

Podcast #210 Transcription – Urban Survival Shelter Tactics

- Jeff Anderson: Hello everyone. I am Jeff Anderson, editor from Modern Combat & Survival magazine, and executive director of The New World Patriot Alliance, a podcast to help you better prepare for any threat you may face in your role as a protector and a patriot. Any time that we talk about the reality of a shit hits the fan collapse ... One that ... I'm talking about drastically changes life as we know it. There are basically two different camps of prepper responses out there.
- Jeff Anderson: There are those who take the rural approach with living in areas that don't have a large population around them, and they can be self sustaining. And then, there are those who are living in and around more urban areas, that will have to deal with an entirely different set of circumstance and challenges. How you prepare for each one of those place, where you live or where you are going to, perhaps, retreat during a true collapse type event, is really ... How you prepare for those things, is going to matter on the resources that you have in each of those areas.
- Jeff Anderson: There is a different set of resources available in rural areas, like out in the wilderness or the country, than there is in suburban and urban areas. So obviously, you don't prepare for each of those the same. Now, as I said earlier, it's the second option of urban survival, that I think is really the most misunderstood out there in the prepper space, and for a couple of reasons.
- Jeff Anderson: One, there are those who don't live in urban areas, and don't think they need to know urban survival skills. Like, you feel protected. I'm not in an urban area. I don't have to worry about city living. I don't have to worry about looters, and anarchists, and people tipping over police cars and setting them on fire. I don't need to worry about those things.
- Jeff Anderson: Then, there are the other ones who tend to throw urban survival skills in that same pod as like, zombie survival. It's passed off as a fantasy prepping approach, because no one ever really wants to try and survive in an apocalyptic city, filled with gangs and Mad Max warrior tribes, and things like that.
- Jeff Anderson: But, the reality is that urban survival skills are a very real set of tactics that you must know, because you never know. I mean, if you already live in an urban area, you always need to start your prepping plan from where you currently are, and with what you currently have. So, if you're in an urban area already, you might be forced to survive, right then and there, and most likely you are gonna stay right there, and you are in an urban area.
- Jeff Anderson: But, even if you live in a more rural area, you don't know when you may find yourself in an urban area, and you need to survive in that environment. It could be that you are currently traveling, and you're trapped in a city. Now, some of you have heard me talk about my friend Adam, who in the past, during a hurricane, was in New York City. I don't remember if that was Sandy, or I don't

remember if that was ... Actually, I don't remember which hurricane it was, right now. But basically, he was traveling New York City. The hurricane hit. There was really no place for him to escape to when he was there. They didn't think it was gonna be all that bad. Whatever this bad decision making was, he was trapped in the city during that hurricane. There's all sorts of things that happened to him when he was doing that.

Jeff Anderson: So, you could be traveling at the time, and then trapped in a more urban environment. There could even be urban hoards that make their way out to your area. So, they try to escape the city because of conditions that are there, and now all of a sudden, you have more people living in your area, and there's all sorts of problems that can come as a result of that. Which include, you may be forced from your home.

Jeff Anderson: Now, that could be because of the disaster itself, or you need to travel, leave your home, because there are threats in the area that move you out of your home, and you need to, maybe, travel to or through urban areas, even if it's just for resupply, or medical attention, and things like that. So, especially if you live in a more rural area, if you really need medical attention, at a local hospital, and the one near you isn't doable, you might have to travel to a more urban area to get to medical attention.

Jeff Anderson: Those are just some examples of why, even if you don't live in the city, why you still need to know these kind of skills. So, to kick this month off with a set of urban survival tactics that you can use right away in your plan.

Jeff Anderson: The first thing we have to discuss is your shelter. So today, I'm gonna go over the six best urban survival shelter options that you should consider if you find that you need to stay in the city environment. Whether, that's for a day, a week, or month, or longer.

Jeff Anderson: Alright. So, the first we have to go over is gonna be ... And, I'll just start with the most obvious. So, the most obvious is your home, or the home that you're staying at or can stay at, with friends that are in an urban area. So, it might be, whether it's a planned retreat that you have, whether it is where you currently live in a more urban environment, in any case, you're in a home that is, you know who the owners are. You're in that area.

Jeff Anderson: The advantages of this are that it's easier to fortify and defend something that you already have control over, if it's your home. So, you have locks on the doors. Or, you have the ability to fortify that home on the inside.

Jeff Anderson: The problem with this is that you should never really look at your home as a fortress. Is it more easy to defend? Yes, it is, with certain things that you do to fortify it, but all it really takes is a Molotov cocktail to force you out of your home. I mean, most people have wooden homes, or even if it's just the roof. Maybe, even you're a brick building, but the roof is made out of wood, and

shingles, and things like that. Then, we've seen that people, like mobs, and looters, and gangs, fire is a very formidable weapon. It doesn't require a bullets or anything like that. So, you can easily be forced out of your home, and you have to be very careful about that.

Jeff Anderson: The other advantage of it is that you know your geographical location. You know your entry and exit points. You most likely travel them all the time. So, you're familiar with that area, that makes a home, or your home, a better, more advantageous tactically, there, as well.

Jeff Anderson: But, you've got to make sure that ... There are certain precautions that you need to take, because there is this overconfidence. It's one of the biggest disadvantages of your home, or someplace like a friend's home, or something like that, is that you have this overconfidence that you're gonna be able to defend this location. As we said, there are all sorts of things that can force you out of that fortress of a home.

Jeff Anderson: It could be the natural disaster. It could be that gangs are starting to form in the area, and they are possibly going ... You don't want to be there, because things have heated up. It could be that martial law is taking effect. There could be gun confiscations. There could be any sort of things that happen socially, within the framework there, that might ... You might decide that there's a safer place outside of that home. You could also be outed as a prepper. So, neighbors that know that you are into prepping. If, you didn't take into account Operation Security. All of a sudden, you could have a bunch of people begging at your door, because they know that you have food and water.

Jeff Anderson: So, any of those things might force you to take an alternative look at another location. So, let's talk about what those really are.

Jeff Anderson: So, number two on our list of the top six, is your vehicle. So, the advantages of this is that, your vehicle really is a shelter. Now, I've done a whole podcast on bug out shelters, where you can go if you have to bug out. One of those, was just you being able to use your vehicle. Look, there are homeless people that live out of their cars. Especially, new homeless people. You lose your home, but you still have your vehicle. You find a lot of people that are homeless, that started by living out of their vehicle. That was what they had.

Jeff Anderson: So, it really is a shelter. You own it. You have locks on it. Hopefully, it's mobile. So, that way you can get out of an area quickly, if things do turn bad. So, you can move your house with you, as an example. You can store more stuff in there, than you would inside of a bug out bag backpack. So, it does give you more opportunity to have more resources available to you.

Jeff Anderson: It's also smaller, so it's easier to hide that vehicle. You could go into a parking lot somewhere. You could go behind a building. So, it's smaller. You can hide it in different places. Also, because it's smaller, it's easier to keep warm. You have a

smaller living area inside of there, so whether it's body warmth that's keeping you together, or even just a candle that keep the interior warm, if you're in a colder climate. There are ways inside of a smaller shelter that you can keep that warmer.

Jeff Anderson: The disadvantages of using a vehicle, there aren't really a lot of them. It's not as much storage room as you would have inside of a building. So, as far as a long-term storage place, you are gonna be limited with what you can carry and stock in there, so size is, can be a benefit, or it can be a disadvantage.

Jeff Anderson: The other thing is that, depending upon what the scenario is that you're in, if there's no gas, you have no mobility. Where you are, is where you are. The other thing is that people can start going through vehicles, if they're looking for resources. That could potentially make a vehicle that's out in the open, a possible stop for somebody that would come and take your stuff. Potentially, if you're in there, they could also attack you. So, those are some of the disadvantages.

Jeff Anderson: Alright, let's talk about number three, which is abandoned buildings. Now, the advantages of this are that, you can be more tactically advantageous than where you currently are. So, it might be that, when you're looking at your home as a shelter in place option, and things start heating up, maybe that doesn't have ... Like, where you purchased your home, or where you're staying, where you're renting, even if it's an apartment ... Especially, if it's an apartment, because you're around a bunch of other people. You most likely didn't buy that or rent that place because of its tactical advantage.

Jeff Anderson: So now, you have to look at it from a different perspective, and it might turn out that you are not in a tactically advantageous location. Again, apartment building's a really good example of that. You're basically stuck in the middle of a bunch of people who, if they're not prepared, you're really in a condensed environment there, and things can really get out of control there. You don't have as many entry and exit points, and things like that. So that's, one thing that you need to worry about with those types of areas.

Jeff Anderson: But, you might need to ... You might be able to go to an abandoned building that is more tactically advantageous than where you currently are. The other thing about abandoned buildings, there could be leftover rations there. So, if it is a true even that there's a grid down blackout, something that really does change life as we know it overnight, but businesses don't really come back onboard, so people are just basically trying to survive. There could be leftover rations in the building that's left there. Whether, that is in cafeteria rooms, dining rooms, if they have their vending machines. There could be resources there that you might be able to get to.

Jeff Anderson: Same thing goes for water and other useful items. So, even if people were living in a home and they leave the home, they might only be able to take certain rations with them. They pile it all in the car. They grab as much as they can, but

they leave some behind. Same thing with water. They might not realize that there is water in other areas of their home, that they weren't able to get to. Or, they didn't know that it was there. And, we're gonna talk about that during the urban survival water scenario, there.

Jeff Anderson: But, there could be other useful items that you could get there. Whether, it's tools, weapons, things that you can turn into weapons. There are those things that might be in abandoned buildings, as well.

Jeff Anderson: You just want to make sure that they're also structurally intact. So, a truly abandoned building, like a home that's been there forever, especially if it's gone through a disaster of any kind, the structural integrity of it might not be very good. So, you need to be careful. You might be going into something that is a danger zone, just by the nature of it.

Jeff Anderson: The best options when we're looking at abandoned buildings, tend to be things like, schools, if schools are not coming back into session. The other good thing about schools is that they have cafeterias. There are lots of different rooms that can be used there. There are lots of different out-of-the-way rooms, that even people don't really know about in schools. Whether, that's maintenance rooms, or other areas of the school.

Jeff Anderson: A library's another good option. Some older libraries that were built during the 50s, and this includes schools as well, often times, have bomb shelters in basements, that you might be able to access, that will have living area there for you to use, and provide you, perhaps, some additional protection, depending upon what you are, basically, dealing with.

Jeff Anderson: Churches are another potential option. They often times have food pantries there. Again, if it's an active church, they might be using that to shelter other people, so that is another option, as far as if it's a short term duration of an event, then you might be able to go there and actually get help from the church. You might be able to get food from them, just from their food pantry. So, there are those options, as well.

Jeff Anderson: Some of the disadvantages of abandoned building, they could be kind of a loot ... They can be ... Basically, you might think that they're vacant, and they're not. So, you might not be the only one having this thought. So, you need to really, not assume that they're vacant. They may already be in use, and you really want to look at it like you're clearing the building, like you're in a war zone. So, you really want to make sure that you go through every room in that building, to make sure that you know if there's other people there, or not other people there. Looking for resources, while you're out there doing it. Looking for signs of other people being in that area, that will let you know whether it is currently being trafficked, even if there's nobody there. Whether, or not you're gonna have to deal with people that are coming by the building. You're looking for something that truly is abandoned, if you can find it.

Jeff Anderson: The other thing is that looters will go through abandoned buildings, at some time, looking for goods. You really need to make sure that you have areas that you can defend inside of there. You have entry and exit places that you can extract yourself if you need to. You're also looking for something that's already, either looted, or doesn't look like it's worth looting. So, if you go to someplace that is somebody that you know, like they've left their home. They've evacuated the area, but it's a nice home. Well, looters are looking for nice homes. They're looking for things that they can steal, as well as other resources that they might find there. So that's, not really what you're looking for.

Jeff Anderson: Same thing goes for the local 7-Eleven, might not be something that ... It might not be something that's gonna come back into business anytime soon, but you also know it's one of the places that often times gets looted. So, you have to be very cautious about what you pick, as far as an abandoned building that you can get into.

Jeff Anderson: Now, we will start to get into some of the lesser known options that are out there. Like, number four, which is, parking garages.

Jeff Anderson: Now, in combat, I can tell you that my entire unit one time, used a parking garage as its home base, and there were many advantages to having this space there. So, some of the advantages of looking at a parking garage as a potential urban survival shelter, is that it can give you a high ground perspective. So, if it is a taller structure in an urban location, having high ground perspective can give you a bunch of tactical advantages.

Jeff Anderson: So, you can get a better view of the city. You can see where there is smoke rising out of the city. That might be areas where there's more civil unrest in those areas. People are setting buildings on fire. There's more things happening there. You can see more avenues of escape. So, you can see when people are coming in your direction. You can also see where your areas of escape are, as well. So, those are some advantages.

Jeff Anderson: The other thing that is ... These parking garages are made of concrete. So, they can provide good cover for you, if you do have to defend from that area. So, there's concrete walls. There's concrete pillars. There's all kinds of things there.

Jeff Anderson: There's also multiple entry and exit options for getting into and out of most parking garages. I'm talking about, really, public parking garages. So, they're usually very open on every single level. They're not really enclosed all that often, so you might be able to repel out of a side of it. You might be able to get to another building from on top of the building. I've been in several parking garages, and there are walls that you can basically jump onto another building's roof, nearby, very easily.

Jeff Anderson: It could also have vehicles inside of there, that can provide you shelter, inside of the vehicle itself. They could also have goods to use inside of those vehicles.

Jeff Anderson: There are also power rooms and even elevators that can be used as temporary shelter, because they can provide concealment for you, but also be a smaller area that, if you need to keep warm, concrete, open area structures of, like a parking garage, are not necessarily the warmest area. So, if you can get to a smaller area that you can keep warm, and hunker down in, that's gonna help you, as well. Even elevators in those areas, can be ... You can pull the doors apart and get inside of those, to be able to keep warm inside of there.

Jeff Anderson: Now, some of the disadvantages of parking garage, is that there could be high traffic in there, if vehicles are still being used. If vehicles are around, again, they could be looter magnets, out there for people that want to go scavenging. So, it's really best to setup lookouts. If you are looking at a parking garage as an option, make sure that you do have lookouts, you're using perimeter security, or have early warning systems that are in place there, as well.

Jeff Anderson: Alright, number five on our top six list, are subways and tunnels. All subways ... Like, if you've ever been in a subway, or an L train, or anything like that, and you're going through a tunnel, or even if you're driving through a tunnel, no doubt, you've looked out there and you've seen these doors, that somehow just seem to be stuck smack dab in the middle of the wall there. That's what I'm talking about. Usually, these are interior rooms for technicians, or maintenance personnel, engineers. There might be communications equipment, or heating ventilation, air conditioning systems are in there. But, those are the areas that I'm talking about.

Jeff Anderson: Now, most people don't even really realize that they're there, and we're not really only talking about like, New York City, when we're talking about subways, because there are several cities out there that either have a subway structure, or ... Back when subways were becoming popular, there were cities that were trying to put it in place, a subways system, but maybe it didn't work for their city. Cincinnati is one of those cities, and Rochester, New York is another one of those cities. Those aren't places that you normally think of as bustling metropolis areas. I guess, Cincinnati is. Rochester, I know Rochester from when I lived out in upstate New York, but these aren't places that you would really think that there were usually a subway there.

Jeff Anderson: Well, Cincinnati has an abandoned subway system. Rochester, New York, theirs closed down in the mid 1950s. So, there are abandoned passageways and things like that, entranceways, that you can get into these subways systems, along the way there.

Jeff Anderson: Now, the advantages of subways and tunnels, is that they aren't really well known that these areas even exist. So, people aren't gonna necessarily think of that as a location to go to as a potential shelter. The other thing it offers you is that, there is an underground travel network in these tunnels and subway systems. Sometimes, there are offshoot tunnels, or tunnels that aren't being used anymore, that you can get through to. What this does, it basically allows

you to travel underneath the city, in some cases, so that you can bypass dangerous areas of the city.

Jeff Anderson: Usually, there are exit doors coming up to the top, about every 2,500 feet or so, inside of a tunnel system, meant for that purpose. Like, if a subway goes down, if the car goes down, if it breaks down or whatever, people can get out of there. They can get to other ... They can get out of the subway, safely, by using some of these exits that are there.

Jeff Anderson: Some of the disadvantages of those areas, there are electrical currents in these rails, if there is power. I'm not just talking about the so-called third rail. Not so-called, but there's a third rail that mostly subway cars generate ... That's where they get their power from, that's usually covered by like, a white ... Usually, it has like, a white cover on it, to try and protect people. But, there can be electrical current in any of the rails, even the ones that the subway cars are on. So, you want to make sure that you're not stepping on the rails. Especially if you have kids around, they just like to step on those things. So, you gotta be very careful about, make sure people know that those can be very dangerous.

Jeff Anderson: Also, those doors to the maintenance rooms and things like that, they're gonna have lock systems in it. That can be ... They're gonna be heavy metal doors. It's not gonna be easy for you to just break it down. You're gonna need to know how to pick locks. That is a worthwhile skill that everybody, I think, should know, especially for urban survival skills. And, it's something that's really not all that hard to figure out, but it does take some practice, and it does take you knowing how to use it. There are lock pick kits out there, and I will put some in the ... I'll link over to some in the show notes, there, what you can use to learn how to pick locks, there. But, you might need to do that.

Jeff Anderson: The other limitation of subways and tunnels is that, you could be limited on the exit routes that you have. As I said, there are typically exits to the topside, about every 2,500 feet or so, but you're talking about 750 yards or so. So that's, not ... That could be pretty far away. So, if you're in a tunnel, you might only have that one way, left or right, to get to one of those areas, there. So, you've got to be very careful about it. It's harder to conceal your route in and out, when it's areas like that, unless you get to know the entry and exit points from topside, or other areas. The best way to do that is from inside the tunnels themselves.

Jeff Anderson: Okay, the final one, number six on our top six list of urban survival shelter options, are graveyards. I'm also gonna throw parks in there, as well.

Jeff Anderson: The advantages of this is that, there's really not a lot to loot in a graveyard. So, you don't have to worry, necessarily, about roving gangs of people coming through looking for stuff. Same thing goes for parks, unless there are food stands there, if it's that kind of a park. But, I'm talking about more of the larger parks that you could get to, that are really kind of greenscape areas. So, those areas and a lot of graveyards as well, often have water access. I'm talking about larger graveyards that have these beautiful surroundings there, there could be

ponds and lakes that are there, as well. There could even be fish in those types of areas.

Jeff Anderson: So, they often have water access, and they might even have defensible areas in there. For example, in graveyards, well, graves can be ... They can offer you some cover there, to be able to use for defending against there. For defending against other people. So, it is gonna offer you some bullet stopping cover, if it's needed.

Jeff Anderson: It's also easier to hide there at night. So, in greenspaces, in a graveyard, a lot of times you have more trees there. You have darker areas. There aren't, typically, in those wooded areas and graveyards, there aren't usually lighting inside of those areas, so you can move around area. That's one of the problems with urban areas, is that you've really got to get to know shadows and darker areas, because there could be streetlights that are gonna be on. Graveyards and parks really don't have that as much.

Jeff Anderson: You can also find other areas that you can hide at night, like under shelters or picnic tables, inside maintenance buildings that are in there. That could be like, maintenance shelters, even if it's just for lawn care, stuff like that. So, those are some of the advantages.

Jeff Anderson: Some of the disadvantages. Stealth is really your best tactical advantage, because these areas don't really have a lot of covered shelter for you to be able to get into and defend from. Again, they might have something like a landscaping shed that's out there that you can use. Those are good options, but they're not easily defensible. So, it's easy to break into them. It's usually made out of wood. So, it's not gonna be easy to defend against those types of things. So, it doesn't offer you that kind of cover, necessarily. Stealth is really your best option, there.

Jeff Anderson: You'll probably need to ... You'll probably not be the only ones thinking about parks. So, graveyards, you might have a better option there, but the bigger the part the better. So, other people might be looking to go there as that, kind of, go-off-into-the-wilderness, so to speak, but it's not really the wilderness. If they're looking to get away from urban areas, they might go to the larger parks. So, you might have other people that are gonna be out there.

Jeff Anderson: Positioning is going to be really, really important. Making sure that you have a tactical advantage to the location that you do choose. Whether, that's high ground or near some kind of cover, make sure that you know your ingress and egress routes, and things like that.

Jeff Anderson: So, those are the top six options. Now, a great exercise that you can do right now to really kind of figure this out and make this part of your plan, is to get a map of your closest city, that you consider an urban center that's closest to you, that you might have to deal with there, or might have to get to. So, what I want

you to do is, break out a map of that city. It can be a roadmap. That's really kind of what you're looking for, here. Start by looking for those areas that fit the criteria that we just reviewed. So, look for where the larger parks are. Look for graveyards that are out there, or larger graveyards, especially if it shows that there's water where those graveyards are. Look for subway entrances. Look for schools. Look for libraries. The building that you can find that, if they do go abandoned, they could have the resources and the shelter that you need there. Those are gonna help ... The map is gonna be able to help you locate those types of things.

Jeff Anderson: Your next step, then, is to start driving around your closest city. Now again, you might not ... This might not be the city that you are going to be in after an event, or traveling through, but it's gonna get you to look at the city through different eyes. That's really what you're looking for. It's best to always do that with a city that you're closest to, but as you're going through, look at it differently. Take your map with you, and highlight those areas that have possible ... Like, where are there abandoned buildings. Maybe, strip centers. Or, even malls. Sometimes there are abandoned malls in different locations. Parking garages that you could use as shelter in a pinch.

Jeff Anderson: Start to look for those things that have ideal tactical advantage for you, as far as locations of where they're at, their proximity to other things like, police stations or medical facilities, because it might be a situation where you live in a rural area, but you have to travel into the city for medical attention. And, while you're in there, going to that hospital, where would you be able to reside, if it wasn't an option, or if it was too dangerous to be near there. You might have to go into the city just for a short stay, but you might be able to find a parking garage, or an abandoned building that you've already go pre-picked out, so that if I need to go into the city and get medical attention, here is where I'll stay. This can be option one. Have a backup option number two, in case that one ends up that it's gonna be taken.

Jeff Anderson: But anyway, the whole point here is for you to start to look at the city in a totally different light. So, it's a really good exercise for you to do, with nothing more than just a map, and getting in your car, and taking a trip into the city.

Jeff Anderson: Okay. So that, covers shelter. Now, next week, what we're gonna do is, we're gonna cover the topic of urban survival food options that you can find. Alright? Okay, that's all coming up next week.

Jeff Anderson: But now, I want to hear from you. What are some other potential urban survival shelters that I didn't think of, that you would also add to this list? Or, are there some advantages or disadvantages that I didn't think about with my top six list? I want to hear from you. Make sure that you go ahead and go over to the blog, and leave a comment there, with your best urban survival tips.

Jeff Anderson: And, until our next Modern Combat Survival broadcast, this is Jeff Anderson saying, prepare, train and survive.

