

HOW TO TURN YOUR

H  ME

INTO AN

IMPENETRABLE

FORTRESS



INTRODUCTION

We were holed up in a forward operating base in Helmand province for about three weeks, minding our own and keeping the peace. The base was makeshift, but it was as fortified as a desert outpost could be - walls of sandbags, fortified positions, the works.

Now, one moonless night, we got hit. It wasn't a small dustup either - we're talking mortars, machine gun fire, the whole nine yards. They were expecting a cakewalk, but they didn't bank on us being ready for them.

While the fire-fight unfolded, we held the line, repelled those attackers, and came through with only minor injuries. I tell you, without that fortification,

without those defenses, it could have been a massacre.

See, because we'd fortified that base, we knew the terrain better than the back of our hands. We knew where to take cover, where to fire back, and where our blind spots were.

That base became our fortress, our safety in the chaos.

So, when I tell you about fortifying your home, I'm deadly serious. I've seen what happens when you're caught unprepared, and I've seen what a well-prepared defense can do. It's the difference between standing your ground and being overrun.

Use this guide in addition to the main Operation Blackout book to super-charge your home defenses

It's packed with additional tricks that are going to keep you safer than a bank vault. These tactics are designed to ensure you and your family can face any danger with confidence.

I. UNDERSTANDING HOME DEFENSE

1: The Importance of Home Security in a Blackout

In an EMP blackout, you're not just dealing with the lights going out. It's the whole shebang, the totality of life as we know it going belly up. That's why home defense, something most folks just nod at in theory, becomes as vital as the very air you breathe.

Imagine this - no power means no alarms, no surveillance cameras, and no 911. You're on your own, my friend. The wolves are out there, and they're hungry. Survival ain't just about protecting yourself from the elements; it's also about warding off those who'd take what's yours.

A man's home is his castle, right? So why wouldn't we defend it like one?

My time in Afghanistan taught me a lot about defense strategies, and I'm here to tell you that the principles of military fortification aren't just for war zones. They're for any place you want to keep safe, especially your own homestead. I'm talking trenches, bunkers, sight lines, chokepoints... the works. Might sound over the top, but when people are overcome with madness, they're prone to do desperate things.

In a blackout, your home is your fortress, your sanctuary. It's the place where your family has gotta be safe. When society crumbles, when there isn't any law or order, the only security you got is the one you create yourself.

You've got to make your home as unappetizing as possible to anyone thinking they can just stroll in and take what they want.

So, let's roll up our sleeves, set to work, and turn that homestead of yours into a fortress that even a hardened looter would think twice about.

2: Evaluating Your Home's Current Vulnerabilities

Assessing your home's current vulnerabilities is like taking a good, hard look in the mirror. It's not always pleasant, but it's necessary. Here's the step-by-step on how you do this:

Step 1: The Walkabout

Start by doing a walkabout around your property. I'm talking the full perimeter. Make note of your entry points - doors, windows, that doggy door you installed for your pooch. Anywhere someone could sneak in, you need to know about.

Step 2: The Deadbolts and the Hinges

Next, check out your doors. Are they sturdy? Do they have deadbolts? How about the hinges - are they inside or outside? An outside hinge is an open invitation to any looter with a crowbar or power tool.

Step 3: Windows to the Soul

Windows are a weak point. How easy would it be to break one? Is there a tree or a trellis that someone could climb to reach a second story window? Trim that vegetation back if so.

Step 4: The View from the Street

Stand across the street and look at your house. What can you see? If you can see anything of value through your windows, so can anyone else. Think about getting some blinds, or rearranging your furniture.

Step 5: Outdoor Hiding-Holes

Look for potential hiding places in your yard. A large shrubbery or a tool shed might provide a convenient place for an invader to hide. Time to rethink your landscaping.

Step 6: Light It Up

Darkness is a thief's best friend. Check your outdoor lighting. Do you have motion sensor lights? Are there dark corners where someone could lurk unseen? If so, it's time to add more lights.

Remember to install your power surge breaker to protect your home appliances - else your lighting will fry.

With a little preparation - and you don't need to turn your home into Fort Knox - a few simple tweaks can make a world of difference when it comes to your home security.

3: Basic Principles of Home Defense

Let's dive into the meat and potatoes of home defense. These principles aren't just theory. They're time-tested and battle-approved. So here they are:

1. Deterrence

The best fight is the one you don't have to have. Make your home look like a hard target and most thieves will move along. Light it up, keep it tidy, show that you're alert and aware. Display that Second Amendment pride if it suits you. Deterrence is about sending a message that says, "Not today, buddy."

2. Layers of Defense

Don't just rely on your front door to keep the bad guys out. Think in terms of layers. The outer layer is your property line. Then your yard, your exterior walls, your doors and windows, and finally your safe room. Each layer is a barrier that buys you time and gives you options.

Once you're confined to your safe room, though, it's pretty much game over as you'll be at the full mercy of your attackers. This may truly be a last ditch attempt at survival.

3. Observation

You've got to see trouble before it can reach you. Keep your landscaping trimmed back. Install peepholes in your doors. Set up mirrors to eliminate blind spots. The more you see, the less they can surprise you.

4. Communication

In a crisis, communication is key. Have a plan with your family. Know who gets the kids, who grabs the Go bag. Practice it until it's second nature. In the heat of the moment, you won't have time to debate about it.

5. Force

If push comes to shove, you've got to be ready to use force to protect yourself and your loved ones. This isn't about being a cowboy. It's about knowing how and when to use force effectively and without hesitation.

6. Recovery

After the threat's passed, you've got to pick up the pieces, and do it quickly. Have a plan for repairs. Reassess your security based on the attack and improve your defenses for next time.

4: Legal Considerations and Ethical Dilemmas

First, let's be clear - this isn't the wild west. We've got laws, and it's crucial to respect them. But we also got some ethical dilemmas to consider, and in a crazy time like post-EMP blackout, things get even more complicated.

Now, before we move on, remember I'm not a lawyer, and this isn't legal advice. But let me share some of my thoughts with you.

First off, the law. As it stands now, every state's got its own rules when it comes to self-defense and home defense. Some have a Stand Your Ground law, meaning you haven't got a duty to retreat before defending yourself in your own home. Others have a Castle doctrine, which allows you to use force to protect your property.

**But remember, lethal force is usually the last resort,
and the threat has to be imminent.**

Research your state laws, folks, and know them well.

Now, come the ethical dilemmas. Defending your home, your family, is one thing. But what about your neighbors? Do you extend your protection to them? Do you share your supplies? And what if someone just hungry and desperate comes knocking, not a dangerous looter?

You're the one who'll have to look at yourself in the mirror every morning, so ponder on this.

In a total blackout, post-EMP world, the legal landscape can become a real question mark. Law enforcement might be scarce or nonexistent. But let me be clear - a crisis doesn't give anyone a free pass to turn into a vigilante. You're still accountable for your actions, to your community and to your conscience.

The bottom line? Know the law, respect it.

Consider the ethical implications of your choices. Be firm in your defense, but

don't lose your humanity. Just because the lights are out doesn't mean we abandon what makes us civilized.

5: The Psychology of a Home Invader

Here we're going to dive into the dark side of the human mind - the mind of a home invader.

From my time in Afghanistan, I learned that the one thing invaders want is control. They aim to instill fear, to make you feel powerless in your own home. But remember this: they're afraid too.

They're stepping into unfamiliar territory, and they don't know what to expect.

That's our advantage.

Now, let's consider a post-EMP world. It's going to be chaotic. The usual law and order we're used to? It won't be there. People will be desperate, scared. That's a dangerous combination. Desperation can drive people to do things they normally wouldn't do, and fear...

Fear can make them ruthless.

The mindset of a home invader in such circumstances? They'll be desperate for resources, maybe looking for shelter, or just wanting to cause havoc. They might act more recklessly, maybe even more violently. They'll be expecting you to be just as unprepared and scared as they are.

And here's where we turn the tables.

By being prepared, by securing our homes, we remove the element of surprise.

We take control. We show them we're not the easy targets they're looking for. And let me tell you, there's nothing more intimidating to an invader than a homeowner who's ready and willing to defend their castle.

II. FORTIFYING YOUR HOME

6: Reinforcing Doors and Windows

When it comes to defending your home, your doors and windows are the most vulnerable access points. These are your front lines, the first places a home invader is going to try to breach.

Next we'll walk through some practical and effective strategies to toughen up those doors and windows.

Doors

When it comes to protecting your home, a critical line of defense is your outside door. Your average, run-of-the-mill wooden door might look pretty, but it isn't worth a hoot when it comes to keeping out determined troublemakers. That's where steel doors step up to the plate. Tough as nails and hard to breach, steel doors are a mighty fine deterrent for any attacker looking for an easy break-in.

But a sturdy door is only as good as its lock. Those standard locks won't hold up against a hefty kick or a sledgehammer. Swap 'em out for heavy-duty deadbolts. These bad boys are tougher to crack, which means a safer home for you and yours.

If you've got a few bucks more to spare - and I recommend you do - this door-to-floor mounted device is a super strong addition or alternative. It protects against break-ins, firmly secures doors to prevent forced entry. Plus it allows you to open up a couple of inches without risking a full blown entry.

Equally effective is a wooden wedge bolted to the floor. Quick, cheap, easy to unscrew when you go out, and screw back in when you return. Darn near impossible to break through unless you're facing something mechanical.

Windows

Windows can be a real Achilles heel when you're talking home defense. They're the low-hanging fruit for anyone wanting to get inside your house, but don't worry, we've got solutions.

Your first order of business? Ditch the standard glass windows for unbreakable Plexiglas. This stuff is sturdy and gives you peace of mind, knowing your windows aren't going to shatter at the swing of a bat.

Now, if you want to go the extra mile, consider adding steel bars to your windows. Yes, they may give your home a bit of a penitentiary vibe, but in a survival situation, aesthetics take a backseat to safety. Besides, nothing says “Keep out!” quite like a set of steel bars.

Remember, in the wake of an EMP, it’s every man for himself. Cops might be spread thin or even non-existent, meaning it’s up to you to protect your own. Fortifying your doors and windows is a solid start to turning your home into a fortress that can stand up to any threats that come your way.

7: Creating a Secure Perimeter

Time to talk about your first line of defense: the perimeter of your property. A well-secured perimeter acts as an effective deterrent and can buy you critical time in case of an intrusion. In this chapter, we’ll look at measures to transform your property boundaries into a formidable barrier.

Fencing and Natural Barriers

First off, you need to consider the existing barriers around your property. If you already have a fence, great. If not, it may be worth considering the investment. But remember, we don’t want a shining, white picket fence here. Opt for metal fencing if you can - sturdy and robust. Even a simple chain-link fence can make a difference.

If fencing isn’t feasible, consider using natural barriers. Planting thorny shrubs, like rose bushes or hawthorn, can discourage would-be invaders from trying to breach your perimeter.

Surveillance

Next up, you need eyes on your perimeter. Mirrors, even simple ones from the dollar store, can give you an expanded view around corners and keep you one step ahead. In an EMP situation, most traditional surveillance systems will be rendered useless, so setting up a system of mirrors can help you keep tabs on the surrounding area.

Obstacles and Deterrents

Create layers of obstacles around your property. These could be things like gravel paths that crunch underfoot, giving you an audible alert to an intruder’s presence, or strategically placed tripwires with cans or bells attached.

Not only do these give you warning, but they also slow down anyone trying to get close.

Warning Signs

Finally, don't underestimate the power of a good old-fashioned warning sign. A simple "Beware of Dog", "Private Property" or even a sign to show that you have guns, can be surprisingly effective at deterring potential threats. They communicate that your home isn't an easy target and that intruders will face resistance.

Establishing a secure perimeter is all about making your property less inviting to potential intruders. By implementing these measures, you are showing any would-be invader that they're in for a tough time if they choose your home. Remember, our goal here isn't to hurt anyone; it's to prevent a breach before it ever happens.

8: Safe Rooms: The Last Line of Defense

Your safe room is your last resort, your fallback sanctuary when all else fails. Personally, I'd rather go guns blazing than resort to a safe room... once you're in there, you got to come out sometime...

Then you're at the mercy of your intruders.

The idea of hiding out in a room while someone ransacks my house doesn't sit well with me. But I understand that for some folks, a safe room might be part of their strategy. And that's fine. If that's your call, here's how you do it:

Choosing the Right Room

First things first, picking the room. It needs to be an inconspicuous part of the house that would not be the first place an intruder would check. Ideally, it should have no exterior windows, and it needs to be big enough to accommodate your family comfortably for a few hours, or even a couple of days.

Reinforcing the Room

Next, you need to reinforce this room. This includes reinforcing the door with deadbolts and the walls, if possible, with ballistic-rated paneling. If that's out of your budget, at least opt for solid wood or metal doors instead of hollow core doors.

Communication and Surveillance

Without electricity, our usual ways of communicating and surveilling might not be an option. Set up a system of signals with your trusted allies on the outside. These can be as simple as knock patterns or coded messages. For surveillance, a small peephole in the door or periscope-style viewing device can help you keep an eye on what's happening outside without exposing yourself.

Essential Supplies

Stock your safe room with essential supplies. This should include water, non-perishable food, first aid supplies, flashlights, and extra clothing. Don't forget about sanitation needs, as well. A simple bucket and trash bags can serve as a makeshift toilet.

Weapons

Finally, your safe room should contain defensive weapons. Whether it's a firearm or a sturdy baseball bat, it's crucial to have some means of defending yourself if an intruder manages to breach your safe room.

9: Implementing Surveillance Without Electronics

No matter how sturdy we make our home fortress, it can be made even more impenetrable when we couple it with surveillance tactics. After an EMP burst, we'll have no electrical kit, so it's back to basics. Here's how to keep your eyes peeled without any fancy electronics.

Mirrors and Reflective Surfaces

Never underestimate the usefulness of a well-placed mirror. You can get a wide view of your surroundings without sticking your neck out. And they're dirt cheap too. You can use anything reflective: broken shards of a mirror, polished metal, even an old CD can work in a pinch.

Tripwires and Noise-Making Traps

Sometimes the best warning system is a good old-fashioned noise-maker. Set up tripwires around your perimeter attached to tin cans, bells, anything that makes a racket. It's rudimentary, sure, but it's also very effective.

Animal Sentries

Dogs are excellent early warning systems. Their hearing is far superior to ours, and they'll raise hell if they sense something amiss. Plus of course, your well trained and loyal hound will do a lot of damage to an intruder who's going to think twice before getting near you and your family.

Natural Watchpoints

Use natural watchpoints like trees, hills or other high points to keep an eye on your neighborhood. It's the higher ground advantage, and it'll give you a good view of the surroundings. Depending on the terrain, you may get a clear view from 50 yards to 5 clicks or more, which will give you a huge early warning advantage.

10: Preparing for a Breach: Defense Plan and Drills

We've covered a lot of ground on making our homes into fortresses. But let's face it, few defenses are impenetrable. There may come a time when a single, or multiple chains of precautions become breached. What do you do then? This is where a solid defense plan and regular drills come into play.

Establishing a Defense Plan

First up, the defense plan. You need to decide how you're going to react when your defenses are breached. Who does what? Where do you fall back to? Which actions trigger a retreat to the safe room?

Decide on primary and secondary roles for each member of your group. Are they manning the barricades, providing first aid, or handling communication and coordination? Everyone needs to know their roles like the back of their hands.

Creating Safe Escape Routes

Next, establish safe escape routes and make sure everyone knows them well. Establish a rating system for the severity of the breach, and the subsequent escape plan you will need for each.

Will you need to abandon your shelter totally? Or is it a temporary breach? What and where will you escape to in these cases? You'll need alternatives, too, because you never know where a threat might pop up from.

Designing Drills

Design drills so that you can practice your defense plan. The key here is to simulate real-world scenarios as closely as possible. This is serious business, so regular drills are a must to keep everyone sharp and focused.

Run Drills

Run these drills regularly. Change scenarios, times of the day, points of breach - keep it unpredictable. Drill until the actions become second nature. Muscle memory is your friend in crisis situations when emotions tend to take over from logic.

Post-Drill Debrief

Lastly, after each drill, have a debrief. Discuss what went well and what didn't. Make changes to your plan if you need to. The goal is to constantly learn and improve.

Remember, the key to successfully handling a breach is preparation and practice.

A plan is only as good as your ability to execute it under stress.

Stay focused, follow this guide and you've got the best chance possible of making it through.

Keep your wits about you and trust in yourself. When the lights go out, your mind is your own best defense. Stay strong. Over and out.