

## Troop 2019 Cold Weather Camping “Secrets”

**C** keep yourself and your clothes Clean

**O** avoid Overheating

**L** wear clothes Loose and in Layers

**D** keep Dry

The hints listed below are in a random manner. There is no order of importance to the list, just some suggestions that have proven true over the years.

### CLOTHING

1. Layer your clothing. Wear several layers of lighter clothing instead of one heavy layer. This way you can better regulate the amount of insulation. When you get warm, take layers off. Getting chilly? Add some more clothing.
2. Keep yourself dry, both from the weather and perspiration.
3. Wear loose fitting clothing, to optimize insulation.
4. Remember when buying clothes for cold weather, wool retains most of its insulation properties when wet, while cotton loses most of its.
5. There are excellent man-made fibers that retain their insulation properties as good as or better than wool. Other benefits include light weight, wide design options & wind-blocking.
6. Rain gear is water proof AND will not allow perspiration to exit (SEE #2). During rainy weather change your clothing several times a day.
7. Athletic shoes and nylon hiking boots do not provide enough insulation. Wear either water-proofed leather hiking boots, rubber overshoes or rubberized boots.
8. Waterproof your leather hiking boots with the appropriate commercial treatment. Use only silicon-based products on leathers which require it. Check the care tag that came with the boots.
9. If you choose to wear rubberized boots, remember they do not allow for ventilation, therefore you will need to change your socks several times a day (SEE #2). You may want to get some felt inserts for insulation.
10. Wear a pair of cotton AND a pair of wool socks to increase insulation and wick perspiration away from your feet.
11. Wear mittens instead of fingered gloves when you do not need independent use of your fingers. Mittens allow fingers to help keep each other warm. Use a pair of socks to cover hands if mittens get wet.
12. Wear a stocking cap or other warm hat: one that covers the ears and neck area is particularly effective. Heat loss happens through exposed skin of which your head is about 10%. So wearing warm head gear is a must when it's cold and windy.
13. A scarf reduces heat loss around the neck. Alternatively, a “ski mask” or baklava offers protection from the cold and wind on your face.
14. If you need a fire to keep you warm, you are not dressed properly If heat can get to your body, so can the cold.

## BEDDING DOWN

1. Natural fiber sleeping bags do not maintain their insulation properties when damp, down bags also fit here. A 3 to 4-pound synthetic bag will take care of most of your needs.
2. A mummy style bag is warmer than a rectangular, as there is less space for your body to heat. Also, most mummy bags have a hood to help protect your head.
3. If you only have a rectangular sleeping bag, bring an extra blanket to pack around your shoulders in the opening to keep air from getting in.
4. Do not sleep with your head under the covers. Doing so will increase the humidity in the bag that will reduce the insulation properties of the bag and increase dampness.
5. Remember to air out your sleeping bag and tent, when weather permits. Perspiration and breath condense in the tent at night and the water will reduce insulating properties of your bag.
6. Wear a stocking cap to bed in order to reduce heat loss.
7. Wear a loose-fitting hooded pullover type sweatshirt to sleep in.
8. A bag liner... purchased or made from an old blanket, preferably wool, will greatly enhance the bags warmth.
9. Insulate yourself from the ground as much as possible to avoid cold spots at the shoulders and hips. Use a sleeping pad of closed cell foam instead of an air mattress. A good rule of thumb is that you want 2 to 3 times the insulation below you as you have over you. Sleeping bag's insulation becomes compressed and is not as effective below you.
10. Use a ground cloth to keep ground moisture from your bag. Your body will warm up frozen ground to a point where moisture can become important.
11. Space blankets, if used as a ground cloth, will not reflect the body heat. Instead it will conduct the cold from the ground to your body.
12. Cold air will be above and below you if you sleep on a cot.
13. Put a hand warmer (in a sock) at the foot of your sleeping bag before getting into it. Or, fill a canteen with hot water (not boiling) and place at foot of bag to keep warm. Be careful with plastic canteens.
14. Exercise before bedding down to increase body heat. This will help to warm your bag quicker. Be careful not to start perspiring.
15. Remove the clothes you are wearing before bedding down if they are damp with perspiration. Put on dry clothing or pajamas before entering the sleeping bag.
16. Never store your sleeping bag compressed. Hang it up, lay it out, or use a very large stuff bag between trips so the filling will not compress and lose its insulating properties.
17. Before you get out of bed bring the clothes you plan to wear inside your bag and warm them up some before dressing.

## ODDS AND ENDS

1. If at night you get cold, let the leadership know so action can be taken before injury from cold weather health problems occur. In other words, it's better to be kidded about forgetting your sleeping bag than risking hypothermia. If shivering does not go away after 10-15 minutes in your sleeping bag, seek help and warmth. It will not get better.
2. Organization and proper preparation is very important in cold weather camping. Good meals, proper shelter and comfortable sleeping arrangements make for an enjoyable outing.
3. Drink 2 quarts of fluids per day besides what you drink at meals. Cold reduces your thirst feeling but you are still becoming dehydrated through exertion and dry air.
4. Learn to recognize and treat cold weather health problems. These include frostbite, hypothermia, dehydration, chilblains, trench foot, snow blindness and carbon monoxide poisoning.
5. Use the buddy system to check each other for cold weather health problems. Notify the leadership if symptoms do occur.
6. If you feel cold gather some wood or do some other type of work. Working will help warm you.
7. No open flames (candles, matches, etc.) inside the tents. It consumes the oxygen and is a fire hazard.
8. Wiggling your toes inside your boots will help keep feet warm. If your feet get cold, they are not insulated well or your body is conserving heat in it's core. Speak to the leadership.
9. Use fuel hand warmers. They are cheap and easy to use. They double as foot warmers, too!
10. It takes longer to cook food in cold weather, so plan accordingly. Before going to bed pour enough water for breakfast into a pot. It is easier to heat the pot than a plastic water can.
11. Keep matches in a metal match safe as plastic can freeze and break if dropped.
12. Gather twice as much fuel as you think you'll need for fires.
13. Gather wood and tinder for the morning fire in the evening so that you will be able to start the fire quickly in the morning.
14. Carry extra plastic bags in cold weather. They can be used as personal wind shields and ponchos by slitting a hole in the top for your head to go through.
15. Flashlight batteries are affected by cold. You can revive a dead battery by warming it up near the fire.
16. You may want to take a bottle of propane into your tent with you at night. This will keep it warmer and make it easier to light your stove for breakfast.
17. Heaters inside your tent can lead to carbon monoxide poisoning and are NOT allowed.

## LAYERED CLOTHING SYSTEM

Select the proper type and amount of clothing. Regulate your clothing according to your activity rate. This is the most effective way to ensure comfort. Pay attention to your bodies' signals. Don't wait until you are cold to put on more clothing. Act when you first begin to feel cooler.

Clothing layers:

- UPPER:
  - Long, thermal underwear. polypropylene
  - Shirt or inner layer
  - Sweater, light jacket
  - Wind or rain gear
- LOWER
  - Inner pants wool, wool blend
  - Wind or rain pants
- FEET:
  - Wicking inner socks polypropylene
  - Insulating socks wool or wool blend
  - Boot liners insulated insoles
  - Footwear, boots waterproof, loose-fitting, mukluks or snow boots
- HEAD:
  - Head coverings
  - Neck, ears, face covering
- HANDS:
  - Gloves and mittens