
Situational Assessment



Success in a survival situation is entirely dependent upon how well you use your first and most important survival tool – your brain. The second step in the BSA Survival Strategy is to **Think**; and the Situational Assessment serves as the framework to help you to analyze your situation.

Once you realize that you are in a survival situation, making a Situational Assessment will determine whether or not you will be successful in your efforts to survive and successfully make it home.

This method is broken down in to three main spheres: **Self**; **Surroundings**; and **Extended Environment**.

Self

- what you brought with you

The first sphere of assessment is yourself, and what you have:

- your clothes and what you are wearing
- what is in your pockets (Pocket Personal Survival Kit)
- items in your waist pack
- items in your daypack or backpack (the Outdoor Essentials)
- any gear that you have with you

Remember – your clothing is considered your first level of shelter – especially your outer layer and any raingear that you are carrying.

Surroundings

- what is within a 10 pace radius of where you stand

The second sphere of assessment is to determine the resources available within a **10 pace radius of your location**

- potential shelter or shelter sources
- potential water sources
- potential fire resources



It is also important to consider the visibility of your current location if you are planning to set-up signal fires, or use a signal mirror or reflector to signal for rescue. If you are in an area that does not make it possible to signal for rescue, that is an important determining factor to consider in your situational assessment.

Extended Environment

- what is within a 500 meter radius of where you stand

The third sphere of assessment is to determine the resources available within a **500 meter radius of your current location**

- signal visibility
- potential food sources
- potential rescue routes or opportunities

Preparation and being familiar with the area and environment in which you will travel is a key factor in this sphere of assessment, and can be the difference in an extended survival situation and a quick rescue. Investigating the area within 500 meters of your current location will allow you to cover a full kilometer of area and may help you to recognize where you are and regain your orientation.

It is also essential that you leave markers and indications of your direction of travel from your initial start point, Not only will this help you to return to your start point, but will also aid any Search and Rescue teams in determining your last know point and direction of travel.

Using the information gathered in a Situational Assessment

As is always the case in any survival situation, you must consider all factors in determining your course of action, and once you complete each level of your Situational Assessment, you may determine that the best course of action at that moment is to stop once you completed your initial assessment. If it is already dark, and your best course of action would be to set up a shelter and start a fire, and to put off any further action until daylight, that is the best course of action. That is the reason for making a Situational Assessment and thinking prior to taking any action – and using your most important survival tool – **your brain**.