

SECTION K: EXPEDITION PLANNING

1.

Expedition planning is a key skill particularly when you take on longer and more complex expeditions. The process is very similar to the planning that you do for other BB activities. In a sense, the method is almost identical and you will find that only some of the planning elements are different.

This section will introduce the elements of Expedition Planning



3 Aim of the Expedition

You and your teammates have to decide on the aim of the expedition. By keeping it simple, e.g. "To scale Mount Ophir in 2 days", you will see that there will be less room for misunderstanding and confusion.

Coming to a consensus allows the team to be clear about the aim of the expedition, so that the rest of the planning can go on. Your Officer may also determine the aim for you and your team.

2 Elements of Expedition Planning

There are 4 main parts to Expedition Planning. These are:

- a) Aim
- b) Situational Analysis
- c) Planning & Execution
- d) Command & Control

4 Situational Analysis

This is simply a “big” phrase that describes your attempt to identify:

- a) The possible problems - natural obstacles, elements, lack of information
- b) The possible advantages - savings of time, money, higher degree of safety,
- c) The possible resources - people who have undertaken a similar expedition previously, log books of previous teams.

The above 3 items should be considered carefully when you analyse the following:

- Terrain

When you are selecting your team's route of travel, think carefully about the kinds of safety hazards and obstacles that may be found in the terrain. Does the terrain require special equipment for your expedition e.g. life jackets for negotiating water obstacles.

Consider also what advantages terrain can offer you when look at possible evacuation routes.

- Weather

On expeditions, you are exposed to natural elements. Weigh the pros and cons of conducting the expedition at specific times of the year, even the time of day. Ask questions like “Can the expedition have a better chance of success if done at a certain period of the year?”

- Resources

These cover a wide range: from physical to information. Physical resources can comprise equipment, locations for rest and meals, and safety vehicles. If you can source physical resources such as these, how can you use these to your advantage?

It does not mean that if you do not have access to such resources, you are therefore disadvantaged. It is far more important to be able to use whatever resources prudently, than having a bloated logistics list.

- Logistics

Identify the logistics that you will need, especially in terms of safety equipment. For instance, if you are going on an bicycle expedition, make sure you bring along spare rubber linings, bicycle chains, repair kits etc.





5 Planning and Execution

You will need to put together a plan of action, listing the various tasks that each member of the team is responsible for. Looking at the route you have selected, also arrange a possible programme for the expedition itself. Communicate clearly your meeting points, rest points and times which people like your support team (if you have one), need to know.

You also ought to prepare for contingencies like inclement weather, accidents etc which might require you to abandon the expedition. Ensure that all on the team are familiar with these contingency plans.

6 Command and Control

During the run-up to the expedition, regular preparatory meetings and equipment checks are useful in helping each member keep up with the plan.

You will also need to work out how you will keep in communications during the expedition itself. If using hand phones, make sure that everyone has each other's numbers. If using 2-way radios, then ensure that once adjusted, the channels and frequencies are not changed.