

It is recommended that you build two kits, one for your personal use and the second for the vehicle or animal you may be traveling in or on. Keep in mind that you may have to make at least temporary repairs in an emergency.

Survival Rate

There is a general rule that may assist you in developing an equipment list for your survival kit:

Skills + Equipment = Survival Rate

25% + **75%** = **100%**
Less Skills More Equipment Survival Rate

90% + **10%** = **100%**
More Skills Less Equipment Survival Rate

Simply put this equation explains that the amount and type of equipment you take will be determined by your experience. The more you are able to utilize natural resources in the wild or improvise, the less equipment you will need to carry with you. Someone like the legendary Daniel Boone could live in the wilderness with only a knife and the clothes on his back because he knew how to find potable water, make shelter, and navigate trails. However, a young boy from the inner city with no wilderness experience would have to take along a variety of equipment to meet the same needs.

Six Areas of a Survival Kit

When building your survival kit you should consider the following six areas:

Survival Kits

1. Signaling
2. Fire
3. Water
4. Shelter Construction
5. Navigation
6. First Aid

Equipment Selection & Considerations

Selecting the right equipment is a difficult process for even an experienced outdoorsman. This process is further complicated by the variety of “high tech” equipment available and the opportunists ready to profit from our fear selling everything from snakebite kits to “Rambo” survival knives. There are considerations that will assist you in selecting the right equipment to meet your personal needs.

First, look at the life expectancy of all survival equipment. The batteries in most “high tech” equipment can be easily affected by cold or hot temperatures causing them to fail. Smoke and aerial flares become unstable after a period of time and must be destroyed. This does not mean that flares, radios, and strobes should be eliminated from all survival kits. It means that serious consideration should be given with regards to how practical they will be in your particular kit. Ask yourself, realistically how often will you need your survival equipment? How can they be stored to insure maximum performance when needed?

Secondly, can the item of equipment be used more than once or only once? Since most people will rarely need their survival kit, it is recommended that you carry reusable equipment. This reduces maintenance and improves the chances of the victim should use of the survival kit become necessary. A mirror or whistle can be used indefinitely while a flare can only be fired once.

Third, can the equipment be used to meet more than one need? If you carry Johnson and Johnson Band-Aids, you can use them not only for cuts but you can also use the cotton in the band-aid pad as tinder to help start a fire. The batteries inside your flashlight can be used to ignite 0000 steel wool.

Fourth, can the average person in an emergency situation or under stress use the equipment safely? When confronted with a traumatic situation you will not always react in a rational manner and in the wrong hands some survival equipment can be more dangerous than helpful. An ax in the hands of a stressed tenderfoot endangers not only the operator but also anyone nearby.

It should be pointed out that you should become familiar with the operation of your survival equipment before you encounter an emergency. A blizzard in the wilderness is no place to begin a lesson on fire building with flint and steel. You need to practice before your life depends on it. You also want to include personal identification in your survival kit. This identification card should include the following:

THIS SURVIVAL KIT IS THE PROPERTY OF:

Name: John Iam Lost
Address: 1234 Uphill Road
Any Town, USA 10001
Phone: 623.123.4567
Medical Conditions/Allergies:
Asthma
Insulin Dependent Diabetic
Allergic to Bees

In Case of an Emergency Contact:

Name: Kathy Rescue
Phone: 623.123.9876
Relationship: Wife

A survival kit is often equated to insurance. We make the investment hoping that we won't need to use it. It is very reassuring to realize that if you did encounter an emergency you could take care of yourself. A survival kit can't do you much good however, if it is left in the closet at home.

