

## Critical Gear List – December Campout

All the scouts have been camping with the troop on several trips. This will be the first one this school year where they are required to backpack into the campsite. It is a short distance – 1 to 4 miles – but what we are trying to teach is how to properly prepare for a backpacking weekend. The scouts should continue to bring their normal camping gear. Mr. McKnight was nice enough to give a checklist out last month. The same checklist applies here with the following additional constraints.

First issue is clothing. Cotton is terrible if the weather is wet. Base layer should be completely non-cotton. Wool socks, synthetic underwear and a synthetic shirt. I know most scouts may only own blue jeans as pants. If that is all they own then make sure they have a pair of breathable rain pants. For an outer layer use a fleece jacket in lieu of that American Eagle cotton hoodie. The cotton will do them absolutely no good if it gets wet and may increase the risk of hypothermia.

1. Sleeping bag in a stuff sack. Bag should be rated for expected temperatures. Average temperatures for Fredricksburg TX in December are 50 for the high and 38 for the low with lows below freezing common.

The WRONG way! Bulky. Can't be lashed outside pack because it will unravel. Has no protection from getting wet inside or outside the pack.



Right! If you want to be even safer line the inside of the stuff sack with a plastic trash bag.



2. Water bottles – minimum 2 – preferred 3.



Sturdy hard plastic preferred



In a pinch, refill Gatorade bottles with water but don't be upset if one or more crack when dropped. It could be a 3 mile hike to the nearest water!

Note: People using a hydration pack still need to bring a water bottle. When we get water from each member for cooking nobody wants water coming out of the container you've been sucking on all day long.



3. Two flashlights – for the Kickapoo trip we had almost 100% compliance. Way to go. Small flashlights only.



Good – AA or AAA batteries



Better – hands free



NO! If the flashlight uses C or D size batteries it is too big.

4. Plastic or metal cup suitable for eating soup or making a hot drink. Must have a handle.



5. Rain jacket. Bring even if there isn't any rain in the forecast. Doubles as a wind jacket. If the chance of rain is 20% or higher then bring rain pants as well.
6. Ground pad. Sleeping bag warmth ratings are only valid if a ground pad is used. Can use a foam or inflatable ground pad or alternatively a small fleece blanket. If the ground pad is bigger than the scout's backpack it is call a MATRESS! If it requires some battery powered air pump to blow it up then it is called a MATRESS! If the scout's gear will not fit in/on his pack then the ground pad is usually one of the first things to be left behind in the trailer. Makes for an unpleasant night.
7. Backpack. The types are described in the Boy Scout Handbook. Remember that once packed the backpack needs to be one quarter to one half empty because each scout is responsible for carrying a share of the group gear such as a tent, cooking gear, food, additional water, ropes, tarps, first aid kit, toilet paper, etc. If you do not have a backpack then I may be able to provide one depending on the size of the scout.
8. Gloves or glove liners and hat for warmth.



9. Pack all additional clothing a one gallon zip lock bags for protection from rain or a leaking water bottle in the scout's pack.