

## What is Cub Scout Family Camping?

Family camping is an important part of the Cub Scout Pack program. Each year most packs participate in at least one pack overnight campout and usually several council or district family camping events. Cub Scout camping is a family event. That means that everyone in your entire family including siblings is welcome. Regardless of the type of camping event, with Cub Scout camping you can always count on having bathroom facilities, clean fresh water and a safe camping environment for the entire family.

**Pack overnight campouts** – These are pack-organized overnight camping activities involving more than one family from our pack. These must be conducted at council approved locations with a planned age-appropriate scouting activities or program. These are typically “entry level” camping experiences where it is expected that we have many cub scouts and families camping for the first time. At these events, the pack volunteers and parents typically plan and prepare meals together for the entire pack. We also have volunteers assist with the cleanup and other camp duties including assisting less experienced campers with preparing and setting up their camping equipment.

**Council or District camping events** – These are organized by the local council or district and often held at Boy Scout camps, special event locations and any council or district selected location. These events often offer special activities that are not typically available to a single pack, in addition to, meals being planned, prepared and served to you. Of course, they typically charge per person for these events. There are several of these events planned or approved throughout the year by our council and district.

Of course, if you really do not want to camp overnight; you are always welcome to just “day camp” and attend the daily events. Overnight camping is totally optional. If you are interested in camping but don’t have any experience, feel free to arrive on Saturday, observe, participate and enjoy. You can decide to stay or leave at any time. Many times families will arrive early on Saturday morning and only camp one night to help avoid having to set camp up in the dark on Friday evening. Use your own good judgment and experience level in deciding what is right for you and your family. Regardless of when you arrive, you can always count on having fun and getting assistance from other experienced camping families in the pack. All you have to do is ask.

## HEALTH, SAFETY AND PREPARATION

As with all scouting activities proper preparation, planning and a few rules will help ensure that every event is fun, safe and enjoyable for everyone. We have BSA approved health, safety and youth protection guidelines that apply at all scouting events. All youth participants including siblings and relatives must be supervised at all times by a parent, guardian or parent specified adult (This requires a special form).

### Training and Information on Policies

We highly recommend that all parents familiarize themselves with all of these policies by taking the free online training courses available at [MyScouting.org](https://www.myscouting.org). This will better help you understand the rules and policies that all must follow when camping safely with the pack. This is especially important with our Youth Protection Policies since they govern many of the practices we all must follow while camping. Remember, every pack member is responsible for being familiar with and following the BSA approved policies and procedures during ALL pack events. No excuses!

### More Training

If you really want to learn more about Cub Scout camping, you can take the Basic Leader Outdoor Orientation (BALOO) course when it is offered throughout the year. This one day course will teach you camping skills, planning and familiarize you with the policies that we all must follow. There is an even more comprehensive camping course available for Webelos leaders and parents. You can check with the pack trainer, camping coordinator, council website, or the Cubmaster for more information on any of these courses.

## WHAT DO I BRING?

While what you want to bring on a family campout depends on you and the particular event; for the enjoyment and safety of all participants, there are several things we should **NOT** bring on a Scouting camping event.

- ◆ Alcoholic Beverages - Beer, Wine and Alcohol are never allowed on any scouting event
- ◆ Fireworks, Firearms or Weapons of any type - This includes toys. Please no play guns, swords and knives.
- ◆ Tobacco – While smoking and tobacco use is permitted at many of the facilities we use; smoking and tobacco products are not permitted in the campsite or any location where you may be observed using tobacco by a Scout.
- ◆ Gasoline or liquid fueled stoves - Scouting rules prohibit the use of gasoline or liquid fueled stoves unless specifically required for high adventure outings.
- ◆ No RV's or campers
- ◆ No gasoline powered generators

- ◆ No mini-bikes, motorcycles, go-karts or 4-wheeler off road vehicles
- ◆ Non-folding sheath knives - Sheath knives are never appropriate for Cub Scouts to use or carry
- ◆ Portable or personal electronic games, iPods, televisions or stereo devices - Please limit your electronic devices to cell phones and try to be courteous to our fellow campers.
- ◆ Pets - While we all love our pets, it is best that we do not bring them camping with us.
- ◆ Please no open toe shoes, sandals or crocs except in shower areas - These do not protect your feet well enough for hiking or camping activities.
- ◆ Please no camouflage clothing - While this type of clothing is great for playing hide and seek, it makes it difficult to find the boys afterwards should they wander off.

## SO, REALLY WHAT DO I BRING?

Well, what do we need to bring on a campout? Of course, you will need your own personal camping gear. If you do not have gear yet; the Camping Coordinator, Den Leader or Cubmaster may be able to assist you in finding some to borrow. Nothing beats having your own gear and knowing how to use it. Remember, there are some situations and policies that may require you to have multiple tents when bringing guests or having extended family camping with you. So, plan ahead. If you are inexperienced don't be afraid to ask for assistance before you buy your gear and then ask for help before you use it for the first time. Nothing takes the fun out of a great campout than being frustrated or damaging your gear while learning how to set up camp. If possible, set up your gear at home in the back yard for a trial run first.

Depending on the campout type, season and planned activities, your gear needs can vary greatly. When selecting, purchasing and packing items for camping it is best to consider the following tips:

- ◆ Avoid aerosol types of anything. These are typically flammable, spray accidentally when packed and improperly closed and often end up in the eyes cub scouts that are attempting to spray themselves or others.
- ◆ Avoid large bottles of insect repellent. Insect repellent tends to be oily and leak easily if not closed properly. Your best bet is the personal wipes available in many brands. These don't leak, can be easily carried anywhere and even the smallest scout can use them. Also, be aware of and careful of the DEET percentage in the product since sometimes there are allergic reactions or issues when used with children.
- ◆ Pack as light as possible. Feel free to purchase the large economy size but repack and bring what you will realistically need for this trip. It has been my experience that if it can get ruined on a campout it will. So carry only the amount you need for this trip. It saves you nothing if you have to carry it in and it gets soggy, contaminated or leaks all over your gear.
- ◆ As a Cub Scout Pack, we will not be camping far from civilization. Remember that you live in Florida where it seldom gets colder than 40 degrees. You should definitely consider that when selecting appropriate types and sizes of items such as first aid kits, drinking water containers and much of your camping equipment. Big all-inclusive first-aid kits are heavy and seldom if ever used since you're so close to civilization. Large water containers are too heavy for many to lift. Lightweight mummy sleeping bags may seem like a good investment but they are typically expensive and not the most comfortable to sleep in if it is rated for 20 degrees and the weather is 70 degrees and raining. You should consider and purchase your gear for the types of camping you're most likely and frequently going to do.
- ◆ Don't forget to pack some personal hygiene products like toilet paper or baby wipes. You can find a small personal or travel roll of toilet paper or travel wipes at many stores. This is perfect for that one time when someone beat you to the bathroom and used it all. Unscented baby wipes and hand sanitizer are your friend for cleaning up after meals, etc. Remember, insects are attracted to sweet smells so unscented anything is better than floral or sweet scents.
- ◆ Big flashlights may be nice and indestructible but they usually run on and quickly consume heavy large D-Cell batteries. So, now you are not only carrying a heavy flash light, but also an even heavier supply of replacement batteries. On top of that, they are next to impossible to use to when trying to single handedly (or with your sons help) set up a tent in the dark. Not to mention that they are quite expensive to replace when your son decides to see if the fish in the lake are sleeping with their eyes open and loses his grip. While regular LED flashlights are nice and bright and remedy the battery situation, they too often fail the midnight run to the latrine test that usually ends up with someone losing a flashlight or having to retrieve it from the most undesirable locations. So, what's the solution... the new hands-free headband LED flashlights. Not only will your Cub Scout love playing with it, he can't lose it since it is attached. Besides, you can now have both hands free to put that tent up even with his help.

- ◆ Your Cub Scout can sleep all night anywhere on a rock with sticks poking him and jump up ready to go in the morning; but, you as a parent can't. Family camping it is no fun if you the parent are miserable, wet, cold or were unable to sleep all night because you were uncomfortable. So, feel free to bring that nice cushy but hopefully lightweight air mattress and an extra lightweight fleece blanket. In fact, I find it is much more comfortable camping in Florida to sleep using a sheet and a couple of lightweight fleece blankets rather than a sleeping bag.
- ◆ Lastly, remember to pack in a waterproof pack or container and to pack a nice dry poncho or raincoat for you. This is Florida and while your son can run around in a garbage bag and stay dry, you cannot. There is nothing more miserable than being wet, muddy and cold on a rainy weekend campout. So remember if Mom and Dad aren't happy then nobody is going to be happy.

Remember, the whole purpose of the Family campout is to have fun. That means that you will want to be as comfortable as possible without having to have an entire herd of pack animals to help pack your gear in. Many camps have restrictions on vehicles in camp, so you may have to carry in your gear. Plan ahead and Be Prepared!

## FINALLY, A CHECK LIST

The following items are always useful or necessary on a family campout regardless of whether it is a council or district event or a pack event:

### Shelter – Pack in a waterproof tote box that can be used as dry gear storage

- Tent with the correct poles and stakes – Sorry no RV's or campers
- Appropriately sized ground cloth for tent (tarp or plastic)
- Battery powered lantern or lamp with extra batteries
- Battery powered fan with extra batteries

### Bedding - Keep it simple, comfortable and DRY

- Air mattress & pump - Pads work for kids but not too well for many adults
- Lightweight Fleece blanket (can double as pillow if not cold)
- Lightweight sleeping bag or bed roll (blanket and sheet)
- Small Pillow
- Spare large trash bag to help protect if rain expected and tent leaks

### Clothing - Pack in Ziploc bags or dry bags in pack

- Scout Uniform and extra Cub Scout T-shirt
- Change of Clothes – Season appropriate 1 per day
- Extra Socks & underwear
- Pajamas or sleep wear
- Sturdy shoes or hiking boots w/extra pair of laces
- Hat
- Lightweight Jacket or Sweatshirt
- Lightweight Poncho or rain gear
- Gloves
- Warm Jacket
- Swimwear

### Gear - Pack in a small day pack or easily carried gear bag

- Canteen or water bottle
- Headband or hands free LED flashlight with extra set of batteries
- Insect Repellent wipes (sprays get in eyes and are flammable)
- Personal Toilet paper and/or small pack of tissues
- Personal Toiletries - toothpaste, toothbrush, razor, soap, shampoo, motel sewing kit
- Personal prescription medications (notify the camp the health & safety officer)
- Reusable cup or mug
- Reusable plastic plate and eating utensils (Leave no Trace)
- Small personal first aid kit
- Sunscreen (place it in a Ziploc bag in case of leakage)
- Small unscented hand sanitizer and unscented baby wipes (optional)
- Sunglasses
- Travel sized baby powder (optional)
- Washcloth and towel
- Scout Handbook

#### Miscellaneous -

- Folding chair or stool
- Small can and bottle opener
- Extra-large heavy duty lawn & garden trash bags
- Matches in waterproof container
- Salt, pepper, sugar and creamer packets in waterproof container
- Emergency kit – string, safety pins, rubber bands, vinyl electrical tape, etc.
- Small Cooler or Ice Chest with Ice
- Small cloth or mesh gear bag

The following are typically optional items on district campouts but can be really nice to have. They may be required on pack camping events where the pack has to cook and cleanup.

#### Camp Equipment –

- Propane lantern with extra mantles & fuel
- Propane camp stove & extra fuel
- Grill or fire grate
- Self-lighting charcoal or firewood
- Bucket
- Pots, pans & cooking utensils
- Hot pads or gloves
- Griddle
- Dutch Oven
- Rain or Dining Fly
- Folding camp table
- Dish soap, scrub pads & dish clothes

The following are typically optional items on any campout but can be really nice to have when you need or want them.

#### Camp Tools –

- Small Hammer (Hand axes are not cub scout approved)
- Folding Shovel
- Small Rake
- Small Saw
- Tent Broom
- Rope or nylon cord

#### Personal Items –

- Binoculars or telescope
- Books – Religious, birding, nature, scouting, etc.
- Camera with Film or extra memory sticks & batteries
- Compass & Map
- Small fanny pack or extra day pack
- Fishing Gear – Don't forget your license!
- Group or family oriented games – Remember, no personal electronic games please.
- Personal GPS and geocache logs
- Waterproof gear bags
- Whistle

#### Personal Snacks & Food – Never know when you will need these

- Individual Crystal light or Kool-Aid packets
- Individual Instant coffee
- Individual snack cracker packs
- Trail mix or nuts and dried fruit
- Jerky

### LAST BUT NOT LEAST... SAFETY FIRST!

So, now you know what to bring there are a few rules that we must follow around camp that will definitely affect what we pack:

- ◆ Please no running or playing tag while in the campsite. There are just too many tent pegs, guys and poles that can easily foul up a good game of chase.

- ◆ With the exception of roasting marshmallows or cooking hotdogs, no sharpened sticks allowed at camp. For safety reasons, sticks should be used for fires, cooking purposes or as walking sticks only. Walking sticks and branches, twigs, etc. - used as "clubs", "spears", "swords" or used by a cub scout for playing in a camp fire can quickly turn into a trip to the camp medic or worse.
- ◆ No non-battery powered lights, lanterns, lamps or heaters allowed in any tent. No open flames allowed in any tent, rain or dining fly, pavilion or structure.
- ◆ All campfires must be attended at all times, in designated areas and follow all scouting and camp fire safety policies.
- ◆ Parents and guardians are responsible for ensuring proper supervision and behavior of their scouts while in camp and at all activities. Please ensure that if a scout is leaving the campsite under your guidance and supervision that the parent or guardian knows the location of that scout at ALL times.
- ◆ While at camp everyone follows the buddy system, leave no trace policies and practices and must follow all scouting safety, protection and camping policies, rules and regulations.
- ◆ While smoking and tobacco use is permitted at many of the facilities we use; smoking and tobacco products are not permitted in the campsite or any location where you may be observed using tobacco by a Scout.
- ◆ Please remember that when you attend a pack event you are an example and role model for not only your son but all the other Cub Scouts in the pack. It is your responsibility to conduct yourself within the principles of scouting, the scout law and ensure that you set the appropriate example.