

# 17 Items That'll Get You HUNTED DOWN After the COLLAPSE

In the spring of 2018, I made a mistake that still keeps me up at night. I'd just finished building out my family's food storage — roughly four months' worth of freeze-dried meals, canned goods, rice, and beans — and I was proud. So proud, in fact, that I casually mentioned it to my neighbor Dave over the fence while we were grilling burgers.

Dave's a good guy. Coaches Little League. Volunteers at the church food bank on weekends. But here's the problem: Dave also has a big mouth. Within two weeks, three other families on our block knew about our "bunker" — their word, not mine. One guy even joked about coming over "when things go sideways."



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He was laughing. I wasn't.

I've been prepping since 2012, and in that time I've learned a painful truth that most people in this community don't want to hear: **the biggest threat after a collapse isn't the disaster itself — it's the people who know what you have.**

Every hurricane season, every grid-down event, every supply chain disruption proves the same thing. When systems fail, people don't politely wait in line. They get desperate. And desperate people do things they'd never dream of on a normal Tuesday afternoon.

Here's the uncomfortable truth most prepper content won't tell you. It doesn't matter if you have the perfect stockpile, the ideal bug-out bag, or a basement full of supplies. If

your OPSEC is garbage, you're not a prepared survivor — you're a supply depot with a welcome mat.

This post isn't about what to stockpile. You can find a thousand lists for that. This is about the seventeen categories of items that will make you a walking target after things fall apart — and more importantly, how to have them without painting a bullseye on your front door. Some of these will be obvious. A few will surprise you. And at least two or three will probably make you rethink your entire approach.

Let's get into it.



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## 1. Prescription Medications and Antibiotics

If you've studied any prolonged crisis — the Siege of Sarajevo, Venezuela's ongoing collapse, or even the aftermath of Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico — you already know that medicine disappears first. Not food, not water. Medicine.

During the Bosnian War, antibiotics became more valuable than ammunition within the first few months. People who had chronic conditions like diabetes, hypertension, or asthma were in a desperate race against their own medicine cabinets. And the people who had access to medications? They became targets overnight.

Now think about this in an American context. According to the CDC, roughly 66% of American adults use at least one prescription medication. That's over 170 million people who will run out of something critical within 30 to 90 days of a major supply chain collapse. The pharmacies will empty in days — maybe hours. Then what?

If you're someone who's stockpiled antibiotics, blood pressure meds, insulin, or even common painkillers beyond what your household needs, you need to understand something clearly: **you are sitting on post-collapse gold.** And if anyone in your community knows it, you're going to have visitors. Some will ask politely. Some won't.

## What Actually Happens When Meds Run Out

I talked to a guy in 2019 who survived the Venezuelan collapse. His mother was diabetic. When insulin became unavailable through normal channels, his family traded a working generator — something they desperately needed — for a three-month supply. That's the kind of desperation we're talking about. And that's a relatively civil transaction.

The reality is grimmer in most scenarios. When a parent's child has an infection and there are no antibiotics at the hospital, morality becomes flexible. That's not a judgment — it's human nature under pressure.

## How to Protect This Prep

First, never discuss your medical preps with anyone outside your immediate household. Not your extended family, not your prepper group, nobody. Second, rotate your stock quietly through your regular prescriptions. Talk to your doctor about 90-day supplies rather than 30-day. Third, learn about fish antibiotics and veterinary equivalents — same compounds, different labels. I'm not giving medical advice here, but I am saying that knowledge is worth having before you need it.

And store it all in a way that doesn't scream "pharmacy." A locked filing cabinet in a closet draws a lot less attention than labeled bins on a shelf.



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## 2. Water Purification and Filtration Systems

You can survive weeks without food. You'll be dead in three to five days without water. Everyone knows this, which means everyone will be looking for clean water after the taps stop running.

Here's where it gets interesting. Having stored water is one thing — 55-gallon drums in the garage are heavy and hard to move, but they'll keep you alive for a while. The real target item is the ability to *make* clean water. A quality gravity-fed filter, UV purification

system, or even a proper understanding of chemical treatment makes you a long-term water source. And long-term water sources attract attention like nothing else.

I learned this during a camping trip back in 2015. We were at a dispersed site in Colorado and a boil-water advisory hit the nearby town. Within a day, our little group had strangers wandering over asking if we had "extra" water. We had a Berkey filter running on creek water. It was fine. But the attention wasn't.

### The Visibility Problem

The mistake most people make is treating water purification as a community resource. I get the impulse — water is life, and turning away a thirsty neighbor feels monstrous. But in a sustained grid-down scenario, you cannot be the neighborhood water station. You'll burn through filters, exhaust your chemical supplies, and eventually draw exactly the wrong kind of crowd.

A better approach: **teach others how to purify water before a crisis hits.** Boiling is the simplest method and requires zero special equipment. SODIS — solar disinfection using clear plastic bottles — works in a pinch. Give people the knowledge now so they're not knocking on your door later.

And keep your good filtration gear out of sight. A Berkey sitting on your kitchen counter is visible through any window. Think about that.



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## 3. Ammunition and Firearms

I almost didn't include this one because it's so obvious. But "obvious" doesn't mean "well understood," and there's a critical nuance here that most people miss.

After a collapse, firearms become tools of both security and acquisition. If you have them and others don't, you're in a position of power. That's the straightforward part. What most preppers don't think about is that **ammunition is the real currency** — not the guns themselves.

Guns are durable goods. A quality firearm will outlast its owner with minimal maintenance. But ammo is consumable. Every round fired is gone forever. During the 2020 ammo shortage, common calibers like 9mm were selling for three to four times their pre-shortage price — when you could find them at all. Now imagine that dynamic when there's no resupply coming. Ever.

## The Ammo Stockpile Dilemma

Here's the problem. If you've been smart and stacked deep on common calibers — 9mm, 5.56, .308, 12 gauge — you're sitting on something that everyone with a firearm desperately needs. And unlike food or water, the people looking for ammo are by definition armed.

This is where things get ugly. During the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, there were documented cases of armed groups going door to door in certain neighborhoods. Some were looking for supplies. Some were looking for weapons to take more supplies. And some were confiscation teams — yes, law enforcement confiscated legally owned firearms from residents during Katrina. That's not conspiracy talk; it's documented history.

My approach: diversify your storage locations. Don't keep everything in one place. A small cache at home, some with a trusted ally, maybe some at a secondary location. And for the love of everything, stop posting pictures of your ammo stash on social media. I see this constantly in prepper groups and it baffles me every time.



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## 4. Fuel and Generators

The sound of a generator running is a dinner bell for desperate people. I cannot stress this enough.

During the 2021 Texas freeze, I was talking with a friend in Houston who told me something that stuck with me. His neighbor had a generator running within hours of the power going out. Smart move, right? Except it was the only house on the block with lights on and the hum of a motor. By day two, people were showing up asking to charge phones. By day three, someone tried to siphon his fuel tank. By day four, he shut it off and sat in the dark with everyone else because the attention wasn't worth the warmth.

Generators are incredibly useful tools. I own two — a dual-fuel Honda for heavy loads and a smaller inverter unit for essentials. But I've also invested in understanding how to run them quietly and out of sight, because **a running generator in a blackout is a neon sign that says 'this house has resources.'**

### Fuel Storage Draws the Wrong Crowd

Stored gasoline, diesel, and propane are another massive target. After a collapse, fuel is mobility. Fuel is cooking. Fuel is power generation. And fuel is finite — it doesn't grow back, and it degrades over time even with stabilizers.

If people know you've got a few hundred gallons of fuel stored, you're a high-value target. Period. Store fuel in nondescript containers, away from the main house if possible. Rotate your stock religiously — I cycle my gasoline every six months and treat everything with PRI-G stabilizer. And consider alternative fuel sources that are less obvious. A wood gasifier isn't sexy, but nobody's going to raid you for a pile of sticks.

### **The Noise Factor**

Let's talk practical noise reduction. A generator in an insulated enclosure with proper ventilation can cut noise output by 50% or more. I built a plywood baffle box for my Honda in 2020 — cost me about \$80 in materials and a Saturday afternoon. It's not silent, but at 50 feet you can barely hear it over ambient noise. That matters more than you think when every other house on the street is dark and quiet.



**People couldn't sleep of fear of looters and rapists after Katrina, in the Superdome.**  
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## **5. Long-Term Food Stores and Seeds**

This is the one that most preppers actually have but handle with the worst OPSEC. You know why? Because food storage is visible. Delivery trucks show up. Amazon boxes with labels. Bulk purchases from Costco that your neighbors see you hauling in. And every time you talk about preparedness casually, food is the first thing people imagine.

Remember my neighbor Dave? The reason he told half the block about my supplies is that food storage is relatable. Everyone understands food. Not everyone understands ham radio or water purification chemistry. But food? Everyone gets that. Which means everyone remembers who has it.

After a long-term grid-down event, anyone known to have a deep pantry becomes a target. Not necessarily on day one — most people have a few days to a week of food in their homes. But by week two, when the local grocery stores have been picked clean and the gas stations are dry, that's when memories get sharp. "Didn't Dave say the guy on the corner has months of food stored?"

### **Seeds Are Even More Dangerous to Advertise**

Here's something that surprised me when I first learned it. In a prolonged collapse — we're talking months, not days — heirloom seeds become one of the most valuable items in existence. Why? Because they represent renewable food production. A can of beans feeds you once. A packet of bean seeds feeds you indefinitely if you know what you're doing.

During the pandemic, seed companies were overwhelmed with orders. Baker Creek, one of the largest heirloom seed suppliers in the country, reported being backordered for weeks. And that was during a relatively mild disruption with grocery stores still operational. Imagine the demand when there are no grocery stores.

If you have a seed vault and the knowledge to grow food, guard both carefully. The knowledge piece matters — seeds without gardening skills are just expensive birdseed. But the combination of seeds and skills makes you invaluable. **Invaluable also means targetable.**

## 6. Solar Panels, Batteries, and Off-Grid Power

We live in a world that runs on electricity. When the grid dies, anything that produces or stores electrical power becomes a strategic asset. And unlike a generator, solar panels are hard to hide — they're literally sitting on your roof advertising your energy independence to anyone who looks up.

I installed a small 400-watt solar setup on my property in 2021. Not a full-house system — just enough to run a chest freezer, charge devices, and keep some lights on. The panels are ground-mounted behind my garage, not on the roof. That was a deliberate choice. Roof-mounted panels are visible from the street, from the air, and from neighboring properties. Ground-mounted panels behind a fence? Much less visible.

Battery banks and portable power stations are another high-value target. A Jackery, EcoFlow, or Bluetti unit with some folding panels gives someone complete energy independence at a portable scale. That's incredibly valuable in a grid-down world. It's also incredibly stealable.



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### The Communication Angle

Here's what connects to the next item on our list. If you have power when nobody else does, the first thing people will want is to charge their phones. In the early days of any disaster, communication is everything. People want to reach family, get news, call for help. If word gets out that you can charge a phone, you'll have a line around the block.

I'm not saying don't help people. I'm saying have a plan for how much help you can offer without compromising your own security and resources. A small USB charging station

near your front door — powered by a hidden battery — is a neighborly gesture that doesn't expose your full setup. Think strategically about what you reveal.

## 7. Communication Equipment — Radios, HAM, and Satellite Devices

When cell towers go down — and they will, usually within 24 to 72 hours without grid power and fuel for backup generators — anyone with communication capability has an enormous advantage. You can coordinate with allies, receive emergency broadcasts, monitor local activity, and gather intelligence about what's happening beyond your line of sight.

A good HAM radio setup with a proper antenna can reach hundreds of miles. A satellite communicator like a Garmin inReach can send messages globally when every other system is dead. Even a basic set of GMRS radios gives you tactical communication within a few miles.

But here's the catch. Radio transmissions can be monitored and direction-found. If you're broadcasting, someone with the right equipment — and this isn't exotic gear, a basic SDR dongle costs \$30 — can figure out roughly where you are. More importantly, if you're the only person in your area with a visible antenna, people will come to you for information, for help, and eventually for the equipment itself.

### Keep Your Antenna Profile Low

A massive HF antenna on your roof tells every passerby that you have communication equipment. There are lower-profile options — wire antennas strung through trees, attic-mounted antennas, portable setups that can be deployed and taken down. I switched from a vertical antenna on a mast to a wire dipole hidden in the tree line behind my house. The performance is slightly worse, but the visual profile is zero.

Also, and I can't emphasize this enough — learn to listen more than you transmit. In a grid-down scenario, receiving information is almost always more valuable than broadcasting it. Every transmission gives away your position and your capability. Be the person who knows everything happening in a 50-mile radius. Don't be the person broadcasting your location to everyone in that same radius.



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## 8. Medical Supplies and First Aid Beyond the Basics

Band-Aids and aspirin aren't going to make you a target. But a proper trauma kit with tourniquets, hemostatic gauze, chest seals, and suture kits? That's a different story.

Throw in a pulse oximeter, blood pressure cuff, and some basic surgical instruments, and you've got something that a hospital won't have once supply chains collapse.

I started building my medical kit in 2014 after taking a TCCC — that's Tactical Combat Casualty Care — course. At the time, I thought I was being dramatic. Now I've used that training three times in real life, twice for injuries at home and once helping a neighbor who sliced his leg open with a chainsaw. None of those were collapse scenarios. They were regular Tuesday emergencies where the nearest hospital was 20 minutes away and the bleeding wasn't going to wait.

The point is, medical capability is valuable *right now*, not just after a collapse. And after a collapse, it becomes priceless.

### The "Doctor" Target

Here's something to think about. In any prolonged emergency, anyone known to have medical supplies or medical knowledge becomes the de facto doctor of their area. That sounds noble. It can also be fatal. In historical collapses, medics and healers were both valued and targeted — valued by the community, targeted by groups who wanted exclusive access to medical care.

During the siege of Sarajevo, doctors who worked in civilian clinics were sometimes forced at gunpoint to treat fighters exclusively. That's an extreme example, but the principle scales down to any scenario where medical care is scarce and demand is high.

**What you need to know:** medical training is arguably more important than medical supplies. A trained person with limited supplies will save more lives than an untrained person with a warehouse full of gear. Invest in courses — Wilderness First Responder, Stop the Bleed, TCCC. These skills are lightweight, portable, and impossible to steal.



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## 9. Alcohol, Tobacco, and Comfort Items

Let me be direct with you about something that the "serious" prepper community tends to dismiss: vice items have historically been among the most tradeable commodities in every collapse ever documented.

Alcohol, tobacco, coffee, chocolate, hard candy — these aren't survival necessities. But they're psychological necessities for a huge portion of the population. And when people are stressed, scared, and grieving the world they lost, they'll trade significant resources for a bottle of whiskey or a pack of cigarettes.

In the Bosnian War, a pack of cigarettes could buy a full meal. In Venezuelan black markets, alcohol has been used as currency when the bolivar became worthless. During

American Prohibition, people literally risked prison for a drink. Human nature doesn't change because the grid goes down.

### **Why This Makes You a Target**

If you've stockpiled alcohol and tobacco for barter purposes — and you should, even if you don't personally use either — you need to treat these items with the same OPSEC as ammunition. Because here's what happens: you make one barter trade, and now someone knows you have more. They tell a friend. That friend tells two more. Within days, you're the local dealer and everybody knows where to find you.

Back in 2017, I experimented with barter scenarios during a weekend drill with my preparedness group. We simulated a post-collapse market using real goods. The guy who brought tobacco products was overwhelmed with offers within the first hour. It was eye-opening. People would trade tools, food, and labor for cigarettes they didn't even need yet — they were stockpiling for future trades. The demand was immediate and aggressive.

My solution: never barter from your home location. Meet at neutral sites. Bring only what you intend to trade that day, never your full stock. And diversify what you're known for — don't be "the cigarette guy." Be the guy who sometimes has various useful things. That's much less targetable.

## **10. Tools, Hardware, and Repair Capability**

This one sneaks up on people because tools don't feel like a scarce resource. Right now, you can walk into any Home Depot and buy anything you need. But after a collapse, the ability to fix, build, and fabricate becomes one of the most critical capabilities in any community.

Think about it. Without functioning supply chains, everything is finite. Every piece of equipment, every vehicle, every structure — when it breaks, it either gets fixed with what's available or it stays broken. The person who has a well-stocked workshop with hand tools, fasteners, welding equipment, and fabrication capability becomes essential. Essential is good. Essential and unprotected is dangerous.



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### **The Workshop Problem**

A visible workshop is a target for the same reason a visible pantry is — people can see it, and they know what it means. I keep my main tool collection in a locked, windowless shed that looks thoroughly unremarkable from the outside. Nothing about its exterior suggests there's thousands of dollars of tools inside.

More important than the tools themselves are repair skills. I spent the last three years deliberately learning welding, basic machining, small engine repair, and electrical work. Not because I enjoy all of it — honestly, welding in an Iowa July is miserable — but because those skills paired with tools make you genuinely useful. And being useful is the best protection in a collapse scenario. People don't target the person keeping their community functional. They protect them.

**The balance is this:** be valuable enough that people need you, but discreet enough that outsiders don't know what you have. That's the sweet spot.

## 11. Precious Metals, Cash, and Barter Goods

In every financial collapse in recorded history — Weimar Germany, Zimbabwe, Argentina, Venezuela — the people who held tangible value outside the failing currency were the ones who survived. Gold, silver, and even pre-1965 US coins containing actual silver have historically maintained purchasing power when paper money becomes wallpaper.

But here's the thing that most precious metals preppers get wrong. **In the immediate aftermath of a collapse, gold and silver are nearly useless.** Nobody's thinking about long-term wealth preservation when they're hungry. In the first days and weeks, practical goods — food, fuel, medicine, ammunition — are the real currency.

Precious metals become valuable later, during reconstruction, when some form of commerce re-emerges and people start thinking beyond day-to-day survival. The problem with that transition period is that anyone known to have gold or silver becomes a target for people who want to accelerate their own reconstruction timeline.



People couldn't sleep of fear of looters and rapists after Katrina, in the Superdome. [Here's how to bug in and start a stockpile >>](#)

### Cash Is King — Until It Isn't

Something people overlook: in the early phases of most disasters, cash still works. ATMs go down, credit card machines are offline, but people still accept physical bills. Having a few hundred dollars in small bills — fives, tens, and twenties — tucked away can buy you critical supplies in the first 72 hours while everyone else is standing in front of dead ATMs.

I keep \$500 in small bills in my get-home bag and another \$300 at home, separate from my regular finances. It's not an investment — it's insurance. After 2012, when Superstorm Sandy knocked out power across the Northeast for over a week, cash was the only way to buy anything in the affected areas. Gas stations that still had fuel would only accept cash. Same thing after Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico. Cash, even a modest amount, buys you time.

## 12. Hygiene and Sanitation Supplies

Nobody talks about this one because it's not exciting. There's no YouTube thumbnail that makes bleach and toilet paper look tactical. But sanitation collapse kills more people in prolonged emergencies than violence does.

After the 2010 Haiti earthquake, a cholera outbreak killed over 10,000 people. It wasn't the earthquake itself that caused it — it was the breakdown of sanitation infrastructure. Contaminated water, human waste in the streets, no soap, no disinfectant. The same pattern repeated after Typhoon Hainan in the Philippines and during the Syrian refugee crisis.

Bleach, soap, feminine hygiene products, diapers, basic dental care supplies, and the knowledge of how to build a proper latrine — these aren't glamorous, but they're the difference between maintaining health and watching your family get dysentery.

### The Quiet Demand

Here's what nobody tells you about hygiene supplies in a collapse: demand doesn't spike immediately. For the first week, people use what they have. By week two, supplies start running low. By week three to four, people are getting desperate — and desperate for things they're too embarrassed to even ask about openly.

Feminine hygiene products in particular become extremely valuable and extremely scarce. I stock reusable alternatives alongside disposables, and I keep this entire category of supplies out of sight and out of conversation. It's one of those preps that you do quietly, thoroughly, and never discuss. The people who need these items will find you eventually through barter networks — you don't need to advertise.



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## 13. Vehicles, Spare Parts, and Mobility Assets

After a collapse, the ability to move — especially when others can't — is a massive strategic advantage. A working vehicle with fuel means evacuation capability, supply runs, medical transport, and access to resources beyond walking distance. It also makes you a target.

During Hurricane Katrina, functioning vehicles were essentially commandeered by desperate residents trying to flee New Orleans. Carjacking spiked. People with loaded trucks were followed and approached at every stop.

But it's not just the vehicles themselves. Spare parts, mechanical knowledge, and the ability to keep vehicles running when parts stores are closed become invaluable. I keep a set of common failure parts for each of our vehicles — alternators, fuel pumps, belts,

hoses, brake pads — stored in labeled bins. If our truck goes down after a collapse, I'm not waiting for Amazon to deliver a fan belt. I've got it on the shelf.

## **Bicycles — The Overlooked Asset**

Let me tell you about something I didn't take seriously until a few years ago: bicycles. A quality mountain bike with spare tubes and a basic repair kit gives you silent, fuel-free mobility with a range of 30 to 50 miles per day on reasonable terrain. No engine noise to attract attention. No fuel dependency. And they're easy to stash and hard to track.

I picked up two solid mountain bikes at estate sales for under \$100 each. Added patch kits, extra chains, and a couple spare tires. That's a total investment of maybe \$250 for two silent, indefinite-range vehicles. Compare that to a generator that runs for a few hundred hours before it needs parts.

## **14. Night Vision, Body Armor, and Tactical Gear**

Now we're getting into the items that separate casual preppers from serious ones — and also the items that draw the most dangerous attention.

Night vision devices give you an overwhelming advantage in any low-light scenario. The ability to see when others can't is a force multiplier that's hard to overstate. But here's the problem: if anyone knows you have night vision, they know two things. First, you're serious about security. Second, you have expensive gear worth taking.

Body armor is similar. A set of Level IV plates can stop rifle rounds and literally save your life. But wearing or displaying body armor signals that you expect violence — and you have the resources to prepare for it. In a lawless environment, that makes you either a threat to avoid or a prize to claim, depending on who's looking.

### **The "Gray Man" Principle**

This is why the gray man concept matters more for tactical gear than for anything else. The gray man approach means blending in — looking like everyone else, not standing out as either a threat or a target. If you're walking down the street in a plate carrier with a night vision monocular on your helmet while everyone else is in jeans and t-shirts, you've failed the gray man test spectacularly.

### **Keep your tactical gear hidden and available, not displayed and advertised.**

Wear a plate carrier under a loose jacket if the situation demands it. Keep night vision in a bag until you need it. And never, ever let anyone outside your immediate security group know the full extent of your tactical capabilities.

I own night vision. I own plates. I've trained with both extensively. But the number of people who know that can be counted on one hand, and none of them learned it from social media.



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## 15. Books, Maps, and Physical Knowledge Resources

In a world without internet, without Google, without YouTube tutorials — and that's the world we're talking about in a true collapse — physical reference materials become irreplaceable. Medical references, field guides for edible plants, mechanical repair manuals, military survival handbooks, topographical maps of your area.

I have a shelf of physical books that I consider as essential as my food storage. The Merck Manual, the Army Survival Manual, a regional plant identification guide, and several others. I've also got county-level topographical maps laminated and stored in waterproof containers. When GPS is dead and cell towers are down, a paper map and compass are the only navigation tools that still work.

You might not think books would make you a target. But in a prolonged collapse, information becomes as valuable as food. The person who can identify which plants are edible, who can reference a medical symptom guide, who has detailed maps of the area — that person has an advantage. And other people will want access to that advantage.

### Digital Backup Matters Too

I keep a set of USB drives and SD cards loaded with survival information, stored in Faraday bags. PDF copies of critical references, instructional videos on essential skills, offline copies of medical databases. If I have a device to read them and solar power to charge it, I have a library that fits in my pocket.

The key is redundancy. Physical books don't need electricity. Digital copies are portable and duplicable. Have both. Protect both. And share knowledge generously while guarding the physical resources carefully. Teaching someone to identify edible plants from your book doesn't cost you anything. Lending them the book might mean you never see it again.

## 16. Stored Water — The Weight You Can't Hide

I separated this from water purification because stored water is a completely different OPSEC challenge. You can hide a Sawyer filter in your pocket. You cannot hide 200 gallons of stored water.

Water is heavy — 8.34 pounds per gallon. A standard 55-gallon drum weighs about 460 pounds when full. It doesn't move easily, it takes up space, and anyone who's been in your garage or basement knows it's there. Delivery of water storage containers or large-scale water purchases is visible to neighbors. And if things get bad enough that

people are going house to house, water storage is one of the easiest preps to find because it's one of the hardest to conceal.

I store water in multiple smaller containers distributed throughout the house rather than a few large drums in one location. Five-gallon stackable containers in closets, under beds, in the utility room. It's less efficient space-wise, but the distributed approach means no single discovery exposes my entire water supply.

### **The Delivery Problem**

When I ordered my WaterBrick containers — a few years back — they came in branded boxes clearly labeled with what they were. I had them delivered to my office instead of home. That's a small thing, but it's the kind of detail that matters. Your UPS driver sees everything. Your neighbors see the boxes on your porch. Think about the trail you leave when you acquire supplies, not just how you store them.

## **17. Your Skills and Knowledge — The Ultimate Target**

We've talked about sixteen categories of physical items that make you a target. But here's the one that most people miss entirely: **your skills and knowledge are the most valuable — and most dangerous — thing you possess after a collapse.**

If you can fix a diesel engine, set a broken bone, grow food from seed, filter water, sew a wound, reload ammunition, weld metal, or generate electricity — you are irreplaceable. And irreplaceable people get treated one of two ways: they get protected, or they get controlled.

In every historical collapse, skilled individuals were either absorbed into protective communities or forced into service by dominant groups. It happened in Bosnia. It happened in Argentina. It happens in every prison system in the world, where people with useful skills get "adopted" by powerful inmates. The dynamic is the same at every scale.



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## The OPSEC of Competence

This is perhaps the most counterintuitive point in this entire post. You need skills to survive. But being known for those skills makes you a target. So how do you navigate that tension?

The answer is community — but the *right* community. A trusted group of people with complementary skills who protect each other. The lone wolf prepper with all the skills in the world is still just one person who needs to sleep eventually. A small, tight-knit group where each member brings something essential and everyone looks out for everyone else — that's sustainable security.

I've spent the last decade not just building skills, but building relationships with people I trust. People who have skills I lack. People who'd show up at 3 AM if I called. That network is more valuable than anything in my pantry, my workshop, or my ammo storage. And it's the one prep that can't be stolen.



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## The Bigger Picture — What All Seventeen Items Have in Common

If you've read this far, you've probably noticed a pattern. Every single item on this list shares the same vulnerability: **visibility**. The danger isn't in having these items — it's in people knowing you have them.

OPSEC isn't a military concept that only applies to soldiers. It's the single most important factor in your post-collapse survival plan. You can have the perfect stockpile, the ideal skill set, the best gear money can buy — and if your neighbors, your social media followers, or even your extended family knows the full picture, you've handed them a shopping list with your address on it.

Here's what I want you to take away from this post. Start auditing your OPSEC today. Think about who knows what about your preps. Think about what's visible from outside

your home. Think about what you've posted online, what you've told people casually, what delivery drivers and repair workers have seen.

Then start closing those gaps. Move visible preps out of sight. Delete social media posts showing your stockpile. Diversify your storage locations. Build relationships with trusted people instead of broadcasting to strangers.

The best time to fix your OPSEC was yesterday. The second best time is right now.

Stay calm, stay steady. Small steps, big security.

— Zach

## **SEO Summary**

### **Primary Keywords**

items that get you targeted after collapse, post-collapse OPSEC, collapse survival targets, prepper OPSEC, items people will steal after SHTF

### **Secondary Keywords**

grid-down security, post-collapse barter items, prepper operational security, collapse survival supplies, gray man prepping, how to hide your preps, survival stockpile security, SHTF target items, disaster preparedness security, prepper mistakes to avoid

### **LSI Keywords**

ammunition storage security, water purification collapse, prescription medication stockpile, generator noise reduction, heirloom seed storage, solar panel OPSEC, ham radio grid down, medical supplies prepper, barter economy collapse, night vision prepper, gray man concept, bug out vehicle security, precious metals collapse, hygiene supplies disaster, survival knowledge skills

### **Suggested Meta Description**

Discover 17 items that make you a target after a collapse and learn how to protect your preps. Practical OPSEC strategies from 12+ years of real-world preparedness. (155 characters)

### **Suggested Title Tag**

17 Items That'll Get You Hunted Down After the Collapse

### **Suggested URL Slug**

items-that-get-you-hunted-down-after-collapse

### **Content Structure Summary**

H1: Title (primary keyword) → Introduction (600 words) → 17 items grouped into 12 H2 sections with H3 subsections (5,000+ words) → Conclusion with OPSEC framework (400 words) → SEO metadata. Reading level: approximately 8th–9th grade. Active voice throughout. Conversational tone with data-backed claims and personal anecdotes.

### **Word Count**

**Approximately 6,100 words** (blog content, excluding SEO summary section).