Safe Hiking

There is no guaranteed safe hiking. There is only _safer_ hiking. On any given hike we need to cope with things that we CANNOT control, but must maintain an awareness of.

Weather
Time / daylight duration
Terrain / environment

And things that we CAN control.

Choice of hike
Entry / exit time
Rate of travel
Gear / nourishment carried
Companions
Knowledge / information about the hike and current conditions

We have a Plan A: Enjoy the hike and have a great time.
We need a Plan B: What if Plan A goes awry?

Plan B is acknowledging that some things can go wrong and taking precautions to cope with it.
(Read the "Common-Sense Hiking Tips for Hawaii").
Check the weather
Be out well before sunset. **
Familiarize yourself with the hike route (map)
Dress appropriately
Carry water and snacks
Carry at least (1) charged cell phone, (2) whistle, (3) knife, (4) lighter, (5) watch

** Hold your fingers horizontally at arm's length between the horizon and the sun. Each finger-width between the horizon and the sun represents fifteen (15) minutes before sunset. Four (4) fingers equals one (1) hour.

When the unexpected happens, what are the priorities?

There's a mnemonic called "**The Rule of Threes**". It's a bit general and exaggerated, but it illustrates the relative priorities for staying alive.

In **three seconds**, you can die of panic.
In **three minutes**, you can die from lack of oxygen or heavy bleeding
In **three hours**, you can die from exposure
In **three days**, you can die from thirst
In **three weeks**, you can die from hunger

If you feel lost or disoriented: **S. T. O. P**.

Stop – Don't panic. Sit down, close your eyes, take three slow, deep breaths, open your eyes.

Think – How to cope with the situation. Can you retrace your steps to the last known point? Should you navigate a way out? Should you remain in place and wait for rescue?

Observe – What's in the area. What resources do you have on hand. What's the weather and time of day.

Plan – Given all of the above, what's the most reasonable plan of action? Execute it.