



What Will You Do Now?

Scouting teaches you to be prepared. When you go on outings, you take along the right equipment, you let your parents know when you'll be back, you monitor the weather, and you take other precautions to ensure that you'll be safe. Despite your best-laid plans, however, the unexpected can happen, and you can be forced to find ways to survive in a harsh environment.

How will you stay warm, dry, and protected from the elements? What will you eat? Where will you get water? How can you make it easier for rescuers to find you? What if rescuers never come?

The Scout motto, "Be Prepared," applies there, too. Learning survival skills before you need them is the epitome of preparedness. This month, you'll learn basic survival skills and apply them in a survival-focused main event. You may also discover how fun and exciting it is to get by with little more than the clothes on your back.

Objectives

This month's activities should:

- Teach Scouts priorities in wilderness survival.
- Build on basic outdoor skills.
- Enhance skills in using natural resources to survive.
- Help Scouts understand the value of a positive mental attitude in the face of uncertainty.
- Let Scouts practice basic survival skills.
- Teach Scouts how to survive in special circumstances.

RELATED ADVANCEMENT AND AWARDS

- Tenderfoot requirements 1 and 2
- Second Class requirements 3a and 3e
- First Class requirements 1 and 3
- Emergency Preparedness, First Aid, Safety, Search and Rescue, Signs, Signals, and Codes, and Wilderness Survival merit badges
- Ranger: Land Navigation and Wilderness Survival core requirements



Leadership Planning

As a leadership team, you may want to discuss the following items during your planning meetings when choosing wilderness survival as your program feature.

1. Who in our unit has completed survival training or earned the Wilderness Survival merit badge?
2. Do we have adult resources in our unit or community that could help bring this subject to life?
3. What special survival situations do we need to consider based on our area of the country?
4. Where can we go to practice survival techniques?
5. How can we practice survival techniques and still follow Leave No Trace guidelines?
6. To meet our needs, what should we change in the sample meeting plans?

PARENTS CAN HELP WITH THE WILDERNESS SURVIVAL PROGRAM FEATURE BY:

1. Sharing their wilderness survival expertise and training
2. Helping Scouts gather items for survival kits
3. Providing materials for making shelters
4. Providing transportation for the main event
5. Helping at the main event
6. Maintaining current Youth Protection certification, which is required of all adults providing transportation for or participating in outings.

WILDERNESS SURVIVAL INFORMATION

Survival Gear

Every survival kit begins with the Scout Basic Essentials. Get into the habit of having them with you on every trip into the backcountry.

- Pocketknife
- First-aid kit
- Extra clothing
- Rain gear
- Water bottle
- Flashlight
- Trail food
- Matches and fire starters
- Sun protection
- Map and compass

What about a cellphone and a GPS receiver? Those can be useful to have, but don't rely too much on technology. The wilderness areas Scouts like to explore can be far removed from any cell towers. While GPS units don't rely on cell towers, they stop working if they get submerged in water or if their batteries die.

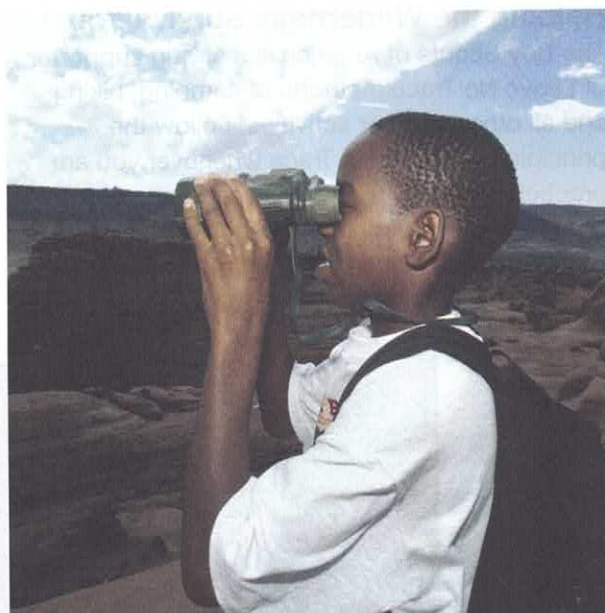




What to Do When Things Go Wrong

Following the seven priorities of survival in a back-country or wilderness location will help you act effectively when things don't go as planned. The priorities are listed here, in order of importance.

1. **STOP.** Don't panic. Unless there are immediate dangers, **Stop**, **Think**, **Observe**, and **Plan** before you do anything else.
2. **Provide first aid.** Treat life-threatening injuries and illnesses immediately.
3. **Seek shelter.** Without using more energy than necessary, find or create shelter that will help your body maintain its ideal temperature.
4. **Build a fire.** In chilly and cold weather, a fire can be important for maintaining body warmth, melting snow for water, drying out clothing, signaling for help, and raising your spirits.
5. **Signal for help.** Signaling for help can be very important if you have become lost or if you or others in your group are injured and cannot be moved.
6. **Drink water.** You can survive for days without food, but in hot weather without water, only hours. Dehydration happens in cold weather, too, even though you may not feel so thirsty.
7. **Don't worry about food.** Yes, you may get hungry, but that's better than eating plants that cause intestinal stress or poisoning or burning more energy capturing an animal to eat than eating that animal would give you.





Helping the Wilderness Survive You

The Boy Scouts of America is a strong supporter of Leave No Trace methods of camping, hiking, and all other outdoor activities. Follow the principles of Leave No Trace whenever you are practicing survival skills. Do everything you can to protect the environment, especially as you are building fires and gathering materials for constructing shelters.

In a real emergency situation, put the safety of yourself and others first, and take whatever actions you must to survive. Think survival first, low-impact second.





WILDERNESS SURVIVAL GAMES

Shipwreck

Equipment: For each team, a ½-inch-thick plywood circle, 3 or 4 feet in diameter, to represent a ship

How to play: Teams line up at one end of a long playing area. On the leader's signal, team members hold the sides of their "ship" and run toward the other end of the playing area. When the leader yells "Shark!" each team must jump aboard its ship. Repeat this process until one team reaches the finish line.

Scoring: The first team with all members' feet off the ground when the leader yells "Shark!" earns 1 point. The first team to reach the finish line earns an additional 3 points. After one team crosses the finish line, add up each team's points; the team with the most points wins.

Notes: Be sure to sand or rasp any sharp edges and splinters on the plywood circles. To extend the game, have teams return to the starting point.

Survival Kit Kim's Game

Equipment: Two boxes; 20 to 30 assorted items that would be useful in a survival situation; paper and pencils for each team

How to play: Before the game, put all the items in one box. While teams watch, one leader takes an item out and tosses it to a second leader, who places it in the second box. Repeat until all objects have been moved from one box to the other. Teams must then list all the items they saw.

Scoring: The team with the most correct items listed is the winner.

Variation: To make the game more challenging, mix in items that would not be useful in a survival situation, and deduct points when these items are listed. You could award extra points when teams list items and explain how they could be useful.



Inchworm

Equipment: None

How to play: Pair the Scouts, then have them sit on each other's feet and grasp each other's elbows or upper arms. Each pair advances by having the Scout whose back is toward the direction of travel lift their bottom off the other's feet and rock backward. Meanwhile, their partner slides their feet forward about a foot and rocks forward as the other sits down on their feet again. Continue in this rocking-sliding motion to the turning line—but don't turn. For the return trip, Scouts simply reverse roles, with the Scout who had been going backward now going forward.

Scoring: The first pair to return to the start wins.

Frantic Object

Equipment: A number of worn-out tennis balls (easy to find at regularly used tennis courts)

How to play: Everyone in the group is given one or two tennis balls. Play on a smooth surface that is bounded by walls. On signal, the group attempts to keep every tennis ball in motion. Referees are used to spot balls that have stopped moving.

Scoring: This game isn't scored. To gauge progress in team development, time the group to see how long they can keep the balls in motion. Then, challenge them to beat their previous time.

Variation: Add additional tennis balls during the game to increase the difficulty.





E.D.G.E. Ideas

***Explain** how it is done—Tell them.*

***Demonstrate** the steps—Show them.*

***Guide** learners as they practice—Watch them do it.*

***Enable** them to succeed on their own—Have them practice/teach it.*

EXPLAIN

- Explain the order of priorities in survival situations.
- Discuss how Leave No Trace guidelines apply to survival practice and actual survival situations.
- Teach the acronym STOP.
- Explain how personal locator beacons work.

GUIDE

- Help Scouts assemble personal survival kits.
- Do a round-robin where Scouts can practice methods for starting a fire without matches.
- Have Scouts research survival techniques for special situations like desert survival.
- Have Scouts practice using signal mirrors.

DEMONSTRATE

- Show videos that teach survival techniques.
- Do a show-and-tell with the items in a survival kit.
- Show Scouts how to use signal mirrors.
- Set up ground-to-air signals in a large room like a gymnasium.

ENABLE

- Present a survival scenario where Scouts have to prioritize the items they have and explain how each could contribute to survival.
- Have older Scouts develop survival scenarios for younger Scouts to complete.
- Have Scouts sleep overnight in shelters they build.
- Give Scouts the chance to teach younger Scouts the survival skills they've learned, using the EDGE method.

MAIN EVENT SUMMARIES

● ESSENTIAL

Day Activity

Survival field day—Hold a half-day survival workshop for Webelos Scouts.

■ CHALLENGING

Overnight Activity

Shelter camping—On a weekend outing, build and sleep in survival shelters.

◆ ADVANCED

Overnight Activity

Scout vs. Wild—Complete an overnight campout with minimal survival gear.






WILDERNESS SURVIVAL

Meeting Plan: Survival Basics



Week 1 Date _____

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	RUN BY	TIME*
Preopening 15 minutes before meeting	Show internet videos from survival television shows like "Man vs. Wild."		6:45 p.m.
Opening Ceremony 10 minutes	Flag presentation Oath and Law Uniform inspection		7 p.m.
Group Instruction 10 minutes	Introduce the seven priorities of survival from the <i>Wilderness Survival</i> merit badge pamphlet (1. STOP; 2. Provide first aid; 3. Seek shelter; 4. Build a fire; 5. Signal for help; 6. Drink water; 7. Don't worry about food).		7:10 p.m.
Skills Instruction 35 minutes   	Discuss ways <i>not</i> to get lost, including the points of Trek Safely.		7:20 p.m.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review the information above.• Discuss first-aid techniques that could be important in a survival situation.		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review the information above.• Discuss special considerations for these survival situations: cold and snowy; wet (forest); hot and dry (desert); windy (mountains or plains); water (ocean, lake, or river).		
Breakout Groups 15 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work on requirements for Wilderness Survival merit badge.• Begin planning participation for the main event.		7:55 p.m.
Game 15 minutes	Play Shipwreck (described earlier).		8:10 p.m.
Closing 5 minutes	Announcements Leader's minute Closing		8:25 p.m.
Total 90 minutes of meeting			
After the Meeting 15 minutes	Leadership team reviews plans for the next meeting and for the main event.		

*All times are suggested.



WILDERNESS SURVIVAL

Meeting Plan: Survival Kits



Week 2 Date _____

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	RUN BY	TIME*
Preopening 15 minutes before meeting	Set up a display of survival gear such as personal locator beacons and high-end signal mirrors.		6:45 p.m.
Opening Ceremony 10 minutes	Flag presentation Oath and Law Uniform inspection		7 p.m.
Group Instruction 5 minutes	Review the Scout basic essentials and how they can contribute to survival.		7:10 p.m.
Skills Instruction 40 minutes	Make a list of items that should go in a personal survival kit.		7:15 p.m.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review the information above.• Make a list of items that should go in a unit survival kit.		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review the information above.• Using catalogs or the internet, rate several commercial survival kits on completeness and cost-effectiveness. Decide whether it would be cheaper to buy or make a survival kit.		
Breakout Groups 15 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue advancement work.• Plan group duty roster for upcoming main event.		7:55 p.m.
Game 15 minutes	Play Survival Kit Kim's Game (described earlier).		8:10 p.m.
Closing 5 minutes	Announcements Leader's minute Closing		8:25 p.m.
Total 90 minutes of meeting			
After the Meeting 15 minutes	Leadership team reviews plans for the next meeting and for the main event.		

*All times are suggested.



WILDERNESS SURVIVAL

Meeting Plan: Fire and Shelter



Week 3 Date _____

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	RUN BY	TIME*
Preopening 15 minutes before meeting	Challenge each Scout on arrival to set fire to tinder using a flint and steel set.		6:45 p.m.
Opening Ceremony 10 minutes	Flag presentation Scout Oath Uniform inspection		7 p.m.
Group Instruction 15 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Review the basics of starting fires without matches.Set up stations where Scouts can try flint and steel, fire by friction, and other techniques.		7:10 p.m.
Skills Instruction 30 minutes	Discuss how to make shelters with found materials and clothing. If possible, practice outside your meeting place (keeping in mind Leave No Trace guidelines).		7:25 p.m.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Discuss the information above.		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Discuss natural features that enhance or detract from a site's ability to keep you warm and dry.		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Discuss the information above.Discuss how to make a shelter visible to search parties.		
Breakout Groups 15 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Continue advancement work.Plan menu for upcoming main event.		7:55 p.m.
Game 15 minutes	Play Inchworm (described earlier).		8:10 p.m.
Closing 5 minutes	Announcements Leader's minute Closing		8:25 p.m.
Total 90 minutes of meeting			
After the Meeting 15 minutes	Leadership team reviews plans for the next meeting and for the main event.		

*All times are suggested.



WILDERNESS SURVIVAL

Meeting Plan: Signaling



Week 4 Date _____

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	RUN BY	TIME*
Preopening 15 minutes before meeting	As groups of Scouts arrive, challenge them to complete a wilderness survival simulation game such as Lost at Sea or Lunar Survival that requires players to rank items in terms of their usefulness in a survival situation. (Do an internet search on "survival simulation games.")		6:45 p.m.
Opening Ceremony 10 minutes	Flag presentation Oath and Law Uniform inspection		7 p.m.
Group Instruction 15 minutes	Review basic distress signals, including noise, fires, mirrors, lights, and ground-to-air-signals.		7:10 p.m.
Skills Instruction 35 minutes	Practice signaling with mirrors, CDs, or other shiny objects. If inside or at night, use a strong flashlight to simulate the sun and signal a person across the room who represents a potential rescuer.		7:25 p.m.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review the information above.• Review the common ground-to-air signals shown in the <i>Wilderness Survival</i> merit badge pamphlet.		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review the information above.• Discuss how color, motion, and shadows can enhance visibility.• Discuss the importance of conserving flares and voices until the most opportune time.		
Breakout Groups 15 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue advancement work.• Finalize plans for participation in the main event.		8 p.m.
Game 10 minutes	Play Frantic Object (described earlier).		8:15 p.m.
Closing 5 minutes	Announcements Leader's minute Closing		8:25 p.m.
Total 90 minutes of meeting			
After the Meeting 15 minutes	Leadership team reviews plans for the next meeting and for the main event.		

*All times are suggested.



WILDERNESS SURVIVAL

Main Event: Survival Field Day



Date _____

Logistics

Location: _____

Departure time: _____

Return time: _____

Duration of activity: 4 hours

Budget: Completed _____ Approved _____

Camping: Duty roster _____ Menu _____

Transportation: Group _____ Self _____



Essential (Tier I)

Hold a half-day survival workshop for Webelos Scouts.

Equipment List

- Survival kits
- Materials to demonstrate fire building, signaling, and shelter construction
- Food
- Water
- Scout Basic Essentials

Activity

- Identify a Webelos den (or other group) to which you can teach survival skills.
- Select a location for the workshop.
- Assign patrols or small groups to teach specific survival skills.
- Gather materials needed to demonstrate survival skills.
- Set up a round-robin schedule that allows Webelos to learn survival skills.

Safety

- Use the buddy system.
- Have a first-aid kit.
- Be especially careful when using and teaching the use of pocketknives.
- Cellphones are a good idea.
- Two-deep adult leadership is required for all activities.

Notes

Follow the principles of Leave No Trace whenever you are practicing survival skills.



WILDERNESS SURVIVAL

Main Event: Shelter Camping



Date _____

Logistics

Location: _____

Departure time: _____

Return time: _____

Duration of activity: Overnight

Budget: Completed _____ Approved _____

Camping: Duty roster _____ Menu _____

Transportation: Group _____ Self _____

Challenging (Tier II)

On a weekend outing, build and sleep in survival shelters.

Equipment List

- Group and personal camping equipment
- Food
- Scout Basic Essentials

Activity

- Choose your camping site and event location.
- Plan other activities as desired (hiking, boating, mountain biking, etc.).
- Plan camping duty roster and meal plan.
- Spend part of a day building emergency shelters and sleep in those shelters overnight. On a Friday-through-Sunday outing, you might choose to sleep in tents on Friday night and shelters on Saturday night.

Safety

- Normal camping safety guidelines apply.
- Use the buddy system.
- Have a first-aid kit.
- Cellphones are a good idea.
- Two-deep adult leadership is required for all activities.

Notes

Follow the principles of Leave No Trace whenever you are practicing survival skills.



WILDERNESS SURVIVAL

Main Event: Scout vs. Wild



Date _____

Logistics

Location: _____

Departure time: _____

Return time: _____

Duration of activity: Overnight

Budget: Completed _____ Approved _____

Camping: Duty roster _____ Menu _____

Transportation: Group _____ Self _____



Advanced (Tier III)

Complete an overnight campout with minimal survival gear.

Equipment List

- Survival kits
- Food
- Water
- Scout Basic Essentials

Activity

- Choose your camping site and event location.
- Before the outing, give each Scout a large coffee can in which to assemble a survival kit.
- Travel to the event site.
- Have Scouts pair up and spend the night relying solely on what they have brought in their survival kits and what they can find on the land.
- The following day, evaluate the shelters Scouts built for durability, protection from the elements, and visibility.
- Practice other survival and general camping skills as time allows.

Safety

- Normal camping safety guidelines apply.
- Use the buddy system.
- Have a first-aid kit available.
- Cellphones are a good idea.
- Two-deep adult leadership is required for all activities.

Notes

Follow the principles of Leave No Trace whenever you are practicing survival skills.



RESOURCES AND REFERENCES

Books

Fieldbook

Emergency Preparedness, First Aid, Safety, Search and Rescue, Signs, Signals, and Codes, and Wilderness Survival merit badge pamphlets

Davenport, Gregory J. *Wilderness Survival*, 2nd ed. Stackpole Books, 2012.

McNab, Chris. *The Boy's Book of Outdoor Survival: 101 Courageous Skills for Exploring the Dangerous Wild*. Ulysses Press, 2008.

Nickens, T. Edward. *The Total Outdoorsman Manual*. Welden Owen, 2013.

Pewtherer, Michael. *Wilderness Survival Handbook: Primitive Skills for Short-Term Survival and Long-Term Comfort*. McGraw-Hill, 2010.

Tawrell, Paul. *Camping and Survival: The Ultimate Outdoors Book*. Paul Tawrell, 2011.

Towell, Colin. *The Survival Handbook: Essential Skills for Outdoor Adventure*. DK Publishing, 2012.

Wiseman, John. *SAS Survival Handbook: The Ultimate Guide to Surviving Anywhere*. Collins, 2011.

Websites

Association of Outdoor Recreation and Education

Website: www.aore.org

Backpacker Magazine

Website: www.backpacker.com

Equipped to Survive

Website: www.equipped.org

National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS)

Website: www.nols.edu

Outside Magazine

Website: www.outsideonline.com

Wilderness Education Association

Website: www.weainfo.org

Wilderness Survival

Website: www.wilderness-survival.net

Wildwood Survival

Website: www.wildwoodsurvival.com

Related Program Features

Backpacking, Camping, Hiking, Emergency Preparedness, Outdoor Ethics, Winter Camping

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