

UGA OUTDOOR RECREATION – TEN ESSENTIAL SYSTEMS FOR TRIP LEADERS

Purpose: The purpose of this document is to outline the Ten Essential Systems as they pertain to Outdoor Recreation Trip Leaders.

Scope: The original “Ten Essentials” list was created in the 1930’s by a Seattle-based mountaineering group. It contained ten pieces of outdoor equipment that are particularly useful in the event of a backcountry emergency. The list has since been updated numerous times and has evolved into the “Ten Essential Systems,” which groups additional, related gear into a specific category. Note that the best TE items are multi-use: an industrial-sized trash bag, for instance, can serve as an insulation layer, water collection/storage system, or emergency shelter.

Ten Essential Systems:

I. APPLICATION

- a. For the purposes of UGA Outdoor Recreation trips, it is expected that each trip leader carry the Ten Essentials on every trip.
- b. It is also the responsibility of the trip leader to familiarize themselves with the equipment and seek further instruction when necessary.
- c. Trip leaders should encourage participants to bring their own kits and look for opportunities to instruct participants when appropriate.

II. THE TEN ESSENTIAL SYSTEMS

- a. Navigation
 - i. A topographic map and compass are invaluable in the backcountry. Even if navigation is mostly done with a GPS unit, a map and compass should be carried as a backup.
 - ii. Outdoor Recreation can supply trip leaders with compasses and topographic maps; maps should be requested as part of the trip-planning process.
- b. Sun protection
 - i. A TE kit should include some means of sun protection.
 - ii. These can include a hat, sunglasses, and sunscreen, or a multi-use item like a bandanna.
 - iii. UGA Outdoor Recreation does not provide sun protection for trip leaders or participants.
- c. Insulation
 - i. Extra insulation guards against unexpected changes in weather, submersion incidents, etc.
 - ii. It can include extra clothing layers or a multipurpose item such as a trash bag or space blanket.
 - iii. The UGA Outdoor Recreation program provides tarps and can provide sleeping bags to trip leaders and participants (who pay) through the ORC.

d. Illumination

- i. Headlamps are indispensable should be kept accessible (along with spare batteries).
- ii. Trip leaders should consider carrying a back-up light source.
- iii. The UGA Outdoor Recreation program provides headlamps on caving trips but NOT on other trips.

e. First-aid supplies

- i. In addition to the program FAK, trip leaders should consider carrying a compact first aid kit to be used if the program kit is lost or damaged.
- ii. The kit should contain essential items such as gauze, pain reliever, alcohol wipes, antibiotic ointment, antihistamine, etc. UGA Outdoor Recreation will provide these items.

f. Fire

- i. Lighters or matches will suffice; ensure that they are waterproof and carry AT LEAST one backup fire source. UGA will provide lighters.

g. Repair kit and tools

- i. A basic repair kit should include versatile tools and materials that can be used to address a wide range of repairs. It should include, at minimum:
 - 1. Pocket knife
 - 2. Cordage
 - 3. Duct tape.
 - 4. Multitools and activity-specific repair materials can also be considered.
- ii. A UGA-specific addition to this section is **a watch**. Trip leaders are expected to wear a watch in order to effectively coordinate their trips and document accidents and incidents. Trip leaders must provide their own timepiece.

h. Nutrition

- i. The trip leader should ensure that the group has additional food in case of a delay in the backcountry.
- ii. Granola or energy bars, trail mix, etc. will suffice.
- iii. On overnight trips, UGA will provide one dinner but all other meals are not provided. Trips do not provide meals unless specified.

i. Hydration

- i. A hydration system should include some means of purifying water in the backcountry.
- ii. Examples include purification tablets, iodine drops, a water filter, or the means to boil water.
- iii. UGA will provide ceramic filters for water filtration but does not provide water bottles. Trip leaders are encouraged to bring a back-up water purifying system.

j. Emergency shelter

- i. Emergency shelter is a critical component of the Ten Essentials. It should be simple, lightweight and could include a tarp, large trash bags, or a piece of plastic sheeting.
- ii. UGA will provide these items.