



# MEMBERS UPDATE

November, 2017



**Conquer the "Prepper's Shopping Dilemma"**

**The NSRA's Ultimate Christmas Gift Guide**

**9 Ways to Beat the Panic Buying**

**Long-Term Fuel Storage 101**



# Tactical Laser Sight



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## Conquer the “Prepper’s Dilemma”

Are you grappling with the tough decision between buying your loved ones pragmatic (but boring) “prepper” gifts, versus trendy little trinkets that serve almost no purpose at all? Better read this.



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## The NSRA’s Ultimate Gift Guide

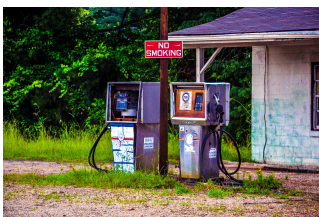
Save time and upstage everyone at the Christmas tree with these rock solid, smile inducing self-reliance gifts. There’s an idea here for everyone on your list. All of these, mind you, cost less than 50 bucks.



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At the first hint of trouble, grocery store shelves are quickly picked clean. There’s only one way to make sure you have enough supplies when the panic buying starts. We’ll give you step-by-step instructions.



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If you depend on a combustion engine, it’s high time you take steps to build an adequate emergency fuel reserve. It’s very simple, budget-friendly, and it can save your bacon in an evacuation.





# THE NSRA CHRISTMAS SHOPPING SURVIVAL GUIDE: 2017 EDITION

It's time to get serious about knocking out your Christmas shopping list, dear readers. No one wants to be that guy driving around town on Christmas Eve, staring at the picked over shelves and stewing as they vow, 'Never again will I wait this late!'

As it turns out, the universal motto, 'Always be prepared,' applies to holiday shopping as directly as it does to self-reliance.

The secret to getting your friends and family truly great gifts is having a solid game plan. And, as per usual, a little thoughtful preparation goes a long way, both in terms of upping your game in the gift department and preventing 'bah humbug' shopper fatigue.

Invest a little pre-shopping forethought and you can focus on what's really important this season: spending quality time with the most important people in your life. With that in mind, let's

**2** to call the "Preppers Dilemma: Xmas Edition."

It may sound corny, but we all experience it at some level, every single year.

It goes like this: You want to get your family members something with some staying power, something they'll actually use, and something they'll value later down the line. Maybe you'd like to help them become a little more self-reliant in the event they find themselves in a crisis situation of some kind.

On the other hand, you'd also like to get them something that puts a big fat smile on their





face. You know, something fun and exciting that they want to take out of the package and start fiddling around with then and there.

In short, we're torn. Should we get them something fun like a bottle of booze... or an always practical bucket of freeze dried survival food? Don't get the food bucket, btw.

It often seems like we have to pick one, like there really isn't anything available that's going to check both boxes. Part of this is a byproduct of simple retail tunnel vision. The more we stress out about it, the fewer options it seems like there are. Another part is the fact that the vast majority of stuff marketed to survivalists is boring, unimaginative junk you'd never really use unless your life truly depended on it.



## YOU CAN CHECK BOTH BOXES

The key to a truly great gift is to accomplish both immediate excitement for the recipient, but also to create that moment, several weeks or months later, where they stop and think "This thing is actually pretty awesome. So-and-so really knows their stuff." That's what you want; and we're here to help you accomplish both same day excitement and ongoing "told you so" supremacy.

That's why we've compiled a list of top-notch, high-quality, smile-worthy gift ideas that will go down in history as the most thrilling and visionary gifts of Christmas 2017. Because, really folks, why do anything halfway?

You might be thinking, I already know that I can get my friends and family great gifts... if I'm willing to pay through the nose! Well, here at the NSRA, we appreciate that all resources, including your finances, are key factors in your self-reliance planning, and we wouldn't urge you to waste one cent. That's the genius of this list, if we may say so. Nothing on this shopping list costs more than \$50!

Yes, when you head to the store without a plan, finding a great gift for \$50 is like pulling teeth. In fact, the enterprising retailers have put a lot of time and research into making it that way on purpose. We don't begrudge them for it; for as we say, fortune favors the prepared mind. And if you're unprepared when you go shopping, there's a good chance you'll pay more.

Go in with a plan, however, and you can make out like a gifting bandit. Without further ado, here are our top 10 gifts that hit that gift giving sweet spot for all types of people on your list, and every item is on the inexpensive end of the retail spectrum.

## SMITH AND WESSON M&P AIR PISTOL



Did you really think we were going to get through this list without including at least one thing that shoots? Of course not.

If you're a longtime NSRA reader, you know that we're big proponents of simulations to maximize training time and technique. If you are getting someone familiar with firearms for the first time, this is an excellent place to start.

While it's true that no simulation beats actual range time, some training tools can be just



as much fun. That's where the M&P air pistol comes in. Air pistols have come a long way in recent years, and not just in terms of accuracy. The major strength of today's air pistols comes in the fact that many are scale replicas of popular firearms like the 1911, Beretta F92, etc.

Case in point, the M&P 40 Air Pistol is an accurate replica of the highly popular M&P 40 and fits in the same holsters. It even mounts the same type of tactical hardware (if you're so inclined) on its integrated Picatinny rail.

For anyone looking to get more handling time without drastically increasing your trips to the range, this can be your backyard sidearm. In fact, you can run tactical shooting drills in your own space that virtually no public range would ever allow; and do it safely to boot!

The M&P 40 air gun features a blowback slide, magazine release, and thumb operated safety. It's pretty much as identical as possible to the original M&P 40. In fact, the magazine holds 19 BBs, which is somewhat realistic at only 4 more rounds than the .40S&W version. The magazine itself holds both your ammunition and the CO2 cartridge, which fires the .177cal BBs at an advertised 480fps.

Made by Umarex, a well-respected name in air guns, this replica air pistol will be a heck of a lot of fun for anyone, whether or not they count tactical shooting among their favorite pastimes. This \$35 gift is almost guaranteed to come straight out of the box once unwrapped. Don't forget ammo and CO2 cartridges. Remember: no one wants to get a battery-operated item without batteries, so you shouldn't give someone an air pistol without the supplies necessary to try it out.

## THE CASE XX SODBUSTER JR.

We don't need to tell you that everyone needs a rock-solid pocketknife to whittle, perform a ridiculous number of daily tasks, or just to show off to buddies when they need to cut open some packaging. Thing is, great looking, high-quality knives are expensive, right? Actually, they're not.



For an heirloom quality knife with a vaunted steel blade that's made in the USA by one of the most collected brands in the history of cutlery, you only have to shell out around 25 bucks, depending on the options.

W.R. Case has been handcrafting the Sod Buster and its little brother, the Sod Buster Jr., in its Bradford, Pennsylvania, factory for forever and a day. The Sod Buster Jr. is based on a classic folding knife pattern with no locking mechanism. The "Jr." is an excellent sized knife for pocket carry, with a 3 and 5/8 inches closed length and a 2 and 5/8 blade.

Case offers this knife with a wide array of attractive handle materials and blades in either its classic Chrome Vanadium or Tru-Sharp Stainless Steel. The stainless is a bit easier to maintain and holds a razor-sharp edge, while collectors seem to prefer the even sharper CV option, which develops a patina over time.

You can't really go wrong with this knife, especially given the extremely reasonable price for a hand-crafted, American made piece of hardware. This is quite literally a collectible and something that can be passed down from generation to generation.

## KERSHAW SKYLINE

Is the person you're shopping for a bit more of a tactical gearhead than a collector of nostalgia? Perhaps a little more of a John Wick fan than a John Wayne fan?

Don't worry; we've got you covered. It just so happens that one of the most popular pocket





knives among your gearheads does, surprisingly, fall within our \$50 budget. The Kershaw Skyline 1760 is one of the highest rated EDC folding knives with a great deep ride pocket clip, slim G-10 handle, and barely noticeable carry weight of 2.3 oz.

Kershaw's US-made knives typically come with scary sharp blades, and the 1760 somehow seems even sharper. The Skyline packs an impressive 3.1 inch drop point Sandvik steel blade, ideal for all kinds of everyday uses. How they managed to design a knife with a 3+ inch blade that weighs 2.3 oz., we really don't know.

We could go over all the stats one by one, but it really wouldn't do this knife justice overall. This model just has nice ergonomics and weight that thousands of fans can attest to. It has a very stout liner lock mechanism, and it rides really comfortably in your pocket. At \$40, this knife really makes you wonder why anyone who has done their research would pay over \$100 for a competitor's knife.

If you want a slightly more economical model, say for a young'un that you suspect may not be great at keeping up with their tools, check out the Chinese made Kershaw Chill. It's a very similar design to the Skyline, with similarly excellent specs at only \$18.

## PORTABLE POWER PLANT

One of the most surprising things we learned in the aftermath of hurricanes Harvey and Irma is just how dependent we've become on our phones for communication. If you tried to get through to anyone in one of the affected areas, you were no doubt exposed to the rushed, just the facts, battery conserving form of conversations that became a hallmark of the 2017 hurricane season.

Anyone with a working cell signal had to conserve their battery life as much as humanly possible, because the power was out indefinitely. It's a terrible feeling when you get into a serious, rapidly evolving situation and you realize your phone is down to 8% battery life.



But that's not a problem at all if you have the Portable Power Plant. This portable power bank is simple to charge, simple to use, and can recharge most smart phones fully 2.5 times – enough for several days of use.

If you know any backcountry hikers, hunters, or fisherman who like to wander out of cellphone range, so to speak, this is both a practical and safety-minded gift they'll no doubt come to rely on.

What's more, it isn't a delicate piece of machinery you have to worry about constantly. This charger is waterproof, dustproof, and shockproof. You can even hang it on the outside of your hiking backpack so its solar panels can work their magic while it bounces around or gets rained on. Oh, and it's lightweight too.

This device really won us over during the last hunting season, as our phones seemed to just burn through their batteries searching for a signal in the backcountry. We



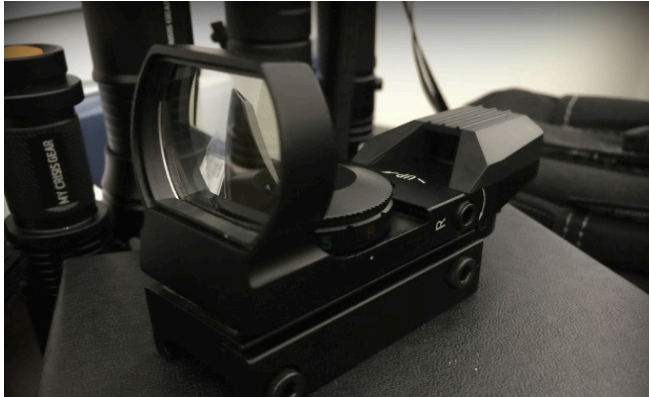
would plug them into our Portable Power Plants and juice 'em back up.

Order Yours Here: [mycrisisgear.com/powerplant](http://mycrisisgear.com/powerplant)



## RED DOT SIGHT

Got a gun nut on your list? If you're reading this, then you probably have more than one gun collector to shop for. And you know how it is; the more toys you have, the more accessories you need, right?



Red dot sights have become a tactical shooting mainstay, beginning with the interest in military style carbines, and now they're catching on in the handgun world as well. For example, the gun selected to serve as the USAF sidearm going forward, the Sig P320, features a red dot. The awesome thing about these sights is their adaptability.

Traditional riflescopes are great for long distance shooting, but not at all ideal for tactical shooting or mid-range plinking. Red dots allow you to keep your head in a comfortable eyes up position while getting better results and much quicker shots.



The glowing red or green reticles available on demand with the MCG Red Dot allow the shooter 6 different options, each with 5 intensity levels. If you've never shot with a red dot before, we guarantee it will win you over.

**6** The MCG Red Dot is much more advanced

that the original "red dots" tubes to hit the market. Yet, despite the fact it has green and red reticles, all of these optics are generally referred to as "red dots."

**Bonus:** If your giftee struggles with poor eyesight, the MCG Reflex Red Dot looks even more appealing (no pun intended). By projecting the reticle on a lens, you can eliminate the need to focus on the front sight, rear, and the target. Instead, everything appears on the same plane just a few inches from their face, which can work wonders for those who need corrective lenses.

Order Yours Here: [mycrisisgear.com/reddot](http://mycrisisgear.com/reddot)

## MCG TACTICAL LASER SIGHT

Got another gun nut or two on your shopping list? The simple fact is that anyone who owns a late model semi-auto pistol with a built-in rail system (the majority of them do) has had thoughts about buying something to mount on that rail.

Most likely, they haven't done so because tactical lasers and similar equipment is



usually very expensive. In the case of the MCG laser sight, this is absolutely not the case.

For well under our \$50 ceiling, you can get a gun toy that will really get them pumped up but also help them improve their speed and accuracy at the range or even during a home defense scenario. In fact, law enforcement studies have shown major improvements in hit ratios in real-life threat scenarios once lasers were introduced.

According to a study published by Crimson Trace, only 25% of bullets fired by law enforcement officers hit their intended target. Yes, it seems incredibly low, but in the heat of the moment, often shooting from an improvised position, it's very difficult to focus on those darned iron sights.



Laser sights, on the other hand, support the natural tendency to focus on the target itself, which is a part of the reason law enforcement hit ratios increased to almost 90% after laser sights were introduced. In the heat of the moment, especially in home defense scenarios, the vast majority of aiming systems are simply ineffective.

Consider for a moment clearing a hallway at 3 AM after hearing someone breaking in. It's dark, you're rounding corners, and you want to keep your weapon close to your body for security. It's just not conducive to using your sights. If you don't have a low-light solution in place, it may cost you. The MCG Tactical Laser Sight puts this SWAT level technology at your recipient's disposal, giving them a serious tactical advantage.

What's more, it takes roughly 2 minutes to remove from the packaging and install on your favorite handgun or rifle. You push the button on the laser and start making basic adjustments (using the hex wrenches included) to align the red laser with your iron sights without even glimpsing at the manual. Perhaps best of all, you can do all this for just \$20, batteries included.

Order Yours Here: [mycrisisgear.com/laser](http://mycrisisgear.com/laser)

## REEBOW GEAR TACTICAL ASSAULT BACKPACK

You may not be able to make your loved ones carry around a "bug out bag," but you can buy them the bag. We're joking, of course... or are we?

Look, everyone needs a good sturdy backpack. That's probably something all of us self-reliance types can agree on. Bug out bags get a lot headlines in the world of "survivalism," but the utility of a good backpack goes far beyond an Armageddon scenario.

If you're going to the gun range, the deer lease, or just to visit some friend out of town, the same backpack can serve all these purposes, provided it's well-sized and well-made.



There are lots of great options out there when it comes to packs, but the combination of practicality and price offered by the Reebow Tactical Assault pack is virtually unbeatable. With a 34-liter capacity, this pack won't hold everything and the kitchen sink. That's not a bad thing, however, because it means this pack is ideally sized for comfortable carrying.

The Reebow tactical backpack is compatible with the MOLLE system (Modular Lightweight Load-carrying Equipment). This makes it ideal for carrying all types of small gear, or just for looking tactical and cool. If the person you're shopping for is a "range rat," they'll no doubt appreciate the compartments, ideal for storing ammo, magazines, etc.

In fact, the straps and padding are by all counts very comfortable, more so than other packs that are twice the price. The Reebow is super sturdy, is compatible with a 2.5-liter hydration bladder, and it comes with a cool American flag patch. All this, for a price of \$35 bucks on Amazon.

## COLEMAN WHITE WATER SLEEPING BAG

For the person on your list who likes to ramble, whether they prefer backpacking or road trips, a comfortable, well-insulated sleeping bag is a slam dunk. Many of us, especially those of us old enough to have forgotten our wilder days, tend to forget how incredibly convenient a sleeping bag can be when it's time to get some impromptu shuteye.





We all know how important sleep is to our everyday health. It's far more important in a crisis scenario, when it's also harder to get. That's why we recommend a bag that is suited for cold weather. The Coleman White Water is an excellent bag, designed for 30-50°F temperatures, at a very good value.

At the fifty-dollar and under range, you won't find a bag rated for -20 degrees, but a bag that insulated isn't very practical for most people anyway. You'd almost never be able to use it without waking up drenched in sweat. A Mylar emergency blanket is a much cheaper option and very easy to carry if a cold weather SHTF scenario is what you're concerned with.



This poly-filled bedroll by Coleman is one of the best-reviewed bags out there at a gift-friendly price range, great for hikers or car campers alike. There's a zipper "plow" designed to prevent those annoying fabric snags. It's comfortable, durable and will get the job done, whether you're backcountry camping or road tripping across the country.

## **BUSHNELL FALCON 10X50MM BINOCULARS**

When you need to see something far away, there's just no substitute for a good pair of binoculars. And if you've shopped for a pair recently, you've probably been taken aback with how much even an entry level pair of binoculars costs.

**8** Enter the Bushnell Falcons. A time-honored classic among bird watchers and hunters,

Bushnell's Falcon model is about as tried and true as it gets. These bino's aren't the most compact out there, but the porro prisms do produce a very nice, bright image with a 50mm objective lens to gather light for dawn/dusk viewing.



The hallmark of these binoculars is the big honking "Insta-Focus" lever in the middle of the frame, which actually does make it a bit quicker to make adjustments as that trophy buck is walking across that opening in the tree line.

Sure, these aren't waterproof or shockproof like you might get if you were willing to pay \$200, but for \$37, they're an excellent value. There are several models available in this same price range which use more advanced BAK-4 prisms and have a bit sleeker design. The issue we've found over the years is that these tend to have very short lifespans. Either the eye relief pieces fail, focus knobs break, or the left and right images get knocked out of alignment, then your "me-too" BAK-4s become junk.

With the Falcons, you're getting a better overall product and one that will last you much longer. With coated lenses and a nice wide field of view, the Falcons represent the best design for this price range. These are excellent glasses for the entry level sportsman, and they're also a pair of binoculars you'll never feel the need to replace.

## **ESTWING FIRESIDE FRIEND**

For anyone who loves campfires (which includes pretty much everyone, right?), they're gonna need some type of firewood splitting



tool to achieve the perfect campfire. Well, we won't go so far as to call the Fireside Friend "perfect," but we will say this camp axe/splitting maul/mini-sledge is pretty darn close.



And get this; although you could consider it a multi-tool (the flat side works great as a shop hammer), the fact is this thing splits logs with the best of 'em. Estwing's marketing claims the 14 inch all-steel handle is designed to create maximum splitting leverage, and according to our reviewers, this seems to be an accurate statement.

Weighing in at a comfortable 4 pounds, one of the standout qualities of this fire tool is its ease of handling for a wide range of people. Longer and heavier splitting mauls can be intimidating and unwieldy. True to its name, this blue UV-coated axe is highly approachable for all sorts of users, especially compared to an 8 lb. maul.

A large, hefty tool like this Fireside Friend makes for an impressive gift, and one that tends to flatter. Given its convenient size and excellent utility factor, this tool is a great choice for any hunter, camper, or outdoors enthusiast on your list. They'll be set for life in the splitting axe department.

## WRAP IT UP

There you have it, folks, your roadmap to a highly satisfying and low stress Christmas shopping experience for 2017. The holidays should be a time where you can succeed at being thoughtful, generous, and, most importantly, physically present with your loved ones, instead of shopping and fretting about your insane credit card bills.

We hope we've been able to convince you that you don't have to choose between splashy gifts and practicality; you can have both, and at a reasonable price. From all who helped put the NSRA gift guide together, we very sincerely hope this list helps you enjoy your shopping time, from Black Friday through Christmas Eve, as well as letting you come in under budget and above all expectations!







Please limit your purchase to

4 (four) of  
(Quantity)

All 1 gallons of water  
(Product)

so that we can best serve the majority of customers in our community.

Thank You

2.99  
STYLISH STRAWS 24 ct  
871022



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*Todd Van Hoosear, Flickr*



# HACKS TO BEAT THE PANIC BUYING RUSH



If you've ever lived through a predicted hurricane or blizzard, or social media driven fuel crisis, or pretty much anything verging on regional emergency, you probably know all about panic buying.

People who are anxious do irrational things, of course. In modern times, this usually means they go to the store and buy bottle water en masse. Forget that the water supply is still 100% functional and safe and that for pennies you could fill any number of containers larger and small. For some strange reason, most folks head to the nearest big box store and buy every single case of water available at the first sign of trouble.

And by no means does this behavior stop at bottled water. Store shelves quickly become emptied of food, batteries, flashlights, you name it. To make things worse, the simple scarcity of everyday items leads to even more terrified, panicky people doing desperate things such as starting fistfights over the last loaf of bread.

As folks in Texas recently learned after Hurricane Harvey, even the widespread belief that there is a statewide gasoline shortage is enough to trigger panic buying. Then the panic buying overwhelms inventories at local gas stations, which only keep a few days' supply on hand for cost reasons. This led to gas lines and very real shortages at many gas stations from Houston to Dallas.

The fake crisis, fueled by rumors on social media, led to a very inconvenient real crisis for several days, statewide. For many of us with our preparations secure, it was a fascinating case study. Filling your tank became a perilous task. There were fights, threats, and several claims of price gouging. But somehow, many were surprised with the same issues a week later when Hurricane Irma began to track toward Florida.

As Hurricane Irma proved, essentials like generators will be gone way before most people think to look for them. Don't expect your local Home Depot or gas station to have enough extra supplies of generators and fuel on hand to meet the sudden and tremendously high demand.

Essentially, if you wait until the last minute, you're going to end up with next to nothing. The stuff you do get may be drastically overpriced, which will make it impossible for most Americans to acquire the supplies they need to weather a natural disaster.

Possibly the worst part is that you don't want to be among desperate people, even your fellow Americans, when they are facing what they believe to be a "life or death" scenario. Those who believe they are in danger often become aggressive, possessive, irrational, and violent. Panic buying is not something you need to be caught up in.

This fairly common scenario would only be exacerbated by a disaster of a different type such as a terrorist attack or enemy forces putting troops on our soil. Can you imagine the level of desperation that could bring? We may not be able to do much to prevent those things from happening, but we can absolutely ensure that we have the necessary supplies to ride out at least a week's worth of chaos. Even better, shoot for at least a 30-day supply of the most absolutely critical items.

So how do you beat the panic buying that causes tempers to flare, people to get hurt and a lot of disappointed faces? Easy: start preparing right now. Let's take a look at what you need to store up and how to do it. We'll also begin by assessing what to do in the event of an emergency if you're not fully prepared.



**PHOTO:**  
*Bruce Washburn*



One of the best tips we can give you is to stay updated at all times about local, federal and global events, including the weather. For example, many people on Florida's west coast were stunned when Hurricane Irma decided to change course at the last minute. But should they have been?

Anyone who pays attention to weather forecasts, particularly those about hurricanes, should know that it's impossible for meteorologists to provide fully accurate forecasts about the path and destructiveness of a storm. That's why it's called the "cone of uncertainty." Yes, they do everything they can with tracking tools to offer a reasonably accurate forecast, but weather doesn't listen to their predictions.

Therefore, if you're anywhere near the potential path of a destructive storm and you still need some supplies, go to the store as soon as you learn that bad weather is on its way. Ideally, we don't mean the day before when forecasters begin looking at the storm's shifting path. Instead, we mean several days before when it's not known yet exactly what the storm will do.

Even better, create and maintain an emergency cache in your home and check it periodically throughout the year. If your food is nearing its expiration date, rotate supplies. Double check on your equipment and supplies every 6 months or so.

Consider this fact: buying supplies today for a storm that may or may not hit you later in the week is a good investment. After all, as long as you stick to non-perishable items, you can always use stuff later on if you don't end up needing it.

**SPECIAL NOTE** – If you somehow end up stuck waiting until the last minute, look for little neighborhood stores that are less likely to be fully raided until after supermarket shelves become empty.

## 2

### STOCK UP ON WATER RIGHT NOW



Water is the first thing that stores run out of in a panic. Like we stated earlier, it boggles the mind that so many believe bottled water will save them, but it is a solution to a very important human need, and a very vulnerable one as well. In other words, if you don't stock up on water right now, you're going to end up in the middle of some serious panic buying when any type of SHTF.

Bottled water has an expiration date, but the truth is that the FDA considers it to have a limitless shelf life. However, you can't just put it in your garage and forget about it. Plastic bottles can begin to break down under extremely hot conditions, which could damage the water. Therefore, be sure to store them at room temperature.

Sealed bottles and jugs of store-bought water are important, but it will only get you so far. You can always keep several large containers on hand to fill with tap water as the "storm" (literally or figuratively) approaches. Instead of fighting the masses to buy two cases of 12oz bottles of water – just 4.5 gallons – why not fill a 50-gallon food grade barrel with a spigot and several canteens?

It's also extremely smart to start collecting rain water. Be sure to transfer this water into smaller containers you can secure before a major storm hits. After all, failure to do so could end up rendering this collection of water unusable if a serious flood occurs.

# 3

## STOCKPILE FUEL



Fuel is in much shorter supply than you may realize. Just like grocery stores only have a three-day supply of food, gas stations have limited fuel that will quickly run out during an emergency. Do you remember what it was like on September 11, 2001? Panic buying sent gasoline prices soaring, left people waiting in line for hours and caused many gas stations to run out without serving every customer. Don't let this happen to you.

Safely storing gasoline is possible if you know how to do it properly. First, ensure that your containers are firmly closed. Next, keep them away from all potential heat sources, including the sun. Gas should be stored at room temperature, which means it shouldn't be left outside or in a garage without climate control during extremely hot days.

Please note that fuel does start to go bad after approximately one year. Therefore, we recommend rotating your fuel at least once every 12 months to make sure it will be useable when needed.

Even if you have enough gas stored up to run your emergency generator for several days, you'll also want each of your vehicles' gas tanks filled to capacity. It's best if you can get this from a local gas station before the impending disaster in order to conserve your other supplies.

However, you'll need to do this early so you don't get stuck in a massive line of cars. After all, sitting in line for an hour wastes gas, wastes time and puts you in the vulnerable position of being near a lot of extremely anxious and angry people.

# 4

## BUILD AN EMERGENCY FOOD KIT



We've written countless articles over the years trying to impress upon each reader how absolutely critical it is to build up a supply of emergency food. Have you done it yet? If not, start today. If so, assess the food to ensure it's enough to last at least a week (with 30 days being preferred).

If you're wondering how to get started on a budget, we have a few suggestions. First, you may not be able to afford to stock an entire emergency pantry in one week, but can you afford an extra \$20? Or even an extra \$1? Put what you can into your emergency food budget and pick up extra non-perishable items during each visit to the grocery store. Buying in bulk is a great way to stretch your budget.

You can also do your own canning and preserving to put together a supply of food that's usable during an emergency. As always, be sure to rotate your stock by eating the oldest stuff before it expires and replacing it with new canned goods.





Be aware that stocking up on food goes much further than simply having a lot of canned goods on hand. You need to store them properly, keep a hand crank can opener on hand, inspect the cans regularly for any dents or flooding in their storage spot and consider your nutrition needs. Sure, everyone loves stuff like Spaghettios, but this alone won't keep you properly fortified for an extended period of time.

Pick up lots of canned veggies, along with canned beans and potatoes. Consider your body's need for a diverse list of nutrients and shop accordingly. Believe it or not, you're also likely to get bored of food after a few days – even during an emergency – if you don't have a nice variety.

## 5

### BUY A GENERATOR BEFORE YOU NEED ONE



As previously mentioned, a generator isn't something you can reasonably expect to walk into a store and buy a couple of days before a major storm hits. After all, stores have limited retail space, and they're unlikely to be able to get a rush order after the news breaks about the upcoming hurricane, blizzard or other natural disaster.

A generator can allow you to live a more normal existence; it can keep your perishable food cold, allow you to turn on lights and even provide you with the resources for entertainment. In some cases, it's even imperative to stay alive. For example, the nursing home in Florida that lost several residents during the aftermath of Hurricane Irma wouldn't have had a tragic story if they had properly working generators and air conditioning.

Make sure you test your generator and know exactly how it works before an emergency strikes. The last thing you want to do is fight with people for the last remaining generator at Lowe's because the one you own isn't working.

## 6

### POWER YOUR COMMUNICATIONS PLAN



Most people don't realize the level of anxiety they will feel when they see a "low battery" alert on their phone during an extended power outage. Without power, your phone is essentially worthless.

But consider for a moment all the data you get from the all-compassing device you call your “phone.” This goes beyond search engines and social media. The fact is that many of us do not know critical family addresses or phone numbers by heart these days. Without being able to access the address book or emails stored in your phone, you may be at a loss to contact your loved ones.

And let’s face it, no matter what type of scenario you’re dealing with, communicating with your loved ones will be a top priority. In fact, given the fairly limited duration of these events, you’ll probably value your communications more than bottled water.

All that is just to say that access to electricity is a primary concern for people today, more than ever before. If your family has two-way radios in your emergency cache, make sure you have ample batteries. If you don’t have a power bank to recharge your phones during an outage, get one (see the Portable Power Plant in “NSRA Gift Guide”).

Your devices will likely be guzzling down more power than ever before post-emergency, on account of intense usage and signal issues. Invest in the time to research and create a robust battery backup plan. You may decide to build a custom system or simply purchase power banks and keep them charged. Either way, this may be your only reliable power source for several days after a major emergency.

## 7 KEEP LUMBER SUPPLIES ON HAND



If you’re in the path of a hurricane, it’s important to board up your windows so that they have less chance of being destroyed. Not only can this save your property from suffering a lot of expensive damage but it can also protect you and your belongings if you’re staying inside your home during the storm.

Wooden boards are a staple of hurricane life. Do you have them handy? Also, have you picked up the necessary supplies for barricading yourself after a nuclear attack? If you don’t have wooden boards, heavy sheeted plastic, duct tape, etc., you’re taking a big risk that could leave you struggling during a panic buying situation.

It’s also wise to ensure that you pre-cut everything to the appropriate sizes so that you don’t have to try to take care of that in a hurry. We recommend keeping nails/screws, along with a hammer/drill together next to these supplies so that you can do everything as quickly and easily as possible.

## 8 KEEP YOUR FIRST AID KIT STOCKED



As the Puerto Rico disaster points out, there’s no guarantee that hospitals or other medical facilities will be operational during the aftermath of a natural disaster. Therefore, your only medical option may be your first aid kit. Keeping it well-stocked could save your life, but only if you carefully consider any unique needs your family has.



For example, if one of your family members is diabetic or hypoglycemic, you'll want to keep glucose tablets and, if applicable, some extra insulin in your first aid kit. Anyone with a life-saving prescription needs to have extra pills on hand too because the odds are high that pharmacies will all be closed for an extended period of time.

All of the stuff you need might be sitting on a pharmacy shelf the day before an emergency strikes, but trying to battle with other shoppers for it is something that can easily be avoided by taking a proactive approach. Never allow your family's safety to come down to whether or not you can make it to a store, find the necessary items and get home safely right before, during or right after the SHTF.

## 9 DON'T ADD TO THE PANIC

Finally, no matter what's happening, commit to staying as calm in public as possible. Perhaps something happens and you have absolutely no choice but to go to a store during the height of panic buying madness. Keep an eye out for danger, leave your kids at home and calmly navigate through the mess. You may not get every item you're looking for, but you're also much more likely to get home unscathed.

Don't engage in panic inducing behavior such as talking loudly about how dangerous the incoming storm is, or even worse, making predictions about how long the power could be out. This is going to make people act even crazier than they already were, which is something you can't afford during an emergency.

Remember: ultimately, beating panic buying is up to you. If you choose to take the right actions today, you can sit safely at home tomorrow while people have fistfights in the local grocery store over the last loaf of bread. Failure to put all of the lessons learned from hurricanes and other natural disasters to work will put you in a vulnerable position, and you might even end up seriously injured.

Media sources have been speculating lately about the future of panic buying, and it sounds like it's going to get much worse over time. This is because weather patterns have changed to the point where we can expect an increasingly larger number of natural disasters. Some people will never learn to prepare for the next one, but you can implement all of these hacks to ensure you won't end up a casualty of someone's misplaced panic buying rage.





# HOW TO STORE GASOLINE LONG-TERM



What's the one thing that you need the most during an emergency aside from food, water and first aid? Gasoline! Without it, there's going to be no getting from point A to point B, nor will you be able to keep your generator running.

The stakes are very high, particularly if you need to evacuate your family to a safer location. Crushing gridlock on the highway can wreak havoc on your gas tank, turning your MPG's into gallons per mile. Unfortunately, you can't rely on local gas stations to be accessible in the aftermath of an emergency, nor can you expect them to remain stocked.

Even if gasoline can be found, the long lines at the pump will likely be nightmare inducing. Likewise, the price might be so high that you can't afford enough to keep your family safe and comfortable. Therefore, it's up to you to acquire and store enough gas before the SHTF.

## CAN'T I JUST FILL A GAS CAN AND CALL IT A DAY?

It's tempting to take the easy road here, but simply filling up all of your gas canisters and expecting to have zero issues later on is a huge mistake. It's not

just a mechanical issue, but one of safety.

After all, there have been at least 11 deaths and more than 1,200 incidents in the U.S. since 1998 as a result of improper container usage and storage. Then again, fuel degrades over time, demanding a small but critical level of maintenance.

## GAS CAN SAFETY



Here's what you need to know: plastic gas canisters aren't necessarily any safer than metal ones. In some rare instances, they can explode even when they're nowhere near fire or heat. This seems to happen most frequently after someone has poured gasoline but ended up leaving a small portion of gas in the canister. **17**



This explosion typically happens through a gas/air mixture that happens to include some type of spark. Believe it or not, something as seemingly benign as static electricity can provide all the spark the canister needs to explode.

As a volatile liquid, vapor is not your friend when it comes to storing gasoline. In short, it's always best to either completely empty a canister or to leave it at least a quarter full. Something about the almost empty container seems to increase the vapor levels and result in "flash back" explosions.

## **STORAGE: A QUICK OVERVIEW**

Aside from using canisters correctly, it's always wise to keep gasoline stored in a cool, dry location that's far away from any potential source of sparks or fires. Think this through very carefully. Some people store their gasoline next to components such as their hot water heater, but this isn't smart (hint: pilot light or ignitor).

It's also best to avoid storing gasoline inside your home. Of course, if you have no other alternative, you might need to do this. Be sure to give the gasoline its own dedicated space that's far away from any appliances or electronics.

## **HOW MUCH GASOLINE DO I NEED?**



Having the right amount of gasoline is almost as important as knowing how to properly store it. Check out your generator's specs and determine how much fuel is necessary to keep it running for at least one week continuously.

As a side note, this is why we recommend a small, efficient generator such as a 2,000 Watt generator, instead of a "whole house" type of solution. For example, the Yamaha EF2000iSv2 runs for 10.5 hours on a gallon of gas.

When an emergency happens, it's best not to run the generator 24/7, so if you have a full week's worth of fuel, you should be able to stretch it to at least two or three weeks of limited usage, if you really needed to.

If you're planning to bug out instead, put aside at least three times the amount of fuel you'll need to get to your desired location. That will enable you to get there with plenty to spare, but you won't have a huge issue transporting it.

Lastly, here's one of the most critical concepts no one ever seems to talk about. Keep your car's fuel tank at least halfway full every time you park in your garage in the evening. Yes, it takes discipline to go by the gas station on the way home from work when you don't feel like it. But a lot can happen overnight. Your car's fuel tank is an excellent place to "stockpile" fuel.

## **FUEL STORAGE: KEEPING GASOLINE FRESH**



What happens if you store 100 gallons of gas and then three years pass before you need to use it? If you haven't taken the proper precautions, it's probably going to be bad and therefore no longer useable. Worse than that, it can render an otherwise perfectly good engine temporarily useless. You can prevent this type of issue by thinking ahead, though.

## ADDITIVES



It's okay to store gasoline in containers for about three months without treating them at all. After that time frame, you'll want to use gas additives to keep the fuel fresh. Some people suggest putting in an additive every six-months. Be sure to read the instructions on the bottle of additive you choose. Also, don't forget to get enough bottles to treat your entire supply.

## ROTATE YOUR STOCK

Another great way to prevent gasoline from going bad is to rotate your supply every year. In other words, put the oldest gasoline in the front of the pile and begin using it. Be sure to immediately replace each gallon you use so that you don't get caught without much-needed fuel during an emergency.

## LABEL YOUR STOCK

How will you know that it's time to rotate your fuel or put in an additive? Simple: use metal tape! Affix a piece of metal tape to each container. Next, use a Sharpie to write the date. When you need to change the date later on, you can wipe the tape clean with acetone and start all over again.

## PROTECTING YOUR FUEL STORAGE

You know to store your fuel in the right environment, to put in a fuel additive and to rotate it at least once a year. You can also put your gasoline cans on top of a wooden surface and even place wood on any nearby walls to reduce the risk of sparks. But what happens if the threat doesn't come from the gasoline canisters themselves?

Just like with food, water and other essential supplies, ill-prepared people are going to begin looting after the SHTF. In other words, someone who didn't do the right thing to protect their family is going to get it into their head that they need – or even deserve – your fuel supplies more than you do. Don't let this happen!

A great way to drastically reduce the risk of gasoline theft is by quite simply not letting anyone outside your immediate family know that you have some. Don't get a reputation as the neighborhood prepper who has a shed full of gas. Instead, be subtler when you put your supplies together and make sure to protect them with durable locks.

During an emergency such as the aftermath of a natural disaster, you're going to want – and possibly need – to run your generator. Doing so, but for critical needs only is a great way to conserve fuel, and it will also help spread the misconception that you don't have a lot of gas on hand.

## TAKE ACTION TODAY

Now that you have a better idea of how to store, rotate, treat and protect your fuel, it's time to start building your gasoline storage! Remember: it's impossible to know how long power will be out after a storm or other catastrophe, so more is always better. If you need to bug out, though, you'll only be able to take a limited amount with you.

Prepare appropriately for your particular situation and don't wait; anything could happen tomorrow, including a gas shortage that sends prices skyrocketing.







## QUICK TIPS: FIREWOOD SEASONING AND STACKING

Maybe you won't be spending afternoons chopping wood in the back forty this fall, but even if you buy firewood from a dealer, storing it properly is essential. Sometimes it's even more important when you purchase split firewood from a dealer, since you don't know if it has been properly dried and seasoned.

First things first, let's talk about buying firewood. Should you buy hardwood or softwood? Contrary to popular belief, hardwoods don't necessarily burn longer or hotter. The terms refer to the tree's seed classification, not the density (or hardness) of the actual wood.

Oak, mesquite, hickory, maple, and pine are all fine options, depending on how you'll use the material. For heating purposes, consult your wood stove's manual or look up a chart listing the BTUs of each species. For campfires and fire pits, it generally comes down to making sure the wood is seasoned, whatever the species.

Like most things, firewood is much more economical if you buy in bulk. A cord of firewood is 128 cubic feet (4 ft. X 4 ft. X 8 ft.), quite a lot of wood. A full sized pickup bed, loaded level and stacked tightly, holds roughly one half cord. Keep in mind, a stack of wood on the highway has been stacked to appear larger than it truly is.

Stacking and seasoning firewood is by no means rocket science, but it's not as simple as piling up a bunch of logs either. There are several tricks of the trade that, when taken into consideration, can save you headaches down the road.

Even if you already have a stockpile of firewood stacked neatly in the yard, you may want to take a

### 3 KEYS TO SEASONING

Over time, the bottom layer will rot and become basically worthless when it comes time to burn it.

2. Keep your woodpile at least 30 feet from your house. All sorts of critters take up residence in woodpiles, none of which you want in your home: Termites, scorpions, vermin, brown recluses, etc.
3. Cover the top of your woodpile to protect it from rain and snow, but leave the bottom uncovered, allowing moisture to escape. A few sections of metal roofing or a tarp atop the pile are usually adequate.

### 3 KEYS TO STACKING

1. The cut ends should face your property's prevailing winds, which of course depends on where you live. This will cut weeks off of your wood's seasoning time.
2. Don't stack your logs as tight as possible. Leave a little room for air to circulate between logs so they'll dry faster and always be ready to burn.
3. Place pieces with bark on top. Bark is wood's natural shield against rain and the elements. Save the logs with the most bark for the top of the pile.



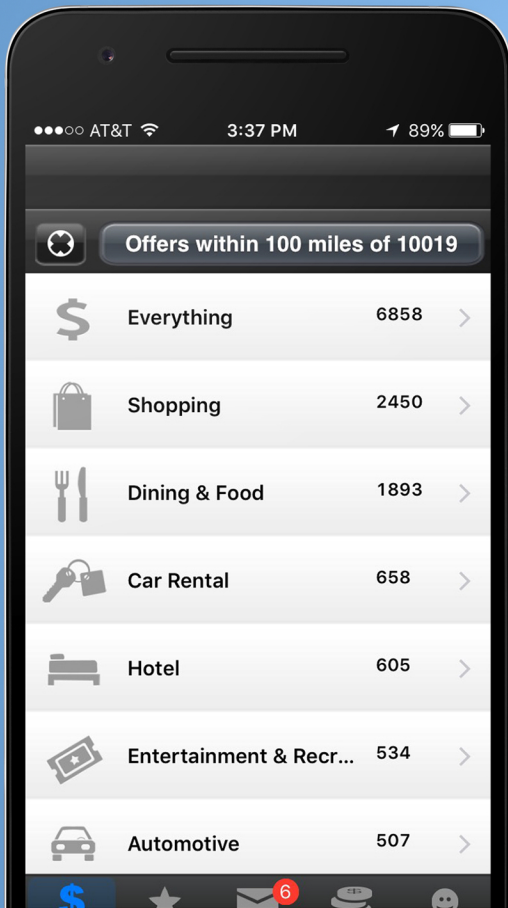




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