The Ten Essentials

BSA Handbook, pages 207-210

1. Pocketknife



A good quality *utility knife*, like a small Boy Scouts pocketknife, is a great tool to carry. It enables you to repair gear, cut food, help with first aid, make kindling, open plastic bags, cut rope, open cans, etc.

2. First-Aid Kit



A good first aid kit doesn't have to be big and bulky. Basic items:

- 6, 1-inch band aids
- 2, 3"x3" gauze pads
- 1, adhesive tape, small roll
- 1, pair of scissors
- 1, pair of latex gloves
- 1, 3"x6" Moleskin pad
- pencil and paper
- 1, soap, small bar
- 6, antiseptic cleansing towels
- 1, mouth barrier device for CPR

3. Extra Clothing



Bring extra clothing layers to help you deal with worse weather conditions than you expect on your trip. Avoid cotton. For example:

- A *water-resistant shell* and a *fleece sweater* can help you deal with ornery mountain conditions. Think layers instead of a heavy jacket.
- *Hand warmers*, *extra wool socks*, *gloves* and a *fleece cap* can keep your hands, feet, and head warm when you are sleeping or hiking.

4. Rain gear



Heavy rain can quickly chill you to the point of hypothermia. Rain gear can protect you from rain, wind, cold, and even insects. For example:

- In warm weather, you can use a *trash bag*, a *light rain poncho*, or an *umbrella* to protect yourself and your backpack from the rain.
- In cold weather, you can use a *good rain poncho* and a *hat* to protect you from the cold rain, wind and hail.

5. Water



Carry extra water. Start your hike with ***a full 32-oz water bottle*** for a short day hike. Two full 32-oz bottles for a full day hike. Without enough water, your body's muscles and organs can't perform as well and you'll be susceptible to hypothermia, dehydration, and altitude sickness. In addition, carry a *water filter* and/or *water purification chemicals*.

6. Flashlight



A small and lightweight two-cell AA/AAA LED *flashlight* or *headlamp*. Always carry extra batteries. It gets dark earlier in the mountains.

7. Trail food



Take extra non-cook foods for the trail like trail mix, nuts, granola, energy bars, dried fruits, pop tarts, etc. to give you an energy boost while hiking and to give you extra food in case you get delayed or lost.

8. Matches and fire starters

Carry windproof and waterproof matches. Also, fire starters like a candle, priming paste, or tinder are essential to start a fire in a rainy and windy day. Carry these in a separate plastic bag for emergency use.

9. Sun protection



Sun protection is important in the mountains where the sun is bright:

- *Sunglasses* to protect you from ultraviolet rays that cause cataracts.
- *Sunblock* and *lip balm* to avoid getting sunburned.
- *Hat* to protect your head from the sun.

10. Map and compass

Carry a *topographic map* of where you are going and a *compass*. Know how to use them to stay found! A *whistle* and a *mirror* to signal for help.