

# OUTDOORS AT UVA

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## Gear Handbook

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## Preface

This document contains our club's rules and policies regarding the use of our gear. It provides information on how to check out gear as well as guidelines for how to properly treat gear.

Access to gear is one of the many benefits of joining Outdoors at UVA. The club owns all kinds of high-quality gear for backpacking, camping, mountain biking, rock climbing, water sports, snow sports, and much more. The club's collection of gear is meant to facilitate outdoor trips and lower the barrier to entry of adventuring outside. Our gear policy reflects what generations of officers have concluded is the most sustainable and fair way to help club members get outside. We ask for your help in ensuring the preservation and accessibility of our gear.

The following policies are designed to allow members easy access to our gear. They also exist to address safety concerns and to increase the shelf life of our gear. Our gear is very expensive, and it has taken the club decades to build up its current inventory. Prolonged improper treatment of gear can easily render much of it beyond repair, thus impeding our goal of getting people outside. We recognize that there will be normal wear and tear on our gear. However, it is the responsibility of the members (not the club officers) to maintain the condition of the gear! The guidelines in this document explain how to properly care for our gear. We ask that you reference them when checking out and returning gear.

The policies in this document are intended to apply at **all times**, unless members have arranged an exception with the officers.

Should you have any questions about information contained in this document, please feel free to contact the club's officers:  
[outdoors-officers@virginia.edu](mailto:outdoors-officers@virginia.edu).



## Checking Out Gear

As a member of the club, you gain access to thousands of dollars of high-quality gear that you can check out *for free*! We have gear for whatever your adventure needs may be.

## Gear Rooms

The officers regularly host 'Gear Rooms' throughout the semester.

These are times where we open up our gear space(s) for members to drop in and check items out. Gear rooms last approximately 30 minutes and are held every weekday during the semester. Members will be notified of the Gear Room schedule and times via email. The times do not vary week-to-week unless specifically stated. They are posted on our website under the Gear tab. The email will include directions on how to get to the Gear Room and contact information for the officer hosting it.

- You **MUST** be on time to the gear rooms. An officer will stay at the gear room only as long as people are coming by. Most gear rooms are over within 30 minutes of starting. If you think you will be late, contact the officer leading the gear room.
- If members have conflicts and cannot make any of the scheduled times, they may also contact the officers to schedule a time. Please email us a **few days in advance** from when you need the gear.
- Simply show up at a scheduled gear room and choose the gear that you need to check out. At the gear room, we will record the items that you are checking out.
- We do not have regular gear room times during summer or other school breaks. Email the officers a **few days in advance** to schedule a time to meet. Members wanting to check out gear for extended periods (such as the entire summer) will be responsible (at their own expense) for returning the gear in as-good or better condition than when they checked it out. Email the officers to request to check out gear in this manner.



## Where to Check Out Gear

Currently, Outdoors at UVA has 3 different locations where we store different types of gear. The list below details what gear is kept in which location.

## The Gear Room on Leake Drive

The Gear Room on Leake Drive is our primary gear storage space. It was kindly given to us by UVA Facilities Management and is located in one of their buildings. We ask that you please be respectful of Facilities Management employees whenever you are around the Gear Room.

### Items in the Gear Room:

- Backpacking and Camping Gear
  - Backpacks + rain covers
  - Tents + ground tarps
  - Sleeping bags and pads
  - Trekking poles
  - Headlamps
  - Water filters
- First Aid Kits
- Cooking equipment (pots, pans, and stoves<sup>1</sup>)
- Hammocks and hammock-camping equipment
  - Underquilts
  - rainflys
- Cross country skis, poles, and boots
- Snowshoes
- Trail maintenance/service tools
- Club merchandise
- Caving helmets, headlamps, gloves, knee pads, and backpacks
- Climbing gear
  - Ropes
  - Crash pads (bouldering)
  - Quickdraws & alpine draws
  - Belay devices
  - Climbing shoes (several pairs for all sizes)
  - Carabiners (locking and non-locking)
  - Climbing helmets
  - Climbing harnesses
  - Traditional climbing protection
  - Additional miscellaneous climbing gear (accessory cord, prussiks, etc.)
- Guidebooks/maps for Virginia and West Virginia

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<sup>1</sup> Some stoves and stove gases are kept in different locations. Please see the "Special Note on Stoves and Fuel" for more information.



## Directions to the Gear Room on Leake Drive

Many people have trouble finding the gear room on their first visit.

If you cannot find it after following the directions below, simply call/text the officer who is hosting the gear room. They can help guide you.

1. Starting from Echols dorm (part of Old Dorms), walk westward on McCormick Road towards O'Hill Dining Hall.
2. Turn right on the intersection of McCormick/Alderman to get onto Alderman Road.
3. Turn left onto Leake Drive.
4. Walk straight, **all the way to the end of the road**, until you arrive at the very last building (there's a forest right behind the building).
5. Go around the left side of the building and up the stairs.
6. Go through the door and walk to the back of the room.

## The Whitewater Locker

The club owns two large shipping containers known as 'The Whitewater Locker' where we keep all of the water sports equipment. The containers are located in the parking lot of Carruther's Hall and can only be opened by the current whitewater advisors and gearmasters in the club.

If you want to check out any gear from the Whitewater Locker, you must email the officers or whitewater advisors a **few days in advance**. The subject of your email should be 'Water Sports Gear Rental Request,' and you should include your name, phone number, and email address.

### Items in the Whitewater Locker:

- Kayaks
- Rafts
- Dry suits
- Dry tops
- Cam straps
- Kayak skirts
- Dry bags
- PFDs
- Paddles
- Helmets
- Wetsuits



## The Outdoors Club House: The Shred Shack

Many of the club's officers and members live together in a castle off-Grounds. **The address for the Shred Shack is 116 Washington Avenue.**

If you want to check out any of this gear, you must email the officers a **few days in advance**. The subject of your email should be 'Shred Shack Gear Rental Request,' and you should include your name, phone number, and computing ID.

### Items at the Shred Shack:

- Mountain bikes
- Commuter bikes
- Bike repair supplies
- Bike helmets
- Bike racks (for storage and for cars)
- Canoes
- SUPs (Inflatable Stand-Up Paddleboards)
- SUP/Canoe paddles
- SUP pumps

## Gear Inventory

On our website, [www.outdoorsatuva.org](http://www.outdoorsatuva.org), members can find a detailed inventory of all the club's gear. Please reference it [here](#) to see what gear the club owns and to see what gear is available for checkout.

## General Gear Policies

**\*\*Note: The officers can refuse to check out gear to members if they feel that the system is being abused or if there are serious safety concerns.**

- **YOU** are responsible for the gear that you check out including its use, care, and condition upon return. If gear that is checked out to you becomes damaged or goes missing under any circumstances, you are the responsible party.



- Gear may only be used for activities that align with the club's mission. **We do not allow the use of our gear for things like camping out for football or basketball games.** Any gear checked out must be used for an "outdoorsy" trip
- Each member may check out *personal* gear (e.g. sleeping bag, pad, backpack) for themselves AND **one** non-member friend. Tents do not count.
- Official club trips have priority on club gear. A member may NOT borrow gear that has already been reserved for a club trip. Trip leaders may check out as much gear as they need for their trip
- Gear is to be checked out in YOUR name. This means YOU are fully responsible for it the moment it leaves our gear room. YOU are responsible for maintaining the condition of any gear that you check out. Strive to return it in better condition than you found it
- Gear may be checked out for **one week** (7 days) at a time unless other permission is obtained from the officers

## Renewing Gear

You may request a renewal of gear by going to the gear room or contacting the officers. Please understand that your request may not be granted, depending on the demand for the gear.

## Returning Gear

Gear is considered to be returned only when YOU have personally turned it into an **officer** at a gear room.

- To return gear, bring it back to the gear room promptly after your trip.
- **YOU must turn in what you checked out.** Giving your gear to other friends is strongly discouraged. The trend of people passing gear onto other club members/friends without letting the officers know has historically cost the club thousands of dollars in lost gear. If the officers notice someone doing this





repeatedly without good reason, his/her ability to check out gear in the future may be compromised.

- If you are a trip leader and have checked out gear for your attendees, please make sure to gather all the gear **at the end of the trip**. Remember: your name, your responsibility.
- The officer to whom you are returning the gear must consider the item(s) to be in reasonable condition relative to the condition it was in upon check out. Gear must be clean and dry upon return. Specific instructions for cleaning gear are included later in this document.

## Overdue Gear

- One week after you check out your gear, you will get a reminder email.
- Two weeks after check out, you will not be able to check out more gear until the initial gear is returned.
- 30 days after check-out will result in the gear being considered missing/stolen. You will lose trip privileges until we have the gear back or a replacement. We will request the money necessary for the gear replacement. Failure to respond within a week to contact attempts at this point will result in more drastic measures (potentially an Honor Code Violation via the Honor Council). If you need to renew or return gear and cannot attend any of the scheduled gear room times, you can email the officers ([outdoors-officers@virginia.edu](mailto:outdoors-officers@virginia.edu)) for assistance.

## Missing Gear

- Replace or pay an Officer the replacement cost of the lost gear (often 70% of current retail value). Some gear must be purchased new to be considered replaced, like climbing gear. Members may also conduct a gear-related service project for the club if replacement is not financially feasible. Please confer with an Officer about specific gear replacement requirements before purchasing.



- You may pay the replacement cost online via our Donation Page PayPal link. Please notify a Gear Officer of the transaction if choosing this option.
- If you are due for a reimbursement (ex. gas or dues), the payment you owe for the gear can be deducted from your reimbursement
- The club will assume the expense of gear lost or broken through "intended use" (ex. Lost a frisbee in the woods). Officers reserve the right to define "intended use" for items.

## **Damaged or Broken Gear**

- You may repair broken gear, as long as it still holds up to safety standards. A Gear Officer will check and approve any repair. A Gear Officer may request a repaired gear item be replaced instead, if there is a safety concern with the repair.
- You may also replace or pay an Officer the replacement cost of the lost gear (often 70% of current retail value). Some gear must be purchased new to be considered replaced, like climbing gear. Members may also conduct a gear-related service project for the club if replacement is not financially feasible. Please confer with an Officer about specific gear replacement requirements before purchasing.
- You may pay the replacement cost online via our Donation Page PayPal link. Please notify a Gear Officer of the transaction if choosing this option.
- If you are due for a reimbursement (ex. gas or dues), the payment you owe for the gear can be deducted from your reimbursement
- The club will assume the expense of gear lost or broken through "intended use" (ex. Crashed a mountain bike on a trip and broke a part, fell while climbing and broke a helmet) "or due wear and tear" (ex. A seam on an older tent coming undone as opposed to ripping a seam on a newer tent). Officers reserve the right to define "intended use" and "due wear and tear" for items.



## **Abandoned Personal Gear**

Outdoors at UVA is not responsible for the loss or damage of any personal gear returned to the gear room. As a courtesy, we will hold lost gear for up to one week, after which it will be deemed abandoned property and subsequently disposed of or incorporated into our gear. In order to claim abandoned gear within the grace period, email [outdoors-officers@virginia.edu](mailto:outdoors-officers@virginia.edu) with a detailed description of the lost item. Reclaimed personal gear may be picked up at a regularly scheduled gear room.



## **Gear Checkout Guidelines**

### **Climbing Gear**

- Members may check out personal gear (harness, shoes, helmet, belay device).
- Approved members who wish to check out ropes, draws, trad protection, and other technical gear must contact the Climbing Advisor(s) first and receive permission before checking these items out (or are leading a trip that has already been approved on the website).
- Members may only check out bouldering crash pads for personal use 2 times per semester.

### **Whitewater/Watersports Gear**

- Members must contact the Whitewater Sport Advisor(s) to gain approval before checking out kayaks or rafts.
- Members may only check out stand-up paddleboards for personal use 2 times per semester.
- Members may only check out rafts for personal use 2 times per semester.
- It is recommended that every member of a trip has a life jacket on their craft and knows the boating guidelines of the area.

### **Bikes**

- Our mountain bikes are NOT for commuting. If you are found commuting with our bikes, you jeopardize your ability to check out bikes again in the future.



## Gear Treatment Guidelines

Members should always strive to return gear in better condition than it was upon checkout. Bottom line: Show our gear the love it deserves by treating it with the utmost respect.

The officers have devised a set of treatment guidelines for all of our gear. Please reference these guidelines when checking out/returning gear.

## Backpacking/Camping Equipment

### Tents<sup>2</sup>

*Before your trip:*

Practice pitching your tent to ensure you have all the stakes, guy-lines, and accessories.

*During your trip:*

Avoid leaving your tent set up in direct sunlight for extended periods of time (or leave the rainfly on over your tent since it is more UV resistant). Keep shoes outside; don't leave food or toiletries in the tent. Do not bring any pets inside.

*At the end of your trip:*

1. Shake your tent out to get rid of any dirt/debris.
2. Dry the tent as much as possible before putting it back in the bag. Drape your tent & fly over a rope or branch if you can. If you must pack up the tent in wet conditions, dry the tent out AS SOON AS YOU RETURN HOME.
3. If the tent is wet and muddy, you MUST clean the mud off and dry the tent before returning it to a gear room. Use a non-abrasive sponge, cold water, and a non-detergent soap. Do not use anything scented because it can ruin the tent's water-repellent coating.
4. Roll up your tent rather than stuffing it like a sleeping bag.

### Sleeping Bags<sup>3</sup>

*Storing your sleeping bag:*

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.rei.com/learn/expert-advice/caring-tent.html>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.rei.com/learn/expert-advice/caring-sleeping-bag.html>



Never store your bag inside its stuff sack! The longer you compress the insulation, the more loft it loses. You can use a stuff sack on the trail, but the minute you get home, take it out. Give it a good shake to fluff up the fill material, then store it in a cool, dry place. Spread it out under your bed, hang it in a closet, or put it in a big, breathable storage bag (often provided by the manufacturer).

*During your trip:*

Protect your bag from exposure to dirt/rocks by using a sleeping pad. Air out your sleeping bag daily.

*At the end of your trip:*

1. Dry your sleeping bag before stuffing it into a stuff sack.
2. To stuff it, start with the foot of the sleeping bag. Make sure the zipper is partially closed. Push the foot of the bag firmly into the bottom of the stuff sack and stuff evenly as you go. This releases air & makes it easier to stuff.
3. Spot clean the dirt/sand off of your sleeping bag! Use non-detergent soap and water with a gentle towel, sponge, toothbrush, or even your bare hands. By holding the shell or liner fabric away from the insulation, you can wash the area without getting the inside too wet. Avoid using too much soap and rinse when finished.
4. If the sleeping bag cannot be spot cleaned and needs a full wash, follow guidelines available on the tag of the sleeping bag. Specific detergents and washing machine settings are usually mandatory, especially for our down-filled bags. If you are unsure of how to wash your bag, you can reach out to the officers via email ([outdoors-officers@virginia.edu](mailto:outdoors-officers@virginia.edu)).

## Backpack Care

*Wear and tear is inevitable but taking care of your backpack can increase its lifetime. Here are some general tips:*

1. Use a trash bag/contractor bag to line the inside of your pack. This protects the pack and keeps your gear inside dry.
2. Wipe down your backpack regularly with a damp cloth to minimize the buildup of dirt while camping.
3. Keep water out and dry your gear if it gets wet.



4. Pack sensibly. Pack anything that may damage the bag (e.g. poles, knives, any sharp edges) in a way won't pierce through the material.
5. There are many different opinions about how to pack a rucksack. [Here is a general guide.](#)
6. Spot clean the mud off your pack.

## Caving Equipment

### Headlamps

1. Remove the batteries as soon as possible after the trip
2. Wash the headlamp with bleach and/or soap
3. Dry the headlamp thoroughly before replacing the batteries, if the headlamp is not dry it will get corroded and stop working.

### Helmets, Gloves, and Kneepads

1. Rinse all gear with water.
2. Scrub all the mud and dirt off.
3. Wash gear thoroughly with bleach and/or soap, as appropriate
  - o This is vital to prevent the spread of White Nose Syndrome<sup>4</sup>, a devastating bat disease!
4. Set it out to dry. Gear must be returned clean and dry.

**\*\*Note:** You should also wash your personal gear (backpack, clothing, boots, etc.) in the same fashion.

## Climbing Equipment

Make sure to keep all gear off the ground while climbing at the crag. It should either be on your harness or in/on a bag at all times.

*When returning from a trip:*

1. Make sure every piece of gear is clean of dirt and grime. If a rope is dirty, let the climbing advisor or gear room officer know instead of cleaning it yourself.
2. Connect all quickdraws (to a sling and/or to one another) before returning a set.
3. Remove all dirt and sticks from the rope bag.
4. Flake or coil ropes into their bags.
5. If gear gets wet, ensure that it dries completely before packing it back into a bag and/or returning it to the gear room. Do not let gear dry in direct sunlight.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.whitenosesyndrome.org/>



6. Take note of any damage or wear (beyond usual wear) to any gear and report it to the gear room officer and/or climbing advisor. This includes large falls on a rope, dropping hard gear, soft gear being left in the sun, etc. If something happens and you aren't sure if it's beyond usual wear and tear, stay on the cautious side and let us know.

## Whitewater Equipment

### Kayaks & Canoes

Make sure there isn't too much dirt or sand on the boat, especially on the inside. Spray down and rinse out the boat as needed.

### Skirts, Helmets, Life Jackets, Dry Tops/Pants/Suits

All gear should be dirt/sand-free and returned **DRY**. Lay all wet gear outside *immediately* after your trip to prevent mildew. Make sure to empty any trash from life jacket pockets.

### Rafts/SUPs

Upon return, SUPs and rafts should be dry, dirt-free, and folded back in their appropriate bags. Make sure to include the pump, fins, and associated gear in the bag. Do not use spray sunscreen or other aerosol products around rafts or SUPs as this can damage them.

## Mountain Bikes

### Bike Use

- Treat bikes gently when handling them; try to avoid scratching the frame or paint.
- When laying bikes down, make sure to lay them with the chain facing up. This protects the drivetrain.
- When riding, shift gears **ONLY** while pedaling. Otherwise you risk an abrupt gear shift that can break a part of the drivetrain.
- When riding, if you begin to feel a large resistance in your pedal strokes and hear unusual sounds (aside from any normal gear shifting), **STOP IMMEDIATELY**. DO NOT try to pedal through it. If you continue pedaling, you risk breaking the chain or another component of the bike. Dismount the bike and try to see if anything is out of the ordinary, such as the chain. If you're on trail, attempt to fix the issue if you can, or walk





the bike out if you can't. As soon you can, contact the officers about the issue if it persists.

## Bike Storage

- Bikes **MUST** be stored inside to protect them from rain damage.
- Bikes **MUST** be stored in a secure location (e.g. inside a house with **locked** doors) or locked securely to something if there is nowhere safe to leave it alone **for any period of time**. The club provides sturdy locks that you can check out.

## Broken/Damaged Bikes

- Contact the officers if you have questions about bike repair and maintenance.
- If you break a bike or part, you **MUST** replace it. If you choose to have the repair done yourself, you should do so by the time the gear is due (we may allow extensions for this).
- The biking advisors may also decide to repair the bike(s). In this case, you may have to pay for the required parts or shop labor fees. Our goal is to have the bike in usable condition available to others as soon as possible.

## Bike Return Guidelines

- Wipe off any excess dirt/grime before returning the bike.
- If you had any mechanical issues with the bike while it was checked out, inform the officers when you return the bike.

**If you have any questions about how to use or maintain gear, email the officers! Keep in mind that failure to adhere to any of the above guidelines may jeopardize your ability to check out gear in the future.**