

Problem solving #1 - The Desert Dilemma

Follow these instructions in your group:

1. Read the following text and individually write down seven of the most important items from the list to ensure survival and/or rescue.
2. Discuss in your group and try to persuade the others that your chosen items are more important for survival than theirs.
3. The group agrees on a list of seven items which are presented for the rest of the class. What arguments do you have for your choices?

The situation

About ten o'clock in the morning in July, your small airplane has crashed in the Sonora desert in Northern Mexico. Both pilots are dead and all that is left of the aircraft is a burnt-out shell. One of the other passengers is injured.

There was no radio in the airplane, but some of your fellow survivors think that you were about 100 kilometres off course when you crashed. Just before the crash the pilot informed you and the other passengers that you were 120 kilometres south of a small mining camp.

From experience you know that daytime temperatures can reach 43°C (110° Fahrenheit) and night-time temperatures reach freezing. All the passengers and yourself are dressed in light clothes. The area is flat and arid as far as the eye can see.

The following list of items survived the crash in good order:

- jack knife
- flashlight with four batteries
- large plastic poncho
- detailed pilot's chart of the area
- instrument to measure blood pressure
- compass
- one overcoat per person
- one pocket mirror
- one pair of sunglasses per person
- two bottles of vodka
- book Edible Desert Animals
- bottle of 1000 salt tablets
- one quart of water per person
- loaded .45 pistol
- one red and white parachute

