

It's Your Responsibility

As we engage in an ever-increasing number of recreational activities in our natural environment, we increase our chances of needing the twelve essentials. Having them available and close-at hand along with the knowledge of your environment and tools **before you need them** provides the greatest opportunity for safety and survival in an emergency situation.

If you get into a survival situation, be sure to slow down, think about what you need to do and don't panic. Your brain is your strongest asset.

Finally, it is important for each individual in the wilderness to inform a responsible person where you will be and when you are expected to return.



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Twelve Essentials for Survival



Taken from
"12 Essentials, by C. Thuot

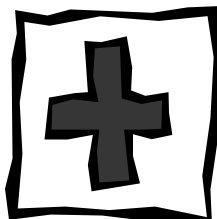
Twelve Essentials for Wilderness Survival

This list is an update of the original “ten essentials” to survival introduced by the **mountaineers** and a subsequent **signpost** bulletin on “thirteen essentials.”

These essentials do not take the place of standard equipment that might be required on an ordinary wilderness outing such as a tent, sleeping bag, food, stove, etc.

The twelve essentials should be carried for regular use as well as for unexpected emergencies. The following list is provided in a **priority** sequence for most wilderness settings.

1. **First Aid Kit**—carry in a waterproof container. A minimum kit should



always include instructions for CPR, materials for dealing with serious bleeding and burns, basic pain medication, disinfectant (small bar of soap), an

antihistamine, razor blade or small scissors, and adhesive tape. Other useful items might include insect repellent, needle and thread, and a small note pad and pen. Know how to use your first aid kit.

2. **Extra Clothing**—should be carried in plastic or waterproof nylon stuff bags. Caps/hats and mittens/gloves are most often lost or misplaced. Don't forget the body's “core,” wool, pile or fleece are the best insulators.

3. **Emergency Shelter**—30 gallon size, durable garbage can liners (2), plastic tube tarps, “emergency blankets,” or any tarp of at least 4 x 8' dimensions are good shelter materials.

4. **Water**—At least one quart or liter should always be available. Expecting to secure water enroute or during an emergency is risky at best. Water is crucial to most medical emergencies and can serve as a calming agent in some stressful situations. Purification is also an important consideration.

5. **Fire Starters/Sustainers**—A small butane lighter and/or wooden strike-anywhere matches in a waterproof container are imperative. The best sustainer is a 3-5 inch plumbers or devotion type candle. Candles serve to prolong the life of your lighter or matches. There are many other natural and commercial sustainers available including pitch or pitch wood, and metal matches.

6. **Signaling Devices**—two such devices are a minimum: a sturdy high-pitched whistle and a glass or chromed mirror. Also, aluminum foil makes good signaling panels. Inexpensive highway road flares are a worthwhile consideration. Remember the international distress signaling procedure is three of anything in sequence. Note: any ground to air signals should be constructed 20 feet or more in length on a side.

7. **Flashlight**—any long-life, alkaline or

lithium type of battery is best. Extra batteries and a bulb should also be carried. In some situations, head lamps are preferable to hand-held flashlights.

8. **Knife**—a high quality pocket knife or “multi-tool” with a locking blade.

9. **Extra food**—should be of high-energy, easily digestible nature which can be eaten cold. Also, instant soups, bouillon cubes and hot chocolate are very good and encourage critical fluid replacement as well.

10. **Compass**—select a compass that has a straight edge, is liquid-filled, and has a rotating face along with a direction of travel arrow. Written instructions are also helpful.

11. **Map**—a topographical map is best for surface/foot travel in wilderness areas. Other useful maps for a variety of recreational activities include forest service maps, marine maps and charts, and other special use maps.

12. **Sunglasses & Sunscreen**—two very important items, especially for high-light reflective (snow or water) and/or high-altitude, (+ 5000 feet) situations. The quality of sunglasses selected should be determined by their ability to screen out ultraviolet light and glare. Sunscreen should take into account these same considerations as well as whether they will stand up to perspiration and water activities.