

Assembling a Basic Survival Kit

A requirement of the Hunter Safety course is that each student (or family) assemble a survival kit. While the student is encouraged to put the kit together with the best items possible, we realize that this can be a burden not only in terms of cost, but because of time constraints.

Below is a list of required items, as well as recommended items. The items on the list include low cost, high quality items that are available in the downeast area.

REQUIRED ITEMS:

Knife- Either a sturdy pocket knife or a mid-sized sheath knife is preferable. Stores that sell commercial fishing supplies often carry Swedish “Mora” deck knives that are inexpensive and very well made.

Survival manual- As a student, you will be provided a copy of “You Alone in the Maine Woods”, free of cost.

Whistle- US Coast Guard approved emergency whistles are available in local stores at a very low cost.

Compass- A baseplate type compass is strongly recommended, although we will accept a bubble type compass.

Chocolate bar- We will accept an alternative for those with allergies, etc.

Signal mirror- A mirror from a make-up compact or an old computer compact disc is fine.

Water purification tablets- Locally available. A small container of bleach will do.

Water proof container of “strike anywhere” matches- The container can be anything from a match safe to a zip-lock baggie.

Second method of firestarting- such as a lighter or magnesium bar.

RECOMMENDED BUT NOT REQUIRED

25 feet of strong cord- We recommend military grade 550 lb. Test “para-cord”. A common locally available substitute is heading twine used in making lobster trap funnels.

Flashlight- An LED keychain type light is acceptable, a larger stronger light is better.

Space blanket- Available in most sporting goods stores.

Toilet paper- For obvious reasons, but also serves as a good firestarter.

Firestarter- This can range from commercially available products such as trioxane, to birch bark, or even dryer lint. Cotton balls saturated in vaseline are very effective, as are alcohol based bug dopes.

Pencil & notepad- Handy for leaving notes to family and rescuers.

A large contractor type garbage bag- Provides waterproof personal shelter from the weather in an emergency, or can be cut open to use as part of a larger shelter.

Water bottle/canteen- Anything that will hold water, even a used soda bottle. The best are the stainless steel bottles that can be used to heat water as well. Another good alternative is a military canteen with a metal cup that can be used as a cook pot.

Candle- To be used as an aid to firestarting, for light, and as a source of heat.

Hand/foot warmers- Readily available at most hardware stores, these are useful in preventing frozen extremities.

Food- Dried foods are light weight and can be prepared with hot water. They provide energy, warmth, and can elevate the spirits of a person stuck in the woods overnight.

Sewing/repair kit- A needle, thread, and some safety pins can be very useful. A hot glue stick and duct tape are valuable items as well.

First aid items- Band-aids, pain reliever, and extra doses of any prescription medication you take regularly.

Spare eyeglasses- Nice to have if you lose your glasses or contact lenses.

A CONTAINER FOR YOUR KIT

A heavy-duty zip-lock bag is sufficient, but a more durable fabric pouch is better. This can be carried in a small daypack with the rest of your gear.

IN SUMMARY

Start with what you can afford and improve the contents of your kit as you are able. It is better to assemble a small kit of quality equipment than a large one of questionable quality that is also a burden to carry. If the kit is too burdensome, chances are you'll leave it home, where it will be of no use to you in an emergency.

SOURCES OF EQUIPMENT

Pineo's True Value Hardware, Machias
Elmer's Discount, Columbia
Four Corners Ace Hardware, Columbia
Church's True Value/ Hamilton Marine, Jonesport
Wal-Mart, Ellsworth
Smitty's Trading Post, Machias
Cadillac Mountain Sports, Ellsworth
Rite-Aid, Machias
Maine Military Supply, Brewer
Willey's Guns, Ellsworth

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