

“Be prepared” *(The Boy Scout Motto)*

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Does it seem like our world is in commotion more than normal? Is there even a normal? Do you feel more uneasy, uncertain, and less stable than you have felt prior to this in your life? Would you like to feel and be better prepared for the unexpected? Then the answer is: get prepared for the unexpected! You will at least feel prepared.

Let me give you some context for this conversation.

Statistically in the United States only 2-5% of all the boys in Boys Scouts achieve the Rank of Eagle Scout. I think you will agree that is a very low percentage.

I am the oldest of six children, three boys and three girls. Many of you may not know that I am an Eagle Scout. My two younger brothers are both Eagle Scouts. Both of my sons are Eagle Scouts, and all 5 of my nephews are Eagle Scouts. That means that every one of my mother's sons and grandsons achieved the Rank of Eagle Scout. I was the oldest and the first. I think it would be fair to say that the Values and Character Traits that are taught by the Boy Scouts of America are held in very high esteem in my family.

So when I tell you that I ALWAYS like to “Be Prepared” I think you can understand why.

Now, more than ever before, I feel I should help my clients prepare for possible emergencies. Your financial plan should include a “preparedness plan” for as many eventualities as possible.

I am presenting this information as a guide of “best practices” on how to prepare for an emergency.

What are some of the types of emergencies we should consider?

1. Forest fires.
2. Trucking strikes.
3. Gas/Oil shortages.
4. Water system problems or contamination.
5. Flu epidemic or Pandemic (like the bird flu).
6. Civil unrest, protests.
7. Terrorist bombings or activities.
8. Food shortages.
9. US Dollar loses its status as the world's reserve currency.
10. Hyper-inflation.

11. Hyper Interest Rates increases.
12. Devaluation of the dollar.
13. Flood.
14. Chemical Spill.
15. Highways closed due to bad weather (5ft. snows in Prescott in 1966).

There are many steps that a person can take to become better prepared. It is possible and likely that many of these emergencies will never take place; that preparation for such eventualities will not be needed. That said, it is likely and very possible that any one of them could transpire during your lifetime. Because of such a risk, it is prudent for you to prepare for these types of emergencies if you have the means and capacity to do so.

Here are some of my best recommendations for your consideration:

1. **Review recommendations** by the government and other organizations that have good information on how you can be better prepared for the unexpected. (See the following websites: www.ready.gov, www.fema.gov, www.disasterAssistance.gov,
2. **Emergency Food Supply**. It is recommended that you have emergency food stores in your home. You should have both short term (1-4 weeks) and long term (3-6 months) food storage supplies stored in your home. You may want some to share with others, say the young mother of small children (your neighbor) who will knock on your door begging. A good website is: www.beprepared.com
3. **Water Storage**. You should store some emergency potable water in your home; enough to provide for your family for at least 1 week. Some of your drinking water should be stored in portable sized containers say 5 gallons. 55 gallon water drums can also be used for longer term storage needs. We lost the water main on our street a year or so ago (it was out for 2 days). I was really glad to have some water available to cook with and flush the toilets.
4. **Medical Supplies**. You should have first aid, prescription medications, and over the counter medicines in large enough amounts to get you by for 3 months if need be. You should specifically have prescription medical supplies to last at least 3 months.
5. **The necessities**. Try going without toilet paper for a week. Included in this list of items should be things like contact lens solution and other supplies that are not life saving but provide for important needs and comforts.
6. **Emergency Cash**. You should have some emergency cash (\$1000 - \$2000). A large portion of it should be in small bills; \$1's, \$5's, and \$10's. Have you ever had to pay \$20 for a loaf of bread after an earthquake because the electricity was down and the credit card machine didn't work and the clerk didn't have any change? (Calif. Northridge 1994)
7. **Fuel Storage**. Remember Katrina? If you had to get out of town, say 200 miles a couple of 5 gallon tanks of gas could be very helpful. How long does it take for a gas station to run out of gas? Anyone remember the gas shortages of the 1970's?

8. **Fire wood or other cooking/heating fuel.** What if natural gas and electricity were interrupted in Prescott in the winter time? Perhaps from a big snow storm for two weeks? Would you be able to keep your house and your family from freezing? You would not be able to count on the government to provide for you in such a circumstance. (Prescott had a 5 ft. high snow storm in 1966. It shut the city down for two weeks)
9. **Emergency supplies.** Flashlights, battery operated radio, batteries, candles, water filters, etc... Supplies like this can make all the difference between being comfortable and not.
10. **72 hour Emergency Preparedness Kit.** You will need a portable emergency kit to make your life more comfortable in case you have to evacuate your home.

There are many resources out on the internet to help you get prepared. I have included a list of websites from the FEMA publication called "Are You Ready".

I hope you will be ready. I hope you will never need to use your preparations. But just in case you do, I hope you have made the preparations necessary to be ready.

Please begin today.

Warmly,

Bruce Hosler EA, CFP®, AIF®
Eagle Scout

....but if ye are prepared, ye shall not fear.
(DC 30:35)

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