

CARE AND FEEDING OF YOUR CITY CACHE

by Sandy Miarecki

BASICS

Storage shed - Determining the proper location of your cache is probably the hardest part of having one. Finding a willing neighbor who has a relatively secure yard to hold it is sometimes difficult. If you can find a location that is already flat and smooth, that works well of course. In addition, you want a location that is not near any large structures that could collapse upon it (multi-story apartments) or power lines directly above it.

However, security is also a big issue, with cache thefts occurring from time to time. So, a location within someone's fenced yard that is not easily visible from the street to ward off theft, not near any hazards that could fall upon it in a quake, but is accessible by your neighbors in an emergency, would be ideal.

In addition, you want to ensure all the people in the neighborhood know that they should NEVER tell any untrained neighbors the location of the cache, and especially no one outside the neighborhood. The more people that know, the more the information might slip out, and criminals might get the information.

Combination Padlock - The lock that comes with the cache is pretty low-tech. You should consider buying an upgraded version. In addition, you should consider giving the combination only to people within the neighborhood who participate in your neighborhood training and drills. You don't want random neighbors to "break in" to the cache to take supplies for their own use when the supplies are supposed to be for the command headquarters. Untrained people have no idea what the supplies are used for, and they will ruin all your plans.

In addition, you should purchase a motion sensor alarm for inside your cache. Ideally you want an alarm that goes off soon after there is motion inside the cache, but not too soon that you don't have time to disarm it when you are legitimately entering the cache for maintenance, etc. Motion sensors are best because criminals have been cutting into the walls of the cache to steal the items, instead of opening the door. The alarm that I personally recommend is the following:

Minialarm Motion Sensor with Remote Control, plus an additional remote
<http://www.smarthome.com/7003MS/miniAlarm-Motion-Sensor-w-Remote-Control-MA-501/p.aspx>

The idea is to install the motion sensor far from the doorway, so that a criminal can't reach it to deactivate it (by removing the batteries) before it goes off. You keep one of the remote controls hidden in the cache so that legitimate neighbors can deactivate it when they go in for maintenance, etc. You keep the second remote in a different location in case the first remote is lost.

50-person Medical Kit - The first aid supplies in this kit will last a long time, but after about 10 years they will need to be replaced. However, you should not throw them away, since it is better to use once-sterile bandages that might not be sterile any more, than to use completely unsterile sheets and such when you run out of regular supplies. Store medical supplies inside airtight Ziploc baggies or other plastic protection, to keep mold/mildew from forming.

5000 Watt Generator - All modern generators come pre-assembled except for the wheels and handles. They also come with oil and spark plugs already installed. All you need to do is add a bit of gas, and start it up. You should preassemble your generator and store it that way.

Maintenance on your generator involves storing it without any gas in it. You want to run the generator at least once every 6 months to make sure it works. Do this by filling the gas tank

with about 1-2 cups of gas. Set the generator on a slight incline so that the gas all runs into the motor (none is left in the tank). Let the generator run completely out of gas. This will take about 20 minutes, and this is enough time for the generator to get its workout.

10 x10 Dome Canopy - If you have a pop-up canopy (or Easy-Up), it will be simple to set up. If not, then you should plan on taking it out of the box and setting it up to become familiar with the procedure. Pay close attention to how it sat in the box, however, so you can figure out how it goes back into the box for storage.

LIGHTING

Utility Lamp 500 W - When you test the generator every 6 months, you should test that the lamp bulbs are still working. No need to test longer than a few seconds.

7' Tripod Light - When you test the generator every 6 months, you should test that the lamp bulbs are still working. No need to test longer than a few seconds.

Power Strip - No maintenance required. Keep it clean and dry.

12/3-50' Extension Cords - No maintenance required. Keep them clean and dry.

COMMUNICATION EQUIPMENT

F/S Portable Radios - You will receive 4-6 radios with your city cache. This is just enough to have 1-2 per Search and Rescue (SAR) team and one for the headquarters. The SAR teams will be the headquarters' eyes and ears in the field, and they will be able to relay any hazards (gas leaks, fires) and when they need assistance. You should consider buying additional radios for your other CERT team members.

For maintenance, if you have the rechargeable batteries in your radios, you should store them INSIDE the radios. You should recharge them every 2-3 months. If you have the radios with regular alkaline batteries, you should store them OUTSIDE the radios. Make sure you put a pack of batteries with every radio, and have plenty of spares.

AM/FM Radio - Keep appropriate batteries with the radio.

PROTECTIVE WEAR

Hard Hats - You will receive 6 hard hats with your city cache. This is just enough for your SAR teams in the field. You will need more head protection for your other CERT members. Consider using bicycle helmets, which most people already own and are already fitted to the user's head. If you want to purchase more hard hats, consider the ones with the ratchet adjustment (for a better fit) but also consider making chin-straps for them to ensure they don't fall off at the wrong time during a rescue. See the BDPNN "Files" section for info on how to make inexpensive chin straps.

Work Gloves - You get many pairs in the cache. Your SAR teams will need them for sure. Others who are working with debris should also wear them.

Light Duty Dust Masks - You get many pairs in the cache. Your SAR teams will need them for sure. Others who are working with debris should also wear them.

Protective Goggles - You get many pairs in the cache. Your SAR teams will need them for sure. Others who are working with debris should also wear them.

TOOLS AND SUPPLIES

36" Axe - No maintenance required. Keep the axe easy to access in the cache.

3" X 1000' rolls caution tape - No maintenance required. Keep with the headquarters supplies.

Duct Tape - No maintenance required. Keep with the headquarters supplies.

Hammers - Good tools for SAR teams. No maintenance required.

Flashlights - Good tools for SAR teams. No maintenance required. Keep the batteries OUTSIDE the flashlights but near the lights themselves for easy use.

Can opener - Keep with the other headquarters supplies.

FIRE SUPPRESSION

ABC Fire Extinguishers - Check the pressure on the extinguishers every 6 months. Recharge them as needed. Maintenance involves turning the extinguishers upside down when you check them to allow contents to shift.

3/4" fire hose, 50 feet each - Keep all the water-based fire fighting equipment in the same place, since you will need all of the equipment at the same time to fight a neighborhood fire. Try out the various hoses and nozzles in advance with a steady water supply, so you know the capabilities and limitations beforehand.

Hose nozzles, brass - Keep all the water-based fire fighting equipment in the same place, since you will need all of the equipment at the same time to fight a neighborhood fire.

1" diameter to garden hose increase coupling - Keep all the water-based fire fighting equipment in the same place, since you will need all of the equipment at the same time to fight a neighborhood fire.

1" nozzle, aluminum - Keep all the water-based fire fighting equipment in the same place, since you will need all of the equipment at the same time to fight a neighborhood fire.

1" SHUT OFF VALVE - Keep all the water-based fire fighting equipment in the same place, since you will need all of the equipment at the same time to fight a neighborhood fire.

Backpack pump and bag 5 gallon - Keep all the water-based fire fighting equipment in the same place, since you will need all of the equipment at the same time to fight a neighborhood fire.

Collapsible yellow pails, 3 gallon - Keep all the water-based fire fighting equipment in the same place, since you will need all of the equipment at the same time to fight a neighborhood fire.

ADDITIONAL ITEMS TO PURCHASE:

- Large box of whistles, one for every team member to use in emergencies
- Reflective vests for your Search and Rescue (SAR) teams. Consider adding CERT patches. Here is one possibility:
 - http://www.iprep.com/CERT-Safety-6-pocket-Jacket-Vest-With-Reflective-Stripes-Printed_p_724.html
- Gas can with gas for starting the generator occasionally.
- Siphon to pull gas from the cars in the neighborhood to feed the generator
- Additional power strips and heavy-duty extension cords (for the generator)
- Additional walkie-talkies for more CERT members
- Batteries for the walkie talkies and AM/FM radio (if they are alkaline-based)
- Backpacks for SAR teams, with equipment pre-packed in each one, ready to go (see attached list of supplies to put into each team's pack)
- Multi-tools for SAR teams (gas valve shutoff, water shutoff, hammer, etc.)
- San Angelo bar (long steel pike) for cribbing rescues
- Large 4x4 blocks of wood to serve as initial cribbing supplies (although you will have plenty of cribbing after a large earthquake from all the debris)
- Additional medical supplies (if you have a large neighborhood)
- Backpack and white hard hat for the Commander, with equipment prepackaged inside
- Clipboards for SAR members to take notes
- Medical supplies for SAR backpacks, including stethoscopes to check for pulse
- Bottles of water for the SAR backpacks
- Brightly colored rain ponchos for all CERT members, but especially SAR teams
- Pens and paper for SAR teams and headquarters operations
- Different sized dust masks (one size does not fit all)
- Air mattresses for the clinic (so injured people aren't lying on the hard, cold ground)
- Map of your neighborhood showing gas/electric/water shutoffs
- Cork board to pin up the map and other papers
- Bullhorn to make announcements to large groups, with batteries