

# How to be Prepared to Survive in Washington D.C.

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The planning procedures that come from analyzing possible disasters and applying principles of disaster recovery can provide opportunities to create a positive outcome out of a disaster. I plan to move and reside in the Washington D.C. area specifically around Arlington, Virginia. Throughout this area, natural disasters are a possibility, but human-caused disaster is just as possible, because it is the capitol of the United States. Attacks on and around this area are more likely than others because the nation's leaders and political figures reside there. To be successful in planning for disaster around this area, I have to take into account both natural and human-caused disaster.

Recent disasters that have occurred in the Washington D.C. area are the following:

- United States Capitol attack of 2021
- Covid-19 Pandemic
- Hurricanes
- Tornados
- Flooding
- Winter Storms

Each of these disasters could shut down roads, businesses, and possibly limit that number of available supplies for citizens in the area. The recent attack on the US capitol in which rioters stormed the Capitol Building, causing overall chaos around the city to try and halt President-elect Joe Biden from being declared the legitimate President. As Washington D.C. and the surrounding area is a place of powerful elected leaders, domestic terrorism could occur around where I am residing in the future. Knowing how to stay safe while the city is under attack can allow me to better survive and move about if I need to leave. Assessing the setting and know when to stay indoors or flee the city for safety can be a life-or-death decision that should be thought about prior to the danger, so I can know what to do if it does occur. The same can be said about natural disasters as storms bring heavy winds and debris that can enter the residence that I will be living in. Having emphasis on trying to stay connected to the internet or have a main form of communication is paramount as it allows me the option of contacting individuals in case I am required to continue working; or in case I need to quickly call emergency services. Creating a disaster recovery plan for both types of threats, natural and human-caused, provides me with the right frame of mind to prepare and practice in case these situations become reality in the future.

When planning for disaster events in advance, some steps that I would take are buying essential materials to secure my physical location, create a food pantry, and have a date to update this disaster recovery plan scheduled, so I can both refresh myself and make needed changes to it. Securing the physical location of my residence would be buying materials such as plywood and sandbags to block windows and doors in case of the introduction of water. Things such as locks and door hinges should be replaced to increase the security of the residence against human threats. To combat hunger in an emergency situation where I cannot leave the residence, I will create a food pantry that holds at least a week's worth of canned food and water to hold me. This will allow me to eat in case I do not have access to power. As these steps are taken, I will set a date to revise the overall plan so that I can make the area the most secure it can be.

As both natural and human-caused disasters could force me out of my residence and away from D.C., I have to be prepared to leave quickly. To do this, I will arrange a “go-bag” to allow me to grab and flee to a safer area away from the city. Within this bag will be several items including:

- Three days’ worth of clothing
  - Having access to extra clothes will allow me to have changes in case of wetness, rips, or dirtiness.
- Emergency electronics such as a police scanner or radio
  - Accessing frequencies to hear what the police are handling can both show me if the emergency is being dealt with, and what areas to avoid if I am fleeing the city.
- Food and water for three days
  - Holding on to food and water is important if I am stuck in an area that has no power as certain nonperishable foods are light in weight and is easy to carry around.
- First-aid kit
  - In case of injury to others or myself, it would be important to both have and know how to use a first-aid kit.
- Flashlight
  - Allowing myself the ability to see if there is no power at night would be good to have as streets would be hard to navigate without it.
- Chargers and extra phone battery
  - The ability to stay connected to news and loved ones through a disaster is important, at the only way to do so is to have a way to charge and use your phone or laptop.
- Masks to protect against dirty air
  - Having something to cover my face during an evacuation to block possible dirty air and disease from others could be a positive factor regarding my health in a disaster setting.
- Cash
  - Having cash on hand during a disaster would be able to secure things such as extra water, food, and supplies without having to worry about the loss of power to use a credit card.

When using this “go-bag,” I will need a place to go. When creating my plan, I would most likely have multiple areas to go to depending on the event. The most likely location would be back home to Pittsburgh to be with my family if I would be able to physically make the trip. Knowing where to go in a time of need could help in the success of avoiding the disaster.

Having this information on hand to help aid in the process of creating a disaster recovery plan will be advantageous as I feel more ready to analyze potential disasters and make the necessary plans to ensure my safety.

## References

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