

BACKCOUNTRY PRE-MORTEM PROTOCOL

Perform this 5-minute risk assessment at home or at the trailhead before unlatching the tailgate.

TRIP NAME / DESTINATION

DATE

TRIP LEADER

1. BRAINSTORM FAILURE MODES

The Premise: "Assume it is 48 hours from now. The trip ended in total failure and Search and Rescue was called. What went wrong?" List all plausible failures (dry streams, blister hotspots, sudden weather shifts, equipment failure).

01

02

03

04

2. SINGLE POINT OF FAILURE (SPOF) MATRIX

RISK CATEGORY	SINGLE POINT OF FAILURE (SPOF)	MITIGATION / REDUNDANCY STRATEGY	CHK
Navigation	Single phone with GPS app	Paper topo map + compass in waterproof case	☐
Hydration	Relying on marked seasonal streams	Carry +1.5L extra capacity; backup purification tabs	☐
Power & Light	Single power bank / primary phone battery	Secondary headlamp on disposable AA/AAA batteries	☐
First Aid	Ignoring early heel hotspots/chafing	Pre-tape feet with Leukotape; enforce early-reporting rule	☐
Communications	Cell coverage dropouts in canyon/valley	Two-way satellite messenger (Garmin InReach / ZOLEO)	☐

3. HARD-STOP TRIGGERS (NON-NEGOTIABLE TURN-BACK RULES)

 TIME TRIGGER

Turn back at `[ \_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_ AM/PM ]` regardless of distance remaining to summit/campsite.

 WEATHER TRIGGER

Abort ridge/summit push if cloud cover drops below saddle level or wind exceeds estimate.

 RESOURCE TRIGGER

Turn back if water reserves drop below `[ \_\_\_\_ Liters ]` per person prior to midpoint.

 PHYSICAL TRIGGER

Halt or alter route immediately if team member exhibits persistent stumble or mild disorientation.

FIELD NOTES & CUSTOM RISK MITIGATIONS

OFFICIAL WILDERNESS FLOAT PLAN

Leave this sheet on your kitchen counter or email a photo of it to your emergency contact.

⚠ INSTRUCTIONS FOR SAFETY CONTACT PERSON

If the trip members listed below have not checked in by the **Overdue Threshold Time**, attempt to call/text them first. If unreachable after 30 minutes, call the Emergency Dispatch listed in Section 4 and provide them with this document.

1. TRIP ITINERARY & OVERDUE THRESHOLD

PRIMARY TRAILHEAD / ENTRY POINT

EXIT TRAILHEAD

PLANNED ROUTE / TRAILS / CAMPSITES

DEPARTURE DATE & TIME

EXPECTED RETURN / CHECK-IN TIME

HARD OVERDUE THRESHOLD (CALL SAR)

2. PARTY ROSTER & VEHICLE DETAILS

VEHICLE MAKE / MODEL

COLOR

LICENSE PLATE / PROVINCE

PARTY MEMBER NAME	CELL PHONE #	EMERGENCY CONTACT	MEDICAL / ALLERGIES
1. (Leader)			
2.			
3.			
4.			

3. ON-TRAIL GEAR & VISUAL IDENTIFIERS

TENT / TARP OUTER COLOR(S)

OUTERWEAR / JACKET COLORS

BACKPACK COLOR(S)

SATELLITE DEVICE ID / INREACH SHAREURL

BEAR SPRAY ON BOARD?

FIRST AID / EMERGENCY BIVY?

[] Yes [] No

[] Yes [] No

4. LOCAL EMERGENCY CONTACT DIRECTORY

LOCAL POLICE / SHERIFF DISPATCH

PARK RANGER OFFICE

LOCAL SAR NON-EMERGENCY