

Murphy's Law also applies to the outdoors

No matter what your chosen outdoor activity, it requires a certain amount of preparation.

The old saying of "prepare for the worst and hope for the best" should be the mantra of all things outdoors. In my line of work, my personal mantra is "prepare for the worst and be ready for it to be worse than that."

In my columns, I always refer to my ever-present companion, Mr. Murphy of Murphy's Law fame, or Murph as I call him through long association.

I use the reference semi-jokingly, but in reality, Murphy's Law is spot on for all things outdoor when it comes to survival. I thought it would be fun to see where Murphy's Law comes from and expand on some of the amendments and additions to the original law.

One of my fellow posse members chewed me out recently. He was upset that I always refer to my close, personal relationship with Murph. He felt it was impossible for me to be so close to him because Murph actually lives at his house full time, constantly wreaking his own special breed of havoc.



Tips from the Posse

By Mark Rackay

The original Murphy's Law, "If anything can go wrong, it will," was born at Edwards Air Force Base in 1949. The law was named after Capt. Edward Murphy, an engineer who was working on a project to see how much deceleration a person could stand in a crash.

One day he found a transducer wired wrong and cursed the technician responsible, saying, "If there is any way to do it wrong, he'll find it." Murphy's Law was born.

The story goes that Mr. Murphy was tragically killed some years later. Apparently, he was on his way home from the base one dark evening, when his car ran out of gas. As he hitchhiked to a gas

Murphy's Laws

1. In any field of endeavor, anything that can go wrong, will go wrong.
2. Left to themselves, things always go from bad to worse.
3. If there is a possibility of several things going wrong, the one that will go wrong, is the one that will cause the most damage.
4. Nature always sides with the hidden flaw.
5. If everything seems to be going well, you have obviously overlooked something.

(Submitted photo)

station, facing traffic and wearing white, he was struck from behind by a British tourist who was

driving on the wrong side of the road.

So many emergency situations we encounter outdoors follow Murphy's Law.

For example, the MacGillicuddy's Corollary adds: "at the most inopportune time." Your car is going to run out of gas, but not at the driveway to the gas station. It will happen when you are 150 miles northwest of nowhere, and late for work.

Murphy's Law of the Outdoors states, "Nature always sides with the hidden flaw."

I relate that law to my equipment. I don't notice the leak in the tent until it rains, or the batteries are dead in the flashlight until dark thirty. It matters

not that I checked all the equipment at home, before the trip; equipment failure will come when on the trip.

"Left to themselves, things have a tendency to go from bad to worse," is an amendment that really sums up outdoor emergencies. You start with being lost, just as the snow starts to fall. In the snow, you slip and twist your ankle.

While nursing the offending ankle, you get soaked to the skin by the falling snow. You then discover that you lost the matches ... you see where this goes.

Here are a few more:

- Nothing is as easy as it looks.
- Everything takes longer than you think.

• Every solution breeds new problems.

• Being dead right won't make you any less dead.

• If it jams, force it. If it breaks, it needed replacing anyway.

• In nature, nothing is ever right. Therefore, if everything is going right, something is wrong.

Then there is Mark's law of the Night which says: "It is always the darkest, just before it becomes completely black."

We don't want to forget that there was also a Mrs. Murphy, who stated: "If something does go wrong, it's Mr. Murphy's fault." Perhaps that's why Mr. Murphy warned everyone to never mess with Mrs. Murphy.

Next time you get ready to head out on your next outdoor excursion, try and leave Mr. Murphy at home. However, if you think you can sneak out of the house when Mr. Murphy is not around, you would do well to remember Mrs. Murphy's Law that says, "If anything can go wrong, it will, even when Mr. Murphy is out of town."

Beware of my close associate and ever-present friend, Murph, for his law knows no religion, race, creed or politics. We all know that he doesn't really exist, and yet, somehow he is always there.

Finally, remember that Mr. Murphy was an eternal optimist, for things are really much worse than you think they are. But as long as we know Murph is around, at least we can be prepared.

Mark Rackay is a freelance writer who serves as a director and public information officer for the Montrose County Sheriff's Posse. For information about the Posse call 970-252-4033 (leave a message) or email info@mcspi.org

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