

Can You Survive? Should You Bug Out?

By Phil Elmore

Stay where you are until help arrives.

Too often, that is the message we receive from those in authority when an emergency looms. Watch any movie about natural (or unnatural) disasters and you'll see variations on that theme – variations that resonate in fiction because they mirror reality. “Return to your homes. You will be safe there.”

Recently I watched *Poseidon* in the theater and caught most of the television movie version on cable. While a fantasy, the movie presents the viewer with a very real dilemma, one which he or she should ponder. If you were in the position of the protagonists, with your cruise ship upside down and taking on water, would you stay and wait for rescue, or would you risk perhaps greater danger in attempting to make your way out of the ship?

Those working in the World Trade Center towers were presented with this dilemma in real life on September 11, 2001. When the first plane hit, before the tower fell, those within were told to stay where they were and await assistance. Many didn't heed this warning and fled. Those that stayed behind died.

The urge to stay put and wait for “the professionals” to come help you is very understandable and entirely natural. Especially if we're home but, to a lesser extent, when we're someplace that's simply familiar, we cling to the idea that everything will be okay if we just stay where we are. Those in authority will frequently pass along the same instructions for some of the same reasons – though at times one gets the impression that it's simply easier to tell the sheep to

stay in their pens while the first responders go about their business.

Survivalism – and martialism – require us to think for ourselves. It is not enough simply to obey authority figures, even if you respect them. You cannot afford to let them do your thinking for you. In every emergency situation, you must apply critical analysis to all the data available to you. The first question you must ask yourself is, “Can I survive?” The second question you must ask yourself is, “Should I bug out?”

Regardless of the problem – civil unrest, terrorist attack, nuclear power plant failure, natural disaster, whatever – you must first evaluate what resources you have at your disposal (this is where survival kits prepared before the fact play an important role). You must consider these resources against what you know of the situation at hand (which makes information vitally important; if you don't have a small AM/FM radio at your disposal, get one now). How long can you reasonably expect the emergency to last? What is the nature of that emergency? Will what you have at your disposal sustain you in terms of food, shelter, and medical needs for the duration of the crisis?

If the emergency is a simple power outage and authorities have already announced a timeline for restoration of power, you're probably safe where you are if you have some food, some water, and a way to stay in touch with the outside world. If the emergency is a meltdown at the nuclear power plant twenty miles away, however, you'd best start taking potassium iodide pills while getting the hell out of there – no matter what those in power are telling you to do.

The choice to “bug out” – to flee – begs certain questions, too. Do you know

where you are going? What are the benefits of trying to get there? What are the potential obstacles? What is your method of transportation – and what will you do if that transportation fails along the way? Have the authorities instituted some sort of curfew? Will you be stopped and your weapons seized if you are found out and about?

You'll note that I mentioned weapons. If you don't have some means of self-protection on hand, you're not adequately prepared. Some municipalities and nations make it very difficult for citizens to possess firearms, but if this is the case, you need to focus on alternative weaponry so you have something when you need it. Buy it, pack it away, and hope you never have to use it. It could be a machete, a sword, a length of chain, a staff, a long metal pipe... just have something, and hopefully the most powerful “something” you can hide away.

When considering whether to stay or go (and how to do that), do not forget your family and friends. Are your loved ones with you? If not, how will you get to them? Do you have a plan? Do they know to stay where they are until you find them, or to meet somewhere? Are you planning on bugging out to the home of friends or family? If so, do they know to expect you?

These questions and many more must be asked before an emergency. You must plan now and prepare now, before you need either plans or preparations. In an uncertain modern world, you cannot afford to leave these things to chance or wishful thinking. *The Martialist* will feature many articles now and in the future on the topic of survival. We have recommitted ourselves to this goal of preparation for adversity. Survivalism IS self-defense. It is, at its core, martialism. We will work hard to help you prepare and to survive. ♠