

Please Don't get lost in the woods!
An Excerpt from OPMS Newsletter of October 2010

If you do get lost:

First, stay warm and dry—a space blanket is small and lightweight, costs little, and will serve both purposes. Build a cozy shelter with tree limbs, moss, etc., and stay there until it gets light in the morning. You should have a flashlight, but you are unlikely to find your way through the woods at night with a flashlight, even if you also have a compass. So, it is best if you stay put in your shelter, rather than falling off a cliff.

Of course, every OPMS member carries and uses a compass when hunting mushrooms. Right? If not, you should do so. When standing at your car (or other starting point), take a reading to determine which direction you are going away from your car. To return to your car, head in the opposite direction.

Have a means to communicate—every mushroom hunter should carry a whistle; they are also cheap and lightweight. Many OPMS members also carry and use an FRS or GFRS transceiver (walkie-talkie) that's set to channel 10.0. They are good for short-range communication (FRS up to 2 miles straight-line distance, GFRS probably farther). But they transmit in circles, so your rescuers won't know where you are, except that you are near. Your whistle will help determine your position. Another nice device to help pinpoint your position is a small air horn. They are inexpensive and loud. Our club sells them to members at cost (about \$3.00).

In addition, you ought to carry some waterproof matches in a waterproof container, a small butane lighter, a plumber's candle, a small roll of toilet paper (for starting fires as well as for the obvious), a container of drinking water, and a power bar. If you are not injured, you'll die first from exposure, then from thirst, and lastly from hunger. Also cell phones and portable GPS devices are nice to have, but they aren't reliable in the old growth forests and steep mountain terrain we hunt in. If you have room in your pockets or fanny pack, put in a large plastic trash bag (you can get red or orange ones in outdoor stores); they are small and lightweight and are good as emergency raingear (and the red or orange ones help rescuers find you). Don't Get Lost and Embarrass OPMS!