

SURVIVAL

A Scouting Ireland challenge

Desert Survival



Survival scenarios

Imagine yourself with a walking party. There is a blast of wind, a lot of noise and you are engulfed in an avalanche of snow. You are sailing in a yacht a heavy wind blows, you lose your mast and are set adrift. How do you cope?

These situations are ones which people have found themselves in on occasions in the past and will, doubtless, find themselves in the future. For this reason a knowledge of survival can be as useful as a knowledge of first aid.

Although we live in a relatively civilised environment the ease of modern travel, coupled with the fact that Scouts are going to more remote areas, maintains the need for a knowledge of survival skills.

Before going further it may be as well to define the term 'survival' - 'Survival is the art of remaining alive in and escaping from a hostile environment, without full facilities.' This needs a few words of explanation. If you camp in the hills in winter with a good mountain tent, a warm sleeping bag, a stove with plenty of fuel and no shortage of food, this is camping not survival. Survival begins when some relatively essential item is missing and becomes more acute the less one has.

The American Rescue Service has said that country people or city people who

have had a lot of Scout training are the best survivors.

To stay alive the following must be considered

Food

Without it one will eventually die although not as rapidly as one might think. In her book, *Hey I'm Alive*, Helen Klaben describes how she stayed alive for forty nine days on virtually nothing.

Water

With no water available a man, even in a cool climate and doing no work, is unlikely to survive more than fifteen days.

Shelter and Warmth

Without these the physical condition of the survivor will deteriorate.

Medical

Untreated injuries or sickness will undermine the body to some extent especially if allied to a lack of shelter and food. Additionally the ability to escape on foot will be inhibited.

Communication

A person is a very small object and the earth is a very big place. Some means of attracting attention is vital for anyone in need of help. A mobile phone is excellent

if a signal is available if not then traditional means of communication will need to be used.

Movement

How to move, when to move, etc. now become vital questions to be answered.

Navigation

This may not be to one-degree accuracy but in many types of terrain it is quite an effort to keep going in a constant compass direction without veering well off course.

Load-carrying

Too big a load will reduce your chances of reaching help but too small a load may mean vital items are abandoned.



Desert survival

It is 1:00 p.m. on a Saturday afternoon at the end of May. You and your Patrol have just finished attending an international two-day scout training session in Casablanca, Morocco. You are now on board a twin-engine plane that is destined for Dakhla, Morocco, a small town on the coast of the North Atlantic Ocean, approximately 1000 miles from Casablanca. At the beginning of the flight the Captain came on the overhead speaker and invited you to sit back and relax during the two-hour flight. The first fifty minutes of the flight were fine. Around this time the pilot comes back on the speaker to let you know that you are currently flying over the Sahara Desert and that weather reports showed a temperature high of 37 degrees. Approximately one hour and ten minutes into the flight, you hear a loud blast and the plane nosedives. Within minutes you realize that the cabin is losing pressure. When you look outside the windows, you notice that the desert below is growing larger as the plane rapidly descends toward the ground. You notice that the only things you can see out of your window are some large boulders and miles and miles of sand.

The pilot comes on warning that he is going to crash and so all on board should prepare for a crash landing. All surviving passengers and crew members scramble to exit the plane before it explodes. Seven minutes after the crash, the plane explodes in a fiery ball that reduces it to rubble. You, and your Patrol, one flight crew member, and the co-captain have all survived the crash. Now you must decide how to work together

to survive the desert climate and terrain, get help, and hopefully make it out of the desert alive. On your way out of the plane, in the few minutes before it exploded, you and your teammates were able to salvage the items in the list below. It is May and you and your Patrol are dressed in Scout T-shirts, neckerchiefs and chinos for the hot summer months of Africa. With only the clothes on your back and the items pulled from the wreckage, how will you survive?

Steps:

1. Individually, rank the items below in order of importance, 1 being most important and 18 being least important.
2. Individually, write down your plan for survival in a few sentences.
3. Discuss your importance ranking of the items and plan with the Patrol.
4. The Patrol should agree a 'best plan, and agreed list of item rankings after a discussion and exchange of ideas.

- 1 No. Book of matches
- 3 No. Airplane blankets
- 20 ft. Nylon rope
- 1 No. Sewing kit
- 2 No. 50 kg Tanks of oxygen
- 20 No. Cans of soda
- 1 No. Life raft
- 1 No. Bottle opener
- 1 No. Magnetic compass
- 1 No. Single-blade pocketknife
- 15 No. Gallons of water
- 3 No. Signal flares
- 1 No. First aid kit
- 1 No. Snakebite kit
- 25 No. Mini bags of pretzels
- 55 No. Mini bags of peanuts
- 1 No. Safety razor blade
- 4 No. Airplane pillows