

## Chapter 5

# SURVIVAL AND FIRST AID



### Objectives

- Identify the basic requirements for survival
- Explain basic rules to observe in the event a hunter becomes lost
- Explain the cause of hypothermia
- Explain the basic rules for treating bleeding.



### Introduction

All hunters should know the basic rules of survival. If you do, you can handle any situation that you are faced with. The two most important things to remember are be prepared and don't panic. You need to be ready for survival situations the minute you leave home, your camp or vehicle. If you wait until you are wet, alone or in thick fog before you think about survival, it may already be too late. Think ahead.

### Basic Survival Rules

You will be able to deal with most any situation if you remember these simple rules.

1. Remain calm in an emergency.  
Avoid panic. Stay put.
2. Never travel or hunt alone.
3. Tell someone where you will be hunting and when you plan on returning.
4. Know the weather conditions where you will be hunting.
5. Dress for the weather and be prepared for worse.
6. Avoid hypothermia. Know how to treat it if it strikes.
7. Carry a survival kit with you at all times.
8. Know how to build a fire even when everything is wet. Carry the materials you will need.

9. Carry a map and compass or GPS and know how to use them.
10. Carry a cell phone when possible.

## Remaining Calm in Survival Situations

To survive you need only four things: A calm head, food, water and shelter. Do not panic. All of the food, water and shelter in the world cannot help you if you panic in a survival situation. Keep calm and use your head. Your brain is your best survival tool.



In a survival situation, remember a “stop” sign for these important steps:



**S.....** Stop, when you realize you have a problem. The first thing you need to do is to admit that you are in trouble.

**T.....** Think, about what you need to do to survive.

**O.....** Observe, the area and look for shelter, fuel and other objects that may help you survive.

**P.....** Plan, how you are going to use your survival kit and other resources available to you. Do not wait until dark to plan.

Remain calm. Think clearly. Use the tools you have available to you.

**Stay in one place if you are lost. Do not wander around and get yourself into deeper trouble. If you let somebody know where you are going to hunt, they will be looking for you in that area. Aimless wandering will only make the search more difficult. Rescue teams are trained to find you, so stay put.**

Plan ways to signal for help. A signal mirror or smoke from a fire can be used. The universal signal for help is three shots evenly spaced. Remember that shots are common during daylight hours in the hunting season. Wait until nightfall to shoot. Three of anything such as toots on a whistle or car horn may also be used to signal a need for help.

## Water Safety

Since all animals need water for survival it is no surprise that you will sometime hunt around water. Be sure to know how to be

safe around water so you can prepare against some of these common accidents. Here are some helpful tips to keep you safe.

### Wading

- Be sure that you wear a belt with your waders so if you slip they don't fill up with water.
- Check the depth of the water with stick or wading staff before going.
- Don't wade to the top edge of your waders.
- Have appropriate soles on your boots to match the bottom you are walking on.
- In cold water boot foot waders are warmer than stocking foot.



### Walking on Ice

- Check the thickness of the ice before walking on.
- 4 inches of clear black ice can safely hold you and your gear.
- White ice is not as strong as black ice.
- Moving water doesn't freeze as quickly as still water. Take this into consideration when crossing streams or rivers.



### Boating

- Do not overload the boat. Make sure the weight is evenly distributed.
- Do not stand in the boat.
- Make sure your equipment is in good condition and you know how to use it.
- Make sure there are PFD's (Personal Flotation Devices) for everyone on board. Children under 12 must always wear theirs.
- Check weather forecasts frequently. Do not

go out if weather is questionable.

## Hypothermia

### Did you know?

Most hunting is done in the fall and winter when the water is cold. The two main dangers around water are drowning and hypothermia. Even if you can swim, your muscles may seize up in cold water allowing you to drown.

Hypothermia is the loss of body heat. This happens when the body loses more heat than it can produce. Hypothermia is always dangerous and sometimes fatal.

Hypothermia is usually caused by one of two conditions:

- Exposure to body sweat, cold, wet and wind
- Falling into water.

Be aware of the effects that wind can have in cold weather, especially if you are wet. Layer your clothes. Control your body temperature with easy on, easy off clothes. Overheating causes perspiration and wet clothing creates a cold feeling. Dry wool or one of the many advanced synthetic types of clothing is your best insulation.

To help prevent hypothermia:

1. Keep warm
2. Keep hydrated (drink liquids)
3. Keep eating (to maintain body warmth)

Most people suffer from hypothermia on days when the outside air temperature range between 30 and 50 degrees. It is important that you recognize the symptoms of hypothermia and

treat them as soon as possible. Symptoms include:

- Violent shivering
- Difficulty in speaking
- Stiff muscles
- Unconsciousness / fatigue

Shivering is the first sign. After violent shivering the victim will not realize they are suffering from hypothermia. In the final stages the victim may appear drunk.

Treatment is necessary when people suffer from hypothermia. Treatments will help raise the body's core temperature slowly and evenly. Never give alcohol to a person suffering from hypothermia.

### **Mild Hypothermia**

- Cover the victim's head
- Provide dry clothes, remove the wet clothes
- Provide warm liquids (if victim is conscious)
- Provide rest in a shelter near a heat source

### **Severe Hypothermia**

- Send for qualified medical aid
- Provide warm liquids (if victim is conscious)
- Handle gently. The victim is very sensitive during this stage.
- Cover the victim's head
- Place warm objects near the victim's chest, neck and head. Use your own body to help warm the victim.
- Continue to provide warmth until medical attention arrives. Do not give up even if the victim appears dead.

### **Frostbite**

Frostbite is the freezing of body tissue. Frostbite isn't something that is found only in the arctic north. It can happen right here in New Jersey if you are not careful. Wind and wet skin

can be very dangerous when temperatures start dropping into the single digits causing frostbite in fifteen minutes or less. The best preventive measure you can take is to avoid severe weather.

Symptoms may include:

- Discoloration of skin to an off white
- A prickly or tingly feeling
- Or loss of feeling

Treatments are:

- Move to a warm shelter
- Drink warm liquids
- Warm affected area with body heat
- Do not use an external heat source
- Do not rub area – This can cause more damage
- Seek medical attention

## **Survival Kit**

You can buy a survival kit or make your own. It doesn't matter how much money you spend or how many items you include. The two most important things are that you must carry it and you must know how to use it. A survival kit will not help if it is left back at camp. Even the most expensive survival kit will not help if you do not know how to use the items.

Depending upon where and when you are hunting will determine if you need to add anything extra to your survival kit. Make sure you check the equipment in your survival kit before each hunt to make sure everything is in working order before you must rely upon it in an emergency.

## **First Aid**

Every hunter must know some basic

first aid. In all first aid situations the rule of thumb is *do no further harm to the victim*. Do what you can do, but do only what you know how to do. This course is not a course in first aid. All hunters should attend a first aid course. Contact your local Red Cross chapter to learn where and when the next first aid class is available in your area.

### **Victim Bleeding**

If a person is bleeding, you must stop the bleeding as quickly as possible. You may also need to protect the wound from infection and treat the victim for shock. Direct pressure is the key. Use direct pressure on all wounds. This is the first choice to stop bleeding. Press directly over the wound. Use any available material to press over the wound. A shirt or sock for example can work. Use only your hands if no cloth is available. If possible, elevate the wound above the heart.

A tourniquet is not recommended to stop bleeding. The only time a tourniquet should be used is when a limb must be sacrificed in order to save a person's life.

Clean small wounds with hand soap and water. Do not clean a serious wound after bleeding has stopped. Leave the bandage in place and allow trained medical professionals to clean the wound. If you try to clean a serious wound, you may cause it to start bleeding again.

### **First Aid Kit**

You should have a basic first aid kit in your survival pack. Make sure that you know what is in your first aid kit and how to use it. Do not assume that because your friends have a first aid kit that you do not need to carry one.