

WINTER SURVIVAL EXERCISE by MAJ Bob Fields

Ranking of survival items by Mark Wanig, Survival and Reconnaissance School
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Other uses for the item are as follows: The shortening can be rubbed on the body to protect exposed areas, such as the face, lips, and hands from the cold. In desperation it could be eaten in small amounts. When into an oil the shortening is helpful in starting small fires. Melted shortening, when soaked into a piece of cloth, will produce an effective candlewick. The can is useful in melting snow to produce drinking water. Even in winter-time water is important as the body loses water in many ways, such as through perspiration, respiration, shock reactions, and so on. This water must be replenished because dehydration affects the ability to make clear decisions. Also useful as a cup.

6. **FLASHLIGHT** Inasmuch as the group has little hope of survival if it decides to walk out, its major hope is to catch the attention of search planes. During the day the lid-mirror, smoke, and flags made from clothing represent the best devices. During the night the flashlight is the best signaling device. It is the only effective night-signaling device the group has besides the fire. In the cold, however, a flashlight loses the power of its batteries very quickly. It must, therefore be kept warm if it is to work, which means that it must be kept close to someone's body. The value in the flashlight lies in the fact that if the fire burns low or inadvertently goes out, the flashlight could be immediately turned on the moment a plane is heard.

7. **PIECE OF ROPE** The rope is another versatile piece of equipment. It could be used to pull dead limbs off of trees for firewood. When cut into pieces, the rope is useful in constructing shelters. It can be burned. When frayed it can be used as tinder to start fires. When unraveled it will make good insulation from the cold if it is stuffed inside clothing.

8. **NEWSPAPER (ONE EACH)** The newspaper could be used for starting a fire much the same as the rope. It will also serve as an insulator; when rolled up and placed under the clothes around a person's legs or arms, it provides dead-air space for extra protection from the cold. The paper can be used for recreation by reading it, memorizing it, folding it, or tearing it. It could be rolled up into a cone and yelled through as a signal device. It could also be spread around an area to help signal a rescue party.

9. **.45 CALIBER PISTOL** This pistol provides a sound signaling device. (The international distress signal is three shots fired in rapid succession.) There have been numerous cases of survivors going undetected because by the time the rescue party arrived in the area the survivors were too weak to make a loud noise to attract attention. The butt of the pistol could be used as a hammer. The powder from the shells will assist in fire building. By placing a small bit of cloth in a cartridge, emptied of its bullet, a fire can be started by firing the gun at dry wood on the ground. At night the muzzle blast of a gun is visible, which also makes it useful as a signaling device.

The pistols advantages are counterbalanced by its dangerous disadvantages. Anger, frustration, impatience, irritability, and lapses of rationality may increase as the group waits to be rescued. The availability of a lethal weapon is a real danger to the group under these conditions. Although it could be used for hunting, it would take a highly skilled marksman to kill an animal and then the animal would have to be transported through the snow to the crash site, probably taking more energy than would be advisable.

10. **KNIFE** A knife is a versatile tool, but it is not too important in the winter setting. It could be used for cutting the rope into desired lengths, making several shavings from pieces of wood for tinder, and many other uses.

11. **COMPRESS KIT (WITH GAUZE)** The best use of this item is to wrap the gauze around exposed areas of the body for insulation. Feet and hands are probably the most vulnerable to frostbite, and the gauze can be used to keep them warm. The gauze can be used as candlewick when dipped into melted shortening. It would also make effective tinder. The small supply of the gauze is the reason this item is ranked so low.



OPINIONS AND FEELINGS ARE FREQUENTLY A PERSONAL TRIUMPH OVER GOOD THINKING
YOU DEFINE REALITY BY WHAT YOU KNOW, WHAT YOU BELIEVE, AND WHAT YOU DO ABOUT IT.