

PLANNING FOR WINTER CAMPING

Most of this information can be found in the *Boy Scout Handbook*. If you are going to be doing a lot of outdoor activities, this book is an invaluable source of know-how and advice.

"One has to lie deep in the snow to learn how warm and protective it is. A den in the snow confines the body heat like a blanket or overcoat. It is a snug place, no matter how hard the wind may howl. One who holes up in the snow understands better the mysteries of the woods in the winter. He knows why the severe weather grouse squirm their way under soft snow and be quiet. He understands why deer bury themselves in drifts, lying a half-day or more with just their heads sticking out. He learns something of the comfort of the bear in hibernation."

William O. Douglas, 1950

MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT WINTER CAMPING

Myth #1: Leather hiking boots will keep your feet warm. -- FALSE

- The snug fit of most leather hiking boots can limit the circulation of blood in the foot, especially with thick socks on. Overboots cut generously enough to hold your foot and shoe are much more effective. The cloth stitching in leather boots can also wick moisture into the shoe. Nothing is worse than wet feet in cold winter.

Myth #2: Waterproof clothing is ideal for cold weather camping. -- FALSE

- To keep warm, in the cold, your clothing must allow body moisture to escape. Moisture that is trapped too close to the body can wick heat away through evaporation. It is better to layer your clothing on in cold weather. Wool, Gor Tex, and polypropylene garments work nice in the cold. Always wear insulated underwear.

Myth #3: Winter camping does not require much preparation. -- FALSE

- Arctic conditions exist when the wind is blowing and the temperature drops below 20 degrees F. There are only seven states in the U.S. that do not experience arctic weather. Indiana is not one of them. It is very important to prepare and even over prepare. I've never heard anyone complain about being too warm or having too many dry clothes on a winter campout.

Myth #4: Mental attitude has little to do with winter camping. -- FALSE

- A positive mental attitude is the most important ingredient in the success of cold weather camping trips. The demands of winter will drain your energy and you'll have to rely on yourself to keep your spirits high.

Myth #5: In cold weather, tasks can be done just as quickly as in warm weather. --
FALSE

- Every effort in cold weather takes longer to complete. Be sure to bring some winter patience with you when you camp in the cold.

CONSERVING BODY HEAT - THE PRIME OBJECTIVE

There are three ways to lose body heat. Keeping them in mind will help you be much more aware of what you are or could be doing to keep your body warm.

RADIATION - The emission of body, especially from the skin areas exposed to the elements. A good set of gloves, hat, and scarf can help best in keeping bare skin to a minimum.

CONDUCTION - The absorption of cold by the body when sitting or laying on cold ground, or handling cold objects such as metal cooking utensils and metal canteens. This is why a decent sleeping pad is required for cold weather camping. The same goes for wearing gloves. A campstool is a must on a winter camping trip. Try not to sit on the ground.

CONVECTION - The loss of body heat due to wind blowing across unprotected body parts. Keeping bare skin covered with hats, scarves, and gloves can also reduce this situation. It is important to keep exposure to a minimum, **ESPECIALLY** in a windy situation. Convection heat loss can reduce body heat the fastest. Wet clothing will accelerate this process, making staying dry even more important.

OTHER CONCERNS

Tent Placement.

Whenever possible, place your tent in a location that will catch the sunrise in the morning. This will aid in melting off any ice and evaporating any frost or dew that may have formed during the night. This will also warm your tent as you awaken in the morning. Cold air sinks. Try to place your campsite on slightly higher ground than the rest of your surroundings. Try to choose a protected site if it is snowing or the wind is blowing.

Water Consumption in Cold Weather.

Dehydration can seriously impair the body's ability to produce heat. Drink fluids as often as possible during the day and keep a water bottle or canteen with you at night.

Cooking In Cold Weather.

Cooking in cold weather will take about twice as long as normal. Always use a lid on any pots that you are cooking in. This will help to hold in the heat and decrease the overall heating time. Make sure you start hot cleaning water before you start cooking. The pots and utensils must still be cleaned. Try to keep your menu to good one-pot meals. Things like stews, chili, and hot beans stick to your ribs, lessen the cleaning time, and provide good sources of energy and fuel for your internal furnace. A good high-calorie snack before bedtime will also keep you warm all night. Stay away from an overabundance of sugar, cheese is a good high-calorie bedtime snack.

Sleeping Tip #1.

Do not sleep with your mouth and nose in your sleeping bag. The moisture of your breath will condense in the bag, and cause it to become wet and ineffective as an insulator.

Buddy System.

Buddies can help each other pack for a trek, look after one another in the woods, and watch for symptoms of frostbite, hypothermia, and exhaustion.

CheckList.

Make a checklist of everything you need before you start to pack. Then check each item off as you pack it. This way you will not forget anything.

Keeping Warm

Keeping warm is the most important part of cold weather camping. Use the C-O-L-D method to assure staying warm.

- C - Clean

Since insulation is only effective when heat is trapped by dead air spaces, keep your insulating layers clean and fluffy. Dirt, grime, and perspiration can mat down those air spaces and reduce the warmth of a garment.

- O - Overheating

Avoid overheating by adjusting the layers of your clothing to meet the outside temperature and the exertions of your activities. Excessive sweating can dampen your garments and cause chilling later on.

- L - Loose Layers

A steady flow of warm blood is essential to keep all parts of your body heated. Wear several loosely fitting layers of clothing and footgear that will allow maximum insulation without impeding your circulation.

- D - Dry

Damp clothing and skin can cause your body to cool quickly, possibly leading to frostbite and hypothermia. Keep dry by avoiding cotton clothes that absorb moisture. Always brush away snow that is on your clothes before you enter a heated area. Keep the clothing around your neck loosened so that body heat and moisture can escape instead of soaking several layers of clothing.

Clothing

- Footwear.

As with other clothing, the layer system is also the answer for foot-wear. Start with a pair of silk, nylon, or thin wool socks next to your skin. Then layer on several pairs of heavier wool socks. When and if your feet become damp, change into another pair of dry socks at the first opportunity. Rubber overboots will protect the feet from water and will allow more comfortable shoes to be worn within.

- Mittens and Gloves.

Mittens allow your fingers to be in direct contact with each other. They will keep your hands warmer than regular gloves that cover each finger. Select mittens that are filled with foam insulation, or pull on wool gloves and cover them with a nylon overmitt. Long cuffs will keep wind and snow from getting in.

- Headgear.

The stocking hat is the warmest thing you can cover your head with in cold weather. Get one that is large enough to pull down over your ears. Also ski masks are great in the winter and can help in keeping your neck and face warm as well. Noses and ears can be very easily frostbitten, so a scarf can be an invaluable item to have.

- Parka and/or Overcoat.

Your coat or parka is the most important piece of your winter clothing. It needs to be large enough to fit over extra clothing without cutting off blood flow, and allowing ventilation to keep moisture away from your body. A large permanently attached hood will prevent heat loss around your head and neck.

- Sleepwear.

Never should you sleep in the same clothes that you have worn all day. They are damp and will cause you to chill. This could cause frostbite and hypothermia. It is advised that you bring a thick pair of sweats and thermal underwear to sleep in. Keep the thermals and sweats for sleeping in only. Do not wear them during the day, this will keep them the driest. Also be sure to have a couple of layers of wool or heavy thick cotton socks on as well. Always sleep with a stocking hat on your head. Your sleeping bag needs to be a winter rated bag. Typically rated down to 15 degrees and stuffed with 5 pounds of Holofil, Fiberfil, or other polyester ticking. It is also a very good idea to have some kind of sleeping mat to use in the winter. The mat can be a \$90 Thermal Rest from Galyans (Scouts get a %10 discount by showing Scout ID card) or a piece of high density rubber foam at least one inch thick. In cold weather camping you never want to sleep on an air mattress or off the ground in a cot. The air under you will cool you off in no time and this would create a threatening situation. If you don't have a sleeping mat, bring a spare wool or natural fiber blanket to use as a ground pad under your sleeping bag. The sleeping mat is worth its weight in gold.

Have fun!

Every year, tens of thousands of boys will go winter camping. Although the threat of danger is always present in a winter camp, planning and knowledge can overcome this. It is very important that the Scouts come prepared.

TOP OUTDOOR SAFETY TIPS FOR THE C-O-L-D

Keeping warm is the most important part of cold-weather camping and outdoor activities. Use the C-O-L-D method to stay warm.

C - Clean

Since insulation is only effective when heat is trapped by dead air spaces, keep your insulating layers clean and fluffy. Dirt, grime, and perspiration can mat down those air spaces and reduce the warmth of a garment.

O - Overheating

Avoid overheating by adjusting the layers of your clothing to meet the outside temperature and the exertions of your activities. Stay hydrated by drinking plenty of water, and refrain from drinking caffeinated drinks that act as diuretics.

L - Loose Layers

A steady flow of warm blood is essential to keep all parts of your body heated. Wear several loosely fitting layers of clothing and footwear that will allow maximum insulation without impeding your circulation. Having clothing that is bright colored (orange or red) is also a good idea, so hunters and sportsmen can see you in snowy conditions. Always have a hat and wear it.

D - Dry

Sweaty, damp clothing and skin can cause your body to cool quickly, possibly leading to frostbite and hypothermia. Keep dry by avoiding clothes that absorb moisture. Always brush away snow on your clothes before you enter a heated area. Keep clothing around your neck loosened so that body heat and moisture can escape instead of soaking through your layers. Keep your socks dry.

"Be Prepared" for Winter Safety – Don't Get Left Out in the C.O.L.D.

The most common errors people make during cold-weather activities include not eating the right kinds of foods, not drinking enough water, not having adequate clothing, and being unaware of the signs of frostbite. One of the best ways to remember what is appropriate to eat when you are spending extended periods of time outside in cold weather is to use good nutrition to "build the fire within". Make sure your food consumption includes sugars, which act like a fire starter, carbohydrates and proteins, which act as kindling, and fats that produce the energy needed to keep the fire burning and your body running at peak performance. Stay away from caffeinated drinks such as soda, coffee, and tea; drink plenty of plain water or sports drinks to keep yourself properly hydrated.

To avoid these and other similar safety hazards this season, the BSA is sharing its tried-and-true winter safety tips. These commonsense tips can help winter campers, skiers, outdoor enthusiasts, and families who make highway travel plans to "be prepared" for winter hazards.

WINTER CAMPING CLOTHES AND EQUIPMENT LIST

The thing to remember here is we are out side in cold weather. It is not foreboding if you think ahead. Things freeze! Fingers don't work as well when we're cold. Boys sweat, sweat freezes, so you need extra under clothing with wicking qualities. NO ONE will be sleeping in the clothes they worked, played and sweat in during the day. **Pack sleep ware** in an easily recognizable plastic bag so you can make this change quickly when you're tired and it's cold. **Pack everything else** in plastic bags according to its purpose i.e.: Extra mittens, sox, and hat (not to be confused with the ones in your sleep ware bag); Toiletries and sm. first aide kit; Clothes for second day; Basic survival stuff i.e.: water proof matches (no lighters), an approved fire starter and tinder for when it's your turn to start the campfire, compass if you have one, your scout knife but remember not to use it if your fingers are too cold to keep it under control. And don't forget your Scout Book, put it in a zip lock bag, or better yet put it in two zip lock bags, and never miss an opportunity to bug a patrol leader or adult leader to sign off what you are doing in rank advancement.

Don't leave your packing to the last minute, and definitely don't leave it to Mom or Dad alone. They can and should help, but "my Mom forgot my..." and "I don't know where Dad put my..." doesn't fly in Boy Scouts.

We don't have a clothes dryer in winter camp. We don't go indoors to warm up and drink cocoa. So when you're wet you change out side and get on with the fun. When nature calls (as it should if your drinking enough liquids to keep away the dehydration and hypothermia) it calls us to a frozen pit toilet, so plan accordingly. We try to provide a hot liquid on the stove at all times.

Sleep wear- sweat suit, stocking cap, wool socks and mittens

Regular Underwear- and Thermax or Polypropylene (go for the expedition weight) long underwear 2 pr. each, no cotton or cotton blends

Pants- 2 changes- 1 wool and a second snow, wind or ski type if not wool

Long Sleeve Shirts- 2 not cotton, polarfleese is great

Heavy sweater- wool

Wind breaker or vest

Heavy Jacket- polar-fleese lined, down or large parka

Hat or cap that can cover ears- separate from sleeping cap