



## SAFETY TIPS

1. When planning a trip to the desert, **always inform someone** as to where you are going, the route you will take to get there and when you expect to return. Stick to your plan.
2. Carry at least **one gallon of water, per person, per day** on your trip. Plastic gallon jugs are handy and portable to pack. Drink water throughout the day. **DO NOT WAIT UNTIL YOU FEEL THIRSTY.** If you have water drink it - do not ration it.
3. If water is limited, keep your mouth shut. Do not talk, do not eat, do not smoke, do not drink alcohol, and do not take in salt.
4. **Keep an eye on the sky.** Flash floods may occur in a wash anytime "thunderheads" are in sight. Even if the rain is not falling where you are, flash floods could come down stream.
5. Be sure your vehicle is in good working condition **before driving to remote locations.** Check your battery, hoses, spare tire, belts, that you have necessary tools, extra gasoline and oil. Extra water for your radiator is valuable – take five gallons.
6. Before driving through washes and sandy areas, get out and walk them to test the firmness. One minute on foot may save you hours of hard work or prevent a punctured oil pan.
7. **If caught in a dust storm while driving, get off the road.** Turn off driving lights, and turn on emergency flashers. If possible, back into the wind to reduce windshield damage or pitting by sand particles.
8. **If your vehicle brakes down, stay near it.** Go only far enough to get shade. Your emergency supplies are in the vehicle. Your car has many other items useful in an emergency. Raise the hood and trunk to denote "help needed". A vehicle can be seen for miles, but a person on foot is very difficult to find.
9. When not moving, use available shade or erect shade from tarps, blankets, seat covers-anything to reduce the direct rays from the sun.
10. Leave a disabled vehicle **only if you are positive of the route to help.** Leave a note for rescuers as to the time you left, and the direction you are going.
11. **Keep clothing on.** It helps keep the body temperature down and reduces the dehydration rate. Cover your head. If a hat is not handy, improvise a head covering.
12. Do not sit or lie directly on the ground. It may be 30 degrees, or more, hotter than the air.
13. If you must walk, rest for at least 10-minutes of each hour. If you are not normally physically active, rest up to 30-minutes out of each hour. Find shade, sit down and prop up feet. Adjust shoes and socks. **Do not remove shoes** - you may not be able to get them back on due to swollen feet.
14. If stalled or lost set, signal fires. Set smoky fires in the daytime, bright fires at night. Three fires in a triangle denotes "help needed".
15. A roadway is generally a sign of civilization. If you find a road, stay on it.



## Maricopa County

Parks and Recreation Department

[www.maricopa.gov/parks](http://www.maricopa.gov/parks)

# BASIC DESERT SURVIVAL GEAR

The items listed below are simply suggestions. We **highly recommend that YOU do your research** before you begin any type of outing into the desert to ensure you are prepared. If you are going for a hike, it is important to remember – **when your water is half gone, your hike is half over.**

## PERSONAL

- Alcohol wipes**
- Aluminum foil** heavy duty foil used for distress signals
- Backpack** to store supplies
- Balloons** bright colors for signaling or carrying water
- Canteen** with water and cup
- Cell phone** fully charged
- Clothing** a hat, long sleeve shirt, long pants, waterproof hiking boots, gloves, extra socks and bandanna
- Comb** to remove cactus spines
- Compass**
- Cooking utensils**
- Dental floss** 100 yards
- Duct tape** can be used for first-aid purposes, clothing repair and cactus thorn removal.
- First-aid kit** with Band-Aids
- Flashlight** with extra batteries and bulb
- Flint and steel**
- Heavy plastic bags** for instant body shelter from the sun or cold weather
- Knife sharpening stone**
- Knife, sheath and/or Swiss Army**
- Lightweight folding saw**
- Medication** aspirin, an inhaler or Tylenol
- Metal signal mirror**
- Needle** heavy-duty with large eye
- Note book** for writing, fire starting and trail markers
- Nylon rope** 1sq. yd. brightly colored
- Poncho**
- Razorblade**
- Small candle** i.e., tealight candle
- Small fish hooks**, line and snare to capture food
- Snacks** items such as protein bars are a good food source
- Stuff sack** made of nylon
- Sunscreen**
- Survival guide**
- Topographic map** of area
- Tweezers** to remove cactus spines
- Water purification tablets** iodine variety.
- Waterproof matches** in a waterproof match case
- Whistle** police type

## VEHICLE

- Aluminum foil** two rolls 18" aluminum foil to make distress signals
- Axe** or good hatchet
- Bar of soap** Large
- Block and tackle/come-along**
- Car key** extra
- Car repair manual**
- Carpet** a piece of carpet can sometimes help you out of the sand
- Cell phone charger**
- Clothing** a hat and long-sleeved shirts
- Cooking pots**
- Emergency Mylar blankets**
- Extra fan belt**
- First Aid Kit** with bandages and cool packs
- Flares**
- Flashlight**
- Gas** enough to transport your vehicle 50-miles
- Glo-sticks** bright colors like neon green
- Gloves**
- Jack** preferably one that may be rigged
- Jumper cables**
- Matches** extras
- MRE Snack** remember that digestion takes up water
- Poncho** or sheets of plastic
- Reflective tarp** for shade and rescue purposes
- Roll of electrical tape**
- Rope** 50 ft. of ¼ inch rope
- Shovel**
- Tire chains**
- Tire pump** to aid in pumping up tires after getting unstuck from wash
- Tool Kit**
- Tow rope** or cable more than 20 ft. long
- Walking shoes** for each member in your party
- Water** one-gallon per person per day / three-day minimum

### TIPS:

- Have a plan and SHARE the plan.
- When hiking in the desert, equip each person, especially children, with a police-type whistle. It makes a distinctive noise with little effort. Three blasts denote "Help needed".
- To avoid venomous creatures, **DON'T** put your hands or feet anywhere your eyes can't see them.
- If you are out of water, **DO NOT** eat...it will only dehydrate you further.