

13. A Night's Tale



Introduction

It's not unusual for search and rescue activities to take place after dark; teams are on-call 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. This has implications on safety and the effectiveness of search activities so it's important to practice all the skills we learn in the dark too.

Activities

Ages 10 ½ - 14 ½ years (e.g. Scouts and Guides)

- Talk about the additional hazards of night searches.
- Undertake an incident night hike and include at least two of the following skills:
 - Kit selection
 - Navigation
 - First aid
 - Effective searching
 - Evidence handling

Ages 14 ½ years + (e.g. Senior Section, Explorers and Network)

- Talk about the additional hazards of night searches.
- Undertake an incident night hike and include all of the following skills:
 - Kit selection
 - Navigation
 - First aid
 - Effective searching
 - Evidence handling
 - Search location selection and assessment



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Equipment

This of course depends on the choice of skills and the complexity of the scenario you set. Parents or gullible leaders (!) make excellent "mispers" (missing people) but make sure everyone has additional warm clothing and torches, especially if they are going to be stationary. Other equipment is as

listed in the other challenges:

- Navigation – see challenge 6
- Kit selection – see challenge 2
- First aid – see challenge 3
- Effective searching – see challenge 1
- Evidence handling – see challenge 11
- Search location selection – see challenge 4

Setup

Create a scenario which fits your location, groups' interest and resources. For example,

- Someone missing for several hours after taking their dog for a walk
- A hiker 3 hours late returning from their planned route
- An elderly person missing without their medication

This is a night time incident hike. Safety is a prime concern so apply all of your organisation's policies and remember to check everyone has the right equipment before they set out.

Further information

The aim of any search is to find and treat a missing person as quickly as possible. Searchers face clear additional hazards at night but must be extra careful to remain safe themselves if they are to be successful.

Ensure the group identify and are aware of all the potential hazards before setting out. Common night hazards include:

- Simple navigational errors
- Disorientation
- Trips and falls
- Members of the public using the area
- Mistakes and carelessness due to tiredness

For SAR team members, the latter is most often associated with the drive home when adrenaline wears off and a lack of sleep catches up with you.

Most importantly, don't forget to make the scenario realistic but fun!