

October 2022

Clothing and Bedding

In a place and time when our houses and cars are climate controlled and most of us have enough clothing that we have to “weed it out” periodically, this doesn’t seem like an area we need to worry about. However, it is one of the things that our area authorities have asked us to prepare and pay attention to. Stop and ask yourself the following questions:

1. If we had no air conditioning what clothing do I have that would help me stay cool in the heat of summer?
2. If we had no electricity or natural gas, what do I have in my wardrobe that I could wear and care for easily that would help me endure the cold of winter?
3. Are my clothes adequate and appropriate to work outside a lot?
4. Does my family have enough bedding and blankets to stay warm while they sleep even in freezing temperatures?
5. If we could not buy clothing for a year or more, do each of our family members have clothing to last and fit for a year ahead?

Things You Don’t Think of Until You Are There

A few years ago I spent a month in China working with a factory. The government did not provide power to heat the factories or other public buildings, and despite the fact that the

climate was warmer than it is here, it was cold. I dresses in layers and wore a coat, hat, and gloves all day. I was able to stay warm enough I thought, but I noticed the effects of my body constantly having to pay attention to staying warm. I felt tense and rigid in all the layers. I also noticed that factory workers, although provided with coats, hats, and gloves, were never completely warm. The children were bundled up so tightly to go to school that their mobility was seriously impaired. I was able to go to a warm hotel at night, but I can only imagine how difficult this situation might be if it went on for months with no reprieve. It was difficult to dress in multiple layers every day. It takes more and thicker clothing than I have ever needed at home. I needed thermal undergarments and heavy sweaters as well as long sleeved tees and turtle necks, not to mention layers of socks, gloves, scarves, and a good hat. This experience has made me realize just how unprepared we are to live in the cold day after day if our homes, schools, and work places are not well heated.

Because of the war in Ukraine, many people in Europe, especially the colder countries, are already feeling the cold caused by lack of fuel. It is predicted that people will die of cold this winter. It was just announced that the Middle East will be producing less fuel to sell. We can expect fuel shortages here too. While you may have plans for how to heat and cool your home if we lose power and gas, clothing and bedding are the first line of defense and worth preparing.

Layers are Key

Having clothing and bedding that you can layer is the key to a changing climate and temperature. In the summer you can take off layers to stay cool, and in the winter you can add layers. Ideally you would have clothes that wick moisture away from your body and keep you dry. Sheets under blankets can help with this too. Temperature is always harder to maintain if clothing or bedding next to your skin is damp or wet.

Nowadays it can be difficult to find clothing that will last and is not just made of thin fabrics. There is a saying, “Function over form.” While I have always maintained that even though function is most important you can usually have both, I am not so sure this applies always to clothing in an emergency. Most clothing now is made for style or “form” and it is not adequate for emergency conditions.

Heat Stroke and Hypothermia

Heat stroke and hypothermia are real. People can die of either one of these conditions if they are not cared for and treated. Both conditions cause people to become tired and lethargic. Those experiencing them often require others to recognize the problem and help.

Heat stroke happens most often when people are in the hot sun and especially when they are not hydrated. However, when your body is at temperatures in the 90s and above for extended periods of time it can also occur more gradually. Having cotton or other natural fiber clothing that can breathe will help you avoid this. Sometimes it is a good idea to even dampen your clothing so that evaporation cools you. In Egypt people will sometimes even dampen or wet a sheet and put it over them at night to cool off for sleeping. It is also vital to make sure that the person who is approaching or experiencing heat stroke is well hydrated.

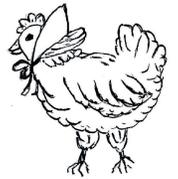
Hypothermia happens when body temperature drops too low. A person starting into hypothermia will often get goose bumps and shiver. If this goes on long the body will have difficulty creating its own heat. A person who has this condition needs to be heated externally and it is helpful to give them warm soup or a drink to heat them internally. Attention needs to be paid to making sure their clothing is dry and adequate to keep them warm once their body temperature is restored.

If we lose our ability to have our homes and public buildings climate controlled for any reason, from natural disaster to supply shortages, it is vital that you have the ability to at least control your body temperature with clothing, and at night with bedding. Having a sleeping bag for an emergency may not always be the best answer unless you are “bugging out” for the simple fact that you don’t have the ability to add and remove layers. *A Mylar/thermal blanket for each family member is a good idea to have if you want to add that to your emergency supplies.

Got a Hat?

Do you have a good summer hat to shade you from the sun? Do you have a good winter hat to keep you warm in the cold? These were essentials in days gone by. They may still become essentials in times of crisis or trouble. Now, while it is still relatively easy to buy them, make sure that everyone in your family has a summer and a winter hat!

Notes from Red Hen



Dear Speckle,

Thank heaven for feathers! Yesterday the farmer’s wife hung clothes out on the line. So many clothes to wash! I still think that aprons and bonnets are a good idea for staying clean and keeping the sun off. You know, aprons and things would cut down on the laundry too wouldn’t they? I guess I think the people of the past had the right idea. I am glad chicken change is not so complicated.

*— Your Faithful Cousin,
Red*