
BSA Survival Priorities



The Wilderness Survival Merit Badge pamphlet establishes the following list of the **Seven Priorities of Survival** in the backcountry. The order of the priorities is incorporated into the learning objectives of the merit badge, and serves as the core of the requirements. When instructing Scouts in the priorities of wilderness survival, the steps must be presented in the published order to meet the objectives and requirements of the Wilderness Survival merit badge.

1. STOP

Stop

As soon as you realize that something is wrong, STOP. Stop moving, and assess your current situation.

Think

Use your most important survival tool - your brain. THINK about where you are, where you went wrong and what steps you can take to retrace your steps and figure out where you went wrong if possible. Check your map if you have one.

Observe

Take a good look around, at your surroundings, at any other people who are with you, and at your self. Determine if there is any need to start first aid, or if there is any immediate threat or impending danger.

Plan

Once that you have completely assessed your situation, you can look at all of the equipment that you have, the people in your group, and you can begin to plan the next step. Plan carefully and cautiously because you don't want to make your situation worse by acting out of fear, frustration or haste.

2. Provide Necessary First Aid

Stabilize any life threatening injuries, prevent them from becoming worse, and provide support and protection to any injured member of your group. Don't forget to take care of any minor injuries to yourself.



3. Seek Shelter

Maintain your core body temperature by any means that you can. Keep yourself dry in a cold wet environment, or shaded and cool in a hot environment. The key is to keep your body temperature as stable as possible while expending as little energy as possible.

4. Build A Fire

A fire will provide warmth, and a means of drying any wet clothing or equipment, as well as provide a method of purifying any water or melting snow. It will also help to boost your morale and instill a greater sense of well-being.

5. Signal for Help

Consider the situation, the terrain, the surroundings, what you have on hand to use to signal, and how you may be spotted or heard. Use as many means possible, even electronic if you have mobile telephone or radio coverage.

6. Drink Water

Drink water. Drink water often, and drink even when you are not thirsty. You can survive for a long time without eating, but at best only days without water. You may also have to consider finding a source of water. Dehydration is the single greatest threat to survival next to hypothermia.

7. Don't Worry About Food

Hunger won't kill you; it will only make you more uncomfortable. Once that you have been met the other Priorities of Survival, you can begin to consider gathering a food source. However, while the feeling of hunger itself won't kill you, eating the wrong plant can kill you.