

How to Escape Disaster in an Urban Scenario

by Benjamin Roussey

Remember the chaos during Hurricane Katrina. Civil society broke down, there was no law and order, and looting was rampant. People were robbing from others to sustain themselves, some were even killing. What was common among everyone was the panic and not being prepared for urban survival. However, when disaster hits urban spaces, these incidents are bound to occur. Breakdown of the civil society can be dangerous and many times, life-threatening.

There will be predators waiting to take advantage of the situation and targeting those they believe are weak and defenseless. These opportunists will be ready to attack you as you try and escape the urban chaos and head to safety. These are individuals with no resources and will have no qualms about snatching yours by any means possible. Avoiding such predators (evil and nefarious people, some will be gangsters) during an urban disaster is the key to survival and escaping to the security of your bug out shelter.

Here are some invaluable tips that will teach you how to escape disaster in an urban scenario:

Becoming a gray man

While walking on the streets, you will notice some people because of the way they are dressed and some people you will just completely overlook. You want to be like someone who is completely overlooked – a person who is completely inconspicuous and does not draw attention to themselves.

This is known as becoming a gray man. So rather than wearing outfits that make others take note of you, learn to dress simply so that you attract no attention. This means forgoing ostentatious attire, sunglasses, jewelry, and makeup. Do not dress like James (Will Ferrell) did in Get Hard. That would be unwise! A gray man has a higher chance of survival than someone who draws the attention of others. This is because everyone overlooks a gray man and hence, he is able to get away without getting hurt, attracting looters or becoming a victim.

Do not eyeball anyone either!

Scope the neighborhood

The best way to avoid trouble, which will definitely brew when the SHTF, is to avoid those places where there is trouble. This means you need to know your surroundings and the routes you should take to stay out of trouble. You should be able to find your way to neighborhoods that are safe while avoiding those that are unsafe. Things you should

know, like the back of your hands, are roads and routes, gas stations, emergency clinics, police stations, and convenience stores.

But that is not all. You should know the streets that have lights at night and the ones that don't, areas that have a tendency to choke up and where people have set up blockades. This will facilitate easy movement through the city as you take steps to leave the disaster zone.

Be anonymous

In this day and age when everything is connected to the Internet, people's lives have become an open book. You can find any information online and then use it against a person. During an urban disaster, you may be forced to defend yourself against thugs and looters eyeing your bug out bag greedily. This may come back to haunt you later if you can be found online. The last thing you need is to be defending yourself in court after coming out unscathed from a disaster. So take measures to protect your privacy in a connected world. There are enough resources out there to teach you how to do this. So get cracking!

Carry concealed

The moment you reveal yourself to a prospective looter or predator that you are carrying a firearm, you paint a bull's eye on your forehead. While there are preppers who favor carrying firearms openly to deter wannabe looters, in a disaster situation, you don't want to draw attention to yourself. Hence, it is best to carry your weapon in a concealed manner so that no one knows you have it on your person.

At the same time, you should be able to easily access the firearm if the situation demands. Also, be sure to put a fair amount of distance between you and your loved ones before you draw your weapon. This is because the moment you pull out your firearm, you will become a target and you don't want your loved ones caught in the crossfire.

You may want to have access to a bullet-proof vest as well.

Forget the camouflage

Camouflage is more apt for rural and the wilderness where you can blend with your surroundings. It is not for urban areas since your camouflage attire will make you stand out like a bright beacon. You will look ridiculous.

You will become a target. Instead, flip the switch for muted colors, such as blacks and gray. You want to dress comfortably but stick to well-worn clothing. However, if you are unable to get out of the city in your first attempt, you may want to press the button for both overt and covert camouflage to help you hide out in your safe house until you can

make a second getaway. If you do not have a safe house, hide out in a car for a while or climb a tree!

Skip cologne and perfumes

Remember, when trying to escape an urban disaster, you want to appear like you are an ordinary and impoverished person like those walking on the street. Hence, you do not need cologne, perfume, makeup, strong deodorant, and after shave. Anything that is strong-smelling is a big no-no since you will attract other people's attention. Wearing expensive sunglasses or perfumes and cologne will not make you into a gray man. Instead, you will be attracting unwanted attention.

Walk the streets with care

In all probability, you will be walking to get away from your city, as the roads will be blocked by either police or hooligans. So, here are some tips on how to walk and get away:

Don't respond to anyone who is talking to you. Remember, criminals need a little bit of attention to corner you. So ignore anyone who talks to you. If they ask you to come here, run away!

If you bump into someone, don't stop. Continue walking as you mutter your apology.

In case someone bumps into you, make sure you discreetly check your wallet. Also, give your bug out bag a quick look to ensure it is secure, with no open zippers.

It is best to carry your wallet in your front pocket, while purses should have short, thick straps that you can use to hit a possible criminal or conman.

Make sure you walk the street confidently. If you appear timid and frightened, you will become a target. And, don't look lost. That is why it is crucial to mark your route before you set out.

Don't stand around to figure out your route. Instead, step into an open store and then check your paper map while in public or at least some other people are around. If you have to, climb on the roof of a small building and hide out until daylight.

Don't appear as though you are in a hurry. It is important to match the speed of your movements to those around you so that you don't become obvious. But, at the same time be purposeful to get out of the city as quickly as possible.

Move out before your exit route becomes closed or clogged

When you are evacuating an urban area, it is integral you act quickly, before others react. This will ensure you get through exits such as bridges, tunnels, and highways before they are congested. Hence, always keep your bug out bag and evacuation plan ready. Don't wait for friends to join you. It is about your survival and the quicker you get moving, the better your chances of surviving and making it to safety are.

Be prepared for environmental hazards

When urban disaster occurs, there will be broken glass, concrete chunks and asbestos and concrete dust floating in the air. Hence, you need to be prepared for these environmental hazards. So make sure your bug out bag has the right protective gear suited for urban landscape. Well-made pants, sturdy boots, and long-sleeved shirt are apt attire for the summer and winter, and will protect you from debris, cuts, and scrapes. Also, include the following protective gear in your BOB:

- Hearing protection
- Eye protection
- Hand protection
- Lung protection

Move in a group

In an urban scenario, you will not be alone. There will be others, who will be desperate, aggressive, or looking to take advantage of you. Hence, it is advisable to travel in a group. When people move in groups, others are less likely to attack you to grab your things. Also, keep your eyes open so that you can observe your surroundings and make sure no one is following you. Be sure to do so covertly so that you don't alarm others in your group. When people panic, it can lead to further chaos and trouble that you want to avoid. Also, use the group only as long as you find it necessary. Don't follow the group blindly because where they are heading may not always be such a fantastic idea.

Trust your instincts

When disaster strikes, most people are unprepared for it. You should not be part of this group. You should be prepared before the SHTF. So create a bug out bag and plan that will come to your rescue when civilization breaks down. Remember, don't have a mob mentality.

Your survival is the most fundamental aspect and hence, you should be willing to take steps to ensure you get out of the city in the safest possible way so that you reach your intended destination quickly. So trust your instincts. Take heed of what your inner voice (guardian angel or whatever) is telling you. It could prove to be the most strategic and poignant decision you have made in a crisis.

Other survival tips

It can be emotionally and physically demanding to escape from an urban disaster. However, the better prepared you are, the higher the chances of making it out. So here are some more tips to help you escape disaster in an urban scenario:

Stay Fit: You will need the endurance to get out of the city and reach your destination. Based on this, take fitness seriously so that you can walk or run long distances. Take up parkour, jogging, or free running to get you fit.

Make Friends: While many people will try to steal your stuff, you still need another pair of eyes to keep watch while you rest. So make friends with people who can help you in your survival when the SHTF. Befriend veterans or doctors to help your own survival.

Turn into a Smart Scavenger: Remember, most people will be looting and scavenging at malls and supermarkets. These are places where fights break out, as well. So avoid them. Look at scavenging orchards, cargo ships, and trains, if practical but probably will not be but just tossing out the idea, to get supplies that you need urgently. Stores will be the most practical.

Know Your Food Sources: There can be a chance where you may not be able to leave your neighborhood as soon as disaster strikes. With that said, you need to find the best food sources in your area. Scout out nearby ponds to check if there are ducks, doves on the roof of your building, or check out petting zoos for goats. Again, this is just an idea, most likely not going to be practical and you may not have the reason to kill anything like this and cook it unless the stuff really hits the fan like in the movie Contagion.

Learn to Grow Food: If you get stuck in the city, you should know how to sustain yourself. This is where your cultivation expertise will come handy. So learn urban gardening and vertical farming so that you can grow food for yourself if you get caught in the disaster zone.

Be Tough: Escaping a disaster can be stressful and you cannot let the stress overtake you if you want to survive and escape. Therefore, cultivate a tough mindset that you help you tackle obstacles without panicking. Even if you are a prepper, you will not be able to prep for every possible situation. A tough mindset will prevent your brains from clouding up and keep your mind sharp so that you can make informed decisions and choices for your well-being and protection.

Urban survival is tough. But if you prepare for it, you will be able to overcome it. Use these tips to help you so that your chances of survival in the event of a catastrophe increase. Remember, training and preparing are the key to ensuring your survival and getting out of a disaster in an urban scenario in a safe manner. If you want to be a true survivor, there is no better time than now to begin this thought process. You will be grateful for it when the SHTF.

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