

Scouting Gear

Scout Handbook

Every Scout will need a Scout Handbook (Girl/Boy specific). This can be purchased at the same location as the uniform.

The handbook should be brought to every meeting, event, and activity. It is the Scouts responsibility to look through the book and see what they can get signed off at each meeting. Our meetings are geared to assist Scouts with their requirements. Again, it is up to the individual scout to make sure an older Scout (1st class or higher) or a Scout Leader signs the requirement in their book.

Once a month we have a meeting where a scout can synchronize their handbook signoffs with Scoutbook, the official advancement system for Scouting.

Recommended Gear for Outings

Basic information about gear is given in the Scout Handbook. In most cases, running shoes and a simple backpack will work for most of our hikes. If there is a need for more specialized equipment, it will be shared before the event.

Don't rush out and buy expensive items. Come to a few events, ask other parents and Scouts what they like.

We have a few backpacks in our troop gear. If you want to try one out, ask our Quartermaster. We may also have tents, sleeping pads, or cook stoves available as well.

Some items are worth investing in. Get a good quality brand for items such as a sleeping bag, shoes, tents, and backpacks. See our recommended gear and suggested places to search for the different types of gear needed for the different events we have throughout the year.

Your scout will need the 10 Essentials+ on every outing (check your scout handbook for more details):

- Pocket Knife
- Medical Kit (a homemade kit is great)
- Extra clothing in a waterproof bag
- Insulation/Rain gear
- Hydration (Water storage and treatment)
- Emergency shelter (tent, tarp, space blanket)
- Emergency Whistle
- 50+ feet of light cord (paracord, new)
- Illumination (flashlight or headlamp)
- Nutrition (Trail food)
- Fire (matches, fire-starter, lighter, candle)
- Protection (hat, sunglasses, sunscreen, bug repellent, lip balm)
- Navigation (Map and compass)
- Toilet paper (in a ziploc bag) and poop scooper

Many of these items can be kept in a small bag in your backpack, so you always know where they are and easy to pack for each outing.

Once you have your 10 essentials you can start to look at gear for hiking, backpacking, camping, winter camping, and summer camp. Identify what items you currently have in your family equipment, the items you can obtain from the Troop gear swap, then make a list of gear you still need.

Type of Outings

There are four types of outings we do, Car Camping, Overnight Backpacking, Day Hikes, and Other Activities. They are extremely different type of experiences and can require different types of gear.

Overnight Backpacking (AKA Lightweight backpacking)

Here is a great presentation about lightweight backpacking. It was created by another Troop's former Scoutmaster, Keith Bassett. <https://seattlebsa.org/download/65/alpine/30168/thriftyandlight2022.pdf>

Mr. Bassett's Backpacking Pack List: <https://tinyurl.com/VM522EZ>

Car Camping

No-hike camping is called Car Camping. You drive to your destination, park, unload, and setup camp. This is your opportunity to bring more and heavier equipment, such as 2 burner stoves and extravagant meals. Everything you have for Backpacking can be used while car camping, you can just bring more stuff with you.

Day Hikes

Day hikes can range from 3-5 hours, and include hiking 5-10 miles. Shorter hikes (under 6 miles) require just the 10 essentials, comfortable walking shoes and day pack. We do hike in all types of weather: snow, hail, and sun; sometimes in the same trip. Check the weather and come prepared with rain gear and sunblock, no matter the forecast.

Special Events / Outings

These are unique events we do once a year. Specifics will be posted on the Scoutbook calendar detailing what scouts will need to bring for these events.

Clothing Specifics

NO COTTON! Cotton leads to hypothermia in the winter and can be clammy and heavy in summer. Stick with synthetic and wool clothing.

Wool. Warm when wet, but gets heavy when wet.

- Look at thrift stores – LOTS of it available—I like merino wool sweaters, and Pendleton shirts.
- Look for sweaters, pants, hats, shirts in wool.
- Tip: Use old stuff in the closet, from your parents, grandparents, etc. Wool doesn't wear out.

Thermo-fleece. Warm when wet, less heavy than wool, cheap

- Look at thrift stores, parent's closet
- Buy cheaply at Walmart, old navy, etc.

Rain Gear. Look for something that layers. Layers work well in the Pacific Northwest (PNW).

- Look at thrift store: waterproof breathable- check for delamination or shredded areas.
- Look at Costco: \$20 waterproof breathable - Paradox brand.
- Look at Walmart: \$20 frog toggs - raincoat and pants - Tyvek— popular with ultra lighters and hunters.
- Look online: Frog Toggs are tried and true. Dupont Tyvek suits are CSI chic, and ridiculous but fun.

- Consider: Ponchos are cheap and versatile - frog toggs - Tyvek ~\$13 - buy online— A very cheap nice poncho.
- Tip: REI Garage Sale - Good deals can be found, read the tag for the reason it was returned. “didn’t fit” but looks new is ideal.

Rain protection does wear out over time. It is much cheaper to re-waterproof garments rather than buying new ones. Niwax is a popular brand available on Amazon.

Shoes / Boots.

- Sturdy walking shoes/running/hiking shoes will work for easy day hikes under 10 miles.
- For longer and frequent hikes, hiking shoes are recommended as they will last longer on the trail than walking and running shoes, especially in our muddy and wet climate.
- Waterproof shoes are recommended. Avoid *heavy* hiking boots if you can.
- <https://scoutlife.org/outdoors/guygear/19580/hiking-boot-buying-guide/>
- Look at Craigslist / Thrift stores for youth sizes
- Look at Craigslist for specialty shoes/boots (XC Ski, Leather Hiking boots)
- Tip: REI Garage Sale – Many returns are new, and ½ to ¼ price. Clearance at end of the day, buy one get one 75 cents second pair, ½ marked price, etc.

Pants.

- Many scouts prefer the convertible pants with the zip off legs that turn into shorts.
- Tip: REI has good quality, reasonably priced youth convertible hiking pants.

Underwear/Long Underwear/Base Layer.

- No cotton underwear! Synthetic, wicking, base layer
- Costco has 32 Degree youth and adult sized base layer sets each fall/winter.
- Lightweight and easy to carry if worn or not.
- We hike and camp year round! ALWAYS bring a base layer! – We have seen hail/snow in May and hailstorms in August. (It is the PNW after all!)

T-Shirt.

- No cotton! Synthetic, wicking
- Tip: Our troop t-shirts are all synthetic and work great for a base layer.

Fleece or Synthetic sweater (insulating layer).

- Worn over the base layer and under the rain gear.
- Layers make it easy to plan for all types of weather.

Hats.

- Wide brim hat (Rain or Sun)
- Warm Beanie (Synthetic or Wool) – use for sleeping in cold weather – make sure will cover ears

Socks.

- 2 pair medium to light weight socks for hiking (Synthetic or Wool)
- 1 pair warm socks for sleeping (that makes 3 total pairs of socks for overnights!)

Shelter Specifics

Scouts typically share, 2 per tent. If you plan to purchase a tent, a 2-3 person dome tent works best for our camping and backpacking outings.

Used Tents. Set it up before buying it, even at an REI garage sale. ~ 3-4 lbs is ideal for a 1 or 2 person tent.

- Used tent - on craigslist, from other scouts, REI garage sale.
- Tip: Almost never found at thrift stores.
- Tip: Need to be careful, people sell bad tents for too much money on craigslist
- Tip: Best to buy from someone you know who is careful. If REI garage sale, remember—no returns...

Value Priced Tents. Ask if you can set it up before buying it. ~ 2-4 lbs is ideal for a 1 or 2 person tent.

- Look at Aliexpress -There are hundreds of different tents, many from the OEMs who make tents for other name brands.
- Look at REI sales or brand website sales. Annual sales can offer great prices.
- Tip: Tent parts are expensive to replace unless the brand has a lifetime warranty.

Sleeping Bag. This is the most important gear. Expect to spend \$200-\$250 for a good quality bag. This can have a big impact on comfort and experience at events. Under 3 lbs is ideal.

- Compact < 3 lbs, ***needs to fit inside backpack***
- 35 degree bag is good for summer and works for winter with a bag liner or blanket
- Mummy bag is warmer and some have pockets for a pad
- Tip: Being cold is not fun. Spend money here. Lighter bags cost more, don't buy more temperature range than you need.
- Look at Aliexpress - watch the weight - insane deals exist on sleeping bags. New -15c, 1.8kg down bag for ~\$55 shipped!!!
- Look at Amazon - watch the weight - sales are often reasonably priced. Marmot Trestles 15 degree is a good bag.
- Look at BSA – sale prices for BSA bags are ok, name brand BSA bags are nice but heavy and a little expensive.
- Tip: REI garage sale - Sleeping bags for as little as \$25, in my experience. May require cleaning, fixing tears, etc. Watch the weight!

Sleeping Pad Light, Tough, and Warm.

- Tip: The ground is VERY COLD. Use a pad. Avoid plastic inflatable pads that look like pool floats, they are quite cold.
- Buy - The blue foam pad - Walmart, amazon, everywhere. Not too tough, not too cold, nice and cheap. ~ \$10
- Consider - A Z-fold pad— Nemo makes a great one, or search “egg slot foam pad” on Aliexpress. ~\$14 -\$25 Packs smaller, warmer. Many scouts like the folding z-style pads – which can also double as a padded seat for hikes.
- Consider - Thermarest ridge rest - often on sale for ~\$25. Warm and tough, good pad.

- Consider - Inflatable pads - EBay refurbished Klymit from Manufacturer - make an offer of 30% less than listed price—they will usually accept. Good pads, fair price, pack small, a little heavy. Save money but score big comfort. ~\$30-~50
- Tip: REI garage sale - ThermaRest and Exped have lifetime warranties, or repair their pads for a reasonable fee. Failed pads are cheap at garage sales and can be sometimes found for >\$20. If it's a manufacturing failure, these companies replace for free.

Ground Cloth. For rocky ground, tarps, etc.

- Tip: You may need to lift the edges with some sticks in the ground to keep the water from running onto your ground cloth.
- Emergency - Garbage bag, split open. Not great, but will keep your pad dry from evaporation from the ground. Almost free.
- Buy - Plastic drop cloth. These can tear, but are also cheap to free if you have them around the house. Put them under your pad.
- Consider - Patio Door weather seal kit - Very lightweight, folds small. Crinkly noise. ~\$11. Ultralight hikers like these a lot.
- Tip: Tyvek house wrap - Beg some from the local construction sites / companies, or buy some from eBay. VERY tough, water resistant, cheap, breathes a bit. The gold standard for tough floors for long distance hikers. I use this and have seen rain stream under it and out the side but I was dry on top of it. Light, and tough but NOISY.

Equipment Specifics

Water Bottles.

- 32 oz wide-mouth Nalgene are best and work with water filters.
- Modern versions will withstand hot water and can be used to warm up a sleeping bag at night, in the winter.
- Scouts need 2x 32 oz bottles on hikes over 5 miles.
- Avoid heavy metal water bottles – especially on long hikes.
- 33 oz Smart Water found at the grocery store are light weight, durable, reusable, and easily replaced if lost.

Mess Kit. Should be lightweight and easy to clean.

- You will need a plate, bowl, fork, knife, long handle spoon, and cup for hot drinks.
- To go containers with a lid are a great interim solution until you find what you want.

Backpack.

- A small to midsize day pack work greats for day hikes.
- Needs to be big enough to carry 10 essentials, water, and food.
- If making hot lunch it should be big enough for a small backpacking stove and mess kit.
- For multi-day hikes you will need to invest in a backpack. Key features:
 1. Light weight – approximately 3 lbs / 30 or 50 liters
 2. Scouts should only carry 25% of body weight.

Gear Bags. Used for car camping and summer camp.

- Do not recommend “open” bags as items will fall out and get lost in transportation.
- Any large zipping duffle bag you already have around the house will work.
- Ikea blue zipper bags are great and inexpensive.

Lights.

- Headlamps are best for camping and summer camp. They are less likely to get misplaced.
- Send glow sticks with your scouts to overnight campouts.
- Scouts sometimes learn, for the first time, they are afraid of the dark – or sleeping outside- and glow sticks are an easy remedy.

Hygiene Essentials.

- Toothbrush/Toothpaste
- Backpack towels take up little space and dry quickly
- Deodorant, camp/biodegradable soap

Optional Gear

Stoves. There are a wide variety to choose from, some specific for car camping, others for backpacking. Some work better in cold weather than others, while others are safer than others. Patrols cook together and someone that has a stove will bring it for everyone to share. Stoves have several different pros and cons depending on the type of camping you prefer to do. We review the types of stoves often for several events. Hold off on buying a stove until you know what will be best fit for your preferred type of event - **and** when your scout is responsible enough to not walk away from a lit stove.

Knives. Multi-tool or locking blade knives are useful tools and appropriate to bring to scouting events. If a scout cannot confirm that it is ok to bring a fixed blade knife, they should leave it at home. All scouts are required to earn the Totin Chip and Firem’n Chit before they can use knives, axes, or build fires.

Note that knives will be confiscated if not used properly and returned to parents.

Water Filters. We have special outings where scouts will practice with different types of water filters. If multiple day hikes are of interest to your scout, a water filter would make a great holiday gift.

Dry Bag(s). Backpacks are not waterproof. Putting your sleeping bag and clothes in dry bags is a good idea for overnight trips. A great gift idea.

Tent Lamp. Inflatable solar ones are nice.

Hiking Poles. We hike in mountainous and hilly terrain, which can be slippery when wet and muddy. Hiking poles help Scouts and adults navigate through this.

Pillows. Camping pillows small and compact. This is a good example. <https://www.rei.com/product/170458/nemo-fillo-elite-luxury-pillow>. Scouts can also use their fleece jacket as a pillow.

Where to get Gear

A scout is Thrifty. Don't wait until the week of your first campout and rush to find the items. Instead, make a list of what you have, what you need, and start the search. Prioritize your purchases based on your scout and family interests. Always start by looking for used and serviceable equipment at local second hand and thrift stores. We also encourage you to come to meetings and chat with the other parents – our parents are friendly and will share their gear experiences with you!

Used Gear:

Note: Always examine your potential new and used purchases carefully. Check all seams, buckles, straps, zippers, sniff test for mold, make sure it fits BEFORE purchase. Weight can also be a factor; young hikers/campers can struggle with heavy packs and unnecessary equipment.

Superior Seconds Gear Exchange, 96 Front St S, Issaquah, WA 98027 - Great place for used outdoor gear!

Second hand/thrift stores: Goodwill, some pawn shops, Value Village

REI USED Equipment- called Garage sale, there is a garage sale section in every REI store. You need to be a member, membership is free, you just need to sign up. It allows you to buy used top quality goods. No returns, so perform a careful check of all seams, buckles, straps and zippers, sniff test for mold , make sure it fits BEFORE purchase.

New Gear:

Brick and Mortar Stores

- REI
- Walmart
- Target
- Fred Meyer
- Big Five Sporting Goods
- Dicks Sporting Goods
- Outdoor Research - Seattle

Online Stores

- www.outdoorgeeks.com
- www.Amazon.com
- www.ebay.com
- www.aliexpress.com
- <https://www.kellykettleusa.com>
- <https://www.cabelas.com>
- <https://www.campmor.com/>
- <http://camingmaxx.com>
- <http://klymit.com>
- <http://sportsmansguide.com>
- <http://www.oldcolemanparts.com/home.php> - Repair Parts for Coleman lanterns and stoves

REI Youth section has a good selection of Youth hiking pants.

Big Five usually have the best prices on shoes.

Aliexpress is a great place to purchase Top brands or similar at a large discount. However, it can take 3+ weeks to receive your purchase. Plan ahead!