

Live in your Vehicle, Temporarily!

In an emergency or disaster, your car, truck, or van makes a dandy temporary shelter. The interior of a vehicle is much more comfortable than a tent. It has interior lights. It has a good radio. It has soft seats for sleeping. The doors are watertight and they lock. The cigarette lighter could start a fire if needed. There's a separate storage area in the trunk or behind the seats. In a pinch, you could have heat or air conditioning for a while (until the gasoline ran out). Ideal?

Not quite ideal. There's no water. There's no stove. There's no potty.

Water: A dozen 2-liter bottles of water in the trunk will last 2 adults for 3 days. You can heat water to pasteurize more on a small propane or Sterno stove.

Stove: A small propane stove, using 1-lb. green metal propane cylinders, is big enough to cook on or to warm water for pasteurizing, cooking, or washing.

Potty: Sorry, you'll have to go potty elsewhere. Carry a small shovel and find a bushy area away from water. Or, my wife insists, find a bathroom!

If you had to live in your vehicle for a few days, where's the best place? A hospital parking lot is good, and most hospitals have a dining area and bathrooms. A Wal-Mart parking lot works, and they have bathrooms and some ready-to-eat food. A shopping center parking lot might work, or a library parking lot, or, with permission, parking by the police station. I like small airports with pilot lounges. Go somewhere else in the daytime. Libraries and museums are good. If people notice you're staying at night or give you a hassle, move on.

A shower may be possible at a gym, a truck stop, or a YMCA. Laundromats have clothes washers and dryers. You don't need to *look* like you're sleeping in your car! If you have a laptop with wi-fi, businesses and motels have free wi-fi. Free wi-fi plus Skype means you have an almost free phone.

During an emergency many of these amenities may disappear. But living in your vehicle may be more comfortable and safer than life in a communal shelter.

I sleep in my truck on long trips, and I cook dinner on the tailgate. I've stayed in a gravel pit along the Alaska Highway, slept by a river in Illinois, and camped in my car in a Nevada desert. A vehicle makes a great emergency shelter! And you can take it with you!