

A Guide to Going Off the Grid

We like to think that we live independent lives - that we're the masters of our own fate. But the truth is that when we live on the grid, we're dependent on the state we live in and the government to keep things running smoothly.

When things run smoothly, we enjoy a comfortable and convenient life. But if something happens to disrupt that grid, then what we depended on will come crashing down.

When you depend on anything else but your own resources, you can't count on it always being there for you. That's why you always need to find a way to live off the grid.

What Does Off the Grid Mean?

When you live on the grid, it means that everything in your home is usually all connected. You get the electricity to power your home from an electric company or a co-op.

It means that you get the heat for your home from a utility company if you use natural gas. If you have city water connected to your house, you're living on the grid.

If you have a home telephone service, it means that you're also on the grid. All of these modern conveniences are supplied by someone other than yourself. You're at their mercy if they suddenly shut you off or a SHTF situation happens and they can no longer supply you with these services.

When you go off the grid, it means that you decide that you're going to forego services that are supplied to you - and instead, you're going to make your own energy to power your needs.

Going off the grid requires patience and planning. When you decide that you're through relying on someone else to make sure that you stay connected, you must have a plan in place that will meet your needs.

Some people slowly change one area of grid-dependent living at a time before focusing on the next area. One of the reasons that they do it slowly is because there are some supplies that you need to get and you will need to be able to afford these.

Others choose to go completely off the grid and have the money to be able to do that. How you can afford to do it isn't what's important. It's only important that you recognize the need to create your own electricity and other utility needs.

Once you've found a way to create the renewable resources that you need to use and you're completely creating your own support, your home will be self-reliant and you will be effectively off the grid.

Even with all of the stuff going on in the world and knowing that the grid isn't always reliable or safe from terroristic attack, some people just don't see the need to live off the grid. But there are several reasons for not relying on the grid.

Why You Never Want to Rely on the Grid

There are new terrorist attacks weekly and sometimes, it seems that these attacks are happening almost daily. In many of these attacks, what gets hit is whatever will cripple the economy, whatever will obstruct communication and whatever will hit the people where it hurts most.

The grid is what's most vulnerable to attacks. When most people think of the grid, they think in small terms, such as how it will affect them within their home. They know if the power plants are hit, then they're going to be without power.

But when a grid is attacked, it's never based on how it will affect individuals in their homes. It's planned based on how the fallout will affect entire cities and even states.

For example, if a power plant is disabled, it doesn't just inconvenience you by shutting off your power. It also shuts down gas stations and banks. Traffic lights go out.

Grocery stores can't run. People can't get the supplies that they need. Government buildings can't operate. The infrastructure of cities relies on the grid. So when someone (or something unintentional like a solar flash) wants to cripple an area, they'll target what will cause the biggest disruption.

Plus, when you rely solely on the grid, you're forced to stay put. This means that you can't bug out if you need to. When you're dependent on the grid, it won't be easy for you to leave if you don't have a place that it's self-reliant.

If it's in the middle of winter, you can't bug out with small children and go somewhere that has no heat. You'll be forced to stay in place for the health and safety of those you love, even if there's danger in the area.

Your choice won't really be a choice when you're dependent on the grid. Instead of being able to leave in the face of a SHTF situation, you'll be forced to take your chances, hoping that everything will turn out all right.

Instead of living that way, you need to take control and figure out how your life is run. Not only does being dependent on the grid keep you in place, but anyone can find you when you're on the grid.

To locate a person, you can look them up by their utility services. You can look them up online in a search site that lists people according to city and state. Some of these sites also list your age, your average income and who else lives in your home.

If you have a cell phone, you can easily be located with the built-in GPS. You can be located through your online purchases if you use a debit or credit card. If you sign in anywhere online, you can be located through your IP address.

Not wanting to be located isn't about hiding from everyone. It's about making sure that the wrong kinds of people don't know your business and where you're at.

Living Without Public Electricity

Though it might sound kind of scary and like it's a huge undertaking, living without public electricity can be done - and not only can it be done, but you'll gain a sense of freedom from being disconnected.

You'll also gain relief from the stress of having to constantly pay those high electric bills every summer and winter. Living without public electricity should be first on your to-do list when you're devising a way to get off the grid.

Creating your own power will be the biggest step that you'll take. What a lot of people do when they're coming off the grid is to search for a natural power supply.

You can easily power the needs of your home by harnessing the power of the wind or the sun. In fact, a lot of people already do this because they know that relying on natural resources cuts the high cost of electricity.

You can install solar panels in your home that can gather the energy from the sun. These panels will range in size as well as price. They're powered directly by the sun's rays.

When the rays shine on the solar panels, energy is gathered and then is able to be used through a conversion method. It's simply protons turning into electrons. Using solar panels isn't the only means of naturally getting off the grid to power the needs of your family.

You can also use the wind. People have been using wind energy dating back many centuries. When you use wind power, you're also harnessing the power of the sun.

It's the sun that powers the wind through the method of hot air pressure. If you've ever seen a windmill you've seen an example of wind energy. The more of a breeze that you have in your area, the better your home is suited for using wind energy.

You use wind turbine generators to be able to naturally power your home. Even the smallest of winds can still generate electricity. The amount of wattage the wind turbine is capable of producing depends on the size of the turbine that you purchase.

Some of them can also be used to charge batteries. They can generate enough power to support the same kind of electricity usage that a home draws from being on the grid.

You can run electronics, ceiling or electric fans, charge cell phones and use lights in your home the same way that you could if you were paying a bill to the electric company. The larger your turbine is, the more power that it's capable of powering.

What many people choose to do is use a combination of both solar and wind power to bring electricity to their home. Solar and wind energy is a clean and inexpensive way to provide the electrical needs for your family.

Surviving in the Absence of Public Water and Sewer Service

Just as you need to take yourself off the grid with electricity, you also need to take yourself off the grid with water and sewer service. Fortunately, finding the water that you need to supply your home with isn't hard.

Nature provides plenty of this for you - all you have to do is harvest it and bring it into your home. What some people choose to do is have a well dug. Digging a well is something that many people choose to do on their own.

You can certainly do this if you're experienced. But if you're not, you'll want to get an expert to do it because there are issues that can backfire on you if you don't. For example, if you don't make sure you have a clean source of water in the well, then you'll spend even more money to have it cleaned up and made usable.

The ground has contaminants that can make your well water unfit for drinking or using. This is why you want to pay to have a well dug if you can afford it. This will be one of your biggest expenses with going off the grid unless you can find

someone that will dig a well for you in exchange for some service that you can offer in return.

Because well water can have a stronger taste than city water, you'll want to have a good filtering system in place. If you don't like the idea of having a well dug or if you can't get one dug because you can't afford it, then you can provide water to your home by using a cistern.

These are containers that are specifically manufactured to hold water outside. These containers use rainwater that collects around your house through your gutters.

Depending on the type of cistern that you use, you may also have to install a pump. A cistern is not a good idea for you if live in a state that's a dry state. It's also not a good idea if contamination from outlying buildings is going to be an issue.

For example, if you live in the vicinity of a paper mill, you wouldn't want to get a cistern because the particles expelled from the paper mill's smoke stacks will be in the air.

These particles could be carried via the rain into your gutters and down into your cisterns and then the water wouldn't be healthy for you to use. When it comes to sewer needs, you'll want to go with a septic tank.

This is a big container that's below the ground. When toilets are flushed or water is run down the sink drains, it all goes into the septic container. When you use a septic container, you should have the waste carried away from the home so that you don't have to deal with the smell.

One way to do this is by using a network of pipes. A properly installed septic container does not require maintenance that often. You can have the container checked by a waste management removal company every 12 to 14 months.

Regular checks will help keep the system in good working order. While you can put in the septic container yourself and fix the pipes so that the sewage is away from your house, you might want to have a plumbing company check over your handiwork to be sure.

But what if sewer service stops and no one is there to remove the septic tank? You need to have a system in place to reuse the waste of your family with composts in the garden, for example - or transport it elsewhere so that it's not in your living space.

The Best Supplies for Off the Grid Living

When you go off the grid, you're going to need supplies. If you decide to go with solar power, you'll need a solar kit. Many of these are fairly self explanatory and you can install them yourself.

You can buy a kit that includes a varied number of solar panels. You can also purchase additional panels separately. Pay attention to the wattage of the panels.

A good choice would be a kit that offers at least 1600 watts. You'll also need to make sure that the kit you choose has the connectors as well as the solar cable and battery cable.

Once you install your solar kit, you'll be able to withdraw from public electricity. You'll also want to get a water purifier. When you're on city water, the city takes care of making sure that the contaminants in the water are at a safe level for human consumption.

Once you're off the grid, you won't get the same purification process, so you'll have to do it yourself. You can get ones that attach right to your faucet. Look for ones that will let you know when you need to replace the filter and ones that only have to be replaced every three months or so.

Investing in a solar powered or a tankless water heating is also a good idea. Once you're off the grid, you'll still need a way to produce hot water. These kinds of tanks aren't as big as traditional water heaters so if you have to bug out to a smaller cabin, they're a great fit.

Plus, they only heat water that's needed. They don't continually heat like a regular hot water heater does. So they won't be a drain on your energy source. You also might want to invest in a wood burning cook stove.

Though these can be expensive, they can do two things for you. They can provide a way for you to stay warm in cold weather and a way for you to be able to cook. Some people choose to use a solar oven if they already have a heat source.

You might want to invest in a portable turbine charger that can keep your electronic devices powered. These devices can charge phones or music devices through the use of wind or solar power.

Going off the grid has both short term and long term options available for you. The solar ovens are an example of short term solutions you can afford quickly. Digging a well might take more planning, so map it out wisely and start acting on it as soon as possible!