



Champaign County Search and Rescue

Equipment List

(Revised - May 2015)

[Note: This document contains content from Cibola County, New Mexico and our own Champaign County SAR volunteer recommendations.]

Organizing Your Stuff

You should always have your **Essential Seasonal Pack** ready to go and clothes you wear ready to put on. In addition, have additional duffel bags or totes that hold everything else. That would include extra food and water, boots or spare shoes, spare clothes and gear. At base camp you'll have time to quickly get your pack ready before a search and that will be easy with everything readily available.

Clothing:

You should prepare for seasonal needs:

Summer Clothing

Inner: Non-cotton top and bottom.

Long-sleeve T-shirts in summer

Outer: Rain gear, additional layer of fleece or down if needed for cool temperatures.

Miscellaneous: 2 pair of inner and outer socks, leather gloves, brimmed hat, belt.

Be sure that your outer layer is always a bright orange shirt, hat and/or vest (for both summer and winter).

Winter Clothing

Inner: Non-cotton top and bottom preferably heavy weight plus an additional light top.

Middle: Insulating top of fleece, polypro or wool.

Outer: Rain gear, additional layer of heavy fleece or wool or, preferably, a down jacket.

Miscellaneous: 2 pair of inner and outer socks, leather gloves, heavy insulating gloves, brimmed hat, stocking hat, belt.

Boots:

Boots are the last contact between you and the ground. All leather, Gore-tex lined or waterproofed hiking boots are best for our purposes. Stay away from heavy winter hunting boots or low-cut, heavy-soled running shoes that don't offer support. Always wear a light pair of non-cotton socks in addition to your heavy outer wool or blend socks. The combination will help control blisters.

Backpacks:

Your search and rescue pack is your life support system. What it contains, how it fits, and how much it weighs are all important pack factors. Consider also convenience, efficiency and necessity when choosing and equipping your pack.

Loading and Wearing your Pack

If your pack has outside pockets or a large pocket in the top, use those for water and smaller essentials. Vertical pockets on the side will keep your bottles from leaking. In the main compartment, pack heavier gear near your back with least used items like a first aid kit or tarp at the bottom with food, rain gear and other readily needed items at the top. Your pack should ride high on your hips to help support the weight. Make adjustments if necessary.

Since we (in Champaign County) typically are not required to participate in overnight searches, small, light-weight backpacks work just fine. Carrying two bottles of water (2.12 lbs) and basic necessities (adjusted for each search assignment) should only weigh between five and ten pounds total.

Helpful Hints:

During a search you can't stop constantly to retrieve needed items out of your pack. A small chest or waist pocket that can hold your notebook, pencil, compass, mirror, whistle and other essentials is very helpful. A radio holster is also convenient since a radio needs to be accessible but is too heavy for your pants and you can't carry it in your hand. You can also get a remote clip-on microphone that will make operation even easier.

Water may be your most important provision. You are not allowed to participate in a search without carrying water for yourself. An easy access water bottle holder on your pack or belt works well.

Recommended Backpack Contents:

Keep in mind that most items on this list can be small in size and light in weight. You don't want to load up your backpack with more than you will want to carry for several hours. Also, when you pack, think about if you need things like bug spray or mosquito head nets in the winter... or thermo emergency blankets in the summer.

1. Cell phone
2. Safety glasses / eye glasses / sun glasses
3. Required medications
4. Sunscreen
5. Bug Spray
6. Cap (for sun and rain protection)
7. Bugout Gaiters (a pricey option... but helps to keep brush, debris and bugs out of your footwear)
8. Moist Towelettes
9. Energy snacks
10. Flashlight (recommend a headlamp - to keep hands free, two backup flashlights)

11. Spare batteries for flashlights, radios, GPS, etc.
12. Heavy work gloves
13. Watch
14. Water - (one quart minimum) (a typical 16.9 oz or 500 ml bottle of water weighs 1.06 lbs)
15. Small first-aid kit (to our kit we added a hemorrhage control bandage and a combat application tourniquet to address bleeding issues until EMTs can get on the scene. We also keep two or three pairs of nitrile (non-latex) gloves in a ziploc bag in our first-aid kit. Nitrile gloves are also useful for those nitty-gritty evidence searches.)
16. Whistle (recommend inexpensive, plastic, ball-less whistle .. they'll still work in freezing conditions .. no plastic ball inside to freeze to the whistle frame.)
17. Compass
18. Pocket sized notepad and pen/pencil
19. Flagging tape
20. Duct tape (small roll)
21. Knife or single edged razor blade device
22. Small mirror
23. Toilet paper or small pack of tissues
24. Hiking stick (to aid in clearing brush, reaching, & walking)
25. Mosquito head net
26. Reflective vest (large enough to wear over jackets)
27. Knee pads (inexpensive, foam pads for those down & dirty, hands & knees evidence searches)
28. A Thermo Emergency Blanket (This is a small, easy to pack item.. we found one at Champaign Surplus that is large enough for two people that is in a packet about the size of a wallet.)
29. All Weather Emergency Poncho (again, this is a small, fold up item... cost about a dollar at someplace like Walmart.)

Recommended to keep in your vehicles:

1. Change of shoes/boots
2. Change of pants (in case of wet, muddy, or snow conditions, etc.)
3. Cleaning wipes
4. Small bottle of hand sanitizer
5. Thermos of hot or cold drinks (depending on the season)
6. Cell phone charger
7. Blankets
8. Extra water & snacks
9. Winter clothing layers (something like ski pants, hoods, gloves, etc.)
10. All weather rain gear

Note: Radios and GPS devices will be issued at each search call out.

Pack and Track Tips (Modified list from Cibola County, New Mexico)

1. Pack everything possible into ziploc bags. They're waterproof, strong (use freezer bags) and stay together even if stuffed. Gear is visible and easier to find and pack.
2. Even with ziplocs it won't take long to realize you also need a pack cover for added protection in heavy rain. A garbage bag works but a cover designed for your size pack is quicker and easier.
3. Always wear something orange and visible during a search. A hat or shirt is the obvious but you could also bring a light, cheap orange hunter's vest to put on over your top. Your ability to be seen is crucial and wearing natural colors is, well, unnatural for us.
4. When was the last time you replenished your first aid kit? Think about adding any of the following: moleskin, eye care kit, second skin, razor blades, chapstick, small soap, sanitary napkins (make great absorbent bandages).
5. If you don't already, think about carrying a small pair of binoculars or even lighter monocular. Weight is always a factor but they could be valuable during a search.
6. Speaking of carrying too much, take time to go through everything in your pack and toss some items you have never used, or replace with something lighter or smaller. If you want further help in reducing your pack weight, check out www.backpacking.net on the web.
7. If you wear reading glasses make sure you always carry a pair (or 2). Not being able to read maps or your GPS would be a problem.
8. If you want or need to take a stove, go for the lighter models with a small gas mix canister. This is the lightest option when you only need a day of use. Check Coleman and Gaz, they both make great models that boil fast.
9. Always keep a few bandanas stuffed into your pack. They are great for wiping away sweat, cooling off and lots more. Choose a bright color and it can be used for marking or signaling.
10. If you don't have breathable rain gear at some point you'll find yourself soaked inside as well as out. Gore-tex is considered the best but there are many decent clones on the market now that work well and cost less. Check Cabela's or other outdoor sources for sets as cheap as \$100. If you're used to a clammy plastic poncho you'll be amazed at the difference.
11. Always carry an extra first-layer shirt. T-shirts in the heat and polypro in the winter will both get sweat-soaked after a good hike and changing into a dry one will help prevent hypothermia, as well as feel better. In the winter, hike in your lighter top and put on the heavy one when you stop. Always change out of a sweaty top when the sun goes down, even in the summer.
12. A small piece of thin, closed-cell foam works great as a butt protector while sitting.
13. Remember to give a quick look around before leaving your break spot, especially if you took your pack off and opened it. You don't want to go back for something left behind, and you probably wouldn't find it anyway. This is especially true at night.
14. Always carry an extra compass. It is one of your most valuable essentials.
15. Whistles also are necessary, cheap and light. Carry 2.
16. Look back periodically especially when you are traveling off trail. It will help familiarize you to the terrain in all directions and keep you on track if you come back the same way.
17. On a night search remember to bring items you'll need if you're out until morning: sunglasses, hat, sunscreen, T-shirt, etc.
18. Dryer lint makes great fire tinder. A handful stuffed into a film canister weighs nothing.
19. No matter how many times you go through and organize your pack, do you find yourself at base camp ready to go in the field and realize you forgot extra water or that new pair of gloves? Keep a list of items that you want to take always handy so that before you drive

away you can quickly go through it and make sure you have everything. Keep another list of To Do and To Buy.

20. Use the folded edge of a map as a straight edge to draw a straight line.
21. Put together a general fixit kit of rubber bands, few meters of duct tape, some strong wire, safety pins, razor blade, needle and fishing line, aluminum foil, etc.
22. Gaiters may be hot, especially in summer, but they keep nature out of your boots and protect your legs from bugs and other irritables.
23. Keep a grease pencil with your note pad. They write on anything and always work.
24. Make sure you have at least 4 extra batteries in addition to other minimum battery needs. You might be a life saver to a battery-less searcher.
25. Carry a small sack or pouch that can hold all the extra small stuff: lighter, candle, extra whistle and mirror, batteries, fixit kit, etc.
26. Don't forget to throw in some straps of various lengths to tie things onto your pack.
27. Keep a pair of tennis or other shoes in your duffel bag to change into after a search. Your feet will appreciate the comfort on the ride home.
28. Pick a buddy and keep an eye on each other—do not get out of sight of your buddy. We don't want to have to search for a team member who gets separated from the team.