might be a terrorist act. It might be martial law and civil unrest. Whatever happens, as preppers, we want to be sure that our family is safe and secure. I realize that all my prepping might just be for naught. Nothing may ever happen. I may never need to hunker down in my home or bug out to my backup location. But I don't care. I sleep better knowing that in case something does happen, I have everything

If something does happen, my family and I have two basic choices - we can hunker down and wait out the problem in our home, or we can bug out/ evacuate the area and head someplace safer. A survival prepper makes plans for both options. In my previous book on *Hunkering Down: Prepping to Survive in Your Home During a Natural Disaster*, we covered the basics of how to survive an emergency that might keep you in your home. In this new book, we're going to look at the opposite scenario - prepping to evacuate and leave your home during a disaster. Having a

GOOD (" get out of Dodge") plan is just as important as having a hunker-down plan. In this book, we have a number of easy-to-read, short chapters to help you start making your GOOD plan.

Just like my other books, this book is written for the new prepper, who is ready to start putting a bug out plan in place. This book is for men and women (and yes, increasingly many new preppers are women) who care about the safety and welfare of their families. It's for those who want to be ready should they need to evacuate their family if a crisis or catastrophe happens. Let me share with you something personal about writing this book. Most authors, when they write a book, hope you'll find ways to use what they've written. But I might be one of the few authors who hope you NEVER have to use anything I've written here. Yes, I want you to get your supplies and your GOOD plan together. But I sincerely hope you never actually have to USE your plan or supplies.

But I want you to have a GOOD plan, so that like me, you'll sleep better at night knowing your family is ready for whatever comes your way. I sincerely hope you and your family are always safe and have long, healthy, disaster-free lives.

## Hunkering Down vs. Bugging Out

Hunkering down, sometimes called "bugging in," is all about making sure you have enough supplies and emergency gear ready to use if you need to stay in your home during an emergency. Bugging out is the opposite. It's all about making sure you have enough supplies and emergency gear ready to take with you if you need to evacuate your home. Visit any of the online prepper forums (there are quite a few these days), and you'll see preppers debating the merits of hunkering down versus bugging out. Some have only hunkering down plans. Others have only bug out or evacuation plans. You'll find lots of debates and arguments about which of these two plans is better.

But it's wrong to think of bugging out vs. hunkering down as an either/ or choice. The best approach is to be prepared for both scenarios. Disasters come in many forms, making it difficult to choose which scenario will make you best prepared. So the hallmark of a successful survivor is adaptability. There is no one right answer to the question of whether to stay or to go, because disaster scenarios are by their very nature unpredictable. It is by being flexible, by being willing to adapt to a particular situation, that will ensure the best possible chance of survival.

### [Start with Your Hunker Down Plan](#)

If you are brand new to prepping, I would suggest you start with a "hunker down" plan - a plan on how to deal with an emergency by staying in your home.

Putting together emergency supplies in your home is something you can do more easily and quickly than a bug out plan. And because most people feel more secure and comfortable in their own home, it is best to keep supplies on hand that allow them to stay at home as long as possible. Those who live in natural disaster-prone areas might already have been encouraged by officials to keep several days worth of water and food on hand, anticipating a time when a hurricane or earthquake may strike and lead to a disruption of normal food or fuel supplies. Known as "72-hour kits," they usually consist of water, food, flashlights and other items that can

be used for three days. Short-term, 72-hour calamities aren't enough to disrupt disaster relief organizations such as the Red Cross. So these kits merely supplement the supplies that would eventually come from such aid agencies.

However, most preppers foresee an event that will require more supplies than what a standard 72-hour kit contains. These preppers consider the effects of events such as more drastic natural disasters, severe economic collapse, or a time when the country might experience martial law or even no rule of law at all. In such scenarios, relief organizations would be overwhelmed or simply dysfunctional, and we as individuals would be responsible for our own survival. Since this is a book about bugging out, we won't go into detail on what you need for hunkering down. For help with prepping your home emergency supplies, see my book on *Hunkering Down: Prepping to Survive in Your Home During a Natural Disaster*.

### [A Disaster Strikes - Do We Stay or Do We Go?](#)

A disaster strikes, and you have both your hunker-down plan and your bug out plan. Which should you use? Do you stay in your home or do you bug out?

I know there are many sides to this debate. Just look at the internet forums I mentioned above. But I'm of the opinion that if staying home is safe, it is probably best to stay at home for as long as possible. Especially if you have a family, morale plays an enormous part in their mental well-being during a calamity. Home represents safety and security, two vital aspects of survival. Even with the best of bug out plans, your home contains more supplies than you can carry in a backpack or even load into a car. Rather than leave food, water, fuel and tools behind, it is best to stay and use them for as long as possible, rather than attempt to carry them to some other location that may not be as secure.

A person's home can also be defended more readily than an unfamiliar or open location. Most people are aware of who their neighbors are and may have made friends that live nearby. Such a situation is far more desirable than the prospect of leaving home and being forced to find a place that is secure, possibly in an unknown location among strangers. But when events transpire or environmental conditions degrade to the point where it is no longer feasible or possible to remain at home, you should make the decision to leave sooner rather than later. Whatever the

unfortunate calamity that leads you to consider leaving your home, you should ensure you remain as informed as possible about the nature of your situation.

Most preppers have a distrust of government officials. But if officials are urging people to evacuate because of a fire, hurricane, or other natural disaster, I think you can trust their advice. There is simply no reason to stay at home if officials are expecting 15 feet of storm surge to enter an area. If, on the other hand, government breaks down and there is no rule of law, you will need to decide for yourself when it is best to leave home.

## Bug Out Bags and Vehicle Kits

The basis for any GOOD (" get out of Dodge") plan is your bug out bag. This is a bag with the emergency supplies you need to take with you to survive. Each member of your family will need a bug out bag, both with their personal items, plus with their "share of the load" the family will take with them. Even young children should have their own bug out bag, even if they can't carry as much as the adults do. And of course, if you are single, your bug out bag will have to have everything you need, since you may not have family members or friends to share the load

You may need two bug out bags. One will have supplies if you need to bug out under your own power (on foot or by bike). The other will have supplies if you are able to bug out by automobile. The walking bug out bag should be a high-quality backpack that is filled with necessary supplies. The bag will allow you to carry some food and water at the start, but may also contains supplies to allow you to search or hunt for food, filter water, defend yourself, and sleep outside under most conditions. Since this bag may need to be carried on your back for long distances, you'll need to limit what you put in it to only essentials.

The "vehicle kit" is like a bug out bag, but stored in your car, truck, or RV. It can be a totally separate store of supplies, or it can have supplies that supplement a walking bug out bag. I like to have all my basic supplies in a walking bug out bag, plus additional/ extended supplies in a vehicle kit that I leave in my car. If I need to get out of Dodge and can do so by car, I can grab my "walking" bug out bag and toss it in the car, so I have the combined supplies of both bags at my disposal. And should something happen during the journey that I have to abandon the car, I can easily grab the bug out bag and be on my way. While I recommend spending the money to get a high-quality backpack, you don't need to spend a lot of money to stock it. You can get many of the products and resources for the bug out bag for discounted prices if you shop smartly. Keep your eye out for sales and buy essential such as food, first aid materials, and non-perishables when they are discounted.

## Selecting and Outfitting a Bug Out Bag

The best way to select your bug out bag is to imagine you are going on a multi-day or extended camping and hiking trip. The type of bag you choose will of course depend on the terrain in your area and in your bug out location. In general, you will need more room for supplies for a longer trip to your bug out location, for more difficult terrain, and for more difficult weather conditions such as extreme heat or extreme cold. Choose the bag for the worst conditions you'll face, not for the best or average conditions.

Backpacks are usually sold by "capacity" in either cubic inches or liters. Multi-day packs are usually 60 to 80 liters, or between 3,000 to 5,000 cubic inches. These backpacks are good for two to five day trips. That should be considered the minimum for your bug out bag to get you to your bug out destination where you may have additional supplies. If you have to travel longer, or if you don't have a cache of supplies at your bug out location, an extended-trip backpack might be a better choice. These are greater than 80 liters or 5,000 cubic inches.

## Selecting a Vehicle Kit Bag

Your vehicle kit can be a backpack too, but since it doesn't have to be carried for long distances, it could also just be a nylon or canvas duffle bag. These tend to be more economical than purchasing an additional backpack. Also you can often cram more in to a duffle bag and even have two or more duffle bags, to carry extra supplies in your vehicle.

## Stocking Your Bug Out Bag

### ***Water***

The first essential is water. You never can have enough water. And depending on the nature of the emergency, you can't always depend on finding water along the way. Consider that you may need about a gallon a day of water per person. Therefore, fill as many containers with water as you can comfortably carry. Having multiple containers (as opposed to large jugs) will allow you to distribute the weight in your and your family's backpacks. You also may want to purchase a water bottle

that has a built-in water purifier and water purifying tablets that you can throw into suspect water. Use the bottled water until you run out. Then, you can use the water purifying water bottle and tablets for extreme emergency situations.

### ***Food***

You also need food. Before packing your backpacks, plan your meals. For each person, plan for breakfast, lunch, dinner, and snacks for each day you anticipate travelling to your bug out destination. Since you don't know what conditions you'll be facing, you may or may not be able to start a fire to cook food along the way. So ideally, food that requires little or no preparation would be ideal. You can find camping and "ready-to-eat" meals at your local outdoor, sporting goods store. Many of these meals are in "self-heating" packages, so you can have a warm meal even if you can't cook. However, ready-to-eat meals take up quite a bit of space in your backpack. Depending on the length of your journey, you may want to pack a selection of both ready-to-eat meals and meals that require some cooking. For cooking meals, dehydrated food and food that bulks up when cooked like rice and oatmeal are good choices. They take up very little space, but produce a filling, satisfying meal. Also, pack your bag with energy bars and granola bars as well as high-energy foods such as nuts and dried fruits. These items have a long shelf life.

### ***First Aid Kit***

Every bug out bag needs a first aid kit. Stock your bag with self-adhesive bandages in a variety of sizes, antiseptic, cotton balls, slings, liquid stitches, and pain reliever pills. You never know what kind of triage you will need to perform, so it also is good to have a booklet on triage and basic first aid so that you can perform CPR, prepare a wound for bandaging, and clean up cuts so that infection does not spread. And remember to pack any prescription medication you are currently taking.

### ***Camping Supplies***

If you have a multi-day journey ahead of you, it is good to have a few camping essentials in your bug out bag. Pack a compact backpacking tent. These are very lightweight tents that can be carried easily. If you are bugging out as a family, you may want to carry multiple lightweight tents, rather than one large tent for everyone. You'll also want to add a sleeping bag to each person's bug out kit. For food preparation, you'll want to carry a mess kit or hiking cookware. Each person

should also have their own utensil kit (knife, fork, and spoon). You may also want a collapsible camping cup for each person.

In addition, you'll want to include a flashlight or backpacking lantern with spare batteries (each person should have their own flashlight). You may also want matches in a sealed water-tight container, a sharp hunting knife, a backpacking saw, and a compass. Also pack a pair of work gloves to help with campsite chores. And garbage bags come in handy not just for trash, but any time you need to bag things to keep them separated in your pack, or to keep things from leaking in your pack. A sewing kit may also come in handy along the way. Some of the other things you might consider packing will depend on where you live and the weather. If it's warm or hot, you might consider packing sunscreen and/ or bug spray. You might also need rain gear such as a compact rain poncho and rain pants.

### ***Hygiene Essentials***

Pack at least one towel for each member of your family. Also pack soap, washcloth, hand sanitizer, and dry shampoo. This way, you'll be prepared if you are able to bathe with water collected from a river or stream. If space is at a premium or you don't have access to water along the way to your bug-out location, you can ditch the soap and washcloth. Instead pack biodegradable camping wipes as a substitute for bathing. One other idea is to pack an empty spray bottle. If you have extra water, you can fill the spray bottle with water in order to spritz yourself with water to bathe. You will also need toilet paper and disposable wipes. You can buy hiking toilet paper that does not have a cardboard core and is biodegradable. And don't forget a toothbrush for each person, as well as toothpaste.

### **Personal and Protection Items**

When bugging out, you'll want to make sure you have copies of all of your important legal documents. These items should not be stored in your bug-out bag, but stored in a plastic, waterproof bag, and placed in your home safe. Then just before leaving, grab the plastic bag from the safe and put it into your bug out bag. In this document bag, include either photocopies or scans of your birth certificate, marriage license, wills, real estate and property deeds, auto titles, passports,

driver's licenses, social security cards, and any state or federal identification. Also include all insurance papers - home, auto, medical, and life.

Make sure you also have copies of any financial documents and information, such as bank account numbers, credit cards and credit card numbers, debit cards and debit card numbers, and mortgage papers. And remember to bring keys to both your home and to any buildings at your bug-out location. In addition, you'll want to have with you cash in a variety of denominations, both paper currency and coins. Ideally, you'll want to include lightweight items you can use for barter as well, such as gold and silver coins (both bullion and numismatic collectibles) and jewelry. Again, prepare these items ahead of time and store them in your safe, with your legal papers. Grab them as you are about to bug out. Speaking of bartering, any extra supplies you can carry, especially food and water, can also be used to barter along the way if the need arises. Depending on the magnitude of the emergency, you may also need some kind of protective agent. At a bare minimum, include pepper spray with your bug out bag. But as you leave, take it out of the bag and put it someplace you can get to easily, such as an easy to reach pocket or on a belt loop. For more serious emergencies, especially if they involve civil unrest, a better item for protection is a handgun, such as a revolver or pistol. You might also carry a rifle or shotgun, but they are harder to carry and harder to get to than a smaller weapon. So if you carry a long rifle, also include a handgun for easy access.

Make sure to bring plenty of spare ammunition. Extra ammunition in common calibers like 9mm (nine millimeter) and .22LR (twenty-two long rifle) may also be useful barter. And make sure everyone in the family is trained in the use and maintenance of all weapons you are bringing.

### **Packing Your Bug Out Bag**

Keeping things as organized as possible is the rule of thumb for packing your bug out bag.

Although people use different techniques, the main goal in packing items is to keep things in their proper order. There are backpacks complete with tiny compartments so people can separate light items from heavy ones. In packing items, it is good to

categorize items that are important for the trip. It is going to be a hassle looking for the things needed when everything is cluttered inside the backpack.

It is important to be sure that things like a compass, rainwear, extra clothing, first-aid kit, map, toilet paper, sunglasses, flashlight, food and drink are easy to access. They should be put in the backpack's outside pocket especially when space is limited.

## Stocking Your Vehicle Kit

As I mentioned earlier, I like to use my vehicle kit to supplement my bug out bag. So while my bug out bag has the bare essentials, my vehicle kit has additional supplies for a car journey. First of all, more water and food. The more water you can carry in your vehicle, the better. For food, you can stick with ready-to-eat meals and dehydrated food, but you can also add canned foods, such as meats, soups, chili, beans, and stews. You can also add canned fruits and vegetables, and aseptic-packaged soup, fruit juices, and drinks. Aseptic packaging is the "juice box" style packaging you may have seen on your grocery shelves.

For food preparation, remember to include a can opener for your canned foods. You might want to include a small camping stove, a lighter, and a box of matches in a plastic, resealable bag. Never store lighter fluid or charcoal in a bug out bag or vehicle kit. These items are highly-flammable and can ignite accidentally. You can also add plastic utensils, bowls, and cups. You may also want to include a heavy-duty camping tent and heavier sleeping bags than the ones in your bug out bag. You may even want a basic tarp. It is good to have strong rope and stakes for the ground in case you have to rig a shelter on branches in the forest. In addition, there is one item that you should store separately from your vehicle kit, but put in your vehicle just before you leave. And that is extra fuel for the vehicle. Make sure it is stored in an approved, air tight, leak-proof container for gasoline. Just before you bug out, put the container in the trunk of your car (not the passenger compartment) and make sure it is placed so it doesn't spill.

## Choosing a Bug Out Location

Once you've decided to bug out, you need to have an idea of where you are bugging out TO. In the event of an emergency, a bug out location (BOL) can help you avoid hardship and, in extreme cases, it can help you survive. In the worst-case scenario, your family or your support network must be able to sustain itself for up to a month or maybe even longer at your BOL. Indeed, the capability of lasting indefinitely through a sustainable setup is ideal although such an approach may be out of most people's reach.

### Buying Property as a BOL

Many people consider a second home or vacation cottage as a perfect choice for a bug out location. A family member or relative could use the second home as a primary residence during normal times. Some people own vacation cabins, so it is a good option for a retreat during a crisis. However, you may not be able to afford a second home or a vacation cottage. Another drawback is that in the case of a regional or a national emergency, the situation may also compromise this fixed location.

### Using an RV as a BOL

Some people own recreational vehicles (RVs) for use during family vacations and other types of travel, especially over long distances. In terms of cost, RVs are less expensive than fixed property like a second home. One great advantage of an RV is that it allows you to move to different locations as the situation warrants. RVs vary widely in size and capabilities with the largest capable of accommodating a large family. Of course, one consideration in choosing an RV is fuel economy. In an emergency, fuel supplies may not be readily available. One option is to choose a hybrid or biodiesel RV as these options provide more fuel flexibility. You can also use power generation devices like solar panels to charge a hybrid RV's electric

motor battery. A biodiesel engine with proper modifications can run even on used cooking oil.

RVs can be vehicles themselves or they can be trailers that require another towing vehicle. Generally, the trailer variety is cheaper and you may be able to use your current vehicle for towing. While an RV might be a good mobile "bug out" location, it does though have some serious drawbacks as a bug out vehicle. We'll talk more about using an RV when we discuss bug out vehicles in a later chapter.

### Using a Yacht or Houseboat as a BOL

An option similar to that of using an RV, a large live-aboard boat provides mobility allowing you to move from one docking facility to another, or simply to anchor at practically any location. Again, fuel is a consideration and it would be a good idea to ensure that you choose a fuel-efficient craft. Another possibility is to learn how to sail and to purchase a sailboat or a hybrid sail and motor boat.

Many large boats are capable of long sea voyages and have all the systems, equipment and storage space needed to keep the occupants sustained for weeks at a time.

### Using a Campsite

An even lower cost option than an RV or boat is to choose one or more campsites as BOLs. All you will need is tents and other equipment along with your vehicle or in your walking bug out bag. In some cases, it may even be possible to live out of your car for short periods at these sites.

Like the RV option, camping has the advantage of not tying you down to any fixed location. In times of crisis, it may be necessary to move around constantly to stay safe. Campsites can be good locations for whole support networks to "take over" so that they can maintain mutual security. One of the disadvantages of camping is that it is not very comfortable over long periods. While you have great mobility, tents do not provide much in terms of fortified protection.

## Staying with Friends or Relatives

Of course, this is probably the ideal solution if feasible. However, it is probably more practical for individuals or couples. Not many people have room enough in their home to accommodate an extra family with children. Another problem is that this option also involves fixed locations, so it is less flexible. One strategy is to set up a network with others in which each member offers their homes to others in case of an emergency. Note that you will need to plan sleeping locations and supply stockpiles.

## Camping in the Woods

Camping at national or state parks, or on other type of public land is an extreme, but doable option. In some cases, it may also be possible to camp out on private land with or without the permission of the owner. Survival in the wilderness requires knowledge of animal and plant life along with other necessary survival skills. An advantage of camping in the woods is that you are less likely to encounter strangers than in more populated areas.

In the woods, it is easy to choose locations where the chances of people randomly finding you are next to nil. However, you must make sure that you have access to water along with having water purification equipment. Unless you have your own power generation equipment, you will not have electricity. Think about appliances that use solar energy. Solar panels are an option as generators. Biofuel generators are another possibility. Kits are available that allow you to create your own biodiesel or ethanol using plant matter. An advantage of camping in the wilderness is that you can hunt and fish for food along with gathering wild vegetables, grains, roots, beans, seeds, fruits and herbs. You could also build a structure using native wood and earth to provide more fortification than is available living in a tent.

## Empty Buildings as a BOL

With this option, you take over an abandoned building owned by someone else. Many people are doing this even today to cope with the housing crisis.

The problem with this approach is that you are trespassing and could end up encountering the owners of the building. However, some banks and financial firms own large portfolios of foreclosed properties that they do not bother to maintain or monitor. If you have to evacuate far from your current location, this option may not be too practical. Note that an abandoned building may not have power, gas or water access.

## Bugging Out on Foot or by Bike

Regardless of the reason for evacuating, you need to be ready to bug out fast and with the key items you need to survive. You can count on most people heading to their cars when it's time to hit the road. That might result in delays as all roadways leaving your area become impossibly congested. When this happens, you may be able to make better time on foot or by bike. However, bugging out without a motorized vehicle requires special preparations, so you should get everything together ahead of time.

### The Benefits of Using Your Feet

You may think that there's no way you would want to evacuate on foot, but there are advantages to this method. If you're on foot, then you will be limited in the gear you can take. However, you won't have to deal with traffic jams, mechanical breakdowns won't be a concern, and you can go where motorized vehicles cannot. In the event of a full evacuation across a large area, you might actually get to your meeting location faster on foot.

### Know the Route Ahead of Time

In an evacuation, you want to know what route to take ahead of time. Just as you are familiar with the available roadways, you should know the area around your home.

Drainage culverts and small streams are excellent areas to pinpoint. They follow reasonable straight lines and will help guide you to another location. If you live in mountainous areas, the best option may be to head for higher ground and move along the first ridge to the next area. Look for routes that will take you to safer areas faster than congested roads, and look for routes with smooth terrain if you will be traveling with children. Make it a weekend activity to go out and hike these

routes with the family for fun. Everyone will be more familiar with them, and it will make an evacuation less stressful.

### Have Alternate Routes Planned

You may decide that the best route is the one following a sweet little stream, but what happens if you bug out in the spring and that area is flooded? Anything can happen, and being prepared means thinking of alternatives ahead of time. Consider the other routes and take the time to hike them. This way, you'll know exactly what to do if your preferred route is blocked due to weather or other hazards.

### Take Notes on Your Weekend Hikes

When you are out hiking your escape routes, bring a notebook and a pencil or pen to make notes along the way.

Are there natural barriers that will pose problems in an evacuation? Take note of good areas to stop and rest or even spend the night. How much will weather slow you down given the terrain? Look for areas that are safer and easier to navigate, as well as areas that are more hazardous for some reason. Determine if there are potential water sources and how well the water could be filtered. Having this information assembled ahead of time will allow you to make a faster evacuation when every second counts.

### Bike Considerations

Bikes will allow you to travel further in one day than you would on foot, and you can still go places where cars cannot. If you choose to bug out by bike, then you should invest in some special equipment. Consider purchasing a bike trailer to help you carry the gear you need. If you are traveling with young children, a bike trailer can make the difference between life and death if you have to get out fast and the roads are blocked. Look for trailers that are designed for the rugged demands of off-road riding. Note that if you are bugging out on a bike, make sure you can comfortably wear your bug out backpack while you are riding the bike. Don't get a

backpack that is too big. Go for a smaller backpack, and use your trailer or bike bags/ saddle bags to carry additional equipment.

Once you have chosen the best bike bags for your purposes and invested in a bike trailer, make sure you pick up a quality light. It will allow you to travel at night, and it makes it easier for your party to stay together. Remember to install a small red light in the rear of the bike so other people can see you. Look for lights that are easily switched off in case you need to evacuate without drawing attention to yourself.

The bike won't do you any good if the tires go flat, and there's a good chance this will happen when you are riding on rough terrain. Take a bike tire repair kit with you, and be sure to pack an air pump. Keep a few spare inner tubes on hand, so you won't have to worry about being forced to abandon your bike.

### **The Single Most Important Item for Bugging Out on Foot**

Good shoes. All your preparation for bugging out on foot won't be worth anything if you don't have good shoes for the walk. If your bug out route is over easy terrain, a sturdy pair of walking shoes will suffice. But if you have more difficult terrain, invest in a good pair of hiking shoes or boots. Make sure each member of your family has shoes that fit. If you have kids, you know how quickly they grow, so make sure they have hiking shoes that are the right size. While bugging out on foot, take special care of your feet. During rest periods, remove your shoes and socks. This is to let your feet air out and to allow the shoes and socks to dry.

Note: If you are bugging out as a family and in a dangerous situation, you may want to have one or two family members stand guard, while the others remove their shoes and socks. Then after an adequate rest period, switch duties and have the rested people stand guard while the other members of the family have a rest period. This will double the amount of time you need for rest periods, but may be safer given the circumstances. During the rest period, remove any dirt, sand, or debris from your shoes. Hang your socks from nearby tree branches to dry. Inspect your own feet for blisters or signs of rubbing that may turn into blisters. Also inspect each other's feet, because sometimes another person can spot problems before you can.

At the end of the rest period, apply foot cream and adhesive bandages to protect any areas that shown signs of rubbing. Change to new socks if you can, rotating through your socks during the trip.

## Choosing a Bug Out Motor Vehicle

Evacuation can be easy with the right bug out vehicle, so it is important to put together a plan for your next vehicle purchase.

### Affordability

First and foremost, you'll need an affordable vehicle. If you're like any of the other millions of families, you probably don't have money to throw around wildly. Keeping in mind vehicle quality, you'll want to look at late-model, used vehicles as opposed to new vehicles. The money you save by purchasing a used vehicle can be put to better use in other areas of your bug out plan. If you find a used vehicle with fewer than 40,000 miles and is about three or four years old, it's still like new and would be worth the purchase. It's standard to have about 10,000 miles a year, so anything higher or lower than that is a bit suspicious and should be treated with caution.

### Dependability

It's also a good idea to pick a vehicle known for dependability and ruggedness when choosing a bug out vehicle.

It should be easy to repair. Ideally, you should be able to handle some of the repairs yourself, so having a vehicle with a simple engine works best. It should be a popular model to guarantee that more mechanics know how to fix it, and that you can more easily get spare parts for replacement.

Pick a vehicle that you can drive on a good road, which would make it a viable candidate for doubling as an everyday vehicle. This makes it all the more important to have good mileage, so the vehicle will be affordable for daily use. Even when it comes to an emergency, having better fuel efficiency means you can get farther

away from the disaster using fewer resources. If you can drive a manual transmission, it is a better choice than an automatic transmission. Manual transmissions are often simpler for a mechanic to fix and use less fuel. You also have more overall control for off-roading.

## Off-Road

Though you want to make sure the vehicle handles well on the road, you will also want a vehicle that works well off road. It needs to be able to drive through snow, sand, and mud, even if it only accounts for only a small amount of your bug out driving. You may have to drive around traffic or stranded vehicles, so a four wheel drive vehicle is a good choice. Even if you are not likely to use the off-road capabilities, it's better to have it and not need it, than to need it and not have it.

## Maneuverability

Finally, aim for a vehicle that is small rather than large as these are easier to maneuver around road obstacles like car wrecks or debris. The car needs some power but has to be agile enough for everyday driving and having to move fast in an emergency. Naturally, you'll need something large enough to fit the entire family, but don't overdo it.

Much like getting off-road capability, you'll have to make sacrifices here. For instance, if you have a family, you will need a medium-sized vehicle that can fit five people but is not too large. You may be able to go for a smaller SUV if you're alone, realizing that you may need the extra room later on.

## Considering an RV

When considering bugging out with your family and all of your emergency kit, you might think of piling everything into your RV, if you have one. However, this may not be the best option when weighing the sacrifices against the potential benefits. On the positive side, RVs provide great means for stockpiling food and water and can even house you if you don't actually have an emergency shelter to drive

towards. But RVs are rather large vehicles that do not maneuver very well even under the best weather conditions. In addition, they also get very poor gas mileage and will cause you to stop rather frequently as it guzzles your fuel reserves. In the worst scenario, you might not even make it out of town before you need to fill up the tank again. And depending on the emergency, you might find most gas stations are going to be closed.

As many potential benefits as there may be, consider the number of bad situations that RVs can cause on the road. For one, you're stuck driving on the main roads. So if your plan to bug out involves driving off-road or you come across a rather large obstacle in the middle of the road, you're going to have trouble in an RV. There are smaller RVs available, and these may be fine traveling down dirt roads, but true off-road driving would cause too many problems. Smaller RVs are also only a good option if you're by yourself or are very close with a significant other. Once you add children to a smaller RV, there's no more elbow room for any comfort.

## Bugging Out with Children and Pets

Bugging out takes planning, even when you don't have kids and pets to consider. However, when you do, it's especially important to make sure that the entire family knows and understands the bug out plan.

### For Children

As we said earlier, each member of your family will need a bug out bag, and that includes your children. Even if they can't carry everything they need, this bag should include some of their essential items. And don't underestimate the emotional value of helping your children prepare their bags. Involve them with your preparation plans, and it can help them understand and be less afraid of what might happen during your bug out. It's also a great way of bonding with your kids, and helps them build trust in you. That trust will be important, should you need to lead them on a bug out. Of course, only add as much weight to their bug out bag as they can carry. But no matter who carries these items, remember to include the following for your infant or children: diapers, wipes, pacifier, crackers, change of clothes, and a comfort blanket or toy.

### For Pets

Bugging out with pets is a difficult decision. A lot depends on the way you are bugging out (by foot or by vehicle), and on whether the pet can walk on its own or has to be carried. I know this is a heart-breaking decision, but if you have to bug out on foot, and the pet has to be carried, it would probably be safer for you to leave the pet behind. The additional weight of carrying the animal may make the entire process more tiring and slow you down. But if you do decide to take a pet with you on foot, you'll need to think about how you'll transport your pet. Dogs trained to a leash can walk beside you with a bag or pack on their backs carrying supplies, but you'll have to carry a cat in its own carrier, which can be soft-sided for

easier transport. If it's cold, your dog will need a coat and possibly shoes to protect its feet from rocks, thorns and similar hazards.

Of course, you'll also need to carry food and water for your pet in your bug out bag or in his saddle bags. Dry food and treats are easier to carry than canned items. And as a general rule, you should plan to carry a half gallon of bottled water for each of your pets each day, although this can vary due to their breed, weight and other factors. Collapsible bowls will make the load easier to carry. Bugging out by vehicle offers more possibilities.

During a bug out situation, your pet will likely feel the stress that you are feeling, and react accordingly. When you decide to bug out, you won't have time to round up your pet from his favorite hiding place. That's why it's a good idea to teach him now to get into his carrier or crate on your command. You can then quickly gather essential equipment for both of you instead of wasting precious time trying to coax him into his carrier. Well before evacuation becomes even a remote possibility, you'll want to spend time training your pet to calmly leave with you. To help a cat learn to easily enter a carrier, start putting his favorite blanket or pillow inside on a regular basis so he'll want to sleep there. If the carrier door is held open with a bungee cord, he'll be more likely to freely enter the carrier. Once he's become comfortable doing this, you can start acclimating him to staying in the carrier when you close the door. Your dog should learn to come as soon as you call him and allow you to quickly dress him in a coat or sweater and shoes if necessary. He should be comfortable wearing a harness and backpack over his shoulders and back. He will need time to get used to this before evacuation becomes necessary. Praise your pet and offer treats when he does these actions with little or no hesitation. Since you likely won't know where your final destination is or when you'll reach it, you must have enough food and water on hand for your pet in your vehicle kit. As we mentioned, dry food and treats are easiest to carry, but if you must bring canned food, remember to include a manual can opener.

Your pet's veterinary and shot records should travel with you too. Your pet won't feel comfortable in the area in which you'll likely land, so he may act out and bite or scratch a stranger. In that case, an up-to-date record of his shots is essential to keep him out of trouble. You'll also want to include a copy of his records, especially if he is being treated for an illness or special condition. Finally, a photo of your pet

can help identify him if he somehow escapes from you. Since you're leaving home in an emergency situation, your pet might be injured during the evacuation process. A pet-specific first-aid kit will help keep him in good shape until you can see a vet. It should include bandages and gauze, antibiotic ointment, scissors, tweezers, eye wash, ear ointment and any medications your pet is taking. Flea and tick treatments can also be included since you may have to travel through wooded areas.

Your pet will need to feel as though something of his familiar home is still available to him during this stressful time. A favorite toy or two and his preferred blanket are great items to quickly place in his carrier as you leave the house. The comforting odors of home will help him relax. Working with your pet well ahead of any emergency situation and providing for his needs and his comfort will help make an unfortunate situation easier for both of you.

## Making Sure Your Bug Out Plan Works

The best way to know if your bug out plan works is to do trial runs. Get your family together, and go through a pretend bug out. Pack the vehicle, or grab your bug out bag and start walking. Practice makes perfect. For example, with a trial run, you might find there are additional items you need in your bug out bag that we haven't suggested here. You may find you need items unique to your situation.

Or you might find that the first time you practice, not everything fits in your car! You may have to get better at packing and choosing which items are essential to make the bug out plan work more easily. As I said in my previous book on Hunkering Down, these trial runs will be the best investment you can make in your family's safety. And that's something you just can't put a price on.

## Final Check: Your Bug out Bag and Vehicle Kit Supplies Checklist

Here is a final checklist you can use to put together your bug out bag and vehicle kit:

### Bug Out Bag Checklist

- Water (as much as you can carry)
- Water bottle with built-in purifier/ filter
- Water purifying tablets
- Ready-to-eat/ self-heating camping meals
- Dehydrated food
- Food that bulks when cooked (rice, oatmeal)
- Energy bars and granola bars
- Nuts and dried fruit
- First aid kit
- First aid booklet
- Prescription medications
- Toothbrush and toothpaste
- Compact pop-up tent
- Sleeping bag
- Backpacking tent
- Sleeping bag

- \_ Mess kit/ cookware
- \_ Utensil kit (knife, fork, spoon)
- \_ Collapsible camping cup
- \_ Flashlight or lantern and spare batteries
- \_ Matches in sealed container
- \_ Sharp hunting knife
- \_ Backpacking saw
- \_ Compass
- \_ Sewing kit
- \_ Work gloves
- \_ Sunscreen
- \_ Bug spray
- \_ Rain gear (poncho and rain pants)
- \_ Garbage bags
- \_ Document case with legal and financial documents
- \_ Cash (paper currency and coins)
- \_ Keys (to home and bug out location)
- \_ Barter items (gold and silver bullion coins, numismatics, jewelry, additional supplies)
- \_ Personal protection (pepper spray, gun, ammunition)
- \_ Towel
- \_ Washcloth
- \_ Hand sanitizer
- \_ Dry shampoo
- \_ Biodegradable camping wipes (bathing substitute)

- \_ Empty spray bottle (bathing substitute)
- \_ Hiking toilet paper and biodegradable wipes
- \_ Facial tissues (compact package)
- \_ Hiking shoes or boots (not packed, but ready to put on and go)
- \_ Foot cream and adhesive bandages

### Vehicle Kit Checklist

- \_ Additional water
- \_ Additional food
- \_ Canned meats, soups, chili, beans, and stews
- \_ Canned fruits and vegetables
- \_ Aseptic packaged soup, fruit juices, and drinks
- \_ Can opener
- \_ Small camping stove
- \_ Lighter
- \_ Matches in plastic, resalable bag
- \_ Plastic utensils, bowls, cups
- \_ Heavy duty tent
- \_ Heavier sleeping bags
- \_ Tarp, rope, and stakes
- \_ Vehicle fuel (store separately from kit, put in vehicle just before bugging out)

### Additional Items for Children and Pets

- \_ Children: Medication

- \_ Children: Diapers
- \_ Children: Wipes
- \_ Children: Crackers
- \_ Children: Change of clothes
- \_ Children: A comfort blanket or toy
- \_ Children: A pacifier
- \_ Pet: Carrier or leash
- \_ Pet: Backpack with harness
- \_ Pet: Food
- \_ Pet: Water
- \_ Pet: Collapsible bowl
- \_ Pet: Canned pet food
- \_ Pet: Copy of pet's health records
- \_ Pet: Photo of pet
- \_ Pet: Flea and tick treatment
- \_ Pet: Medications
- \_ Pet: Favorite pet toy or blanket