



## **Outdoor Recreation:** **General Information and Guidelines**



- Environmental Ethics
- Appropriate Dress
- Health Concerns
- Survival Tips
- Water Safety

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### **Environmental Ethics**

*“Ethical behavior is doing the right things when no one else is watching – even when doing the wrong thing is legal.”*

- Aldo Leopold

#### **General:**

- Respect natural resources:
  - Leave the land better than you found it (don't litter, pick up trash).
  - Abide by laws, regulations, boundaries, etc.
  - Respect private property.
- Respect the rights of others with whom you share the resource.

#### **Wildlife:**

Wildlife is easily scared by humans. If animals are nesting, breeding, or seeking shelter, scaring them can create a dangerous situation for them or their young. Observe the following guidelines when watching wildlife:

- Limit noise so as to not frighten animals. Frightened animals use unnecessary energy.
- Keep a respectful distance so your presence does not interfere with animal activity.
- Stay at least 100 feet from nesting sites.

#### **Water:**

- Paddle quietly.
- Minimize impacts to the shore when launching, portaging, or taking out.
- Don't splash paddles near wildlife.
- Use environmentally safe products, including soaps and detergents, around water.
- Keep in mind the result of run-off and what it might bring to nearby bodies of water.
- Conduct all toilet activity at least 200 feet from any body of water.

#### **Camping:**

- Avoid building campfires except in established fire rings or in emergencies.
- Set up campsites in established areas or where minimal impact to area will be made.
- Pack out human waste when in sensitive or heavily used environments.
- Use biodegradable soaps and detergents at least 100 feet from any water body.

## **Appropriate Dress**

### **Cool/Cold Weather:**

- Wear layers. At least 3–4, you can shed layers as you get warm and put them back on as it gets chilly. An additional insulating layer should be stored in your backpack or vehicle.
  - Outermost layer: weatherproof (wind, water, sun) material like nylon or gortex
  - Middle layer(s): warming/insulating fabrics like fleece
  - Next to the skin: wicking material (polypropylene, wool, etc.); avoid cotton
- Eliminate spaces for cold air to get through. For example, coveralls are warmer than a coat and insulated pants; mittens are warmer than gloves.
- Hats and mittens. The majority of body heat is lost through the head and extremities.
- Hand and feet warmers
- Extra socks
- Gaiters keep ankles dry in deep snow, mud, or water
- Pack high energy foods and hot fluids
- Sunglasses protect from eyes snow glare

### **Warm Weather:**

- Light colors reflect the sun's rays
- Wicking fabrics pull perspiration off your skin
- A hat or cap protects head and eyes from sun
- Sunglasses & sunscreen
- Sturdy, comfortable shoes
- Long pants protect legs from poison ivy, scratches, sunburn, and insects
- Pack lots of water

### **Insects (mosquitoes, ticks, etc.) and Heavy Vegetation:**

- Long sleeved shirt
- Long pants tucked into socks to keep insects out
- Light-colored clothes allow for easier detection of insects
- Use insect repellent containing DEET

**ALWAYS have extra clothes in case the weather takes a turn for the worst.**

## Health Concerns

	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Symptoms</b>	<b>Prevention</b>	<b>Treatment</b>
<b>Heat Exhaustion</b>	Core body temperature increases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pale clammy skin</li> <li>• Headache</li> <li>• Nausea</li> <li>• Dizziness</li> <li>• Vomiting</li> <li>• Weakness</li> <li>• Muscle cramps</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drink lots of water</li> <li>• Take frequent breaks</li> <li>• Dress in layers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drink water</li> <li>• Seek shade or cool location</li> <li>• Fan but don't overchill</li> </ul>
<b>Heat Stroke</b>	Body temperature elevates to unsafe levels, possibly over 105°	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dry, hot, flushed skin that is dark or purple in color</li> <li>• Dilated pupils</li> <li>• Slow/weak pulse</li> <li>• Shallow breathing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drink lots of water</li> <li>• Take frequent breaks</li> <li>• Dress in layers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>DO NOT</b> provide fluids</li> <li>• Wrap in sheet and soak with cool (not cold) water</li> <li>• Fan but don't overchill</li> <li>• Seek medical attention immediately</li> </ul>
<b>Frost Bite</b>	Body tissue freezes, typically in extremities and nose/ears	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skin turns off white, prickly or tingly feeling</li> <li>• Painful initially then loss of feeling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dress properly for cold temperatures</li> <li>• Wear face cover</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Slowly</u> warm affected area (<b>DO NOT RUB</b>)</li> <li>• Wrap with warm dry cloth</li> <li>• Seek warm shelter and drink hot liquids</li> <li>• Seek medical attention</li> </ul>
<b>Hypothermia</b>	Body loses heat faster than it can produce it. Core temp falls.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uncontrolled shivering</li> <li>• Slow, slurred speech</li> <li>• Memory loss</li> <li>• Irrational behavior</li> <li>• Lack of body movement</li> <li>• Drunken appearance</li> <li>• Sleepiness</li> <li>• Unconsciousness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dress for protection from wind and water</li> <li>• Eat high calorie foods</li> <li>• Beware wet or windy weather</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Find shelter</li> <li>• Replace or dry wet clothing</li> <li>• Drink warm liquids</li> <li>• Warm victim slowly</li> <li>• Seek medical attention immediately</li> </ul>

## **Survival Tips**

- Always leave notice. Tell someone where you're going and when you plan to return.
- Go with a partner or group whenever possible. If you must go alone, make sure to leave notice and have a well defined plan.
- Know your own limits. If there's something that you can't do or aren't comfortable doing, let people know.
- Stay dry and warm. Pack your clothes and your sleeping bag in water proof bags. If you get wet, find shelter and change into dry clothes. Wear a hat.
- Beware of the sun, even on cloudy days. Put on sunscreen and reapply if necessary. Sunburn with dehydration can lead to heat exhaustion.
- Learn basic first aid (or travel with someone who knows it). You should know how to treat hypothermia and heat exhaustion, cuts, blisters and burns; how to stop bleeding, make a splint or a sling, and treat for shock.
- Watch the weather before and during your adventure. Be prepared for the worst and don't trust the forecast.
- On day hikes, plan to return to your car/camp before dark.
- Take survival and first aid kits. The size and materials of your kits depend on the intensity of your adventure.
- Know how to build a fire. Fire provides light, heat, and warmth in an emergency. Take fire starting materials.
- Stay hydrated. You can quickly dehydrate in ALL kinds of weather. Try to drink a quart of water per hour, especially in hot weather.

### **If lost or disoriented, STOP:**

**Sit Down**

**Think**

**Observe**

**Plan**

## **Water Safety**

*Drowning is the second leading cause of death (after auto accidents) of persons aged 44 years and younger in the United States.*

- Learn to swim. The best thing anyone can do to stay safe in and around the water is to learn to swim. This includes anyone participating in any water sport or boating activity.
- Wear a life jacket when enjoying the water, even if you know how to swim.
- If recreating on a river, know river markings and landmarks.
- Keep maps, routes, camping permits, and other paperwork handy and stored in a waterproof case. Secure the case to your vessel if boating.
- Watch the weather. Get off the water as soon as you see or hear a storm and if lightning is present. Sudden wind shifts, lightning flashes, and choppy water can all mean a storm is approaching. Bring a portable radio or weather radio to check weather reports. Store your radio in a waterproof bag.
- Be alert for sudden changes in water levels resulting from storms or water releases from dams.
- When the river water is low, many normally hidden rocks and ledges appear. Be extra cautious when recreating in these conditions.
- Do not paddle in water rated above your skill level. Check out the river or lake ahead of time!
- If you want to start and finish at the same point on a river it is easier to go upstream first and then float downstream to your starting point.
- If you are confronted with large waves, position your boat to cut through them at a 45 degree angle.
- Do not change places in a kayak or canoe while on the water. Go ashore. Avoid sudden weight shifts that could capsize a kayak or canoe.
- Pack equipment in a kayak or canoe with the heaviest items on the bottom and distribute the weight evenly. Fasten all gear securely to prevent loss, especially in rough water.
- Boating alone is discouraged. It's best to have three people or two kayaks or canoes.
- If someone in the water is in trouble, never jump in the water to help. Try these other steps first: **Reach, Throw, Row, NEVER Go**

**Reach:** Reach out to the person using lifejacket, belt, stick, oar, fishing pole, etc.

**Throw:** Throw something that will float, like a lifejacket, throw bag with rope, plastic bottle, beach toy, cooler, piece of wood, etc. Throw near and upstream of the person, but avoid hitting them with the object.

**Row:** Row to the person. A boat or raft is best, an air mattress or log will work in a pinch.

**NEVER Go:** Never jump in to try to swim to a victim. Instead, go for help.

**Water regulations in Iowa are set by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. For a complete list of rules, go to the Iowa DNR website (<http://www.iowadnr.gov/>) or refer to the current edition of "The Handbook of Iowa Boating Laws and Responsibilities."**