

**A SURVIVAL MOM  
SPECIAL REPORT**

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# **ONE SECOND AFTER THE LIGHTS GO OUT**

**The First 15 Things You Must Do  
Immediately After an EMP**

This Special Report is an adaptation from the upcoming book  
by Lisa Bedford,

## One Second After the Lights Go Out: A Complete EMP Survival Handbook

Available Fall, 2015

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At the top of every prepper's list of nightmares is an EMP event. It ranks even higher than a power grid failure by sabotage or a coronal mass ejection. Those are almost as bad, but they would leave much of our transportation and other infrastructure intact.

With an EMP, it's a different, scarier story.

An EMP, or electromagnetic pulse, is a broadband burst of electromagnetic energy. This massively powerful wave has the potential to damage nearly everything electronic over hundreds of miles. The wave of electromagnetic energy would affect electric circuits throughout our transportation, energy, telecommunications, water supply, and financial infrastructure. The damage would be accomplished silently, without warning, and it would be permanent.

Unlike numerous other worst case scenarios, this one is entirely man-made. There are weapons designed specifically to create this pulse, and, in fact, we know for certain that China, North Korea, Russia, and, most likely, Iran have developed these. However, an EMP can be created by much simpler weapons. The same devastating result can be achieved by the detonation of a small load nuclear weapon, exploding at least 25 miles above sea level.

Detonation at that high altitude turns a conventional nuclear explosion into something far more extensive and, ultimately, more devastating. A detonation at 250 miles above sea level, over the United States, could affect the entire country, along with parts of Canada and Mexico.

In early fall 2015, I'll be releasing my second book, *One Second After the Lights Go Out: A Complete EMP Survival Handbook*. In the meantime, I wanted to get this report into your hands as quickly as possible, first, to give you simple, practical steps that will help you and your loved ones survive an EMP event and second, to reassure you that survival is possible!

Let's face it, every person who read *One Second After* by William Forstchen or one of the other numerous EMP survival books has wondered, "What if...? Contemplating a world completely transformed by the absence of electricity and virtually all technology is unsettling, to say the least. Even the most prepared among us admits that life would become unbearably hard. Only a few would survive.

As the mother of two young teenagers with a husband who commutes to a job in the heart of a very large city, I'm as worried about this scenario as anyone else. It's not a natural disaster that would most likely come with some warning. Rather, it's an event caused by the most unpredictable creature on earth, man.

Researching survival in a post-EMP world led me to my new book and then to this Special Report. It was critical to my own peace of mind that I had solid answers to the question, "What are the VERY FIRST things I should do once I know for sure that an EMP has happened?"

As you can imagine, the hours spent answering that question and analyzing various scenarios led me down some terrifying paths as I contemplated security issues, a world without support from fire and police departments, refugee camps filled with desperate people and rising levels of disease. More than anything, I, like you, want to prepare for all types of emergencies in order to keep my family safe.

My upcoming book, *One Second After the Lights Go Out*, is a complete plan for dealing with sanitation, food storage, evacuations, and the numerous, probable dangers in a post-EMP world. Until the book is available, this special report puts in your hands the very first 15 actions you should put into place once those lights go out, the cell phone no longer connects, and the car engine is dead – forever.

There's not a moment to spare because one second after the lights go out, everyone is a survivalist.

# The First 15 Things You Must Do Immediately After an EMP

## 1. VERIFY

Verify that what has happened is really an EMP or a massive failure of the power grid, rather than a typical power outage.

- If you have a landline phone, is the line dead?
- Are you able to connect to the internet?
- Looking outside, are many, possibly all, vehicles at a standstill?
- Can you contact anyone with your cell phone? Can you send and receive text messages?

Those will all be telltale indicators, but they are not confirmation. Keep in mind that the government has the capability to disrupt personal cell phone service, giving first responders priority, but text messages may still get through in a non-EMP emergency.

Not all experts are in agreement about how an EMP will affect specific technology. If some of your electronics are operable and your vehicle's engine comes to life when you turn the key, count yourself blessed.

## 2. DELEGATE

Immediately begin dividing up the tasks on this list between family or group members. There's a lot to be done and your window of opportunity has already started to close. Even young kids can help with filling up sinks and bathtubs with water.

Checklist for delegating the basics:

- Check phone lines and cell phone connection.
- Attempt to turn each vehicle on. Include motorcycles, ATVs, golf carts, tractors – all motorized vehicles.
- Check for fires in neighboring houses. Without help from a fire department, these fires will quickly spread.
- Fill bathtubs with water using a WaterBOB or a similar product, if possible.
- Fill sinks and every large container with water. Additional Water BOBs can be filled and left outside.
- Assign one person to pick up kids. See details at #6.
- Look for any device that has the current time and is still running.
- Collect all cash, including coins.

- Check to see if shortwave/ham radio is working. If it is, attempt to connect with radio stations that haven't been affected and gather whatever information is available.

### 3. DEAL WITH FIRES

It's possible that the EMP may have generated electrical fires. Quickly check around the house (smoke detectors wired into your home's electrical system will not be operational) and smell for smoke. If there's a fire, putting it out, or GETTING OUT of the house, will be your first and most immediate step.

**ACTION STEP:** Install one or two battery-powered smoke detectors at each end of your house or apartment and purchase fire extinguishers. Keep one in the kitchen and one in the master bedroom. It's a good idea to also keep an extinguisher in the garage and one in the upstairs hallway, convenient to all the upstairs rooms.

Buy an extra extinguisher for practice outside, especially if you've never used one before. In the heat of the moment, no pun intended, it's highly unlikely that you'll be able to focus on reading the instructions while faced with a rapidly growing fire.

### 4. WATER

Unless you have your own water well and a manual pump, water becomes the second most immediate need. The EMP has very likely disabled your city's water system, including its ability to filter and purify water. The clean water in the system may be all you get for months, or much longer. In most cities there is, at best, 24-36 hours' worth of clean water in the system at any given time.

Quickly fill with water each bathtub, sink, water barrel, trash can, and all other large containers, even if they aren't squeaky clean. From this point forward, any water gathered from rainfall, a well, a swimming pool, or any other source will need to be purified before drinking, and that includes water stored in less-than-clean sinks and bathtubs.

Keep in mind, too, that the water coming into your home arrives there thanks to a pumping system that keeps the water flowing. If the pumps aren't operating, there's no way of knowing exactly how that will affect your home's water supply. There may be water in the pipes but without a force behind it, it will be difficult to access. In that case, find the faucet that is the

lowest to the ground, possibly an outdoor faucet/hose bib used for the garden hose, and drain water from that point.

## **5. VEHICLES**

Try to start every motorized vehicle you own, from car to ATV to golf cart. Even if an EMP disables most vehicles, there will likely be some that escape the damage, so don't assume all motors have been affected. A working vehicle will greatly enhance your chances for survival, especially in the first 72 hours or so following the EMP.

Experts do not agree on exactly how an EMP will affect vehicles. Some say that virtually every motorized vehicle will be disabled, except for a few manufactured decades ago. Others say that it depends on the location of the vehicle, where it's parked, and even the direction in which it's parked! At this moment, it's enough to see if any of your vehicles are running. There will be plenty of time to argue about the finer points of EMP effects down the road!

## **6. GATHER KIDS**

Are your kids at school? For the next few hours, they will be safe there. Most teachers and staff will not quickly realize the full extent of the damage to the power grid and will follow established emergency protocol. This will include not allowing masses of panicked parents on campus to grab their kids. Use this time to calm down, assess what needs to be done at your home, and then get to the school to pick your kids up.

By the end of the school day, teachers and other school employees will want to get home to their own families. Some may choose to stay with the remaining kids, but that's not something you can count on. If your kids are teens, they should have been instructed to recognize the effects of an EMP and told to head home, following an agreed-upon route. They should also have their own Get Home Bag containing whatever items are allowed on campus. If they have a friend who lives near the school, that bag can be stashed there instead, especially since high school lockers are infamous for being too small anyway. Keeping their Get Home Bag at a friend's house will allow them to add a few extra items, such as a pocket knife and basic medicine, like ibuprofen or an inhaler, which might not be allowed on campus.

Younger kids should remain at school until a family member or other designated person comes for them. Be sure that person has a photo ID and, if they are not the parent, a written note from



you giving permission to pick up your child. For a time, schools will still be very liability-minded, which is a good thing! You wouldn't want a stranger showing up and claiming your kid.

Give yourself plenty of time to make the trek to the school, or multiple schools if your kids attend more than one. Depending on the location of your child's school and the route you must take to get there, it might be wise to carry a firearm for protection. While I do not recommend breaking the law, this isn't the time to worry about gun-free zones. The school will probably have a system set up for parents to sign out their kids, so you might not even need to enter the building, and if you're traveling with another adult, one of you can pick up the kids, while the other remains outside, and armed.

Each hour that passes increases the number of people who are realizing the enormous implications of what has happened, making the outside world less and less safe by the hour.

If you don't have a vehicle, you'll have to either walk or ride a bike. You'll be making the trip home with little ones who might have a tough time walking a couple of miles or more. In that case, bring along a scooter, wagon, skateboard, etc. to make it easier for them. Make sure you're home before it gets dark; bring some functioning flashlights, just in case.

***ACTION STEP:*** Consider the possibility of establishing a series of 'safe houses' between your child's school and your home. These should be the homes or places of business of people you know well or have a connection with through church or another organization that brings together like-minded people. BEFORE A CRISIS, ask that person if they would be willing to harbor your child in a severe emergency until you can arrive to pick them up and offer to do the same for their children.

Mark these locations on a map, along with various routes, and laminate the map for long-term preservation in your child's backpack. When you're able to venture out to collect your children, you can begin with the safe house closest to your home and progress closer to their school until you're reunited.

## **7. GET HOME YOURSELF**

If you aren't at home, get there as quickly as you can. What if this event finds you hundreds or thousands of miles away? That presents a completely different survival scenario and strategy, which I'll detail in the book and, possibly, in future emails.

A Get Home Bag stashed in your vehicle or your workplace will help make the trek home easier and, especially, safer. That bag should include:

- Flashlight with extra batteries, but here's a good chance that LED flashlights will have been affected by the EMP. A UVPaqlite, which utilizes naturally luminescent minerals, provides ambient light without requiring batteries and a LuminAID solar powered light takes up little room in your pack, although it's possible that its electronic components will be damaged.
- Water – Most important. You'll need at least 2 liters per day, possibly more if you'll be walking in hot and/or humid weather. If you're not sure you can get water along the route home, discard from your pack what you can and make room for more water.
- 2 methods for purifying water, either a LifeStraw or a Sawyer Mini Water Filter
- Small first aid kit, including moleskin and other blister treatments, plus any necessary prescription medications (enough for at least one week)
- Extra pair of lightweight wool or wool blend socks
- High calorie snacks/energy bars – I favor the Datrex 3600 Calorie Food Bar. That's a lot of calories packed into a single bar.
- Cash (Divide this into at least 2 stashes and carry them in different pockets, inside a shoe, or in some other hiding place. See #9.)
- Hand sanitizer or wipes
- Toilet paper or a couple of packets of tissues
- Personal protection gear, e.g. handgun with extra magazines, taser, etc.
- Knife – This should be something more than a Swiss army knife because you may have to use it for self-defense.
- Map of area with alternate routes identified
- A compass, even if you don't know how to use it, it will still be helpful in providing general directions
- Sunglasses and a spare pair of eyeglasses or contact lenses
- Rain poncho – can double as a ground cover, if necessary.
- Portable ham radio, if you know how to use it. Store it in an EMP-proof bag.
- A change of comfortable clothes and shoes for walking, suitable for the current season, if your usual work attire isn't suitable.
- Small tool/survival kit to include a 4-way Sillcock key (can be used to access exterior secured water spigots), multitool, matches, duct tape, and length of paracord.

## **8. KEEP TRACK OF TIME**

This might sound like a minor detail, but unless any of your electronics have avoided destruction, there won't be a way to keep track of time. Setting schedules, including security measures and meeting times, can only happen if everyone has a way to track time. A sundial isn't going to do the trick!

Some electronics that may not have been damaged that can be used to set and tell time:

- iPods
- Tablets
- Kitchen appliances
- Cell phones
- Ebook readers (Kindle, Nook)
- Fitbit, or similar device
- GPS device
- Digital camera

If you're a worrier like me, I need to know how long my kids have been gone on errands and when I can expect them, or my husband, home, safe and sound. This one simple step will spare you a lot of stress.

***ACTION STEP:*** Look for wind-up wristwatches at estate sales and antique stores.

## **9. SHOP FOR LIFE-SAVING NECESSITIES**

Once you're sure your home isn't in danger of a fire, you have as much water stored as possible, and you've made plans to get the kids/grandkids home safely, it's time to spend every last dollar and coin that you have on hand.

This is when a motorized vehicle may end up saving lives, because you'll be able to make more stops, and will be able to make quick decisions regarding routes and destinations. During the first few hours following the EMP, it should be safe enough to venture out, since the majority of people will be confused and not yet desperate.

Wherever you decide to go, it will be best to travel with another person or two, since there will likely be many people who didn't think to have cash on hand and will be just as happy to steal whatever it is you buy. If your area is safe for the time being, your group can split up and get more done. Ideally, one person could stay behind to provide some security for your home and belongings.

Even if you are very well prepared for this event, you may as well spend that money because in a matter of hours, it's going to be useless. Cash registers and ATM machines won't be working, so try to find stores that are still open and willing to accept cash.

The first things to shop for are items that are most necessary to survival. These might include:

1. Prescription medications and medical supplies --Insulin, inhalers, and diabetic supplies are life savers.
2. Food – stored supplies run out eventually, even if you have several weeks or even several months' worth. Focus on buying canned food, rice, beans, pasta, honey, salt, sugar, and spices.
3. Baby supplies -- formula, diapers, and other baby-related products
4. Bleach – for household cleaning, as a disinfectant, and for purifying water
5. Gasoline or diesel – especially useful if any of your vehicles are functioning
6. Bottled water – Cases and cases of the stuff.
7. Oscillating fans – Babies, toddlers, the elderly, and those in poor health will not survive for long in unrelenting heat. These may have been incapacitated by the EMP, along with space heaters, another life-saving appliance.
8. Over-the-counter medications – Benadryl, ibuprofen, anti-diarrhea medication are just a few you'll want to have plenty of.

If you live in a city, it's very possible that roads will be impassable due to hundreds of stalled cars.

## **10. CONTINUE THE SHOPPING SPREE**

Spending that last bit of cash should be a task delegated between 2 or more members of your family or group. One person/group should focus on buying items that are most necessary to survival. However, there is no limit to the number of products that will improve the quality of your post-EMP life.

Stores that most people will overlook at first that you might want to check out:

1. Nurseries – Buy as many seedlings and seed packets for fruits and vegetables as possible. Look for heirloom varieties whenever possible because their seeds have better germination rates, making it easier to feed yourselves in future growing seasons. Other important products to buy are garden fabric and shade netting and different types of fertilizers.

2. Bicycle stores – Add spare tires, pumps, baskets, trailers, and other accessories to your stash. If you have little ones, consider buying a trailer now in order to make their transportation easier later.
3. Auto parts stores – Pick up as many spares as possible for things like windshield wiper blades, oil and air filters, fuel stabilizer, gasoline cans, siphoning hose, and bulbs for headlights and taillights for any working vehicles. Do the same for motorcycle parts stores, if you have a motorcycle. If all your vehicles are inoperable, this is a store you can skip.
4. Pet stores – Food and medications are top priorities. Buy flea and tick products, including tick removers, since insects of all kinds will soon begin to make life miserable. Also look for fish/bird antibiotics and buy as much as you can. These antibiotics are the same as those prescribed to humans.
5. Natural foods and/or vitamin stores – Stock up on Vitamin C, Vitamin D3, Vitamin E, multi-vitamins, protein powder, essential oils, and nutritionals you already use and know to be effective. Pick up a book about natural remedies if you don't have one. Prescription for Nutritional Healing by Phyllis A. Balch is a classic and worth owning.
6. Restaurant supply stores – These should have basic food stuffs in bulk quantities, as well as basic paper and cleaning supplies, such as toilet paper, steel wool, and bleach. Most people will overlook these stores.

Avoid big box stores, except for, perhaps, the first few hours following the EMP event. It won't take long before the lawless realize there is no protection for their intended victims. They will likely hit the big stores and malls first.

If your cash holds out, buy as much as possible of these things:

- Batteries of all sizes
- Toilet paper – Yes, you can use other things but TP is very efficient and has other uses.
- Ammunition for firearms
- Matches – Makes starting a fire quicker and easier for most people.
- Household cleaners
- Insecticides – Reclaim IT is one brand that is highly concentrated (1 ounce to 1 gallon water) and is a broad spectrum insecticide.
- Heavy duty black trash bags
- Disposable diapers in different sizes, if there's a baby in the family or one is expected.

- Any type of light source: lanterns (and fuel!), flashlights, light sticks

Moving forward, and for an indefinite period of time, your priorities will be water, food, shelter, sanitation/disease prevention, and security. Keep those in mind as you stock up on last minute survival items.

At the first sign that the tide has turned and your area is no longer safe, get home as quickly as possible or, at least, to a temporarily safer and quieter part of town. Warning signs will include an increasing number of people on the streets, blatant law-breaking, arson, and fighting.

## **11. CHECK UP ON LOVED ONES**

If close friends and family members live within walking distance or you have a vehicle and can make the trip quickly, send someone to check up on them and, your decision, bring them back to your house

In a worst case scenario such as this one, there are no “one size fits all” rules. You will have to make a judgment call based on your circumstances, the health and physical safety of your loved ones, your ability to provide for them, and their ability and willingness to help the whole group, even if just by sharing their skills and knowledge. You should also consider their personality. Someone who is a lazy troublemaker in good times is not likely to be better in a worst case scenario.

Don't underestimate the value of an extra pair of hands and an extra set of eyes and ears. Additional group members can help with security, household chores, hauling and purifying water, childcare, caring for the sick, and numerous other tasks. If you know that someone else is stationed at the front of the house keeping an eye on the neighborhood, for example, it will free up your time to take care of something else or get some much needed rest.

## **12. EAT LIKE A KING (OR QUEEN!)**

All that food you have in your refrigerator and freezer? It's a matter of hours before it spoils and becomes a health hazard. With that in mind, along with the fact that you are going to be working harder, physically, and under more mental stress than you have ever been, start eating!

If you have more food than you can eat before it reaches unsafe temperatures, 40 F/5 C, give it away to neighbors. If it's produce, slice it up and put it in a food dehydrator. These can run on a

small solar powered generator. It's possible to use a water bath canner or pressure canner over something like a rocket stove if you want to can food (including meat in a pressure canner), but it's difficult to maintain a steady temperature and pressure. If you plan on doing this in a SHTF scenario, practice beforehand.

Remove all uneaten food from both your refrigerator and freezer and wipe the interiors clean. You will soon have enough issues to deal with and the smell of putrefied food is one thing you don't need. A clean, closed fridge will be very effective at keeping critters out of your food and anything else you want to keep pest-free.

### **13. ALERT YOUR NEIGHBORS**

Tell your neighbors what has happened. In no way is this giving away information about your supplies or plans, but it will give them a chance to improve their own chances of survival by filling up bathtubs with water, making quick trips to the grocery store, and doing their best to gather all their loved ones together.

You can easily approach them with information without arousing any suspicion with these conversation starters:

- "I think what has happened is an EMP, like on that TV show, 'Revolution'."
- "Is your electricity out? It might be a power grid failure, so you might want to fill up your bathtubs with water and run out and get some extra food before everyone figures out what's going on."
- "We heard on our shortwave radio that an EMP has knocked out the power grid."

Simple conversation starters but ones that could save lives – even your own, someday!

At some point in the future, their survival and good will may help ensure your survival. Human beings have always clustered together in tribes, clans, and villages, and those same social structures will begin to develop in post-EMP life. For your best chances of survival, start establishing those supportive relationships now if you haven't already because it's something you will need in the future. A bit of charitable kindness will long be remembered.

### **14. GATHER INFORMATION**

A shortwave radio or ham radio equipment can help you gather information about the cause of the EMP, how widespread its affects, the status of local and federal government, weather alerts, and other vital information. This radio equipment may not have survived the EMP unless it was shielded in a Faraday container, but if it's operational, gather whatever information you can.

Initially, though, it's far more important to get your home and loved ones safely settled for what is going to be a very, very long-term survival situation.

## **15. TAKE STEPS TO SURVIVE THE SEASON**

There's no way to know during what time of year an EMP could occur, but for sure, it's either going to be too hot or too cold for many to survive for long, or it will be soon.

Babies, toddlers, the elderly, and those with chronic health problems will need to be protected as much as possible from extreme temperatures, especially heat. An oscillating fan run on batteries or a generator, combined with a spray bottle filled with water, can help keep body temperatures fairly comfortable in hot weather. In the cold, set up a tent in a small to medium size room, shut the doors, cover the windows with blankets, and use the tent as a cold weather shelter. Post-EMP life is going to be difficult in temperate climates and nearly impossible to survive in extreme cold or heat.

### **Survival doesn't end with these 15 steps**

An EMP is categorized as a worst case scenario for good reason. There will be many, including those who are well prepared, who won't survive for very long. Those who do will be able to think on their feet, quickly adapt and improvise, and willing to connect with others to form strong alliances.



## Coming up next: Should I bug out, if I can?

Assuming you have at least one working vehicle, deciding whether or not to leave your home, or current location, and traveling to another location is going to be one of the very toughest decisions you'll make in the first hours and days post-EMP. Even if you have the ideal survival location that is fully stocked with food and every other supply you might need, consider this: in the time it takes to make the decision to leave, pack up your vehicle (if it's running), and hit the road, the world around you has continued to deteriorate by the hour. It will only take a single road block by 2 or 3 predatory, armed individuals to bring your best laid plans to a halt.

Look for my next Special Report, "Should I stay or should I go?" coming to your email box in about 3 weeks, along with a sneak preview from my book!

I'll be sending additional email updates with urgent information and when my book is ready for pre-order. I'll be sure to let you know how to get a signed copy and how to give signed copies as gifts.

To receive future Special Reports and EMP survival notices, [click here](#) or copy and paste <http://forms.aweber.com/form/66/745985766.htm> into your browser. The sign-up form only asks for an email address and no other personal information. All email addresses are kept private and are never shared.

If this information was helpful to you, I encourage you to share it with others.

**Have questions or comments? Contact me at [EMPSurvival@thesurvivalmom.com](mailto:EMPSurvival@thesurvivalmom.com)**

## About the author



Lisa Bedford is better known as The Survival Mom, a preparedness-minded author, blogger, and speaker. She encourages families to adopt a calm and common-sense approach to preparing for an uncertain future.

Lisa is the author of [Survival Mom: How to Prepare Your Family For Everyday Disasters and Worst Case Scenarios](#), an Amazon #1 bestseller, published by Harper Collins, and her blog, [TheSurvivalMom.com](#) has an international audience. She also hosts The Survival Mom Radio Show podcast.

For a suburban, homeschooling mom, Lisa has an unusual background that includes working on an Israeli kibbutz, backpacking for months at a time throughout Europe, traveling in the former Soviet-bloc countries, and spending time in the Soviet Union. She's been a classroom teacher, corporate trainer, direct sales executive, and now an author and blogger.

Lisa has been featured in [Newsweek](#), The Today Show, the Glenn Beck show, MSN Money, USA Weekend, CBS and Fox News affiliates, the Arizona Republic, Phoenix Magazine, Woman's World Magazine, and numerous print, internet, and radio interviews that have reached readers and listeners across the globe.

Lisa believes there's power and peace in being prepared and draws from her 25 years of experience as a teacher and trainer to carry that message to others through her writing, classes, webinars, and speaking engagements.