

Requirement 1

Show that you know first aid for injuries or illnesses likely to occur in backcountry settings, including hypothermia, heatstroke, heat exhaustion, frostbite, dehydration, sunburn, stings, tick bites, snakebite, and blisters.

Hypothermia (a subnormal temperature of the body defined as being under 36.6°C or 97.88°F)

Symptoms – Slurred speech, increased clumsiness, and uncontrollable shivering

Treatment – Strip off wet clothing and dry the victim. If possible, give the victim warm drinks and put him in a sleeping bag or under a blanket. Get the victim out of the weather. The rescuer's purpose is to increase the victim's body temperature slowly and steadily.

Heatstroke (a severe and often fatal condition produced by exposure to excessively high temperatures, especially when accompanied by marked exertion)

Symptoms – Lack of sweating, flushed and red face

Treatment – Move the victim out of the sun immediately. Apply water that is preferably cool. The rescuer's purpose is to lower the victim's body temperature quickly without putting the victim into shock. Seek medical attention.

Heat Exhaustion (a condition resulting from physical exertion in hot weather, independent from hydration)

Symptoms – Weakness, nausea, dizziness, clammy skin, profuse sweating, slurred speech

Treatment – Get the victim to lie on his back in the shade. His head should be level with, or lower than, the feet. Cover the victim if he feels cold. If the patient doesn't recover quickly, seek medical attention.

Frostbite (injury or destruction of skin and underlying tissue, most often that of the nose, ears, fingers, or toes, resulting from prolonged exposure to freezing or subfreezing temperatures)

Symptoms – Yellow/gray or white skin color

Treatment – Get the victim out of the elements and into shelter. Warm the frostbitten area. If a hand is affected, it can often be warmed by holding it under a person's armpit or against a person's stomach. If warm water is available, use it to warm the affected area slowly using water that is lukewarm.

Frostbitten areas should not be rubbed, as this may cause flesh to become more irritated. Prevention is key; dress for the weather.

Dehydration (excessive loss of water from the body)

Symptoms – Dark yellow urine, tired feeling

Treatment – Have the victim move slowly so as to limit exertion and cause no more sweating than necessary. Have him drink water if any is available. Keeping moisture in the body is the best way to avoid hot weather problems. You should drink when thirsty; rationing water does not help.

Sunburn (a first-degree burn caused by overexposure to the sun)

Symptoms – Red and inflamed skin appearance

Treatment – Keep the affected area covered and out of sunlight. Cooling the area with water or cooling gel could help. Prevention is key; use sun block.

Stings (pierce-wounds caused by insects)

Treatment – Anti-itch cream can be used. Sting sites should not be scratched to speed healing. Clothing that covers most of the body will prevent most stings. Insect repellent is another preventative measure. Be sure to remove the remaining stinger from the skin with the edge of a knife if the stinging insect was a bee or wasp.

Tick Bites (the bite and burrowing of ticks into one's skin)

Treatment – It is possible to remove a tick by gently pulling, but make sure to get all of it out. Using tweezers if they are available, pull the tick straight out of the skin and treat the resulting bite as a simple open wound.

Snakebite (the bite of a snake, but remember that not all snakes are poisonous)

Treatment – Treat any snakebite as if it were that of a poisonous snake. Have the victim stop moving and keep the bitten area lower than the heart. If pain, nausea, and shortness of breath begin to occur along with swelling and discoloration, apply a constricting band. The band should be placed between the heart and the bite and should be tight enough that only one finger will slip under it easily. If swelling increases, the band should be loosened, but not removed. Treat the victim for shock and seek medical attention. A venom extractor could also be used if the snake is known to be poisonous.

Blisters (a local swelling of the skin caused by irritation or a burn and contains watery fluid)

Symptoms – Hot spots indicate the formation of blisters

Treatment – Surround the hot spot or blister with a doughnut bandage cut from moleskin. Stack doughnut bandages as needed to keep the area from rubbing against the shoe.