



GREAT SALT LAKE COUNCIL

BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA®

Lost Youth Prevention

The State of Utah with its abundance of public lands and wilderness provides a unique opportunity for its young people to enjoy outdoor recreation experiences. In the past, a number of youth have become separated from their group while in Utah's remote areas. In 2005 the Great Salt Lake Council created a Lost Youth Prevention, Survival and Rescue Task Force. The task force recommended the following to reduce or eliminate lost youth incidents. Many of these items are covered as you complete and file the BSA's Tour Plan.

Adult leaders -

- 1.) Should be *physically fit* so they can manage themselves and a group of youth in the outdoors.
- 2.) The leader in charge should be someone with *significant experience* in working with young people in the outdoors. The leader's skills should include the ability to *evaluate* whether *each youth* can participate in the activity without endangering others.
- 3.) *Consult with the parent or guardian* of each youth to determine any physical limitations a youth may have.
- 4.) *Review any instructional materials relating to the outdoor activity* and be prepared to follow the guidelines for that activity.
- 5.) *Be familiar with the area* and any alternative access routes. At least *one adult leader should have recently traveled any hiking or water routes* before the activity to anticipate concerns.
- 6.) *Leaders should have moderate to advanced orienteering skills* and possess a current map of the outdoor area. At least one adult leader should have both a compass and GPS. *Each leader should know the most expeditious routes out of the area* in case of fire, weather, or illness/injury.
- 7.) Adult leaders should *make others (public agencies, landowners, parents) aware* of planned camping areas, the route and timetable of the youth group.
- 8.) If the group will be spread out at any time during the outdoor activity, the group should *be able to communicate effectively with communication equipment*. The leaders should be aware of the limitations of such equipment.
- 9.) The group should *possess and have access to water purification tablets or a water filter*.
- 10.) At the beginning of any trip or the start of any activity, leaders *should designate prearranged rallying points for the group*. Adult leaders should assure that each youth knows how to find these rallying points on a map carried by each youth. Each member of the group should understand when they are to terminate the activity and meet at the rallying points.
- 11.) *If a youth is missing* or otherwise unaccounted for, the *adult leaders must immediately assemble all members of the group* to gather relevant information about the missing youth. If the missing youth is not

found quickly, *local law enforcement must be immediately notified*. Adult leaders should take great care in sending individuals out to look for a lost youth so they do not become lost or injured as well.

Scouts -

- 1.) *Know well the information contained under the heading "What to Do if You are Lost" in the Boy Scout Handbook.*
- 2.) *There is no shame in becoming lost or disoriented.* Even the most experienced outdoorsman can become disoriented on occasion. No one will be angry if a member of the group becomes lost. *Do not hide from those looking for you* out of fear of getting in trouble.
- 3.) *Carry and know the contents of your essentials kit, including how to use the items in it.* A kit should include a map and compass.
- 4.) Follow the *buddy system at all times*. Never be out of sight or voice contact with your buddy. If you are separating themselves from the group, You must tell someone where you are going, the route, and when you will return.
- 5.) *Know the route and the geographic features of the area* and be able to *identify both on a map*. On any hike or trek, the *group should stop regularly and observe the surroundings* to identify the geographic features and relate those features on a map.
- 6.) *If you become lost, sit down and evaluate the situation* before doing anything. While sitting down, inventory what you have on your person and mentally retrace your movements. *Remain as calm as possible*.
- 7.) Understand that people will be looking for you. Your chances of being found are improved if *you stay in the immediate area*. If you are not sure where to go to rejoin the group... stay put.
- 8.) *Make yourself as visible as possible...* in clearings using rocks, bright clothing, or other means.
- 9.) *Stay dry and warm*, especially at night or when exposed to wind. *Know how to build a temporary shelter*. A small shelter protects better than a large shelter. Find a shelter in the immediate area where you become lost. *Know how to maintain body heat and how to safely start and maintain a fire* for shelter and signaling. You should *know several ways to signal for help*.
- 10.) If you run out of food, it may be *best to not eat wild game or plants*.