

## A Long-Term Survival Guide – A Quick Guide To Bugout Aircraft:

If you live in or near a major city, then having a bugout plan must be part of your long-term survival strategy, as most large population centers will probably become deathtraps in any (realistic) large scale, long-term disaster scenario. If you have an interest in flying, then you may want to consider an ultralight aircraft, as part of your escape plan.



An ultralight could be one way to flee a large population center, in a major crisis.

The basic idea is to have one of these tiny aircraft stored at home, and to use it to travel to your planned retreat area, if a major crisis makes an evacuation necessary. This idea has several advantages, and several drawbacks, so you need to carefully think through all of the pros and cons, before deciding if it might fit into your survival planning.



Using a small plane to flee the collapse of civilization, and reach a safe retreat, is an appealing idea.

There are many types of modern ultralights on the market, so first let's take a quick look at some of the basic designs that are available:



Paramotor: This is a parasail parachute, with a motorized harness, and optional landing gear.



Helicopter: There are several kinds of tiny helicopters and gyrocopters, both open cockpit and enclosed.



The smallest helicopter designs are now not much larger than the pilot.





Small helicopters can be had in both one-man, and two-man versions.



Developers are constantly working on new designs, like this ultralight helicopter prototype.



Ultralight helicopters can also be outfitted with pontoons, for amphibious use.



Fixed Wing Aircraft: Nowadays there are miniature versions of aircraft, like this tiny French Cricket.



Float Planes: Many ultralights can be turned into little float planes, with the addition of optional pontoons.



Ultralights can land in very short clearings, but with pontoons, any body of water can be your landing strip.





With a float plane you can follow a river or coastline, and always have a safe place to land.

The advantages of being able to fly to your retreat area during a crisis are fairly obvious, including avoiding traffic jams, roadblocks, checkpoints, rioters or ambushers, flying over obstacles (such as bridges washed away by flooded rivers, or roads buried by landslides), and being able to travel quickly to your chosen destination in a straight line.



If you have stored fuel, small planes may be the safest way to travel, in a long-term crisis.

These advantages make the idea of having a bugout aircraft very appealing, but you have to take a long hard look at all of the disadvantages as well, before deciding if an air escape will realistically fit into your evacuation plans.

The biggest problem with all light aircraft is that bad weather and small planes don't mix. Severe weather could keep you grounded for days, so an ultralight aircraft would not be the best choice for any hurricane evacuation scenarios.



This paramotor can be worn like a backpack, or a larger version can be equipped with landing gear.

I like paramotors because they are the most compact type of ultralight aircraft, and can be stored in your garage, van, or truck; some will even fit in the trunks of most full-size cars. Paramotors are launched by laying the chute out, then running or rolling forward to get the sail airborne. This is nearly impossible to do in the rain, as the chute becomes wet and heavy. Windy conditions also make self-launching extremely difficult, so the main question is, could you afford to wait for favorable conditions in a crisis?



Some paramotor designs use a fabric fixed-wing design, which take longer to assemble before flights, but which are also easier to launch, under less than ideal conditions.



This gyrocopter is a simple open framework design; operational, but exposed.



Small helicopters range from simple, exposed frames with a minimum of controls, to fully enclosed cockpits with all of the navigation aids found in larger versions. These little choppers can take off and land in nearly any small clearing, and can also be equipped with pontoons, for amphibious use.

Helicopters are easier to launch in windy or rainy conditions than paramotors, for those times when the weather is not bad enough to keep you grounded. An enclosed cockpit is preferable; it makes flying much more comfortable in wet or cold conditions.



The Cricket is a fully functional miniature fixed-wing plane that can take off and land in small clearings.

Possible delays from bad weather are only one factor to consider when thinking about evacuating by ultralight. Here are some others: Most ultralights will only carry one or two people, so this would not be a good tactic for large groups, unless you plan to acquire a whole fleet of aircraft. You can only carry a small amount of basic equipment and supplies in an ultralight, so you can't plan on taking more than a bugout pack and survival kit. This means that the best strategy will be to use your aircraft to reach a safe retreat site, where you have already cached or stored the bulk of your equipment and supplies.



The cricket is small enough to car-top, and light enough to carry; it weighs less than most pilots.

Another potential problem involves darkness. It is easy to drive a car at night, and two or more people can drive and sleep in shifts, keeping a ground vehicle moving for days at a time, if needed. But flying at night can be very dangerous, so you will mainly be limited to air travel during daylight hours.

You should be able to reach most locations in one full day of flying, but what do you do if you need to evacuate in the middle of the night? Fuel is still another consideration. You should store enough fuel with your aircraft to reach your destination, if possible.

If you might need to make refueling stops, then more fuel should be cached along your planned evacuation route, in locations that will be easy to locate from the air (using landmarks), and easy to land at, but also as secure as possible, because the danger of theft of your plane in a crisis should be an additional worry.

Once you have addressed these potential problems, you will know if a bugout aircraft fits in with your survival plans. Just remember that any plan can fall apart due to circumstances beyond your control, so stay mentally flexible, and always develop one or more workable backup plans as well, in case your primary plan goes awry.



Before deciding that a bugout aircraft will work for you, carefully consider all the potential problems.

One last idea: Whether or not you plan to travel to your retreat in a small plane, an ultralight aircraft, and a good supply of stored, stabilized fuel, would be a useful item to have at the retreat site, if you can afford it. Travel in any long-term crisis will be extremely dangerous, due to the constant danger of ambush by desperate people. The safest way to travel, if you must get somewhere important, will be to fly there.

An ultralight is the cheapest way to own your own plane, as the cost of the aircraft, maintenance and spare parts, and the amount of fuel required will all be significantly less than with any normal-sized small plane.

Of course, the cost of a bugout aircraft, and its possible utility, should be weighed carefully against the advantages of having the additional equipment and supplies that you could buy with the same amount of money, but the idea is appealing.