



THE MEDICAL CLINIC

Right, so you have been designated the "Medical Officer/Doc/Medic" for your group's retreat/BOL and you need to set up a "clinic area" to deal with any, but hopefully not too many, patients. If you are new to this task, it can be overwhelming. The following article leverages my experiences dealing with outdoor concerts and multi-day events, to come up with a basic list of things to make your clinic function efficiently.

Shelter

Depending on your situation, and the type of collapse that we may face, you must have a designated shelter capable of treating multiple patients. This could be converting a room in your home into a treatment facility, or having a designated tent for your Bug Out Location (BOL).

If you are using your home, your treatment facility should be located close to running water, and a means to sterilize medical equipment. A formal dining room would be an ideal place for a treatment facility, since it is close to your kitchen (running water and stove to sanitize medical equipment), and is usually its own room which can provide privacy. Additionally, since your kitchen and living areas will be hub for other daily activities, you will usually have someone to monitor the ill and injured. Other areas inside your home include a room that is close to a bathroom, or converting your "man cave" or basement into a full-fledged treatment and isolation level of your home.

In a Bug Out situation, you should have a facility that provides protection from the elements and can be heated if necessary. A tent or canopy can be used here, and depending on which route you take, can be easily packed into the back of a vehicle. Even if you decided to shelter in your home, the tent can be used as an outside containment area. This containment area can be used to screen individuals before you allow them into your home during a pandemic event.

A 10 x 10 shelter can be used to house one serious patient and bed, and can contain your medical supplies.

A 12 x 12 shelter can house two serious patients and beds, in addition to your medical supplies.

You should also think "outside the box" when designing a portable or Bug Out medical clinic; I have been planning a horse float based clinic, which can hold two to four stretchers in the main part, and has an add on awning which can hold an additional two stretcher patients and the triage and minor treatment area.

Shelter Floor

Regardless of which route you take, the floor of your facility needs to be as clean as possible. If using a tent, some have integrated floors, while some will need tarpaulins (tarps) or groundsheets. If converting a room in your home, place tarps on carpeted areas; wood, vinyl, and tile floors can be cleaned using normal cleaning methods. You do not want liquids (blood, feces, or urine) to be absorbed by your carpet as these fluids will lead to contamination of other supplies and provide the grounds for additional illnesses.

Lighting

Try to keep the facility as well lit as possible, using day light white (not the warm white) bulbs or LED lamps. In a crunch or Bug Out situation, headlamps can be of some use, but it is better if you have a well-lit area so you can fully assess your patient. Keep in mind that lighting requires power, so you will need a battery bank

or generator power to light your facility. In a survival situation, light discipline may also be important. Light discipline is a military term used to identify the obvious need for light, but limiting others from seeing your light. If you are using a tent, have walls that will block the light from being seen from the outside. If you are in a home, cover your windows so people passing by cannot see the light in the room. This is important for any survival situation, and is not only relevant for your medical facility.

Running Water / Hot Water

There are many reasons to have a safe water supply in your medical facility. Your water supply can range from using public water (if operational), a container over a bowl as an improvised sink, a camp kitchen unit, or transporting filtered water to your medical facility. Hot water is another necessity. Have a means to sanitize water by boiling it. If you are Bugging In, a **propane stove** can provide quick access to hot water; you must stock up propane. If you are Bugging Out, a **Kelly Kettle** is a great product that burns any dry fuel. Or, you can use a **solar camping shower** or **solar stove** to heat water. If your budget allows, **Coleman** makes a great propane hot water on demand system; again you will need to store propane.

Clean and Dry Supply Area

You should have a way of organizing your supplies, which can also ensure they remain clean and dry. Plastic roller boxes are great options, or you can go with a surplus military desk / medical chest. Also have a table or cart that is close by that can house dressing materials, medications, and other supplies that you will need. If your budget allows get a cart for medical purposes; it can be rolled between different treatment areas.

In addition to your standard medical supplies, have a supply of clean linens and towels which are dedicated for medical purposes. Clean linens provide many different purposes, and include sheets for beds and stretchers, comforters to keep patients warm, and towels which can be used to clean up spills, urine, and feces. Whenever using linens and towels for medical purposes, ensure they are cleaned in hot water, and are not laundered with general use linens and towels. Additionally, we recommend washing them with bleach in order to sanitize; we recommend having white linens and towels.

Bulk Medical Supplies and Specialty Equipment

Most of us already have a Personal Medical Kit (PMK) which is carried by each person. However, during an extended grid-down scenario, these supplies will be exhausted fairly quickly. We cover this topic more in depth in our **SHTF Medical Kits** handout.

We also recommend reading our **Suturing Introduction** and **Airway Management** articles for advanced medical supplies.

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To Sterilize A Surface Using Bleach

1. Mix 3/4 cup of bleach with 1 gallon of warm water.
2. Wearing rubber gloves and using a clean rag or sponge, wipe down the surface area with the bleach solution.
3. Let the area sit for 10 minutes before rinsing with clean water and a clean sponge or rag. Let the surface air dry.

WARNING:

Bleach that is 6 months old loses potency and should not be used.

NEVER mix bleach with ammonia.

Remove bleach from skin and eyes by washing with lots of water.

If bleach is ingested, do NOT induce vomiting. Contact your local emergency number. Strong concentrations may cause serious side effects that require medical help.



Medication Storage

Have a plan for securing your medications. Any stock-piled medications become a valuable resource during a collapse. All medications should be kept locked up to stop children from accessing them, and will also deter theft (hopefully theft is not an issue). Additionally, ensure your medications are protected from water and heat sources.

Rubbish Bins

Rubbish, or trash, bins should be located in close proximity to your medical facility. Preferably, your rubbish bins have a swing lid or foot operated lid, so you do not have to touch the lid. Touching your lids is a contamination issue.

In addition to your rubbish bins, stock up on **biohazard bags**, and general waste bags. You should burn your biohazard bags to decrease the possibility of insects and rodents from accessing these harmful materials, as they may transfer these unsafe materials back into your home / retreat; think the "Black Death". If you are unable to burn your trash, double bag and bury it away from water sources, and living and eating areas.

Beds and Cots

In addition to your medical supplies and tools, ensure you have the necessary equipment needed to provide comfort to your patients, as well as allow you to properly treat your patients. This starts with something for your patient to lie on. If you remain in your home, move a bed to your treatment facility, or use a **folding rollaway bed** or **camp cot**. If you are at a Bug Out location, have a cot or build one. Remember some patients may need to be propped up, especially cardiac or respiratory medical patients. Any chest trauma patients will find it easier if they are propped up. Cots can be used at either location, and provide a lot of capability; even in your home.

Additionally, you may want to keep pregnancy pillows or wedges to assist in positioning your patients, or designate a set of pillows for this purpose. Again, keep these separate from general use bedding, and sanitize with bleach.

Paperwork

Documenting your patient's history is an important task; you never know if/when you may be able to transfer your patient to a real medical facility, or when a doctor may wander upon our retreat. Keep a folder with patient reports and charts for ongoing assessments. Keeping records will assist in deciding if your patient is getting better or worse.

If you are part of a group, it may be of use to get your retreat members to fill in a "medical declaration" sheet which is filed in the medical clinic so you can get an idea of the likely issues you could face in your new role, it makes it easier if you have this info on hand, especially allergies to medications. Please review our forms that we have created for this purpose:

a. Medical History Form – To be filled out now, before an event. Provides the foundation for a basic medical record for family and group members. Keep a filled out copy in your Triage area.

b. Evaluate the Casualty Matrix – Our take on the U.S. Army's evaluation process. Print off, and keep a copy in each individual's Personal Medical Kit (PMK).

c. First Aid Evaluation Form and Vitals Tracker – Our take on a First Aid form, use with the Evaluate the Casualty Matrix. Print off, and keep a copy in each individual's PMK. Also keep several copies in your Triage area.

Medical Facility Layout

When setting up your medical facility (see examples on page 3), there are some key considerations which will provide more efficiency and decrease chaos.

Triage and Waiting Area

You should designate a triage and waiting area and keep as many people out of the main treatment area, so they do not get in your way (as they will). One general rule to establish for your triage area is: Only one support person per patient; the rest can wait outside. Your triage area is for a quick assessment and basic treatment (what we call "plasters and Paracetamol"); anything beyond that goes further into the clinic.

If you are not familiar with diagnosing patient's conditions, then an area with several medical reference books near the Triage area would be a good idea, and having an able sensible assistant, or two, would also be a great option.

Your medical records and forms should be located in the Triage / Waiting area. Additionally, any supplies and medications to treat minor medical injuries / illnesses should be located here, preferably in a bin or plastic roller box. It is recommended any person that gets an injury, even a minor cut, visit the Triage Area to properly bandage wounds so that they do not become infected.

Treatment Area

Your treatment area is where you will conduct any surgical procedures, and possibly where your patients will remain throughout their duration. Ideally, your Treatment Area is separate from your long-term care area, but if you have limited space both can be co-located. Located inside your treatment area are your advance medical equipment (airway management, IV administration, suturing, surgical instruments, etc.). You do not need to search for much needed supplies and equipment when you need them. Have separate bins and plastic roller boxes which contain these supplies.

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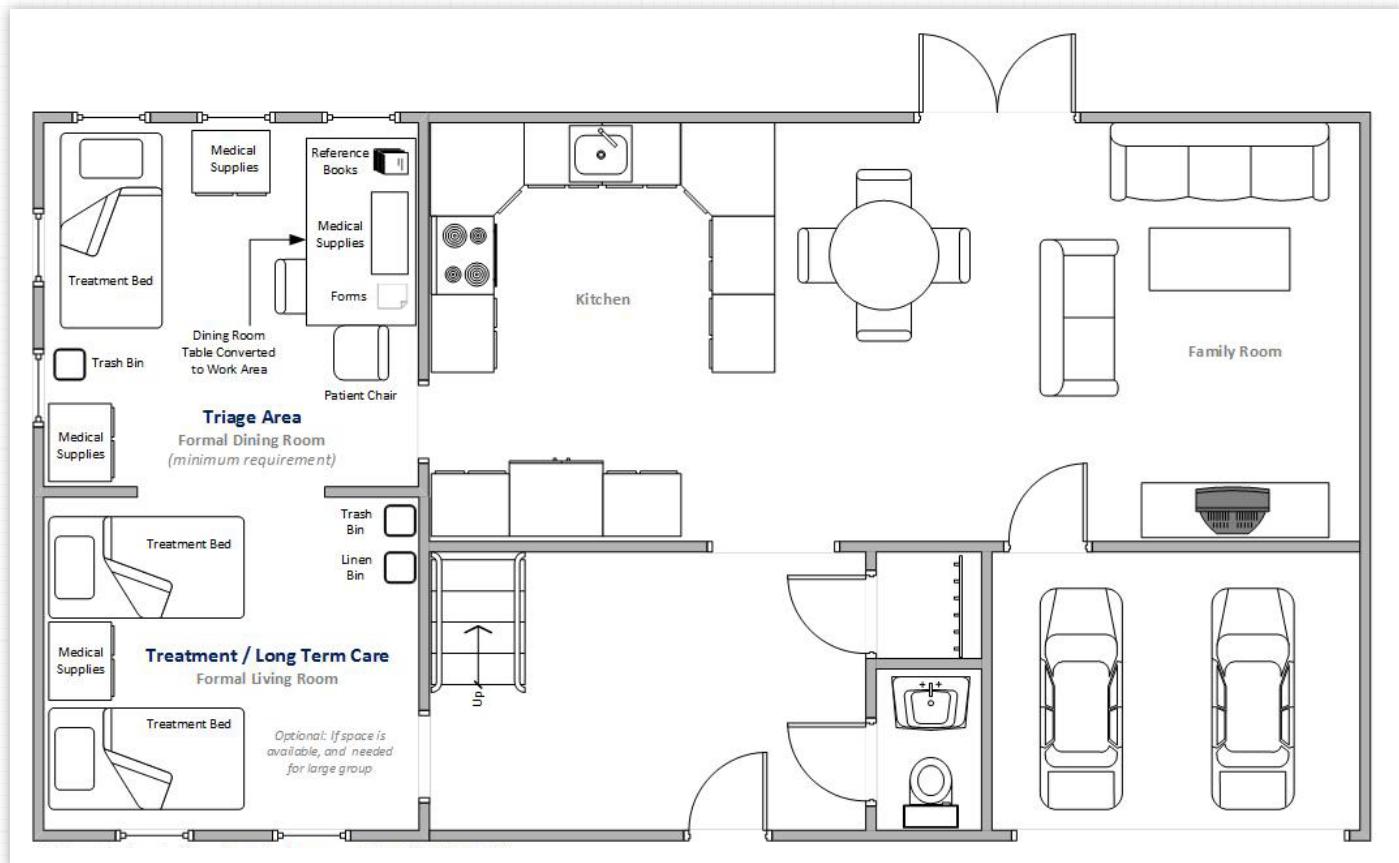
WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN THE SHOOTING BEGINS

Record activities

Green DIY energy


Figure 1. Home Medical Clinic

Formal Dining Room / Living Room Conversion


Figure 2. Tent Medical Clinics

Examples for Common Canopy Sizes

