

Ground & Urban Direction Finding Team Tasks



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Developed as part of the
National Emergency Services Curriculum Project

O-0601
CONDUCT ACTIONS WHEN LOST

CONDITIONS

You have become separated from your ground team in the wilderness, and do not know where they are or where you are.

OJECTIVES

Take correct actions needed to survive and be found.

TRAINING AND EVALUATION

Training Outline

1. Search and rescue operations are frequently conducted in adverse weather and terrain conditions. The same environment that caused the search objective to be missing could cause the same difficulties for a team member. All ground team members should have a knowledge of basic survival skills. This will decrease the chances of serious injuries and decrease the time before the team member can be found.

2. If you are in a survival situation, remember the acronyms **SURVIVAL** or **STOP**:

a. **SURVIVAL**:

1) **Size up the situation.** Look at where you are. What resources (water, wood, etc.) are available nearby? What dangers are there? (see task O-0101 - Identify Natural Hazards.) Inventory your equipment to establish what tools you have to handle the situation. Are there people nearby who might be able to help you? For example, if you just became separated from you team, just blowing your whistle might rescue you. (See task O-0406 - Use Whistle Signals)

2) **Undue Haste Makes Waste.** **STOP.** Walking around aimlessly is a waste of energy. Take your time and think about your decisions. You could easily make the situation worse by moving farther from help, injuring yourself, or losing an important item.

3) **Remember Where You Are.** You may not be as lost as you think, just momentarily disoriented. Think about the last time you knew where you were, and what happened next. Mark your current location, and memorize it. That way, as you look around, you will not become more lost.

4) **Vanquish Fear and Panic.** These feelings are natural, but might lead you to do something that you have not thought through clearly. If you are tired, frustrated, or near panic, stop and rest. Provide your body and mind with a few minutes or hours of down time. This will help to calm anxieties and better prepare you to handle the situation. Keep a positive mental attitude -- believe you are going to be all right.

5) **Improve Your Situation.** Think about how to be found, safe from danger, and more comfortable.

a) Find a clear area. This will facilitate your being spotted from the air.

b) Establish shelter for your body. If you have to spend the night in the wilderness, spend the necessary time to build adequate shelter and a fire. Maintaining body warmth and protection is a high priority.

c) Establish signals. Place orange markers or vests in nearby location. Preferably where they can be seen from the air. Do not forget Ground to Air Signals (task O-0703). Build a large signal fire. Establish a schedule for blowing your whistle to attract anybody in the area. If you are moving at night, stay in the open. Tie your chem-lite to the end of a string and swing it in a circle over your head. This will make you easy to spot from the air, and make it easy for the pilots to tell the difference between you and the lights of the ground searchers looking for you.

d) Find water. If you are in a wilderness area, remember that downhill always leads to water. Do not drink standing water, build a fire and boil it at least one minute to remove bacteria. Rain water, melting snow or ice will provide adequate bacteria-free water.

e) If you have to move, remember that downhill and downstream leads to civilization. Moving uphill will rarely lead you to any help.

6) **Value Living.** Never stop trying. Giving up is the surest way to ensure failure. No matter how cold, wet, or tired you get, do not forget that positive mental attitude. Never give up!

7) **Act Like the Natives.** Observe animals in the area. They live here -- they know where the where food and water are, and what the dangers are. (be careful what you eat, though. Some plants are poisonous to people but harmless to animals.)

8) **Learn Basic Skills.** And use them. This book is full of them. Make sure you know how to build a fire, avoid hazards, build a shelter, signal for help, and find water.

b. **STOP:**

1) **Stay** where you are. Rather than wandering aimlessly, don't move unless it is more hazardous to stay where you are than to move.

2) **Think** before acting rashly. If something does not seem right, it probably isn't. If you take the time to stop and think, you may come up with a better solution.

3) **Observe** your surrounding and its' inhabitants. Animals survive on natural instinct experience in their surroundings. By observing their habits, and in many cases mimicking them, you will survive.

4) **Plan** for the worst. Most people who do not survive had the tools and the knowledge to survive, but got caught off guard and didn't do anything about it. If you plan for the worst using what you have, you will at least be ready, and kept your mind off of being lost and re-focused your energy on living.

3. If you ever end up in a survival situation, remember that a Positive Mental Attitude will save you. If you don't want to live, then most of what you do will be a waste of time, but if you really do want to live then you have a chance. There are many stories of people that should have died days earlier being rescued and returning to happy and healthy lives long after the normal person dies. And there are obviously many other of people who died that shouldn't have. Stay focused, and tell yourself you want to live!

Additional Information

More detailed information on this topic is available in Chapter 9 of the Ground Team Member & Leader Reference Text.

Evaluation Preparation

Setup: None

Brief Student: Tell the individual that that he has become separated from his team and darkness is 2 hours away. Have him describe his immediate actions and survival steps.

Evaluation

Performance measures

Results

The individual:

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| 1. Identifies and describes the SURVIVAL or STOP procedure steps. | P | F |
| 2. Defines Positive Mental Attitude and demonstrates understanding the importance of it. | P | F |

Student must receive a pass on all performance measures to qualify in this task. If the individual fails any measure, show what was done wrong and how to do it correctly.