

THE NEXT EMERGENCY – ARE YOU PREPARED?

Extreme climate events are happening all over the world. According to the U.N., last year “Sixty-two million people were hit by extreme weather disasters fueled by climate change”. Pandemics, probably the most dangerous threat, are becoming more frequent and more deadly. Catastrophes usually occur when we least expect them, and most people are not prepared. We insure our cars and our dwellings, but we often forget about preparing for other emergencies.

The Australians had no idea that they would experience an unprecedented heat wave followed by devastating fires. In January, wildfires burned an area larger than Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island combined or bigger than the state of Pennsylvania. In California, 170,000 people had to be evacuated immediately when the Camp Fire burned through more than 200 square miles. It incinerated an entire town of 25,000 people. And while forest fires can't burn in big cities, they can easily cut off the food supply, shut off natural gas or destroy the power grid. Hurricanes can do the same thing. The people of Puerto Rico were without power for months after hurricane Maria. A severe ice storm could devastate much of the Northeast cutting off power for weeks, even months.

I don't want to scare you but, we must start paying attention to some real nasty possibilities. For example, one critical aspect of a disaster is that all food would disappear within hours. Another often overlooked aspect is how irrational people get and how quickly they get there. Remember Hurricane Katrina! Rescue helicopters were shot at - the whole place reverted to a primitive state within hours. People were killed and looting was rampant. The lawless took what they wanted. Without power, drinking water, and fearful of food shortages, people panic. It happened before and it will happen again - humans are humans.

Closer to home, south of Fredericton New Brunswick, hundreds of people had to be hurriedly evacuated due to extreme flooding. Some were out of their homes for weeks. And while the evacuation was orderly it was nonetheless traumatic. Weather systems contain far more water than they used to and can thus cause more damage. The right weather conditions could turn large areas of Canada and the United States into a disaster zone overnight. Too few people think about this. None of us can know what will happen next, or where. What we do know however, is that we can choose to be a survivor or a statistic – the choice is ours.

I spent several years as a forest ranger prior to returning to university and changing careers. My training as a ranger taught me to respect Mother Nature because the natural environment is beyond our control. And although I was mainly taught how to survive in the wilderness, much of this training can be adapted to survival in an urban environment. It's all about being prepared for unexpected situations. One never knows when some type of traumatic event is going to occur. It's like car insurance; you never want to have to use but, it is peace of mind to have it.

But, no matter how clear the warning, it is still human nature to procrastinate. But this time we can't afford to follow our nature. We must instead push the panic button now when it counts - later could be too late. Often, only those who prepare will survive a serious situation. Please read my free 12-page [survival guide](#) and get ready in case a disaster occurs in your area. It could save your life.

Jim Cogle, February 14th, 2020