

# Act or React - The Need for Disaster Drills

*“Learning is not compulsory... neither is survival.”  
W. Edwards Deming*



I have a very dear friend and her husband who are retired military and are newbie Preppers. She is an avid home soap maker and she was going to teach me a recipe for olive oil soap and look at what I had on preparedness and homesteading. As she was looking over the information I have and deciding what she wanted copies of she made a comment that “Well I don’t need this on generator repair or biodiesel or that on sanitation since I was in the military as a nurse and we drilled for disaster preparedness all the time. So did my husband’s unit.”



So I asked her “Ok, what would you do if tomorrow we were in a disaster and your generator stopped working? Where is the military unit you were stationed with at the time now? What supplies do you have on hand to replicate what the military had on hand for your drills? Do you or your husband know how to fix the generator when you can’t get to the store to purchase the replacement part or on the internet for how-to information? With the GRID and your generator down how will you pump water from your well or flush the toilet? There is no unit of support staff to dig a latrine for you. If this is a long term outage, how much fuel for your generator do you have, even if you could fix it? You like to make soap, how will you get lye to make soap with this disaster situation?”

She looked at me kinda dumbfounded and requested to see my list of documents again. So as we reviewed the list we started to play the “What If” game and went through about 12 scenarios that are quite possible for our area. Then we ended up burning a CD with all of my documents on it.



This is a lesson to all of us who feel we are already prepared and just need to maintain or tweak a thing here and there.

I have been “Prepping” since the 70’s and I am still learning and still preparing. I cannot stress enough that no matter what your skills and experiences are, there is bound to be a multitude of things out there (big or small) that if a disaster hit you in the next hour, you would be doing without something that you have not accounted for. Even Ragnar Benson in his books stresses that he is always learning.

*“Preparedness is not just about stockpiling, it's about having an actual plan.”*  
*Mike Ryan*

**To have a good chance of success you MUST Plan, Practice and Prepare on a regular basis.** Just like home, school and office fire drills – practice makes perfect and repetition is the foundation to learning.

List and prioritize the possible disaster scenarios for your area. Then each month pick a scenario and a family day to have a practice drill on what to do, where to go based on your preparedness plan for each scenario.



As you and your family get better at your drills, add some complexity (which will help eliminate the boredom of the drill) and have some where you must evacuate to an emergency shelter somewhere, others where you shelter-in-place and some where you must bug-out to some other personal designated shelter or retreat.



I know of a family that once a year practice an actual emergency bug out to a favorite wilderness camping place where they have 1 hour to collect everything they want and need and only a half a tank of gas for their vehicle. They then stay a long weekend at this special place. They even take different routes each year to get to the same general area and last year they practiced “ditching” the vehicle a couple of miles from their retreat site and hiked in.

When they get home they discuss what they forgot or brought that they didn’t need; how long it took them to reach this safe area; what would they do if they couldn’t get there in the usual driving time; what did they have trouble with and stuff like that. Then for their actual week or two week long vacation they usually go to some sort of “Living Colonial” camp and learn something new to add to their skills and experiences. Needless to say this family, if ever in the throes of a disaster, is ready to act and do rather than react and panic.



Practice enough and should disaster strike, you will ACT out of habit and not REACT out of surprise or panic. You don't have to go out in the woods in the middle of the winter, but you do have to have drills or practice sessions where you and your family act out a What-If scenario.

*"What we anticipate seldom occurs;  
what we least expect generally happens."  
Benjamin Disraeli*



*TNT*

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