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## Get Home/Bail-out Bag



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by [Larry Diffey](#) , [January 25, 2015](#)

Everyone has their own idea of what constitutes the perfect get home bag, bail-out bag or bug out bag and many people will mistakenly lump all those various bag ideas together. In reality, all of those bags (to a certain degree) serve different purposes and must be tailored to the individual's needs and circumstances.

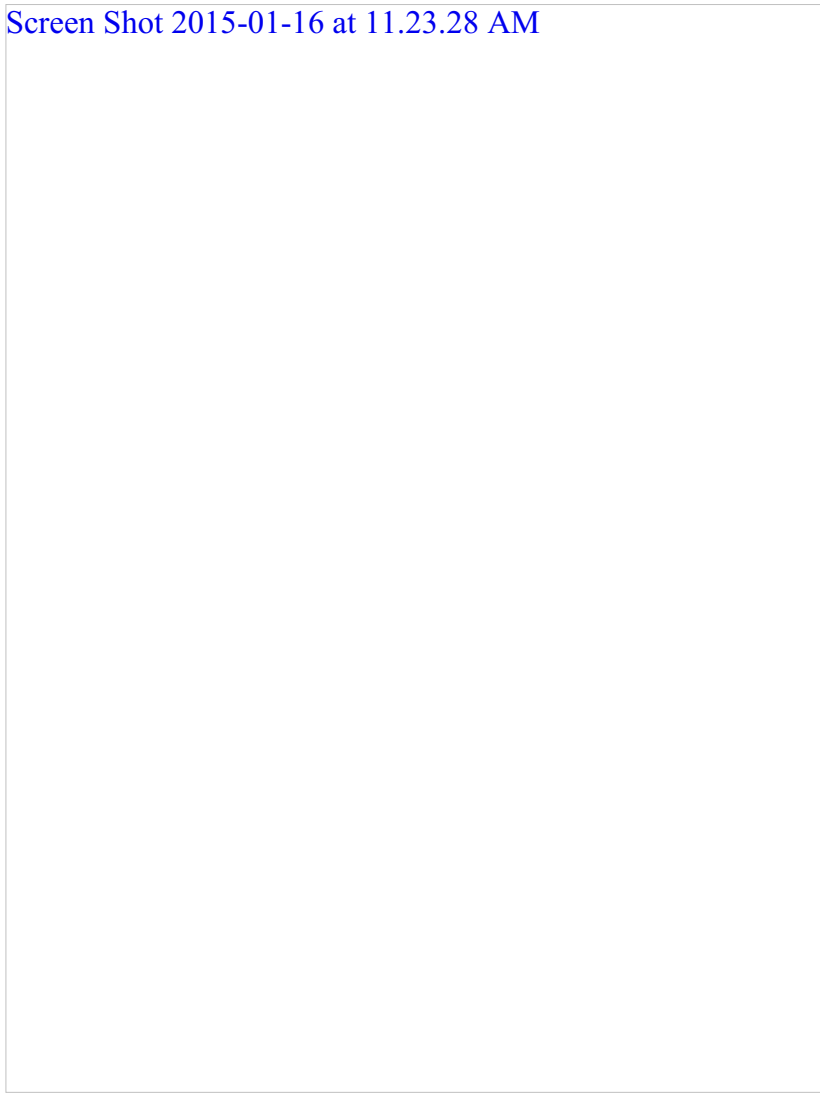
In my mind, the get home bag is the smallest and lightest and is used to get you home from work or a short trip should some natural catastrophe or failure of civility occur. Often these bags contain just a protein bar, a water bottle, a good knife and maybe a GPS or compass and maps to get you home should you need to hike it back. The bail out bag is usually a little more comprehensive and would be used to get the hell out of Dodge immediately and keep yourself in good health for a few days as you get to a safer area. With the bail out bag concept you have every expectation that you'll be able to come back home after the crisis has passed. I think supplies for three days would probably be the maximum you would need to get you where you're going but your mileage may vary, so to speak. The bug out bag is large and comprehensive and literally should contain everything you can possibly carry that would enable you to make a new start elsewhere. If you've grabbed the bug out bag you really aren't planning to come back for a long time, if ever.

With those ideas in mind, I'm going to go through what I consider my hybrid get home/bail out bag. It won't work for everyone nor is it intended to do so. It works for me and perhaps it may work for others or at least allow others to cherry pick some of the ideas or items for their own bag.

First, let me address the reason for my hybrid bag. I'm not rich. I haven't the resources to build the perfect bag for every circumstance. What I've done instead is build a dedicated bug out bag which sits in my house ready to go should it ever be necessary. It is very large, very heavy and includes everything I feel I would need if I absolutely had to run for my life and never look back. I am not going to lug that bag around in my vehicle on a daily basis. It takes up too much space and I certainly wouldn't want to lose the contents to some a-hole who might steal it. On the other hand, I really don't mind having a small, thirty pound pack that will get me home or let me bail out quickly and for a short period of time that is always in my vehicle and ready to go.

Now, to the bag. The bag itself is a SOG bag that I bought for about thirty bucks. It is almost identical in size, construction and layout to the 5.11 Rush 12 at less than half the price. I can't see that there is an appreciable difference in materials or stitching between the two bags. If there is anything inferior in the SOG bag it *may* be the zippers. None of them have failed me but they are sometimes a bit recalcitrant in operation. Following are photos of the back, front and sides of the loaded bag.

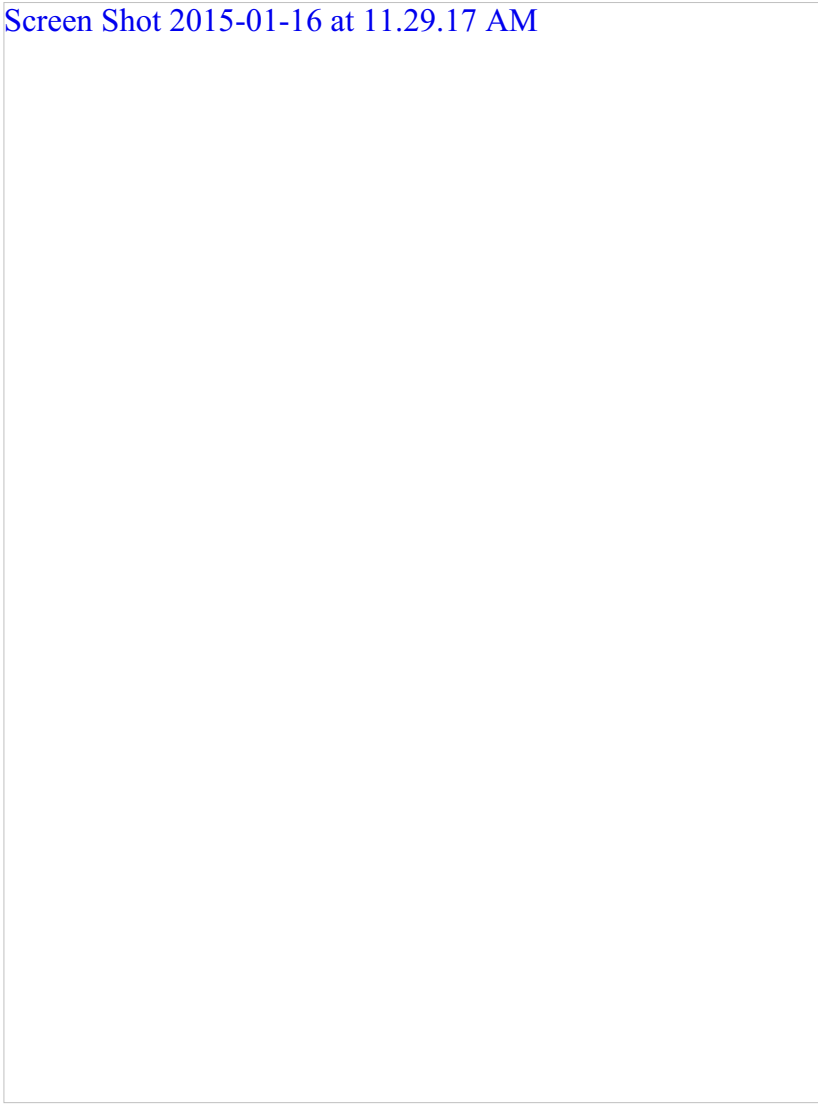
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Front of bag.

On the right strap I have a Leatherman One-Hand Tool and on the left strap is an ESEE Izula. I want these items readily available at all times. I do not want to stop and drop my pack to get to either of these. You can also see the tube for the hydration bladder on the right strap.

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Back of bag.

The front of the pack is clean right now but I actually have a Condor Rip-Away EMT pouch that mounts on the lower part of the pack where you see a pair of MOLLE sticks. By the way, those are great. They are fast, easy and they stay put. I'll cover the med pouch and contents at a later date. In the photo of the right side of the pack (right side as you're carrying the pack) you will see an Inovo red led light that I've attached with paracord so that I can find things in my pack if necessary. You can also get an idea of how small and compact this pack is by comparing it to my foot in the photo.

Right side

Right side.

The left side of the pack is clean except for a spare MOLLE stick.

Left side

Below you will see a photo of the first compartment and the contents.

upper left outside front



The contents are the straw, syringe and small bag for a Sawyer Mini filter system. I also have a one liter bag for the Sawyer in the main compartment of the pack. There is still a lot of room in this compartment for small items.

Next compartment.

upper right outside front



Here is the actual Sawyer filter, a couple of BIC lighters and a magnesium fire starter. As with the previous compartment much room remains for small items.

By the way, you will notice as we go through these photos that many items are still in their packaging. I know very well that I could save weight and space if I removed the packaging but I also know that I may not be the only one who needs to use this bag. Someone who is unfamiliar with these items may need to use them and I have left any packaging which has instructions intact. Also, in some cases, the packaging helps protect the items. I have used duplicates of every item in this bag at one time or another and many are in my bug out bag, too, so I know that they are tested products.

The next photo is of the large outside pocket on the front of the pack, immediately below the two previously covered compartments.

organizer

Let me state right off the bat that I did I poor job on this photograph. This pocket is an “organizer” pocket and the photo doesn’t show nearly as much as it should so I’ll list the contents you can’t see in just a moment. In the photo you can see a few spare Malice clips, a titanium spoon, fork and knife set, an AA powered LED flashlight, a fifty-foot roll of 550 paracord and a roll up solar charger. The charger will keep a cell phone charged as well as charging AA batteries. For this reason most of my flashlights and my GPS are AA powered. Items which are less visible or cannot be seen at all are: two Rite in the Rain notebooks, a Fisher Space Pen, a Sharpie permanent marker, a pair of leather work gloves, a McNett microfiber towel, four Dakotaline snares sized for small game and a pair of wool socks. In the zippered pocket you can see behind the flashlight are some redundant antibiotics and over-the-counter medications (like Ibuprofen and Imodium) just in case I should need to replenish items in my EMT pouch.

Next is the right-side outer pocket.

right outside pocket

As you can see I carry a 32 ounce stainless steel bottle in this pocket. What is not obvious in this photo are the contents of the bottle.



## ROP contents

Inside, I have three New Millennium food bars, some Wetfire tinder and one of my favorite “comfort” items; Café Perfecto coffee cubes. Whatever may be going on in the big world I’ll be okay if I can have a cup of coffee.

On to the left outer pocket.

## Left Outside Pocket

In this pocket I have a couple of twelve hour Snaplights and a Berkey Sport water bottle. Though the Sawyer Mini filter is a great filter it will not remove chemicals or heavy metals. The Berkey will. If I have nothing but really dodgy water I’ll be using the Berkey.

Now for the main compartment. Unzipped but packed:

## Main Compartment Packed

And partially unpacked:

## Main Compartment Partially Unpacked

Here we have a Snugpak Jungle Blanket, a SOL Escape Bivy (partially inside a stainless steel cup), a Grand Trunk Ultralight hammock, a few N95 masks, an Esbit stove with twelve fuel tabs and a Cold Steel Trail Hawk.

Large zippered pocket inside flap.

### Main Compartment Lg. Zipper

Here I have a small pair of binoculars and a GPS with several spare rechargeable batteries inside a waterproof case.

Smaller zippered pocket inside flap.

### Main Compartment Sm. Zipper

In this one I have a couple more Snaplights, a pair of polypropylene glove liners and a Merino wool beanie.

Another view of the main compartment.

## Main Elastic Partial Unpack

Here you can see that I've pulled some of the items out of the elasticized back pocket of the main compartment. The items include a bag of assorted toe, hand and body warmers, a bag of assorted zip ties, a roll of camo duct tape, some tent stakes and a McNett repair kit which contains a sewing kit and various items for clothing, gear and pack repairs. Still in the pocket is an 88" by 81" tarp with shock cords attached for quick shelter.

Last photo.

## Final Outside Resized



Here are my Pocket Naturalist series guides on top of the pack. I took them out of the pack earlier for a photo and then forgot to include them. Below those you can see a Vargo Titanium alcohol-fuel stove. It weighs less than an ounce and actually boils water faster than the Esbit. This stove finds its way into and out of my packs. It is very light and very efficient but I have never been a fan of carrying alcohol in my pack. (Not for stoves, anyway.) I've had leaks before that damaged some of my items and also left me without fuel. Consequently, I usually have the solid-fuel Esbit in my pack rather than the Vargo. The Vargo is a very nice stove, though. This photo also illustrates again how small and compact this pack really is. As you can see it is barely wider than the pair of gloves and considerably narrower than the Thermarest Z-Lite attached to the bottom of the pack.

Now for some final notes. Things that you did not see in my pack that I know you'll ask about are: clothing and firearms. If I arrange the items in the main compartment carefully I can get a lightweight shirt and pair of pants in the pack. I saw no need to photograph the clothing. As far as firearms go I look at it this way: This pack lives in my Suburban. As I stated before there are some things I really don't want to have stolen. My handgun is one of those items. Further, my handgun is normally on my person along with a couple of spare mags anyway. Finally, if I can't get where I'm going without a long gun I'm probably just not trying hard enough.

With this pack I can certainly get home from a trip to town and, if necessary, bail out and live fairly comfortably for a few days as things settle down or until I can get to a better area.

I hope this will prove to be of some benefit to someone out there. I'm always willing to improve this setup so I welcome your feedback.

David Helms

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## About Author



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