Each item has an expected function and capability. Items selected may have a specific design that lends them more towards SAR use or makes an alternative item incompatible with SAR. In order to utilize this guide to evaluate equivalent substitutions or even the requirement of an item for a specific environment or circumstance, the background and explanation for each item is provided here. Instructors and Lead Evaluators are given some latitude in determining needs based on the environment, circumstances, agency requirements, assignment, and their experience. **NASAR expects that safety is always the priority when reviewing items.**

| **Personal First Aid / Survival Equipment** | |
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| Ziploc Bags | The gallon and quart size, heavy duty Ziploc style bags come in handy for a lot of things like carrying water, keeping dirty or contaminated clothes separated from other stuff, collecting evidence, carrying extra food, carrying out trash, etc. |
| Acetaminophen and/or Aspirin Tablets | These can be used to help counteract pain. |
| Ibuprofen Tablets | These can be used to help counteract inflammation. |
| Imodium Tablets | These can be used to help counteract diarrhea. |
| Benadryl Tablets | These can be used to help counteract allergic reactions. |
| Antacid Tablet | These can be used to help counteract stomach acid. |
| Antiseptic (Alcohol Cleansing Pads) | Antiseptic pads can be used to clean small cuts and scrapes to keep them from getting infected. Alcohol based pads may sting when you use them, but they can also be used to assist you in starting a fire in a survival situation |
| Antibiotic Ointment / Cream | Helps prevent infection and promotes healing of small cuts and abrasions. |
| Band-Aids, Various Sizes | SAR is a dangerous business, and cuts or scrapes happen to everybody eventually. Being able to protect that small injury after it gets cleaned lets you continue searching and helps prevent infections from occurring. |
| Cotton Swabs, Non-Sterile | Otherwise known as Q-Tips, these are used to help clean small wounds. Care should be taken when using them in ear or nasal canals. |
| Medical Gloves | You will always want to carry several pairs of surgical style gloves for triaging and treating victims or collecting evidence. (Be considerate of people with latex allergies and use latex-free gloves). |
| Roller Gauze Bandage | These can be used too for first aid. |
| Sterile Dressings | These are sterile 4” by 4” gauze squares. |
| Razor blade, Single edge | **This is a single edge razor blade, not a razor for shaving.** This item can be used for many applications. |
| Signal Mirror | A signal mirror is a powerful tool for signaling during the daylight; although, it can be used with a flashlight in the dark, but less effectively. Glass mirrors have the best reflective properties, but plastic mirrors are less prone to cracking or breaking in your pack. A mirror that is specifically designed for signaling has a sight window built into it, which biases you towards successful use, and is highly suggested. *Compass mirrors are acceptable, but a signal mirror with sight window recommended.* |
| Water Purification Capability | There are a couple methods to purify water that you can select from depending on your environment and mission: There are filtration based systems that usually use a pump and are very effective in removing suspended solids from dirty water; There are chemical systems that purify the water but leave the suspended solids in the water; and, finally there are UV systems that utilize a battery powered light to kill the bad stuff and leave the suspended solids. Some systems combine filtration with either UV or chemical which gives you the best chance at good, clean water from that stinky cow puddle. Spend some time researching what works best in your area and what other members on your team carry. |
| Electrolyte Drink Mix | You can enhance your water with bringing along some sports drink like Gatorade or Powerade to help replace your electrolytes. Try not to load up on the ones with a lot of sugar. |
| Space Blanket / Emergency Reflective Sleeping Bag | These can be used to construct a small shelter, to rewarm a victim, or rescuer that is hypothermic. |
| Fire Starting Capability | Waterproof matches in a protective case or a fire starter that uses a sparking striker. Fire can be used for signaling and for keeping warm, and for cooking. It makes sense that you have the ability to make a fire easily. Although the striker will work in most environments, the matches are typically easier to use. (Lighter, Flint & Steel, Magnesium, etc.) |
| Safety Pins | Safety pins are small and light weight and handy for holding together broken zippers, missing buttons and other cloth based connections. They can also be used as a field expedient fishhook in a survival situation. |
| EMT Type Scissors | EMT style scissors are designed to cut through thick fabrics easily. |
| Splinter Forceps, Tweezers | These come in handy for removing ticks or splinters. |
| Whistle | **A plastic chamber based (no ball) whistle is required.** If you use a whistle with a ball in it, the ball could fall out or freeze and render the whistle inoperable. |
| Duct Tape | Duct tape comes in handy for so many things, from fixing holes in tents to field expedient splint work. The most functional is 3” wide, and can be wrapped around itself or some other pack item like a water bottle. At a **minimum, 5 feet** should be carried since it is so multi-functional. Color doesn’t really matter; but in keeping with the visibility needs of SAR, the brighter the better. |
| Towelette | Small hand towel or wash cloth. Used for field hygiene. |
| Leaf Bag | Leaf bags make great expedient raincoats or a mini-shelter from the wind and weather. **50 – 55 drum bags.** |
| Moleskin | **Must be a 4x4 sheet.** Moleskin is used to help treat foot blisters. |
| Personal Medications | You should include at least 72 hours’ worth of your personal medications just in case you are delayed in getting back home. |
| Spare Prescription Eyeglasses and/or Contact Lenses | SAR involves lots of rough terrain and activity. It is possible to lose your glasses or a contact lens as well as have your glasses damaged beyond use. Better to plan on a backup than be blind in the woods (or on a mountain, etc.) This includes carrying extra contact lens solution. |

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| **Equipment** | |
| Pack | *A pack size of 2400 cubic inch recommended*. Pack selection is a very personal choice. First, it is important to realize that there are different sizes/designs that fit men and women differently. Second, there are many different pack options that make a pack SAR friendly. For example, a top loading pack really limits your access to what is in the bottom of the pack, but a zippered panel loading pack could suffer a zipper failure and you could leave all your stuff on the trail as you hike along. Remember that human nature predicts that if you buy a big pack, you will end up carrying all sorts of unnecessary stuff. A smaller pack forces you to be a better decision maker about what you are carrying. |
| Picture Identification | The public expects to be able to identify you. Picture identification is very helpful. |
| Compass | Orienteering type compass that is graduated in degrees, fluid filled, has a mirror and sighting system, and a clear baseplate. **There shall be one additional orienteering or other style compass carried by team member**. |
| Helmet | This is for rescuer safety. *Helmet should be appropriate for SAR missions.* |
| Bandanna / Handkerchief | In hot environments you can wet the bandanna and use it to cool your neck or shade you from the sun. In cold environments you can use it like a miniscarf to stay warm. |
| Cap / Headgear | Headgear is intended to keep sunlight and bugs off your scalp and neck. It can also keep your head warm (a lot of heat is lost through your head) in the winter or cool in the summer (get it wet and let the evaporation cool your head.)A wide brim that goes completely around the hat is preferable to a baseball style hat. A wide brim protects your neck from sun and is easier to hang a bug net from. If you are trying to stay warm, a wool or fleece type hat that is snug and can cover your ears is best. Don’t forget that you might be wearing a helmet and during the winter a fleece or wool hat underneath can go a long way towards keeping you comfortable and alive. |
| Footwear | Footwear is very dependent on your environment and mission. You want to select something that protects your foot, fits well, supports your ankle, and wears well. You might also want to consider breathability, waterproofness, tread, and the type of sock you are going to wear. **No tennis shoes or open toe allowed.** |
| Clothing Bag, Waterproof | A waterproof bag large enough for extra clothing, socks, and gloves. **Zip lock and vacuum seal bags not allowed.** This can also be used to transport water. |
| Clothing (Worn) | Appropriate for the environment, weather, circumstances, and assignment. This may be the uniform required by your agency or team. |
| Clothing (Extra Set) | Appropriate for the environment, weather, circumstances, and assignment. In case you or a fellow searcher or the victim is wet, cold, or contaminated, this gives you options to continue searching, protect someone from the environment, or prevent further contamination (like poison oak or other plants.) You should at least carry extra socks to keep your feet dry. These should be kept in a waterproof bag to keep them dry. |
| Socks | Cotton kills. You need to select socks made from other materials (*e.g. wool or synthetics*) that will help wick perspiration away from your foot and provide adequate cushioning based on your mission requirements. |
| Eye Protection | Carrying and using eye protection is just common sense. There is night searching where you don’t want to get a branch in the eyeball; working around helicopters where there is high speed dust in the air; and protecting yourself from body fluids while providing medical assistance. Eye protection should typically meet local safety requirements and can be in glasses, or goggle form and may also include tinting for UV protection (sunglasses.) |
| ANSI/ISEA 207-2010 Compliant Vest | This is one of those blindingly bright reflective vests. If they are compliant with the ANSI/ISEA standard, they will say so on the package. Not only are they required when working on roadways, they make you much more visible in the wilderness to helicopters, searchers, and hunters. |
| Primary Light Source  (Head Lamp) | LED technology has changed flashlights and headlamps over the past few years. They are brighter and last longer than ever before. Your primary light source should be as bright as you can afford and be hands free (i.e. a headlamp.) By wearing your light on your head (or helmet), it keeps your hands free to climb, carry a litter, treat a patient, keep branches from hitting you in the face, manipulate your compass, etc. **You must carry one extra spare set of batteries for your lights as well. Must be AA or AAA battery powered light.** |
| Secondary Light Source  (Hand Held) | Light sources are technology and rely on batteries; so you should always carry a backup source or even two. Things to consider for the backup light source include common battery size with your other electronic devices, size, and weight. **You must carry one extra spare set of batteries for your lights as well. Must be AA or AAA battery powered light.** |
| Watch | An analog style watch with a second hand is preferable. It is easier to assess patients using a watch with a second hand. |
| Gloves | There are a couple different types of gloves you will need to carry depending on your mission. You will also want some leather style work gloves that will protect your hands when searching at night or doing USAR or rope work or other rough activities. |
| Knife or Multi-Tool | **Gerber multi- tool or Swiss Army type** |
| Water Proof Pad and Pencil | You should always have two writing instruments and a notebook. Notebooks come in different size and styles made from **waterproof paper**. **Two Pencils are required.** |
| ICS 214 | Used by team leader for documentation. |
| Grease Pencil | Used for marking and map work. |
| Grid Reader / Map Ruler / Protractor | When working with maps, accuracy is very important. Using a grid reader or map ruler helps you navigate accurately. |
| Pacing Beads / Hand Counter | In many cases you will need to do pace counting during navigation. Pacing beads or a hand counter will help you navigate accurately. |
| Tracking Stick – 42” Length | If you are tracking or your assignment includes tracking, it is good to have an appropriately prepared tracking stick. If you are using trekking poles to assist you in hiking, one of them can be set up to act as a tracking stick. *Should carry rubber bands or other items in order to set up tracking stick for tracking.* |
| Measuring Device | When you are tracking, you need to be able to measure and compare footprints and strides. Many trackers carry an 18” to 24” small retractable measuring tape. It also can be used for navigation and map work. |
| Insect Repellent | Depending on the part of the country you are in and the insects that you need to repel, you should get the appropriate formula. There are some urban legends about stuff that works on local critters that you might also look into (e.g. Avon Skin So Soft works on sand fleas in the South East.) *Recommended aerosol or pump sprayer bottle.* |
| Sunscreen | A lotion that has UVA/UVB SPF 50 or more is preferable. A higher or lower SPF is a personal preference based on your complexion, environment, and cancer risk. |
| Lip Balm | **A lip balm with sunscreen is required.** Lip balm is just as useful in cold weather as it is in hot weather. |
| Rainwear / Poncho | *Ponchos are allowed.* A durable and breathable jacket and pants set with an attached hood. Gore-Tex or similar material is preferable. Plastic or rubber coated material can cause sweating under the rain gear which can lead to life threatening conditions in cold weather. Armpit zipper vents help moisture escape and makes the jacket more efficient*.* Rain gear selection is up to the individual team member. |
| Paracord 550 (50’) | Another really handy product, paracord can be used to help set up a shelter, secure a splint, or even replace a broken bootlace. |
| Carabiners | **Must be F1956 complaint, locking gate**. |
| Prusik Cords | **Prusik cords are made from 6mm – 8mm, Must be compatible with life line rope. Rope must be 6 feet in length before tied.** |
| Safety Rope | **Rope must be 75 feet in length, One rescuer lifeline. NFPA compliant and compatible with Prusik cord.** |
| Webbing | This is a single piece of **1” tubular climbing style webbing that is 25’ long**. A possible use is making a Swiss seat for you or a victim; so this should be protected from chemicals, sunlight, and other things like towing cars. Other uses include securing a patient in a litter, quick leash for a dog, or even building an expedient shelter. |
| Food | **Must equal to 1500 calories, For SAR I must have 2 individual 1500 calories amounts.** Let’s be realistic, this is a 24-hour pack! You don’t need a lot of food to survive for 24 hours. However, depending on your environment and assignment, you will need to generate energy and fuel your body. Carrying some protein bars will go a long way in keeping you energized and may come in handy if you find a missing person that hasn’t had food for a few days. |
| Water Bottle / Canteen / Hydration Bladder | You will have to hydrate, and that means carrying water, and water is heavy. You have many options for carrying water. Some searchers are carrying hydration bladders that are slipped into their backpacks with a drinking tube that comes over their shoulder. Some searchers carry multiple water bottles or other canteens for their water. **Must have at a minimum of 2 separate 1 liter containers.** |
| Fishing Hooks | Used as a survival tool. Recommend to be size appropriate for your region. |
| Fishing Line | **Must have 20 feet in length with 10 lbs. test.** |
| Fishing Floating Bobber | **Must not be made of plastic.** |
| Aluminum Foil | Must be **12 inches wide and 24 inches long**. Used for variety of purposes. |
| Wire Ties / Zip Ties | These come in handy for so many things: Building shelters, field expedient splints, closing off water containers, building a shelter, closing a broken zipper, etc. Carry a couple of different sizes because they are light and come in handy for so many things. |
| Toilet Paper / Baby Wipes | Toilet paper (and feminine hygiene products) are essential hygiene items for a team member. Many outdoor stores sell compact rolls of toilet paper for backpacking. It is important to keep your hygiene products dry; so keeping them in a Ziploc style freezer bag is a good idea. TP can also be used as fire tinder in an emergency if kept dry. Small packages of baby wipes are also accepted. |
| Chemical Light Stick | Light sticks come in handy for a number of purposes: Providing you light and signaling capability. A white or bright yellow/green light stick can help light the area immediately in front of you. A bright or contrasting color light stick tied to the end of a 3’ string can be swung around in a circle quickly and makes an effective signal at night. A series of light sticks can show an evacuation path to a litter team in the dark. |
| Metal Cup or Pot | Used for heating meals, drinks, and boiling water. |
| Sterno or Stove | A single can of sterno or a compressed or liquid gas camping stove will be accepted. Used for preparing meals, drinks, or boiling water. |
| Machete | Suitable Length (minimum 10 inches in length) |
| Shelter Material | **One** **8’ x 10’ tarp** of waterproof or water resistant material**. Two-5’x7’ tarps** are also allowed. This combined with your paracord and items found in place, should allow you to build a shelter that will protect you from the environment and weather. |
| Flagging Tape | Fluorescent (brightly colored) colored 1” flagging tape (either PVC or paper based) at least 100’ in length. You use this to mark your trail, the area you searched, or an evacuation route for a rescue team. Some teams have a specific color coding, so check with them before you buy. |