

# Top 7 Things You Need for Sheltering in Place

October 9, 2014 By [JimCobb](#) [4 Comments](#)

In most disaster scenarios, the best place for you to be is at home. That's where the bulk of your supplies are located. You're familiar with the area. The fact is, that's just where you'll be the most comfortable. Stress reduction is extremely important during a crisis and anything you can do to put your mind, and the minds of your family members, at ease is desirable.

As a general rule of thumb, I advise you to shelter in place at home until or unless home is no longer safe. By this, I mean there are certainly potential disasters that could drive you from home, perhaps at a moment's notice. Perhaps storm damage renders your home uninhabitable for the time being. Or, groups of looters are roaming the area and you feel you'll be safer elsewhere.

Okay, back to sheltering in place. There are several things you will need to have on hand in order to make a lengthy stay at home at least a bit more bearable. Remember, we're talking about a situation where you'll be stuck at home for perhaps several days, with no opportunity to run to the store, the gas station, or Redbox. For some, this thought brings a smile. A forced vacation! For others, a shiver might run down their spine, imagining days on end spent in close proximity to those they love dearly but drive them up a wall on a good day.

Let's run down the list of the top 7 things you need on hand for sheltering in place.



1. **Food** – You should always have enough food on hand to sustain your family for at least one solid week. Preferably, you'd have enough to last several weeks but you gotta start somewhere, right? There is little need to go out and buy dehydrated or freeze dried food by the pallet load. Just stock up on the things you and your family already eat, concentrating on things that store well for long periods of time and require little to no preparation. Examples include canned soups and stews, pasta (canned or boxed/bagged), rice, canned fruits and veggies, granola bars, protein bars, crackers, and peanut butter. Don't overlook the importance of junk food, too, like chips, popcorn, candy, and chocolate. That stuff is perfectly fine in small doses – everything in moderation, right?

Of course, you'll also need a way to cook food if the power is out. Your nuke machine probably won't be operating very well in the absence of electricity. Same thing goes for an electric stove top. Propane and charcoal grills work great, provided you're able and willing to stand outside to use them. It should go without saying but never use those grills indoors!



2. **Water** – in recent years, there have been at least a few examples of situations, right here in the good, ol’ US of A where tap water suddenly became tainted and unfit for human consumption. Often, this was not the result of some natural disaster but rather it WAS the disaster. Everything else is working fine, you just can’t drink the water. Not the end of the world, of course, but damn inconvenient when turning the tap results in poison spilling into the sink. You’ll need an absolute minimum of one gallon of water per person, per day of the crisis. If you plan on cooking things like pasta, rice, or beans, all of which require a goodly amount of water, you’ll need to take that into account. I suggest you plan on at least 1.5-2 gallons of water per person. Better to have more than you truly need than run out before the crisis is resolved. You can buy cases of bottled water for just a few bucks if you shop around and watch for sales. Of course, you could also just refill soda and juice bottles. Either way, store the water in a cool, dark place, such as a closet or basement. Avoid the temptation to dig into those cases of bottled water until they’re actually needed. Commercially bottled water, the kind you’ll buy in the store, will last damn near forever without going bad, due to the bottling process, as long as the bottles are kept sealed.

Don’t overlook the necessity for a way to purify additional water, as well. While rain is generally pure as it falls, once it has run over your roof and through your gutters, you’ll want to filter it. I recommend either the [LifeStraw](#) or one of the [Sawyer products](#).



3. **Medical supplies** – If you or any other family member take a life-preserving prescription, such as heart meds or insulin, you’ll want to always have on hand a supply that will last at least a couple of weeks, preferably

longer. Three days into an unrelenting blizzard is a damn poor time to run out of Grandpa's heart meds. Talk to your physician about increasing the prescription amounts so as to allow for longer periods of time between refills. In addition, put together a decent first aid kit, being sure to have adequate amounts of adhesive bandages, gauze wrap, antiseptic ointment, burn cream, pain relievers / fever reducers, and stomach upset meds like Pepto tablets.



4. **Light sources** – It can get pretty dark at night when the power is out. Candles are great, but they don't last forever. Oil lamps are better, but as with candles, you're dealing with an open flame so great care must be given when using them, especially if children are in the home. Flashlights are great and the newer LED models use far less battery power than their incandescent predecessors. Be sure to have extra batteries on hand, though, enough for at least one set for each flashlight. I suggest having one flashlight located in each room of the house. Crank powered ones are great for kids rooms, in particular, as you KNOW they're gonna play with them and if they run on batteries, they'll be dead when you need that light the most. LED headlamps are also great to have, as they'll prove useful when doing chores like washing dishes. Another option is to buy a set of solar landscape lights. Leave them outside all day long, then bring them in at night. They'll give off enough light to where you'll not be barking shins against the coffee table at least.



5. **Entertainment** – Without Netflix, Redbox, Facebook, Twitter, and all those other modern diversions, life could get boring pretty damn quick for many people. Fortunately, there are all sorts of things you can stock up on now, and for very little cash, that will provide distraction if you're stuck at home with no power. Board games are incredibly cheap at rummage sales and thrift stores. Just make sure they have all the pieces. Pick up



some paperback books while you're out deal hunting, too. At last count, there are roughly a bazillion different games you can play with a deck of cards. A set of dice could prove fun as well.



6. **Solar charger** – Small portable solar panels have become fairly reasonable in price and they can be an absolute Godsend when the power goes out for a while. Goal Zero is one well-known brand name. I have the [SunJack Portable Solar Charger](#) and it works like a charm for my Kindle Fire as well as my cell phone. Whichever type you get, spring for the attachments that allow you to charge AA and AAA batteries. This way, you can power up your flashlights and such while also providing power for your portable devices.



7. **Portable radio** – While we shudder to think of a scenario that would cause us to lose our cell coverage, and thus our lifeline to the world at large, it could happen. A crank powered radio could very well end up being the single best way to gather information about the situation at hand. While battery powered radios will work just as well, the crank style ones are a better choice, for obvious reasons. Plus, most of them will tune in NOAA weather channels as well as shortwave, in addition to the more standard AM/FM.

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