

▶ RESCUE

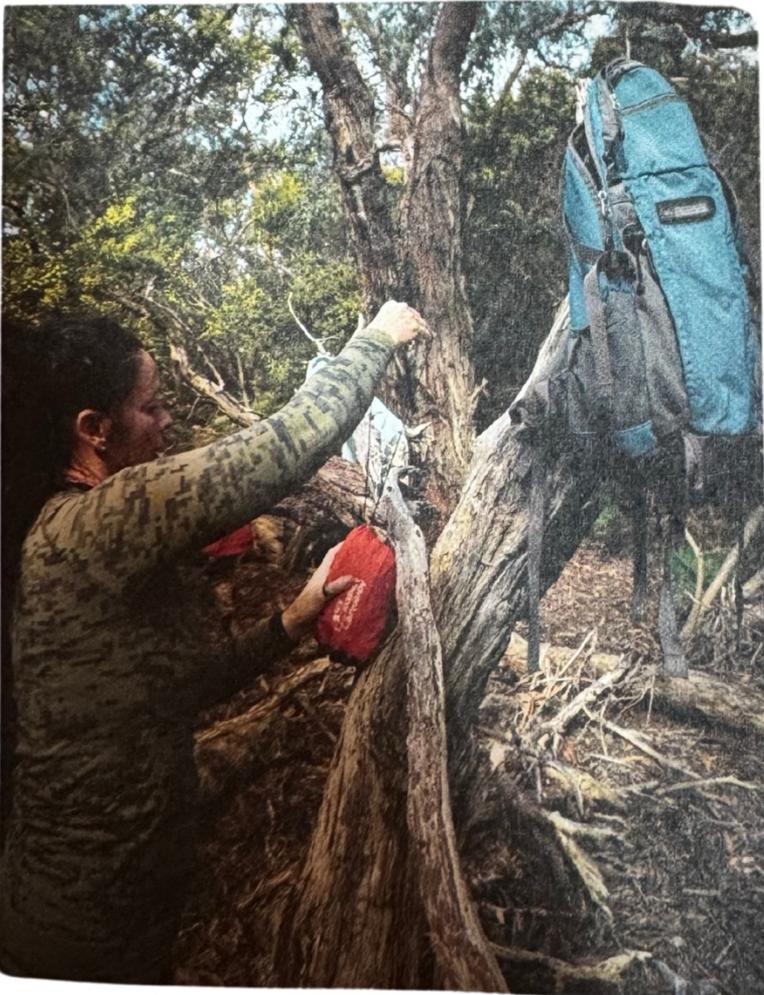
Although the four basic needs of survival are commonly thought of as shelter, water, food, and fire, I include rescue under my basic needs. The reason for this is because the sooner your survival situation ends successfully, the better for you. This will either happen by you figuring out how to get out of the situation, or by someone finding you

It is recommended in a survival situation to remain where you are when your disaster strikes. If it is a threat to your life to remain in that spot, then move on to somewhere your life isn't in immediate danger. Examples of this might be a capsized boat, bushfire, or lack of water.

If your life isn't in immediate danger, staying where you are will present you with the best chance of survival. Not only will you be closer to where rescuers might start to look for you, you won't be potentially moving away from rescuers as they search for you. It also gives you time to create an environment that you could survive in long term if you have to.

I have put myself in challenges where I am moving and trying to survive and where I am staying in one area and trying to survive, and it is always easier to stay put. When you are on the move, you are burning a lot of calories for something other than your immediate survival, and you are lacking the time to ensure that you have adequate shelter, water, and food for the night.

Once you have decided that you need rescuing, and you have taken steps to ensure that shelter, water, and warmth are taken care of, it is time to think about making yourself as visible as possible. How you do this will depend on what resources you have around you and on you. You will need to get inventive. The more visible you can make yourself, the more likely you are to be rescued. Try everything. As silly as it seems, people really have been rescued by putting messages in bottles and floating them out to sea.



▶ SIGNALING

Your rescue is likely to come by means of air, land vehicle, or a rescue mission on foot. You will need to prepare something visible for all the scenarios. Even if you think that you will hear someone who passes by you on foot, you may be sleeping or out collecting water, and they need to know you are around. Generally, you will have about two minutes from the time you hear an aircraft to the time it is out of range, so any signaling needs to be thought out beforehand and ready to go.

Things that will make you more visible to rescuers include:

- Bright Colors
- Reflective surfaces
- Straight lines and arrows
- Words on the ground
- Thick smoke
- Bright Flames
- Torch Trees
- Lights in the dark

BRIGHT COLORS Assuming you have spare gear or clothing with you, hang it from the branches of a high *tree*, ensuring the leaves don't block the item from view. Place it out in the middle of a clearing, anchored so it doesn't blow away. Use branches or rocks to make an arrow to indicate the location of your shelter. Use bright green vegetation on darker surfaces to write a message for aerial search parties. Building a tepee structure to hang your bright and colorful pieces from is also a good idea, as the tepee structure itself will draw the eye.

REFLECTIVE SURFACES While a signal mirror is ideal, assuming you don't have one on you, any reflective surface will do. Utilize garbage that you might find around you, such as polished cans or glass bottles. These will catch the sun's rays, causing a flash of bright light observable from up to two miles away. Hang these in trees around your location. When the wind blows, they will move and signal without you needing to tend to them.

Have a polished surface on you at all times in case you hear a vehicle. The front of a mobile phone will work even if you are out of signal or your battery has died. Practice reflecting the sun's rays until you know how to aim them.



AERIAL RESCUE hold your hand to the sky where the plane is and direct the light from the sun to your hand; remove your hand and you know that the light should be visible from the plane.



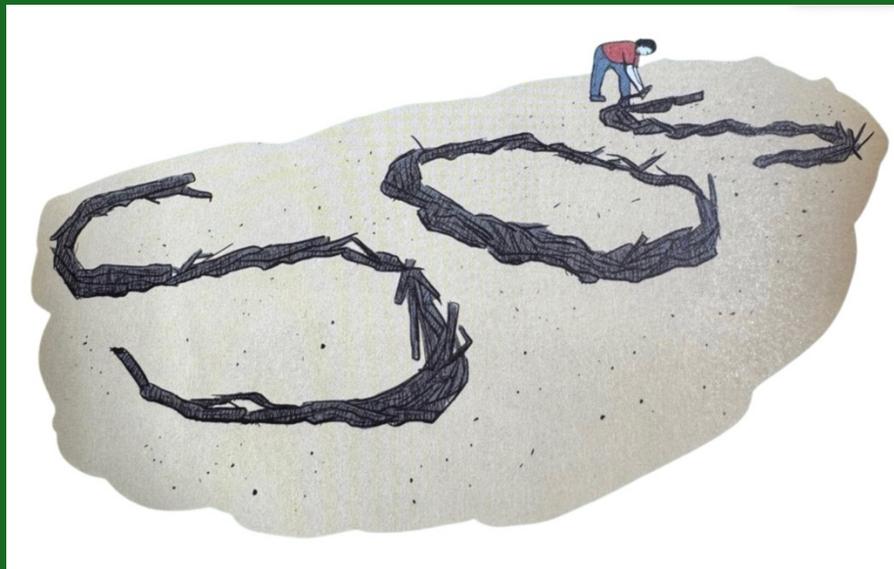
GROUND RESCUE reflect the light to the ground and then direct it in a straight line to the vehicle or person.

Keep signaling until you know that you have been seen. You will know this when you receive some kind of acknowledgement from the rescue party. It may be in the form of a signal back, a change of course, or a low flyover of the aircraft.

Straight lines and arrows Nature rarely constructs in straight lines, so any structure with straight lines stands out; lines and arrows made of rocks, branches, or leaves pointing to your location or the direction you are traveling will attract attention.

Words on the ground SOS was accepted as the worldwide signal for distress in 1906. Although many people believe it is an acronym for something, it was chosen because it translates easily in Morse code (three dots, three dashes, three dots). HELP would also work, but would require knowledge of the English language. If you are writing words on the ground, make sure you do them in a cleared area, easily visible from above. Make them as large as you can, and try to distinguish them in some way from the ground you are creating them on. Straight-line letters work best, as they don't blend in with nature as easily. Make sure you destroy your words when you are rescued, to ensure people don't think someone still needs saving.

just as well. Natural divots in rocks will catch water in pools, and some plants catch water at the base of their leaves. A rainstorm can be a great asset if you are prepared for it.



Thick Smoke During the day, thick white or black smoke will get attention. If you have managed to get a fire started for your camp, make sure that you keep it burning all day, every day. Have separate fires set up for signal fires, with dry, extremely flammable fuel ready to go. These fires should be out in the open and large. Fires under trees will be hard to see and may start a forest fire if they get out of control. It's best if you can prepare more than one fire area with three fires, which is a universally accepted number for a distress signal. Green leaves will burn with thick white smoke, and anything rubber will burn with thick black smoke.

Bright flames At night it's best to have a fire that burns brightly rather than produces smoke. Dry wood and dead leaves will flare up brightly in the dark to shine a light on your location.

Torch trees Build a fire in a tree by filling the lower limbs with flammable kindling. When you light the lower branches, the whole tree will catch on fire, sending out a signal that will last for longer than your average fire. Just make sure you choose a tree that is separate from the forest, so you don't cause a wildfire.



Lights in the dark If you do have a flashlight with you, save the battery for when you truly need it. Signaling for help is going to be way more useful than having it on for comfort during the night. Your phone screen lights up, and most phones today have flashlight function, so save your battery if you don't have service. Amplify these lights at night by shining them off something reflective, such as tin cans or shiny surfaces. Three short flashes followed by three long flashes and three short flashes will indicate your distress to anyone in the area. Pause for a minute and signal again.

We have all seen the movies where the hero runs to signal the rescue ship or plane as it moves past the location, only to be too late and for rescue to pass them by. As focuses as you need to be on your basic needs, your overall aim is to get out of there, so spend the time in the early days of your scenario to be prepared to make the most of any sign of possible help.