

Troop 104

Camp Alaska

Guidelines, Training, Safety, and Equipment Detail

Camp Alaska is a unique opportunity for a troop to experience real winter survival. Careful preparation and education can pay off in a challenging, safe and successful outing.

Guidelines from Erie Shores Council Camping Committee for the Camp Alaska experience:

- 1) Conduct an outdoor encampment for a **twenty-four (24) hour (minimum) period** between the dates set on the Erie Shores Council Calendar. The troop/patrol should not leave the campsite or area for an outside activity.
- 2) Hold four troop meetings preparing for the Camp Alaska experience.
- 3) Before any Scout can participate, the unit leader should ensure that the Scouts participating have knowledge of:
 - a) Appropriate types of clothing, bedding and camping equipment
 - b) Cleanliness in cooking and care of the campsite
 - c) Proper practice in the care of food, menu planning, and proper sanitation
 - d) Proper types of fires and their uses
 - e) Proper skill in use of wood tools (Totin' Chip)
 - f) Proper training in cold weather first aid
- 4) Units may not use manufactured tents. They may use visqueen, tarps, or native materials.
- 5) A minimum quarter-mile pack-in is required. With the exception of their water, units may only bring what they can carry in by backpack in one trip.
- 6) Menus must be prepared and food purchased by the Scouts. Cooking should be done individually or in teams of two.
- 7) **Practice Leave-No-Trace camping, carry out what you bring in, follow the BSA Outdoor Code!**

A Note to Camp Alaska Parents

Parents are often concerned whether their son should participate in a Camp Alaska experience because of the real challenges and risks of camping in cold weather. In the end, parents are the best judge of their sons' maturity and experience level and despite the many precautions the troop takes, injuries are still a possibility. However to reduce the risk of cold weather camping to the lowest possible level, the following steps are taken:

- 1) The troop spends at least (4) meetings conducting cold weather training for winter clothing and gear, building winter fires, use of wood tools, preparing winter meals, cold weather first aid, and building shelters.
- 2) Prior to the event, a backpack inspection is performed for all first year Camp Alaska participants to ensure they will have the proper gear to stay clean, dry, and warm and have brought meals which will provide energy and won't freeze solid.
- 3) The buddy system is used at all times. Scouts check on each other, looking for cold weather injury symptoms or other issues. At least (2) adult leaders must camp out with the Scouts.
- 4) In the event of extreme weather, a decision will be made the Friday night before leaving if we will camp.

- 5) Immediately upon arrival at our camp site, a fire is built and a large bank of firewood is obtained to keep scouts warm. Parents are encouraged and always welcome to camp with the troop or visit us at any time during the campout.

General Information for All Camp Alaska Participants

- 1) Each team of boys/dads is responsible for purchasing, packing, and cooking their own food. Purchase food for (1) breakfast, (1) lunch, and (1) dinner. Parents, please help your boy and his buddy obtain and pack this food. The boys should have jointly decided upon their menus.
- 2) Keep the menu simple: dehydrated, packaged, canned goods (which can't freeze), or foods requiring only boiling water are best.
- 3) We will meet at the Camp Miakonda parking lot at 9:00 AM Saturday. Breakfast should be eaten before arriving. Have all your gear properly packed and be dressed to go into the woods immediately upon arrival at Miakonda.
- 4) Please refer to the Camp Alaska equipment list at the end of this document. The troop will provide plastic and twine for shelters. Bring plenty of socks, a stocking cap and spare gloves. All gear including food, gear, and shelter materials will be carried at least 1/4 mile to our campsite.
- 5) A backpack will be necessary for each scout to carry his equipment. If you need to borrow a backpack, please call any of the scout masters.

Training Schedule

Week # - Training Topic:

- 1) Proper types of fires and their uses, proper skill in use of wood tools. Cold weather injuries.
- 2) Cleanliness in cooking and care of the campsite, conservation and care of environment.
- 3) Proper practice in the care of food, menu planning, and proper sanitation.
- 4) Appropriate types of clothing, bedding and camping equipment, and making shelters.

Important Camp Alaska Safety Rules & Guidelines

- 1) Use the buddy system at all times. Pick a partner to build & share a shelter with and watch each other for cold weather injury symptoms.
- 2) Wear dry, loose, layered clothing. Change socks and underwear often and especially when wet. Remove clothing layers to avoid sweating. Remember the acronym "**COLD**": Clean; avoid **O**verheating; **L**oose and **L**ayered clothing; keep **D**ry.
- 3) Drink plenty of fluids. Sugary drinks are OK for quick energy.
- 4) Shelters must be made - no manufactured tents.
- 5) All gear, food, shelter materials, etc. must be carried in to your campsite in one trip a minimum of 1/4 mile. The only exception allowed is for water.
- 6) Menus must be prepared and food purchased by each Scout. Shopping and cooking can be done individually or in buddy teams.
- 7) Scouts must attend or make up (4) Troop meeting training sessions in order to participate in Camp Alaska.
- 8) No "mega-shelters" are allowed. The maximum number of Scouts in any one shelter is (3).
- 9) Scouts will remain outdoors for 24 consecutive hours.
- 10) Everything carried in to your Camp Alaska site must also be carried back out in one trip. This includes

garbage, camp tools/stoves, et

- 11) Make sure all items carried in can be securely contained within or attached to your backpack. Save all attachment ropes, straps, etc. used to bring gear in so you can re-attach them for the trek out.

Safe Winter Camping Practices

Ice Safety

- 1) Stay off the ice near or over flowing water.
- 2) Ice must be at least 4 inches thick to support weight. Leaders must be present while scouts are on ice. Have rescue gear nearby.
- 3) Know how to safely rescue someone if they fall through the ice.

Snow Safety

- 1) Do not eat ice or snow. It is not pure and can reduce body temperature.
- 2) Carry sunglasses to prevent snow blindness.
- 3) Snow (not ice) is a good insulator. Water containers are best stored under snow to keep from freezing.
- 4) In an emergency, you can dig a hole in the snow with the entrance away from the wind to protect yourself

Other

- 1) Tie all loose items to yourself or your backpack with cord or string. It is very easy to lose items in the snow.
- 2) Carry candles and waterproof matches to help keep you warm in an actual emergency. **NEVER USE LIGHTED CANDLES, LIQUID FUELS, PROPANE DEVICES, ETC. IN YOUR SHELTER UNLESS IT IS A TRUE EMERGENCY.**
- 3) Know how to find dry tinder, kindling, and fuel in snowy or wet areas.
- 4) Sweets are OK for quick energy. Foods high in fat, carbohydrates, & protein are best for long term energy.
- 5) Tight, waterproof clothing is *not* good for cold winter camping. Layered, breathable clothing is better.
- 6) Change socks and clothing regularly to reduce the loss of insulation value due to sweating and body oils.

Proper Types of Fires and Their Uses

Materials Needed to Build a Fire:

- 1) Tinder in small sealable plastic bag.
- 2) Candle
- 3) Fire starters or fuzz sticks, if available.
- 4) Waterproofed wood matches, matches in a waterproof holder, or small butane lighter.
- 5) Kindling and fuel (***get 3 times the amount you think you will need***).

Building Fires:

- 1) Find a suitable site away from the tents, and downwind from the tents, with no overhead snow packs in trees above.
- 2) Clear the ground of snow, dead leaves, branches in a 10 foot circle. Build fire on top of a logs if necessary.
- 3) Gather dry kindling and fuel. ***Get (3) times the amount of wood you think you will need.***
- 4) Use the tinder and matches you brought to start the fire. If windy, have other scouts block the wind with their bodies, ponchos or tarps.
- 5) Place wet wood near the fire to allow it to dry. Cover dry fuel with plastic to keep it dry from snow/rain.
- 6) Keep shovels, water, or sand nearby for safety.
- 7) Extinguish the fire and dispose of ashes in the proper manner.

Keys skills/knowledge:

- 1) How to keep tinder in a plastic zip lock bag and know the various ways to waterproof matches.
- 2) Discuss where to find dry tinder, kindling, and fuel in wet or snowy areas.
- 3) Know how to build a log fire lay to build fires on packed snow or ice.
- 5) Explain the importance of selecting fire building sites out of the direct wind.
- 6) Understand why fires, stoves, candles, or matches are not to be lit or burned in tents.

Proper Skill in Use of Wood Tools in Cold Weather

- 1) Ask permission to use troop tools.
- 2) Use camp saws instead of axes – wood with sap in it may freeze. Chopping it can be like chopping cement.
- 3) Hatchets and axes may be used to split the wood.
- 4) Do not overexert yourself when cutting wood. Remember to remove layers of clothing to avoid sweating.
- 5) Set up your axe yard in such a way as to keep wood off the ground when sawing. Use Circle of Safety.
- 6) Use the driest wood tinder and kindling possible – look for dead branches hanging in trees, dry (brown) pine needles, etc. Do NOT cut down live trees.
- 7) **Cut three times** the amount of wood you expect to use – the odds are you will need it.
- 8) Stack wood close to the fire to help dry it out. Keep it off the ground if possible.
- 9) Place a tarp over your wood pile to keep it dry.
- 10) Consider setting up fire watch shifts to keep the fire going all night. This will speed up morning activities and provide warmth for anyone getting cold in the night. Build fire up (to safe level) before going to bed.

Cold Weather Injuries

- 1) **Frostbite** – Happens when skin and tissue becomes cold enough to freeze. **Signs:** numbness or grayish white patches on hands, feet, nose, etc. **Prevention:** keep hands, feet and face covered at all times in extreme cold. If signs occur, treat immediately. **Treatment:** move person indoors, warm affected area with palm of hand, place under clothing next to skin. Do not rub affected area. If severe, wrap person in blanket, separate affected touching areas with gauze (fingers and toes), get medical attention immediately.
- 2) **Hypothermia** – Happens when body is losing more heat than it can create causing core temperature to drop. Can happen at temperatures well above freezing due to rain, hunger, exhaustion, being in water too long, etc. **Signs:** feeling cold and numb, tired and can't think straight, shivering, poor decisions, irritability, stumbling or unconsciousness. **Prevention:** if you get wet, change into dry clothes immediately. Put dry socks, stocking hat and clothes on before going to bed. In extreme cold situations, use heat packs in gloves and boots. **Treatment:** move person indoors, remove wet clothing and get into dry clothes, wrap in sleeping bag or blanket, drink warm liquids, place warm water bottles near armpits or groin. Call for help.

Cleanliness in Cooking, Care of Campsite, Conservation and Care of the Environment

- 1) Put leftovers in trash to be carried out. Wash empty cans or jars and take home for recycling.
- 2) Take food particles out of dish water and put in trash. Use biodegradable soap if possible (store in plastic bag in case it leaks). Wash all dishes in hot soap and water 200 feet (75 steps) from camp, stream or lake. Rinse well in second hot water container. Dispose of dishwater at least 200 feet from camp.
- 3) Wash hands with soap or use sanitizer before handling food.
- 4) For foil dinners, pack meat & vegetables in separate Ziplock containers next to “cold pack” to keep fresh
- 5) Wash all containers or utensils that have touched raw meat.
- 6) Use cook kits (plates, utensils and cups) instead of paper, plastic and Styrofoam
- 7) Follow Leave No Trace Principles:
 - Plan Ahead and Prepare
 - Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces
 - Dispose of Waste Properly
 - Leave What You Find
 - Minimize Campfire Impacts
 - Respect Wildlife
 - Be Considerate of Other Visitors

Proper Practice in Care of Food, Cold Weather Cooking, Menu Planning, and Sanitation

Cooking & Meal Selection in Cold Weather:

- 1) Keep it simple – select meals which require a minimal amount of clean up and utensils to prepare.
- 2) Avoid canned food or foods which can be difficult to thaw or cook, or may be damaged if frozen.
Examples to avoid: raw eggs; most canned foods or fruits; fresh fruit; milk; etc.
- 3) Dehydrated, instant, powdered, or dry foods are best. It is easy to heat water to rehydrate freeze dried food.
- 4) Self-heating pre-packed backpacking meals are also a good choice, but can be expensive. These can be purchased at Bass Pro, Gander Mountain, or Cabela's.
- 5) Use powdered milk and eggs if required in recipes.
- 6) Store water in snow banks (snow is a good insulator).
- 7) Keep your water close to your body to prevent freezing. Don't fill it to the top to allow for expansion.
- 8) Bring rope and a "bear bag" to store your food and hang it in the air away from raccoons or other animals.

Breakfast Suggestions:

- 1) Oatmeal packets (brown sugar)
- 2) Dry cereal with powdered milk.
- 3) Pre-cooked sausage links (cook like hot dogs)
- 4) Granola bars
- 5) Hot cocoa packets
- 6) Powdered breakfast drinks
- 7) Fresh or dried fruit

Lunch & Dinner Suggestions:

- 1) Foil meals. Cook meat and vegetables in double layered foil on hot coals for 20 minutes, turning once. See page 340 of Scout Handbook for more ideas.
- 2) Pre-foiled grilled cheese sandwiches
- 3) Instant soup mixes
- 4) Other instant meals (not containing water)
- 5) Dehydrated trail meals
- 6) Self-heating pre-packaged meals
- 7) Hot dogs (no mustard or ketchup)
- 8) Lemonade mix
- 9) Nuts, raisins, seeds (trail mixes)

Sanitation:

If no latrine is available, dig "cathole" using troop shovel at private spot at least 200 feet from campsite, water and trails. Bury all waste (paper too) 6 – 8 inches deep. Push a stick in the ground to warn others. Clean shovel if needed and return to trailer. Use hand sanitizer or soap and water after.

Appropriate Types of Clothing, Bedding and Equipment

- 1) Tight, Waterproof clothing is not good for winter camping. Multi layered, breathable clothing is better than waterproof clothing in cold weather.
- 2) Change socks and clothing regularly to reduce the loss of insulation value due to sweating and body oils.
- 3) Keep a separate set of dry (wool) socks, long underwear, long sleeve shirt, wool/synthetic “hoody” sweater and stocking cap to sleep in. Change just before getting into sack so everything is DRY.
- 4) Bring separate rain parka or hooded waterproof jacket and hat for rain/heavy snow.
- 5) Bring waterproof insulated gloves.
- 6) Boots should be waterproof and high top if possible.
- 7) In extreme cold, if you start to sweat, stop, rest and consider removing a layer or two of clothing to dry out and prevent hypothermia.
- 8) Winter sleeping bags are best if rated at 0°F degrees or lower. Your bag should be rated at 20 degrees colder than the actual temperature you expect to encounter.
- 9) A good insulated ground pad (foam or air) is strongly recommended for comfort and to reflect body heat.
- 10) Bring a ground cover to build your shelter on.
- 11) Never build a fire or light stoves inside shelters or tents for warmth.
- 12) Use coats, and other clothing not being worn at night on top of sleeping bag to add warmth.

Typical Camp Alaska Shelter

Materials needed (per team) for a 2-man lean-to or tent-style shelter:

- 1) (1) - 12' x 20' tarp or piece of heavy duty plastic (visqueen supplied by the troop)
- 2) (2) - 25' lengths of cord or rope (supplied by troop)
- 3) (8) - stones, acorns, or other hard, round, small objects (you may be able to find them at your site).
- 4) (2) - 8' x 6' tarps or ground cloths
- 5) Construction Procedures:
 - a. Find a site between (2) trees, or make (2) 4' long tent poles. Locate the shelter entry away from the prevailing winds.
 - b. Clear the ground of snow, branches, etc. as much as possible.
 - c. Tie twine or rope between trees or tent poles about 4' off the ground, or lash a long pole to trees at that height.
 - d. Spread several inches of leaves, straw, or other insulation material (if available) on the ground under tent floor area.
- b) Lay your shelter tarp or plastic on the ground over the insulation, fold it over the twine or pole, and fold it again to end on top of itself on the ground to make it resemble a standard tent shape.
- c) Use acorns/stones and twine with stakes at the corners, or place logs where needed to secure and seal tent along the ground. **Leave excess shelter material at each end for folding to close it up.**
- d) Pile snow or logs around three sides to seal the bottom of the shelter.

Key skills:

- 1) Use of stones or acorns to tie twine to tarps or plastic.
- 2) How to use logs or snow to seal along the ground if the ground is too frozen to use stakes.
- 3) How to fold the plastic wrap to make a tent, and attach ropes in corners.
- 4) Understand the importance of having insulation underneath (ground cloth/tarp and mattress pad) and to have the entry to the shelter closable, and out of the wind.
- 5) Understand that site selection is very important: avoid snow packs in trees overhead, dead limbs in trees; use natural windbreaks (trees, hills, etc), and build in low areas.
- 6) Smaller shelters are better - there is less area to heat up with your body.

CAMP ALASKA EQUIPMENT LIST

Scout's Name: _____

Back Pack Check Date: _____

Personal Clothing/Gear

Scout handbook

Toiletry kit: towel, wash cloth, tooth brush/paste, bar soap or hand sanitizer in zip lock bag

1 class "B" T-shirt

2 pair warm socks (wool is best)

2 pair sock liners or warm socks (polypropylene or thin dress socks)

2 pair underwear/T-shirts

1 pair of pants (no jeans or cotton)

1 set insulated thermal long johns

1 ski type (wind break) coat w snow pants, or snowmobile suit

1 wool/flannel/fleece shirt

1 wind resistant waterproof jacket with hood (or rain suit)

1 fleece full face/neck/head cover

1 stocking hat

2 pair insulated/waterproof gloves

1 pair waterproof boots (lined if available)

1 first aid kit (troop will have one)

1 set mess kit, cup, eating utensils

1 quart minimum cooking pot for heating water (if needed for the food you decide to bring.)

Backpacking stove and fuel (if available and if needed for your food selection)

Pen, small notepad

2 heavy duty garbage bags

1 flashlight w/extra batteries

2 one quart/liter insulated water bottle w water

Small container of dish soap, dish towel and drying towel for cleaning pots in Ziplock bag

Toilet paper in Ziplock bag

Aluminum foil for cooking in fires (if needed for the food you decide to bring)

Sleeping Gear (change into completely new clothes at night)

Note: Pack these separately in waterproof bag(s) and secure inside or to frame backpack.

1 sleeping bag rated for 0°F min.

2 ground cloth/tarps (6' x 3' min)

1 insulated ground sleeping bag pad (critical)

1 blanket (wool is best).

Note: the 2nd pair of socks/liners, gloves, stocking cap above are for sleeping
and are critical items for comfort.

1 "hoody" sweater top

1 pair sweatpants

Shelter Materials

1 – 12' x 20' tarp or HD visqueen (troop will supply visqueen)

2 – 6' x 8' ground cloth or tarp

2 – 25' lengths of rope (troop will supply)

CAMP ALASKA EQUIPMENT LIST, Continued

Meals

- 1 – non-freezable breakfast for Sunday
- 1 – non-freezable lunch for Saturday
- 1 – non-freezable dinner for Saturday
- Cold weather snacks for energy

Other Important Items (ITEMS IN RED HAVE BEEN RECENTLY REVISED)

- 1 pocket knife
- lighter or waterproof matches
- tinder in a Ziplock bag
- Lots of Chemical Hand Warmer Hot Hand Packs for insertion into gloves, boots, and sleeping bags
- tent stakes or fallen wood or rocks to secure the tent to the ground.
- Duct Tape
- Pack of binder clips
- Fire starters (cotton balls dipped in Vaseline or dryer lint - stored in a Ziplock bag)
- Camp chair or stool
- Sunglasses (for snow glare)
- Sled, skis, or other winter equipment

Shared Group Gear (supplied by troop)

- Camp saws, hammer, and axes
- Shovel
- Visqueen plastic for tent
- Rope for hanging the tent

DO NOT BRING

- Cell phones, I-pods or other electronics

Note:

Pack all items which can get wet into water proof bags, ziplocks, or HD garbage bags