Urban Escape and Evasion Hides

When entering a new city or just starting out one must search for and document escape and evasion locations or hides. This is especially true if one lives in the city or has an extended operation in such city.

Possible locations

Possible locations that are well suited for hides are Parking Garages both above and belowground. Unoccupied or abandoned factories and buildings also make good hides with proper planning. Also consider areas of occupied buildings that are no longer used such as utility access rooms, HVAC buildings and basements/storage rooms. The parking garage locations may be better suited for night hides as most are closed after normal business hours. One can map out the security camera system during normal business hours to show blind zones where one can enter. Once inside parking garages offer numerous hide zones including the stairwells, fire sprinkler utility rooms and level breaks that usually have dead zones. These parking garages may not be suited for a long term hide but offer excellent concealment for a night or two and are immediately accessible in the inner city.
Abandoned buildings are best suited for both day and night access. They also offer excellent concealment for a long-term hide if the necessary planning is conducted before choosing the location. Most abandoned building are located at the edge of town or in a heavily industrial/commercial zoned part of town. They are also located in the “bad” parts of town. The abandoned building located in the Ghetto should be avoided at all costs do to the heavy police activity and heavy drug/illegal activities during all hours of the day and night. Such activity could easily identify a hide and compromise the location. Thus leaving the commercial/industrial area of the city best suited for locating abandoned buildings for long-term hides. Most industrial/commercial sectors shut down at around 5:00pm. They are virtual ghosts towns after this time and during holidays and weekends.
Abandoned buildings offer the freedom of entering them at will and setting up a hide that best suits your needs. A small room or area of the building can be isolated. Supplies such as food and water caches can be stored. Comfort items such as inflatable mattresses or bedrolls can be hidden for later use. Avenues of approach and escape can be cleared or concealed for later use.

Pre-deployment intelligence of the building can be gathered before choosing which one to use. The local courthouse can identify owners, liens, and foreclosure information. The local urban planning and development department can identify future land use plans or demolition permits. Building permits can also be found to identify future use plans or renovations. Such intelligence can be used to pick the right abandoned building for use as an urban escape and evasion hide.

Getting to the location

How easily accessible is the location? What routes will be taken to get to the hide? Who will spot you entering or exiting? Can it be accessed during the day or should it only be accessed during the night? Also look out for security cameras. Security cameras from neighboring buildings and businesses could be used to spot your hide or at least film you entering or exiting.

Escape routes from the location

All escape and evasion locations must have at least three avenues of escape. Whether it is by foot, vehicle, or water, there must be a way out. Careful consideration must be taken in both planning the location of the hide and planning the escape from the hide if one is discovered.
Make a plan

Once the proper locations are identified they must be recorded on a map or notebook/PDA if one cannot remember all the details of the escape and evasion plan. Writing plans out helps build memory and uncover unforeseen issues. Precautions must be taken so these plans are not discovered. These precautions can include password protection and encryption, or just hiding the written plans where no one searching can discover them. The plans should include location of each hide, how it is accessed, what area precautions must be taken (cameras nearby, dogs down the street, etc) and a detailed description of each of the three escape routes from the hide. The hides may also be daisy chained with proper planning. An example of this is Location #1 using escape routes A, B, C leads to Location #2. If location #2 is compromised used escape routes A, B, or C to get to Location #3. Stick to the plan.