

## Murphy's Laws of Canoeing

Everyone has heard of and likely experienced Murphy's Law, "What Can Go Wrong Probably Will, and at the Worst Possible Time." No matter how well you plan and prepare, it is impossible to make anything foolproof because fools are so ingenious.

Murphy's Law affects people in different ways, and a visit to canoe country is no guarantee that you can escape Murphy's jurisdiction. While the Law is universal and covers everyone, everywhere, a number of corollaries to the Law specific to canoe country have been determined.

1. The direction of prevailing winds always shifts to blow in the opposite direction you're paddling.
2. Given a chance, matches will find a way to get wet.
3. If you can't remember whether or not the stove has fuel, the stove has no fuel.
4. If you are positive you remember that the stove has fuel, the stove will still have no fuel.
5. All 10-lb test line is visible to fish.
6. All 8-lb test line has a 3-lb failure point.
7. Works-in-one-dose diarrhea medicine doesn't.
8. The moose always shows up right after you put the camera back in the Pelican Case.
9. Whenever a comment is made about how great it is to be out in the wilderness and not see ANYBODY, 14 blue canoes full of shouting high school students will paddle around the corner.
10. The confidence in your bombproof tent is the highest just before you discover you have left the tent poles at home.
11. Your side of the tent is the side that leaks.
12. The longest portages will always be at the beginning of the trip, when the food pack is heaviest.
13. If you finish one leg of a portage and you need a drink, your water bottle will always be at the far end of the portage.
14. The first scratch on the new canoe is always a big one.
15. The more often someone says "I think it's clearing up", the less the chance that it will.
16. The need for bug repellent is inversely proportional to the amount you have left.
17. The number of times you have to get up in the middle of the night to go pee is directly proportional to the intensity of the rain outside.
18. You will always flip in the easiest set of rapids.
19. The only time a waterproof GPS will fall into the lake is while you have the back off changing the batteries. (Corollary ... the probability of the GPS landing in the lake is directly proportional to the cost of that GPS).
20. The trip that you decide to bring soup is also the trip you forget the spoon.
21. The only time it rains is when you have: (a) forgotten your rain gear (b) have it, but it is at the very bottom of the pack (c) worn it the day before as wind gear, and torn a big hole in it.
22. Waterproof clothing isn't. (However, it is 100% effective at containing sweat).
23. If you carry a full set of heavy-duty rainwear, it will never rain. Corollary: leaving the suit at home guarantees four days of steady rain.

24. If you forget something while loading up at the end of a portage, you will not notice the loss until you are at least three hours down the lake.
25. The length of the next portage is directly proportional to the weight of your heaviest pack.
26. The sharpest object in your pack will find the softest part of your back.
27. In direct contravention of the law of conservation of mass, no matter how light a canoe is, it always weighs over 100 lbs at the end of a portage.
28. The least capable person in the group will criticize the most.
29. If you lecture a group member about the ill effects of smoking, he/she will likely be the only person who remembered to bring matches.
30. No matter which side of the fire pit you sit on, the smoke always blows in your eyes.  
Corollary: if you move to escape the smoke, it will find you.
31. Rainy weather always waits for the day of the longest, deepest and muckiest portage.
32. If the fish are hungry, you've just finished dinner.
33. The plastic bag the toilet paper is in will develop a leak just before you feel intestinal cramps.
34. You will remember to go to the bathroom just after you take off your socks inside the tent.
35. You will remember to brush your teeth just after you have gone to the bathroom and re-entered your tent.
36. You will remember that no one pulled the canoe all the way out of the water just after you have achieved perfect temperature inside your sleeping bag.
37. Fishhooks work on people, too.
38. The rainbow will disappear just after you have frantically dumped the contents of your pack on the muddy ground and located your camera.