

Surviving the Apocalypse in the New River Valley: A Guide

Tim Asher

Dedicated to Erwin Smith
His bravery bought us time.
His memory lives on through us.

This Booklet Belongs to

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Although if you're actually reading this in the middle of a Zombie Apocalypse,
go ahead and copy it all you want. Give it to your friends, your family.
Humanity's survival probably outweighs my copyright claim.
Good luck!

Table of Contents

The Zombie Threat	2	Growing Food	11
The Silver Virus	2	Weapons	12
Silvers	2	Obtaining Weapons	12
General Characteristics	2	Using Weapons	12
Alpha Silvers	3	Vehicles	12
Follower Silvers	3	Finding Vehicles	12
How to Spot Silvers	3	Jump Starting a Vehicle	13
How to Evade Silvers	3	Siphoning Gas	13
How to Delay Virus Spread	4	Using a Vehicle Strategically	13
How to Kill Silvers	4		
		New River Valley Map	14
Other Humans	5		
Friend or Foe?	5		
Friends Pre-Pandemic	5		
New Faces	5		
How to Make Friends	5		
How to Spot an Enemy	5		
Alliances	6		
Forming an Alliance	6		
Communication	6		
<i>Radio</i>	6		
<i>Morse Code</i>	6		
Morse Code Translator	7		
New River Valley Survival	8		
Survival Primer: What's Important?	8		
Shelter	8		
Using Existing Buildings	8		
Creating Your Own Shelter	9		
Water	9		
Finding a Water Source	9		
<i>Bottled Water</i>	10		
<i>Rivers, Streams, etc.</i>	10		
Purifying Water	10		
<i>Boiling Water</i>	10		
<i>Purifying with Iodine</i>	10		
Storing Water	10		
Food	11		
Looting Stores	11		
Hunting	11		

The Zombie Threat

The Silver Virus

The threat we face in this apocalypse is not a typical Hollywood zombie. In fact, if you don't know what a typical Hollywood zombie is, then you're probably in a better position to learn how to counter them than most. That is, you don't have false perceptions of what these zombies are capable of, so you have a clean slate on which to build your knowledge.

The "zombies" we face are a symptom of the Silver Virus. The origin of the Silver Virus is unknown, but it is clear that it turns any living being, including humans, dogs, and insects, into a metallic, zombie-like version of itself whose only goal seems to be attacking other living beings. The CDC has learned very little about the virus, but it has discovered there are two ways to transmit the virus.

The Silver Virus is transmitted when an infected entity, known as a "Silver," bites or scratches another being. The transmission can only be completed if skin is broken.

This means the virus is neither airborne nor waterborne, so masks are not required and water is safe to drink



Image of metallic blood that flows through "Silvers"

Silvers

Before you learn how to fight and survive in this new world, you must first understand the threat we face. Silvers are a symptom of the Silver Virus. Although not confirmed, the prevailing theory is that the Silver Virus enters a host - any living being - and slowly transforms the host into its Silver form, which then becomes a vessel for transmission by attacking other living beings.

There are two types of Silvers: Alphas and Followers. You can learn specific information about each on page 3. Followers are the more common type you will encounter as one Alpha controls all followers within an approximately 10-mile radius. This means that you can expect one to two Alphas for each city or town in the New River Valley.

General Characteristics

All Silvers can be characterized by the following common traits:

- **Metallic skin:** spreads from the bite or scratch location to cover all natural skin or fur. Can make Silvers easy to spot, but also protects them from many weapons.
- **Highly intelligent:** Silvers have been known to organize raids with carefully planned attack strategies on survivors.
- **Weakness to light:** Silvers will not go outside during a sunny day, and shining any bright light at them will cause a disorienting effect.

Alpha Silvers

Alpha Silvers have the same general characteristics as all Silvers, with a few key distinctions:

- *One Alpha in a 10-mile radius:* Alphas are rare and control all Follower Silvers in their range, so they are also geographically spread out.
- *Large and powerful:* Alphas are much larger than typical Silvers and are very difficult to fight, in part because there will be a higher density of Follower Silvers close to the Alpha.

Follower Silvers

Follower Silvers operate within a hive mind: they follow the orders of the Alpha, but they also seem to have the ability to communicate with each other telepathically. Therefore, if you encounter and fight one Follower, there will likely be others nearby who will show up to help their comrade.

How to Spot Silvers

As mentioned before, a Silver's metallic skin makes identification fairly easy for fully-turned Silvers. However, some recently bitten or scratched beings may be partially connected to the Silver hive mind, so you need to be vigilant in inspecting unknown parties. Follow these steps to be safe:

1. *Halt Unknown Party:* if needed, draw a weapon on the suspect to conduct a search.

2. *Ask if Bitten or Scratched:* if the suspect confesses to exposure, there is no need for a search. You have found a Silver.

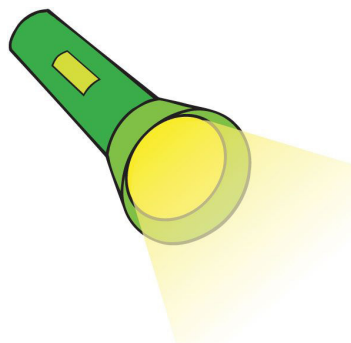
3. *Conduct a Search:* thoroughly search the suspect. If they have been bitten or scratched, the surrounding skin will be metallic.

If you find a partially turned Silver, you have to act fast. As mentioned, even a partially turned Silver may be connected to the hive mind, so other Silvers may be nearby. Unfortunately, there is no known cure for the Silver Virus. However, there are ways to slow down the spread or stop the spread. If you find yourself in this situation, proceed to **How to Delay Virus Spread** (p. 4).

How to Evade Silvers

There are a few things you can do to avoid an encounter with a Silver:

- *Only venture outside during daytime.* Silvers become disoriented in sunlight, so it should be safe to go outside during the day.
- *Avoid dark areas (indoor and outdoor).* Even during the day, there may be areas where Silvers are active. Be mindful of the light levels.



Light from a flashlight can disorient or freeze silvers. If you see a Silver, use this to your advantage to hide or escape.

How to Delay Virus Spread

If you or someone you know is bitten or scratched, remain calm. The closer the virus gets to the brain, the more connected an individual becomes to the Silver hive mind. However, it is possible to slow down the spread or even stop it before you may have to consider death.

If the bite or scratch is on the affected individual's torso, neck, or head, there is no way to stop the spread. In this case, it may be beneficial to slow the spread before putting down the individual for the group's protection.

To slow down the spread, apply electricity to affected area:

1. *Obtain a battery* or other power source, at least 9V.
2. *Obtain two wires* or gator clips connected to conductive wires. These are the wires you would use to jump start a car. See: **Jump Starting a Vehicle** (p. 13)
3. *Connect one end of both wires to opposite ends of battery.*
4. *Connect the other end of one wire to the affected area.* It doesn't matter which wire you connect first.
5. *Connect second wire to affected area.* This will complete the circuit and temporarily slow the virus spread.

If the bite or scratch is on an arm or leg, amputation will stop the spread entirely. Obviously, this option does not sound appealing. However, you must weigh it against turning into a Silver.

To amputate a limb, follow these steps:

1. *Obtain a tourniquet.* This can be an elastic strip, a belt, or even a strip of cloth.
2. *Obtain gauze and bandages.* Lots of gauze and bandages.
3. *Obtain a large, sharp knife or saw.* See: **Obtaining Weapons** (p. 12)
4. *Wrap tourniquet tightly around limb.* Place it above where you plan to cut.
5. *Cut limb below tourniquet.* Immediately apply bandages.

How to Kill Silvers

At some point, you will encounter a Silver and be unable to escape. Therefore, you should know how to fight a Silver.

A Silver's weak spot is its brain. The virus turns the brain into something resembling a Central Processing Unit, and the rest of the body cannot function without it.

You will need a high-powered rifle to penetrate the Silver's armored skin. See: **Obtaining Weapons** (p. 12). To kill a Silver:

1. *Aim for the head.* Target the Silver's weak spot.
2. *Shoot.* A single well-placed round will stop the Silver.



Target the Silver's head. Any damage to the brain will kill the Silver.

Other Humans

Friend or Foe?

Other humans can be just as much of a threat as Silvers. Unfortunately, competition for resources brings out the worst in people. Therefore, it's important to learn how to distinguish between friendly and dangerous behavior.

Friends Pre-Pandemic

Any close friends you had before the pandemic are likely to remain that way, especially in these tough times. However, beware of people who you would have called friends, but did not consider yourself close with them. They may attempt to manipulate or use you for their gain. It is up to you whether you keep them around, but keep your guard up and remain cautious.

New Faces

If someone new approaches you, assume the worst. Keep your guard up and remain suspicious as they may have ulterior motives for approaching you. In any case, use your best judgement.

If you approach someone new first, assume they have read this booklet. Therefore, they may be thinking the same things I'm teaching you right now.

In either case, refer to the following two sections, **How to Make Friends** and **How to Spot an Enemy**, for advice on how to handle these situations.

How to Make Friends

Often, simply being yourself is a good way to make friends. However, considering the tense moment we find ourselves in, simply being yourself may not be the best strategy. Follow these tips to make new friends:

- *Be friendly.* This may seem obvious, but having a positive, amicable attitude is one of the best ways to make a good impression on a potential ally.
- *Show strength.* While maintaining your friendly attitude, don't be afraid to show decisiveness and disagree with your potential ally. This will show them that they cannot take advantage of you and earn their respect.
- *Make sacrifices.* To be clear: I don't mean leave your friends behind for the sake of making a new ally. Instead, be prepared to yield to your potential ally to show them that you value their life.

How to Spot an Enemy

If you meet someone new, they may not be as friendly as they seem. Look for these signs of a potential enemy:

- *Constantly watching you and your friends.* This could simply be out of caution, but if someone is constantly sizing you up, they may be looking for weaknesses to exploit.

- *Hesitation to follow your decisions.* This is a sign of distrust. That said, don't assume someone is an enemy based on this behavior alone.
- *Snooping around.* Without a good reason, this behavior is highly suspicious. The potential enemy may be gathering information on you and your allies to relay to their allies.
- *Telling constant lies.* This may be hard to pick up on without high emotional intelligence, but if you suspect that someone consistently lies to you, they may be a potential enemy.
- *Share resources fairly.* If one group hoards resources, it will create anger among other groups and may divide the alliance.
- *Communicate effectively.* A breakdown in communication can lead to many other problems within the alliance.

Communication

Communication is key to survival. To maintain a strong alliance, it is important to be open with your friends about resources you know about and any intelligence you learn about your enemies. This section details long-range communication methods to share information with your friends and allies.

Radio

Radio is the obvious long-range communication device. Radio towers are likely to remain operational throughout the pandemic, so this is also a reliable way to communicate. To obtain radio sets, follow the instructions in the **Looting Stores** (p. 11) section, replacing food with radios.

Morse Code

This method of communication is significantly more advanced than radio use and requires a line of sight between the sender and recipient. However, it can be more covert than a radio since enemies are unlikely to understand the code. Use the code with flashlights or smoke signals, but beware that enemies may see the sender.

See next page for a Morse code translator.

Alliances

Making alliances in this new world can be paramount to survival. At this point, you already know how dangerous Silvers and unfriendly humans can be; therefore, organizing strong alliances with your friends, old and new, will give you an edge in outlasting your enemies.

Forming an Alliance

Once you identify your friends using the tips you learned in the previous section, you can begin to form an alliance. This may simply be a group of people who survive together, or it could be a network of two or more groups who agree to help each other for mutual benefit. In either case, follow these tips to ensure a strong alliance:

- *Agree on goals.* If your allies do not share the same vision as you, it may cause a rift in the future. Your goals could be simple or complex.

Morse Code Translator

International Morse Code

1. A dash is equal to three dots.
2. The space between parts of the same letter is equal to one dot.
3. The space between two letters is equal to three dots.
4. The space between two words is equal to seven dots.

A	• —	U	• • —
B	— • • •	V	• • • —
C	— • — •	W	• — —
D	— • •	X	— • • —
E	•	Y	— • — —
F	• • — •	Z	— — • •
G	— — •		
H	• • • •		
I	• •		
J	• — — —		
K	— • —	1	• — — — —
L	• — • •	2	• • — — —
M	— —	3	• • • — —
N	— •	4	• • • • —
O	— — —	5	• • • • •
P	• — — •	6	— • • • •
Q	— — • —	7	— — • • •
R	• — •	8	— — — • •
S	• • •	9	— — — — •
T	—	0	— — — — —

New River Valley Survival

Before continuing, you should know that this booklet is not meant as an in-depth survival guide. Rather, it is meant to give you tips and tricks to prolong your survival in a devastating apocalypse. Therefore, while I will give you some basic instructions and how-tos, I will not explain skills in-depth. If there is anything in this section that you do not quite understand how to do, I highly recommend looting a bookstore in search of an in-depth survival guide or similar book.

Survival Primer: What's Most Important?

Before we get into talking about what you need to survive, we first have to consider which of the topics we will cover are the most vital to your survival. Here are the topics we will cover over the next few pages:

- Shelter
- Water
- Food
- Weapons
- Vehicles

You are free to draw your own conclusions about which topic is the most important to your survival, and indeed the answer may depend on your situation: for example, you may already have food and water stockpiles, so you should focus on finding shelter above all. However, I will assume that at this point, you have nothing. Therefore, the following is my order in which you should find resources:

1. **Water.** You simply can't survive without water, and NRV weather can be harsh and hot.
2. **Weapons.** There are threats all around. It's necessary to be prepared.
3. **Food.** This could be interchanged with Shelter: both are about equally important. You need energy to survive.
4. **Shelter.** You'll need somewhere to safely sleep at night.
5. **Vehicles.** Most NRV towns have everything in walking distance, but a vehicle can help you escape in a flash.

You'll notice that this order is not the same as the order these topics appear in this booklet. That is because I didn't plan ahead well enough. In fact, I could change the order right now, but I believe some Silvers will come knocking at my door in a few hours at 11:59 pm, so I have a tight deadline to finish and publish this booklet.

Now, dear reader, continue reading and learning so that you, too, will know how to survive in this world.

Shelter

Using Existing Buildings

This strategy can be risky to set up since Silvers lurk in the dark, but using an actual building for shelter will offer more protection from enemies of both kinds. To use an existing building, follow these steps:

1. **Choose a building.** You'll want to find a building that offers a good vantage point of the surrounding area and will be hard for enemies to infiltrate.

2. **Clear the building.** As mentioned, Silvers may be lurking in the building you choose. Therefore, you and your squad will need to carefully clear every part of the building with flashlights out and weapons drawn.
3. **Set up defenses.** Think *Home Alone*, but more deadly. You don't want enemies sneaking into your home, so fortify the windows and doors and set up traps.
4. **Organize the rooms.** Decide where you and your group will sleep, where you will store food and water, and where you will keep your weapons.
4. **Set an early warning system.** Set up a wire along your perimeter that, when tripped, will make a loud noise. You can accomplish this with pots and pans or anything metal.
5. **Organize your space.** As before with an existing shelter, you need to define where you will sleep, where you will keep your food and water, and where you will keep your weapons.

Whether you're using existing shelter or creating your own, it's always a good idea to have someone on watch throughout the night in case anything slips past your perimeter. This is why alliances can be beneficial. Check out the **Other Humans** (p. 5) section for more information.

Creating Your Own Shelter

Living in the Wilderness can be a viable strategy since Silvers and other humans alike are less likely to venture out that far. However, it is also a clearly more complicated endeavor. Follow these steps to set up your own shelter:

1. **Obtain a tent.** If you can't find one, you can setup a makeshift tent or a lean to with a tarp and some branches.
2. **Find a camp location.** Since we are in the Blue Ridge Mountains, using a ridge for your camp is recommended since you will have a near full view of the surrounding area.
3. **Set a perimeter.** Before doing anything else, define the edge of your camp. Try to make sure the edge is not too far from the center in any direction. This is important for the next step.

Water

It should come as no surprise that water is an extremely important resource for you to have during this apocalypse. Summers in the NRV can be scorching, and winters can leave you dry and thirsty. Therefore, this section may be the most important of the entire survival portion of this booklet.

Finding a Water Source

Luckily, there are many sources of fresh water here in the New River Valley. Here are two of the easiest and most common ways to obtain water:

Bottled Water

This is a great option because the water is already purified and packaged for

you! To find bottled water, simply follow the steps in the **Looting Stores** (p. 11) section. If you choose to go with this option, you'll have to consider how you plan to transport the water. You should keep your hands free in case you encounter an enemy, so bringing a cart or motor vehicle on your store run will help greatly.

Streams, Rivers, etc.

Using the New River Valley's natural resources as a water source is another good option, especially if you set up your shelter near one of these sources. Since we are in the mountains, there are natural water sources within a short walk of just about wherever you find yourself. Further, every water source here is fresh water! If you have a choice, use running water instead of stagnant water.

Purifying Water

If you opt to go with natural sources of water, you'll want to purify your water to be sure you do not contract an illness. There are two predominant methods to purify water: boiling and iodine. Both methods have different procedures depending on the state of the water (cloudy or clear).

Boiling Water

Boiling water does not require you to loot a store for iodine, but you will need a campfire or other source of heat such as a stove.

For clear water:

1. *Boil water for 1 minute.*

2. *Let water cool.* Store in a clean container.

For cloudy water:

1. *Run water through a filter.* This can be a cloth, paper towel, coffee filter, or something with similar properties.
2. *Follow steps for clear water.*

Information courtesy of CDC.gov

Purifying with Iodine

Using iodine as a disinfectant is preferred if you are far from your shelter. Obviously, you will need iodine for this to work. You can follow the steps in **Looting Stores** (p. 11) to find iodine. Follow these steps to purify water using iodine:

1. *For clear water, add 5 drops for each liter of water. For cloudy water, add 10 drops.*
2. *Stir, then allow to sit for 30 minutes.*

Information courtesy of EPA.gov

Storing Water

Safely storing water is just as important as obtaining and purifying it because you do not want it to carry disease-causing bacteria or other microscopic creatures. Follow these tips to safely store your water:

- *Clean your containers when not in use.* Any standard dish soap with warm water should do the job.

- *Store your containers in a cool, dry place.* Water is wet, but you do not want its surroundings to be. Damp areas often harbor disease-causing organisms.

Food

Finding food is a very important part of surviving in this new world. You can expect to be moving and working constantly, so you should maintain a food stockpile to give yourself a reliable source of energy.

Looting Stores

It's finally here! I'm finally writing the section I've been referencing constantly. As indicated by how many times I've referenced this section, looting stores is an invaluable skill for many more applications than simply finding food. To loot a store, keep these tips in mind:

- *Make sure the store is clear.* As with finding shelter, enemies could lurk in any given store.
- *Bring transportation help.* Whether it's a cart, a vehicle, or other people tasked with carrying supplies, make sure you have a plan to transport your haul.
- *Have a list* of what you need and any substitutes. You want to be in and out of the store as fast as possible.

Hunting

Hunting is a good way to source food if you are living in the wilderness. The New River Valley has a rich ecosystem with lots

of animals to hunt for food. Here are some animals you can find in the area:

- Bears
- Deer
- Rabbits
- Ducks

While hunting, make sure you make as little noise as possible and stay alert of your surroundings. You can use a variety of weapons to hunt, and each specific animal may have a different weapon best suited to taking it down. Once you get a kill, quickly skin it, pick it up and take it back to your shelter. There, you should cook the meat as quickly as possible.

Growing Food

Growing food is a good way to be self-sufficient and minimize the risk of venturing outside your base. This is a complex subject that is best explored in a specialized book, but I will give you some tips to get yourself started:

- *Plan a plot.* Make sure the location you intend to grow has fertile soil and is big enough for the plants you intend to grow.
- *Choose a crop(s).* You want something that grows fairly quickly.
- *Remember to water your plants!* If you want to live this lifestyle, put as much effort as you can into keeping the plants healthy.

Weapons

Having a weapon is extremely important to your survival in a zombie apocalypse. Not only are Silvers a big threat that require adequate weapons to combat, other humans may also pose a threat. See: **Other Humans** (p. 5) for more information on that topic.

Obtaining Weapons

No matter what type of weapon you're looking for, you can likely find it somewhere in the New River Valley! Because there may not be weapon stores close to you, having a vehicle is handy for this task. Refer to **Finding Vehicles** to obtain a vehicle.

To find a weapon, follow these steps:

1. *Choose your weapon(s).* Before you go, make sure you know what you want. This way, you'll waste less time at the store.
2. *Scout for the proper store.* Not every weapon store will have what you need. Therefore, do what you can to make sure your target store has what you need.
3. *Follow the tips in Looting Stores* (p. 11).

Using Weapons

You should use your weapons sparingly to avoid ammo depletion or excessive wear from overuse. Therefore, you should consider the following criteria before using your weapon:

- *Is there a threat to myself or my friends?* If not, there should be no reason so use your weapon.
- *Can I safely escape without using my weapon?* It could be better to conserve your ammo and simply run.
- *If I do need to use a weapon, is there a way I can do it quietly?* Loud gunshots can attract nearby enemies. If possible, use a knife or sword.

Vehicles

Transportation is always useful, whether you need a quick getaway or something to transport goods or people with. The New River Valley is also fairly spread out, so if you wish to venture far from your shelter, you'll probably want a vehicle.

Finding Vehicles

Similar to obtaining weapons, whichever vehicle you want will be somewhere in the New River Valley! Follow these steps to find a vehicle suitable for your needs:

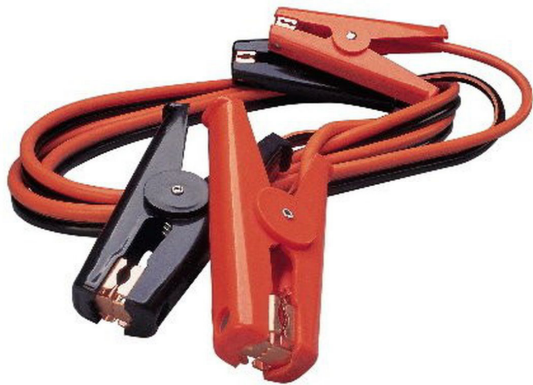
1. *Choose your vehicle(s).* Consider what you will need it for. Escape? Transportation?
2. *Explore your surroundings.* Because most of the population has been wiped out, there are vehicles just sitting around everywhere!
3. *If you see something you like, take it.* Unless it's clearly in use, its previous owner probably won't miss it.

4. *If you can't find what you need, look for dealerships.* They'll even have the keys so you don't have to spark the ignition!

Jump Starting a Vehicle

If your vehicle's battery is dead, you need to jump start it. To do this, follow these steps:

1. *Obtain jumper cables.* These are heavy-duty cables with alligator clips on the ends. They look like this:



2. *Connect both cables to operational vehicle battery.*

3. *Connect other end to matching charges on dead battery.* Expect sparks when you connect the second cable.

4. *Turn both vehicles on.* Start with the operational vehicle.

Siphoning Gas

Since gas pumps are likely not operational, siphoning gas will be an invaluable skill to keep your vehicle running. Follow these steps to siphon gas:

1. *Obtain a tube.* This can be a hose or other long, flexible tube.

2. *Put one end of tube into gas source.*

3. *Suck on other end until gas begins to flow.* You can then direct the gas wherever you would like it to go: a collection bin, a vehicle tank, or something else.

Using a Vehicle Strategically

Vehicles have a finite limit to their use, with several constraints including gas, electricity, oil life, and tire wear. Therefore, you should only use a vehicle when it is absolutely needed. Such situations include escaping a threat, transporting people, and transporting supplies. Use your best judgment as to whether it is necessary to use a vehicle.

New River Valley Map

