



Wilderness Survival

Scouts BSA · Outdoors

Name

Started

Completed

Wilderness Survival teaches you how to stay calm and safe if things go wrong outdoors. You will build a shelter, make fire, treat water, and signal for help. These skills give you confidence on every trip, even if you never need them in an emergency.

Requirements

Every official requirement, in plain language. Check the official wording when you sign off (scouting.org/merit-badges/wilderness-survival/). Tips and examples are ideas, not extra requirements.

1 Hazards and first aid

Tips for this section: List hazards you might face, the first aid for each, and how a good trip plan helps you avoid them.

- ☐ **1a** Show or explain how to prevent and give first aid for these backcountry injuries and conditions

- ☐ **1a1** Dehydration

- ☐ **1a2** Heatstroke

- ☐ **1a3** Hypothermia

☐ **1a4** Shock

☐ **1a5** Blisters

☐ **1a6** Eye injuries

☐ **1a7** Sprained ankles and knees

☐ **1a8** Bites from chiggers, ticks, mosquitoes, and biting gnats

☐ **1a9** Bee stings

☐ **1a10** Spider bites

- ☐ **1a11** Scorpion stings

- ☐ **1a12** Bites from wild mammals

- ☐ **1a13** Venomous snakebites

- ☐ **1b** Explain how the Scout Basic Essentials help with the dangers of a survival situation and why they form the base of a survival kit

- ☐ **1c** Explain how making a trip plan can keep you out of a wilderness survival situation

- ☐ **2** Explain why each of the seven priorities of survival matters when you're in the wilderness

Tip: Talk through the seven priorities and put them in order for a few pretend situations.

Example: Put the seven priorities in order for a scenario, like being separated from your group in the late afternoon in fall: stay calm, then first aid, shelter, fire, signaling, water, and food. Explain why shelter comes before food.

- ☐ **3** Describe how to keep from panicking and keep morale high if you are lost, and explain why that matters

Tip: Talk about how staying calm and positive helps a group survive, and what you'd do to keep spirits up.

Example: Describe what you'd do to keep spirits up: take turns with small jobs, tell stories, keep a routine, and remind everyone that people are looking for you. Share one way you calm yourself when you're scared.

- ☐ **4** Put together two kits, one for personal first aid and one for personal survival, and show how each item in them is used

Tip: Pack a small first aid kit and a separate survival kit, and explain why you chose each item.

Example: Pack two small kits in zip bags or tins. First aid: adhesive bandages, gauze, and tape. Survival: a whistle, a signal mirror, a space blanket, a fire starter, a small flashlight, and water treatment tablets. Explain why each item earns its spot.

5 Shelter

Tips for this section: Build a simple natural shelter on a campout with your patrol and an adult nearby.

Example for this section: With your patrol and an adult on a campout, build a simple lean-to or debris shelter from fallen branches and leaves, using low-impact methods. Spend the night in it, then take it apart and scatter the materials when you're done.

- ☐ **5a** Describe what you would do to survive in each of these exposure conditions

- ☐ **5a1** Cold and snowy

- ☐ **5a2** Wet

- ☐ **5a3** Hot and dry

- ☐ **5a4** Windy

- ☐ **5a5** On or near the water

- ☐ **5b** Show you know the right clothing for the outdoors in very hot weather, very cold weather, and wet conditions

- ☐ **5c** Explain ways to stay safe from bears and raccoons

- ☐ **5d** Describe how to find or build a survival shelter in a forest or in snow

- ☐ **5e** Improvise a natural shelter using low-impact methods, and spend a night in it

- ☐ **6** Build and light 3 fires, each with a different method that doesn't use matches

Tip: Practice fire starting with a leader in a safe fire ring, and always put the fire out completely.

7 Signaling

Tips for this section: Practice using a whistle, mirror, and ground signals on your next campout.

Example for this section: Practice three whistle blasts, flash a signal mirror at a target, and lay out large ground-to-air signals with logs, rocks, or bright clothing in an open area where they'd be visible from above.

- ☐ **7a** Explain and demonstrate ways lost or stranded Scouts could signal ground, air, or water search teams to get their attention

- ☐ **7b** Demonstrate using a signal mirror

- ☐ **7c** From memory, describe 5 ground-to-air signals and what each one means

- ☐ **8** Demonstrate 3 ways to treat water found outdoors so it is safe to drink

Tip: Try filtering, boiling, and treating water on a campout with an adult.

- ☐ **9** Explain why eating wild plants or animals is usually a bad idea in a wilderness survival situation

Tip: Talk about why wild plants can be risky to eat and why carrying food is safer.

10 Careers and hobbies: Choose 1 of 2

Tips for this section: Ask a ranger or outdoor instructor how they use survival skills in their work.

- ☐ **10a** Explore careers related to this badge and research one (training and education, costs, job outlook, pay, duties, advancement) using sources your parent or guardian approves; discuss your findings and why it might interest you with your counselor

- ☐ **10b** Explore how this badge's skills could lead to a hobby or volunteer work; research training, expenses, and groups that support it, then discuss your short- and long-term goals with your counselor