

LOST WHILE HUNTING: SURVIVAL & RESCUE CHECKLIST

Prepare before the hunt - survive the emergency - help rescuers find you

If you become lost while hunting, the hunt is over. Shift immediately from finding game to staying alive, preventing injury, and making yourself easier to find. Use this checklist as a quick reference - not as a substitute for training, local regulations, or sound judgment.

1. BEFORE THE HUNT

- ☐ Leave a trip plan: hunting area/unit, access point, route, vehicle, partners and expected return time.
- ☐ Check the latest weather forecast, watches and warnings.
- ☐ Agree on a meeting point and communication plan with hunting partners.
- ☐ Mark your vehicle, camp or trailhead on your navigation device when appropriate.
- ☐ Carry emergency gear for an unexpected overnight stay.

2. IF YOU REALIZE YOU'RE LOST: STOP

- ☐ **Stop:** Do not keep walking just because a direction feels right.
- ☐ **Think:** Identify where you were last certain of your location.
- ☐ **Observe:** Check terrain, landmarks, weather, daylight, injuries and resources.
- ☐ **Plan:** Decide whether staying put or moving is actually safer.

3. STAY PUT OR MOVE?

- ☐ **Stay put** if you are unsure where you are, searchers may be looking, darkness is approaching, you are injured, or movement adds risk.
- ☐ **Move only with a reason:** a known destination, safe route, adequate daylight, or need to escape an immediate hazard.
- ☐ Do not follow a stream simply because you assume it will lead to civilization.
- ☐ If tracking game caused the disorientation, stop the recovery effort and switch to survival priorities.

4. COLD, EXPOSURE & SHELTER

- ☐ Get out of wind, rain or snow before you become dangerously cold.
- ☐ Add insulation and protect or replace wet clothing when possible.
- ☐ Prepare shelter before dark and insulate yourself from the ground.
- ☐ Avoid dead trees, dry creek beds, unstable slopes and other hazardous shelter locations.
- ☐ Use fire only when legal and safe for current conditions.

5. WATER & ENERGY

- ☐ Use carried water first and conserve energy rather than wandering unnecessarily.
- ☐ Treat natural water with a proven filter, boiling or appropriate chemical treatment.
- ☐ Food is usually a lower priority than shelter, temperature control, water, injury management and signaling.
- ☐ Use emergency food for energy; avoid unfamiliar plants or mushrooms.

6. MAKE YOURSELF FINDABLE

- ☐ Use a whistle, bright/blaze-orange material, signal mirror, headlamp or other signaling tools.
- ☐ Choose a visible location when nearby and safe.
- ☐ Keep signaling equipment accessible - not buried in your pack.
- ☐ Listen for voices, vehicles, aircraft or other signs of rescuers.
- ☐ Avoid unnecessary movement that expands the search area.

7. PHONE, GPS & SATELLITE COMMUNICATION

- ☐ Call emergency services if you have service and provide useful location and condition information.
- ☐ Conserve battery: lower screen brightness, close unnecessary apps and limit nonessential use.
- ☐ Protect electronics from cold and moisture; use offline maps or saved waypoints if available.
- ☐ Use satellite emergency communication if supported and you know how it works.
- ☐ Do not assume rescuers can automatically locate you because you have a phone.

8. BEFORE NIGHTFALL

- ☐ Stop risky travel early enough to prepare before darkness.
- ☐ Set up shelter and ground insulation; organize essential gear.
- ☐ Secure water if necessary and safe to do so.
- ☐ Establish a signaling area and keep your headlamp accessible.
- ☐ Stay with your partner or group when possible.

9. IF YOU MUST MOVE

- ☐ Identify a specific known destination before leaving your location.
- ☐ Check remaining daylight, weather, terrain and your physical condition.
- ☐ Use map, compass, GPS or reliable landmarks rather than guessing.
- ☐ Avoid cliffs, dangerous crossings and terrain that increases injury risk.
- ☐ If confidence in your route drops, stop and reassess.

10. HUNTER EMERGENCY GEAR CHECKLIST

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| ☐ Map / compass | ☐ Water + treatment method |
| ☐ GPS / phone | ☐ Extra insulation layer |
| ☐ Backup power | ☐ Rain protection |
| ☐ Headlamp + spare batteries | ☐ Fire-starting equipment |
| ☐ Whistle / signal mirror | ☐ Emergency food |
| ☐ First-aid supplies | ☐ Knife / multi-tool |
| ☐ Emergency bivvy or tarp | ☐ Satellite messenger when appropriate |

THE HUNT IS OVER. STAY ALIVE. STAY FINDABLE. GET HOME.

SurvivalPlaceBlog.com - Keep a printed copy with your hunting or emergency gear.