

Safety Rules for Desert Travel

Keep this information with you at all times when in the desert or mountains.

It just might save your life!

Things To Do When Lost:

1. Don't get excited when you realize you are lost.
2. Don't start to wander.
3. STAY OUT of wooded areas, ravines, canyons or where you are hard to see.
4. STAY IN the open – on a ridge or clearing
5. Build a smoky fire in a cleared area.

BE CAREFUL NOT TO START A FIRE YOU CANNOT CONTROL.

SIT TIGHT SO AIR SEARCH CAN FIND YOU.

6. When you observe a low flying plane, it is probably searching for you. Flash any bright article or mirror to attract the pilot's attention. Always travel with water, shovel and food in your car when going across the deserts or into remote mountain area.

Don't Forget!

Heat Stroke or Heat Exhaustion

Heat stroke and heat exhaustion are different.

Heat Stroke Symptoms: Flushed, hot and dry skin; high temperature, dizziness and headache. First Aid: put patient in shade, head and shoulders raised. Sponge with cool water, ice bag (if available) on head. If conscious, give ½ tablespoon salt in ½ glass of water every 15 minutes for three or four doses. NO STIMULANTS. Get patient to a doctor as soon as possible.

Heat Exhaustion Symptoms: Skin cold and pale, cold perspiration, may suffer dizziness, nausea, and cramps. First Aid: Keep patient warm, flat on the back, with head low. Give ½ teaspoon salt in ½ glass of water, or salt tablets, coffee or aromatic spirits of ammonia. Unless quick recovery, get patient to a doctor.

Field Study Trip Safety Rules

Safety of personnel is of paramount importance on a field trip. Therefore, you are requested to comply with the following basic rules.

1. **Vehicle:** Be sure your vehicle has been “topped off” with gasoline, oil and water prior to your arrival at the meeting point.
2. **Meeting Point:** A meeting point will be selected that all drivers and vehicles can reach safely. The class MUST travel together from the meeting point to the study area and return unless specifically released by the instructor. Don’t wander off by yourself in any desert.
3. **Desert Travel:** Drive slowly and stay on trails. Keep sufficient distance between each vehicle to allow for sudden stops or maneuvering (and to keep from eating dust). A stop may be made to scout the road and may require a change in directions so don’t “close-up” until signaled to do so by the instructor.

Conventional vehicles have a low clearance, when on a trail with deep ruts the center ridge may hide a boulder that can rip the bottom out of a vehicle. Ride your wheels partially on the center ridge to raise the car bottom from the ground.

Don’t leave the trail without checking the ground condition by walking the area. If you MUST turn around on soft ground always keep your drive wheels on the trail. It will take time, but not as much time as digging!

If you find yourself in soft sand MAINTAIN STEADY SPEED until clear. Do NOT stop or speed up. If you feel your vehicle bogging down take your foot off the gas pedal IMMEDIATELY! Wait for assistance.

4. **Poisonous Critters:** There are poisonous snakes in the desert. Watch where you walk and avoid passing too close to bushes and rocks where snakes rest to avoid the sun. Most important, when climbing rocks don’t reach up on a rock to pull yourself up, a rattler may be taking a siesta on the same rock or in the shade on the other side. Turn small rocks over with a walking stick (do not use hand or foot) before picking them up, poisonous scorpions hide under rocks.
5. **Trouble Signal:** The recognized trouble signal is three sounds, such as: three shots, blasts on a horn, whistles, mirror flashes, smoke signals, etc.
6. **Clothing:** Wear protective clothing, hats to prevent sunstroke and garments to prevent sunburn. Loose clothing helps to retard moisture evaporation.

Staying Hydrated in the Desert

- A man needs all the water he drinks. So long as he wants it, his body uses it better than his canteen does.
- Sweat in the amounts naturally formed is indispensable for work and health.
- A man's water needs vary with his location, season, work and body size.
- No advantage is known to result from water restriction. Man cannot be trained to maintain himself on little water, except as he learns to waste none that can be used and to avoid unnecessary work and exposure to heat.
- Visibility of sweat on the skin or clothing is no index to the rate of sweat production by man in the desert.
- Acclimatized men under like circumstances sweat at like rates. There are no significant differences among men of equal size and activity.
- In the desert sun, sweat is saved by wearing clothing, not by discarding it.
- Drinking water does not increase sweat, though momentarily some extra sweat may be reflexively secreted in response to swallowing the water.
- The man who drinks water while working consumes no more water in the end than he does if forced to wait until after the work in order to drink.
- Salt is desirable only for men who have plenty of water to drink. This holds true even though the men are exhausted.
- The only sound economy of water is achieved by avoiding so far as feasible, the need for production of sweat.
- The most practical expedients by which to economize on water use are: shift of daylight work program to the cooler hours, and avoidance of waste.
- Avoid foods containing protein or salts (both require large amount of water for excretion)
- Cease activity.
- Avoid the sun – loss of water can be through convection, radiation, or conduction heating.

- Use non – potable water (pools, plants, urine, etc) on clothing or skin to effect body cooling.
- If lost or stranded – walk at night, carry all the water available, eat little or no food, use the best possible share during the daytime. SAVE YOUR SWEAT.

This information is taken from the following sources:

1. Pond, A. W. Air Force Training Manual, “Afoot in the Desert”.
2. Adolph, E.F. Physiology of Man in the Desert.

Ground to Air Codes

Lay out those symbols for communications as needed. Make as much contrast as possible. Symbols at least 10 feet high or larger.

Require Medical Supplies		Require Doctor Serious Injury	
Unable To Proceed	X	Require Food And Water	F
Require Map and Compass	□	Require Firearms And Ammunition	∨ ∨
All Well	└┘	Indicate Direction To Proceed	K
AM Proceeding In This Direction	└───>		
No	N	Yes	Y