Safety Briefing Handout

March 2025
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As we welcome warmer days, it's important to remember that being prepared for your hike is key, no matter the season. The weather can change quickly in the mountains, and having the right gear can make all the difference. Here's a quick reminder of the **

10 Essentials every hiker should carry:

1. Navigation** (map, compass, GPS)
2. Headlamp** (even in daylight!)
3. Sun protection** (hat, sunglasses, sunscreen)
4. First-aid kit**
5. Fire** (matches, lighter, firestarter)
6. Repair kit** (for gear)
7. Food** (snacks, energy bars)
8. Water** (hydration system or bottles) MAKE SURE YOU HAVE ENOUGH
9. Extra layers** (weather can turn fast!) Remember the higher you go the colder it gets 😉
10. Emergency shelter** (space blanket, tarp)

We may be seeing warmer temperatures, but conditions can shift quickly. Be prepared and hike smart!

A couple of things to keep in mind

- Know how to use all of your equipment?
- Prepare for the expected weather and unexpected, rain, flash floods, wind, snow, cold, hot
- Be aware of your surroundings.
- How are you feeling, we all have off days, we need to pay attention to them, we are not getting younger. We can't do what we once did. Higher altitude = more stress on your body.
- Know where you are at all times. (GPS on your phone uses batteries more than usual).
- Make sure someone knows where you are or where you are heading.
- Do you have a GPS when your phone doesn't have a signal?
- Do you know some time you can send a text message when you can't call?
- If needed, can you survive overnight?
- With no food and no water, the maximum time the body can survive is thought to be about one week. With water only, but no food, survival time may extend up to 2 to 3 months.

Your safety is our priority. 💪

Snakebite First Aid: A Comprehensive Guide

What are we doing that might upset the snakes? Metal detecting, shoveling, moving rocks, where do snakes like to hide?

If you are bitten by a snake, **immediate and appropriate first aid** is crucial. The goals are to slow the spread of venom, keep the victim calm, and transport them to a medical facility as quickly as possible. Here's a breakdown of the first aid steps to take:

1. **Move Away and Stay Safe:** Immediately move away from the snake to prevent further bites. Do not attempt to capture or kill the snake. Identifying it (if possible, take a picture from a safe distance) can help medical professionals determine the correct antivenom, but your safety is the priority.
2. **Stay Calm and Still:** Panic increases heart rate, which accelerates venom circulation. Keep the person calm and still. Have them lie down, if possible, and discourage movement.
3. **Immobilize the Bitten Limb:** Use a splint or other means to immobilize the bitten limb. Movement can increase the spread of venom.
4. **Remove Constricting Items:** Remove any rings, watches, bracelets, or tight clothing from the bitten limb *before* swelling begins.
5. **Clean the Wound:** Gently wash the bite area with soap and water. Do not scrub the wound, as this could potentially worsen the situation.
6. **Apply a Pressure Immobilization Bandage (If Appropriate):** This technique is recommended for bites from venomous snakes known to cause systemic effects (like elapids such as cobras, kraits, and sea snakes). The **pressure immobilization technique** involves wrapping the entire limb with a wide, elastic bandage (like an ACE bandage) starting just above the fingers or toes and extending as high as possible up the limb. The bandage should be applied firmly, but not so tightly that it cuts off circulation. You should still be able to feel a pulse below the bandage. Then, splint the limb to further restrict movement. This technique is *not* recommended for bites from snakes that cause significant local tissue damage, such as many pit vipers (rattlesnakes, copperheads, cottonmouths) in North America, as it could worsen local tissue injury. If unsure about the type of snake, local medical guidelines should be followed.
7. **Keep the Bite Area at or Below Heart Level (Contradictory Information Explained):** There's conflicting advice regarding elevation of the bite. Historically, elevating the limb was discouraged to prevent venom from reaching the heart quickly. However, current recommendations vary depending on the type of snake and the severity of the envenomation. The primary goal is to minimize movement of the affected limb. If the victim is exhibiting severe systemic symptoms, keeping the limb at or below heart level *may* slow the venom's spread. However, if local tissue damage is the primary concern, elevating the limb *might* help reduce swelling, but this is a secondary consideration to minimizing movement. Following the guidelines of local medical professionals is highly recommended.

8. **Monitor Vital Signs:** Keep a close watch on the person's breathing, pulse, and level of consciousness. Be prepared to administer CPR if necessary.
9. **Get Medical Help Immediately:** Transport the person to the nearest hospital or call for emergency medical services. Speed is essential. Inform the hospital that a snakebite has occurred so they can prepare antivenom, if available.

What shouldn't you do about a snakebite?

- **Don't panic:** Staying calm is essential.
- **Don't cut the wound:** Cutting into the wound and attempting to suck out venom is ineffective and can cause further damage.
- **Don't apply a tourniquet:** Tourniquets can cause severe tissue damage and are generally not recommended.
- **Don't apply ice:** Ice can constrict blood vessels and potentially worsen local tissue damage.
- **Don't drink alcohol or caffeine:** These can increase heart rate and potentially speed up venom absorption.
- **Don't try to capture or kill the snake:** Focus on getting medical attention.
- **Don't use electrical shock:** There is no evidence to support the use of electrical shock as a treatment for snakebites.