



Canada West Mountain School - www.themountainschool.com

Wilderness Survival course pre-planning

Please read over all the information completely, there are a few "**action items**" that we need to hear back from you as well. We also welcome and encourage any questions so that we can ensure you are best prepared for your course.

COURSE LOCATION

You will spend the 2 field-days in a local backcountry area. Specific destinations are decided close to the trip dates, based on current weather conditions and seasonal factors, and will be decided during the pre-trip planning session. For planning purposes, trailheads are within a 2 or 3-hour drive (maximum) of Vancouver/Lower Mainland region.

WEATHER

We conduct the course in most weather conditions, but if the weather is too poor for running the course, we will discuss alternate locations, dates, or logistics. There are many websites for weather forecasts, but SpotWx.com is a great site to get a quick and detailed forecast for any location – www.spotwx.com.

INSTRUCTOR TEAM

Your course will be led by one of our regular Hiking and Survival Course Instructors, you will be notified in advance of the course who the specific Instructor is for your program as well as their contact details.

PRE-TRIP PLANNING

The Wilderness Survival course includes Online Learning in the Canada West Mountain School Virtual Classroom – classroom.themountainschool.com. Every student receives a separate email with a link to register in advance of the course. If you have not received a link, please check your email spam folder, and contact the Canada West Mountain School office by email to request a new signup link be sent to you.

A Live Zoom session is scheduled on an evening prior to the 2-day field trip. Many topics are covered during the evening theory session, as well as an opportunity to discuss and ask questions. Our staff and instructors are also available for consultation at any point in advance of the course.

You will be notified separately by email of the date, time, and sign-in details for the Zoom Pre-trip evening session.

LOGISTICS

On the morning of Day-1, you will meet at the location determined at the pre-trip evening session. You will spend approx. 1 hour getting to know your team, reviewing gear, and finalizing logistics before hiking into the course area.

TRANSPORTATION

Participants are responsible for transportation to/from the course. Ensure you do not have anything in your vehicle as the parking lots for most trailheads are not patrolled or secured. Trailheads are not serviced by public transportation.

GEAR

A gear list can be downloaded from our website - [GEAR-Survival-2025.pdf](#). Plan for weather which may include temperatures below freezing, and possible precipitation of rain and/or wet snow each day. Ensure your clothing and gear is suitable for these conditions as a worst-case option; but consider that it may also be hot, dry, and sunny as well.

MAPS

When the location is decided your instructor will give you the specific details for the best mapping options – this may be a paper map or an electronic map that can be used on one of a variety of GPS Map Apps such as GaiaGPS.com or Avenza Maps, these are 2 common map apps. If you are using any mapping application on your phone or GPS, make sure it is updated and the local maps are downloaded for off-line viewing when you are in the mountains, away from cell service.



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FOOTWEAR

Many of the trails encountered during this course are rough and involve slippery rocks, roots, and muddy sections. You will spend some portion of the course off-trail as well and early-season courses (April/May) might involve some hiking on snow. Boots should be proper hiking boots that provide good support, are waterproof, fit well and are broken in. It is important to have good footwear that will keep your feet warm, dry, and protected to best enjoy your course.

FOOD AND COOKING

While this is a Survival course, we still expect people to bring food and stay nourished and healthy. Food planning should be done in advance, here are a few notes to help. This topic is also covered during the evening pre-trip session:

- review your food carefully and measure out your portions to avoid bringing excess food.
- you will have a lot of time in the evening for preparing dinner, but still try to keep to a simple, one-pot meal
- breakfast should be quick and easy (no gourmet pancake breakfasts, please)
- lunches should be planned to be easy to prep and can be eaten during short breaks. Do not plan on a long "lunch break" involving cooked lunches - it is more likely you will be eating during small breaks in travel and teaching.
- bring snack foods that are easy to access.
- bring a stuff sack to store your food in overnight. Food may be hung from trees, cliff faces or buried in snow.
- there are usually ample water sources, we suggest using purification drops, purification tablets, or a water filter.

ANIMAL PRECAUTIONS

Bears and other wildlife share the regions we visit, our instructors will teach and follow best practices on all courses to reduce the risk of interactions with any wildlife and how to minimize negative impacts. Wild Safe BC provides many good resources including a section on camping in bear territory - <https://wildsafebc.com/camping/>

SAFETY PLANNING

Our Guides will have a Satellite phone or Inreach device for the course, as well as all the emergency first aid kits and gear to take care of any situation. We have a daily check-in protocol by Sat device as well. Cell Phone reception is not 100% reliable in all areas, do not plan on having access to cell coverage.

On all your trips, leave a Trip Plan with a responsible person. We suggest using the online planning tool at AdventureSmart - <https://plan.adventuresmart.ca/>. For the purposes of Trip Planning for this course, you should plan on being back in contact at 7 pm (at the latest) on the final date of your course. If anyone needs to contact you, they should contact Canada West Mountain School at 1-604-878-7007 (alternate #604-815-3451), or info@themountainschool.com and we can provide an update. Please be sure that you follow up with your check-in contact person when you finish your trips, to avoid unnecessary alarms and SAR callouts!

Waiver and Medical disclosure

All participants must complete a Waiver and medical disclosure form before attending Canada West Mountain School programs. Please complete this in advance here – www.waiverfile.com/b/CanadaWestMountainSchool

ACTION ITEMS

- 1) Confirm that you have received this Pre-Planning document, Gear List and Course outline.
- 2) Complete and sign the online Waiver and Medical disclosure form.
- 3) **Please ask any other questions that you may have!**

Enjoy your course,

The Canada West Mountain School team