

# Survival tips for the lost hunter

What can any hunter do to keep from getting lost? Firstly, get rid of that 'it can't happen to me' attitude

Hunting season is with us again. Along with the naturalists who wander in forested regions to enjoy the splendors of a fall day, along with photographers bent on capturing brilliant autumn colours on film, a substantial number of the hunting fraternity will also take to the woods.

These outdoor people, a group of individuals dedicated to the sport of hunting, will be found in many secluded bush areas throughout Ontario. Each fall, they follow a predictable routine — obtain a hunting license, clean and sight weapons, plan the trip with some buddies and proceed to hunt in a favourite wilderness part of our province.

Thanks to hunting courses sponsored and offered by the Ministry of Natural Resources and many gun

## Survival



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clubs, this sport has become one of the safest of all outdoor pastimes. And yet, in spite of these many hunting and safety courses, workshops and seminars, this fall a fair number of hunters will become lost.

Statistics show that hunters form the largest single group of outdoor enthusiasts who will require assistance from search and rescue personnel during any given year.

Of all people who become disoriented while in the wilderness, 56 per cent of lost victims are hunters.

What can any hunter do to prevent from joining these statistics?

Firstly, get rid of that "it can't happen to me" attitude.

Too many individuals become smug

and complacent when travelling in the bush, reasoning that since they've been out so frequently in the past, taking a few risks, come careless meanderings, and a little sloppy map and compass work won't hurt anyone. Or so they think.

Secondly, we encourage all hunters to notify some responsible person(s) of their exact destination, the duration of the trip and when they plan to be out of the bush.

If something does go wrong and this individual hasn't been contacted at a predetermined time, he can notify the appropriate authorities immediately.

A search party, if required, will know exactly where to start its operation.

Thirdly, hunters must dress appropriately, for the wilderness.

Clothing should be warm, functional and bright.

Fluorescent orange, for example, will not frighten away game, since, for the most part, animals are colourblind.

On the other hand, such clothing will be visible from great distances, thus making the hunter easier to detect. This serves a dual purpose. The hunter will not be mistaken for a deer by other members of the group, and should he become lost, his clothing will attract search and rescue personnel.



Finally, we suggest that all hunters use their God-given common sense. For example:

- carry waterproof, strike-anywhere matches on you at all times. Also, stash some essential survival gear in your pockets.

- have a good knowledge of the general region in which the hunt is to take place. This can be done by studying

aerial photos and contour maps. As well, be familiar with a GPS, as well as map and compass skills. Know how to use them effectively.

- If lost, stay put, erect a shelter, build a fire and await the search party! They'll soon find you.

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