

Wilderness First Responder



Course Overview

The Wilderness First Responder course is essential if you work or recreate in the outdoors or in other austere environments where access to medical care is delayed or communication is unreliable. It is the industry standard for professional guides, trip leaders, search and rescue team members, outdoor enthusiasts, and international travelers. Upon completion, you will be able to conduct a thorough physical exam, obtain a patient history, assess vital signs, provide emergency care in the wilderness, and make crucial evacuation decisions.

NOLS Wilderness Medicine's nationally recognized curriculum encompasses a wide range of topics including long-term patient care, wound management, selective spine immobilization, reducing dislocations, litter packaging, and epinephrine administration.

Successful course completion will earn the following NOLS Wilderness Medicine certifications:

- Wilderness First Responder
- Adult, Child, and Infant CPR & Airway Management
- Epinephrine Auto-injector

Class Format

Check-in is between 7:30 am and 7:45 am on the first day. On subsequent days, please plan on arriving by 7:45 AM. Course days run from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM with an hour-long break for lunch at noon, with two additional evening sessions. Ten-day courses will include a day off; nine-day courses do not.

The class format involves lectures integrated with practical scenarios, case studies, and skills practice sessions. Attendance is required at all classes. Scenarios and practice sessions will take place both inside and outside. Bring outdoor clothing appropriate for lying on the potentially wet, snowy, or cold ground while playing the role of both rescuer and patient. Stage (moulage) blood and make-up are used to enhance the realism of a scenario. The classroom environment generally lends itself to a pair of indoor comfy shoes. A 4-hour evening, outdoor mock rescue is part of the curriculum. Plan to dress accordingly for spending an evening outside.

Course Logistics

For registration, travel, and logistics information specific to a course, please reference the Student Logistics document.

Curriculum

Our curriculum has been developed and has evolved over decades by medical professionals and experts in outdoor education. Our instructors are expert educators with years of medical and wilderness leadership experience. Please see the [WFR Course Outline](#) for an overview and schedule of topics covered during your course. You can [read more about our curriculum on the NOLS website](#) as well as view [other curriculum resources here](#).

Testing

Along with continuous evaluation and feedback from your instructors throughout the course, each student will be required to pass both a written and practical exam on the last day of the course. The practical exam will require students to demonstrate the skills they have learned throughout the course and the written exam will be multiple choice. Your instructors can provide more info on testing procedures on the first day of your course if needed.

What to Bring

- Notebook and pencil or pen
- Outdoor work gloves (gardening, leather, or canvas)
- Personal bottle of hand sanitizer
- Watch with a second hand or digital second
- Sunglasses and/or protective eyewear
- Water bottle
- Light day pack
- Headlamp
- Waterproof outerwear—top and bottom
- Light hiking boots or sturdy shoes
- Clothing layers that allow you to be comfortable in a variety of weather conditions, including a hat

Optional:

- Slippers or comfortable shoes for classroom time
- Camp chair for classroom time
- Clipboard or hard surface to write on

Both texts: “NOLS Wilderness Medicine, 7th Edition” and the Wilderness First Responder handbook will be provided on day one. You **do not need to read or purchase these ahead of time.*

NOLS Wilderness Medicine Student Agreement

Please download the [NOLS Student Agreement](#) and read it carefully as it affects your legal rights.

Bring this two-page signed document to the first day of the course. If you are a minor, a parent or guardian must sign the document as well. Without a signed document, you cannot participate in the course. NOLS Wilderness Medicine participants, including minors, will have unsupervised free time throughout the course. Any activities during the free time are not part of the NOLS Wilderness Medicine program and are at the sole risk of the participant.

Communicable Disease Practices and Policies

NOLS strongly encourages all students on all Wilderness Medicine courses to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 and up-to-date with eligible boosters.

To help mitigate the spread of communicable disease in our classrooms, NOLS has instituted a set of policies regarding the use of personal protective equipment (masks, gloves, etc) and hygiene practices that all students and staff must follow. For more details, please review the [NOLS Wilderness Medicine Communicable Disease Mitigation Practices and Expectations for Students](#). Please review this document ahead of your course. Willful failure to comply with these practices could result in dismissal from your course.

Please follow the links below to the NOLS website for overviews of other pre-course planning resources:

[College Credit](#)

[Continuing Education](#)

[Recertification Policies](#)

[Alcohol, tobacco, and firearm policies](#)

[Scholarships and financial aid](#)

[Pets and service animals](#)

[Essential Eligibility Criteria](#)

[Minimum age requirements](#)