

Individual First Aid Kit



Tips from the Posse

By Mark Rackay



The sling pack I carry everyday on the left and a stand alone IFAK on the right. Notice how the tourniquet is outside on the bag so it is easily accessible. (Photo/Mark Rackay)

I almost think that carrying an Individual First Aid Kit, known as an IFAK, with you has become a semi-fashion statement, although it's the first fashion statement ever that has common sense attached.

A dozen years ago, you had to "build" your own first aid kit. There were always the plastic box versions available in the Mighty Mart stores, but for one that would actually have things you might need, you had to build it. Now days, there are all sorts of pre-made kits, for just about every need, from professional kits to day hikers kits.

The kits now available have scores of ways to carry them, from MOLLE bags, belt loops, small duffels and small backpacks, to professional ones for police officers that fit in an ankle holster, so it is always in reach. Some even have a little red cross emblem on the outside of them for quick identification.

It has been said that if your outdoor sport does not leave you with injuries occasionally, not to mention a trip or two to the ER, that you are not passionate

enough about it. Well, I must be pretty passionate about my outdoor sports. Between fast boats, dirt bikes, hunting, ATVs, baseball, hockey, not to mention my career choices, it is surprising that I am still on the tax rolls. There were occasions that my carcass looked like something that would give a roadkill eating coyote the dry heaves.

Now that I am definitely older, and purportedly somewhat wiser regardless of what my wife will tell you, I carry a first aid kit with me. I am not talking about the size kit one would carry in a vehicle, RV or have at a base camp. These kits are far more extensive, as they should be, than what a person wants to lug around in a pack with them all day.

The IFAK you keep on your person, backpack pocket, range bag, fishing vest, or fanny pack, should be small, and contain the

lifesaving items you need. Leave the bug bite cream, burn cream, and tweezers for the large kit. If your kit swells up too much, you won't carry it. Just bring the things to save a life. The splinter can wait until you get home.

If you injure yourself in the woods, such as with a knife, and you happen to cut an artery, chances are you are going to attend a funeral, yours, unless you have something within immediate reach to stop the bleeding. You can bleed to unconsciousness within a minute, so that kit better be close, and not back under the truck seat. In my case, my wife carries an IFAK to take care of me.

Serious bleeding can lead to death in short order. I carry three things for this. First on the list is a tourniquet. A Swat-T tourniquet, which has a stretch, wrap, and tuck application. They

are very small and lightweight. See www.SWAT-T.com. Some people, especially first responders, prefer a more traditional tourniquet, such as the CAT (Combat Application Tourniquet) version. I have found the Gen 7 CAT to be very user friendly. Either one will work fine.

I also carry a small package of Quik-clot Combat Gauze. Used with the above tourniquet, you can dam up the blood flow quickly. It is small, lightweight, and very easy to use. Available at www.rescue-essentials.com

For serious gashes, or to cover a wound, I carry a 4-inch Israeli bandage. This trauma wound bandage is battle tested and has its own elastic band, similar to an ACE wrap, attached to a super absorbent pad. They also come in a 6-inch size. These were developed by the Israeli military and are battle tested.

I keep just a couple medium sized band-aids with me. A small cut that just bleeds all over your equipment can be an annoyance. My wife buys these by the gross for me and replenishes my IFAK weekly.

A small plastic bottle with a few ibuprofen and acetaminophen tablets in it can save the day when a headache interrupts the fun. Throw in a Benadryl tablet in case you run into something that causes an allergic reaction. People with known serious allergies should consider adding an Epi-pen.

Some folks carry a small Sam's Splint with them. This is very useful in the event you need to immobilize a limb because of a fracture. They are lightweight and can be folded up fairly small.

I will throw in a couple betadine wipes to disinfect cuts, scrapes and gashes, especially if I am a ways from the bigger first aid kit. A pair or 2 of nitrile gloves are important, especially if you have to do a repair job on someone else.

You can customize your IFAK for your own personal needs. If you carry a sidearm for protection, you might consider adding a chest seal. Duct tape is a friend anytime, not just medical emergencies. Rather than a whole roll, wrap a few yards around an expired plastic credit card. Keep the add-ons small and light, remember, this is just a lifesaving emergency kit, not an ambulance in a bag.

The pocket kit, like all first aid kits, should be inspected at least annually. Adhesives go bad with age.

A little water damage can render many items useless in the kit. Pills expire in time and should be replaced.

Along with this kit, you must possess the knowledge of how to use it. For this, I recommend an extensive first aid class, one that is geared to wilderness first aid. Learning the proper use of a tourniquet is imperative. Placing it too low, not tight enough, or when not needed, and you can cause more problems. There are many classes available on this and scores of books written on the subject. If you have not taken a class recently, consider getting into another one. Bottom line, train often.

I have a number of these IFAKs around now, in my boat bag, attached to the back of the driver's seat of my truck, my hunting pack, range bag, and my carry everywhere sling bag. It takes my wife the better part of the morning to replace the band-aids in all of them these days.

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Lone Mesa State Park hunting opportunity now open to applicants for 2025

SPECIAL TO THE MDP

DOLORIS, Colo. – Lone Mesa State Park provides one of the most unique big-game hunting experiences in Colorado, and the application period for the 2025 opportunity is now open.

Scenic Lone Mesa State Park, nestled in southwest Colorado, offers bear, elk and mule deer hunting during the fall seasons. The 11,760-acre property located 23 miles north of Dolores is open to the public only through a Special Use Permit that allows for limited hunting during big game seasons. The park ranges in elevation from 7,200 feet to a little more than 9,000 feet and provides excellent habitat.

The application for the hunting permit draw for Lone Mesa State Park opened May 27 and will be available through 4 p.m. June 26. The

order of submission does not have any bearing on the outcome of permit draw success.

"Lone Mesa State Park offers excellent hunting opportunities for elk, deer and bear," said Park Manager Nolan Tappenden. "Each year, we look forward to opening this incredibly scenic state park during big-game hunting seasons and to share in the experiences had by all the successful applicants selected through the draw."

The application for the Special Use Permit is now available online. The drawing will be held at 5 p.m. June 27 at the Mancos State Park Visitor Center located at 42545 Road N. in Mancos. For those unable to attend the draw, a virtual viewing option will be made available via Zoom. It is recommended that virtual attendees register for the webinar in advance.

Successful applicants will be notified, and unsuccessful

hunters will be placed on a waiting list in the order of their draw number.

Per regulation #710, a valid hunting license for Game Management Unit 711 is required in addition to drawing a limited Lone Mesa permit for access. The only exception is for the second and third rifle seasons, where hunters can buy an over the counter antlered elk license if they're successful in drawing a limited second or third rifle Lone Mesa permit. Hunters must have both a valid license and permit to hunt in Lone Mesa. Other than second or third antlered elk season applications, you must currently hold a license outlined in regulation #710 to apply.

For more information on the number of available permits as well as links to harvest statistics, go to the Lone Mesa State Park page. Questions regarding the application



Scenic Lone Mesa State Park, nestled in southwest Colorado, offers bear, elk and mule deer hunting during the fall seasons. The 11,760-acre property is located 23 miles north of Dolores. (Photo/CPW)

process and the draw may be directed to Lone Mesa and Mancos State Park at 970-533-7065 or by emailing lone.mesa@state.co.us.

CPW offices can provide additional information on

season structures and licensing. The Lone Mesa and Mancos State Park offices can be reached at 970-533-7065, and the CPW Durango area office can be reached at 970-247-0855.

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