



## HIKING AND CAMPING

**Step 1: IDENTIFY THE HAZARDS:** Let's look at the hazards associated with hiking:

- Weather (thunderstorms, lightning, rain, and wind)
- Location (near water, forest, mountains)
- Wildlife (bugs, poisonous plants, snakes, and bears)
- Fire (campfires, cooking)
- Many others, situation-dependent
- Getting lost

**Step 2: ASSESS THE RISK:** Then assess the impact of each hazard in terms of potential loss and severity:

- Injuries, death, loss of equipment, and damage due to severe weather
- Incidents involving water (drowning and hypothermia), falls, becoming lost
- Animal bites, insect-borne diseases, skin irritations, and bothersome pests
- Burns, out-of-control fires, explosion, and carbon monoxide poisoning

**Step 3: MAKE RISK DECISIONS:** Once you have identified the hazards and assessed the associated risk, you should develop risk control options. Start with the most serious risk first and select controls that will reduce the risk to a minimum consistent with mission accomplishment. Decide on some controls that can be employed to reduce or mitigate the hazards:

- Check the weather and be prepared for severe conditions. Plan for cover in case of inclement weather and always carry rainwear and fire-starting material for warmth
- Have a quality topographical map of the area you will be hiking or camping in. Consider taking a compass, a Global Positioning System (GPS), and a personal locator beacon. Also, ensure you know how to use whatever device you take. Take a water filter to ensure that you have clean filtered water to drink. Have, at least some, climbing ropes in case you find yourself needing extra support because of a precarious situation while in the mountains. Take a course that covers the risks you will encounter. You can find courses on everything from packing a backpack to predicting avalanches. Tell somebody responsible:

- Where you are going
- When you will get there
- When you expect to return

- What kind of equipment you have on hand (If you become lost, knowing the color of your tent would be helpful to rescuers)
  - Take extra food in case you become lost or stranded
- Use insect repellent. Become familiar with the types of local poisonous snakes/plants that you may encounter and what you should do if exposed to them. Talk to the medical folks. Learn how to treat snakebites and bee stings/mosquito bites if they become a problem. Visit fish and wildlife experts to learn about bear safety. If you use anti-bear devices, make sure you know how to use them
- Keep food in sealed containers and out of your tents
  - Remember that bug spray, suntan lotion, and other nonfood items may smell like food to a bear
  - Hang food from a tree, out of a bear's reach, if possible
  - Keep fires contained to a well-constructed fire pit. Keep water on hand when any flame is present. Keep plenty of clear space around fires and lanterns to ensure that combustibles do not come in contact. Be very cautious around fuels and never allow anyone to play or put anything but wood and paper in the fire. Never take a fuel burning device inside a tent as carbon monoxide could overcome you
  - Make sure children don't wander off into the water, woods, or mountains without adult supervision
  - Carry a cell phone

With selected controls in place, decide if the benefit outweighs the risk. If risk outweighs benefits or if assistance is required to implement controls, communicate with higher authority in the chain of command. You need to either accept the risk, avoid the risk, reduce the risk, or spread the risk. Do not make dumb decisions.

**Step 4: IMPLEMENT CONTROLS:** Once you select appropriate controls, implement them! A plan is only good if it is followed.

**Step 5: SUPERVISE:** As always, the situation is subject to change quickly. Monitor the situation and adjust as necessary to keep things under control. Summer is a great time to have fun and we all deserve a break every now and then. From now on, use risk management to make your summer fun, memorable, and safe. No one wants a summer outing to turn into a tragedy!

---

Member  
Printed Rank/Rate/Name

---

Member Signature

---

Date