

Preparedness 101: Zombie Apocalypse

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GOVERNMENT WEBSITE ARTICLE



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- 1 There are all kinds of emergencies out there that we can prepare for. Take a zombie apocalypse, for example. That's right, I said z-o-m-b-i-e a-p-o-c-a-l-y-p-s-e. You may laugh now. But when it happens, you'll be happy you read this. And, hey, maybe you'll even learn a thing or two about how to prepare for a *real* emergency.

This text is an alternate version of the original text, which appears in your student edition.

A Brief History of Zombies

- 2 We've all seen at least one movie about flesh-eating zombies taking over (my personal favorite is *Resident Evil*). But where do zombies come from, and why do they love eating brains so much? The word *zombie* comes from Haitian and New Orleans voodoo origins. Although its meaning has changed a little over the years, it usually refers to a dead body that comes back to life. Ancient voodoo and folklore traditions have brought us shows like the *Walking Dead*.
- 3 In movies, shows, and literature, zombies are often created by an infectious virus. The virus is passed on through bites and contact with body fluids. Harvard psychiatrist Steven Schlozman wrote a (fictional) medical paper on the zombies in *Night of the Living Dead*. The paper names their condition *Ataxic Neurodegenerative Satiety Deficiency Syndrome* and claims it is caused by an infection. The *Zombie Survival Guide* identifies the cause of zombies is a virus called solanum. Other zombie explanations shown in films include radiation from a ruined NASA Venus probe (as in *Night of the Living Dead*), as well as mutations that occur because of diseases such as prions,¹ mad-cow disease, measles, and rabies.
- 4 The rise of zombies in popular culture supports the idea that a zombie apocalypse could happen. In such a scenario, zombies would take over entire countries. They would roam city streets. They would eat any living thing that got in their way. The spread of this idea has led many people to wonder, "How do I prepare for a zombie apocalypse?"
- 5 Well, we're here to answer that question for you. We hope to share a few tips about preparing for *real* emergencies, too!

NOTES

1. prions (PREE ahns) *n.* proteins that cause disease.



Better Safe Than Sorry

NOTES

6 So, what do you need to do before zombies ... or hurricanes or pandemics,² for example, actually happen? First, you should have an emergency kit in your house. This kit should contain water, food, and other supplies to get you through the first couple of days before you can locate a zombie-free refugee camp. Or, in the event of a natural disaster, it will give you some time until you are able to get to an evacuation center or until power comes back on. Below are a few items you should include in your kit.

- **Water** (1 gallon per person per day)
- **Food** (stock up on canned or boxed items that you eat regularly)
- **Medications** (prescription and nonprescription)
- **Tools and Supplies** (utility knife, duct tape, battery-powered radio, and so on)
- **Cleaning Items** (household bleach, soap, towels, and so on)
- **Clothing and Bedding** (a change of clothes for each family member and blankets)
- **Important Documents** (copies of your driver's license, passport, and birth certificate, to name a few)
- **First Aid Supplies** (You're a goner if a zombie bites you. But you can use these supplies to treat basic cuts and injuries that you might get during a tornado or hurricane.)

7 Once you've packed your emergency kit, sit down with your family and come up with an **emergency plan**. The plan should include where you would go and whom you would call if you see any zombies appearing outside on your doorstep. You can also use this plan if there is a flood, an earthquake, or any other emergency.

1. Learn which emergencies are possible in your area. Besides a zombie apocalypse, these emergencies may include floods, tornadoes, or earthquakes. You can contact your local Red Cross chapter for more information.
2. Choose a meeting place for your family to gather in case zombies invade your home. This place can also be where you meet if you have to leave your town because of a hurricane. Choose one place right outside your home for sudden emergencies. Choose another place outside your neighborhood in case you are unable to return home right away.
3. Learn who your emergency contacts are. List phone numbers and any other information for the police, fire department, and your local zombie response team. Also, find a contact who lives out of your state—someone you can call during an emergency to let the rest of your family know you are OK.

2. pandemics (pan DEHM ihks) *n.* large disease outbreaks.



