

Murphy's Laws of Backpacking

"Anything that can possibly go wrong will!"

1. Any stone in a hiking boot migrates to the location of maximum pressure.
2. The remaining distance to a given campsite remains constant as twilight approaches.
3. The number of mosquitoes at any given location is inversely proportional to the volume of remaining repellent.
4. The probability of finding a latrine is one divided by the number of poison ivy plants per acre.
5. The square feet of level ground available for tents equals the degrees from horizon of the setting sun.
6. No matter how many times you turn your sleeping bag around, your head is always downhill.
7. The need to urinate at night increases in direct relation to the hour past midnight, layers of clothing worn, occupants in your tent, and inches of rain since sunset. Curiously, it increases in an inverse relation to the outside temperature.
8. The ground under shoulders compresses without sunlight while the ground under feet expands.
9. Rocks and sticks rise above dirt when irritated by tent flooring fabric.
10. Feet expand when removed from hiking boots. The same law applies to tents, clothing, and sleeping bags.
11. Backpack strap widths decrease with the distance hiked. To compensate, the weight of the backpack increases.
12. The average local temperature increases with the amount of clothing packed.
13. Tent stakes come only in the quantity of N-1 where N is the number of stakes necessary to stake down a tent.
14. Fuel in sealed bottles spontaneously evaporates.
15. All available humidity and moisture will congregate on match heads.
16. If no match heads are in the vicinity, all moisture will congregate inside waterproof clothing.
17. The one new tent on the trip that leaks will be yours.
18. The side of the tent that leaks will be your side.
19. When reading the instructions of a pump-activated water filter, *hour* should be substituted for *minute* when reading the average quarts filtered per minute.
20. A backpack's weight load migrates up and back the longer it is in motion.
21. All tree branches in a forest grow outward from their respective trunks at exactly the height of your nose. If you are male, tree branches will also grow at groin height.
22. The difficulty of finding any given trail marker is directly proportional to the importance of the consequences of failing to find it.
23. When you arrive at your chosen campsite near dusk, it is already occupied.
24. The net weight of your boots is proportional to the cube of the number of hours you have been on the trail.
25. Swiss Army Knife toothpicks and tweezers evaporate upon contact with air.
26. Waterproof clothing isn't. However, it is 100% effective at containing sweat.
27. If you don't pack a rain jacket or pants, it will rain. If you do pack a jacket and pants, there will be blue sky and sunshine -- guaranteed.
28. The fog, rain and hail that plagued you throughout the whole hike will suddenly turn to sunshine right about the time you get back to the trailhead.
29. A backpack's weight is not affected by the amount of food eaten out of it.
30. The minimum temperature rating for any sleeping bag rises as the external temperature lowers.

31. The loudness of an animal at night grows as the size of the animal shrinks.
32. The sun sets 47% faster than normal when setting up camp. It sets another 28% faster if rain is eminent.
33. If there is a 25% chance of rain, 100% will fall in your campsite.
34. When hiking, you take half as many downhill steps as uphill.
35. If someone giving you directions says at any time, "You can't miss it," be assured that you will.
36. The difference between the game trail and the real trail is that you are following the game trail.
37. 95% of a backpack's contents could have been left at home while the 5% left at home will be needed.
38. The probability of diarrhea increases with the square of the briar content of the local vegetation.
39. Individuals of the opposite sex are only encountered while dealing with the diarrhea mentioned above.
40. If you forgot to bring toilet paper with you, you are guaranteed to have diarrhea.
41. Camping gear to be carried always exceeds the space available.
42. That's not the real mountain pass that you see, it's just a false summit. The real pass is actually another mile away and 5000 additional vertical feet.
43. All trails have more uphill sections than they have level or downhill sections.
44. The perceived distance to your destination is inversely proportional to the distance remaining.
45. The memory of misery approaches zero as the memory of joy approaches infinity.