

Camping Basics

Troop 554

Camping is the primary teaching tool for many of the Scouts BSA skills and is essential for your young Scout to advance through the Scout ranks. Through camping, we teach the skills of cooking, camping, organization, leadership, and self reliance. Much of the learning from our trips translates directly into the youth becoming an adult. Troop 554 usually camps once per month during the fall, winter, and spring. The summer months typically have a week long summer camp and an extended adventure trip for the older Scouts. We will publish each August the dates for the campouts for the coming school year. You should have a schedule of the campouts for the remainder of the year.

On the week of a campout this is the order of events

- Tuesday – Scout Troop meeting – The Scouts who are going camping will organize into small groups called patrols and devise a menu for the weekend. They will plan meals for Saturday breakfast, lunch, and dinner, plus Sunday breakfast. A senior Scout and an adult will check the menu. The Scouts will decide what to purchase for the weekend. The Scouts will decide when and where to meet to purchase food. Any special considerations for the coming weekend will be covered with the Scouts. If your Scout does not commit to the campout on Tuesday, and he or she later decides to go, then the Scout is responsible for his or her own food. Also, if we are short on transportation, then the Scout may not have a seat or the parent will be responsible for transportation. Camping fees are usually covered by the Troop, unless stated otherwise. If we are renting equipment such as canoes, we will divide the cost of the equipment among the campers.
- Thursday – The patrol will meet and buy food. Typically this is around 6:00 or 7:00 at the Crowley Walmart.
- Friday – The troop will meet at the church at 6:00PM and leave at 6:30 unless other times are announced. Permission slips will be collected then.
- Sunday – The troop usually returns at noon. The Scouts will call when we are about 30 minutes away. If the destination is more than two hours away, the return time may be later. Inclement weather may also affect the return time.

Scouting Philosophy

The campout is a great example of the BSA Way. The BSA Way is to let the Scouts lead, and to learn by doing for themselves. Sometimes this may appear to be a little abrupt on the part of the leaders. Our preferred approach is not to solve the problem for the Scout. We will usually address situations with questions back to the Scouts. We want the Scouts to think their way through the problem. We haven't had a child starve or freeze on a campout, and we do our best to safeguard them without interfering. The adults do not cook for the Scouts, we do not share our food, we do not put their tents up, we do not clean their cookware, nor do we pamper the Scouts in any way. We do watch carefully to avert disasters, and we keep a close eye on any potential health issues.

Equipment

- The troop supplies tents, stoves, propane, and cookware.
- There is a comprehensive list of camping supplies in the Scout Handbook. Please consult the list in addition to these basics.
- Sleeping bag, rated for the season.
- Clothes, at least one change
- Rainwear
- Something to eat out of and eat with -----mess kits, forks, spoons, bowl
- Flashlight
- Food that the Patrol has purchased
- A water container with the capacity to carry at least one liter of drinking water
- Personal grooming supplies (yes, we do brush our teeth when we camp!)

Trailer Camping and Backpack Camping

- When we trailer camp, we tow the Scout equipment trailer. That allows us to bring the bigger stoves, cooksets, Dutch ovens, lanterns, and ice coolers. This makes the menu a little more flexible because of the ability to cook in the Dutch ovens and to keep perishable items.
- When we backpack, the campsite is often a mile to five miles from the parking area. Everything we use we must carry in. This makes a major difference in the menu planning. No perishables. The troop will provide a stove if needed, but the Scout is responsible for providing cookware. A mess kit is perfect. The Scout and his or her tentmate will carry everything they need for the campout with them.

Other Stuff

- We are always on the lookout for new places to camp. Please give us your ideas!
- We are trying to teach the Scouts to cook and eat healthy foods while on campout. You can really help us by emphasizing this point at home: by paying attention to their menu for the camping weekend, by teaching them some basic cooking skills at home, and by carefully monitoring the personal food the Scout is bringing on campout. Also, we usually stop at a convenience store during the trip. Many of the Scouts are loading up on junk food and candy at these stops. Please help us curtail this situation. We are not trying to become the food police. However, the junk food has two negative effects. One, after filling up on candy, the Scout is not too interested in learning how to cook. Second, the leaders have to deal with sugared up and sick kids on the campout.