

MARYLAND PARKS AND WILDERNESS COMMISSION



POCKET SURVIVAL GUIDE

PLANNING, RESOURCES, AND BASIC GUIDELINES

What to Pack

Being adequately equipped is the first step in surviving difficult conditions. This list represents the bare minimum requirements.

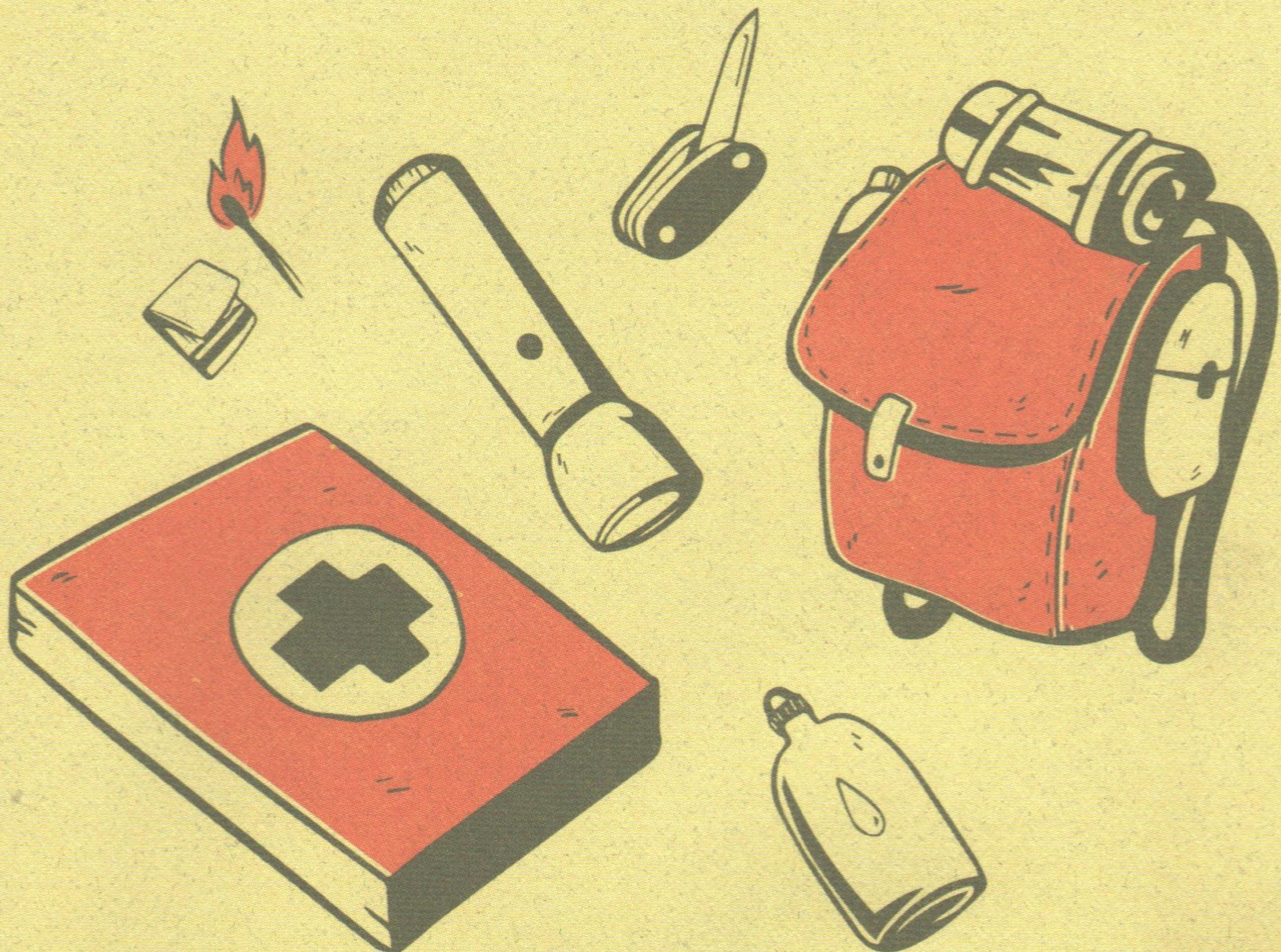
1. Clothing that will work for a variety of temperatures. This includes rain gear. Try to dress in layers whenever possible.
2. Food that is both calorie-dense and easily carried. Protein or ration bars and MREs are usually a good option, as they will not weigh down your pack.
3. Water. The rule of thumb is one gallon per person per day. Always have purification tablets with you, in case your supply runs out.
4. A knife. If you are stranded, this tool will be essential for making shelter and preparing food.
5. Fire-starting materials. This includes matches, lighters, steel wool, and other paraphernalia.
6. Tarps and paracords. Impromptu shelter may be necessary in the event of extreme weather.
7. Signaling items. In an emergency, flares and/or fluorescent cloths can draw the attention of rescuers.
8. Navigational tools. Even if you're sure of your route, a map and compass are essential.
9. Telecommunication tools. Cell phones may not have service in remote areas, so satellite phones and two-way radios can be extremely helpful.

Without these items, the odds are against you. Don't allow yourself to fall into the trap of a false sense of security. Be prepared.

General Safety Considerations

Follow these rules during any hike or excursion.

1. Always let others know where you are going and when you expect to return. If you change your plans, go back to your entry point and communicate any changes.
2. Do not rely solely on your own instincts for navigation. Use the tools you have available. What feels like moving in the right direction may in fact be walking in circles.
3. In the event you are lost, stay in one place. It's harder to locate a person on the move.
4. If an emergency happens, remain calm. Panicking can make difficult situations even more challenging.



When to Seek Help

Ranger or other professional assistance is required during any of the following situations:

1. You lose your way for more than a few hours.
2. You are unable to locate any trail or path.
3. You find yourself unintentionally returning to the same location.
4. You do not have enough supplies to make it to your destination.
5. Someone in your party requires medical attention.
This includes but is not limited to: accidental injuries, illness, attacks by animals, ingesting poisonous substances, and assault.
6. Someone in your party becomes belligerent to other members, to the point that it becomes a safety concern.
7. Someone in your party displays symptoms such as hallucinations, paranoia, extreme lethargy, extreme excitability, or simply seems "off." Trust your instincts and seek help.

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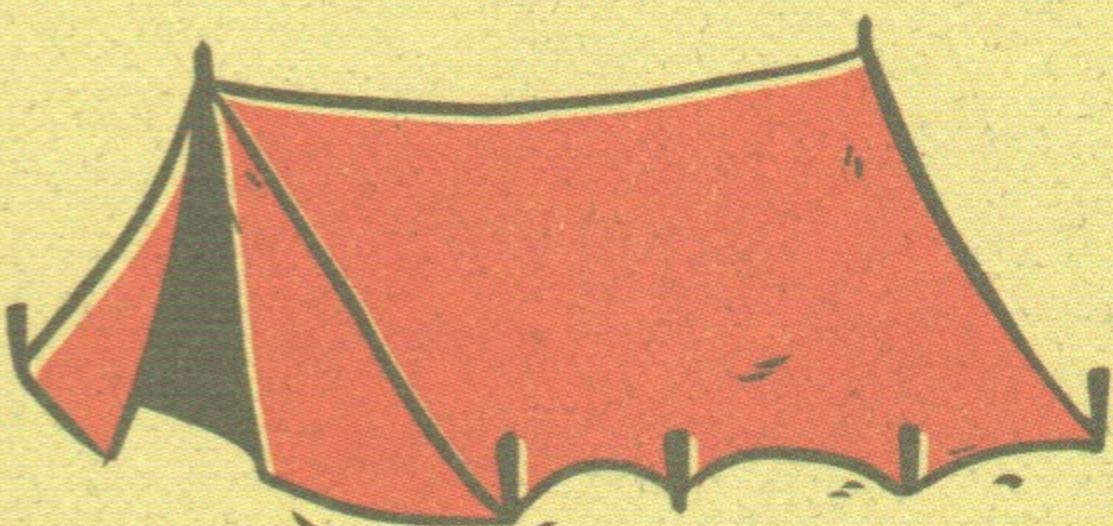
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SHELTER

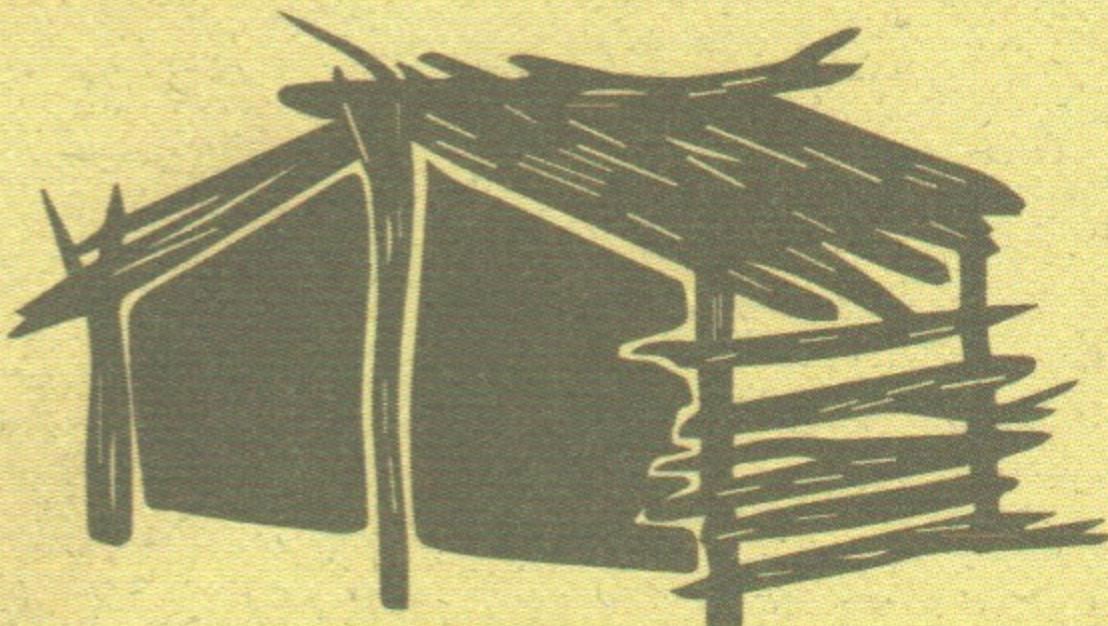
Common Types of Improvised Shelters



1. Tarp-based. This type is the simplest form of shelter. For more details, see the next section.



2. Debris-based. This structure is made from natural materials such as branches and leaves.



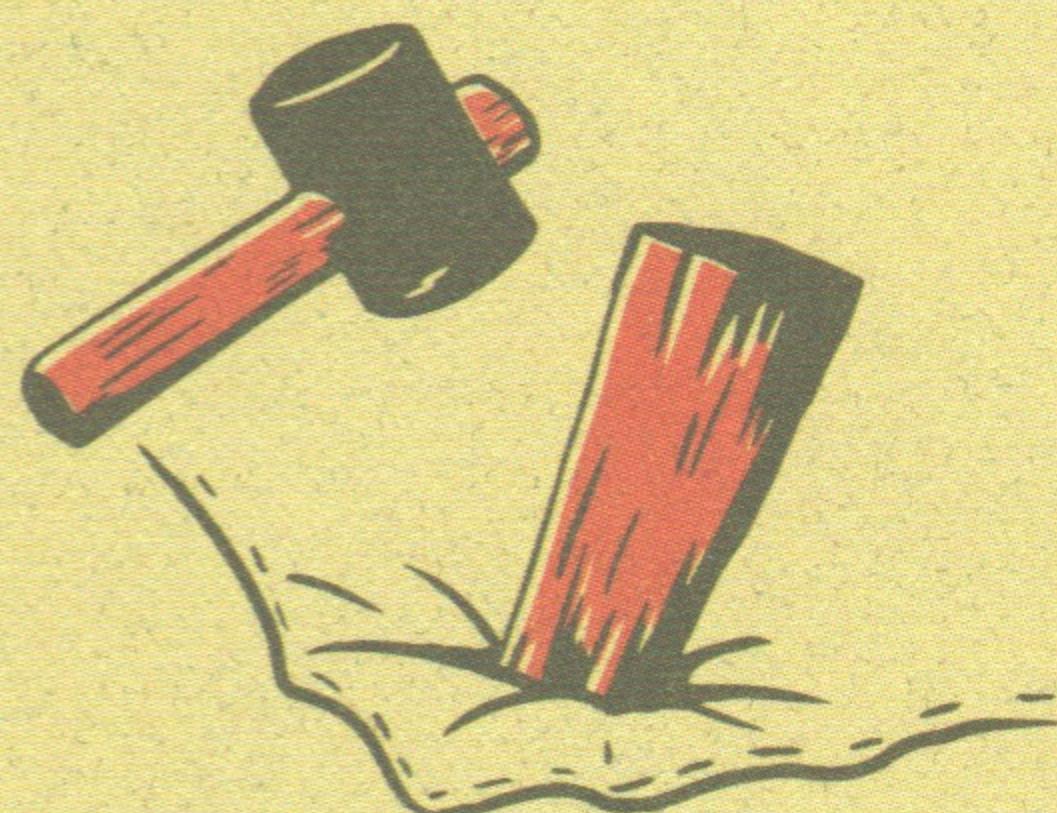
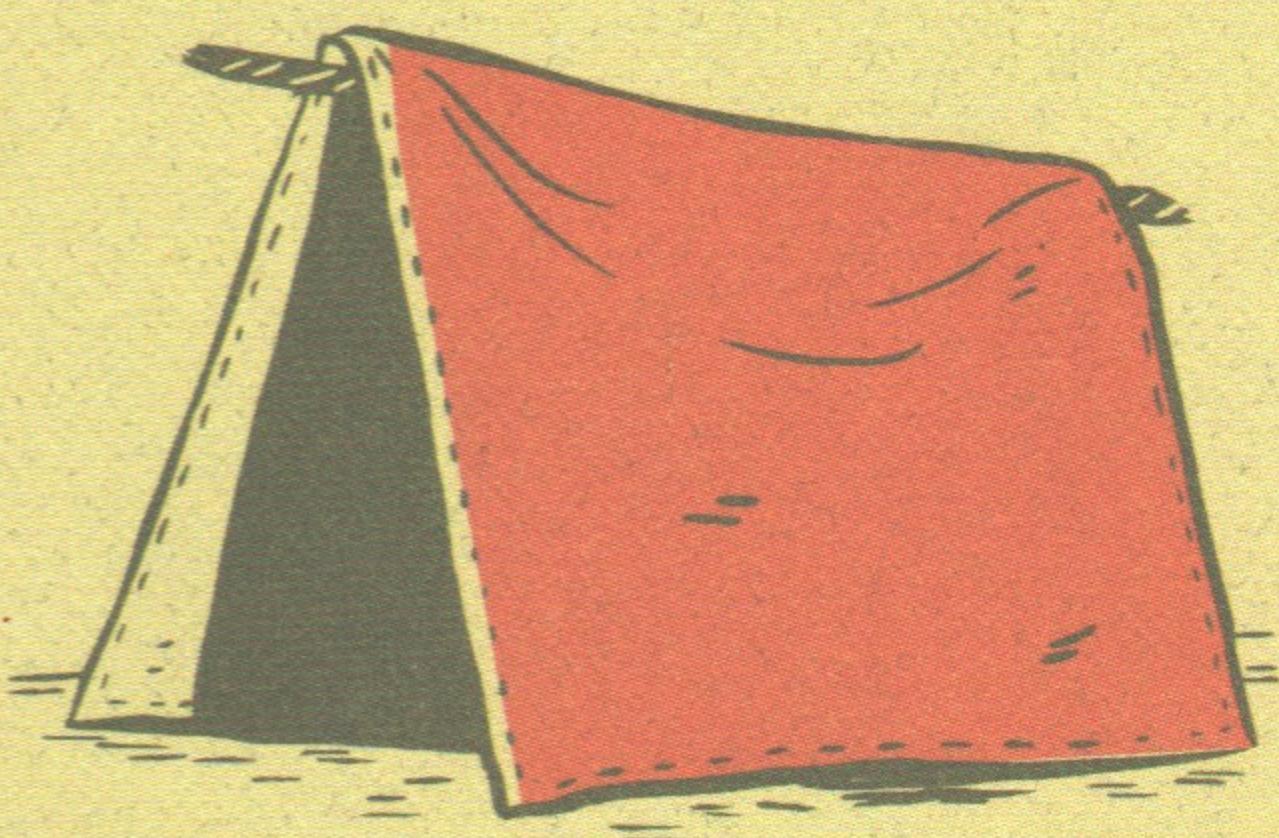
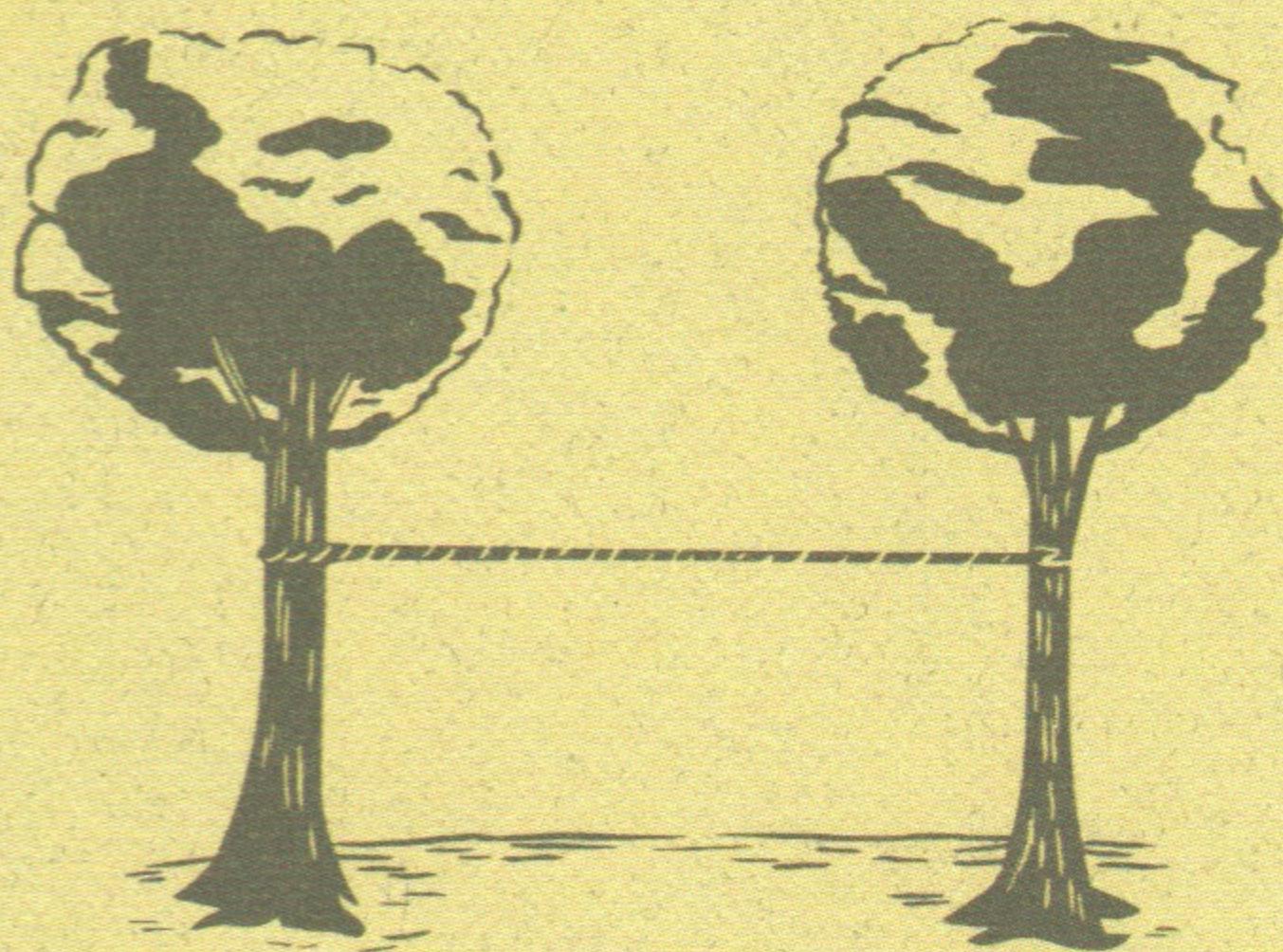
3. Simple hut. Taking several days to build, this type can be made with interlacing branches and mud. Sturdy deciduous tree species such as white oak (*quercus alba*) or American sycamore (*platanus occidentalis*) are good options for materials.



4. Burrow. In colder climates, tunneling in snow can create a shelter with good insulation.

Remember to always check your shelter for snakes, dangerous insects, and other vermin. Your tent is inviting to more than just humans.

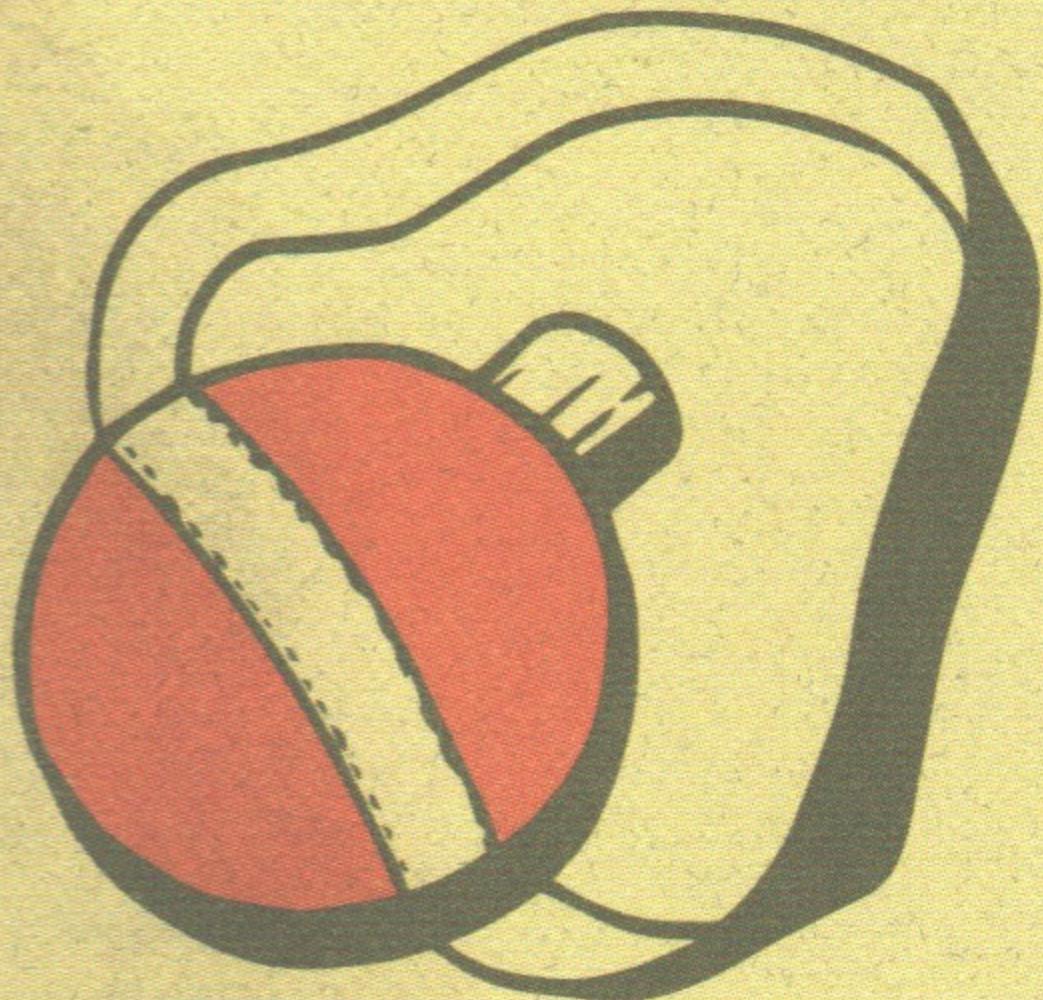
How to Build a Tarp and Paracord Shelter



An A-frame tarp shelter can be built quickly and does not require much effort or skill. First, string the paracord between two trees so that it is level with the ground. Then, place the tarp over the cord and arrange the free ends so that they are positioned at a 30 degree angle. Stake the tarp down. This structure will provide several square feet of shelter.

WATER

Types of Water Sources



1. Flowing, including streams, rivers, and creeks.
2. Still, including lakes and ponds.
3. Underground, including springs and aquifers.
4. Snow.

NOTE: Any water from a natural source **MUST** be purified using water purification tablets. Many people have died from drinking unpurified water. Don't be one of them.

How to Access Groundwater

Clues that indicate possible groundwater include evidence of dried-up ponds or streams, as well as the presence of plants and trees that require a large amount of water.

If groundwater exists in an area, you may need to dig up to seven feet to find it. For efficiency's sake, dig holes no closer than four feet apart. When you reach the source, the water will begin to bubble up into the ditch.

Always purify water before drinking. See the warning above.

EDIBLE PLANTS

Common Edible Plants

The following Maryland species have parts that are safe to eat. However, if you are not 100% sure you have successfully identified a particular plant, or if you are not sure which particular parts are edible, do NOT consume it without testing (see next section).



1. Anise Scented Goldenrod (*Solidago odora*)



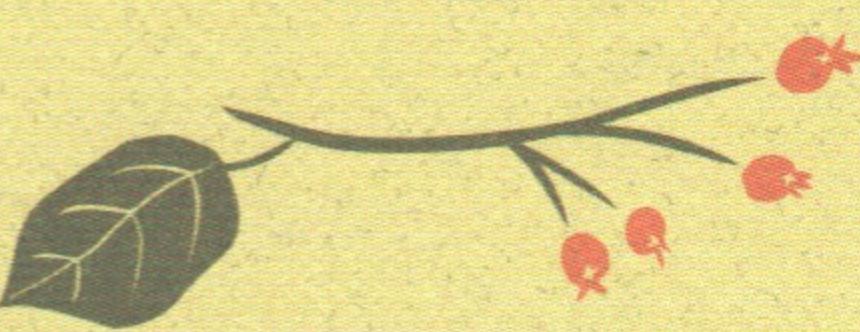
2. Chicory (*Cichorium intybus*)



3. New Jersey Tea (*Ceanothus americanus*)



4. Pawpaw (*Asimina triloba*)



5. Common Serviceberry (*Amelanchier arborea*)



6. Wild Mint (*Mentha arvensis*)



7. American Wintergreen (*Gaultheria procumbens*)

Please note that certain elements of the above plants (for example, roots in some species) are NOT consumable. If you do not have a strong knowledge of edible plants, use the test in the next section to determine which parts are safe.

Testing for Edibility

Every element of the plant—roots, stems, leaves, buds, and flowers—must be tested SEPARATELY.

1. Note any unpleasant odors, which can be a sign of poisonous substances. If you sense these, discard the plant element. It is likely unsafe to eat.
2. Place the plant element on your skin—the forearm or wrist works best—for 15 minutes, then wait eight hours for a reaction. If any itching or burning occurs, do not eat the plant element.
3. If no reaction is present, prepare the plant element by heating or boiling until it reaches the consistency at which you plan to eat it. Then, repeat Step 2 for three minutes using your lips instead of your arm. Only if you are reaction-free should you continue to Step 4.
4. Place a small piece of the plant element inside your mouth and wait 15 more minutes. If no reaction occurs, you can move on to Step 5.
5. Chew the plant thoroughly and hold it in your mouth for another 15 minutes. If no reaction occurs, swallow.
6. Wait a minimum of eight hours before consuming the rest of the plant element.

If you are even the slightest bit uncertain as to whether you are experiencing a reaction, do not move forward.

FIRE

Building a Fire



1. Make sure you have tinder (smaller pieces like dry grass or leaves), kindling (medium-sized pieces like twigs and branches), and fuel wood (larger branches).



3. Surround the kindling with a similarly shaped structure made of fuel wood.

4. Light the tinder using a match or firestarter.

Always watch your fire carefully, and never leave it unattended. All it takes is a few careless seconds for a major fire to take hold.

Extinguishing a Fire

Do not attempt to put the fire out by dousing—using a large amount of water at one time. Rather, apply water in a sprinkling motion and stir so that the water touches all of the inflamed matter more thoroughly. Be patient, as a fire can take up to half an hour to fully extinguish.

WILD ANIMALS

Common Dangerous Species in Maryland



1. Black Bear (*Ursus americanus*)



2. Eastern Copperhead (*Agkistrodon contortrix*)



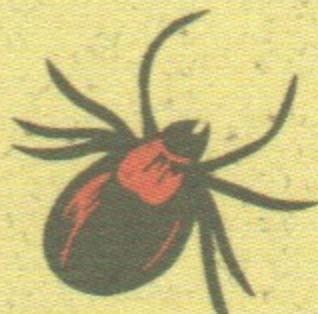
3. Timber Rattlesnake (*Crotalus horridus*)



4. Coyote (*Canis latrans*)



5. Raccoon (*Procyon lotor*)



6. Ticks (multiple species)

Safety Strategies for Wildlife Encounters

1. Make noise as you progress on the trail. Most species are afraid of humans and will hide when they sense footsteps.
2. Always keep your campsite clean. Remember, open containers of food are an invitation for animals.
3. Do not place your hands or feet anywhere you cannot directly see. This is particularly important for avoiding snake bites.
4. Regularly check your skin for parasitic insects. Most species prefer warm, damp areas, such as the armpits. Wearing clothing that does not easily allow insects to crawl inside—for example, pants tucked into socks—can be helpful.
5. Only hike during daylight hours. Seeing clearly will give you an advantage in any wildlife encounter.
6. Carry bear spray if you are hiking alone.
7. If you are approached by a black bear, do NOT play dead. If the bear tries to harm you, fight back as needed, concentrating force on the bear's face.
8. Do not feed any animals, whether you consider them dangerous or not.

Ray

1. says he knows the way, but then we always get lost.

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2. Won't stop whispering at night. Says the whisper is coming from outside the van.

.. -- / - . --- - / . - - . / .. - - - - - - -

3. Read his little diary just now. --. .-. ---

4. ... - .. - - . - - - -- . - . everywhere.

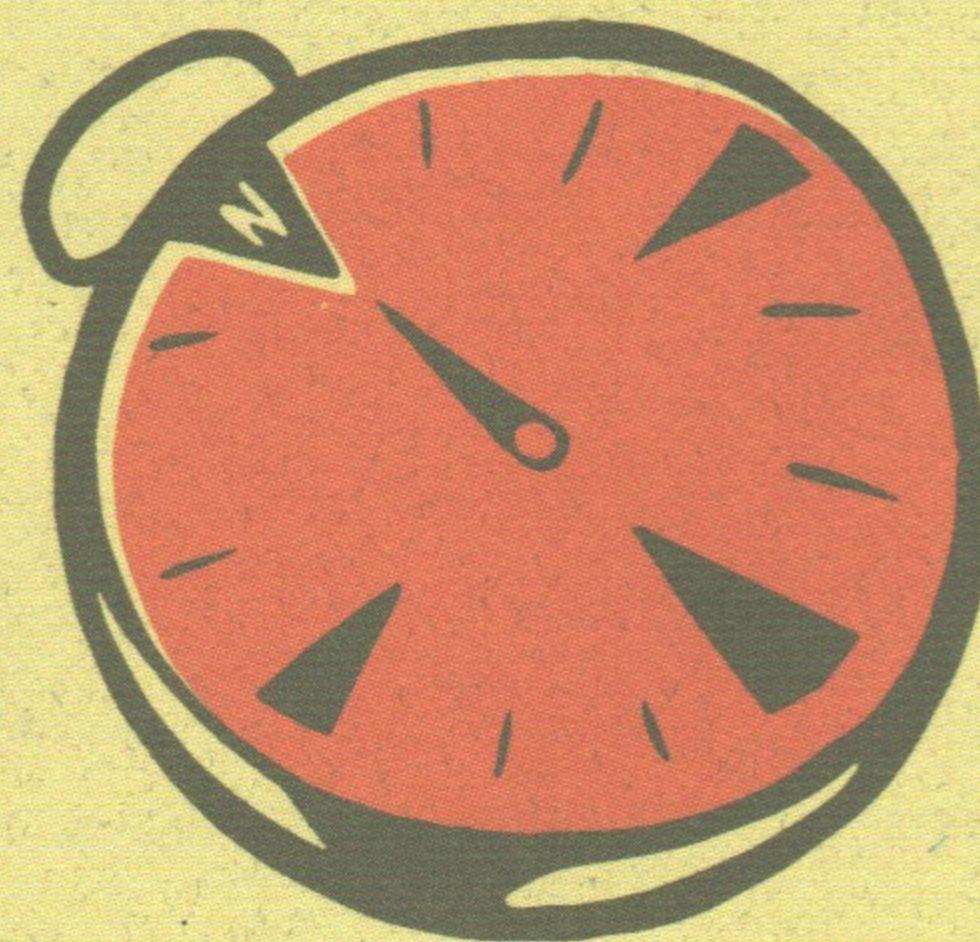
5. More of them tonight.

6. Rock formations. / - - . - . - - . - - . - - .

NAVIGATION

Tips and Tricks to Find Your Way

1. Never separate from your party, if at all possible. If you do become separated, retrace your route and meet back up at your entry point.
2. If you are unsure of how far you have traveled, use timing to measure distance. Most people will take twenty minutes to walk a mile at a brisk pace.
3. If your compass fails, you can find south by looking for vegetation, which usually grows thicker with southern exposure, with one exception: mosses and lichens are often denser on the northern side of trees.
4. If all else fails, find a line of landmarks—at least three—and move toward it. Keep following this line until you reach safety.



Fording

The most important decision you will make when crossing a river or stream is your entry point. While it may be tempting to cross where the stream is narrower, the currents can be much more concentrated here. Better a long and safe crossing than a quick and dangerous one.

Before you cross, make sure you have the appropriate footwear. Never cross a stream barefoot, and whenever possible, use a walking stick to help with balance.



SIGNALING

Common Signaling Devices

1. Fire. Three columns of black smoke are the international signal for distress.
2. Mirrors. The light created by the mirror's reflection can signify distress when moved in a sweeping motion across the horizon.
3. Flare devices. Whether from a pen, gun, or other apparatus, these bursts of flame can reach up to 215 meters high.
4. Flashlight. This method can be used to send messages in Morse code.
5. Colorful clothing, such as a bandana. These items can serve as an impromptu signal flag.

Sending an SOS

A light source can be used to send out a distress signal by communicating the letters S, O, and S. Morse code uses a series of dots (short pulses) and dashes (longer pulses) to form a message.

SOS in Morse code looks like this:

What To Do Next

... --- ...

~~Stay at the van until we have a game plan.
See "General Safety Considerations."~~

We can't stay here. It knows where we are.

Leave a trail for EB? Will these things
be able to follow it?



Tips and strategies included in this Guide are general suggestions for good practice and are not intended to be the definitive guide to the outdoors. Always use good, sensible judgement and planning in any outdoor scenario, and do not blindly follow advice without any personal research.