

How to Survive a Nuclear Bomb

It's more likely than you think!

About Me

- Lifelong prepper
- Editor at The Prepared for two years
- Now run [Unprepared.life](https://unprepared.life)
- I've published a two-part guide to nuclear war
- <https://bit.ly/3Ptn9ZR>
- <https://bit.ly/38gXiUd>

Primary Sources

- *Nuclear War Survival Skills* — Cresson Kearny
- FEMA, Ready.gov — Brooke Buddemeir
- *U.S. Armed Forces Nuclear, Biological And Chemical Survival Manual* — Captain Dick Couch

Nuclear War: Fact vs. Fiction

- Much of what we think we know about nuclear war comes from horror propaganda like *The Day After* and *Threads*.
- They're based in reality, but were made specifically to put pressure on Reagan and Thatcher. They worked! Reagan was spooked.
- It's more survivable than you think. Many survived the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Some even survived *both* bombings.

Nuclear War: Fact vs. Fiction

- A lot of people get angry when you tell them that a nuclear bombing is a survival event.
- Largely due to propaganda.
- No downplaying it: millions could die or suffer horrific injuries.
- But the key to surviving any situation is maintaining a positive mental attitude. Don't sell yourself short. Ask any veteran or survival expert.

Two Types of Nukes

- **Tactical:** “Baby” nukes intended for small battles. Limited yield, short distance.
- **Strategic nukes:** What we usually think of. Big boom, can travel around the world via ICBMs or SLBMs.
- Strategic nukes are often armed with MIRVs, which launch multiple warheads over a wide area.

Anatomy of a Nuclear Detonation

- **Fire:** Intense heat and light that can reach up to a five-mile radius. Can cause temporary blindness if looked at and ignite flammable materials.
- **Blast:** Creates a shockwave that causes hurricane force winds.
- **Radiation:** The initial blast creates gamma and neutron radiation, but it falls off with distance.

Anatomy of a Nuclear Detonation

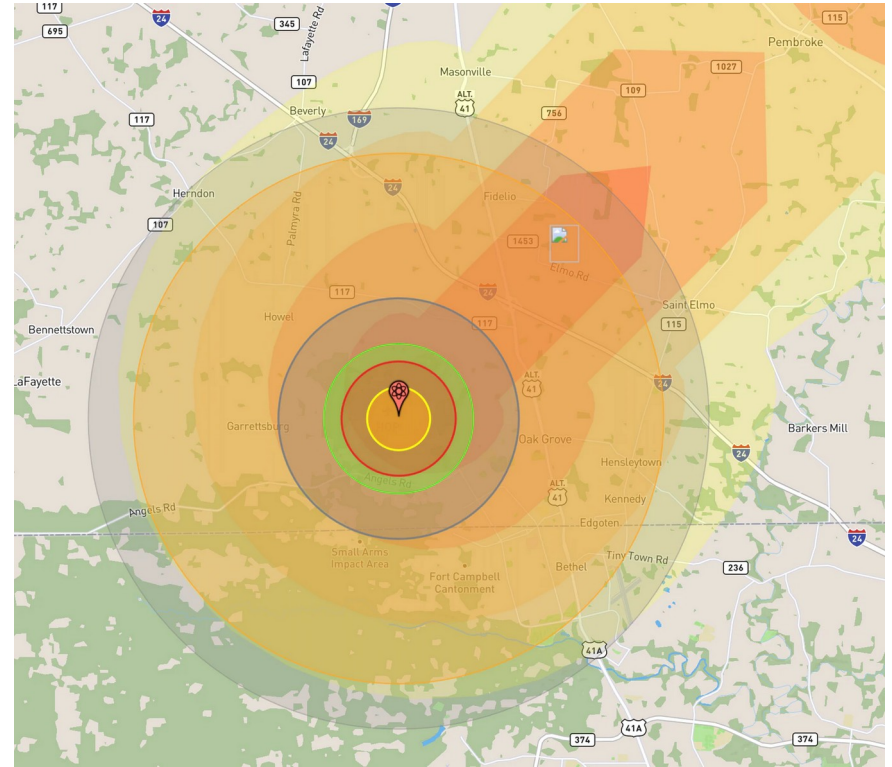
- **Electromagnetic Pulse:** Sends electricity through the air like a radio wave. Can fry electronics connected to a long wire that acts as an antenna, like power lines.
- **Fallout:** Radiated debris, can spread for miles. Quickly starts to decay after three days.

Likely Targets

- Military bases
- Anywhere else nuclear weapons may be housed like Oak Ridge National Lab
- Major cities, especially Washington, D.C.
- Runways over 7,000 feet long (takeoff distance for a B-52 bomber)

NUKEMAP

- You can use NUKEMAP to simulate nuclear detonations at your closest likely target to see what threats you're looking at



Early Warning Signs

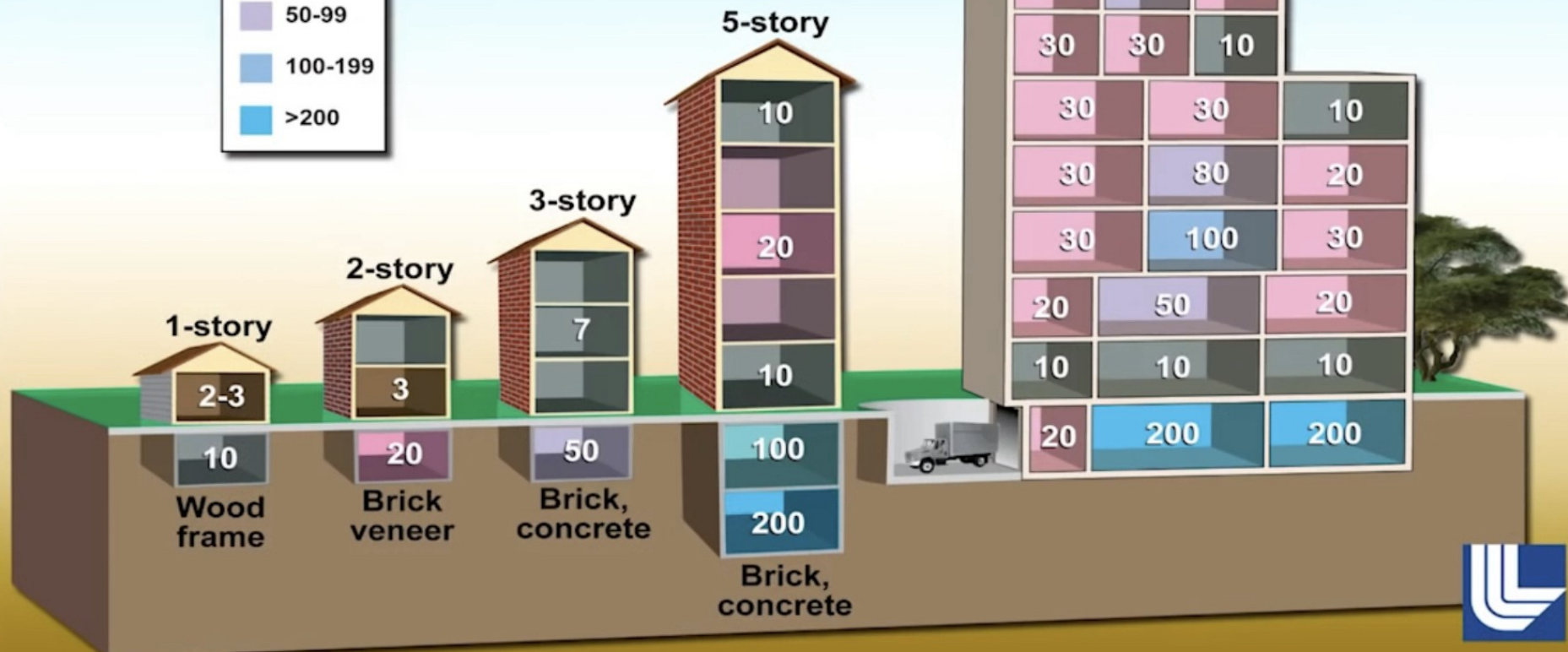
- Old fashioned: radio. Listen for emergency broadcasts and/or sudden loss of stations, which indicates EMP.
- New fangled: SMS alerts. Text SHELTER and your ZIP Code to 43362 get on FEMA's list.
- The US has excellent alert systems. Hawaii learned this in 2018.

What to Do if a Nuke Is Imminent

- GET SHELTER
- Underground is best
- Surrounded by buildings = even better
- The key is surrounding yourself with as much dense material as possible
- Stay away from windows!

Office/Large Apartment Building

Higher numbers
indicate more
protection



What to Do if a Nuke Is Imminent

- What if you have no shelter?
- Use whatever you can: inside a car, hillsides, ditches, irrigation drains, etc.
- It's the only time you should accept a red balloon from a clown in a sewer
- Duck and cover works! Lay flat, cover yourself with a blanket. The blanket may protect you from the heat.

What to Do if a Nuke Is Imminent

- Once you have your spot:
 - Lay face down on the ground
 - Tuck arms under your body
 - Open your mouth to keep pressure from popping your skull
 - Waiting for two shockwaves

After the Blast

- After the blast, you have about 15 minutes until the fallout starts
- If you're outside, get inside and be ready to stay there
- Turn off any air intakes like HVAC

How Long to Shelter?

- Good news: fallout radiation decays quickly
- Bad news: there are a number of variables
- Surface burst: more fallout, brown mushroom cloud
- Air burst: less fallout over a wider area, white mushroom cloud

How Long to Shelter?

- You want to remain sheltered at least 24 hours
- Ideally up to two weeks
- Three days is a good target

Moving in the Fallout Zone

- Keep skin covered: long sleeves, hat, gloves, etc
- Cover mouth with respirator or wet bandana
- Stay out of the rain, avoid trees
- Avoid contaminated food and water
- Move *AWAY* from the blast zone

Moving in the Fallout Zone

- If you get fallout on your skin, wash it off ASAP with soap and water
- When you reach your destination:
 - Shake off fallout being going in
 - Immediately strip and bag clothes
 - Wash with soap and water
 - Do NOT use conditioner (it causes fallout to stick to your hair)

Potassium Iodide (KI)

- Floods your thyroid with non-radioactive iodine
- Prevents thyroid cancer, not radiation poisoning
- Cheap, some FDA-approved products
- But now hard to find
- Potentially dangerous if taken too long or overdose

Potassium Iodide (KI)

- FDA-approved products:
 - iOSAT
 - ThyroSafe
 - ThyroShield
 - Potassium Iodide Oral Solution from Mission Pharmacal — meant for kids

Is Survival Hopeless?

- The Nuclear Winter theory is a theory that says a nuclear war would throw so much ash into the atmosphere that the world would be thrust into years of darkness and everything would die.
- But there is reason to doubt.

Nuclear Winter Doubts

- Carl Sagan, a famous proponent of nuclear winter, claimed in 1991 that Saddam Hussein would spark a miniature nuclear winter. That didn't happen.
- William R. Cotton, an early proponent, later said, "It is clear that nuclear winter was largely politically motivated from the beginning, and it is an example of science being subverted to political ends."