4. Signals  “Hey! I need help over here!”

You can help search parties find you by putting up signals. To be effective, signals must:

- attract attention
- send a message of distress

Some signals can be carried with you in your survival kit:

- Signal mirrors
- Whistles
- Flares
- Reflectors (aluminum foil)
- Lights
- EPIRBs (Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon)
- VHF radio

Some signals can be constructed using things that you find:

- Hanging clumps of trash
- SOS of driftwood, seaweed, or grass. Build it above the high tide mark.
- Fires and smoke

Rules to remember when setting up signals:

- The more signals you have, the better.
- You need signals that are visible from **air, land, and sea.**
- Signals must be large! Each letter of an SOS should be 18 feet x 3 feet.

  **Three** signals mean distress. An SOS has **three** letters. Hang **three** clumps of trash from trees or drift logs. Use **three** fires in a line.

- Use colors that contrast with the background: hang life preservers or bright bandanas.
- Moving signals catch the searcher's eye.
- If you are using a fire, you must have someone on watch at all times to keep the fire burning and to make sure it doesn’t spread.

Use the right signal in the right place:

- Forest: whistles, bright colors, something reflective
- Coastline: SOS, hanging trash, something reflective
- From a boat: mirrors, bright colors, water dyes
5. Water  "I need to avoid dehydration."

You need 6 to 8 pints (3 to 4 quarts) of water every day. How much is 6 pints? Lots! 6 pints = 8 pop cans = 12 cups.

If you don’t get enough water, you can become dehydrated. What are the symptoms?

- Craving for cold or wet foods
- Dark urine
- Headache
- Chapped lips
- Feeling tired or dizzy
- Depression

When you are dehydrated your body and mind don’t work as well as usual. If you become severely dehydrated you can die. If you don’t have any water in an emergency situation you should:

- Avoid a lot of activity such as hiking.
- Eat very little, because digestion requires water.

Water that is safe to drink:

- Rainwater collected in a clean container
- Water that you brought with you
- Water that has been boiled for 20 minutes

All other sources of water are not safe to drink. River or lake water should be boiled for 20 minutes. Never drink seawater or urine.

To collect rainwater you can use plastic containers, ziploc bags, bark, clamshells.
6. Food  “Eat safe foods.”

There are three rules for foods in a survival situation:

- If you don’t know it—don’t eat it.
- If you don’t have water—eat very little.
- Try to eat several kinds of food, rather than a lot of just one kind.

If you are lost along the shore it is easy to find food. You can eat almost all seaweeds, plus limpets, crabs, and small snails.

**Don't eat clams, cockles, mussels, oysters, scallops, barnacles, or moon snails.** They may have Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning (PSP), also called red tide. Even if you eat them at home, never eat them in a survival situation! At home you can go to the hospital if you get PSP. Out in the wilderness you could die.

**Don't eat starfish, jellyfish, sponges, sea anemones, sand dollars, or the hairy triton. They are all unsafe to eat.**

Mink, marten, squirrels, rabbits, birds, and mice are all small game animals that are safe to eat. But they take much more time and energy to get than sealife. For that reason it makes more sense to collect sealife for food in an emergency situation, if it is available.

Try to balance your diet by eating plants also. Eat leaves in the spring, eat berries in the summer, and eat roots in the fall and winter. It is very important to learn which plants are safe to eat. Alaska has some poisonous berries, leaves, and roots.

Remember: If you don’t know it—don’t eat it! You can live for weeks without food.
7. Play  "Think positive."

Play is important to avoid depression. You can keep yourself busy and happier by doing these things:

- Improve the shelter
- Build more signals
- Collect water
- Collect food (try fishing)
- Talk and tell stories
- Play games

If you are alone, think about what you will do when you get home. If you are sitting around feeling sorry for yourself, get up and do something!

If you are with other people, watch them to make sure they are not depressed or scared. Remember that inactivity can be a sign of depression or fear. So keep everyone busy and talking.

**Try to think like a survivor, not like a victim.**
HOW TO BUILD A FIRE

For the survival course, your fire should burn for 10 minutes. This tells you how to build a fire that will burn for longer than 10 minutes.

Air, fuel, and heat are needed to start a fire and to keep it going.

Fuel is anything that burns well such as logs, twigs, pitch from trees, plastic, or paper. Fuel includes tinder (small dry twigs, pitch, or grass), kindling (small branches or wood, no bigger around than your finger), and large fuel (driftwood or logs).

Air or oxygen is necessary to ignite a fire and to keep it burning.

Heat is supplied from the spark of a flint or by a match.

First locate a site sheltered from wind and rain. Collect enough tinder and kindling to supply a fire for at least 20 minutes and enough large fuel for the day.

Arrange tinder to allow room for oxygen. Kindling can be cross-hatched on top of tinder or stacked in a teepee shape. If a magnesium fire starter or other flint material are being used, add kindling sparingly after starting a flame.

Kindling should burn for several minutes before adding larger fuel. Do not smother the fire by adding too much fuel at one time. Larger fuel should also be added sparingly. A small fire is adequate to boil water or cook food.