

Wilderness Survival Training Syllabus

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Wilderness Survival is an advanced camping skill. We are assuming that each student has basic first aid skills, good cooking skills and good camping skills. For the field exercise, students may be in trouble if they can not build fires and cook without instruction or hesitation.

It is assumed that students who expect to complete the core requirement for Wilderness Survival in this course will prepare themselves for both class and the field exercise. For the staff to provide elementary instruction in all the skills for all the requirements would take a minimum of 40 hours. We do not have that much time.

The well prepared student will arrive at the field exercise having read and familiarized themselves with, at minimum, the materials in the readily available Boy Scout publications. It would be especially useful to have read the Fieldbook (Chapters 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 26, and 30). The Merit Badge Pamphlets for Wilderness Survival, Emergency Preparedness, First Aid, Cooking, Camping, and Pioneering present much of the same information with a different slant. The Venture and Varsity "Survival" pamphlet has some useful information on the subject but is not particularly well written.

U.S. military survival manuals have a wealth of good information but typically assume that the survivor is a downed pilot and will have things that pilots normally have. Unfortunately, if the survivor is not a pilot, a parachute, parachute lines, a pistol, flare guns, hand grenades and other items must be done without (although there are substitutes for each that are available to the dedicated survivalist).

A European (English) slant on survival can be experienced by getting the USBORNE SUPERSKILLS book **Improve Your Survival Skills** which is an excellent introductory book for children or **The Complete Wilderness Training Book** by Hugh McManners, a former British Paratrooper and Survival Instructor. Although this book has errors and suffers a little from the same problems of the U.S. military publications, it has much useful information and takes a world wide outlook.

A North American slant can be found in the book **Outdoor Survival Handbook for Kids** by Willy Whitefeather (a Creek). Although cartoon like and pointed at elementary school aged children, there is much good information here. Another great author specializing in North America is Tom Brown (an Apache). He has written a series of field guides that all start with **Tom Brown's Field Guide To**. Of most interest to us are his **Nature and Survival for Children**, **Wilderness Survival**, and **Wild, Edible and Medicinal Plants**.

There are many other useful books on survival techniques, including some under other topics. Edible and useful plants, for instance, are sometimes found in historic books rather than modern guides. Check your library to see what you can find. The more you read, the better prepared you will be.

It is rare that a victim will need to survive in the modern world for more than a few days. Search and Rescue teams usually find their targets quickly. There are exceptions though. Sometimes, no one knows that the search needs to start because no one knows that the person is missing. Other times, because of misinformation, a very intense search is conducted in the wrong place and the target is not found. Finally, weather can delay a search for extended periods in some places at some times of year.

Experience shows that the fundamental difference between survivors found in good shape and those found in other conditions is not strength, training, skill or equipment, it is attitude. Training, skill and equipment can help attitude, but it is the belief in survival and the willingness to make the best of what one has that makes the most difference.

The sections below are keyed to the requirements in the Ranger Handbook. As an aid to study and preparation, references are given to Boy Scout publications, especially the Fieldbook. These sections are also the modules which will be used to teach the course and evaluate your knowledge.

Items marked with ***** will have lectures and/or demonstrations by staff to amplify, illustrate, or extend the information available in the Boy Scout references.

Activities and Boy Scout Document Support

Hand in Items (Student is expected to have these at the start of the Field Exercise)

***** Risk Management Plan

Write a risk management plan for a hypothetical trip. Assume you are the adult in charge. The plan must include enough detail to show that you have considered the following minimum items:

- Description of Trip
- Nutrition
- Health
- First Aid
- Supervision
- Insurance
- Safety Rules and Regulations
- Equipment
- Maps and Navigation Equipment
- Training
- Environment
- Emergency and Evacuation Procedures
- Emergency Contacts

(Fieldbook Ch 4)

(Wilderness Survival MBB)

Wilderness Survival Kit List

A Combination of the "Ten Essentials" as used by T/C 27 and the list in the Fieldbook...

(Fieldbook Ch 11)

(Wilderness Survival Merit Badge Book)

(VS Survival)

Class Items (Any item here could be in Class or moved to the Field Exercise)

Survival Priorities Recitation

Survival Priorities to be Learned by Candidates On Their Own

STOP (Stop, Think, Observe, Plan)

Attitude/Will

Oxygen

First Aid

Shelter/clothing

Fire

Signaling

Water

Food

Conservation of Energy

(Wilderness Survival MBB)

(Third Edition Fieldbook Ch 12)

Search

Basic Search to be Learned by Candidates On Their Own

Confinement

Segmentation

Clues

Search

Hasty

Open Sweep

Closed Sweep

(Fieldbook Ch 26)

(Emergency Preparedness MBB)

Signal

Basic Signals to be Learned by Candidates On Their Own

Minimum 5 Signals

Yes, No, Need assistance, Need Medical, Direction of Travel

(Wilderness Survival MBB)

(VS Survivals)

(Third Edition Fieldbook Ch 12)

***** Evacuation Decisions

(Fieldbook Ch 26)

First Aid Items

First Aid Items to be Learned by Candidates On Their Own

Hypothermia

Hyperthermia (Heat Stroke, Heat Exhaustion, Heat Cramps)

Frostbite

Sunburn

(Fieldbook Ch 11)

(Wilderness Survival MBB)

(First Aid MBB)

Dehydration Discussion

Dehydration Issues to be Learned by Candidates On Their Own

(Fieldbook Ch 6)

***** Weather

(Fieldbook Ch 30)

***** Rope Discussion

Rope Lore to be Learned by Candidates On Their Own

(Pioneering MBB)

Knot Tying Competency

Knots to be Learned by Candidates On Their Own

Sheet Bend, Fisherman's Knot, Bowline, Bowline on a Bight,

Two Half Hitches, Clove Hitch, Timber Hitch, Taut-line Hitch,

Square Lashing, Shear Lashing

***** Food Discussion

(Wilderness Survival MBB)

(VS Survival)

Wilderness Survival Kit Explanation

(Fieldbook Ch 11)

***** Wilderness Shelters

Be prepared to discuss shelters for Snow, Sand (Desert), Forest

(Handout)

(Wilderness Survival MBB)

(VS Survival)

(Fieldbook Ch 13, 14)

Items For Field Exercise (These items must be conducted in the field)

***** Methods for Obtaining Water

Be prepared to describe four.
(Wilderness Survival MBB)
(VS Survival)

***** Methods for Purifying Water

Be prepared to demo two.
(Fieldbook Ch 9)
(Wilderness Survival MBB)
(VS Survival)

***** Fire Lays

Be prepared to demo two.
(Fieldbook Ch 8)

***** Fire Starter Discussion/Demo

(Fieldbook Ch 8)

Food Preparation (Found Food)

(Fieldbook Ch 5)
(Cooking MBB)

Outpost Camp (2 Days and Nights)

Wilderness Shelter Construction

Wilderness Camp Presentation