Modern Equipment by Larry Babb

Players in fantasy RPGs have a huge list of equipment from which to choose. And for good reason - the dungeons they explore will be miles from civilization. They need to take anything they might conceivably need for days or weeks - - and enough pack mules to tote it around! We're talking about everything from torches to 10' poles.

I am routinely disappointed at the comparatively little attention that is given to equipment in the modern game settings. Whether the game is pulp-era adventure, Lovecraftian horror, or cold-war espionage, you still need practical gear. When the GM asks you to write down the equipment your character is taking along, you will want to list more than a gun and a flashlight. Chance favors the prepared, as the saying goes.

The next page is a laundry list of the stuff I try to pack. Print it out and leave it in your gaming notebook. Some of the items may not be available in the early 20th century and the GM may override some of it, but it doesn't hurt to ask. This is not an exhaustive list, but most of the items tend to be fairly common, lightweight, and versatile in application. You'll notice lots of items that produce flame - I'm a firm believer in the age-old RPG adage, "If all else fails, set something on fire!"

Equipment List for Modern RPG Settings

- Backpack: You've got to carry all your gear in something, right? Beltpacks, rucksacks, and gym bags are all good alternatives.
- Bags, zip-loc freezer (quart and gallon): Waterproof storage and evidence bags.
- Blanket, small: For warmth or a windbreak shelter.
- Bolt cutter, small: Great for dealing with padlocks, telephone cables, and barbed-wire/chain-link fences.
- Camera: Used for collecting evidence.
- Candles, trick birthday: Great for fire starters and impromptu fuses since they can't be blown out.
- Cell Phone, with spare batteries: This little marvel of modern science can be used to call for help and keep in constant contact with your partners. The more advanced versions have Personal Data Assistants (like a portable minicomputer), walkie-talkies, cameras with sound, and web browsers, just to name a few of the optional goodies. Unfortunately, it is only available in the most contemporary of modern game settings.
- Chalk, multiple colors: Used for marking paths or leaving messages behind.
- Coins, 1 roll of quarters: Spending money and convenient fist-load in one package.
- **Compass**: For navigation. A GPS is a good, too, if you are in a very modern setting.
- Cotton balls, saturated with petroleum jelly: Great for waterproof fire starters, making doorknobs difficult to grab, and stair steps slippery. Four or five of these will pack into a small plastic film canister.
- Crowbar, small: For forcing open windows, doors, and chest lids. Nice blunt weapon in a pinch.
- Duct tape, 50': The many merits of this wonderful material require no explanation.
- Epoxy resin, 1 tube: Quick-drying, bonds to anything, pretty strong.
- First aid kit: Because you're going to get hurt.
- **Fishing kit, compact**: Primarily for food gathering, but the line and hooks can be used for booby traps in a pinch.
- Flares, road: Used for signaling and setting fires.
- Flare gun: Used for signaling and setting fires.
- Flashlight, with spare batteries: Shed a little light in dark places. Don't forget an extra bulb, too. Get a water-resistant model, if available.
- Food: Adventuring is hungry work.
- Glass vials (sulfuric acid, nitric acid, hydrochloric acid, kerosene, ether, indelible black ink): Good for all kinds of mayhem. Be sure to surround the vials with paper or plastic bags filled with baking soda (to limit damage in case of breakage) and seal them in a metal tin.
- Hiking staff, 5' long: Used to extend reach or as an impromptu weapon. Good for poking into dark holes or underwater creek beds.
- Insect Repellent, small aerosol can: Besides the obvious health and morale benefits of deterring biting insects, this item can be sprayed into the eyes of an attacker or used in concert with a lighter to make a mini-flamethrower.
- Knife, small utility: Not much of a weapon, but very useful for cutting mundane items.
- Lighter, windproof: Fire starter and light source.
- Magnesium block fire starter: Stable in block form but ignites easily when shaved into flakes. Burns at a temperature of 4000 °F - - this *will* light your fire.

- Magnifying glass or plastic Fresnel lens: Look for clues or start fires on a sunny day.
- Map of known area, topographical: Navigation.
- Marbles, glass or steel: Good for tripping folks or dropping down a stairwell to lead away pursuers while you escape upstairs. Modest weapon with a sling.
- · Marker pen, permanent: Writes on anything.
- Marker tape, 50' (bright orange): Signal aircraft from the ground or tear into 6" strips and leave a highly visible trail.
- Matches, waterproof: More fire starters.
- Mirror, dental: Great for looking around corners and under doors.
- Mirror (signal), steel: Signal device. Can also be propped up in the corner of a hallway to indirectly watch for anyone approaching.
- Multi-tool (pliers, wire cutters, screw drivers, etc.): Not as good as a real toolkit, but handy in most situations.
- Neckerchief: Used to conceal your appearance, staunch a wound, gag a captive, filter smoke/dust from your nose/mouth, or any of a hundred other activities.
- Parachute cord, 200' (550#) or other light, strong rope:
 Uses too numerous to name.
- Pepper, ground: Throw into the face of an attacker or leave behind to spoil scent tracking.
- **Pins, safety**: Quick clothing repair and secure light items hidden on the inside of your clothing (I.D. cards, money, jewelry, documents, photos, envelopes, etc.).
- Reversible Clothing: A reversible windbreaker or sweatshirt is a quick and simple disguise, especially when used in conjunction with sunglasses and a hat/cap. They work equally well whether you are shadowing someone or trying to lose a tail yourself.
- Tape recorder: Used for collecting evidence.
- Thread, 1 spool (black heavy duty): Used for light repairs and trip lines for traps. Dental floss can be used, too.
- Trash bags, plastic (50 gallon): Used for makeshift ponchos, shelters, and sleeping bags.
- Water bottle, with iodine or water-purifying tablets: Adventuring is thirsty work.
- Waterproof paper: Good for leaving notes, even under adverse environmental conditions.
- Whistle: Signal device. Easier on the vocal cords and can be heard from a greater distance.
- Wire, steel (20' spool): Stronger than cord.
- Wire saw: Useful for cutting wood and occasional strangling.
 Remember - villains use garrotes, but heroes use wire saws.

More Equipment Ideas

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