

Cold Weather Camping “MUST HAVE” List:

Always check the weather forecast when you pack and again before your leave, and always remember it can be wrong. It's most useful for deciding how warmly to dress and if there might be ANY chance of rain or wet snow. The colder or wetter, the better organized you and your pack need to be. No matter what the forecast in winter bring everything listed below.

If your scout doesn't have something below, consider adult items you might have. Better to have too much than too little, within reason. Bring options to the pack check or ask. Need we add this isn't a fashion contest.

- Warm 3 season mummy-style sleeping bag rated to 20-25 deg. minimum. Rental possible. Beefing up your mummy bag is possible: add a liner, a lightweight down summer bag, pin your parka across your chest, increase the padding under you, wear more dry clothes inside your bag, even slippers.
- 1 WARM hat that covers ears. A spare is recommended.
- 2 pr. WARM mittens or ski gloves minimum, more would be better, especially a light pair for dexterity. Gloves get wet quickly and are hard to dry out. Shelled mittens and gloves are better, but fleece is ok as second or third pair.
- 1 scarf or neck gaiter
- Long underwear top and bottom
- Insulated winter boots or high-top waterproof hiking boots worn with two pairs of warm socks (with two changes of socks). Boots with removable liners are ideal
- 3 pairs or sets of warm socks. Tip: bring a couple of plastic bags to use as liners to protect your dry change of socks if your boots are soaked. This is Craig Weeks' trick and scouts say it works.
- Insulated snow pants, or warm fleece pants with shell
- 2 fleece or sweater layers
- Winter parka that fits over other layers
- Complete change of clothes, for sleeping or emergency. A second set of synthetic long underwear is ideal, cotton is OK.
- 100% waterproof rain jacket and pants if there even a 1:1,000 chance of rain or wet snow. Big enough to fit over several layers.
- Water bottle filled with WARM drink – tang or lemonade are good
- Snack foods – Lots! High energy = high calorie. Gorp, nuts, crackers, cheese and salami, granola bars, candy.
- Other standard personal camping equipment as listed in scout handbook, p. 224.

Note: Cotton is not recommended as a material on outdoor trips, summer or winter. When cotton is dry it's fine, but when it gets wet, it loses all of its insulating properties, and is extremely hard to dry out. No cotton sweatshirts, jeans or socks. Cotton is OK for a spare pair of clothes.

Recommended but Optional Winter Gear:

- Gaiters – tubes of nylon with velcro or zippers that keep snow out of boots.
- Breathable nylon shell clothing. Trina's eternal mantra: It's impossible to keep scouts out of the snow, but it's important to keep snow off the scouts. Scouts get hot, take off their parkas, play in the snow, snow collects on their fleece, melts, and voila, there they are, all wet while winter camping, which is a big NO NO for safety and comfort. A light shell layer prevents this.
- Ski poles or hiking poles with baskets – very helpful with snowshoes when you get into one of those “awkward” situations.
- Headlamp – keeps hands free to work in the dark, or dark corners of the hut.
- Slippers or booties (luxury item)
- Earplugs for hut (adults take heed)