



Mountain Pursuit Challenge

Participant Handbook

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Introduction

Welcome to the Mountain Pursuit Challenge (MPC) handbook. The purpose of this handbook is to prepare you and your team for the MPC adventure by outlining how to prepare, what to bring and how to travel and camp over the MPC weekend.

An MPC is a weekend hillwalking and camping expedition set in some of the most remote and beautiful countryside that Ireland has to offer. There are four MPCs every year and these form an integral part of the national Scouting calendar. They offer the Scout who is keen on hillwalking the opportunity to test their skills in map reading, compass work, and lightweight camping. Add to that the chance to meet lots of other Scouts from all over the country and you can see that the MPCs are not just about walking, but also about respecting the environment, and learning from each other's experiences.

Enjoy your adventures in preparing for the MPC. We will see you on the hills.

The MPC

At the outset, we must state that an MPC is a training and skills consolidation event, designed to foster respect and appreciation for wild environments: it is not a race or a competition.

The aims of the MPC are to:

- Improve the hiking/navigational and mountain skills of the Scouts involved.
- Encourage Scouts to participate in adventurous outdoor activities.
- Develop a greater awareness of the preparations required and of the possible dangers that mountain activities entail.
- Develop an appreciation of the fun, team spirit and "craic" that mountain expeditions generate.
- Encourage Scout Troops and counties to organise and run similar events.
- Foster a caring attitude to the environment.
- Improve group awareness and safety consciousness of the scouters involved.
- Improve the quality of equipment in scout Troops, and the knowledge about how best to use it.

Safety

Safety on MPC events is of the utmost priority. As a participating patrol, this starts with your training and preparation before the event, ensuring that you have the proper equipment, both personal and patrol, and ensuring that your menu plan is adequate for the weekend.

The Scouting Ireland MPC Team plans the route and staffs the checkpoints over the weekend. As the weather and conditions can quickly change, it is important that you listen to the advice and instructions given by the staff. Stay on the trail advised and check in with each checkpoint along the route.

The MPC program

An MPC requires a lot of planning and preparation and is a strenuous activity: naturally after all your hard work there are rewards! There is one MPC in each province each year, and each has its own unique and highly prized badge. The four badges together make a "diamond". Earning a diamond shows a high degree of dedication, effort, and skill, reflecting a scout's (or scouter's) commitment to hillwalking excellence.

The MPCs have traditionally taken place in September (Connaught), October (Ulster), April (Munster) and May (Leinster), but this remains open to change depending on circumstance. For example, in the 2024/2025 season, the Leinster MPC is moving to October to allay concerns over disturbing nesting ground birds.

MPC event programme outline

Decide to attend if you have a patrol and a Scouter that is interested in and capable of taking part in an MPC.

Book onto the relevant MPC event. You must obtain event-specific consent forms for all participants and check medical and allergy details and managing medication forms.

Complete a targeted program to practice relevant skills and topics, including navigation, lightweight camping, emergencies, menus, and Leave No Trace in the Scout section.

Check group equipment to ensure the patrol is correctly equipped for the MPC. Communicate personal gear requirements to the MPC patrol and their parents / guardians.

Complete some practice hikes and camps, using the gear you will bring to the MPC.

Discuss and complete nutrition and menu preparation and practice outdoor lightweight cooking in the Scout section.

On receipt of the MPC route and map, examine the route carefully and develop a route card.

Immediately prior to the MPC, prepare the menu, and check all group and personal gear.

MPC Weekend

After the MPC, hold a review with the MPC patrol and the Scout group. Record and share lessons learned and retain for the next MPC

Deciding to attend an MPC.

MPCs and the Troop

The MPC is not an end in itself. Troops must complete an active preparation programme before the expedition. While this is specifically for the scouts who may be participating, it can involve the whole troop. After the expedition, the scouts can help organise hikes, expeditions and activities for their troop and their patrols, using the ideas and experiences they have gained (while keeping in mind their limitations).

If your troop has little or no experience in hillwalking and lightweight camping skills, the MPC is not the place to start. Your troop must build up the requisite skill base and equipment list over time with practise hikes and camps.

The MPC patrol

An MPC patrol consists of not more than four older scouts accompanied by a scouter.

Scouts must be at least 13½ and not more than 16 years old at the time of the event and be members of the Scout Section. All patrol members including the scouters are requested to wear neckerchiefs. The scouter must have received a consent form specific to the MPC event for each member of their team.

These weekends are demanding and challenging, and the weather can be bad, so the Scouter should satisfy themselves that the Scouts are physically capable of hiking over three days, with a heavy rucksack.

Each team of four scouts is responsible for their own navigation and for bringing their scouter safely to the checkpoints and campsites. The scouter is present to ensure scouts remain safe. The MPC staff provides checkpoints at strategic points along the route, so they can monitor the teams' progress, but they are not there to replace your responsibility for navigating.

All scouts in the patrol are expected to have at least basic navigation experience and also familiarity with the equipment and practices of lightweight camping. Each team should have some walking experience before attempting an MPC, with your own Troop or on a county hike.

The MPC patrol Scouter

Scouters on this type of activity should have a basic knowledge of hill-craft and first aid and be striving to keep up and improve skills these areas. There are numerous courses available at many centres around the country to help you improve your skills; notable are the Mountain Skills (MS) 1 & 2 and Rescue Emergency Care (REC) first aid courses.

At a minimum, an MPC scouter should be capable of preparing a route card and exercising the 5 Ds of navigation on route legs. Experience in low-visibility navigation is preferred. Experience in lightweight camping and leave No Trace is a must.

The scouter must satisfy themselves that all team members are physically able to partake in the event and have knowledge of their equipment and what is expected of them on the expedition. The scouter is responsible for helping scouts to organise a comprehensive training program for the team in the months running up to event.

Booking onto the relevant MPC event

The National Activities Events Booking Process document is available at (at time of publication): <https://issuu.com/Scoutingireland/docs/16as-national-activities-events-booking-process-do>.

Page five has instructions on how to update the patrol. There are four roles that can action that update: Section Leader, Group Secretary, Deputy Group Leader, Group Leader. If you have any difficulties in relation to booking you should email events@Scouts.ie.

When booking an MPC, please email the name and mobile number of the accompanying scouter to the mpc@Scouts.ie email address: this facilitates efficient communication between the staff and the attending scouter.

If your patrol changes after your booking, make sure you update the information using the link above. It's important that the MPC Team has the updated information.

Completing a targeted skills programme

As outlined above, one of the factors affecting the decision to attend an MPC is the level of navigation and lightweight camping skill in the Troop and Scout section. However, even where these skills are present, it is best to explicitly practice and refresh the skills with the MPC patrol. This gets the patrol ready, eliminates any assumptions, and ensures that both personal and team equipment is in a good state (for example, teenage scouts will often outgrow personal gear like boots over the Summer). Build a program to evaluate and update the skills outlined under the following headings.

Navigation skill

Follow a bearing, 5 Ds on a navigation leg (Direction, Distance, Duration, Description, Destination), prepare and use a route card.

Lightweight camping

Pitch (put up), strike (take down), and pack lightweight tents, cook on lightweight stoves, deal with waste and keep a tidy camp, wash dishes using LNT principles.

Leave No Trace

Manage rubbish and pack it out, manage human waste ("how to sh*t in the woods"), use a trowel, dispose of toilet paper and other sanitary products.

Practice hikes with equipment.

Run a practice hike to see that everyone has suitable personal gear and can demonstrate navigation on the ground. It is best to have one or two practice runs carrying full packs, if possible.

Patrol equipment.

A detailed MPC gear checklist is available: see Appendix A. Use this checklist when you prepare your gear for an MPC. It includes details of personal gear, patrol equipment, and first aid that your team must bring on the MPC.

Patrol Equipment
Gas or multi-fuel stove (not meths or solid fuel)
Cooking pot & handle
Matches/lighter and fuel
Utensils to cook, eat & prepare beverages with (e.g., tin opener)
Dish cloth (small) in zip lock bag with washing up liquid (biodegradable)
Strong refuse bags & zip lock bags (you must bag out all rubbish including biodegradable)
Maps in waterproof case, compass (silva type 4), route outline & pencil (in zip lock bag) at least 2 per patrol
First aid kit (sized for a patrol for the weekend), including burns and blister treatment
Lightweight mountain tent(s) including poles and pegs (with spare guy lines, pegs, and repair kit)
Trowel for toilet

The sections below outline general considerations in relation to MPC equipment.

Tents

You must have appropriate tents for the MPC. Two, three, or four -person hiking/mountain tents, with a minimum 3 season rating. They must be lightweight and strong, with taped seams and sewn in groundsheet. Match the size of the tent to the number of scouts sleeping in it – this minimises weight per scout and increases the temperature when sleeping. In the terrain where MPCs typically take place, a small tent footprint makes use of the limited level, dry camping space available. In Ireland's damp conditions, outer-first pitched tents have significant advantages, despite being marginally heavier than inner-first.

There is a variety of tent designs, with tunnel, dome, geodesic and semi-geodesic being the most common. You can find a sample description of the most common tent designs, including their pros and cons, at, for example,

<https://westonfront.wordpress.com/2021/01/21/backpacking-tents-a-comprehensive-design-review/> .

It is essential that all team members are familiar with their tents and can pitch them! Practice pitching the tent outdoors in the dark. Practice striking the tent and packing it so it fits neatly into the bag. Continue practicing until pitching, striking, and packing the tent is second nature.

Stoves

You must have a gas stove for cooking, such as a Trangia with a gas adaptor, or one of the many cannister stoves available, or a multifuel stove. The MPC team no longer approves of methylated spirit stoves because they are more prone to fire incidents and are slow to cook or boil water.

Practice cooking the patrol meal on the stove you plan to bring, in the outdoors. You are much more limited in terms of cookware when using lightweight stoves, and it's important the patrol can cope with this and cook their hot meals efficiently.

Practice cleaning up. The best first step to cleaning up is to eat everything, then clean while following LNT principles. Note that the patrol must pack out any food they do not eat (this includes small solid particles from liquid foods like soup or stew).

Personal gear

Personal equipment is a matter of personal choice and finances. There is no need to buy expensive branded equipment for these expeditions. However, the patrol and scouter must be suitably equipped for a weekend in the wild. All team members must have the proper basic equipment.

IMPORTANT: The MPC staff will not allow any team who arrives insufficiently equipped (either as a team or with any one individual) to take part in the event!

MPC staff will ask to see key pieces of equipment for each scout at check-in; ensure your patrol comes ready to show that they have all this necessary gear. Typically, staff will want to see each patrol member has these items.

- Non-cotton base layer and mid layers
- A sturdy rain jacket (that will stay dry for hours in the rain)
- Sturdy rain trousers
- Proper hiking boots (If these are unavailable trekking boots may be used. Runner boots and 'Doc Martens' do NOT qualify)
- Warm hat and gloves
- Whistle

- Head torch.
- Rucksack
- Survival bag.

All scouts must avoid cotton clothing: it readily absorbs and retains water and is inefficient at drying. It will leave scouts wet and cold, creating a significant danger of hypothermia out on the hills. This does not mean purchasing lots of new equipment: use your ingenuity to find what the scouts need. For example, sportswear is often synthetic, and you can use it for base layers.

Packing

Practice packing well in advance of the MPC. Use this opportunity to check patrol equipment and personal gear. Ensure that raingear is easily accessed from the rucksack. Line the inside of all rucksacks with a heavy plastic bag or else wrap all the contents in plastic bags (there is no such thing as a waterproof rucksack.) Spare plastic bags are extremely useful for carrying wet clothes and rubbish.

Have everything inside the rucksack. Avoid carrying unnecessary equipment, and remember weight is always going to be a challenge. Practice repacking by having the scouts remove everything from their rucksacks and pack it again: do this in the outdoors. Everything needs to fit back in on day 2 and day 3!

Weight of rucksacks

The weight of a fully packed rucksack, with personal gear, patrol equipment and food can be challenging for some scouts. Ensure that the scouts have practiced hiking with them before the event.

Patrol equipment and gear checks.

As noted earlier, MPC staff carry out gear checks on Friday evening. If an MPC patrol is missing essential equipment, or has inadequate personal gear, staff will not permit them to take part in the event.

Perform your own equipment and gear check both at the last meeting before departing and, crucially, before boarding transport to travel to the event. Use the MPC gear checklist to ensure the patrol and scouts have everything.

Purchasing equipment and gear

There are numerous shops where groups and scouts can purchase suitable gear for an MPC event, such as The Scout Shop. Have a look at the Scout shop range here: <https://outdooradventurestore.ie/>. Remember that you can use the discount code “MPC10” to avail of a further 10% reduction sitewide. Other shops may also offer a Scout discount, so take the time to check.

Nutrition, water, and menu preparation

As exhilarating as mountain camping is, it presents unique challenges, especially when it comes to nutrition and hydration. Proper nourishment ensures Scouts have the energy and stamina to tackle the demands of an MPC weekend. You must plan this carefully to consider weight restrictions and the constraints of cooking on lightweight stoves, while providing sufficient energy for the weekend and addressing personal needs and preferences.

- **Carbohydrates:** Carbs are crucial, they fuel muscles and maintain blood glucose levels. Prioritize complex carbs like whole grains, oats, and legumes which release energy gradually.
- **Proteins:** Vital for muscle repair and growth, protein also provides sustained energy that is essential after a long day of hiking. Incorporate lean meats, tofu, beans, and dairy.
- **Fats:** Healthy fats like nuts, seeds, avocados, and olive oil are energy dense. They provide sustained energy, especially useful when carbohydrate reserves deplete.
- **Micronutrients:** Vitamins and minerals support immune function and energy production. Foods rich in iron, calcium, magnesium, and vitamins A, C, D, and E are excellent choices.

Assuming that scouts arrive at the event well fed and watered, you will need to plan at a minimum:

- Breakfast, lunch, and dinner on Saturday
- Breakfast on Sunday
- 2L of drinking water per scout per day (typically by purifying from natural sources).

When you develop a menu that suits all scouts' preferences and nutrition needs, make sure you practice cooking it in the outdoors and cleaning up afterwards. (Some foods are notoriously difficult to clean up if you spill them: for example, rice and pot noodles.)

Reviewing and preparing the MPC route

The MPC Team sets the route for the weekend and sends details of the route and a map to all patrols before the event, to allow them to review it in advance and prepare their route card and plan. All scouts in the patrol should be familiar with route before the MPC weekend! If there are subsequent updates to the route, these are given at the Saturday morning briefing for the patrols. by undertaking their own route planning before the MPC weekend.

The checkpoints on the route will be spaced, but there can be long and complex legs between each checkpoint, which requires the patrol to complete route planning and execute careful navigation on the event, especially in poor weather.

The MPC weekend

MPCs all follow a similar structure, as outlined in the following table.

Friday	<p>Arrival and check-in (8pm to 10pm): MPC patrols arrive at the car park for the event. Let the coordinators know that you have arrived. They will then schedule your check in and equipment/gear review.</p> <p>The MPC co-ordinators conduct a gear check to ensure you have appropriate personal gear and patrol equipment. If you are missing key items, staff will not permit you to take part in the event.</p> <p>After check-in, patrols hike to low camp, normally 1 to 2 hours, and pitch camp. Hiking and pitching are usually in the dark</p>
Saturday	<p>On Saturday morning, the scouts eat breakfast and strike camp, ensuring to Leave No Trace. Patrols may not leave their pitch until a staff member has checked it for LNT.</p> <p>The co-ordinators hold a briefing for patrol leaders and scouters, to outline the route, detail the checkpoints, highlight specific hazards, update on weather conditions, and cover other considerations for the day such as a route change due to weather conditions.</p> <p>MPC patrols check out with the MPC staff and leave camp, with staggered timing. Saturday's hike is normally about 12 km with a height gain of about 600m – 800m. The MPC patrols arrive at high camp by evening, pitch their tents, cook dinner, and settle down for the night.</p>
Sunday	<p>On Sunday morning, the scouts have breakfast and strike camp, again ensuring they Leave No Trace. Patrols may not leave their pitch until a staff member has checked it for LNT.</p> <p>The staff holds a Scout's Own and presents MPC badges to each of the Scout patrols.</p> <p>MPC patrols then check out and leave camp. The hike back to the carpark is usually mostly downhill. Participants are typically at the car park by 1pm.</p>

The full MPC event runs from Friday night to Sunday afternoon. The MPC Team expects that you stay for the whole event. The Team understands that there are conflicting events, but there is always the next MPC for you if you need to be somewhere else: if you cannot attend the whole event, then please don't book in.

The staff present the coveted MPC badge only on the Sunday morning at the MPC Scouts Own. The only exception to this is when the whole event is cut short due to poor weather or some emergency.

MPC hoodies and fleeces are on sale on Sunday morning in the car park. Cash is the only form of payment. These garments are good quality and very competitively priced and are not sold at any other time.

Transport

It is up to each patrol to provide their own transport to and from the MPC. The MPC team is not responsible for any aspect of transport. Planning the transport to and from the event is very much part of the MPC adventure.

Teams may wish to contact each other to hire a bus or travel together. For groups travelling by car, parking is available, but cars are parked at the owner's risk. Park cars at the pre-arranged car park only, following the instructions from the staff. Parking cars closer to the campsite to avoid a longer walkout is actively discouraged: MPC co-ordinators negotiate parking with local stakeholders, and inconsiderate or unplanned parking can cause difficulties with local communities.

Ensure that you have a contingency travel plan for the return journey on Friday, on the chance that your patrol is refused access to the event (You can easily avoid this issue by checking and re-checking the patrol equipment and personal gear right before you travel.)

You must leave your pets and other animals at home—only humans are allowed on the event. (This point may seem flippant, however for access to many upland areas, farmers specifically forbid dogs.)

If you are going to arrive later than 9:30pm you must contact the coordinators using the numbers provided in the Joining Notes.

Campsites

We camp at low camp on the Friday night, and at high camp on Saturday night. When arriving at the campsite on Friday night, it will be dark and a challenge to find a location. It's best to leave your rucksacks in a spot with one patrol member, while others search for a suitable place to pitch your tent(s). While it is recommended to spread out when camping, remember that there could be 20 teams and numerous staff on the event, each of which needs a tent site. Watch for guy ropes and trip hazards as previous events tents have had poles broken by careless scouts or scouters.

When your tent is pitched, if you wish to socialise or talk with others, be mindful of the fact that others might wish to rest and will not appreciate hearing your conversations or music; so, keep the volume low. If you arrive late, we expected you to arrive at the campsite quietly, and pitch and settle in quietly and efficiently.

It is easier to find places to pitch on Saturday, and it is a good opportunity to mix with other people on the event before getting the famous MPC power sleep.

Leave No Trace on an MPC

MPCs follow a strict Leave No Trace policy. Some key considerations, specific to the MPC are as follows:

- You must carry out all rubbish, litter, and food remnants. Eating all your pasta, rice, or noodles in the first place will solve the problem of trying to lift it off the ground the next day. MPC staff will not tolerate patrols leaving food and litter behind.
- You must check out of low and high camp. You may not leave until an MPC staff member has inspected your camping area to ensure it is clean.
- DO NOT to light any type of fire. The whole patrol needs to know how to operate their stove safely so as not to start a fire. Plenty of practise will help prevent issues.
- Patrols (scouts and scouters) must properly dispose of toilet and personal waste. At the Friday night check-in, the patrol must show their trowel or other instrument to prove that they are equipped to deal with this area.
- Be respectful to the other patrols by limiting your toilet activities and staying 60 meters from water sources. There are plenty of peat hags or hillocks to hide behind.
- Be respectful of landowners' property. Do not climb over fences or gates. Use gates properly and leave them as you found them (closed if they were closed, open if they were open).

MPC Checkpoints

When you arrive at a checkpoint, the Patrol Leader must check in with the staff member. Identify your patrol by your town name: for example, please do not use 87th & 114th Roscommon (Anytown), just say, "we are Anytown".

If you are from a Troop that has multiple patrols, please identify that by using some qualifier, so the staff knows which patrol you are for example, "Anytown Wednesday" or "Anytown One".

State how many scouts and how many scouters in your patrol. Let the staff member know if you have any issues or concerns; for example, someone is ill, or exhausted, some piece of gear is broken. The staff member can advise or help, but they won't know unless you ask!

MPC checkpoint staff discuss the previous leg of the route with the scouts, asking them about navigation techniques used and features passed along the way. Staff ask about the next leg to ensure scouts have a clear understanding of where they are going next and any potential hazards along the way. The general expectation on an MPC is that scouts rotate navigators from leg to leg: this increases the learning opportunity for the youth members. If scouts are inexperienced or unsure, they can expect some coaching from the MPC staff. The staff expect

scouters to stand back in these conversations, so that the coaching and learning is focussed on the youth members.

Scouts should be able to show by pointing to a map and referencing their route card where they are and where they are going, show that they have the correct compass bearing dialled into their compass and show where the direction of travel is according to the compass. Typically staff members will talk the patrol through the 5 Ds (Direction, Distance, Duration, Description, Destination).

When you are ready to continue, you must check out. Ask a member of the checkpoint staff to check you out and inform them that you are moving to the next checkpoint. It is important that you move efficiently between checkpoints, as the team is monitoring all patrols' progress on the mountain.

Key Points to Remember

You must check IN and check OUT from EVERY checkpoint: be clear in your communication. On Friday and Saturday, it is essential that you check into camp. Do not assume that the staff saw you walking into camp. You must check out of low and high camp. Before you can leave camp an MPC staff member inspects your camping area and you must clear, pack, and carry out all rubbish, litter, and food remnants (no matter how tiny).

Taking breaks and lunch

Stop for breaks and lunch only at checkpoints. If you are overdue at a checkpoint, staff will start search operations. This is costly in time and energy, and disruptive to the overall event.

The Scouter's role

While scouters are ultimately responsible for the safety of their group, the MPC team expects all scouters to let their scouts lead and learn during the MPC. Explain mistakes to the scouts and use the event as a training exercise and as an opportunity to get to know your scouts better. This means that your own navigation ability must be spot-on. Constantly monitor the scouts in your team for signs of tiredness, cold, failed gear, etc. and report any problems to the staff at the next checkpoint.

Let the patrol perform the navigation. They are there to lead, not to follow you like sheep.

The scouter is fully responsible for their patrol at all times.

Toilet facilities and sanitation

Up on the hills toilet facilities consist of a peat hag or boulder to hide behind and a hole dug with a trowel, so prepare and train the scouts for this and ensure you pack a trowel, toilet roll, and lighter or carry-out bags. This can be an embarrassing subject for scouts, but you must brief them on correct burial of their waste and disposal of toilet paper. Ensure that everyone knows and remembers the importance of personal hygiene. A trowel is ideal to bury waste at

15 cm deep. Burn toilet paper unless there is a fire risk, in which case double bag it and pack it out.

Details on how to properly go to the toilet in the outdoors can be found at: <https://outdoordoer.com/leave-no-trace-how-to-poop-when-hiking/>

More information can be found in the following book:

[https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/77377.How to Shoot in the Woods](https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/77377.How_to_Shoot_in_the_Woods)

Menstruating scouts and scouts must familiarise themselves with and use appropriate practices outlined at:

<https://www.navigationwithharriet.co.uk/post/how-to-deal-with-your-periods-outdoors?fbclid=IwAR0BqLczOwvIJeYZM3C--6yt5wSlq5bx01WMcEYKAKksWI9juETBtwhsC9g>

Cooking and cleaning up afterwards.

Each team is responsible for bringing their own supply of food for the weekend. Also remember your emergency rations and your treats! People burn up a lot of energy in the hills, exposed to the elements and carrying a heavy pack, so ensure that you bring enough food for breakfast, lunch, dinner, and snack breaks.

It is worth mentioning that on previous MPC's, several scouts stated that they had not brought enough snacks with them and that their main meal was not substantial enough. We suggest that you consider using a pre-cooked meal, prepared by the scouts in advance, such as a stew or curry that only requires heating. This type of meal is preferable to many of the "boil-in-the-bag" or 'add hot water' type meals. Consider packaging, as minimising the number of wrappers reduces the effort in keeping your campsite clean.

You must ensure that you bring all food waste and food wrappers home with you. This includes everything – you must clean up and remove every scrap of leftover rice, pasta, etc. You must remove it ALL as waste and not leave it behind to degrade. When washing up, you must also ensure that you wash saucepans or plates well away from natural water sources, such as streams or lakes. Bring clean water to your saucepans and plates, far away from the water source and do the wash up there. You can dispose of dirty water only, so ensure you scrape out every scrap of solid food waste before washing, or strain scraps out of the washing water before spilling it out.

Emergency procedures for MPCs

Avoid emergencies by behaving appropriately for the terrain and event. Note and follow safety instructions from the route description and checkpoint staff.

In particular, do not slide on your bum or other parts of your body downhill! Do not use a survival bag or your rucksack to slide downhill! If the MPC Team sees you sliding or attempting other uncontrolled forms of descent they may ask you to leave the event.

If an Emergency happens

- **Stay Calm:** The initial response sets the tone. Deep breaths, reassurance, and a clear mind are vital. Gather the group and take a headcount.
- **First Aid:** Administer first aid if there are injuries. If you suspect broken bones, try not to move the injured person unless necessary.
- **Communicate** with the staff, another group who can relay a message to the team or as a last resort call mountain rescue if someone needs immediate medical attention.

What to do if lost

- **Stop moving:** If you suspect you are off your route or lost, STOP! Moving further can exacerbate the situation.
- **Stay together:** Always keep the group together. Splitting up can create more problems.
- **Signal and make noise:** Increase your visibility and audibility. Use the whistle, and if you have a mirror, use it to reflect sunlight.
- **Communicate** with the MPC staff or another group who can relay a message to the staff; we will come and find you.

We have deliberately left notes on emergency beacons and buddy beacons on mapping software out of this version as we need to develop a robust policy on their use.

When help arrives?

- **Provide Information:** Clearly communicate the situation, number of people, any injuries, and potential hazards to the rescuers.
- **Follow instructions:** Trust the professionals; they are trained for mountain emergencies.

Emergencies can be unpredictable, but scouts can minimize risks with preparation, awareness, and calm decision-making. While the mountains offer profound lessons in resilience, leadership, and teamwork, safety should always be paramount. Being prepared is not merely a Scout motto but an essential creed that can make a significant difference in critical situations. Remember, the best trips are those where memories of Nature's beauty and patrol camaraderie are the highlights, rather than tales of mishaps. Safe scouting!

Group dynamic of scouts and scouters on MPCs

Mountain hiking and camping trips are more than just physical endeavours; they are also journeys of collective growth, collaboration, and camaraderie. The group dynamic involving both scouts and their scouters plays a pivotal role in shaping these experiences.

Safety in unity – stay together.

In the wilderness, there's safety in numbers. This is key on the MPC event; if a patrol gets lost it is much easier for the staff to find a single group. The patrol must stay together and not string out and arrive at checkpoints together. This also makes it easier for the staff to check you in and out.

The collective vigilance of a group, under the watchful eyes of the scouter, ensures that risks are minimized. Whether it is crossing a river, navigating in darkness, or ensuring that no member is left behind, the group operates with a unity of purpose – safety first!

After the weekend: recovery and review

Debrief

As soon as possible after the event, hold a review with the patrol and scouter. Typical questions to address include:

- What went well, what could have been better?
- What did you carry but not use or eat.
- What did you not use but would still bring again? (e.g. first aid kit)
- What equipment worked well and what did not?
- What skills did you exercise well, and which ones need some improvement?
- How would you change your planning and preparation for the next event?
- How did the conditions you encountered change or impact your experience?

Equipment cleanup and packing

- Clean and dry tents: wash pegs, air out inners and outers, dry everything thoroughly, and return to storage.
- Wash pots, pans, cooking equipment and dry before storing.
- Review first aid kit contents and restock if necessary.
- Report failed or damaged equipment to the Troop quartermaster; ensure it's fixed before returning it to stores.
- Weigh gas canisters to see how much capacity they have left.

Follow-through

- Make a plan to practice skills that you need to brush up.
- Plan to practice with replacement equipment, if applicable.
- Pass on learnings to the rest of the Scout Section / Troop.

AND

- Show off your badges; sew them onto your uniform in anticipation of completing your MPC diamond.

Appendix A: Equipment and personal gear checklist

It is essential to pack light, so choose gear that is lightweight, compact, and multipurpose. Adjust this list based on your individual needs and preferences above this base minimum.

Always check the weather forecast and trail conditions before deciding on your final gear list.

You should be able to leave your spare change of clothes for going home at the start location to avoid the need to carry it around the hills unnecessarily.

Personal (to Wear)	Packed ?
Waterproof hiking boots with ankle support and grippy soles	
Hiking socks or two pairs of sports socks	
Underwear (non-cotton)	
Moisture wicking base layer upper body (DryFlow or Under Armor style)	
Insulating mid-layer body: half zip fleece or jumper (never cotton or hoodies)	
Insulating mid-layer legs: activity trousers/hiking pants (never jeans or cotton)	
Waterproof shell layer body: waterproof jacket with hood	
Waterproof shell layer legs: waterproof over trousers or trekking salopettes	
Warm waterproof gloves	
Warm hat / beanie / buff (sun hat if expecting warm weather)	
Gaiters	
Mosquito head net	

Patrol Equipment	Packed?
Gas or multi-fuel stove (not meths or solid fuel)	
Cooking pot & handle	
Matches/lighter and fuel	
Utensils to cook, eat & prepare beverages with (e.g., tin opener)	
Dish cloth (small) in zip lock bag with washing up liquid (biodegradable)	
Strong refuse bags & zip lock bags (you must bag out all rubbish including biodegradable)	
Maps in waterproof case, compass (silva type 4), route outline & pencil (in zip lock bag) at least 2 per patrol	
First aid kit (sized for a patrol for the weekend), including burns and blister treatment	
Lightweight mountain tent(s) including poles and pegs (with spare guy lines, pegs, and repair kit)	
Trowel for toilet	
Food (Personal Snacks and Patrol meals)	Packed?
Various snacks (trail mix, preferred chocolate bar etc) and emergency rations	

Scout neckerchief	
Spare clothes (in waterproof bag)	
Warm fleece / jumper	
Base layer (can also be used as nightwear)	
Trousers	
Socks	
Underwear	
Personal equipment	Packed ?
Rubbish bags	
Whistle	
Rucksack (modern with internal frame and hip belt) & liner (rubble bag or similar)	
Head torch & spare batteries	
Toothbrush, toothpaste, flannel/small trekking towel, wipes, toilet paper, biodegradable toiletries in zip lock bag	
Personal medication (in discussion with attending scouter and recorded on managing medications form)	
Sleeping bag (rated for expected temperature) in compression sack with waterproof cover	
Sleeping mat & (optional) pillow	
Bivvy / survival bag	
Optional trekking poles	

2 breakfasts, 2 lunches, 1 dinner (ideally precooked) in containers (remove unnecessary packaging)	
Beverages & condiments (e.g. tea bags, sugar sachets) – milk if needed	
Water bottle filled (at least 1 litre of water) per member of the patrol	
Comfort & Safety	Packed?
Collapsible water bag or bottle	
Mobile phones with the event coordinator number saved	
Storm Shelter / Bothy / KISU 6-to-8-person size	
Optional Garmin InReach or Spot Emergency Beacon (iPhone 14 also has the ability but limited battery life)	
Optional water filtration system / purifier system	
Small knife or multitool	
Repair kit; pole sleeve and duct tape	
Portable battery pack / solar charger	
Insect repellent	
Sun cream, SPF 50 recommended / Lip balm, high SFP	
Cards / games to play in tent	
Not needed – so don't bring it!	Left behind?
Rope	
Fixed blade knives	

Cup, plate, bowl / knife, fork, spoon	
Water bottle or hydration system, minimum 1 litre	
Optional flask	
Watch	

2 litre bottles of 'fizzy pop' (as not to mention brands)	
Fire lighting equipment and portable fire boxes	
Flares	
Overly loudspeakers - no problem with a small one for your tent	

While the MPC team do not ask for or need to see any of these forms it might be helpful include them in your checklist. They all belong to the patrol.

Activities consent form:

https://issuu.com/scoutingireland/docs/sif_11-05_-_scouting_ireland_activities_consent_fo

Managing Medication form:

https://issuu.com/scoutingireland/docs/sif_11a-10_-_managing_medications_form

Accident and Incident form to be given to your own Group Leader:

https://issuu.com/scoutingireland/docs/sif_10-05_-_accident_and_incident_report_form