

Forgotten Shelter Tools

Mechanical Alarm Clock:

Often entirely overlooked, a mechanical alarm clock which is powered by a windup spring and has a mechanical bell is an ideal shelter timepiece. The clock can be stored in a shelter for years and still remain functional. It can be dropped or splashed with liquids and still remain functional, and it is immune to EMP or magnetic field effects. The clock is simple to wind, simple to set, and the alarm is both intuitive and easy to adjust.

The bell is loud enough that if you must leave the shelter for a short period, you can still hear the alarm bell. The bell can be sounded so others know you are alive in a shelter. The ticking is relaxing to pets and infants. The faceplate over the dial can be written upon with a grease pencil. The dials are large enough to be readable by those with vision issues, especially if you have a larger sized mechanical alarm clock, or one with glowing numbers.

Fire Bucket:

A 1 to 3 gallon handle-pail, especially a galvanized metal one, should be filled with clean sand for fire emergencies (sand is the only practical way to control pyrotechnical fires). It can be stored in a shelter for years without issues. The sand can be used both to quench a fire, or fill a sand bag. The metal pail can be used to store other items, keeping them from liquid splashes. It can be used to carry water, or hold waste. If the pail is metal, it can be turned over to use as a makeshift stepstool, or to cover a smoldering object. A rope can be tied to the handle, and the pail used to raise inserted objects; or if filled with heavy objects, function as a counter-weight.

Clothesline:

The rope can be used as a clothesline for drying rags or clothing, but also used to tie to a pail. Bulky items that need to be kept together can be wrapped with the rope. The diameter of the rope is small enough that it can be tied to all sorts of things, or passed through small holes. It is strong enough to use as a light tie-down.

Natural Sponge:

These large hand-filling sponges are useful for both dusting away loose particles or wicking up liquids. It can also be used as a coarse liquid filter. It works well for transferring liquids between containers or to your lips. They are perfect for a "sponge bath".

Garden Hose:

At least a "medium" walled garden hose of at least "25" feet in length. Never select a light-duty hose, as it will easily kink and become useless. Useful for washing away contamination. Also works as a siphon hose. Can even be used to store a small amount of water. Consider also getting a hose-to-sink thread adapter.

Newspapers:

Not just for providing reading material during a shelter stay, non-glossy newspaper can absorb spilled liquids. It can be stuffed into cracks to prevent airflow. It provides a certain amount of extra warmth when supplementing a blanket. When spread out, it can be used as a disposable surface for pottying pets or vegetable peels, or use it as a disposable doormat so you don't track in dirt. Newspaper also makes excellent tinder for a fire. Newspapers take little space when stored flat, and if you know Origami, can be fashioned into containers.

Floor Broom:

Broom should have a real wooden handle, especially one that can be unscrewed. The long handle makes it easy to sweep away contamination without getting too close. Broom handle can be fixed horizontally and used as a rope support. Broom can also be used to prop items from falling or opening. The wood handle can be easily cut. Effective tool for both cleaning and shooing away pests.

Keyhole Saw:

Although the Hacksaw is often included in supply lists, it has the disadvantage that the blade support often gets in the way when trying to work in close quarters, and it cannot cut holes. The keyhole saw can be used to cut notches in wooden items such as plywood, and can also be used to chop wooden boards or paper tubes to length. It is more effective at cutting wood than a metal cutting hacksaw blade.