

Be Safe in Utah's Back Country

1. Tell others of your plans. Where you are going and when do you expect to return?
2. Know before you go. Learn about the local weather conditions, and conditions of the terrain. Know how to use your emergency gear.
3. Know your limitations and when to postpone your hike. Turn back if the weather is changing; the terrain is too strenuous, or the river is too high, etc.
4. Stay together. Lone hikers are more likely to need rescuing.
5. Pack in and pack out what you take into the backcountry. (Follow Leave No Trace principles and keep in mind that garbage bags are a multi-use marvel as well.)
6. While cell phones can be helpful, be aware that cell phone coverage can be sporadic at best in the backcountry.
7. If you need rescue, don't be a moving target. Shelter in place, whether that's near a trail, a body of water, your disabled vehicle, etc. If you are lost, the most important thing to do is to not panic but to S.T.O.P. (Sit, Think, Observe and Plan). Your brain is your most important piece of survival gear. The first ten minutes of being lost are when most search fatalities make their deadly mistake.
8. If on the water, make sure you have enough Personal Floatation Devices for each person in the boat or raft. Adults and youth in your canoe or raft should know how to self-rescue in the event the watercraft capsizes. (Unskilled swimmers should wear a PFD at all times.)
9. Carry the appropriate gear and be prepared for emergencies. (See Ten Essential Systems list below) When choosing your gear, remember that the body's ability to maintain its core temperature is essential to survival, and pack accordingly.
10. Know how to contact the local sheriff's office in an emergency.

Ten Essential "Systems" For Hikers

The tried and true list of Ten Essentials was developed by the Seattle-based Mountaineers, and has been updated since it first originated in the 1930's. It was created to answer two basic questions: First, can you respond positively to an accident or emergency? Second, can you safely spend a night—or more—out? The list has changed from a list of individual items to a list of functional systems.

1. Navigation (map and compass)
2. Sun protection (sunglasses, sunscreen and lip balm with sunscreen)
3. Insulation (wear several thin layers of clothing to adapt to temperature and weather changes as needed)
4. Illumination (headlamp/flashlight)
5. First-aid supplies (Small first aid kit for when you or others fall, trip, burn, or bleed)
6. Fire (waterproof matches/lighter/candles)
7. Repair kit and tools (e.g. multipurpose knife, small amount of duct tape)
8. Nutrition (extra food to help maintain energy levels)
9. Hydration (extra water is essential in Utah's dry and high elevation)
10. Emergency Shelter (e.g. emergency space blanket or tube tent)