

## Troop 160 Winter Camping Gear List and Tips

The items below are suggested in addition to your typical gear such as toiletry kit, mess kit, Nalgene bottles, flashlight, tent, first aid kit, Ten Essentials etc.

### Cold Weather Comfort

The concepts of Layering, Warmth, and Body Heat, all work hand in hand and are interconnected. In order to understand why we outlined the choices in equipment below, let's review these concepts first. It is important to remember that clothing does not produce warmth – your body does. Your body's first priority is to protect the head and heart from becoming cold and in order to do so, will pull blood flow from the extremities. The biggest defense against cold feet and hands is a good stocking cap!

Since the body is generating the heat required to keep it warm, it is the role of the clothing to help control that heat. We rely on clothing to manage heat so that it does not escape too quickly or if we have too much heat – to let some escape. Multiple layers of clothing produce multiple layers of air pockets, which in turn will keep you warmer than a single, thick layer. While doing physical activity, it is advisable to shed insulating layers in order to prevent excessive perspiration. This is a tricky balancing act that requires practice. It is inevitable that we will perspire while camping and hiking, that is why we stress the idea that **Cotton Kills!** Cotton holds onto perspiration and keeps it close to the body. This moisture produces a chilling effect that could lead to hypothermia. The clothing and equipment we outlined below encourages the use of synthetic or wool garments that will help wick moisture away from the body, unlike cotton which retains moisture close to the skin and ultimately chills the body. The use of multiple layers makes it easier to modulate body warmth depending on field conditions such as changes in sunlight, temperature, wind and precipitation.

### Clothing

- **Wicking Layer** - Two sets of Polypropylene underwear, one set to wear on arrival day and one set to wear at night that can also be worn the next day. This layer helps pull the moisture away from the skin. Remember – layers for upper and lower body.
  
- **Insulating Layer(s)** - Two pair of synthetic or wool pants and two pair of long sleeve synthetic or wool shirts. Fleece shirts or hoodies are great and brand names like Polar Tech are popular. A fleece or similar vest is an additional insulating layer that is popular because it keeps the body core warm while also allowing greater mobility in the arms. **BLUE JEANS AND SWEAT PANTS ARE COTTON AND ARE NOT RECOMMENDED!**
  
- **Shell Layer** – Synthetic, weather proof coat/liner and pants. Remember that popular materials like GORE-TEX, Precip, etc provide water proofing to keep out rain and moisture while allowing moisture from the body to escape. Ski pants and coats are recommended, one piece snow suits are not.

## Accessories:

- Boots** - Waterproof hiking boots or winter boots with liners (NO SNEAKERS OR SHOES) Waterproof boots will have a Gore-Tex or similar proprietary lining.
- Socks** - Wool / Smart wool / Merino wool boot length socks (NO COTTON SOCKS) Two Pair/day plus one pair for night sleeping. You can wear a light weight synthetic sock under wool socks to prevent itching. Smart or Merino wool will not itch.
- Hats** - Two stocking hats or balaclava – one to wear during the day and one at night. A balaclava is great to wear at night because it will not come off while sleeping.
- Scarf** - or neckie/gator are great to wear during the day.
- Gloves** – Gore Tex or Similar lined, insulated gloves are important. Leather work gloves are good to have for working.

## Overnight Sleeping

- Sleeping bag** - 0 degree will work best for most people. If you do not own a 0 degree bag, you can improve the bag that you have by about 10 degrees by inserting a fleece liner inside. If you have a mummy bag that is rated in the 20 degree range, you can insert that bag inside of a rectangular bag to increase the performance. Inserting a mummy bag inside of another mummy bag will compress the insulation which will defeat the purpose.
- Sleeping Pad** is a must. A pad is better than an air mattress.
- Synthetic sleepwear** or polypropylene underwear.
- Stuff or nylon bag** to hold your boots – It is advisable to clean your boots of snow and mud before going to bed and then place those boots in a bag. If you then take that bag and insert it at the bottom of your sleeping bag, it will take up space you will not need to heat and keep you boots warmer than if you would have left them outside of your tent.
- Sleep boots** – although these may seem to be a luxury – a pair of down filled sleep boots are incredibly good at keeping your feet warm. You can substitute these with a pair of clean/dry socks.
- Sleeping tips:** It is imperative that all clothing worn during the day be removed, and clean, dry sleepwear put on. Trust your sleeping bag! If you put on multiple layers of sleepwear in anticipation that you are going to be cold, you will begin to perspire and after a while – begin to chill. Do not breathe into your sleeping bag – the extra moisture will once again chill the body. Go to bed with an empty bladder. Slip tomorrow's insulating layer into the bottom of your sleeping bag so it will be warm in the morning.