

Winter Survival

The Situation

You have just crash-landed somewhere in the woods of northern Minnesota or southern Manitoba. It is 11:32 AM in mid-January. The small plane in which you were traveling was destroyed except for the frame. The pilot and copilot have been killed, but no one else is seriously injured.

The crash came suddenly before the pilot had time to radio for help or inform anyone of your position. Since your pilot was trying to avoid a storm, you know the plane was considerably off course. The pilot announced shortly before the crash that you were 80 miles northwest of a small town that is the nearest known habitation.

You are in a wilderness area made up of thick woods broken by many lakes and rivers. The last weather report indicated the temperature would reach minus 25 degrees in the daytime and minus 40 degrees at night. The men and women in your party are wearing business attire (including pants and jacket), street shoes, and overcoats.

The Challenge

While escaping from the plane your group salvaged the fifteen items listed below. Your task is to rank these items according to their importance to your survival. (Rank the items so that 1 is the most important and 15 is the least important.)

You may assume that the number is the same as the number in your group and that the group has agreed to stick together. Good luck! Choose wisely...

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|---|--|
| ___ Knife | ___ Sectional air map made of plastic |
| ___ Ball of steel wool | ___ 30 feet of rope |
| ___ Cigarette lighter (without fluid) | ___ Family-size chocolate bar (1 per person) |
| ___ Loaded .45 caliber pistol | ___ Flashlight with batteries |
| ___ Newspaper (1 per person) | ___ Quart of 85-proof whiskey |
| ___ Compass | ___ Extra shirt and pants for each survivor |
| ___ 2 ski poles | ___ Can of shortening (cooking fat, like butter) |
| ___ First Aid kit (with 30 feet of gauze) | |

Names of Group Members

Source: *Joining Together*, Johnson & Johnson.

Winter Survival Answers

(according to the experts)

Item	Experts Rank	Reasoning
Compass	15	Might tempt survivors to walk away from the crash site
Sectional map made of plastic	14	Dangerous because it will encourage individuals to attempt to walk to the nearest town
Quart of 8-proof whiskey	13	Used as fuel for fire. Extremely dangerous to drink. If cold, it would freeze a person's esophagus and stomach
2 ski poles	12	Supports for the shelter
First Aid kit	11	Used for insulation of feet and hands
Knife	10	Used for cutting rope and shavings from pieces of wood for tinder
Loaded .45 caliber pistol	9	Provides sound signaling device
Newspaper	8	Used for starting fire and as insulation
30 feet of rope	7	Used to pull dead limbs off trees for firewood and also to construct shelters
Flashlight with batteries	6	Used as a signaling device
Can of shortening	5	Can be rubbed on body to protect exposed areas. When melted, can be used to start fire. Lid can be used as a mirror-like signaling device.
Chocolate bars	4	Supply energy to sustain the survivors
Extra shirt and pants for each person	3	Used for warmth, shelter, signaling, bedding, bandages, and tinder to make fires
Ball of steel wool	2	Actually the best substance to catch and support a flame, especially if it is wet
Cigarette lighter without fluid	1	Used to produce sparks

Interestingly, the experts explain it's best to stay put instead of fleeing to find a nearby city. Because of the elements of weather, they say the *best* chance of staying alive would be to find warmth and shelter, then worry about signaling for help and finding food. ☺