

About Winter Survival

PLEASE READ ALL INFORMATION CAREFULLY!!

Winter Survival is an endurance hike, designed to provide a test of physical and mental abilities, managing in challenging conditions and carrying only minimal equipment.

What to Expect

The route is approximately 40 miles, and teams that complete the route will usually finish some time on Saturday night. You will navigate between checkpoints, being given only one grid reference at a time. The check points will be run by friendly staff who will make sure you are happy and well, and your team's progress will be closely monitored by Survival Control.

The location of Winter Survival is top secret until the event, so you won't find out where the event is taking place until the Friday evening, when you will be telephoned and given details of the start location that you will need to get to.

When you get to the start, you will be greeted by the registration team, who will check your team and medical details are correct and issue you with a personal wristband each. You will be given a team map and GPS tracker, and a reflective square each for the back of your rucksack. You will proceed to kit check, drop off your bags to be left at main base, and be briefed on the event. At the end of briefing, you will be given your first grid reference and set off on your route. Note that there are different routes and the team in front of you may not be on the same one, so do not be tempted just to follow another team!

At some point on Friday night, you will reach the Night Stop, where you can get hot drinks and maybe some sleep in a survival bag. There's usually a fire burning. You will also be given your Saturday morning start time (usually between 6am and 7am). On Saturday morning, you will be given a bacon roll (or vegetarian alternative) and the grid reference to the next checkpoint for you to continue on the route until you retire or finish.

Retiring

One individual may retire from a team of 4. Teams of 3 must retire as a whole team. You should only retire at a checkpoint, by telling the checkpoint staff. They will notify Survival Control, who will arrange for you to be taken by minibus back to the main base, where you will arrange to go home. If you are retiring, you are still subject to the event rules (including not using your phone!) until you have returned to main base by minibus and been booked in. On no account should you go directly home from anywhere except main base.

Finishing

Finishing Survival is not a simple task and not something that many teams do. Taking part in Survival and doing YOUR best is the most important. BUT.... you will need to be physically fit, have excellent navigation skills (including night navigation, in poor weather conditions and when you are tired) and plenty of determination. You will need to work as a team and sometimes the only thing that will keep you going is team spirit and determination.

Bussing on and cut off times

Your progress is closely monitored so that the event can be safely managed. This allows us to be on the lookout for teams who might have got lost or who are struggling.

There might be occasions when teams will need to be bussed on. This means that your team will be picked up from a checkpoint by minibus and taken to a checkpoint further along the route.

Decisions to bus teams on are not taken lightly and are at the discretion of the Winter Survival Committee.

Note that for staff safety reasons, there are cut off times for reaching the night stop and the finish. If your walking pace is too slow, you are repeatedly getting lost, or spending too much time in checkpoints (which can really add up!), you will not be allowed to continue. It is not a fixed time, to allow us some flexibility to enable teams to complete as much of the route as possible, but it is likely that you will be stopped at a checkpoint if it clear that you are not going to reach the night stop by 2am on Saturday morning or the finish by 2am on Sunday morning. You will then be taken directly to the night stop or main base.

Navigation between checkpoints

Your team will navigate between checkpoints using map and compass. Your route between checkpoints is entirely your choice! However, you must use footpaths wherever possible. The route is planned to make the best use of the footpath network available. Sometimes, a section of road walking will be unavoidable, but there will usually be an obvious sensible route to the next checkpoint via footpaths. Check with the checkpoint staff before you leave if you are unsure. If you are found using a road where a footpath alternative exists, your team may be disqualified from the exercise. All teams will have a GPS tracker and routes taken will be reviewed after the event. Significant time penalties may be applied for walking on roads when a footpath was available.

Checkpoints

There are regular checkpoints along the route. At each checkpoint, there will be staff waiting to greet you. On arrival, you will ask them a password question (given to you at the previous checkpoint) and you must receive the correct answer to confirm that they are the checkpoint. Most checkpoints will have water for you to refill bottles with, and a first aid kit.

You may stop at checkpoints for as long as you wish and it is not counted in your walking time for the results. We want you to have any stops at checkpoints, so that we know where you are, and that you are safe. It is a good opportunity to get your stove out for some hot food or drinks and to sort out any problems with your feet. However, you should aim to spend as little time as possible at most checkpoints and only have the occasional longer stop. If you are spending 20 minutes at every checkpoint, that time adds up quickly and you will soon begin to fall a long way behind the front teams, and may end up being bussed on or not having enough time to complete the route as a result. When you are ready to leave a checkpoint, tell the staff and they will give you the grid reference and password for the next checkpoint. Teams must leave checkpoints at 3 minute intervals.

Going Home

On no account should you go directly home from anywhere except main base. The event will finish at 8am on Sunday and all teams must be collected by this time. Participants / Teams retiring prior to this will be expected to arrange collection as soon as possible on their return to main base (if it is a reasonable hour, unless your parents are happy to be called at 3am!). Each individual must provide contact details of the person that is picking them up from the event.

Equipment and food

Included in this pack is an equipment list. It is very important that you have all of the compulsory equipment as a minimum. The compulsory kit list is there for good reason and is not up for debate. If you have a genuine query about whether something will pass kit check, email wintersurvival2@gmail.com before the event to check! It isn't a huge amount of kit, so you won't need to carry a massive bag.

For food, you will need to be self-sufficient for the weekend (apart from hot drinks and a bacon roll at the night stop, a hot drink further round the course and something to eat at the finish). You will have a team stove, so plan to have some quick and easy hot food such as noodles a couple of

times and hot drinks if it's cold (it probably will be!). Remember that you'll need to replace the calories you are using, so pack lots of high energy snacks to keep you going, but remember to keep it light and compact.

You will also leave a bag with clean clothes and a sleeping bag at the start, so when you get back you can get changed and perhaps get some sleep before you go home.

If you arrive at the start without the correct equipment, it may prevent you, and possibly your whole team, from taking part in the event. You may (and it is certainly not guaranteed) be able to borrow certain items of equipment once at the start, but your team will incur a time penalty.

Cover Stories

Winter Survival will always have a story line that you will be part of. You might be battling with aliens, undercover agents or saving the world! The story line may also involve you carrying out certain tasks.

You should however bear in mind that wherever there are goodies (generally that's you!) there are always bad guys out to stop you. The baddies are a group of people (generally referred to as the Opposition) who will fit in with the story line and will try to slow you down, hold you up and generally try to prevent you from completing your mission. They are best avoided if you can but may be more lenient if you have a convincing cover story for being out and about.

Come prepared with your cover stories. Previous cover stories have included Badger Watch, Dutch Mountain Rescue, Mad Scientists, Duke of Edinburgh teams, Escaped Prisoners and French Foreign Legion. Create an identity for your team and make it real - carry your own props, produce false identities, maybe even have a friend who is willing to be called by Opposition to back up your story! Be imaginative and put some effort into it.

Emergencies

An emergency number is given to all teams at the start of the event and you will be issued with wristbands with your name and the emergency phone number/s on. This will go to a dedicated emergency phone/s at Survival Control and will be manned at all times any teams are walking the route.

If you need to be contacted by your parents during the event, they should call Survival Control. (Contact phone numbers will be provided closer to the event. These numbers are for emergencies only and should not be called for any other purpose. We will provide a different phone number during your Friday evening phone call in case of difficulty travelling to the event.

Cancellation Policy

In the event of unforeseen circumstances such as severe weather warnings, it may be necessary for the Committee to make the difficult decision to cancel the event. If circumstances suggest that cancellation may be necessary, the Committee will endeavour to make the decision to cancel as early as possible, but by 8pm on the Thursday evening before the event at the latest.

Winter Survival is run as a zero-profit event to keep entry fees as low as possible. In the lead up to the event, costs are incurred that may not be recoverable, which are paid from entry fees. In the event of cancellation, entry fees will be refunded minus any unrecoverable costs.

If you have any queries, please email wintersurvival2@gmail.com