

CUB SCOUTS



CAMPING

This guide has been produced to assist families that are new to or relatively inexperienced at camping. It also serves as an introduction to families new to Cub Scout camping. It is not intended for unit leaders and should not be used in place of the BSA Guide to Safe Scouting and other local council regulations.

First copy written by Steve Adams, Cubmaster, Pack 484,
North Florida Council,
as a project for Woodbadge Course SR-660,
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Author is not liable for poor weather, campers not being prepared, and other bad camping experiences including the mosquitoes biting and the fish not!

INTRODUCTION

“Of all that you can take with you on a camping trip, the most important thing is knowledge. No item of outdoor gear will be of any use unless you know what to do with it. If you ever find yourself without a particular piece of equipment, or without any gear at all, you can always rely on your wisdom and resourcefulness to see you through.” BSA camping merit badge pamphlet.

Welcome to Cub Scout camping! You are in for a real treat and a great way to experience camping with younger children.



Cub Scout camping is designed especially for families with children under 11 years old and can serve as the perfect introduction for families with little or no camping experience. So if you’ve never been camping, haven’t been camping since you had children, or just need a quick refresher, read on.

Cub Scout camping is front country camping. Front country means you drive into the campsite and unload your vehicle. (The counterpart to front country is back country, which is hiking in with all your gear on your back.) Cub Scout camping is also normally tent camping, so leave your 45 foot motor home with satellite TV and internet at home!

THE RULES

Yes, we have rules. Some rules are there to protect you, the camper, from injury and will be discussed in a later section. Other rules are to protect the mission of Cub Scouting, specifically character development. Finally, there are rules to protect the organization. Unfortunately, BSA has to protect itself in this litigious society. Included in this pamphlet are those rules directly affecting families.

- No youth will sleep in the tent of an adult other than that of his or her parent or guardian.
- Pack campouts are conducted as family oriented events with participants camping in family units.
- Smoking areas must be located away from all camping or activity areas and smoking should not be done in the presence of Scouts.
- No firearms, fireworks or alcohol.
- Only Webelos can go on den campouts. Tiger, Wolf and Bear dens must camp only on Pack campouts.
- Each Pack must have one adult camping who has completed Basic Adult Leader Outdoor Orientation (BALOO) who can ensure the Pack observes BSA safety practices.

CAMPING EQUIPMENT

“A man can stand almost any hardship by day; and be none the worse for it, provided he gets a comfortable night’s rest; but without sound sleep he will soon go to pieces, no matter how gritty he may be.” Horace Kephart, The Book of Camping and Woodcraft, Outing Publishing, 1906, as quoted in the BSA camping merit badge pamphlet.

Each family will need to have their own tent and personal gear.



Tent: Modern tents are often rated as 3 season (appropriate for spring, summer, and autumn use) or 4 season (reliable in any conditions, including winter camping). For Florida, an inexpensive 3 season tent is fine, but be sure it has a decent rainfly!

Sleeping bag: you can make a sleeping bag with a blanket or two, but a real sleeping bag is the way to go. Don't spend a lot on a sleeping bag rated to below 0 temperatures unless you intend to camp in the mountains in winter. The most basic sleeping bag will be sufficient for camping in Florida. Air mattresses are inexpensive and comfortable, but foam pads are lighter and more durable and insulate better (and you don't have to blow them up!).

Ground cloth: Keep moisture under the tent and away from your bedding with a ground cloth—a plastic sheet or tarp cut to the size of your tent floor. Put the ground cloth down first and set up the tent on it. Tuck the edges of the ground cloth beneath the floor of your tent so that rainwater will not collect on the cloth and run under the tent.

Shoes: Almost any durable shoes will do for a front country camping trip, but they should fit well. Your heels should not slip much when you walk, and your toes should have a little wiggle room. **NO SANDALS OR FLIP FLOPS.** Footwear must be close-toed and over the heel.

Normally, the Pack will camp, cook and eat as a unit in one big campsite. Your Pack may have its own cooking gear / camp kitchen, or each Den will be assigned to bring certain items. Do not feel obligated to spend a lot of money purchasing gear for common use. Check with your Pack to find out what cooking/eating gear you need to bring.

Where to get camping gear. If you want new inexpensive gear, major discount stores carry reliable brands. Military surplus stores carry both new and used gear, but they may be a little more expensive. Garage sales can provide a treasure trove of gear for very little money. Be wary of camping and outdoor specialty stores if you are not interested in high end camping gear.

SUGGESTED CAMPING EQUIPMENT

COMFORT

- Tent
- Tarp (Ground cloth)
- Sleeping Bags & Camp Pillows
- Air Mattresses or Foam Pads or cots
- Flashlights w/ Extra Batteries
- Camp Lantern, w/extra Batteries or Fuel & Mantels

HYGIENE / SAFETY / CLOTHING

- First Aid Kit
- Insect / Mosquito Repellent
- Sunscreen (SPF 30+)
- Toothbrush / Toothpaste
- Toilet Paper (and Other Personal Toiletries)
- Shower Soap & Shampoo
- Sunglasses
- Shoes—Make sure shoes are comfortable and suitable for lots of outdoor walking.
- Socks. Sockless footwear is not good for outdoors and hiking. Bring extra pairs.
- Clothes
- Towels
- Sweatshirt and/or Jacket
- Hat
- Sleepwear – you need to be decent if you have to take a midnight stroll to the community bathroom! (Don't sleep in the clothes you wore the preceding day; they are damp and will make for an uncomfortable night.)

- Wet wipes. Individual packets are good to stick in your pocket. (Mind the trash!)
- Canteen / water bottle. Something that clips onto your belt is good.
- Backpack. Small to carry a few items around during the day.
- Sunglasses
- Whistle – to round up the kids when you need them (or the search party when you REALLY need them!).

OPTIONAL ACCESSORIES

- Camera & Film
- Books (Tree / Bird Identification or Other)
- Binoculars
- Rope or Nylon Cord
- Folding Chairs
- Tent Broom
- Games
- Notebook and Pen
- Cub Scout Handbooks

WHAT NOT TO BRING

- Pets
- Alcohol
- Firearms / weapons
- Electronic toys
- Boom boxes (The point is to enjoy nature, not drown it out!)

COOKING / DINING (Pack gear)

- Eating Utensils (i.e. Disposable Knives, Forks, Spoons, Plates, Cups, etc.)
- Cooking Utensils (i.e. Pots, Pans, Spoons, Spatulas, Knives, Coffee Pot, etc.)
- Charcoal Briquettes (& Starter)
- Groceries
- Waterproof Matches
- Camp Grill
- Camp Stove
- Firewood
- Ice Chest
- Dish Washing Detergent (Small, Biodegradable)
- Pot Scrubber Brush
- Water Jugs and/or Canteen
- Paper Towels
- Dish Towels
- Trash Bags
- Campfire Bucket
- Small portable grill
- Folding / camp table
- Dish pan to wash dishes

PREPARING FOR THE CAMPOUT

Practice setting up your tent before you go camping. Don't show up with a brand new tent still in its box. You need to make sure you have all the parts and are familiar with the process. Modern tents are fairly easy to set up, but each tent is different. Only one time setting it up and you will be comfortable doing it.

When you practice setting up the tent, spray the seams of the tent with a seam sealer or water repellent. Tents are made to be water resistant, but no tent is water proof.

Get something to keep the tent in. Odds are you will never be able to get it back into the box or bag it came in. Besides, you don't want to! It is actually better to stuff a tent into a bag rather than folding or rolling it up. This keeps the tent from getting memory creases in it and helps maintain the water resiliency. Best tip is to get an old army duffel bag or navy sea bag. First place the poles into the bag. Next push a corner of the tent all the way to the bottom of the bag and continue stuffing the rest of the tent alongside the poles.

Open up and test all that new camping gear you just purchased. Pack them in large (18 qt) plastic storage bins that have tight fitting lids. These are good to store your gear (and food) outside the tent and keeps them dry and safe from curious and hungry critters.

MAKING CAMP

Get to your campsite early enough to make camp before night fall! Even the most experienced campers prefer setting up a tent in daylight.



Don't pitch a tent under dead trees or limbs that might fall onto the tent. Stay out of gullies that could fill with water during a rainfall. Find a site away from lone trees, high ridges and other likely targets of lightning. Pick a site that slopes gently for drainage. An area open to the east and south will catch sunlight early in the day and perhaps be drier than slopes facing north.

Set up a dining fly first. That will provide shelter in case of rain and will establish a camp center.

Leaves, pine needles, and other natural cover can keep the ground from becoming muddy. Remove sticks and other items that could poke a hole in the tent floor, but leave the ground cover. Raking an area is contrary to Leave No Trace guidelines. Ground cloths should not stick out from under the tent or they might collect rain water and funnel it back under the tent.

Establish a food storage area that will be secure from animals, insects and dirt. When front country camping, you can use vehicles, trailers, and tightly closing storage bins.

BREAKING CAMP

Leave the dining fly in place until you're almost ready to go. It can serve as a last minute shelter for people and gear.

Before taking down your tent, open all the doors and windows and sweep out the inside. After you take down the poles and pull the stakes, shake the tent to get off as much dirt and water as possible.

After all your gear is packed into the vehicles, walk around the campsite to pick up all trash. **LEAVE THE CAMPSITE LOOKING BETTER THAN YOU FOUND IT.**

Clean your gear when you get home. The most important things to take care of are the tent and sleeping bags because they will almost always have moisture in them.

Spread sleeping bags out or hang them up to air out. It is better to store sleeping bags by hanging them up and not rolled or stuffed into a bag. This helps keep their insulation material from compacting or deteriorating.

Tents need to be set up or hung up. When it is dry, sweep the dirt and sand out of the inside and off the bottom. It can then be re-stuffed back into its bag for storage.

SAFETY

- Knives. Cub Scouts should not carry pocket knives until they are at least in a Bear den (third grade) and even then only after completing a knife safety course and earning their “Whittling Chit”.
- No flames are allowed in tents. Use only flashlights or battery operated lanterns. No tent is fireproof and can rapidly burn or melt.
- Tents are not to be pitched near fire rings. Fires shall not be built near standing tents.
- No fireworks are allowed on BSA campouts.
- Propane lanterns should be monitored by adults. Many battery operated lanterns look just like gas lanterns and children are accustomed to picking them up by the top. This has resulted in severe burns.
- Lightning. The best thing to do is take shelter in a building or vehicle. If you are in a tent, stay away from the tent poles. If no shelter is available, get into a forest or large group of trees. **DO NOT STAND UNDER ISOLATED TREES.** Stay away from water, metal objects, and anything that is taller than everything else around it. If you are caught outside when lightning is present, get as low as you can such as in a ditch or depression, spread out at least 15 feet apart from each other, and squat with your feet close



together. Getting lower than other things around you will minimize your chances of being struck. Keeping your feet together minimizes your contact with the ground to avoid ground shock. Spreading out minimizes the chance of more than one person getting shocked.

First Aid Kit

Start with a basic kit from a discount store. The Pack should have a larger first aid kit designed for group camping. You need to worry about personal protection and minor care for your family. A family first aid kit should have a minimum of:

- Scissors
- Tweezers
- Sunburn lotion
- Lip balm
- Poison ivy lotion
- Instant ice pack
- Bandages
- Antibacterial cream

CAMPING TIPS & ETIQUETTE

Do not bring electronic toys, video games, portable televisions, radios, etc. The idea is to enjoy nature, not overwhelm it! Leave No Trace.

Respect other campers. Their campsite is their home. Don't walk through it or enter without being invited. Remember also that tents are not as soundproof as houses are, and some people go to bed earlier than others. Have an established quiet time and observe it. Make sure the children know about it and observe it too.



Don't shine flashlights into people's faces; keep them aimed downward. A flashlight shone into someone's face temporarily blinds one at night, and it is rude. This especially needs to be stressed to children.

Take your shoes off before crawling into a tent. Stocking feet are kinder to tent floors, and you won't track in dirt. Store your shoes by the tent door under a tent fly or tarp. Put down a small door mat or rug outside the tent door.

Whenever you cook with a stove or over an open fire, put on a pot of water before you serve a meal. That way you'll have hot dishwater by the time you finish eating. To effectively wash camp cookware, use the 3 pan process: hot water with a few drops of biodegradable soap to wash, cold water with a few drops of bleach to kill bacteria, then hot water to rinse. Air dry in a mesh bag hung from a tree branch or dining fly pole.

REFERENCES

BSA Camping merit badge pamphlet

Guide to Safe Scouting