



MEMBERS UPDATE

March, 2017

**FIELD GUIDE: HOW TO SURVIVE
A DANGEROUS ANIMAL ENCOUNTER**

Meet the US Army's Next "Official" Sidearm

How to Fortify Your Home Quickly and Easily

Top Gun: The Army's Quest to Replace the M9A1

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Life for everyone will fall apart and chaos will reign.



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SANITATION BREAKDOWNS, VIOLENCE AND
RIOTS WILL ALL HAPPEN AT THE SAME TIME**

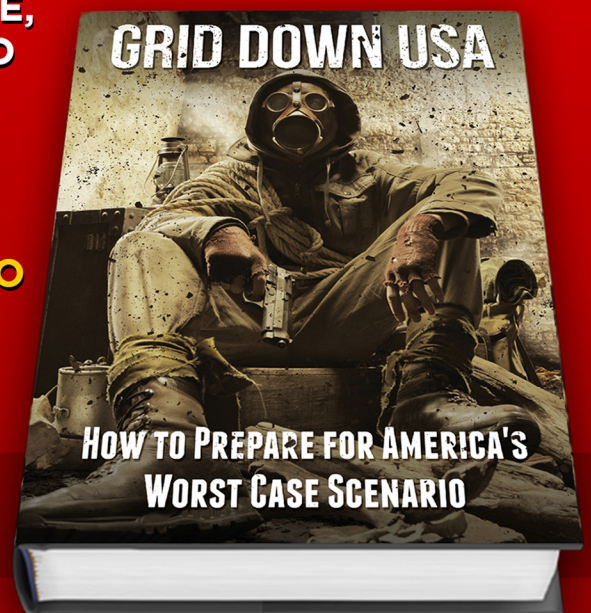
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TOP GUN:

Inside The US Army's Modular Handgun Competition

Ever since the ink dried on the US government's first contract to provide handguns for its soldiers, decision makers in Washington, D.C. have had a pronounced effect on America's taste in handheld firearms.

It could be said that the US Government's choice in handguns is the only thing that it's gotten consistently right throughout the years. The US Army had a key role in the history of several legendary weapons.

Or perhaps this is because our veterans become so intimately familiar with their service pistols that they become advocates for these models after their discharge. Thus, these thought-leaders help to refine the technology and educate other shooters about how to get the best performance out of them.

One thing is for certain, you'd be hard pressed to find two firearms as universally beloved as the Colt Single Action Army or the Colt M1911A1. Despite the fact that these models were developed over a century ago, they are still among the most popular models year after year.

So is it possible that the US Army is just incredibly good at selecting the best handgun platforms? Or is the secret really to let the troops guide the research and development process, taking a great pistol and making it truly outstanding?

Whether it's the chicken or the egg, you have to admit that it's been a winning combination for quite a long time. Over the past 4 years, the US Army has been zeroing in on its next service handgun, a replacement for the Beretta M9A1.

Love it or hate it, the M9A1 is a quality semi-auto platform that's user-friendly, reliable, and highly accurate. Since its adoption in 1985, it's steadily become a patriotic icon of sorts, recognizable from so many movies and TV shows. Despite this 9mm's solid service record, it's on the verge of being retired.

Many GIs will be glad to see the M9's dated technology go, as it scored an abysmal 58% approval ranking with combat troops deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan. In all fairness, an awful lot of major advances have been made in handgun technology since 1985.

As you might expect, handgun nuts of all stripes have been eager to see what comes next. Many veterans never forgave the US military for moving on from the iconic 1911, while others couldn't forgive the controversial decision to adopt the 9mm over the tried and true .45ACP.

PHOTO:

Below: U.S. Air Force

Photo by Staff Sgt Chrissy Best





Millions of firearms enthusiasts are hoping the folks at the Pentagon get it right. Truth be told, there's no chance the Army's next sidearm can escape any and all controversy, no matter which of these fine weapons they adopt.

The good news, however, is that any of the handguns under consideration constitute an upgrade for our troops. The list of firearms that made it to the final round of the government's lucrative MHS (Modular Handgun System) contract reads like a wish list for gun collectors. In fact, that's exactly why we felt it was worth a closer look.

Modular Handgun System Competition Criteria

So, what exactly does it take to become the next official sidearm of the US Army? The MHS standards and guidelines were pretty rigorous, as expected, though they weren't entirely specific. This may explain some of the interesting pistols that made it to the final round.

Several of the requirements put forth were very general. For example, the Army's initial requirements were for the MHS to be more effective, accurate, and reliable than the current M9. Simple enough.

The MHS would also have modular features that allow alternate grips, magazines, and easy mounting of accessories, including suppressors. The Army also requires a non-reflective, neutral color.





Now for the specifics: The gun adopted to be the MHS should have a 90% or greater chance of hitting a 4-inch circle at 50 meters throughout the weapon's lifetime.

The caliber was not specified in the competition's guidelines. However, the effectiveness was compared side-by-side with military grade 9mm FMJ rounds, fired at 50 meters through 14 inches of ballistics gel.

This opened the door to a wide variety of calibers, including .357 SIG, .40 S&W, .45ACP, as well as other calibers that were under heavy consideration.

The reliability/durability requirements are a bit more specific. The Army's Request for Information called for the weapon to cycle through 2,000 rounds between stoppages, 10,000 rounds between failures, and have a 35,000-round service life. The service life expectancy for the Beretta M9 is 15,000 rounds, just for reference.

From the outset, the Army was dead set on getting measureable improvements for their money, and dragged out the search for several years, waiting to find a "system" that checks all the right boxes. In fact, the first RFI for the MHS competition was sent out in January of 2013.

The winner was announced with modest fanfare on January 19th, the day before Donald Trump's inauguration. If you don't already know which gun took top honors, read on; we'll reveal it at the end of this article.

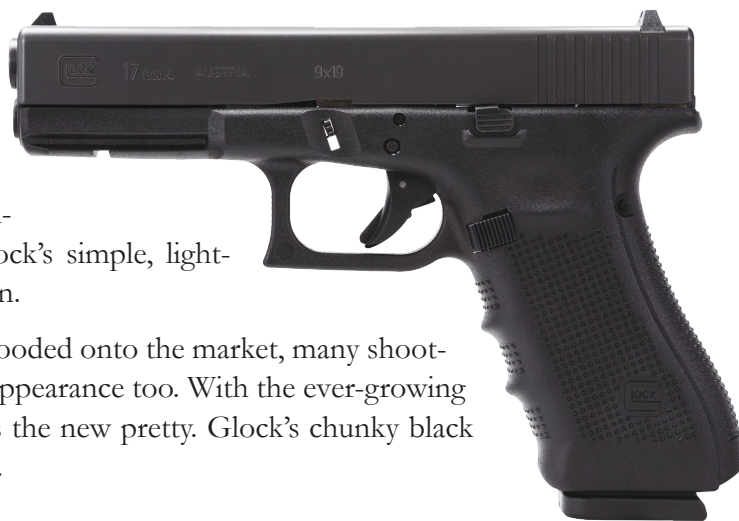
In the meantime, enjoy this tour of what the US Military considers to be the best tactical pistols available today.

Glock 17 or 19

There's just no avoiding it; the Austrian-made Glock changed the course of handgun history with its innovative polymer designs.

Early detractors made fun of Glock's guns for being "made out of plastic" or looking like a "block" (thus the mean-spirited nickname). These days, however, it's plainly obvious that the vast majority of handgun enthusiasts have been won over by Glock's simple, lightweight, and nearly indestructible design.

Judging by how many copycats have flooded onto the market, many shooters have come around to the Glock's appearance too. With the ever-growing market for "tactical" hardware, ugly is the new pretty. Glock's chunky black guns may well have had a hand in that.



It's not looks that put two of Glock's pistols into the MHS final round, though. Interestingly enough, there was a wide-ranging disagreement on which particular model should be considered. Perhaps Glock's strategy was to submit all their applicable models and let the USAF sort it out. That's how many great firearms are in Glock's catalog.

The Glock 19 is a compact model that is easy to carry, fun to shoot, and yet versatile enough to serve pretty much any security application out there.

The Glock 17 is a full-size model, available in a .40 caliber, which was thought to give it an edge if the Army preferred a heavier round. Many federal organizations, such as the FBI, carry these mid-sized versions of this platform.

Expert after expert will tell you, if you're only going to own one pistol, you can't go wrong with a Glock. The question is, does the US Army agree?



Springfield Armory XD

The Springfield XD series has quickly become a fan favorite among pistol enthusiasts, approaching even the Glock in popularity.

It's fun to shoot, it's extremely reliable, and it chews through ammo relentlessly while refusing to jam or misfeed. In other words, it's another one of those rugged polymer guns.

As far as features are concerned, the XD is outfitted with a chamber indicator and a firing pin indicator as well. XD models feature an ambidextrous

magazine release, a grip safety, and a trigger action safety.

The sharp 3 dot sights are easy to get comfortable with and even the shorter models are highly accurate. There's a lot to like and very little to take exception with when it comes to the XD. It just has a nice feel and balance to it in your hand.

When you put the XD and a Glock side by side, the comparisons just can't be avoided. The XD is a bit narrower than the Glock, and the controls and safety are slightly larger than those on the Glock. The .40 XD model comes equipped with two 13 round magazines, so you've got plenty of firepower for the range.

For any of you who might be rooting for team USA here, the truth is that the XD series is 100% a Croatian import from stem to stern, manufactured by HS2000. It is, nevertheless, an excellent weapon.

Beretta APX

As you'll notice, most of the guns on this list are strikingly similar, i.e. they're striker-fired polymer models influenced by Glock.

The Beretta APX clearly follows suit. In fact, the APX appears to have been designed from the ground up to win the coveted MHS contract.



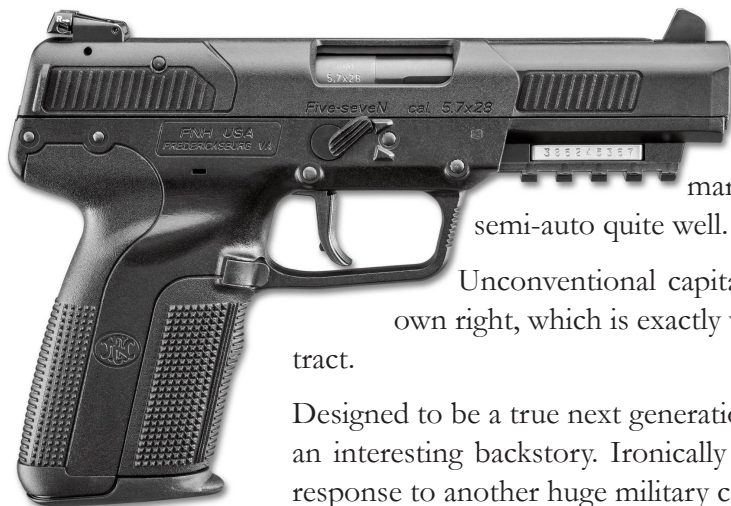
Yes, Beretta is technically an Italian company. However, since the Army adopted the M9 to be its official sidearm, Beretta USA has established quite a presence here in the States, and they'd clearly like to land another Army contract to keep that success going.

After years of its status as stalwart, Beretta has been working to stake out its place in the polymer handgun category. Its best effort yet is the APX.

The fierce looking APX is striker-fired, with a loaded chamber indicator. It has a built-in rail system for mounting lights and other accessories.

There are also a number of handy safety mechanisms to prevent the gun from discharging when dropped or during hasty cleanings where a shooter has neglected to empty the chamber.

As dumb as this sounds, these safety features give the APX a few nice talking points that the USAF wants to hear. Along with the familiarity, reliability, and best-in-class engineering that comes along with the Beretta name, the APX definitely has a lot going for it.



FN Five-seveN

Now for something completely different: the FN Five-seveN. Yes, the name of this dark horse contender is actually trademarked as "Five-seveN," which suits this funky semi-auto quite well.

Unconventional capitalization aside, this gun is innovative in its own right, which is exactly why it was in the running for the MHS contract.

Designed to be a true next generation firearm, this Belgian weapon comes with an interesting backstory. Ironically enough, the Five-seveN was developed in response to another huge military contract.

At the time, NATO was looking to replace the 9mm with a more effective and more versatile round, one that could be used in both handguns and shoulder-fired carbines. The result was the 5.7x28mm cartridge, a necked down centerfire that looks like a .17 HMR on steroids or a .223 that got shrunk in the laundry.

After extensive testing in 2003, NATO recommended the cartridge over a few competitors, and officially, at least, it was heralded as state of the art. Still, the round has been a bit slow to catch on.

Fast-forward to today, the Five-seveN has been adopted by a number of police and military organizations around the world, including the US Secret Service.

But it's been a bit slow to fully penetrate the broader market, so to speak.

Now let's move on to the actual nuts and bolts of the weapon. First off, the Five-seveN is an FN, thus it has the high quality look and feel that we've come to expect from the brand.

The Five-seveN is another competitor in the lightweight polymer class, with ambidextrous mag and slide releases, low recoil, three-dot sights, and high magazine capacity. How high? The Five-seveN comes standard with a 20-round magazine.

There's really no way to describe the gun without talking about the cartridge itself. But those who criticize the 5.7mmX28mm as just a fancy .22WMR, are seriously mistaken.

The high muzzle velocity and small bullet diameter (.224-in) give this gun a lot of interesting ballistic qualities. Muzzle velocity is around 2800 fps for the standard ammo, versus 1,300 fps for the 9mm. This gives the Five-seveN a nice flat trajectory you'd expect from a rifle round.

Also noteworthy is the fact that the 5.7mm round has the ability to penetrate body armor at long distances. This might be the number one advantage that earned the Five-seveN a seat at the table.

Still, despite the impressive ballistics, the Five-seveN is a long shot for several reasons including costs. This ammo is neither cheap nor currently abundant in the US.

CZ P-09

If you've been a fan of semi-auto handguns for any extended period of time, you're probably quite familiar with Czech arms maker CZ (Česká zbrojovka). Most likely, you're familiar with the CZ-75 series.

On par with any US or Austrian-based manufacturer, CZ has a long history of craftsmanship before, during, and after the end of Cold War. CZ's well-respected pedigree definitely does itself proud in the P-09 series.

CZ is well known for participating in competition shooting events and their guns have built a reputation for being extremely accurate. Several versions of the P-09 are suppressor ready from the factory, a big plus if you own or plan to own a suppressor. Perhaps that factors into their bid for the MHS.

The P-09 is the only hammer-fired pistol in an MHS lineup that's otherwise loaded with striker-fired models. As such, it has a familiar single to double action firing mode that's similar to the Beretta M9 with a de-cocker mechanism. It's also equipped with a thumb safety, like a 1911, so you can carry it "cocked and locked" to bypass the single action functionality.

The size of this weapon is on the larger side, comparable to the XDm 5.25 9mm and just a tad heavier. The P-09 is a smooth shooter, with a 19 round magazine capacity. This gun has plenty of firepower and is an excellent value, coming in at around \$500.



PHOTO:

*Above: Bobbfved,
Wikimedia*



We Have a Winner!

Meet the US Army's New Sidearm



PHOTO:

*Above: TexasWarhawk,
Wikimedia*

A new king has been officially crowned, and guess what? The Army selected a Glock-inspired, polymer framed, striker-fired 9mm. That really narrows it down now, doesn't it? The surprising factor is the manufacturer of this cutting edge polymer gun.

SIG Sauer P320

For those of us who've fired lots of SIG handguns throughout the years, well, the P320 doesn't share much in common with those at all.

Introduced in 2014, the P320 is Sig's first ever striker-fired polymer handgun. And wouldn't you know it? The highly respected Swiss-German arms maker scored big on its very first attempt.

A quick look at the P320 makes it clear that this gun is perhaps the most modular design out there. In fact, the apparatus considered to be the "gun" by the federal government (the part with the serial number) is a hunk of metal easily removed from the polymer frame.

That means everything aside from the trigger assembly and striker mechanism can be swapped out "on the fly" by a non-gunsmith in under a minute. Yes, it's hard to believe, but this feat can actually be accomplished by hand fairly easily, no tools required.

P320 owners are able to purchase additional slides and frames, converting their full-size 320 into a compact, sub-compact or carry configuration based on their needs. A TacOps version of the 320 is already available with a threaded barrel and 21-round magazines.

This gun really takes the modular concept to a whole new level. And as far as the Army is concerned, the versatility of that, mixed with the potential cost savings built in to the P320, makes it a very persuasive piece of equipment.



While many would argue that it's impossible to beat the Glock 17 or XD when it comes to reliability, accuracy, etc., the P320 has an obvious edge over the competition in the versatility department.

The modular design gap between the P320 and its competitors is wide enough to drive a Humvee through. We suspect this is what forced the Army's hand when decision time rolled around.

That's not to say that the P320 is lacking in any other department. SIG has a long-standing reputation for best-in-class design and reliability. These are the Swiss/Germans we're talking about here; they're not about to let the Austrians or Croatians one-up them.

The P320 comes standard with ambidextrous controls, a 17-round magazine, and a mil-spec Picatinny rail, as well as the watchmaker precision you'd expect from Sig Sauer.

Sure, many Glock and Beretta enthusiasts will gripe about the decision and the byzantine level of technical requirements that guided the MHS competition, probably for years to come.

Plus, we can't stress this enough, all of the finalists on the MHS list meet the Army's rigorous demands, more or less. All of them are excellent sidearms in their own right and would constitute a major upgrade for the Army. But in hindsight, however, it's easy to see how the P320 set itself apart from the MHS crowd.

When you find a gun that's as reliable as a Glock, shoots as well as an XD, and has the craftsmanship you'd expect from a Beretta, you're really onto something. Throw in the P320's unique "shape shifting" abilities and you've got a solid handgun system that gives up nothing and delivers next-level versatility.

Although it shares so many similarities with the Springfield, Glock, CZ, and others, the P320 is simply the most modular handgun of the bunch. Thus, it makes perfect sense that the P320 is the US Army's new Modular Handgun System.



CHANGE GRIP FIT:


Interchangeable grip modules provide optimal grip circumference and access to controls unlike simply changing a backstrap.



GRIP MODULES	PG. 108	LARGE	MEDIUM	SMALL
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HOW TO FORTIFY YOUR HOME

*Quickly
& Easily*



Whether you want to be proactive, fortifying your home and/or bug out cabin in the here and now, or you simply want tips for what to do quickly in a SHTF situation, we've got you covered!

The most important thing to remember is that there are many items that are probably sitting in your garage, basement or attic right now that could be extremely useful in either scenario.

Essentially, your fortification plans need to be simple and easy to install, yet sturdy enough that they could be used long-term if necessary. You may wish to begin gathering supplies now so that you can have the most impressive fortification system for your specific budget.

1. Make Crossing Your Fence a Daunting Task

Do you have a fence surrounding your property? If so, you can expand the concept of this fence to turn it from a property marker into a viable source of protection. For example, if an emergency has happened and society is in the process of crumbling, you no longer need to be polite in a way that makes the local HOA happy. Instead, you could attach barbed wire to the top of the fence to make it unwelcoming.

Obviously, this isn't something you're going to be able to do right now unless you live in a rural area on a large lot of land. That doesn't mean that you can't keep barbed wire on hand for an emergency.

Believe it or not, you can even order barbed wire online from Amazon or purchase it in person from Home Depot or Lowe's. Be sure to invest in a thick pair of high performance gloves that will enable you to work with the barbed wire without getting hurt.

If you get enough barbed wire, you could also attach it to other key areas around your house and property such as outside your windows. No matter where you put it, this is a quick and easy security improvement that's going to make many people think twice before they attempt to infiltrate your property.



2. Use Wood to Beef up Your Fence

Speaking of fencing, all the barbed wire in the world isn't going to help much if you have rotting fence pickets or a basic chain link fence. This is because all it will take is a swift kick or bolt cutters to make a path through the fence instead of going over it. Unless you have enough barbed wire to cover the entire fence, you will need to find another way to secure this part of your property.

The good news is that you can easily affix wood to the backside of the fence. This will make it much more durable and a lot more difficult to get through.

3. Get Your Plywood Ready

Businesses and homeowners in hurricane prone areas typically use plywood to protect their windows. This can be a very useful fortification tool for many issues, but you need to be prepared in advance.

After all, acquiring plywood and cutting it to the right size takes time. Therefore, we recommend doing this process in advance. Store your plywood in an easily accessible but

discreet area. Make sure the wood is properly marked so that you can put it in place in a hurry. Keep a power drill charged up and ready to go next to the wood.

There are two schools of thought about where to hang the plywood. Should it go outside or inside the window? This really depends on the nature of the emergency. If a massive storm is coming, you need to put it outside, obviously.

Some would argue that putting plywood over your windows could make your home a noticeable target for looters in a SHTF crisis. The fact of the matter is that it's impossible to know what will stick out like a sore

thumb in an unprecedented crisis.

In our view, protecting your window glass is a high priority and there's no good reason to leave it exposed to looters.

4. Be Creative with Booby Traps

Whether your movie interests lean more toward "Home Alone" or "A Nightmare on Elm Street," you've undoubtedly seen many cinematic representations of how useful booby traps can be. However, if you aren't careful, they can be just as harmful to you as they are to trespassers.

With this in mind, we want to start this section with a word of caution: always ensure that everyone you're trying to protect knows where the booby traps are, along with how to avoid them and get rid of them.

Don't forget about your pets and where they might accidentally end up. Most of the booby traps listed are illegal to utilize, so don't put them into action unless it's a true SHTF situation. Finally, as always, we assume no legal responsibility for any damage that may occur from not taking these warnings seriously!

Pain is something everyone wants to avoid. This means that if you can make getting into your house too



painful, most people will skip it and look for an easier place to target. Barbed wire is a solid part of this plan, but what if it's not enough or, even worse, what if you don't have a fence to attach it to? Enter: broken glass!

Broken Glass Booby Trap

Broken glass strategically placed will deliver a powerful and unexpected punch. For example, if your windows are high enough that someone would need to use the ledge to climb up to them, you could place a large amount of broken glass on the ledge outside of the vantage point of someone on the ground. In other words, as they attempt to climb up the ledge, they'll cut their hands up. The same idea can be used on top of anything someone might climb.

You may also want to booby trap the front door because that's how most people will attempt to enter your home. This is especially useful if you have a back or side door that isn't easily visible that can become your main point of ingress and egress.

Trip Wire Booby Trap

Trip wire that is low and hidden by grass or other elements can be used in three ways: as a simple deterrent, as an alarm system or as a means of delivering a serious injury. Either way, the wire needs to be tied between two sturdy places and pulled taut. You can weigh it down with counterweights by tying some excess rope to large rocks. When someone trips, this is going to not only startle them but could cause them to get hurt. For many people, this alone will be all they need to experience to decide to move on to a different house.

You can also use the counterweights to trigger an alarm or an explosive device. There are numerous tutorials

on YouTube that show you exactly how to do this, but it's also a relatively simple and straightforward process that most survivalists can probably figure out on their own. Again, make sure your family knows where the trip wires are and how to avoid them. Keep trip wires away from areas where the family pet will go.

Stake Pit

Now we're really getting into illegal territory in most areas, so don't ever do this unless you're in an apocalyptic situation. Again, we take no legal responsibility for you using any of these booby traps and provide them for informational purposes only.

Stake pits, also known as stick traps, have been used throughout history, perhaps most notably during the Vietnam War. The basic idea is to sharpen bamboo sticks and harden them with fire. Don't have bamboo? No problem! You can emulate this with wood you have access to. The best resource is wooden baseboards.

Dig a pit in an area that is likely to attract foot traffic from intruders. Next, put the stakes inside the pit with the sharpened end pointing up.

From here, you need to cover the pit in a way that makes it look like it's not there. This can be done relatively easily by creating a grass covered trap lid that will fall into the hole if someone steps on it.

When someone falls into this trap, they will have their foot impaled. The depth of the trap helps make this happen due to inertia and the individual's body weight. Even if they somehow manage to get out of the trap, they are going to be in serious pain and in danger of bleeding to death. In other words, they most likely won't be a threat anymore at this point.

Want to be truly ready for when the SHTF? Prepare your pit stakes in advance, but don't put them in place yet. You can also prepare the top of the trap. This will leave you with nothing more than digging a quick hole, inserting the stakes and covering everything. These aspects really shouldn't take very long at all, especially if you keep the components of your stake pit near a shovel. And, of course, you may wish to consider putting multiple stake pits in place after the SHTF in order to truly protect your family and property.





5. Kick Proof Your Doors

Most people are unaware how truly vulnerable their front door is. Yes, it has a lock, maybe even several, but this doesn't mean you're actually safe. Unfortunately, anyone with enough strength and determination can kick through the combination of the average door and lock. It might take them several tries, but if they really want in, they're going to make it happen. That is, unless you take proactive action by kick proofing your doors!

There are a few ways to do this, but the most important thing to do right now is trade your basic locks in for professional grade locks. Make sure you have a deadbolt, and consider getting two of them. Also, don't choose the cheapest doors available. Remember: metal is harder to break through than wood.

Speaking of wood, have some 2x4s ready to go at a moment's notice. Screwing or nailing them in place inside the door will make it even harder for someone to get inside. Do this for any entry doors to keep people out! You may also want to have a set up in place for a chosen panic room so that you can fortify yourself inside that one specific area too, just in case.

6. Keep Your Landscaping Tight

Do you have a lot of trees, shrubs and hedges on your property? On the one hand, this can be good if it helps camouflage your house. After all, if no one can see that there's a house on your property, they'll be a lot less likely to bother you. On the other hand, though, if your home is even slightly visible, the presence of so much greenery is going to make it very hard for you to spot an intruder approaching.

Home security companies recommend keeping bushes small enough that they don't provide a good hiding spot. You'll also want to take the time to trim everything back on a regular basis to minimize the number of places on your property that someone can use to their advantage.

One word of caution: if society has crumbled, it's important to consider what's more dangerous; a house that looks maintained and lived in or a house that looks abandoned. There are pros and cons to each approach. For example, if your home looks abandoned, looters may be more likely to stop by. Alternatively, if your house looks lived in, you will scare off casual looters but may attract the attention of much more nefarious individuals.

Whichever route you decide to take, be sure to keep up with it for the long-haul. Therefore, you'll either trim your shrubbery regularly or let it go completely after the SHTF.

PHOTO:

Below: David Catchpole



7. Have Weapons Handy

If all else fails, you need to have weapons handy to protect yourself and defend your property. We have provided several ideas and resources throughout the years for how to hide a weapon in your home, but let's go over a few quick reminders. Behind a framed photo, inside a fake electrical outlet, hanging in the door frame of your closet or inside a hallowed out book are all great choices.

The argument between whether or not to store a loaded and ready-to-fire weapon is a question of living situations and personal philosophy. Our recommendation has always been that the safest and most effective place to keep a loaded firearm is in a holster on your person.

Begin Your Preparations Now!

Many people put off these important preparations because they think it will be expensive. If all else fails, you can use scrap wood as your main fortification tool.


This is quick, cheap and may be easily accessible in a way that barbed wire and other supplies aren't during an emergency. Prepare as much as you can now by cutting everything to size and putting all of it in an easy to grab location.

Be sure to place supplies together for easy usage. For example, a charged drill needs to be near the wood. You can have the screws in the plywood already to make everything even quicker! If you have barbed wire, keep thick gloves with this part of your fortification stash. As to broken glass, you can simply keep a few empty six packs of beer bottles in an easy to grab location.

No matter what happens, don't fall victim to the "wait and see" mentality. Although you can't enact the legally questionable techniques right now and certainly don't want to leave plywood over your windows on a permanent basis, it will be important to take action as soon as there's any conclusive evidence that the shit has indeed hit the proverbial fan.

MINIMIZING THE RISK

OF a DANGEROUS ANIMAL ENCOUNTER



We all know that hiking, hunting, and fishing expeditions are a great way to relax and decompress. However, a relaxing walk in the woods can get dicey in a hurry if you manage to cross paths with a grizzly.

One tense encounter and you'll no doubt realize how important it is to know what to do, and what not to do, when you surprise a potentially dangerous animal in the wild.

Any animal can be aggressive if it's sick or feels threatened. And you don't want rabies from any animal, big or small. What you really need to watch out for, of course, are larger aggressive predators such as bears or a pack of wolves.

There are a few things you can do to reduce your risk of having an encounter with a vicious wild animal, and we'll start there. You can also take steps to minimize the risk of an animal attacking after it has already spotted you, and that's something we'll also address during this article.

SAFEGUARDING YOUR CAMP

Animals typically enter a human's camp for only one reason: food. This means that if you're sheltering outside, even if you're in a cave, you must keep your food smells to a minimum. This is especially true at night when your lack of activity will make animals feel more confident about invading your camp.

The first thing you need to know is that it's a myth that you can keep your food safe by tying it up in a tree. Not only will this still enable the food smell to attract predators but there are also several creatures that can climb. Instead, you want your food to be kept in sealed containers that keep their odors inside. You also need to make sure your food isn't visible. Never leave a see-through container or cooler visible because bears have learned that these are sources of food.

Other smells will also attract wildlife. This means that burying or burning your garbage is a big priority, as



is burying your bodily waste. Be sure to dispose of everything at least 200 feet away from your camp. It's also imperative to steer clear of products that put off a smell such as scented deodorant. Stick with unscented products instead so that animals are less likely to be enticed from afar.

These tips will keep the majority of larger animals out of your camp, but you may still deal with smaller, more obnoxious creatures. Always remember that leaving any food behind will act as a wildlife commercial that advertises your camp as the latest and greatest dining spot for animals.

SURVIVING a DANGEROUS ANIMAL ENCOUNTER

So you've taken all of the precautions with your camp and have been very careful to keep an eye out for tracks and other signs of dangerous creatures. Still, you end up face-to-face with an angry grizzly bear or a hungry coyote. The actions you take in this situation will have a big impact on whether or not you make it out alive. In some cases, your actions, or lack thereof, can even prevent the animal from attacking altogether. Because each creature requires a different approach, we're going to break this survival guide into sections. First up, black bears!

BLACK BEARS

According to Smithsonian Magazine, the biggest risk in this category is encountering a hungry male black bear. August is the most likely month for an attack because they're preparing for winter denning.

Traveling in groups of three or more may not be your desired plan after the SHTF, but if you're going to be taking refuge in bear country, it might be your best bet. Researchers have found that fatal bear attacks almost never happen to people within a group of at least three people. This is probably because bears are intimidated by the amount of noise that a group makes.



You also need to keep an eye out for bear tracks and scat. Recognizing that you've wandered into a bear's territory can help you move on and seek out a better spot to take shelter before the bear is even aware that you're nearby.

Most black bears will stalk their prey for an extended period of time before attacking. Remain cognizant of your surroundings at all times. If you spot a bear trying to be stealthy and staying near you instead of moving through the area, it's time to become proactive.

Believe it or not, black bears are actually timid and shy by nature. However, they're also the most likely to kill a human, and this is due to their preference for an easy kill and food source. If you don't make it easy for them, they'll usually run away. This means standing your ground and being as loud as possible if you see a bear stalking you. If it's on its way to attack, though, you'll need to protect your neck and face while speaking to the bear in a calm, soothing tone. We know that's hard to do with a bear coming right for you, but it's still one of the best methods to get them to call off an attack.

If you happen to have bear pepper spray handy, you can use this for defense. As always, make sure that you don't start running because bears can go much faster than you and will easily catch up.

Be aware that black bears like to bluff their way into a cleared out environment. This happens when they want you to leave the area. A bear bluff consists of running toward you, but then altering their course at the last second so that they don't actually hit you. If this happens to you, speak in a calm voice and begin to slowly back away.

GRIZZLY BEARS

The differences between a black bear and grizzly bear attack prove that you can't take one standard approach to all of these creatures. Sadly, doing exactly what you'd do for a black bear attack while encountering a grizzly bear instead could be what causes you to become seriously injured or even die. Learning what to do for each species, along with how to quickly identify them, is a must for any survivalist.



Grizzly bear attacks are usually brought on by a mother bear's desire to keep the area clear and safe for her cubs. Therefore, if you see any signs that grizzly bears are nearby, especially cubs, you should exit the area before they spot you. Building camp near a grizzly bear den is a terrible idea that can be avoided by learning to spot their tracks and scat.

What happens if you get caught unaware and have to defend yourself? As with any other bear, you shouldn't run because there's no way you're fast enough. The only possible exception to this would be if you're just a few feet away from a cabin or other closeable structure that you can reach extremely quickly. Even then, you run the risk of agitating the bear, and an angry grizzly can do a lot of damage to a cabin.

You've probably heard that you can survive a bear attack by playing dead. This isn't true with black bears because they want the easiest source of food possible. With a grizzly bear, though, you can defuse the situation by pretending to be dead. After all, the mother bear simply wants to protect her cubs from something she perceives to be a threat. If that threat appears to go away, she'll be appeased and can go back to her normal activities.

Of course, it's still best to roll into a ball and protect your face, throat and back of your neck while you're playing dead. You can also use bear pepper spray to fight back against a grizzly, but you usually won't need to do this if you play dead instead. Grizzlies do weigh as much as 600 pounds, though, so if they continue to investigate you after they believe you're dead, you could still end up getting injured. However, the injuries shouldn't be nearly as severe as they would have been if that grizzly knew you were alive.



COYOTES (SOLO OR IN A PACK)

A coyote isn't the worst of your troubles if society has fallen apart. After all, there are only two recorded instances in U.S. history of a coyote killing a human. Having said this, you still need to know how to defend yourself to avoid serious injuries and the risk of becoming number three.

As with any other dangerous animal, it's imperative to educate yourself about coyotes. Learn how to identify them based on appearance, tracks and scat. Find out their typical territories in your surrounding area. If you see an area that coyotes appear to frequent, don't build your camp anywhere nearby.

Despite these precautions, you may still end up facing off with an aggressive coyote or even a pack of coyotes. Your reaction to this situation will be a major deciding factor in whether you are attacked. For example, if you must take shelter in an area that contains coyotes, be sure to carry a large stick and some type of noisemaker with you at all times. Both of these items can help you scare off a coyote that has decided it may want to attack you.

Next, always remember that coyotes are usually scared of larger predators, and this includes humans. Unlike black bears, if you see a coyote following you from a distance, it's most likely shadowing you to ensure that you leave the area. This isn't a stalking maneuver. Instead, it's their way of feeling safe. Still, if you see this type of behavior, be sure to calmly keep walking until the coyote leaves. If it becomes more agitated, you might be walking toward its den. In this situation, changing your direction may make things better.

In some cases, a coyote may appear to be trying to threaten you off with more aggressive actions. If you

experience this, you can engage in the act of hazing to scare the coyote away. This means making yourself appear as large as possible, combined with making loud noises. You should also stand your ground and maintain eye contact with the coyote until it backs away. If the coyote is still approaching you, throw rocks and sticks in its direction. Try to avoid actually hitting the coyote, though, unless you have no other choice.

Never turn your back on a coyote. Doing this gives them alpha status and encourages them to attack. If your efforts at getting them to leave you alone aren't working, you may need to maintain eye contact while slowly backing away. This should eventually get them to lose interest and wander off.

After doing all of this, it's still possible a coyote or pack may become aggressive. In these instances, you need to protect yourself. Start by throwing clumps of dirt and sticks at the coyote. Again, you can make loud noises as a deterrent. If this fails and the coyote gets near, you can protect yourself with a large stick.

On the rare occasions that none of this works and the coyote attacks, you need to protect your throat and arteries. Coyotes will usually lunge at the throat during an attack. Again, only two humans have been killed by a coyote during an attack, so your odds of survival are very good. If medical facilities still exist, you'll need to get to one as soon as possible after the attack. Be sure to refer to the many emergency medical tips we've published in the past to help you patch up your wounds.

SPECIAL NOTE: If you have a pet with you, a coyote becomes much more dangerous. This is due to their tendency to attack and kill smaller animals, including dogs. Therefore, upon spotting a coyote, you need to get your pet in the safest spot possible. Make sure they're tied to something so that they can't run free. Unfortunately, many dogs will run straight to their death if left to their own devices because they want to protect you and the camp from the coyote. While this is noble, it can also easily lead to death.

GRAY WOLVES OR A PACK OF WOLVES

Although the risk of being attacked by a gray wolf or pack of wolves is actually quite rare, the imagery that this phrase conjures up is still terrifying. No wonder it's been used in several horror movies; the idea of being eaten alive by multiple wolves has probably kept many people out of the woods. As a survivalist,



you're not going to join the lemmings who are afraid of the woods, but you also always need to remember to respect the woods and every creature living there. When you forget this lesson, your odds of an attack go way up.

Wolves require a roaming distance of about 10 square miles for each member of their pack. This means that the typical pack will enjoy a space of approximately 60 to 80 square miles. This minimizes your odds of encountering them, but it does give you numerous opportunities to spot their tracks and scat. If you discover you've entered wolf territory without being spotted, get out of the area as soon as you can. This isn't the spot where you want to set up camp unless you have no other options.

If you somehow find yourself on the receiving end of hostility from a wolf or pack, be sure to stay as calm and collected as possible. Your first instinct may be to run, but this would be a terrible idea. Wolves chase running prey all the time, so don't make yourself look even more like a source of food by trying to run away.

Unlike coyotes, it's never okay to get into a staring contest with any wolf, regardless of whether or not he's alone or in a pack. To wolves, anyone who engages them in a stare down is a threat that must be dealt with. Therefore, if you make and keep eye contact, you're inviting them to attack you.

Never turn your back on a wolf. This makes you ap-

pear weak and, again, turns you into a more viable source of food. Instead, you can back away slowly. If they determine you're not a serious threat but also not an easy source of food, they will most likely move on.

When wolves begin to show signs of aggression such as growling, it's time to make yourself appear too scary to mess with. Raise your arms over your head to appear larger. Shout at the wolves. You can also throw stones in their direction to let them know you won't be easy to take down. In most cases, this will be enough to get them to run away. Remember: at their core, wolves (and coyotes) are part of the canine family. Just like dogs, they get intimidated by large predators and noise.

The last tip for preventing a wolf from attacking may seem impossible to follow, but wildlife experts say it's a biggie. Never, ever allow them to see your fear. You also have to avoid falling at all costs. If you fall, you'll become an instant target. So when you're backing up, go slowly and do your best to remain aware of your surroundings to reduce your risk of falling down.

Sometimes, following all of this advice may not be enough. If a pack of wolves, or even a single wolf, lunges at you, curl into a ball and protect your face, throat and neck. Since 1900, there have only been 10 reported cases of a wolf killing a human in North America and Europe. The majority of these attacks happened in Europe, and no deaths have been reported in the contiguous United States.



COUGARS (MOUNTAIN LIONS)

Cougars, which are also known as mountain lions, are beautiful creatures. Unfortunately, they're also deadly. Even worse is the fact that conventional wisdom for surviving an attack may not actually be true.

Scientific American reported back in 2009 that studies indicated standing still instead of backing out of the area led to an increase in injuries. Standing still did slightly reduce the death rate, but injuries and the odds of being attacked altogether went up. So what's the right call; standing still or slowly backing out of the area? We're honestly not sure. But you should probably base your decision on how aggressive the cougar seems.

What we do know for sure is that running away will put you on the cougar's menu for the day. So if you're going to move, do so slowly. Also, never turn your back on a cougar and be sure to maintain eye contact at all times.

Making yourself appear to be bigger than you actually are is always a good way to intimidate a cougar. It's also wise to make loud noises. And, of course, if an attack happens, you'll want to protect yourself as

much as possible. Fighting back may become necessary, and you can use a walking stick to do so. Ram the cougar in the head with it if possible. Also, if there's anyone else nearby, they may be able to scare the cougar away during the attack by being loud and making themselves look really big.

THE AFTERMATH

If you survive an encounter without it turning into an attack, it's a good idea to consider relocating your camp. Most attacks happen because the animal feels threatened, and this means you're too close to their den. Remember: you can use the appearance of tracks and scat to help you steer clear of a dangerous animal's territory.

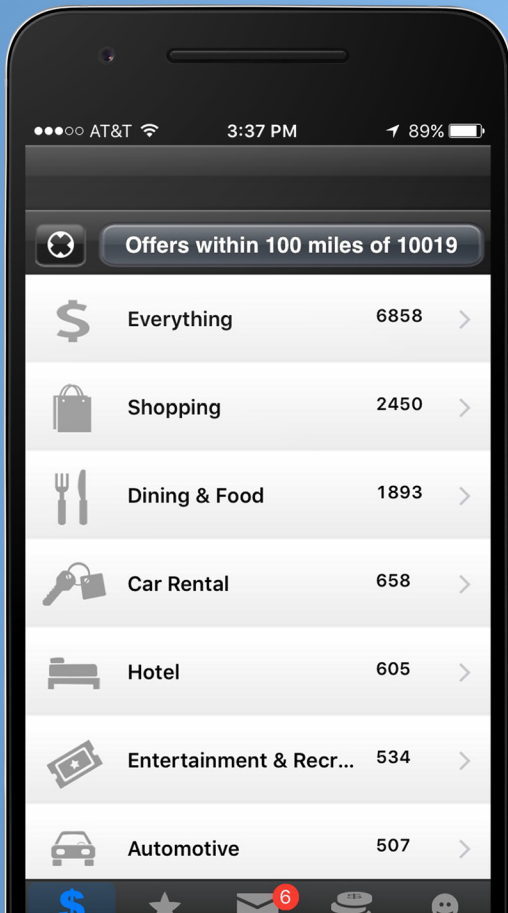
In some instances, you can do everything right and still get attacked. Protecting your most vital areas (neck, face and throat) will be essential to minimize the damage. After the attack, use whatever you have on hand to bandage up your wounds. Try not to panic while you exit the area. The odds of a repeat attack are very low. Ultimately, the animal just wants you to leave its territory. If you comply, they'll usually leave you alone.



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