

# ***The Gift of Preparedness***

From the website “In Case Of Emergency, Read Blog”:

<http://incaseofemergencyblog.com/>

**Here’s an interesting way to get friends and family into preparedness planning without hitting them over the head or scaring them to death, as I am wont to do on occasion! This was compiled by John Solomon, who is currently writing a book called “In Case Of Emergency, Read Book: Simple Steps To Prepare You and Your Family For Terrorism, Natural Disasters and Other 21st Century Crises.”**

*James Roddey, Oregon Department of Geology and Mineral Industries, April 2010*

When holiday, birthdays or other events that might involve giving gifts comes around, the question becomes what gift would be appropriate? Here’s an idea - give *preparedness gifts* instead of gift boxes of unidentifiable cheese products and ugly neckties. The great thing is, many of these items can be had for just a few dollars.



Two years ago I ran across a closeout on those shake flashlights. You know, the ones with the LED bulbs, that you shake for a minute and you get 10 or 15 minutes of light. No batteries needed. They normally sell for about \$5 each, but these were just .77 cents at a closeout store. I bought 40 of them, and gave all but two of them away.



Last year I ran across a deal on LED headlamps, and bought about 20 of them for \$2 apiece. Hands free light can be a real plus in a crisis. These too ended up in a number of people's Christmas and birthday packs.



I bought my daughter a combination windup/battery/solar AM/FM/SW radio for Christmas. Under \$40, and she loves it. Uses it every day. Every home should have a battery operated radio, yet many do not.



A pair of the FRS radios, like the ones I highlighted in [yesterday's blog](#), would make an excellent gift for many families, and can be had for less than \$25.



For Christmas last year I put together some first aid kits, and distributed them to a number of friends and relatives. You can either put one together yourself, or purchase one already assembled.



During the year I keep my eye out for bargains such as these, and stock up when I find things on sale. Recently I picked up a number of LED lanterns for \$3 apiece at a closeout store. They are particularly nice, and run about 40 hours on a set of AA batteries.

And lastly, I've put together CD's of preparedness videos, along with copies of online manuals and preparedness guides. For the cost of a blank CD or DVD, and a little bit of my time, I've at least put this valuable information into my friend's hands.

These are all useful, indeed, potentially lifesaving items, that most people simply don't think about needing until it is too late. Giving them as gifts, instead of more traditional items, not only helps prepare the people you love and care about for an emergency, it opens the door for conversations about pandemic preparedness. We need to cultivate a culture of preparedness in this country, and around the world. We can start doing that, one gift at a time.

### ***Another idea: Cyber- preparedness gifts***



I decided to give my family Iron Keys to get them started on building go-kits. Iron Key is a manufacturer of mil-spec USB drives, which come with built-in encryption and a heap of other useful features. My thought was that I could give these to my family, along with a list of specific documents they should load onto the drive, and it would allow them to create a secure, and extremely portable file depository in case they were ever in a forced evacuation.

There are a couple of specific reasons I chose to go with the semi-pricey Iron Keys. First is the integrated encryption. If I am asking/encouraging people to put important files like mortgages onto one of these things having built-in security is a must. Another is the durability - they're metal and sealed against water, allowing them to be run through a washing machine without problem. There are a few other reasons, but those were the two biggest.

I wrote a little instruction sheet which listed out documents by type (medical information) or name (mortgage) that should be included, as well as explaining that the idea was to have a last line of defense, in case they had to evacuate and all other records were lost. Because these are intended as a last-ditch resource they don't need to be updated daily, a once-a-year review is probably good. As of today both of my parents have begun loading information onto their keys, and hopefully the others will begin soon. Since most of my family lives in earthquake and fire-friendly California, there's no way to predict when something might occur and require the documents backed up this way.

## **More preparedness ideas from around the country**

### **Jei-Nhy Quirantes/Kekaha, Hawaii**

*Information I store on the backup disc includes personal finance records, tax returns, insurance policies, a home inventory (photos, videos, receipts), and irreplaceable photos and videos. I update the contents of the DVDs at roughly 6 month intervals. The update process takes only about 1-2 hours. You might keep copies of the discs at work, in your briefcase/work bag, and in your go-bag/emergency kit at home. Having the information distributed in different places lessens the likelihood of a total loss. Make sure they are password protected*

*I've gathered important documents i.e. birth certificates, medical cards, insurance papers, wills, placed them in a zip-lock bag, and put them in my emergency kit. I've also scanned digital copies of each of them and uploaded them to a jump drive and emailed them to myself.*

### **Mike Everett-Lane/Brooklyn, New York**

*1) Get a few hundred dollars out of the bank, in small bills (ones and fives). If there's a power outage, the ATMs and credit card machines will be down. Stores will run out of small bills quickly. Put the money in an envelope, and store it some place where you won't spend it.*

*2) Make sure at least one of your phones can be powered with just the phone line, again in case of power outage you'll still be able to make calls.*

*3) Keep a pair of old slip-on shoes under your bed, and a flashlight at hand. I use a Pak Light ( <http://www.9voltlight.com/> ), attached with velcro to the underside of the bed frame.*

### **Patty Brooks/San Jose, California**

*Turn off your power and water for a weekend and survive it. You don't really know how it will go until you try it. Trying this before you lose it in a real situation will give you an idea of what you will need when it really happens. Take notes and make a list of items most important to your survival. Do you have flashlights at the ready? Do you have a battery powered radio? Do you have sufficient prescription drugs for 3 days? Do you have a first aid kit? Do you have a telephone that does not rely on electricity?*

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[www.OregonGeology.org](http://www.OregonGeology.org)