

## Wilderness Survival Information from Firefly Adventures for Areas out of Cell Phone Range

<http://fireflyadventures.ca/>



1. Always plan your excursion. The trip should match your abilities, skill and knowledge. Your equipment and clothing should match the type of trip, terrain, season and duration. Create a route itinerary using a map. Register for land use if required (provincial parks, etc.) Always, always, always tell someone where you are going, your route and date and time of expected return. This way search parties know where to start looking if you do not return.
2. You can live without water for only a few days and water is heavy to carry. So to purify water one can use filtration equipment, boiling, treatment tablets or drops. There is danger in drinking untreated water in the wilderness, primarily giardia.
3. You can live without food for 7 to 10 days, so bring enough food for your trip **plus 15%** in case of problems that lengthen your trip (weather, accidents, injuries, etc.) Food plan should include 3 meals per day **PLUS** snacks. The more challenging your trip, the more calories you will need. Plan for 33% protein, fats and carbohydrates.
4. Essential equipment – In addition to your clothing, shelter, transportation, cooking and first aid equipment, there are some essentials that you should always bring, even on short day trips. They include, but are not limited to: lighter, knife, “P” cord, whistle, signal mirror, flashlight or headlamp and batteries, map and compass (or GPS device and batteries or charger) small tarp or large garbage bag, extra clothing (wool socks, under layers, light sweater).
5. First aid kit – This should match your knowledge as well as the duration of the trip and the distance/time from medical help. The longer the trip and the further from help, the larger and more comprehensive it should be. Common issues on trip include cuts, scrapes, sprains, burns and insect bites. There are first aid courses that are specifically designed for wilderness situations.
6. Weather – In sad situations where someone dies in the wilderness, it is usually because of “exposure” meaning hypothermia. In these situations the victim is unable to retain enough body heat because of inappropriate or insufficient clothing for the situation. Cold, wet and windy weather is the worst for this. Getting out of the wind is extremely important, therefore, finding a location out of the wind or making a shelter can save your life.
7. A shelter can be a tent, a tarp, garbage bags, a quinzee (snow shelter) or a lean to debris shelter (made from forest material).
8. For cold weather trips, i.e. winter, proper clothing is literally a lifesaver. Layering of the clothing is the key. Many thin layers of clothing trap air between them which acts as insulation to retain body heat. 4 to 5 layers is recommended. Inner most layers should be merino wool or polypropylene which wick your body moisture away from your skin. In these cold situations, cotton is not recommended as it retains moisture.
9. If lost in the wilderness, stay put, make a shelter and wait for rescue. Signaling to search parties can be anything in 3’s; for example 3 piles of evergreen branches or 3 fires in the open or 3 blasts of your whistle.