

Troop 135 Cold Weather Camping



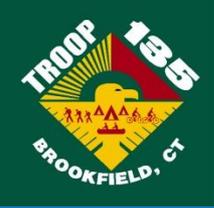
Winter camping is an advanced and challenging adventure. The winter camper has a respect for nature that the summer camper will never have.

But as with most things in life, the most rewarding experience is the one that takes the most effort. If it were easy, then the personal reward and satisfaction that a winter camp out gives would not be the same.

A Boy Scout has a unique opportunity to experience this first hand. Most adults never get the chance to go on summer camp outs, let alone winter camp outs, because they are stuck in the everyday routines of today's fast paced modern world. They don't have the time for such "dumb" things as a winter camp out.

For those people, it's hard to explain the feeling of lying in your tent on a cold winter night, with only the sound of the wind howling outside. It is a feeling of solitude, peace and great respect for nature that will be a memory to treasure.





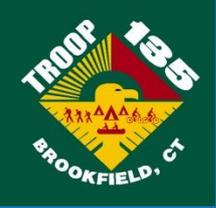
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• Planning and Check Lists

- Check the weather forecast frequently prior to and during camp out
- Use a check list, and pack a few days before the camp out to avoid last minute rush and time to get any items you may be missing
- Always bring a bit more than what you think you'll need – water, food, clothes.
- Make sure that you have a good knowledge of the signs of frostbite and hypothermia. You should be able to recognize it in others and in yourself. Tell someone right away if you or another scout is showing signs of cold-related problems.
- Keep out of the wind if you can. A rain fly for a tent can be pitched to serve as a wind break. The wind chill factor can often be considerable and can result in effective temperatures being much lower than nominal.

• Food and Hydration

- Bring extra WATER. It's easy to get dehydrated in the winter. You aren't visibly sweating, so you don't think to drink water, but since the air is so dry, you lose a LOT of water through breathing. Drink lots of water!
- Bring extra food that doesn't need to be heated or cooked. Granola bars, trail mix, etc.
- Keep a pot of hot water available for cocoa or Cup-a-Soup – these warm from the inside.
- Always eat hot meals (breakfast, lunch, & dinner.) Dutch ovens are the best – they keep the food hot longer. Meals can be 1-pot meals to keep cleanup to a minimum. Don't get too fancy with the meals - it's hard to chop onions & carrots at -10°F with gloves on.
- Shelter the cooking area from wind (walls of tarps, etc.)
- Fill coffee/cook pots with water before bed. It's hard to pour frozen water, but easy to thaw it if it's already in the pot.



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- **Clothing, Remember C O L D:**

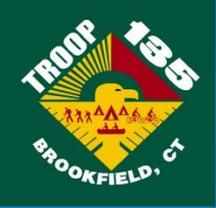
- C Clean - dirty clothes lose their loft and get you cold.
- O Overheat - never get sweaty, strip off layers to stay warm but not too hot.
- L Layers - Dress in synthetic layers for easy temperature control.
- D Dry - wet clothes (and sleeping bags) also lose their insulation.

- **Staying dry is the key to staying warm**

- COTTON KILLS! Do not bring cotton.
- Air is an excellent insulator and by wearing several layers of clothes you will keep warm.
- Remember the 3 W's of layering - Wicking inside layer, Warmth middle layer(s) and Wind/Water outer layer. Wicking should be a polypropylene material as long underwear and also sock liner. Warmth layer(s) should be fleece or wool. The Wind/Water layer should be Gore-Tex or at least 60/40 nylon.
- If you're camping in the snow, wear snow pants over your regular clothing
- Everyone must be dry by sundown. No wet (sweaty) bodies or wet inner clothing

- **Keep your hands and feet warm**

- Your body will always protect the core, so if your hands and feet are warm, your core will also likely be warm. If your hands or feet are cold, put on more layers, and put on a hat!
- Bring extra hand covering - mittens are warmer than gloves.
- Bring 2 changes of socks per day.



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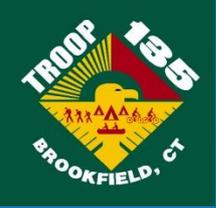


- **Sleeping Bags**

- **Use a sleeping bag that is appropriate for the conditions**
- Use a sleeping bag liner. There are silk and fleece liners that go inside the sleeping bag. They will lower your sleeping bag's rating by up to 10 degrees. Or buy an inexpensive fleece throw or blanket and wrap yourself in it inside the sleeping bag.
- Most cold weather bags are designed to trap heat. The proper way to do this is to pull the drawstrings until the sleeping bag is around your face, not around your neck. If the bag also has a draft harness make sure to use it above the shoulders and it snugs up to your neck to keep cold air from coming in and warm air from going out.
- Don't burrow in - keep your mouth and nose outside the bag. Moisture from your breath collecting in your bag is a quick way to get real cold. Keep the inside of the bag dry.
- A zipped up coat pulled over the foot of a sleeping bag makes an extra layer of insulation.
- Don't sleep directly on the ground. Get a closed cell foam pad to provide insulation between your sleeping bag and the ground. A foam pad cushions and insulates. The air pockets are excellent in providing good insulation properties. Use more than one insulating layer below you – it's easy to slide off the first one.

- **Dress right while sleeping**

- Change into clean, dry clothes before bed. Your body makes moisture and your clothes hold it in - by changing into dry clothes you will stay warmer and it will help keep the inside of your sleeping bag dry.
- Wearing wool socks and long underwear (tops and bottoms) in the sleeping bag is OK.
- Put on tomorrow's t- shirt and underwear at bedtime. That way you won't be starting with everything cold next to your skin in the morning.
- Wear a hat to bed, even if you have a mummy bag.



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• Other Items

- Put tomorrow's clothes in your bag with you. This is especially important if you're small of stature. It can be pretty hard to warm up a big bag with a little body, the clothes cut down on that work.
- Put a couple of long-lasting hand warmers into your boots after you take them off. Your boots will dry out during the night.
- Use toe/hand warmers. Toss them into your sleeping bag before you get in. Some of the toe/hand warmers will last 8 hours.
- Eat a high-energy snack before bed, then brush your teeth. The extra fuel will help your body stay warm. Take a Snickers bar to bed and eat it if you wake up chilly in the night.
- In an emergency, cardboard makes a great insulator. Old newspapers are also good insulation. A layer of foam insulation works too.
- If in tents, leave the tent flaps/zippers vented a bit, it cuts down on interior frost.
- Drain your bladder before you go to bed. Having to go in the middle of the night when it is 5 degrees out chills your entire body. Drink all day, but stop one hour before bed.

