

WINTER CAMPING PREPARATION GUIDE

The purpose of this guideline is to help scouts get ready for winter or snow camping. Winter camping can be a safe and enjoyable experience if campers are properly equipped. The opposite is true if improperly equipped, therefore all winter campers must have proper clothing and equipment.

Parents please consult with the adult leaders who do winter camping if you are considering any alternatives or substitutes to this list. Clothing made with any cotton at all should be avoided. Check out borrowing missing items from friends, older scouts, or other adults. Do not buy something that might not get used again.

Personal Equipment

Backpack – external or internal (approx. 3500-4000 cu in.) See the note at end of document.

Sleeping Bag (approx. 2 ½ lbs of down or fiber fill and rated at least 0 Degrees F.) Alternatives- pre-approved combination of double summer bags, covers and liners. Carried in plastic lined stuff bag.

Sleeping Pads (full length) closed cell foam and inflatable. Usually the closed cell is layered on top of the inflatable.

First aid kit (see scout book page 289 plus 1 space blanket)

Extra space blanket (optional-can be used over sleeping pads and under sleeping bag to reflect heat back into bag, can be used as a vapor barrier inside sleeping bag.

flashlight or head lamp: (head lamp preferred as it allows both hands to be free when a light is needed) small size with extra alkaline batteries and bulb (metal flashlights like Mag-light are not recommended as they get very cold and batteries go dead very fast.

Sun glasses: with UV protection or ski goggles, Glacier glasses.

Sun screen at least spf 15

lip balm with sun screen

Pocket knife (folding or lock back blade not longer than 3 inches)
Tooth brush/ tooth paste (small tube)
Hand towel for drying things (tent condensation, hands, etc)
Toilet paper in its own zip lock bag(2-3 day supply)
Matches in waterproof container.
Fire Starter **(only bring one)
Cup – Measuring style, non metal insulated type
Deep Bowl (non metal)
spoon and fork (preferably Lexon (non metal))
50 feet of 1/8 inch nylon rope
compass liquid filled
2 wide mouth 1 quart water bottles (Lexon wide mouth are easier to
open in cold weather and hydration hoses tend to freeze up)
bottle jacket covers (optional) helps prevent freezing.
disposable camera (optional)
Pad: to sit on (garden kneeling pad) sitting on the snow robs one of
heat
1 snow shoes – w/ claw and hinged strap binding (rent)
1 Ski poles–w/ snow baskets, wrist straps, sized to user or telescoping
Good will can be a good source of these.
Urine bottle: (optional) extra water bottle indelibly marked or square.
Can save a night time trip out of your shelter.

Clothing

Boots: -rubber bottom snow-pac (Sorrel type) w/ felt liners (1Pair) can
Rent mountaineering boots like Koflach Degre. High quality
insulated boots can be used but can have a problem freezing up if
they get wet. BOOTS. (must fit comfortably over your socks.)

Socks: 2 or 3 pair of heavy wool or poly hiking socks (Thorlo or
Smartwool etc.) Some use liner socks also, Liner socks make
Great sleeping foot wear (NO COTTON SOCKS)

Base Layer: (long underwear) can be light or medium synthetic type top
and bottom. Neck zipper tops provide extra ventilation You need
two tops and two bottoms so boys and adults can change in
evening. ASOLUTLY NO COTTTON FOR BASE LAYER AS
IT HOLDS MOISTURE AGAINST YOU BODY AND ROBS
YOUR BODY OF HEAT.

Light Insulating layer: A light fleece pullover, wind shirt, vest, or expedition-weight long underwear are examples of this layer (MUST FIT OVER YOUR LONG UNDERWEAR AND UNDER YOUR HEAVY INSULATING LAYER)

Heavy Insulating Layer: A fleece or wool upper body garment, i.e. a fleece jacket, pullover, wool sweater, wool jacket, silk jacket. (MUST FIT OVER YOUR LIGHT INSULATING LAYER AND UNDER YOUR SHELL JACKET.)

Pants: light insulating fleece or wind-stopper pants could be polartec fleece, wool pants etc. (MUST BE ABLE TO FIT OVER YOUR BASE LAYER AND UNDER HEAVY PANTS)

Shell Jacket: (Rain gear) wind /rain resistant jacket with hood that is sized to fit over all upper clothing.

Pants: Heavier insulating one pair of fleece or wind stopper type pants could be wool, or fleece. Full side zippers are nice for easy changes over boots but are not necessary. Examples: military style wool pants, fleece pullovers or even expedition style long-under wear. Should fit over lighter insulating plus base layer and under shell

Shell Pants: (Rain Gear) wind /rain resistant pants that is sized to fit over all lower clothing. Full side zippers are a great option for facilitating clothing adjustments over boots.

Gaiters: Knee length pair of gaiters large enough to fit over your boots. These will keep snow out of boots and keep your socks dry and And they add a layer of warmth to your lower legs.

Gloves: light weight fleece or wool glove/gloves, insulated glove/ gloves, Insulated Mittens, Mitten over shells are all examples of the types of gloves. Gloves work best for hiking and shelter building while mittens keep your hands warm. Each person should have enough gloves / mittens to have replacements when a pair gets wet or lost. This is one area where the scouts really can't have to many pairs.

Head Insulation: 2 stocking caps as one will get wet or a balaclava will also work and provide neck protection.

Neck protection: Neck Gaiter made of fleece works well here and can also Be used as a ear band to keep ears warm.

Bandana or handkerchiefs: to clean goggles etc.(this should your only cotton items)

Group Equipment

Snow Saw: for cutting snow blocks trimming snow doors cutting snow Shelves, ETC

Shovel – Lexon, snow (life-link), dust pan, We NEVER have enough of These. Digging shelters, leveling tent area.

Tents- 3 or 4 season with floor (4 season is warmer)

SNOW PEGS: for tent

Cord: 2-3mm thick for making dead man tent stakes precut and fused. 20 inch to 24 inch lengths work well. Examples: parachute cord, 2.8 mm nylon cord, etc

Tarp: many uses; serves as a ground cloth under tent only used if camping off of snow, roof over trench snow shelter, barrier between snow floor and sleeping bag/pads, ETC

Sheet of 2 to 4 mil plastic: many uses; to line the inside of the tent floor making a bathtub floor also used to line sleeping area of snow cave, igloo, snow shelter, ETC.

Candle lantern – w/ extra candle

The following Items are listed for the patrol venturing out on a separate outing. The scouts will not need these things on the February troop snow camping trip, as we do whole camp cooking.

** Fire: one should pay close attention to the ability to melt snow and heat water on a winter campout. The old “10 essential” list of matches and fire starter are not much use in the middle of a snow storm at 6000 ft on a Mt. Rainier or while huddling in a snow cave as THERE IS NO WOOD. You need a gas stove, cooking pot and a way to light the stove WITH YOU.

Pots and Pans appropriate for planned meals
Single burner stoves and fuel (enough to cook meals)
Cooking utensils appropriate for planned meals
Serving utensils
Camp soap (biodegradable for every washing need)
Dish washing sponge / scrubber pad (absolutely no S.O.S or soaped steel wool pads)
Dish towels (cotton or “camp towels”)
Collapsible water containers (might not be needed)

NOTE: All clothing should be protected from water by lining packs with plastic bags. 33 gallon and 13 gallon garbage bags are very useful on winter campouts; from storing wet clothing at night to covering boot in vestibules.

The snow has a habit of swallowing knives and other small items. Gloves and knife should have lanyards so they can be attached to the body. Other items should have brightly colored flagging attached so if dropped they show up in the snow.

Winter camping takes more clothing than fair weather camping and in addition to the above list some people add snow or ski suits, parkas and other extra clothes and gear. Active boys can go through more than one set on a two-day camp out. The distance we travel is not great but we often have to make more than one trip; sort of a mini-expedition. To make it easier on the scouts and adults getting more things in to the campsite, while wearing snowshoes consider a sled or pulk (fancy name for a sled with poles and a harness or hip belt attached) and a daypack instead of a large pack.

There are plans available and this would make an excellent patrol project where each scout and adult could build a very usable product for very little money. See Jan Skoropinski for more information on building your own. I have plans and examples.