

DESERT
TRAVEL
HINTS



SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPT
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In Memory of

E. PAUL KNIGHT **ERIC C. KNIGHT**
1933 - 1998 1965 - 1995

Father and Son

Follow These Helpful Hints to Survive Your Next Trip to the Desert

- ⊕ **Let someone know your trip route, destination, and return date.** Leave a map or written directions with someone. Let them know if you change plans after you leave. If you get stuck, we need a place to begin looking.
- ⊕ **Be prepared.** Take plenty of rations and a minimum of one gallon of water per person for each day. More is better. Take shelter material, plenty of sun screen, proper clothing, and a first aid kit. Take a first aid/CPR class. Expect the unexpected to happen and you are likely to be prepared.
- ⊕ **Dress in light colored, loose fitting clothes for the heat, and several layers of clothing for cooler weather.** Wear a hat.
- ⊕ **Your vehicle should be in good condition.** A safety check before you leave is a good precaution. Check your tires and the gas gauge before you leave the pavement. Take a tire jack, some tools and tow rope or chain.
- ⊕ **Stay on the dirt roads.** Avoid going cross country on what looks like hard surface. Just a few feet in soft sand can sink a vehicle up to the axles. Even four wheel drive vehicles can become easily stuck in the sand.
- ⊕ **Never go alone.** Always take a companion, especially if you are not familiar with the area. If things go wrong you can help each other.

If Things Go Wrong....

- ⊕ **If your vehicle gets stuck.** Don't panic. Don't continue spinning your tires. Try jacking the drive wheels up and putting solid material under the tires to gain traction. Boards, sticks, rocks, floor mats, vegetation or anything solid may help regain traction.
- ⊕ **If your vehicle won't go any further, raise the hood.** This is a universal distress signal. You have to decide if you are going to stay with the vehicle or try to walk for help.
- ⊕ **Things to consider:**
 1. Your vehicle can provide you with shelter from the heat or cold, and it contains all your supplies.
 2. Your vehicle is much larger than a person, and therefore easier to find.
 3. If you choose to walk out for help, how many supplies can you carry?
 4. Avoid strenuous activity in the heat of the day. Conserve your energy.
 5. As a last ditch effort, during daylight, you can use a small amount of gasoline to set a tire or other material on fire that will create a large dark cloud that will be visible for miles. Be sure that you set the fire a safe distance from your car if you choose this option.
 6. Stay in the shade of the vehicle. On a hot day, the sand can get up to 200 degrees or more. Conserve your energy for the cooler part of the day.

Have The Will to Survive. Do the Right Things and You Will Survive!

- ⊕ **Don't Panic.** Remain calm and think rationally. Don't lose your cool. Panic is your enemy.
- ⊕ **Make yourself visible.** A column of smoke can be seen for miles in the daytime. Think of ways to attract attention to your location. If at all possible, be visible from the air and ground. Use anything that makes noise like a vehicle horn. Your vehicle affords you many resources.
- ⊕ **Don't ration water.** Drink if you are thirsty. Your body is a canteen and will store water.
- ⊕ **Avoid eating if possible.** The digestion process uses valuable water and can cause dehydration. You can survive for several days without eating but only a few days without water.
- ⊕ **Stay clothed.** Your clothes will actually insulate you from the heat if you are not active and are in the shade. Use plenty of sun screen on exposed areas of your body such as your arms, hands, face and neck.
- ⊕ **Cell phones and radios work** in many remote areas. Keep trying to call someone.
- ⊕ **Above all, stay calm and stay alive**

Should You Leave Your Vehicle and Go For Help ?

You have to make the decision whether to stay with your vehicle or try to walk to safety. Some things to consider before you decide to leave your vehicle and walk out for help include, but are not limited to:

☺ **Do you know where you are?** Can you easily walk to safety or will it be a gamble? How long will it take, and can you easily make it?

☺ **Do you have enough water?** Do you know the shortest route or are you just guessing. Will it take more than one day? Drinking alcohol can cause dehydration and is not a replacement for water.

☺ **How long will it take to reach help?** If you are not in good enough shape to hike out, it will cost you your life! This is your call.

☺ **What time of day is it?** Leave at the right time. Avoid any activity during the hot part of the day. It could zap your energy and it will cause your body to require more water.

☺ **Can you still be found?** Leave a note with the time and day and the direction you were going.

Will Someone Report You Missing? If someone is likely to report you missing, it might be better to stay with your vehicle. It has all your supplies. It can provide you shelter, and can be an excellent signaling device.

Volunteers

Members of the SBSD Search and Rescue teams are citizen volunteers from all walks of life who are dedicated to helping people and the community. Members must complete extensive training in such skills as survival, tracking, land navigation, first aid and CPR, climbing with ropes, rappelling, mine rescue, 4x4 driving, ATV operation, horseback, map and compass and many others. All members must pass written and field testing that meets national standards established by **The National Association for Search and Rescue.**

Each member must equip themselves with personal survival equipment, clothing and gear necessary to accomplish their mission. Average start up costs are about \$300 to \$400, but most members spend much more than that on specialized gear.

CONTRIBUTIONS ARE WELCOMED

When the squads are not training, they are searching for ways to raise funds for rescue equipment and vehicles.

BARSTOW DESERT RESCUE SQUAD TEL(760) 256-4838

This pamphlet was prepared by the Barstow Desert Rescue Squad and was written as a simple guide on how to make your next trip to the desert a pleasant and successful one.

**FOLLOWING THESE HELPFUL HINTS
CAN SAVE YOUR LIFE OR THE LIVES OF
YOUR LOVED ONES ON YOUR NEXT
DESERT TRIP.**