

Wilderness Survival Merit Badge

Historic Huntley & Huntley Meadows Park

The Wilderness Survival merit badge is a 5 hour session. Scouts should bring a snack and plenty of water. Please no red liquids.

What to bring:

- Signed Blue card, pen and pencil
- Snacks and water
- **Preworks, which will be listed in Red.**

What is Prework? Merit Badges in general are not designed to be completed in an afternoon; there is some work the scouts need to do outside of the workshop to complete the badge. We call this **prework**. We suggest completing prework prior to the badge program date, but realize this is not always practical or possible. In these cases we will, if requested, sign partial cards and accept the assignments after the program. We ask that you bring/send back all the work and the blue card together in order to sign off on the blue card all at once.

Important information about how to prepare for a merit badge program at Huntley Meadows Park.

Parents, please review the content of a merit badge prior to registering your scout: some badges may be challenging for younger scouts. Also, the class discussions are more interesting if scouts review *all* the requirements for the badge before the program. The chances of your scout completing all the work for the badge increases dramatically when he is properly motivated and the badge content is age-appropriate.

Merit badges are not designed to be completed in a day and require independent work on the part of the scout outside of the workshop. We call this PREWORK. We suggest this is done prior to the badge program date, but we realize this is not always practical or possible, in these cases we will sign partial cards and accept the assignments after the program.

Merit badge programs can be from 3 to 5 hours long, so be sure to pack a snack and water for your scout and that he is dressed appropriately for being outdoors for some or all of the program.

Though not required, Scout workbooks are very useful and we prefer that scouts use the workbook during the program. Workbooks can be found at:

http://meritbadge.org/wiki/index.php/Merit_Badge_Worksheets .

About blue cards: WE DO NOT HAVE BLUE CARDS. Please bring an *authorized* blue card with you to the program. **Your troop scout master should be consulted prior to attending any merit badge program and he or she will sign the front of the card.**

1. Do the following:

- (a) Explain to your counselor the hazards you are most likely to encounter while participating in wilderness survival activities, and what you should do to anticipate, help prevent, mitigate, or lessen these hazards.
- (b) Show that you know first aid for and how to prevent injuries or illnesses likely to occur in backcountry settings, including hypothermia, heat reactions, frostbite, dehydration, blisters, insect stings, tick bites, and snakebites.

2. From memory list the seven priorities for survival in a backcountry or wilderness location. Explain the importance of each one with your counselor.

3. Describe ways to avoid panic and maintain a high level of morale when lost, and explain why this is important.

4. Describe the steps you would take to survive in the following exposure conditions:

- (a) Cold and snowy
- (b) Wet
- (c) Hot and dry
- (d) Windy
- (e) At or on the water

5. Put together a personal survival kit and be able to explain how each item in it could be useful.

6. Using three different methods (other than matches), build and light three fires.

7. Do the following:

- (a) Show five different ways to attract attention when lost.
- (b) Demonstrate how to use a signal mirror.
- (c) Describe from memory five ground-to-air signals and tell what they mean.

8. Improvise a natural shelter. For the purpose of this demonstration, use techniques that have little negative impact on the environment. Spend a night in your shelter.

9. Explain how to protect yourself from insects, reptiles, bears, and other animals of the local region.

10. Demonstrate three ways to treat water found in the outdoors to prepare it for drinking.

11. Show that you know the proper clothing to wear while in the outdoors during extremely hot and cold weather and during wet conditions.

12. Explain why it usually is not wise to eat edible wild plants or wildlife in a wilderness survival situation.

Parents

Merit badges are supposed to be done with the buddy system. ***We highly recommend that you attend the program with your scouts especially if they do not have a buddy***; the chances of your scout completing all the work for the badge during the allotted time increases dramatically when properly motivated. There is never a fee for adults and you are sure to learn something. Also, our policy is that the program will not proceed if there are not 2 or more adults present for the program especially those containing hikes. We will attempt to enlist adult volunteers from our center but this is not always possible so ***prepare for the possibility that you may have to stay for the program and not just drop off your scout***. This will allow the instructor to concentrate more fully on the difficult task of imparting all the required information and assisting the scouts individually, if necessary, while other adults keep the atmosphere calm and productive.

If you have further questions, **please contact our senior interpreter Melodie at Melodie.Stehling@fairfaxcounty.gov or call the Huntley Meadows Visitor Center at 703-768-2525 and you will put you in contact with the appropriate counselor.**