

# Fieldcraft Skills

## Basic Trip Planning



Taking the following steps before you leave on an outing to ensure that you have a safe outing

### **Let people know the route you will be hiking and when you expect to return**

It is important whether you are going on a day hike at a nearby park or on a multi-day backpacking trip. Plan where you'll be camping each night as well as the section of trail you'll be hiking each day, in case you need to be pinpointed for an evacuation. It is also essential to leave a copy of your written hike plan and map behind with someone who is not going on the trip, and who is expecting you to return or to check in at a certain time.

### **Study your maps before you begin the trip**

Plan and know the route that you will be hiking. Be familiar with the terrain surrounding your route, locate a few prominent landmarks that you can use as check points while on the trail. Look for possible emergency exit or evacuation points as well, just in case one of your hiking party becomes injured. Identify places where water refills are likely, and plan for more than one water spot since water supply can be unpredictable.

### **Develop a Time Control plan**

Determine where you think that you will be at certain points of the day using your map. Factor in your walking speed, the number of people on the hike, as well as their fitness level. Remember that when traveling as a group, you are only as fast as the slowest person in the group. You must also keep in mind that for every 1000 feet of elevation you gain, you will need to allow about an additional hour of hiking time.

### **Graph your route**

Highlight the route you will be taking on your master map. Mark potential campsites, water stops, rest stops, and major road intersections. Make a copy for other members of your hiking party and one additional copy to leave at home.

### **Track the weather and prepare accordingly.**

Remember that the weather at the base of a mountain can be vastly different than halfway up a mountain. Rain gear (one of the Outdoor Essentials) should be packed even if no rain is predicted. In wet clothes, a person can become hypothermic even with temperatures well above freezing.