

# *SARC Information Sheet*



Outdoor Enthusiasts Should Always  
Have With You:

- Map & compass—mandatory
- GPS
- Headlamp/flashlight & extra batteries
- Lunch, plus extra food
- Water
- Adequate clothing for existing conditions & extra clothing
- First aid supplies
- Pocket knife
- Fire starter—waterproof matches/lighter/steel flint striker
- Fire starter tinder
- Metal cup
- Space tarp/small string or cord
- Whistle

*And be sure you know how to use all the equipment you carry!*

Before venturing into the backcountry you should plan your trip. Know where you are starting from, your route for the day and your expected time of return. Make a written itinerary of your plans. It is important that you not deviate from these plans once they are made. Take a copy of your itinerary and leave a copy of it in your car at the trailhead. Also, leave a copy of your itinerary with a friend or responsible party. Tell them when you will be leaving and when you will return. Predetermine at what point this person will call for Search & Rescue, should you become overdue.

*What to do if you become lost...the first thing you always do is **S.T.O.P!***

**S: SIT.** Sit down, gain your composure and remain calm. Have a drink of water and bite to eat. Panicking will only compound the problem. Traveling blindly through the woods will seldom remedy the situation.

**T: THINK.** Analyze your situation. How long have you been lost or disoriented? Can you retrace your steps to a last known point? How much light do you have left in the day? What is the weather like? If the sun is setting and/or weather is bad, shelter is a priority. Analyze your immediate needs. What are they? Heat? Shelter from the elements? First aid needs? Water? Food?

**O: OBSERVE.** What are the immediate dangers? Any injuries? Poor Weather? What are your shelter options? How much fuel is in the area?

**P: PLAN.** Plan what you will do until help arrives. Move to a suitable location. It should provide shelter near sufficient fuels and near open or high areas where you will be seen by searchers. Hang visual attractors in open areas. Blow on your whistle. Gather wood for your fire. Improvise a shelter. Build your fire. Stay put. Moving locations only complicates search and rescue efforts.

*Provided by: Mesa County Search & Rescue  
Volunteers and  
the Mesa County Sheriff's Office*

