

Grab and Go

Hibernation and Go Bag Primer

Terrorism. Riots. Warfare. Natural Disasters.

Now more than ever, there is a real need for expatriates to be prepared to hibernate and even evacuate with little notice.

But preparing for hibernation or building a go bag in the middle of a crisis is the last thing a person wants to be doing.

No matter an individual's experience or training, this primer is intended to help both the novice and the experienced expatriate not just survive -but thrive- in tough circumstances and conditions.

This primer is the second installment of my survival kit series detailing the three survival tiers (or kits) that make up my "survival system". These tiers fulfill different functions depending on where I am and what I am doing. Please contact me for a link to my "*Survival Kit Primer*" for details on my Basic and Extended survival and first aid kits.

That said, this primer will focus less on basic survival and first aid "kits" (that's what the first primer was for) and more on the principles for building a go bag (also referenced in this primer as a "go kit") and a hibernation or shelter in place (SIP) kit.

In this primer I will both outline and discuss the basic principles of go bags as well as a basic understanding of bug out and hibernation principles that can offer local field personnel critical guidance for sheltering in place for days or even weeks.

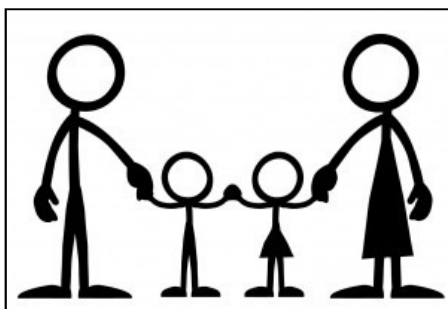
Key to Success: Preplanning

As mentioned earlier, trying to put together a bug out kit in the middle of a crisis is something no one wants to do. Preplanning and preparation **BEFORE** a crisis is critical to success when problems come. Be confident by being prepared with planning and preparation.



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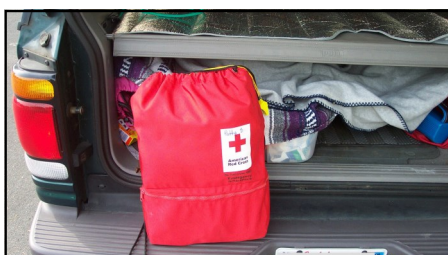
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Pre-planning Principle 1:

How many people does your go bag or SIP kit need to support? What are their ages? Are there any specific health, medical, sanitary, or other needs to be considered in your plan? If so, make sure that those needs are accounted for in your preplanning.

Based on where you live and the



Pre-planning Principle 2: How long do you want the kit to last?

probable threats you face, how long do you want a kit in Hibernation or evacuation to resource or sustain you?

Depending on the situation, most SIP kits are designed to help a person hibernate 5-14 days (including food, water, fuel, communication, medicines, etc.).

Go bags and kits generally resource or sustain individuals for a shorter period of time than the SIP kit; often just enough time to get the user to an evacuation point or safety.

Go kits expatriates build are generally designed to support them for 24-72 hours.

Focal Point: Go Bags/Kits vs. Hibernation/Shelter In Place (SIP) Kits

Often I get the question: “Scott, do I really need two kits?” My answer is always: “Yes!”

Often contingencies begin quickly and warrant sheltering in place. However, soon thereafter, a situation can quickly deteriorate and necessitate a quick evacuation, thus the need for the go kit.

Optimally, the SIP kit and go bag complement each other. Parts of the go bag could/should include items from the SIP kit (items such as: batteries, flashlights, foods, water, etc.). This not only helps eliminate extra cost, but can also make keeping track of key items easier.

There are a lot of factors that go into planning for hibernation. Factors include:

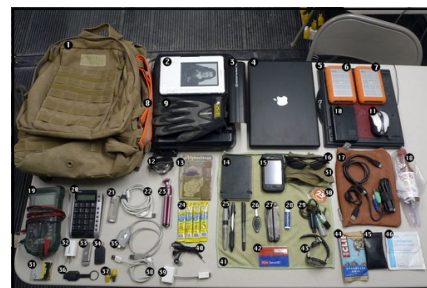
- What are the realistic and probable threats that could warrant hibernation?
- How much time have expatriates in your area spent in hibernation in the past?
- Is your hibernation location (normally someone’s home or compound) properly equipped to handle you, your family, or your team? This includes simple concerns:
 - Ensuring there is enough storage space to keep extra water and food on hand for those planning to hibernate on site.
 - Identifying and addressing beforehand any sanitation challenges
 - Safely storing fuel such as propane, gasoline, or diesel for emergency use
- Additionally, if other team members will hibernate with you, it is important to have extra space for sleeping areas, community areas, and sanitation.

In my recent experience, I have seen expatriates in North Africa enter a hibernation scenario, only to lead unexpectedly (and immediately) to a critical need to evacuate. Additionally, many expatriates in Japan were prepared for earthquakes and tsunamis but were caught off guard when a major nuclear incident occurred that forced the evacuation of tens of thousands living around the Fukushima nuclear power plant. The key takeaway from each of these incidents: It is hard to tell how quickly a hibernation scenario may transition to evacuation and the need for a go kit but it does happen.

Having a basic go kit prepared BEFORE an incident begins will save both time, energy, and anxiety. If you enter into a shelter in place scenario, immediately insure that your go kit is updated and ready to grab and go because you NEVER know when the need to evacuate may be thrust upon you.

As you prepare your go kit, you are encouraged to consider the following guidelines:

- Container: Can your go kit be contained in a backpack or do sheer number of evacuees necessitate something bigger like a box?
- Shelter: Should your kit contain a tent or tarp to protect you from the elements?
- Transportation: Will you be bugging out in a vehicle or on foot? Can you (or your team) physically carry the go kit if necessary?
- Documents: Do you have your passports, visas, or other official documents (medical, financial, housing, etc.) accounted for and packed to travel?
- 411: Do you have a hard copy of important names, phone numbers, emails, and addresses in your kit?
- Rx: Don’t forget to include your prescription meds in your go kit!



Shelter in place vs hibernation. What’s the difference? While often the two terms are synonymous, shelter in place can also refer to the need to “hunker down” for a short amount of time (often in your home) while an acute safety or security situation stabilizes. Hibernation generally lasts for a longer period of time than SIP and people or families may come together at a location to hibernate together for added security and moral support.



Shelter In Place (SIP) Essentials Checklist

Below you will find suggestions for building a basic shelter in place kit.

NOTE: Depending on the situations you may be facing, you should tailor your kit to the two or three most probable threats you may face.

(Example: If rioting is a realistic threat, being able to seal off a room from tear gas is very important as I learned one time in a hotel facing Taskim Square in Istanbul (just because you close the windows does not mean the tear gas wont come in through the air conditioning vent –even if it's turned off...).

1. 2- 4 mil plastic sheeting
2. Duct tape
3. Utility knife
4. Scissors (to cut the plastic sheeting)
5. First aid kit
6. 5-14 day supply of non-perishable food
7. Can opener
8. 5-14 day supply of water (1 gallon of water per person, per day)
9. Flashlight(s)
10. Unit-specific batteries (AA, AAA, C, D, Etc)
11. Cell phone, charger and extra minutes
12. Baby items (diapers, formula, wipes, etc)
13. Battery powered shortwave radio
14. Medications
15. Extra pair of glasses or contact lens & solution
16. Candles or multi-fuel lantern (with extra fuel)
17. Garbage bags and ties
18. Five gallon bucket and lid (at least one...)
19. Extra paper items: toilet paper, paper towels, etc.
20. Fire starting materials (matches and lighters)
21. Cleaning supplies
22. Water purification (bleach, iodine tabs, etc)
23. Emergency contact numbers



Redundancies: Additional Items for Consideration

Some survival needs demand redundancy in crisis planning. When building your SIP kit or go bag, consider building redundancies into areas of your planning such as communications, electricity, lighting, water (both appropriation and purification), fire starting, and other areas as necessary.

Remember, the more unstable the situation, or strategic the need, the greater the need for redundancy in your contingency planning.





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Go Bag/Go Kit Checklist Essentials

In the event of an evacuation, your go bag or go kit will certainly utilize some of the items included in your SIP kit; it only makes sense. That being the case, having your go kit ready in the event of an evacuation is critical in getting out quickly and with what you need (it may also lower your stress somewhat being prepared to move...).

In addition to a basic survival and first aid kit (see my *Survival Kit Primer* for those checklists) there are a few additional items that should be considered when completing your go kit:



Passports and other pertinent travel documents



Prescription Drugs and scripts



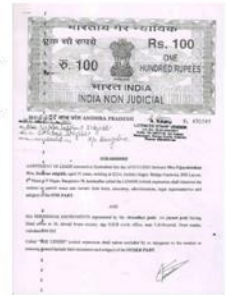
Sleeping gear



Tent or other basic shelter



Tool Kit



Housing information



Vehicle title, registration, and other legal documents

Extra fuel for evacuation vehicles; unless you plan to walk out... (you should have already topped off the tank...)



Extra clothing



2-way radios

\$500 US in local currency



How Much Is Too Much?

As an expatriate living abroad, you have obviously moved overseas for a reason. Similar to your home country, you need to have a healthy concern for you and your family's safety.

However, being preoccupied with (and attempting to plan for) every security concern is unhealthy and can ultimately create major anxiety for you and your family and even ruin what should be an amazing opportunity and great experience living abroad.



Obviously, many of your security concerns are based on location, the current and changing threat environment, past incidents, personal

experiences, etc. Therefore, seeking a rational, balanced approach to crisis planning based on a holistic approach to risk and security management is important.

Talk with your family, supervisor, security director, even other expatriates who have been living in your country or area for awhile. Perhaps they have insights that could be helpful as you begin your contingency planning.

Also, consider talking to the embassy's Regional Security Officer or other security professionals about your plan. Often government agencies such as FEMA and the US Department of State have prepping lists, valuable insights, and commentary on their websites for crisis and contingency planning. Also check out the many online security and "survival" websites that offer advice and resourcing for survival planning.

Finally, as with any future planning, remember to revisit your contingency plans annually; more often if there are significant changes to your family situation, seasonal changes, or threat environment.

Final Thoughts

The world can be a complicated and sometime dangerous place; we all understand this reality and accept certain risks when we move abroad.

It is up to you to create a contingency plan that includes realistic planning for both hibernation and bugging out when the situation warrants.

Working together with other teammates or families in your area can certainly add a measure of security. However, the greater the number of teammates, the greater the need for communication.

Bottom line, your journey to preparedness may be long but, if you ever need it, it will have been worth it!