ROYAL CANADIAN ARMY CADETS

GOLD STAR

INSTRUCTIONAL GUIDE

SECTION 2

EO M424.02 – EMPLOY THE IMPROVISING PROCESS

Total Time: 30 min

PREPARATION

PRE-LESSON INSTRUCTIONS

Resources needed for the delivery of this lesson are listed in the lesson specification located in A-CR-CCP-704/PG-001, *Gold Star Qualification Standard and Plan*, Chapter 4. Specific uses for said resources are identified throughout the instructional guide within the TP for which they are required.

Review the lesson content and become familiar with the material prior to delivering the lesson.

Select an area that can provide natural items (eg, deadfall, rocks, vines, bushes, cattail, grass) that can be used for improvising.

PRE-LESSON ASSIGNMENT

Nil.

APPROACH

An interactive lecture was chosen for TP 1 to review techniques for survival and to generate interest.

A practical activity was chosen for TP 2 as it is an interactive way to introduce cadets to the improvising process. This activity contributes to the development of survival skills and knowledge in a fun and challenging setting.

INTRODUCTION

REVIEW

Nil.

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this lesson the cadet shall have employed the improvising process.

IMPORTANCE

It is important for cadets to learn how to improvise items when in a survival situation. When a cadet determines they are lost, the ability to stop and inspect their immediate surroundings can provide the necessities to improvise items that will allow them to survive while awaiting help. Improvising items can increase the chances of survival.

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Teaching point 1 **Review techniques for survival.**

Time: 5 min Method: Interactive Lecture



Briefly review the survival techniques cadets have learned throughout the Cadet Program—STOP, five elements of survival and the seven enemies of survival.

These techniques will help guide them in a survival situation when applying the improvising process to determine what items should first be created.

THE STOP PROCEDURE

A person can become lost simply by leaving a tent to go to the washroom or by following an incorrect compass bearing on a hike. Once it is determined that one is lost, the best thing to do is to stay in one place, keep calm and try to gather information to determine one's location. It is extremely important to concentrate on making good decisions.

Sit. Sit where you are! Do not panic. Many lost people waste valuable energy and risk injury by panicking—running aimlessly, continuing to travel after dark, or walking in circles. If a lost person decides to wander in an attempt to find their location, in most cases they will move further away, increasing the distance between the known points of their course. This will only increase the size of the search area, increasing the time it will take for a rescue team to locate an individual. During the first 30 minutes of being lost is when people tend to make their biggest mistakes. Making good decisions about the situation involves thinking through options without panicking.

Think. Think about immediate and future dangers and the factors involved in the situation. Consider the time of day, personal physical condition, and the last time water or food was consumed. Try to list the options that are available.

Observe. Observe and listen for the signals of rescuers. Study the immediate environment, determining weather, terrain and resources available. Check the immediate area for a shelter location, fresh drinking water, and for clues of the current location.

Plan. Plan the best course of action. It could be close to dark and consideration should be given to setting up shelter, finding water or starting a fire. A safety bearing could have been provided prior to beginning the activity and consideration should be given to use it or not. Include in the plan how to signal rescuers.

FIVE ELEMENTS OF SURVIVAL

After successfully completing the STOP action and recognizing a survival situation, the lost individual shall take inventory of all the food and equipment on hand and proceed to implement the five elements of survival. These are listed in order of priority.

Attitude. Maintaining a positive attitude is essential. One can survive by staying calm, using all available resources, and prioritizing personal needs.

Shelter. Designed to provide protection from the weather and, depending on the conditions, protect a person from either hot or cold temperatures. Hypothermia and hyperthermia are two of the greatest dangers in a survival situation. A proper shelter can help prevent these from occurring. In a desert scenario, for example, the goal is to stay under a shelter, shaded from the effects of the sun. In cold weather situations, the shelter will provide insulation.

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Water. The most essential nutrient for the human body. Even when thirst is not extreme it can dull your mind. Lack of water will slowly degrade the ability to survive. With adequate shelter and water you can survive for weeks.

Fire. In a survival situation, fire provides heat and light, and signals to rescuers. Cold weather not only lowers the ability to think, but it also lowers one's will to do anything. Even a few degrees drop in body temperature can affect the ability to make reasonable decisions.

Food. Individuals in good physical condition can go for many days or even weeks without food. Your goal in a wilderness survival situation is to be located in the shortest time possible, so in most cases you will be located long before food becomes a survival issue. However it is always important to prepare for the worst and find ways to supply the body with substance, through berries, fish, animals, birds, etc.

SEVEN ENEMIES OF SURVIVAL

Cold. More of a threat than most people think. Cold lowers the ability to think and distracts people from doing much more than thinking about getting warm. Because cold slows the body down, it is easy to feel the need to sleep. Cold numbs the mind, the body and the will. Stay moving to try to get warm.

Pain. Nature's way of letting the mind know that something is wrong. The mind can postpone the feeling of pain, if the mind and body are distracted doing something else. Once the mind recognizes pain, it can weaken the drive to survive. It can become overwhelming, even if it is not serious or prolonged. Keep spirits up to postpone the feeling of pain.

Thirst. The hidden enemy of survival. Even when someone has a mild thirst, the mind can feel dull. Like pain and cold, if attention is drawn to it, it can lower the drive to survive. Remember to drink water if it is available and safe. The feeling of thirst can fog the mind. One can become dehydrated even when water is available because they forget to drink or do not force themself to drink. Lack of water leads to dehydration as well as headaches and nausea.

Hunger. The feeling of hunger can affect a person's rational thought. Thirst and hunger can increase the chances of weakening to the effects of cold, pain and fear. This is especially true after three days, when the stomach shrinks and reduces its desire for food.

Fatigue. Even a small amount of fatigue (tiredness) can reduce mental ability. It is easy to become lazy and adopt a careless attitude. Fatigue is one of the biggest dangers to wilderness survival and may be responsible for some deaths. Although there is a real danger of over-exertion, fatigue may be caused by a feeling of hopelessness or frustration. Sleep allows someone to escape from a situation they feel may be too difficult to handle.

Boredom and loneliness. Boredom and loneliness are two of the toughest enemies of survival because they are unexpected. When there is nothing to do, feelings of boredom and loneliness may creep up. Try to find some way to keep occupied. Working on a plan allows one to be constructive while staying busy. Building amenities for the site or something as simple as singing and talking can keep the cadet's mind occupied.

CONFIRMATION OF TEACHING POINT 1

QUESTIONS:

Q1. When stressed about being in a survival situation, what do some people forget to use?

Q2. What are the seven enemies of survival?

Q3. What are the five elements of survival?

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ANTICIPATED ANSWERS:

A1. When stressed about being in a survival situation, some people forget to use their common sense.

A2. The seven enemies of survival are cold, pain, thirst, hunger, fatigue and boredom and loneliness.

A3. The five elements of survival are attitude, shelter, water, fire and food.

Teaching point 2 **Conduct a scenario-based activity where the cadets will employ the improvising process.**

Time: 20 min Method: Practical Activity

BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

IMPROVISING PROCESS

Being lost and unaware of one's surroundings can be an uncomfortable and scary situation. It can happen at any time. Even when leaving a campsite to go to the washroom, a person can easily take a wrong turn and find themselves wandering aimlessly in the forest. Improvising can turn an uncomfortable survival situation into one that is more comfortable. With creativity and imagination, anyone can improvise the basic survival necessities, gather food, make shelter and create a source of heat. The only limiting factor is the imagination. This is all possible, it just requires the person to stop, think and follow the improvising process. When working through the improvising process, the following steps will help in making the best choices:

1. **Determine items needed for survival.** When in a survival situation, determine what is required to survive from the most to least important (eg, shelter, food, fire, water).

2. **Identify available resources.** Take inventory of available resources, to include two types of materials—natural and man-made. Man-made items can be anything from a survival knife to the laces in footwear and even the clothes on oneself. Natural items include resources found in the area such as trees, branches, leaves, cattails, etc.

3. **Consider options available.** Think about that what options are available to meet the needs of the situation by remembering the five elements of survival and determining priorities. If there is an injury, the first thing would be to tend to the wound, (eg, a broken or sprained ankle may need to be splinted) to allow one to continue about the site.

4. **Select a survival item to improvise.** Particular factors determine the practicality of an item to improvise. The factors that influence the type of survival item to be improvised include:

   a. **Time.** How much time will be consumed constructing the item? Time is important to survival. As time passes the remaining hours of sunlight diminish. If time is assessed correctly, many improvised items can be created to help prolong survival until help arrives. In the big picture, if an item will take a considerable amount of time to construct, the question needs to be asked: will this benefit the situation?

   b. **Energy.** Will the item benefit the situation if a lot of energy was expended creating it? Choosing to construct an item that consumes considerable amounts of energy without having a source of food to replenish that energy can threaten the chances of survival.

   c. **Materials.** Will the item require man-made or natural materials? These materials may be limited depending on area. Could the materials be put to better use and are the materials being used in an appropriate fashion? This must be considered.

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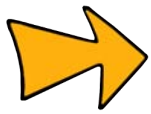
5. **Construct the survival item.** Once it is determined that the item is viable and required, the person can continue with the construction, ensuring that the final product is safe and durable.



Some survival items do not need to be constructed (eg, using a rock as a hammer).

6. **Repeating the process for other survival items.** The process can be repeated to create more survival items. This should continue until found; an idle mind can be devastating to survival.



Items that are common to improvise include:

- bed / layer of comfortable material to rest on,
- cordage,
- cutlery,
- shelters,
- tools,
- traps,
- water carrying devices,
- weapons for hunting, and
- wind and heat reflectors.

ACTIVITY

Time: 20 min

OBJECTIVE

The objective of this activity is to have the cadets employ the improvising process.

RESOURCES

- Natural and man-made items found in the surrounding area, and
- River Folly scenario located at Attachment A.

ACTIVITY LAYOUT

Nil.

ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS

1. Conduct a briefing to include an explanation of:
   a. the objectives and importance of the activity,
   b. the resources that may be required to perform the activity, and
   c. any safety guidelines that must be followed while performing the activity.
2. Divide the cadets into pairs.

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3. Read the River Folly scenario located at Attachment A to the cadets.
4. In pairs, based on the scenario, have the cadets:
   a. determine items needed for survival from most to least important;
   b. identify available resources in the immediate area, to include:
      (1) man-made, and
      (2) natural;
   c. consider options available by:
      (1) referring to the five elements of survival,
      (2) determining what should be improvised first to assist the survival situation;
   d. select a survival item to improvise;
   e. construct the survival item if time permits; and
   f. repeat the process for other survival items.
5. Conduct a debriefing of the activity.



The items improvised should be small and simple given the amount of time available.

SAFETY

Cadets shall be briefed on any boundaries for this activity.

CONFIRMATION OF TEACHING POINT 2

The cadets' participation in the improvising activity will serve as the confirmation of this TP.

END OF LESSON CONFIRMATION

The cadets' participation in the improvising activity will serve as the confirmation of this lesson.

CONCLUSION

HOMEWORK / READING / PRACTICE

Nil.

METHOD OF EVALUATION

Nil.

CLOSING STATEMENT

The improvising process is a method a person can use to help determine a requirement and provide basic constructed materials to aid in a survival situation. This process allows the one to weigh the pros and cons

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of a particular item before committing materials and resources. Creating improvised items can increase the chances of survival.

INSTRUCTOR NOTES / REMARKS

This EO shall be conducted during the allocated bivouac field training exercise.

REFERENCES

C2-016 ISBN 0-517-88783-5 Curtis, R. (1998). *The backpacker's field manual: A comprehensive guide to mastering backcountry skills*. New York, NY: Three Rivers Press.

C2-148 ISBN 978-0-8117-3292-5 Davenport, G. (2006). *Wilderness survival*. Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books.

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RIVER FOLLY

The cadet corps has planned a three-day canoe trip for senior cadets. The trip covers a total distance of 53 km and includes travel across many lakes, including portages and some white water canoeing. It is late August, the weather at this time of year has normal daytime temperatures between 18–23 degrees Celsius and temperatures overnight between 8–13 degrees Celsius.

It is Day Two, early afternoon of the canoe trip and the group has travelled by canoe on flatwater. The final leg of the day takes the group down a fast moving river with a few Class 2 rapids. The group is required to travel 2 km down the river and complete a final portage to that evening's campsite. All groups are directed to follow the lead canoe, giving ample distance between canoes in case of accidental capsizing.

You and your partner are the third canoe in the chain. As you follow the lead canoes ahead, you see they are turning and rafting in an eddy. Just past the eddy is what appears to be an area of Class 3 rapids—larger rapids than what this group expected today. As you approach the lead canoes, you are directed to raft up in the eddy. However, when turning into the eddy something goes wrong. You feel a sudden rush of cold water engulf your body and you are stunned, as the rushing current pulls you downstream.

You awaken face down on a small rocky beach, pebbles are in your mouth, your face is covered in mud and half your body is still in the water. You feel a slight headache and have a rather sizable lump on your forehead. You instantly assume you must have been knocked unconscious when the canoe capsized and have no idea where you are on the river. You remember in the briefing the instructor informed everyone that this river is over a 100 km long and runs directly into the ocean—you could be anywhere.

Climbing out of the river and to higher ground, you gather your thoughts and assess the situation. You realize you are only left with your personal flotation device (PFD), a wet suit and a knife on your belt. Everything else is missing, including your shoes, helmet and survival kit.

Thinking back to your training, you remember that stern looking warrant officer teaching you about survival factors who told you that if you get lost the first thing you should consider are the techniques for survival including STOP, five elements of survival and the seven enemies of survival.

Well you are lost, you are wet, you have a headache and it is going to be dark in four or five hours. What items can you improvise to help you survive the night while you wait for help?

Scan the surrounding area to see what available natural resources may be employed.

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