

Defensive Strategies



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Since the last article I wrote for *Women & Guns*, the tail of Hurricane Irene came through my state, and yesterday we had what might be our first ever October nor'easter (a snow-laden storm with high winds). Both caused tremendous damage. The rain and winds of Irene caused a local power outage of—we were lucky—less than a day. Heavy, wet snow in October on the trees that still had most of their leaves caused a massive number of downed branches that took out power lines for, again we were lucky, less than a day. Other people nearby were not so lucky, and had to experience life without electricity for days. Though the snow arrived two days before Halloween, cleanup took so long that Halloween had to be postponed in Massachusetts' second biggest city, Worcester.

Thoughts on Emergencies

I can't fault the early warning systems that were in place for both storms. I remember when only the most general weather reports could be had. Now the forecasters can be quite precise about the timing, track, and strength of many major weather events long before they arrive. Just in case some busy people hadn't heard that our first-ever October nor'easter was coming, one of my state's major roadways had signs up—the signs that usually tell you about road work ahead—saying "STORM COMING BE PREPARED."

With all this knowledge about what is coming, weather-wise, there's no excuse not to be prepared. But no matter how prepared you think you are, there is always something more that you might do. For Irene, expecting perhaps days without power, my husband and I got a big ice chest and filled it with bagged ice from the store, so we could manage food from the refrigerator and freezer for a longer period. For 6 to 12 inches of snow before Halloween, we knew the emergency supplies unused during Irene would see us through.

John Farnam, one of my earliest teachers, and a true guru not just of the gun but many aspects of

self-protection, talks endlessly about the need to be self-reliant. That's sometimes a hard sell in our current culture which emphasizes inter-dependence among people. In normal times, it is reasonable to expect the firefighters to be there to help you if you have a fire, the police to show up some time after you call them, and friends to be available to share the vicissitudes of life. But in an emergency, as Farnam says, "You will always be your own first responder," and unless you are fully prepared and trained for that, it won't be pretty.

Other Farnam words of wisdom teach that you must be adequately, personally prepared, all the time, not just when a disaster is known to be looming. He, being ex-military, says, "It is always a 'come-as-you-are' war!" Yours probably won't be a war, but your emergency might come in the middle of the night, without warning—think tornados or earthquakes.

Farnam is a big proponent not just of being prepared with guns, ammo, and relevant training for them. He also advocates other kinds of preparedness, including medical. "Reasonably foreseeable security and medical emergencies need to be anticipated beforehand

and planned for. Every adult in your family needs to be competently equipped, supplied, and trained.”

Being prepared for major emergencies means that you will undoubtedly be able to manage minor ones with ease. One of Farnam’s students, who took a class in handling gunshot wounds, started carrying an IBD (Israeli Battle Dressing) to stop bleeding in his car. He never encountered a gunshot victim needing first aid, but a child in his church cut his head badly, and was bleeding profusely. The church’s first aid kit, if they had one, was completely inadequate, and no other person there had any idea what to do. Head wounds are notoriously bloody, and the boy would have lost a lot of blood before an ambulance could arrive. Farnam’s student got his IBD, applied it as he has been trained, and the bleeding stopped, the child was OK, and the emergency room doctor who finally sewed up the scalp wound was impressed, not having seen an IBD before.

If that injured boy had been near you, would you have been able to do anything truly useful, other than call 911?

There is no substitute for preparation. Preparation always comes in three parts: equipment, training, and practice. If you are fully prepared for the worst to happen at any time, you will also be prepared for the more frequent, unexpected “little emergencies” that life will throw at you.

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Sig P239 Rainbow Continued from Page 19

a Sig P220 with the same control configuration and had never had a problem with it, I decided to see what might be different about the P239. At home with the two guns side by side I discovered that the lever on the P239 was larger and curved to fit flush against the frame. While I suppose this makes that control lever more carry friendly, it took a bit of work to get to where I could consistently lock the gun open during clearance.

After the promising performance at the ladies shoot, I ran a series of

pronounced the more rounds we ran through it. A tap against something solid, such as the shooting bench, would release the locked-back slide, too. It is possible the locking lever on my sample wasn’t catching firmly enough, which could explain our other issues with it as well.

Though recoil was definitely noticeable in a small gun chambered for .40 S&W, the fact that the slide was weighted more heavily than the frame made it easy to bring the gun back in line for follow-up shots. It handled well in one-handed shooting with either dominant or non-dominant



Author shoots the P239 at 25 yards for accuracy. Photo by Tom Walls.

accuracy tests with various carry loads at 25 yards and at 10 yards. For the 25-yard test, the shooter was seated with the gun braced on a soft rest. The 10-yard test was with the shooter freestanding. Both tests were performed with the gun in single action mode for consistency. The results are presented in Table 1, Page 19.

The P239 accepted all types of ammunition we tried and ran without malfunction. Regardless of ammunition type, though, it often failed to lock back on the last round. This issue grew more

hand.

The Sig P239 is a well made, reliable and accurate carry-sized gun. The rainbow titanium finish makes a stylish statement that tools, even serious self-defense tools, can be beautiful. If the double/single-action type of gun is not your preference, the same model can be had with a double-action-only DAK® trigger, just not in the rainbow finish. Or, if you prefer a more subdued look, it can also be had in more traditional gun finishes. It’s all about choices.

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