

# *72 Hour Wilderness Survival* *& How to be Rescued*



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Northwest Wyoming OHV

Alliance

If you find yourself in a wilderness survival situation, there are many things to think about. Some of these things are more important than others but they all need dealt with sooner or later.

- **ATTITUDE!!!!**

Your attitude about the situation you are facing could determine the outcome, stay positive.

- **Equipment**

What equipment do you have with you? You should ALWAYS carry enough to spend the night.

- **PLAN**

Make a plan to help yourself as much as you can. Weigh your options and decide on the best one.

# General Survival: Rule of 3's

- 3 minutes without air
- 3 hours without shelter. This includes the clothes on your back. They are your immediate shelter from the environment and current and potential weather. Carry a quality emergency bivy bag or some other small shelter.
- 3 days without water. Find the cleanest water you can and drink it if you run out. Giardia can be treated later, and dehydration is typically more severe.
- 3 weeks without food. Always carry extra food. Don't eat anything you aren't educated on that grows naturally. Wyoming does have some wild plants that are deadly.

# Hiking/ATV Riding

- Tell someone where you are going, when you expect to be back and a general area or trail you will be in. Or, leave a note in your car with your equipment, intentions, etc. that Law Enforcement could retrieve if necessary.
- Don't expect cell phone reception. Your cell phone is not reliable in the backcountry.
- Carry overnight gear even if you don't expect to spend the night. Matches, bivy bag, etc.
- Carry extra water and food. Carry a method to purify water. Don't eat anything you aren't educated about that grows in the wild.
- Wear proper clothing. This is your first defense from the environment and weather.
- Be aware of your surroundings. Wyoming is home to large predators and dangerous terrain.

- Hypothermia and Hyperthermia. You can become too cold to function as well as too hot. Get educated by a local group or a trusted online source.
- Carry a satellite communication device and know how to use it properly. Garmin, Zoleo, SPOT, etc.

# What's in your pack??

Your personal pack should contain **WHATEVER YOU NEED** to spend an uncomfortable night in the woods. This varies from person to person so experiment at home before trying the real thing. Some suggested items to carry are:

- **Fire Building tools**

I carry three different ways to start a fire. Remember the colder you are, the harder it is to start a fire.

- **Small tarp or bivy sack**

There are several lightweight quality options that aren't too expensive. Never rely on the cheap foil type.

- **Basic First Aid Kit**

This kit should deal with small to large cuts, blisters, burns and twisted ankles.

- Light Sticks

A couple of light sticks in your temporary shelter make things easier to see and even provide a little comfort.

- Headlamp or Flashlight

It is never a bad idea to carry a source of light. I normally have both plus some extra batteries.

- Signaling Equipment

Emergency whistle, signal mirror, SPOT device.  
NEVER rely on cell phones in the backcountry.

- Paracord

Paracord can be used to tie up a shelter made from a tarp or logs.

- Water Filter or Life Straw

- Toiletries and any medication you may need to take.

- Bear Spray or Other Defensive Weapon

# Survival Facts

- If you are wet, your body loses heat 27 times faster due to evaporation.
- You can survive 3 hours without shelter, 3 days without water and 3 weeks without food. This is known as the rule of 3s. Shelter is based on inclement weather. Also remember, proper clothing is also considered a shelter.
- Hypothermia generally sets in a body temperature around 95 degrees Fahrenheit. Below that, functions decrease rapidly until subject becomes unconscious or dies.
- Hyperthermia normally occurs when the body absorbs more heat than it can dissipate. This is usually a body temperature from 100-104 degrees Fahrenheit. It differs from fevers based on its cause.



- Giardia takes several days to kick in. If you have no means to boil water or filter it, find the cleanest water you can and drink it.
- If you are bitten by a rattlesnake, do not attempt to suck out the poison. It doesn't work. Saliva can introduce infection into the wound and make it worse.

# How to be Rescued

Park County Search and Rescue is on call 24 hours per day, 365 days per year to assist the residents of Park County Wyoming in an emergency situation. These services are provided free of charge.

- Tell someone where you are going, when you will be back and your intended activity.
- Leave a note in your car with a gear list and what you may be doing.
- Build a signal fire
- STAY PUT!!!
- Purchase a personal locator beacon such as a SPOT or a DeLorme. With some devices, you can communicate back and forth with family, friends, or even the emergency dispatch center.

## Survival Myths:

- Moss grown on the North side of trees. Not true, it grows where it wants to and in this area we don't have much moss growing.
- Eating snow to get hydrated. Hypothermia can happen all year. Eating snow can lower your body temperature and speed up hypothermia.
- Humans can eat anything animals can. There are several plants in the region that can make you sick or even cause death.
- Wet matches work when dried. NOPE! Water changes the chemical balance in match heads rendering them useless.
- Building a fire in a cave. Not a good idea as the heat from the fire can expand the rock in the cave causing it to collapse.
- You need food immediately. FALSE. You can survive quite some time without food. Shelter and water are far more important.