

Troop 278

Some General Tips for Camping

Permission Slips: A Troop permission slip/medical form is required for every outing. Here's the tip – fill out everything on the form except the dates, destination and signatures. Make several copies of the mostly completed form. When you need one, just fill in the missing information. This saves a lot of time the morning we leave for a trip.

Shoes: Hiking boots are the preferred foot wear but they are not required. What is required is a sturdy closed toe shoe that securely ties with laces. If you can slip the shoe on or off without untying, it is not tied securely. Don't buy expensive boots. Boys at this age grow too fast! The cheap hiking boots at Target, Big 5, Sports Authority etc work just fine for the length of time that they fit. Oh, and by the way, socks must be at least 2 inches above the top of the shoe. The little bootie things won't cut it. We are very strict about footwear on hikes. A bad blister in the first mile of a hike makes a miserable trip for both the Scout and the leaders... Another tip – trim your toenails (but not too short) before a hiking trip to avoid pressure from your boots/shoes.

Sleeping Bag: A good sleeping bag is the most important item to take on an outing. It can mean the difference between a miserable, shivering, cold experience and getting a great night sleep. Each Scout will need a stuff type sleeping bag (not the heavy roll-up kind). The bag should be rated between 25 to 35 degrees Fahrenheit and weigh under 6 pounds.

Backpack: There are many good backpacks on the market. The two main types are internal frames and external frames. The difference is, well you guessed it, one has the frame on the inside and the other has the frame on the outside. The difference is a matter of preference. The external frame packs tend to be less expensive but still good quality. Important features to look for are: proper fit (the salesperson can help you with that), sufficient capacity (enough room to carry all your stuff) and a good hip belt.

Tent: Don't rush out and buy a tent right away. A good tent runs about \$150. To start off we can pair boys up with someone who has a tent or loan them one. If you really want to buy one now, don't go to K-mart or Target. Go to Sport Chalet or REI. Things to look for: two-person, less than 6 pounds and a rain fly that goes within 6 inches of the ground. Cheap tents are great in good weather, but if it rains they keep water in better than keeping it out (this is a tried and true testimony). Cheap tents make great water collection devices.

Your Scout will be learning many of the needed skills for camping at the Troop meetings and in the great outdoors. Our goal is to make it the best experience possible, especially on the first handful of outings. Proper equipment is key toward this goal, but it can be costly. You don't have to go out and buy everything in one shot. It can happen over a period of many months. The key items that you should focus on for the first 2 to 3 campouts are shoes, sleeping bag and a pack. The rest will come over time.

If you have any questions please call the Scoutmaster or any Assistant scoutmaster – see the troop website for contact information: www.Troop278.net