



Outdoor Safety Training



Severe Weather Issues

- **Excessive Heat** – take breaks and stay hydrated while working outside. The rule of thumb to keeping hydrated is 2-4 glasses of non-caffeinated cool fluids each hour, even if you do not feel thirsty. If you suspect heat exhaustion/heat stroke, seek help immediately.
- **Sun Safety** – Make sure to wear sunscreen and a hat. Light-colored clothing will help reflect sunlight. Sunglasses protect your eyes from UV rays and reduce the risk of cataracts. They also protect the tender skin around your eyes from sun exposure.
- **Tornadoes** – Seek shelter in any solid structure, away from windows and doorways. The lowest level of the building is best, and choose an interior room if possible. If caught outside, do not stay in your vehicle or try to outrun the tornado. Instead, lay flat on the ground and cover your head with your hands. Watch out for flying debris, whether you are inside or outside!

Severe Weather Issues, Cont.

- **Severe Thunderstorms/Flash Floods** – Seek shelter right away. Go to higher ground if you are caught outside. Be aware of streams or other waterways that may have rapidly rising waters. Do not hide in your car – it can take as little as 2 feet of water to cause your car to float away!
- **Large Hail** – Seek shelter in any building, staying away from windows.
- **Lightning** – Seek shelter in any building or vehicle (except a convertible!) Stay away from tall trees, towers or poles. Use the 30/30 rule – if the time lapse between thunder and lightning is 30 seconds or less, go to a safe shelter. Stay there until 30 minutes after the thunder has stopped.
- Each of our sites has an Emergency Plan and you will be oriented as to where to take shelter in an emergency situation.

Personal Safety

- If you are approached by a hostile person, do not engage them in conversation or otherwise confront them. Stay in your group as there is safety in numbers. Orient yourself to your surroundings and know the quickest way back to your vehicle. If necessary, call for help. If you feel that there is a real danger to yourself or others, call 911.
- If you carry a cellphone, we strongly suggest that you sign up for Fairfax Alerts (it's free!) and choose to be notified of Weather Alerts. Based on the address you enter, you will be alerted of weather issues such as excess heat, tornadoes reported in the area, impending snowstorms etc. Use the following link to open an account: <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/alerts>



Plants, Bugs and Animals: Oh My!

- Have a first-aid kit available at all times.
- Familiarize yourself with what Poison Ivy looks like:



Leaflets three, let them be!

- Wear gloves, long sleeve shirts and pants to prevent poison ivy oil from getting on your skin. If you suspect you have come in contact with poison ivy, wash the affected area with mild soap and cold water. Wash any clothing, shoes, socks and tools that may have been contaminated. It may take 24 – 48 hours to develop symptoms. A topical corticosteroid cream can be used on the area, as well as calamine lotion to control itching.
- If you develop a severe rash – especially on your face – see a doctor.

And more....

- Use bug repellent spray with DEET whenever possible. If using sunscreen, apply that first and bug repellent second.
- Familiarize yourself with ticks common to Virginia and tick removal at the following sites: www.fairfaxcounty.gov/hd/westnile/tickscommon.htm and www.fairfaxcounty.gov/hd/westnile/tickremoval.htm.
- Other tick tips:
 - Wear brightly colored clothing to see the ticks better.
 - Tuck your pants into your socks to deter ticks from crawling up your legs.
 - Check yourself for ticks after working in the field.
 - Wash after being in the woods, this will help you to find ticks.



Last one!

- **Bug Bites and Stings:** Wear insect repellent whenever possible. Be aware of insects that may cause severe reactions such as bees, wasps, hornets etc. If you are bitten/stung, move away from the area in case you are close to a hive or nest. Remove a stinger if you see one, and wash the area with soap and water. A cold compress (cloth dampened with cold water or filled with ice) can be used to reduce pain and swelling. Apply a product containing hydrocortisone or lidocaine to help control pain. Calamine lotion can help soothe itchy skin. If you have a severe reaction such as difficulty breathing, swelling of the lips, eyelids or throat, dizziness etc. call 911 or the non-emergency policy number (703)691-2131.
- **Animal bites:** If it is a minor wound (this skin is unbroken or barely broken), wash the area thoroughly with soap and water, then apply an antibiotic cream to prevent infection. Cover the bite area with a clean bandage. For deep wounds, apply pressure with a clean, dry cloth to stop the bleeding and see your doctor or seek help at an emergency clinic/hospital as soon as possible. If you suspect that the animal may have been rabid, get emergency help immediately. Report any animal bites or human exposure/encounter with potentially rabid wildlife to the Fairfax County Animal Services Division at (703) 691 – 2131 or visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/police/animal.

* The above medical suggestions were taken from www.mayoclinic.org/first-aid/first-aid-animal-bites/basics/art-20056591 and are meant only to be guides.