

7 CRITICAL LAYERS OF

SURVIVAL

GEAR

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From The Editor

“Preppers” and survivalists love to make lists of gear. We love to pack bug out bags for every emergency. We love to have a lot of stuff on hand, period.

But does your gear follow any sort of plan?

Do you understand the 7 layers of survival gear preparation, and does your gear coordinate to make you the best equipped survivor you can be?

This isn't merely a theoretical question.

The threat of civil unrest, natural disaster, and lately, pending economic collapse, has a lot of people worried.

They're worried about what they'll do if the services and infrastructure they take for granted suddenly isn't there.

All it takes is a few days with the lights off or with the grocery stores closed to bring out the worst in your neighbors, and that's when the 7 layers of survival gear become extremely important.

The 7 layers of survival gear include your everyday carry (EDC), your SCRAM bag (a small emergency external bag for emergencies), your bug out bag (or BOB), your bug out vehicle (BOV), your home or survival retreat, the larger survival community, and your personal protection gear (which permeates all the 7 layers of survival gear).



Yours in survival,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jeff Anderson". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Jeff Anderson
Editor

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Layer 1: Everyday Carry (EDC)

The first of these, and the one that you will always have with you because it is on your person, is your everyday carry gear. Your EDC, which is the beginning of the 7 layers of survival, is incredibly important.

A lot of people don't think about their EDC when considering the 7 layers of survival gear. They're more involved with the stuff they keep at home in their bug out bag. But you can have all the MREs and ammo you want at your survival retreat and never actually get to it. You can have a bug out vehicle stuffed with gear and never reach it through the crowd or the emergency at hand.

When considering the 7 layers of survival gear, and your everyday carry, don't just carry a lot of junk for the sake of carrying it. Make sure the things you carry will actually be useful. The first of these is a knife. Knives have multiple uses, from utility to use as weapons.

A flashlight is another one; not only can you use it as a striking tool, but once you have a utility light with you all the time you will wonder how you ever got by without it.

The Key to EDC Utility

These are just examples. Your everyday carry should include anything that is small enough to be carried comfortably while being something you're likely to need frequently.

When planning the 7 layers of survival gear, ask yourself what the smallest item that will accomplish the task might be. Make sure that gear is easy to hide, too, so that you don't make yourself a target because you are obviously equipped.

Your clothing must be chosen carefully in order to facilitate the best distribution of the EDC portion of the 7 layers of survival gear, because the more pouches and pockets you've got, the better able you are to hide and carry everything you have that is useful - such as the clothing offered by www.ScotteVestClothing.com.

By following these simple guidelines and keeping in mind always how the 7 layers of survival gear are supposed to work together, you can be as equipped as possible for any emergency you face.

Layer 2: External Carry Bag

In an emergency, the time to find the gear you will need, to assemble that gear, and to make sure you have it with you is well before the emergency. It doesn't matter if the emergency is a natural disaster or an act of civil unrest. You must plan ahead to make sure your survival gear coordinates to make you the best prepared survivor and citizen you can be. This means you must understand the 7 layers of survival gear. The 7 layers of survival gear divide up your equipment and preparations into concentric zones that affect and encompass different areas of your day to day life.

The 7 layers of survival gear include your everyday carry (EDC), your SCRAM bag (a small emergency external bag for emergencies), your bug out bag (or BOB), your bug out vehicle (BOV), your home or survival retreat, the larger survival community, and your personal protection gear (which permeates all the 7 layers of survival gear).

The SCRAM Bag

The second of these, your SCRAM bag, is one step up from the everyday carry things you keep on your person. A SCRAM bag is a social chaos bag, a small, external bag full of emergency things that are

intended to help you extract yourself from a situation of extreme danger or uncertainty so you can proceed with your survival plans (such as getting to your bug out bag or bug out vehicle).

In keeping with the 7 layers of survival gear as a priority plan, the external carry bag is NOT a giant backpack. It's like a man purse, smaller than a bug out bag but containing the things you need for immediate emergencies beyond what you have on your body.

The Bag Itself

When planning your 7 layers of survival gear and your external carry bag, consider the bag itself. You don't want it to be too military looking. You need it to be nondescript so you don't draw attention to yourself as a prepared person. If other people get that YOU get the 7 layers of survival gear, they'll home in on you as someone who has things they want to take.

Make sure, too, that your external carry bag isn't too heavy. Especially if it's just a single-sling satchel, a heavy bag like that will really start to weigh on one shoulder and give you physical problems. Packing their carry bags too heavily is a huge

mistake that many preppers make. They want to have so much gear with them that they forget they've got to be able to travel, move, and often, move quickly while carrying these things.

When planning your external carry bag, think one level up from everyday carry. Think of the things that are too bulky to carry on your person, but which would be nice to have. One good example would be swim goggles, which are great for protecting your eyes from debris and noxious fumes (like tear gas).

Include other short-term survival gear too, like meal replacement bars and trauma gear like QuickClot bandages.

The 7 layers of survival gear help to divide things up. The layers help create divisions among your cached, stockpiled, and carried gear so that there's less chance you are lugging around more than you need to be for specific situations, while assuring that you WILL have what you need when you do need it. Prepare accordingly while you have time.

Layer 3: Bug Out Bag

It's the scenario that every survivalist and prepper envisions "when the balloon goes up." An emergency, a natural disaster, an act of civil unrest, has finally arrived, and now it's time actually to put into practice all those preparations you've made until now. Because you understand the 7 layers of survival gear, you have divided your preparations into 7 categories. These are your everyday carry (EDC), your SCRAM bag (a small emergency external bag for emergencies), your bug out bag (or BOB), your bug out vehicle (BOV), your home or survival retreat, the larger survival community, and your personal protection gear (which permeates all the 7 layers of survival gear).

The Bag Itself

The layer of the 7 layers of survival gear that everyone likes to focus on in the prepper community is definitely the bug out bag. But very few consider the actual bag itself. A lot of survivalists gravitate toward military style bags. They like feeling that they're tactically prepared, but that's actually the opposite of what we want. You don't want to stand out, to make yourself a target.

Consider if you are walking as part of a crowd. There is an emergency and among that crowd of sheep are

several wolves who want to take what people have that is useful. If you are wearing "tactical" clothing and carrying a military style bag, you will immediately be drawing a target on your face.

How Heavy Is It?

Another thing to consider when it comes to packing your bug out bag is that it can't be too heavy. You're going to be covering a lot of ground with this bag. It isn't enough to heft your bug out bag once and think, "Nah, it's not too heavy." The 7 layers of survival gear divide your external carry bag and your bug out bag for a reason. The BOB is the thing you'll be carrying while traveling from point A to point B, where point B is your place of greater safety. You could be on foot with this bug out bag for a LONG time.

Take your bug out bag out and hike with it. Take it for two to five miles, one day, and then for five to ten miles another. Get an idea of just what it feels like to carry that bag over long distances. You need to know that you can carry it for however long it takes to get you to safety. If it's too heavy you need to start taking things out of it.

Noise Discipline

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Another thing to consider is noise discipline. Does your bug out bag make a lot of noise? What movements are you making that are generating noise as you walk? You don't want to attract more attention than necessary. While you are hiking, focus on noise and see what you can do to reduce the sound generated by your bug out bag.

While bugging out, you are not a super stealthy ninja. But you do want to get where you are going without being noticed. Pay attention to the 7 layers of survival gear and make sure each of the layers is covered... but pay special attention to the bug out bag, because that's what is going to sustain you while you travel among all the OTHER layers.

Layer 4: Bug Out Vehicle

In any survival scenario or emergency, you know that you may need to flee the location you are currently in. There are any number of reasons why you might need to “bug out.” This is why preppers and other informed citizens take the time to stockpile useful gear for emergencies, and to divide that gear up into categories so they will always have what they need in a given, specific situation. Prepared survivalists, in fact, divide their survival gear up into 7 layers. The 7 layers of your survival gear are your everyday carry (EDC), your SCRAM bag (a small emergency external bag for emergencies), your bug out bag (or BOB), your bug out vehicle (BOV), your home or survival retreat, the larger survival community, and your personal protection gear (which permeates all the 7 layers of survival gear).

A Rolling Storage Locker

Your bug out vehicle, which of course is one of the 7 layers of survival gear, is really just a large, mobile storage locker. Some of that has to do with the vehicle, and some of that has to do with the equipment you need for survival. For example, you should keep your bug out bag right in your car. Keeping your bug out bag in your response room or

basement or in the garage, ready to go, may not be terribly useful to you, because in a real emergency, you may never actually GET home.

There could be some event or disaster where the equipment you have at home isn't an option for you. By keeping your bug out bag in your car, by dividing up your gear in the 7 layers we've described and being mindful of where those layers are, even if you never make it home, you will have that extra layer of survival gear (beyond your everyday carry and an external emergency bag) that will help you get to a safe location.

Everyday Useful Items

Items in your car should facilitate the 7 layers of survival gear by being useful for everyday tasks in general. A good example is bungee cords. These can be used for lashing down equipment for day to day use, but also for setting up survival shelters and securing other gear.

A fire extinguisher is another good example. During times of social chaos, when your 7 layers of survival gear become really important, you could need a fire extinguisher to put out a sudden fire or deal with an accident. You can also use it as a distracting tool when dealing with hostile people.

Still other good examples for bug out vehicles are a can of fix-a-flat for quick tire repairs, and consumables like oil (so you don't blow your engine on the run). Other survival gear you should keep in your vehicle are long-term survival items, in case you have to live out of your car for some time. Other useful tools include a siphon (to help you get gas from other vehicles) and just basic living supplies, like stores of food and pots of sterno.

The 7 layers of survival gear help you deal, conceptually, with the different facets and ranges of survival. The bug out vehicle is one of these 7 layers and must be considered in the context of the others. Treat your bug out vehicle like a rolling survival locker... and prepare while you have the time to do so.

Layer 5: Home or Survival Retreat

The 7 layers of your survival gear are your everyday carry (EDC), your SCRAM bag (a small emergency external bag for emergencies), your bug out bag (or BOB), your bug out vehicle (BOV), your home or survival retreat, the larger survival community, and your personal protection gear (which permeates all the 7 layers of survival gear). Lately, there has been a lot of momentum built up concerning the home or survival retreat layer. Average people are taking up preparing their home for a disaster, probably due to the increase in natural disasters we've seen. These bring with them loss of power, disruptions in food supply, disruptions in the drinkable water supply, and other things society takes for granted. Of the 7 layers of survival gear, the home or survival retreat is one of the critical ones, because it is here you will survive for the long term.

Long-Term Stockpiles

The main thing to think about, where the 7 layers of survival gear and long-term survival gear are concerned, you need to focus on essentials. Food is one of these. Even FEMA has started to realize the error of its ways and is now recommending you stockpile based

on two weeks of food and supplies, rather than just three days.

Water, Water, Water

Stock up on dry goods for longer term subsistence. There is a lot of information on these out there. But in addition to food, you need to stockpile water. You need water to live. Without water, the other 7 layers of survival gear are quickly going to seem unimportant. Besides a survival straw for short term needs, you want to be able to purify water on a larger scale. There are plenty of systems available for this.

Power and Light

Another thing to consider is power for your home. You need to be able to light it so you can see. People think if they have flashlights and candles, they are all set. But what happens when the candles die and the batteries run out? Consider stockpiling solar walkway LED lights. These give off quite a bit of light at night and charge during the day from the light of the sun.

Consider also having some dark tarps on hand. You can get these from landscaping places. They're very handy for blocking out light so your house doesn't stand out at night as being prepared and equipped

while the other houses in the neighborhood are dark from a power outage.

Besides stockpiling food, water, a means to light your home or survival retreat, and the other essentials of long-term life, consider the 7 layers of survival gear and how to hide your preparedness from others.

You never want your home or retreat to stand out. You don't want to attract looters or others who want to raid your supply. Part of understanding the 7 layers, and of being prepared in general, is not to let people know you are... and never to lead them to your door, where all your gear is cached in bulk.

Layer 6: The Community

You know that your survival gear, and your survival preparation, can be divided up into categories. This helps you better decide what gear to stockpile where, and gives you a means for coordinating your supplies so that you are the most prepared person you can be. The 7 layers of your survival gear are your everyday carry (EDC), your SCRAM bag (a small emergency external bag for emergencies), your bug out bag (or BOB), your bug out vehicle (BOV), your home or survival retreat, the larger survival community, and your personal protection gear (which permeates all the 7 layers of survival gear). But many preppers don't consider community even as they cover all the other layers.

The survival community, of the 7 layers of survival gear, is important because it helps to have access to various skill sets from like-minded community members. This helps the group as a whole. When it comes to 7 layers of survival gear and how to conceptually divide up those supplies and equipment, keeping the community in mind can be very helpful for your overall plans.

The Survival Network

In a best case scenario, for example, your community will have a doctor. But that may not be an option. A lot of people don't know doctors, and perhaps there isn't a survival-minded doctor in your area. But someone in the community might have a friend or spouse who is a nurse. That person will have access to certain specialty medical equipment.

In a survival emergency, consider the 7 layers of survival and look at the next level up and down. As a community, think in terms of community medical items, like an AED for resuscitation. These are items you wouldn't find in regular homes but that might be useful to the community as a whole.

Complimentary skills

Consider also how your skills complement those of others in the community. You may not have any carpentry skills, for example, but someone else in your community might. Your community can come together and use each other's skills to produce the most prepared and best defended group of survivors.

In this way, understanding the community element of the 7 layers of survival gear helps you think not just of yourself and by yourself, but of your greater group of neighbors who all want to help each other get by.

Community Equipment

Other equipment you might consider as a community is supplies like plywood and gear like a nail gun. Every person in the community doesn't need to have and store these things, if one or two community members have them and can loan or distribute them to the others. This can help you fortify your homes in case of a storm or to prevent looting.

Another great person to have access to at the community level of the 7 layers of survival is a mechanic. Mechanic skills are rare compared to the population overall. Having someone who can repair vehicles is exceptionally helpful, and your community mechanic can trade his skills for other help and supplies from the survival community as a whole.

Plan your survival, not just as a single man or family, but as a community as a whole. The better integrated your plans are with those of your neighbors, the better able you all are to use the 7 layers of survival. No man is an island. A survival group has a better chance for the long term.

Layer 7: Personal Protection Gear

You have probably learned to divide your survival preparations into categories. These categories help you understand survival at the conceptual level, and also help you determine how your various preparations coordinate with each other. The 7 layers of your survival gear are your everyday carry (EDC), your SCRAM bag (a small emergency external bag for emergencies), your bug out bag (or BOB), your bug out vehicle (BOV), your home or survival retreat, the larger survival community, and your personal protection gear (which permeates all the 7 layers of survival gear). It is the last item that is perhaps most important because it affects all the other layers.

The best way to look at personal defense weapons is to think of the 7 layers of survival gear themselves. How do personal defense weapons affect each layer within the six other layers?

Start at the Center

Start at the center, which is your everyday carry. You may have an AR-15 at home, but you may never make it home in a disaster. What do you have on your person that you can use as a weapon? A tiny pocket knife isn't necessarily a great weapon. So what can you carry or improvise?

Look at the 7 layers and ask yourself, "How do I protect myself in order to

reach the NEXT layer?" Let's say a riot breaks out. You might be able to fight your way to your car, your bug out vehicle. In there you might have stored safely a legal rifle, or a larger-capacity handgun.

Your Vehicle

Once you are in your car you may be able to get home. There you can have the weapons necessary to protect against a home invasion. It might be a home defense shotgun, it might be that AR-15, or it might be something else.

At the next of the 7 layers, you're now dealing with your community. What do you have that is longer range? A shotgun doesn't have the accuracy of a rifle or a "sniper" rifle might have. And you might need one of those "reach out and touch someone" weapons, something that hits heavier than an AR-15 and has greater effective range, if you are defending your community at large.

Community Considerations

Something to consider at the community level is ammunition. Does everyone in your community have different ammunition that can't help the other members feed their weapons? Or have you been smart enough to standardize on only a few calibers, so that neighbors can resupply each other without huge

discrepancies in the ammo they need and carry? Standardizing on NATO weaponry and calibers is one way to make sure you can possibly scrounge more supplies in the field, too, depending on the emergency.

Consider also keeping spare parts and repair resources and tools on hand. A weapon that breaks can't be sent back to the factory for repair. Firearms contain several parts that will wear out with heavy use over the life of the

firearm. You need to make sure you have these spares on hand so your weapons don't become useless when you most need them.

When stockpiling and choosing personal protection weapons, always consider the 7 layers of survival. Consider how the weapons you have and carry will help you get to the NEXT level of survival. Make sure your preparations work together to make you the most prepared person you can be.