

Camping – Manitoba Style!

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Tips for Sleeping Warm at Camp

- A sleeping bag will not create heat. It does, however, help prevent heat loss and retains the heat that you naturally create
- If it's still cold out when you camp, the cold from the ground will seep into your sleeping bag unless you create a barrier. Dry, still air makes a good insulator. A self-inflating mattress will go a long way in increasing your sleeping comfort.
- Placing a flannelette sheet inside your sleeping bag is more effective than putting a blanket on top of you.
- Change out of the clothes that you've worn during the day. These could contain moisture, which will make you feel cold during the night.
- Wearing a hooded sweatshirt over your pajamas will help keep your head and shoulders warm. Also, loose fitting socks that are dry and clean will keep your feet warmer than the ones you wore all day.
- Have a hot snack before bed to help your body generate more heat. Eating something is preferable to having a hot drink, as any more than a half litre of liquid will almost guarantee a (cold) trip to the latrine in the middle of the night!
- If you go to bed cold, you will probably feel cold most of the night. As the sun begins to set, start putting on extra clothing. A fleece jacket with a wind suit over top makes a good barrier against the dampness and chill of a spring evening.

Helpful Hints

Tent Repairs/Maintenance

If the zipper on your tent door is starting to separate, try a gentle squeeze on the narrow end of the zipper head with a pair of needle-nosed pliers. Caution must be used because too much pressure will result in the zipper head breaking.

Keep a few different sizes of zip cable ties in your repair kit. They are almost as handy as duct tape. The best time to storm-lash your tent is while you are setting it up, not as the storm is approaching. Duct tape makes a quick temporary repair to a rip or hole in a canoe.

First Aid/Safety

Baking soda and water make a good paste to put on insect bites.

Tie long hair back when working around food, stove and/or campfire.

Remember to empty the fuel out of your stoves and lanterns before you store them for the winter.

Survival shelters should be built facing East. Weather systems usually tract from West to East.

Shivering is an important early warning sign that should not be ignored.

Always carry lip balm and sun glasses when spending the day outside in winter.

Mosquitoes & black flies are attracted to dark colours. It is best to wear light coloured, loose fitting, tight weave fabrics.

Cooking/Food

Frozen juice boxes are good to use in coolers as ice packs.

If you heat your stick before wrapping the bannock around it, the bannock will cook faster.

When hiking in winter, turn your water bottle upside down, the ice crystals will form on the bottom instead. Winter hikers need a minimum of 3 litres of liquid per day.

Use extra caution when handling pots in cold weather, your finger tips are less sensitive.

When cooking with foil, meat should be wrapped tightly so that the meat will brown as it comes in contact with the foil. Vegetables should be wrapped loosely so there is room for steam. Your reflector oven will work much more efficiently if it is kept clean and shiny.

A small piece of foam pad under your stove will help insulate it from the cold ground in cold weather. An old pizza pan makes a good base to prevent your fire from sinking into the snow.

Empty tennis ball cans or Pringle chip cans are good for carrying soft foods like tomatoes or pears to camp. An empty Pringles chip can is a good way of controlling the amount of junk food girls are allowed to bring on a camping trip. They can each bring one can full of "junk" which includes a can of pop.

Miscellaneous

Pails with snap-on lids (water tight) that fit under canoe seats make great coolers. Line with a towel.

Garden kneeling pads (available at Canadian Tire) make great sit-upons, extra padding on canoe seats or for kneeling on in your canoe.

Put your pajamas in your sleeping bag when doing bedroll for camp.

Shower curtain makes a good bedroll plastic.

Tying a brightly coloured string to your jackknife will make it easier to find if you drop it in the snow.

Treat It Well! Equipment Care

Cleaning your camping equipment for winter storage will take some time but the effort will pay off.

Tents

Clean any dirty areas with soap and water.

Check the tent for any tears or zipper problems and mend if necessary.

Replace any broken or weak poles and inspect the shock cord.

Remove dirt from pegs and replace broken pegs.

Return all equipment to its bag. Place a tag on the bag with the date equipment was checked and note any problems.

Coolers

Coolers should be washed and dried thoroughly.

Sprinkle baking soda in the cooler to absorb any odours.

Stoves

Empty fuel from stoves.

Release the pressure valves and lubricate the leather.

Wash all cooking surfaces and dry completely before storing.

Lanterns

Empty fuel or batteries from lanterns.

Store batteries in a cool dry place (not outside - they will freeze).

Axe and Hatchet

Oil blade.

Make sure handle is secure.

Patrol Boxes

Wash and dry patrol boxes.

Replace any damaged or missing equipment.

Although it may seem like a lot of work, proper care of your equipment will extend its camping life.

Nature's Weather Forecasters

No need to bring a radio to camp, just watch for these weather predictors:

Pine Cones - in dry weather, the scales shrivel, open up and stand out stiffly. When rain is coming the scales become pliable and tighten as they absorb moisture from the air.

Ants - build ring dikes around the entrance to their tunnels right before it rains. This activity will stop within an hour of the rain starting.

Leaves - on deciduous trees will turn bottom side up about 12 - 24 hours before a storm hits.

Birds - insect eating birds feed lower to the ground when a storm is coming, and higher up during fair weather. They are following the insects that are forced higher in fair weather updrafts.

Squirrels - red squirrels will place a pile of cones at the entrance to their nest before rain starts to fall. The bigger the pile, the longer the storm.

Hawks - gather in large numbers in the tops of trees when a storm is approaching. They are watching the increased activity of mice and other small rodents.

Camp Poncho

How To Make It:

1. Make the poncho from a blanket or fabric such as polar fleece.
2. For the main body, you need a three-foot square (this will require cutting off a strip at one end).
3. Cut a neck opening slit in the center of your poncho. Be careful not to cut it too big (should be about 11 inches).
4. Fold the left over strip that you cut from your poncho in half. The fold forms the top of the hood. Seam one side to make the back of the hood.
5. Sew a casing around the front of the hood. Run a skate lace or a piece of cord through the casing.
6. Sew the bottom of the hood to the neck opening of the poncho.
7. If desired, finish the bottom of the poncho in a blanket stitch or put a fringe on it.

Cooking With Propane

The information below has been taken from Alberta Labour, Technical and Safety Services. If you are using propane stoves please ensure that you comply with the following regulations and guidelines.

- Camping or portable propane fuelled cooking appliances are approved for **OUTDOOR USE ONLY**. Do not use stoves in tents and camping screen houses.
- Propane cylinders, regardless of size are not to be stored or used indoors. This includes single trip or non-refillable cylinders.
- No outdated cylinders are to be refilled and/or in use. They must be re-inspected and re-certified every ten years. Look for the manufacture or re-certification date on the protective collar of the cylinder.
- There are many different lengths of approved propane hoses for use with your stove. If your propane cylinder is **BELOW** your stove, the hose can be of any length to bring the propane gas safely from the outside cylinder. If the appliance and the cylinder are at the **SAME** level, the hose must be long enough to have a 10' (about 3 meters) distance between them - this does not apply to propane stoves with a side attachment that use non-refillable cylinders. The difference in these requirements is governed by the fact that propane gas is heavier than air.
- Always maintain enough clearance between hoses and a cooking appliance to prevent any heat or flame damage to the hose. Check your hose for signs of damage before use and protect your hoses and cylinders from any physical damage.
- Always check for leaks at all connections before lighting your stove. A mixture of one part dish detergent and three parts water poured over the connection will show any leaks, by bubbling, if there is a problem. Never use a match or a lighter to test for leaks.
- Ensure that your stove is on a level or stable base and that you propane tank is secure and out of way.
- Maintain safe distances from any combustible materials.

Health and **safety** are our first priority. Let's ensure we do everything within our power to teach our girls how to protect themselves and enjoy the new challenges they are faced with in our outdoor program.

Happy Camping!

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Fire Starters

Ideas for fire starters that make lighting fires at camp a lot easier. These can be made at a meeting before you go camping.

Egg cartons (cardboard) - Fill the egg carton with sawdust, lint from dryer, or cotton balls. Fill with wax. Add a loop of string if desired. To use, tear each section apart.

Rolled newspapers - Roll newspaper and tie with string. Soak in wax until saturated. Cut into smaller pieces.

Small candle stubs - Using small candle stubs, wrap in several layers of wax paper and twist both ends. Tie with string.

Pine cone starters - Using pine cones or spruce cones that are dry, dip into wax. (Add a few sparkles, place some in a clear wrapping and tie with curly ribbon. This makes an ideal gift for someone with a fireplace.)

Hunter's matches - Wrap a wooden match with soft string, (don't wrap the head of the match) and secure with a half hitch on the end. Dip into wax leaving the head of the match free.

Building Your Fire

You need three types of fuel to build your fire - TINDER, KINDLING and WOOD.

Types of Tinder

- birch bark
- resin shavings (that hard yellow stuff at the bottom of dead trees)
- punk (the dry insides of rotten tree trunks)
- pocket lint
- cotton rope or twine (not nylon)
- dry moss
- old bird nests
- dry grass
- dry crushed leaves
- old "wool" from pussy willows

To prepare your tinder, break it, roll it in your hands or cut it into small pieces. Then make a small pile.

Fuzz Stick Tinder

- Cut a dry soft wood stick into shavings, making sure the shavings stay attached to the stick.
- Stack these sticks into a teepee shape on top of some curls of birch bark.
- Light the fuzz and you will have a good blaze in a few minutes.
- Have heavier wood ready to add to the fire.

Types of Kindling

- small strips of dried wood
- pine needles
- twigs
- bark
- punk (the dry insides of rotten tree trunks)

Punk is one of the best types of kindling. You can find dry punk in wet weather by knocking away the soggy outer portions. Arrange the kindling over your tinder pile in a wigwam or log cabin pile to maximize airflow.

Preparing the Wood

The first pieces of wood that you put on your fire shouldn't be any larger in diameter than your finger. When the fire is hot enough, you can add larger pieces gradually. Always make sure that there is enough room for oxygen to keep your fire burning.

Light Your Fire

Using matches is the easiest way to start fires. They are also compact and easy to carry. Store matches in a waterproof container in your backpack, pants pocket or jacket pocket.

To Light a Match in the Wind

- Face the wind
- Cup your hands against the wind
- Hold the match with its head pointing down and towards the wind
- Strike the match with your right hand then quickly resume the cupped position

Because of the wind, the flame will burn up the matchstick, giving it something to feed on. Light tinder under kindling.

Lose your matches?

Use flashlight batteries and steel wool to light your fire. Here's how...

- Cut the wool into a ½ inch strip
- Hold the two batteries, one on top of the other as they would be in the flashlight
- Hold one end of the steel wool against the bottom of the lower battery
- Take the other end and rub it across the top battery
- After the steel wool sparks, place it next to the tinder and blow on it to start the fire.

How to Extinguish Your Fire

- Break up the fire with a stick and spread out the coals
- Keep stirring the fire, adding water until the coals are cool enough to touch
- CAUTION: Do not add too much water at one time as it may cause a sudden burst of steam that could burn bystanders.
- A fire is not out until it is cool enough to touch
- If large logs have been burning, make sure all the sparks are out
- If no water is available, dig a hole or trench. Bury all hot material and cover it with dirt at least two inches deep.

Fire Facts and Tips

Rotting wood decreases the potential energy in the wood. Dried rotten wood is flammable, but will burn very quickly and give off limited heat. Rotten wood chips make good tinder. Look for dry fuel of all types in the following places:

- under rock shelves
- in the core of an old tree stump
- on the underside of a fallen log
- on a dead softwood tree that leans to the south - the wood and bark on the underside will be dry.

Box Oven

Box Size

A fruit box, the type where the top fits over the bottom is a practical, sturdy choice.

Construction

- Take a box, with the top on, and lay on one of the long sides. Cut around three sides of the box, leaving it attached on the long side on the bottom. This will be the oven "door"
- Cover the interior and the "door" with heavy-duty foil, shiny side out. Tape in place on the outside of the box. Two layers of foil make a safer oven.
- Find a rack that fits inside the box and support the rack on four cans. Empty fruit or soup cans are excellent. There must be sufficient space between the cans for an aluminum pie plate, which will hold the charcoal.
- Devise a fastener for the door. A wire hoop on the door can be caught on a wire hook on the top of the box. An alternate method is to have the door open up, rather than down. In this case, the door would have to be held closed with a rock placed against the base of the door.

To Use The Oven

Start charcoal on the aluminum pie plate, outside the oven, using as a rule of thumb one briquette for every 45°F wanted. When the briquettes are white, place pie plate and coals in the box oven. Care must be taken when handling hot coals and plate.

After the oven has been preheated, add items to be baked. Timing is dependent on the amount of heat produced by the charcoal. If the cooking time is long, it may be necessary to add more charcoal (already started) to the oven tray.

This oven is useful for cakes and other baked goods.

Build a Quinzee

They are warm to sleep in. It's fun!

How to Start

- Mark off a circular area that is up to ten feet in diameter.
- Tramp on the snow within the circle to mix it up.
- Shovel more snow in from the outside of the circle.
- Pile the snow six feet high, finishing off in a dome (do not pack the snow down).
- Place a dozen sticks that are at least 12 inches long through the top and sides of the snow pile.
- Let the snow settle.



The Next Steps

- Start digging out the pile. Have one person work behind another. The first digs while the second clears the snow away.
- Using the sticks as markers, hollow out the pile until it is between eight and ten inches thick.
- Clear the snow down to the ground except where you plan to sleep. Leave a base of four to five inches in the sleeping area.
- Make the walls as smooth as possible.
- Make a ventilation hole in the top of the quinzee.
- Mark the outside door with a shovel, ski poles, skis, etc.

For Better Building...

- When shoveling snow into the circle, don't scoop up the snow the same way every time.
- Flip your shovel over as you throw snow onto the pile. This helps mix the snow and makes a quinzee that is better insulated.
- Take turns when digging - it's very tiring!
- When designing a door, remember that it shouldn't close too tightly. You need air to circulate.
- Don't worry about ice inside your quinzee. A thin layer develops due to condensation.

Food & Garbage Storage

What You Need

- Zip lock bags (variety of sizes to suit your needs)
- Dry bag or trash compactor bags (Dry bags can be obtained from most camping stores. Trash compactor bags are not regular garbage bags. The regular garbage bags break too easily.)
- 100 feet of nylon cord (i.e. parachute cord)
- Gloves
- Small rock or piece of wood

What To Store

Everything that has any food smell - cooking gear, eating utensils, water bottle (if it has been previously used for juice or drink crystals), food bag, contaminated clothes (food spills), all toiletries (soap, toothpaste, deodorant, shampoo) and all garbage (including used pads and tampons).

How To Store

Store items in a tree at least 100 yards from the sleeping area. The classic method is to tie a nylon cord to a small rock or piece of wood and toss it over a branch of suitable tree. The branch should be at least ten feet above the ground and large enough to support the weight of the bag.

Once the cord is over the branch, attach one end to the dry bag and hoist the bag eight feet up, leaving a space between the branch and the bag. If the bag is too heavy, wrap the cord around a small tree for leverage, and tie off on the trunk of the first tree.

IMPORTANT TIPS

Ensure that all campers are behind you when you make your first attempt to secure the cord, it may take more than one try. Use gloves to avoid cord burns.

Minimum Impact Camping An Environment Philosophy

Planning

Keep your camping group small. Remember, though, that the environment impact of a group is not necessarily related to its size. Two careless people can do far more damage than 12 careful ones. For minimum impact camping, groups should not exceed 12.

Prepare carefully and carry everything you need with you. Pre-trip discussions with the entire group are part of careful planning. The types of things you should carry with you include:

Adequate food and food supplies

Equipment such as shelter, warm clothing, washing gear, foam pads, etc.

Make sure that your group is familiar with all of the equipment before leaving on your camping trip.

Have a list of who is carrying what for quick access to certain supplies.

Traveling

Use existing trails and portages and stay within their boundaries. This will help limit contact with plants that might be unfamiliar to the novice, such as poison ivy.

If you must blaze new trails, conduct a careful study of environment implications before proceeding.

Campsites & Shelters

Use existing campsites.

Keep heavy use (soil compaction) to a confined area.

Do not overstay.

Do not expand the campsite.

Refrain from using natural materials for shelters except in emergency situations.

Refrain from landscaping the campsite.

Use natural drainage. Do not dig trenches. Use a tent with a floor and ground sheet.

Fires

Use stoves to minimize environmental impact whenever possible, and always where law and local regulation dictates. This may include areas where:

- there is a fire hazard
 - serious danger to the ecosystem exists
 - there is little or no firewood
 - the user wishes to have minimal impact
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- Keep fires small - maximum of knee high.
 - Use existing fire pits.
 - If the area has no fire pits, remove evidence of your fire after use.
 - Where the fire pit is lacking, dig to mineral soil or rock in an area away from burnable soils, mosses, roots or overhanging trees. Save sand to cover cold ashes when you leave.
 - Use only deadfall for firewood. Do not collect birch bark unless the tree is dead and fallen to the ground. The birch bark on a standing tree is a protective layer against the elements and disease (regardless of its state - i.e. "shedding" - on the tree).
 - Burn to a white ash. Retrieve non-burnables - foil, tin cans, glass, etc.

- Douse fire thoroughly. Stir ashes and surrounding area. Douse again. Remove fire scars where possible.

Human Waste

- Use existing outhouses.
- If there is no latrine, bury waste in a small shallow hole (10-15 cm, 2-4 inches deep). The hole should be well away from campsites and trails and at least 35 metres from any water source.
- Burn all toilet paper or use single ply biodegradable and bury completely.

Other Waste

- Burn it, stash it, bag it, bring it back. Remember that what is carried in must also be carried out. This includes cans, foil, plastic wrap, paper, twist ties, etc.
- Wash dishes, clothes and yourself in a dish pan - not a lake or stream. Rinse away from open water. Dump dishwater in a latrine located at least 20 metres from any shoreline.
- Use biodegradable soap.

Clean Up Other's Mistakes

- Pack out all garbage that you find. For cans, remember the "Three B's" - burn (or wash out) the contents, bash it to save room and bag it to carry out. Labels from cans should not be burned as the inks may contain toxic chemicals. Plastic should also not be burned.
- Destroy woodcraft projects found on campsites and use for firewood. In some situations, use of the structures when they are already built is reasonable.
- Eliminate unnecessary fire pits. Leave bundles of dry wood covered so that it is available in emergencies.
- Inform authorities of situations created by others that are too extensive for you to cope with.

General Courtesies & Responsibility

- You are a guest in nature's home - act accordingly.
- Respect the rights of private landowners. Obtain permission if required.
- Respect the rights of other nature enthusiasts. Be sensitive and courteous.
- Be a responsible guardian of nature. Display leadership when you know you are right in any situation that may bring harm to the environment.
- Setting examples without making judgments upon others is the most effective way of dealing with situations.
- Respect physical, cultural and historical sites and properties. These may include settlements, cemeteries, pictographs, abandoned cabins, etc.

Remember the motto: The best camper is not seen or heard and leaves no trace.