



The Scout Leaders' Almanac

Things they
may not have told you on
your training course.

COMPILED BY.

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ILLUSTRATIONS

Glen Hall

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This Resource book has been compiled from many years experience in Scouting.

We are always searching for new and exciting programming ideas. If you have some material that might be useful to other leaders, which could be included in further editions of this book, please send a copy to:

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Introduction

This is a rambling collection of ideas and practical skills, which new Leaders may find useful. Formal training courses provide essential training for Leaders, but cannot cover some topics, which are usually learned by experience.

Rob Plenderleith and Catherine Bickell who compiled this set of ideas have many years experience as a Troop Scouter working with Patrols and Troops in a wide range of conditions.

Scouting and camping one always changing and we are always facing new conditions and have to adapt what we know to the new circumstances. In camp this is very obvious with the pressure on popular sites and increasing public restrictions. For both environmental and safety reasons it is important to think things through and always be ready to find new solutions.

Great Scouting!

Branch Scout Council
Victorian Branch, Scouts Australia
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Health & Safety

Do you need a First Aid qualification?

Leader training provides an introduction to basic first aid, and trained first aiders are available at major activities, but on most Troop activities you are the responsible adult on the scene.

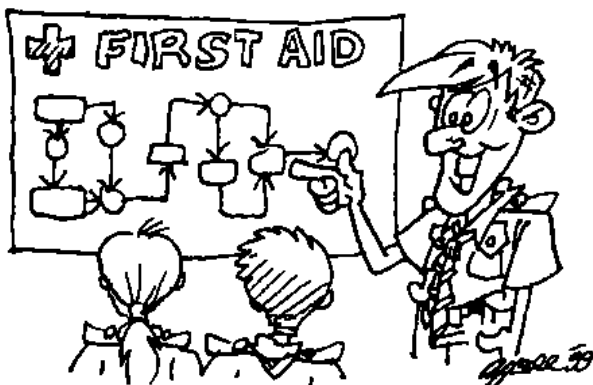
For Duty of Care reasons, your own peace of mind, and to gain essential skills, all Leaders should seriously consider doing a First Aid course.

Your Group Committee should be pleased to pay for this.

Train and retrain your Scouts You could be the patient!

First Aid can save lives. You won't always be around when First Aid is urgently needed, so train your Scouts well. You might even be the patient! Remember that First Aid treatments change as time passes. Keep your own training up to date, and train your Scouts to current standards.

Even the youngest Scout, if properly trained, can clear an airway and put an unconscious adult in the recovery position. First Aid training is an important part of the Award Scheme, and can be worked into many fun activities. Try to refresh every Scout in expired air resuscitation at least once a year.



Safety is no accident!

A good safety record in camp is the result of thorough preparation and training, and an effective risk management programme.

Recognise the risks; with the Troop Council design a way around them; and train the Scouts. Correct bad practice gently the first time and discuss it with the PL. Monitor the situation and discuss it in Troop Council. If it is repeated be a lot less gentle with both the offender and the PL.

Asthma

A Leader's nightmare is the Scout who has an asthma attack and does not respond to medication. This can be fatal.

You must know every Scout's current asthma status and management, and what triggers asthma in that particular Scout. If pumps are carried, check that the Patrol campsite is close to a power supply, and if not, make sure that the appropriate parents know this. Make sure the power point is working. Make sure that the rest of the Patrol know where to find the medication/pump, and that the medication is with the pump. Practice what to do if a Scout has an asthma attack. Find and check the phone. Alert the Camp Warden or Leaders of nearby Troop, just in case. Don't be left on site without a reliable car.

The above list may sound excessive, unless you've had the experience of a Scout suffering a severe asthma attack on a camp.

If an attack does not respond immediately after taking medication, or if you are in any doubt about the severity of the attack, call an ambulance, and tell the operator if the asthma attack is severe. An Intensive Care ambulance may be sent if available.

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Health and Safety

No health form - no camp!

Medical Conditions / Health Forms

On activities or in camp, you must know the current health status of your Scouts. You must also have the written approval from parents or guardians to immediately authorise ambulance or medical treatment as necessary.

If the form giving this permission is not available, consider very carefully before taking a Scout on an activity. Consider using the simple rule: "No health form - no camp".

A good rule is to ask that health forms be returned with the camp fee, or at least one week before the camp. This gives time to sort out any problems. Parents are unlikely to send a sick child to camp and will tell the Leaders -if anything has changed since the health form was returned.

If a Scout returns a form endorsed, for example, "*no blood transfusions may be authorised*", you need to decide if you are prepared to not authorise potentially life-saving treatment.

Activity approval forms must request details of any medication, including how much/how it should be taken, at what time or under what circumstances, even if the child is self administering.

Be aware that some parents will for whatever reason (e.g. lack of time, thought you knew already, just forgot, child asked them not to tell you) won't tell you about important medical conditions. This causes enormous concern and stress for Leaders when something starts to go wrong.

If a condition is common to several Scouts (e.g. asthma) or is likely to require immediate attention, the Troop as a whole may require some form of training, which can often be organised through the relevant parents, or via the relevant association.

Knocks on the head

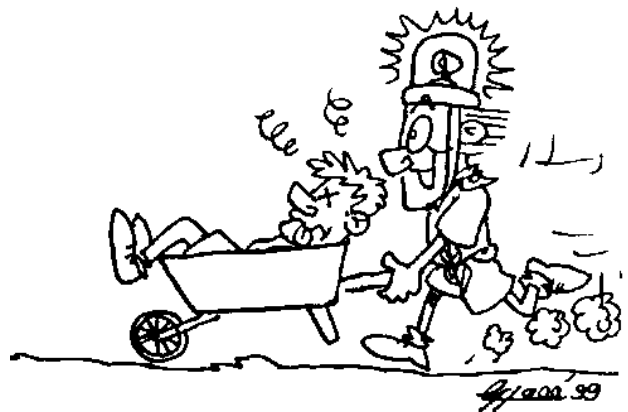
Scouts do get knocked over during games, fall out of trees, and run into immovable objects. Be very careful of all knocks on the head. A doctor must urgently assess any period of unconsciousness, no matter how short. Similarly, disorientation, disturbed vision, etc, require an urgent medical assessment.



Common First Aid treatments

If your risk management programme is working, the great majority of First Aid treatments should involve minor cuts and grazes; minor burns (hot billy handles); bites and stings; and blisters.

Make sure that all First Aid cases are reported to you, even if treatment was completed within the Patrol. Restock Patrol First Aid kits as required. Record treatment if necessary.



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Sleeping bags and waterproof coats

A good night's sleep, and dry clothes, do a lot to prevent accidents and illness. Scouts can make do with all kinds of hand-me-down equipment but every one of them needs a long waterproof coat, and a good enough sleeping bag to avoid being cold at night.



Sleep

At camp, lack of sleep can cause a range of additional problems. These can include headaches, irritability, and upset stomach or hyped up behaviour.

Leaders have reported that in more extreme cases can be freaky, like hallucinations, imaginary illnesses and behaviour, which is out of character.

One-way of dealing with this is to explain to the Troops what they will miss out on if they don't sleep and get the PLs on side to ensure the Patrol is sensible.

Dealing with the dreaded lurgi

We actually have no experience of this, but an experienced leader who ran a very good Troop in Queensland told us of his experience. He had succeeded in halting an outbreak of tummy upsets and diarrhea during a long camp by raising standards of cleanliness and hygiene from high to extreme.

- Nobody who was sick was allowed to handle food, or anybody else's dilly bag, or do the washing up. (They couldn't have, they were generally making quick dashes to the toilet).
- All dilly bags were boiled to kill any lurking nasties.
- All cleaning cloths and scourers were discarded after every meal.
- Tea towels were boiled after every meal.
- Washing up was inspected with an eagle eye, and rinsing was done in a solution normally used for babies' bottles.
- Washing up basins were disinfected.
- Sick Scouts were fed dry toast and water, and kept relatively quiet.
- After going to the toilet, hands were disinfected as well as washed thoroughly.

In a couple of days the sick Scouts had recovered, and the camp continued.



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Risk Minimisation

Cutting Wood

Axes

A good axe is handy in camp only if one of the adults can use it properly. It is too heavy for Scouts to use safely, although most will jump at the chance to try it out, briefly, under expert supervision.

To indicate the position of the axe head, mark around the axe handle, up against the axe head, with paint or marker pen. Watch for any movement in the axe head (you'll see a space between the ink and the axe head) and do not use an axe with a loose head. It is frightening to have the axe suddenly "go light" in mid-swing, and not to know where the axe head is going.

"Mask" axes in a log when not in use, or cover the head and return to store. Keep axes sharp. Sand the handle very smooth and apply linseed oil. If you break a handle, the butt end can be converted into a billy lifter.

Bush-saws

600 mm (24") bush saws are the most effective tools for Scouts to cut wood of more than about 50mm diameter. These saws can be used by one or two people, and can cut anything, which Scouts will need to deal with.

Carry a saw hanging over the shoulder, down the side of the body, with the teeth pointing backwards.

Nobody should walk close behind or on the same side as the saw. When not in use, leave it in clear view in the wood chopping area, either hanging up out of the way, or with teeth protected in some way. Blades rust, so keep saws dry. To protect the blade in the Patrol

box, slip a length of rigid PVC water pipe over the blade.

Start saw cuts slowly, until the saw is settled in the groove. Be very careful in starting a cut on a sloping piece of wood, as the saw is likely to "skip" downwards, and can give a nasty cut.

Tomahawks

These are over rated tools, but handy for cutting kindling. Younger Scouts are fascinated by tomahawks and do not recognise the dangers.

Light tomahawks are as effective as the heavier models on light wood (up to 50 mm diameter) are less tiring to use, and are therefore more easily controlled. Use a bush saw for heavier wood. Good quality lightweight tomahawks, with metal handles and rubber grips, are not cheap but they need less sharpening and don't break handles.

Carry a tomahawk by its head, cutting edge forward, and have nobody walking beside you on that side. If you trip, get rid of the tomahawk to avoid landing on it. "Mask" the tomahawk in a log when not in use. Keep them dry -they rust. Keep tomahawks sharp.

Make a leather cover for the head to avoid damage to the edge, and other equipment, while in transit in the Patrol box.

Throwing tomahawks, as in old Western films, must be discouraged most severely. When chopping, nobody should be within two arm lengths. Never use two hands (this brings the blunt end dangerously close to the forehead), or use a tomahawk as a hammer (this brings the sharp end dangerously close to the head and shoulder).

Food Preparation

Knives

Buy good knives, and keep them sharp. This reduces the risk of a knife slipping and at worst means that First Aid is required on nice straight cuts.

Many Scouts will not be allowed to use sharp knives at home. In camp, carrots do seem to be easily confused with fingers, and onions are slippery.

Try to prepare the evening meal in daylight, or by bright lantern light. A little training here, and careful menu selection, will go a long way to reducing the risk of cut fingers.

Around the Fire

Fires are pretty dangerous things, so here are a few things to watch out for.

Numchuks

Home-made camp oven hooks, known as numchuks, are ideal for handling hot camp ovens, billies, fire grids, moving logs around the fire, raking coals, and even for making toast. When not in use, they are left in the fire bucket, which cools them down and keeps them handy. See page 34.

Fire grids

Make sure the grids are not too large or billies are likely to tip, resulting in a late meal, dampened fire, and possibly scalds and steam burns. Grids must be strong enough not to bend, even when hot.

Graters

Are they worth the trouble? Cheese can be bought ready-grated and attempts to grate carrots etc. seem to end up with grated knuckles and fingernails.

Adequate light

Adequate light is essential for safe food preparation, but don't hang up a lantern where any body can walk into it.

Lanterns hung up against wooden tent poles or trees have started fires. They should be suspended, or placed on top of a solid table, box, etc.

Fire buckets

Fire buckets are essential beside every fire or stove. Even a potentially severe scald or burn can be minimised, possibly without blistering, if the affected part is plunged immediately into cold water and kept there for a while.

Hot water

The risk is usually in the transfer of water from the heating vessel to a billy or basin. Homemade ladles consisting of an empty tin attached to a 600 mm length of wooden tent pole can be used to bail water into a basin placed on the ground. This avoids the risks of tipping over drums of boiling water and has proven very effective. Have cold water handy to where the basins of hot water will be filled, to minimise the risks of handling basins containing near-boiling water.

Trip Hazards

Fire

There is no place for trip hazards around the fire. Remove turf, bags of excavated soil, firewood, etc, from the cooks' working area.

Paint tent peg tops

Steel pegs are unyielding when kicked, and have sharp edges from being hammered. If the tops are painted white (the best inexpensive colour to see at night) there will be few cuts due to kicking pegs.

Closed shoes always

Thongs and open-toed sandals are a liability in camp. There is a multitude of things to fall over or to kick, but foot injuries will be few if closed footwear, with laces tied, is worn at all times outside the sleeping tent.

Old sneakers should be worn when swimming in creeks or dams, or when canoeing.

Gas Equipment

If a leak is suspected, or gas can be smelled, pour soapy water (detergent, with a little water added) over suspected leak. If there's a leak, you'll see bubbles.

Light the match first

Always light the match before turning on the gas. If you don't think this matters, try it in reverse some time, with a damp or well-worn matchbox.

Keep cylinders upright at ' all times

Gas cylinders contain a pool of liquid gas with a vapour space above. The supply line to the stove or light is designed to carry gas vapour only, but if the cylinder is tipped liquid can enter the supply line. Lighting a stove which has liquid in the supply line causes a flame which burns unevenly and tends to leap up in an uncontrolled fashion. Turning off the

Guy rope colours

We intend to replace our worn sisal guys with white synthetic rope, partly to improve their visibility, at night. Sisal is reasonably visible when new, but darkens with age. New campers seem to forget that there are guys around every tent and tarp, and frequently walk into them. We have a few guys made from dark green parachute cord, which even Leaders fall over!

Games around the camp

Keep all chasing-type games away from the Patrol sites. There are far too many trip hazards, especially at night.

Out after dark

Nighttime visits to the toilet can bring campers in contact with the local wildlife. To minimise the risks, use a torch and wear closed shoes.

supply valve on the cylinder will calm things down (due to less pressure pushing the liquid through) but will not extinguish the flame which is fueled by vapour from the liquid already present in the supply line.

If this happens, turn off the stove as well as the supply valve on the cylinder, remove the stove and cylinder to a safe place, and relight the stove. **Do not open the cylinder supply valve.** After the liquid in the supply line has burned out, normal operations can resume.

Do not move the bottle if the supply line is frozen as you could break the tubing

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Finding Equipment

Recycled Equipment

This is where Leaders and Scouts can use their imagination to spot the potential to reuse or recycle something into a useful item, usually at little or no cost.

Billies

Billies (large and small) are easily found.

Frying fat for commercial kitchens comes in drums, which are ideal for boiling water.

Billies can be made in minutes from catering sized cans used for tomatoes, pineapples, jam, etc.

Scouts can use a hammer and nail to punch two holes just under the top rim, file the holes smooth, and make the handle from the straight bottom section of a dry-cleaning coat hanger.

If you can't find an old lid to fit, use aluminium foil.

If the scrambled eggs stick badly, junk the billy (save the handle) and make another one.

Water Containers

Wine merchants often have more empty plastic containers than they can use. It is a simple task for a Patrol to rinse out bulk port containers and fit a tap.

Fire Grids

Old oven shelves make good fire grids, as do the grids from the top of some domestic gas stoves.

Reinforcing mesh for concrete slabs is strong, but has lots of sharp ends and the mesh can be too large. Fridge shelves often melt.

Rope

Light rope is used on an expendable basis by utility companies, which lay underground cables, and can generally be obtained for Scout use after being used once. This is often best arranged on an informal basis with the foreman of the cable-pulling gang. This rope is good for light duties such as water activities, lashings, fences, tying trailers, etc.

NOTE:

Don't even consider using second-hand rope for load-bearing duties. You don't know what previous loads have been applied to it, and what service life is left in it. Similarly, all load-bearing rope, which you inherit with your Scout Troop, must be considered suspect unless you can be absolutely certain of its history.

Gadget Wood

Gadget timber can be obtained from old tea-tree fences, which provide fairly straight 25-40 mm diameter, 1-2 m long poles. Ask the householder first. Make sure the fence is being scrapped and not rebuilt.

Rubber Bands

Rubber bands are easily cut with sharp scissors from inner tubes. Don't get sprung, or you'll have to buy a new pair for the kitchen. Long bands of rubber can be cut from inner tubes in a long spiral around the circumference of the inner tube.

Groundsheets

Old tarps can make good groundsheets.

Finding Equipment

Spars

Spars for construction can be obtained from State Forests. Contact the local Forest Office for help and explain the future use of the spars. They will probably have an area of forest to be thinned and will often mark the trees for you to fell, trim, and remove. Great fun!

Typically the cost will be on a lineal metre basis, and there may be a few extra trees thrown in for luck. Remember that fresh felled timber is wet and heavy and that your trailer will carry many fewer fresh spars than dried seasoned ones.

Different types of Eucalypts have different barks and different qualities. Those with stringy or fibrous bark that is not too thick make the best spars for lashing. Smooth barked wood, or wood that has the bark peeled off is OK but can slip if the lashings are not tight. For rafts, spars with bark can become waterlogged.

Experience will tell you which species are best for your uses.

Common Eucalypt timbers can include:

Stringy Bark (Messmate) - best timber for spars as, when it dries out it retains its springiness. The poles can be quite long but not too thick or too heavy for Scouts to manage.

Silvertop is not bad but the butt end is thick and heavy with fibrous bark and the top end is smooth-barked.

Mountain Ash is very brittle when dry and very heavy when green. It's useful life can be short and unreliable when the wood is cured.

Peppermint has bark in short fibres and is usually reliable.

Smooth-barked Eucalypts are called Gum trees and are variable in value.

And ... some other sources

Obtaining equipment to be used in the Troop is always an ongoing problem, but here are a few ideas to let you try other sources.

Q-stores of defunct Troops

If a local Group has closed down, and there is the opportunity to acquire any useful equipment from their store, it is usually worth having a look at what is there.

Garages and sheds

There are plenty of tents suitable for Scout use which are stored in sheds and garages because they are either no longer required, or have passed out of fashion. Use your Group network to pass the word and you might be surprised with what turns up.

Second hand equipment

You can find excellent Shellite pressure lights, an easily repaired marquee, tent poles, and an as-new canoe through ads in the local papers. The skills to assess the usefulness of the equipment can usually be found within your Group or District, and the savings can be considerable.

Donations - Factory Outlets

Living near a light industrial area can be handy where waste material may be useful for a variety of camping and activity equipment. Alternatively these companies may be willing to donate goods to the Troop.

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Maintenance

Repair Kit

A basic repair kit is a vital part of a Troop's equipment. It goes on camps and is often used in the hall. The following is a very extensive list but each Troop will want to develop its own variations. The Kit can be stored in suitable tote boxes or crates for ease of carting around.

Materials for repairs

New canvas of the correct weight for Patrol tent walls
New canvas of the correct weight for Patrol tent roofs
Various canvas and leather pieces
Tarp material to repair tarps and groundsheets
Adhesive patches to repair hike tents
Rubber guy loops for hike tents
A length of heavy rubber shock cord
Brass eyelet kit
A can of Selleys Kwik Grip glue
Tub rivets
Sewing machine oil
Linseed oil
Lots of tent repair tape
End clips for 6 mm lashings
Labels- for damaged gear
Whipping twine
Lump of beeswax
Teflon thread tape
Spare mantles
Glass paper
Lumps of builders chalk
Waxed thread
A hank of venetian blind cord

Tools

Staysharp scissors
Rotating punch for leather or canvas
Wooden fid
Splicing fid
Very sharp sheath knife
Small scissors
40 mm paint scraper (for spreading glue)
Small pliers
Speedy stitcher
Small side cutters
Sharpening stone
Small diamond stone
Flat file
File handle
Stitching palm
Large Texta pen
Thimble
Stove prickers
Stove/lantern jets
Stove jet spanner
Makers instructions for lanterns and stoves
Stanley knife
Pencils and pens
Metal axe wedges
Shackle key
Spare stove knobs
One large nail
8 m steel tape
Small nail punch
12 kg spring balance
Leather gloves
Inflator needle for balls

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Tents & Canvas

Canvas repair & maintenance

Given sufficient training, a Patrol is quite able to repair tents and tarps. If each Patrol is assigned a particular set of gear, it has every incentive to avoid damage and to make its repairs effective.

If nobody, ever, walks on tents or tarps while they are on the ground, or on the floor of the hall, there will be few holes to mend. If there is no alternative, remove shoes first.

If pegs are never put through metal eyelets, and if the strain of holding up tarps is taken by a ridge pole or ridge ' rope, there will be few eyelets to replace.

However, if your gear is used heavily, or your tents are old, there will be a need for repairs. Damage will be caused by big gusts of wind, flying sticks from trees, young Scouts who are still learning and tents being pitched by tired Scouts on dark windy nights.

Patrol tents purchased in the early 1950s have lasted into the 1990s. They had been used so much that the strongest fabric was the patches, but it shows the long life of a canvas tent, if well cared for.

Drying wet gear

As soon as you get back from camp, hoist tents and spread out the walls with tables, chairs etc. Synthetic tarps can wait if space is limited - they'll smell but they won't rot. Unroll lashings, ropes, and guys, and lay out on the floor.

The drying time varies with season and the wetness of the canvas, but less than two days would be surprising if canvas was seriously wet.

Inspecting tents

Tents should be opened out, and crawled over to check for damage. Scouts who are not bothered by dust can go under the tent and look for light coming through holes while the rest of the Patrol holds up the corners of the tent.

Especially check walls and roofs near the apex and around the side pole eyelets, and half-way down the walls where the poles are joined. Check the rope loops at the bottom of the walls, and the lacing eyelets at doors or corners. Carefully check every pole eyelet.

Fold neatly; making sure that when opened out the tent will not be upside down. Many Patrols have pitched tents inside out, and had to turn them over. This isn't much fun, late on a dark wet night.

Inspecting tarps

As for tents. Pay particular attention to eyelets, as their replacement is a difficult field repair. Tarps flap around more than tents and tears soon grow, so catch them while they are small.

Inspecting groundsheets

Groundsheets take a lot of abuse from camp bed feet, etc. Missing eyelets don't matter, and minor tears are not a problem. If the weather is so wet that water is coming up through holes in the groundsheet, you'll be already looking for a way to divert the water, move the tent, or move the occupants.

If your groundsheets are wrecked tarps, make sure that the edging rope (it is stitched into the hem) does not form a trip hazard in the tent. If it does, pull it out and cut it off.

Poles

Count the poles, bundle into sets with rubber bands, straighten any bent pins, check that the extendable (inside) section of a centre pole hasn't disappeared up inside the outer section, make sure the grub screw on an extendable pole hasn't fallen out.

These tasks are noisy, but best done in a dry, well-lit Scout hall, rather than in the dark and rain.

Pegs

Many Scout camps seem to be in frosty hollows, or on flood plains, or on land so rocky that bent pegs are unavoidable. Straighten them in the vice.

Be careful! A vice applies a lot of pressure, and a bent peg can spin out with great force. Wear strong gloves for this job.

Other Gear

The maintenance of all camping and activity gear is extremely important and here are a few more thoughts for you.

Rope

Avoid steel ends - they are handy and quick for lashings but end clips are heavy enough to do real damage if a rope end whips out of control, or is used carelessly. Bad cuts have been caused by attempts to catch the end of a running rope which has a steel clip fitted.

Ends should be whipped with a good tight sailmakers whipping, made with waxed polyester whipping twine.

NEVER let anyone walk or stand on rope while it is on the ground. Chips of rock can be forced into the

Paint the peg tops white (just dip them in something cheap, and hang up over an old tent to drip dry).

Guy ropes

Springs and sliders are like billy lids - they can be recycled indefinitely. The rope wears out, or rots out if it is natural fibre that has been stored wet.

Teach the Scouts to eye splice and recycle the sliders and springs. Buy some 6mm diameter sisal (very traditional, but it wears and eventually rots), or silver rope. Work out the length from the old guys, and allow enough for an eye splice on one end and a stopper knot on the other. Put a whipping or clip at the stopper knot end.

Even those Scouts who are not keen on knots will see the sense of keeping the tent standing up.

rope, between yarns and strands, and will cut the adjacent fibres when the rope is 19aded.

Synthetic (polyethylene, polypropylene, polyester, nylon, etc) ropes wear from the outside, so check for abrasion and broken strands. Unless they have been exposed to unusual risks (chemicals, etc), this is about all that goes wrong with synthetic ropes in Scout service.

Natural fibre rope (sisal and manilla) is prone to mildew and rot if stored without being dried. The rot begins in the middle, and you'll have to look for it to find it.

Maintenance

Wire cable is not much used except for flying fox hawsers and debogging the Rovers' mud buggy. (These uses are mutually -exclusive.) Wear strong leather gloves and watch out for broken stands and jagged ends. Forget about tying knots in wire. Use hard eyes in the ends, with shackles of appropriate SWL (Safe Working Load). Keep a shackle key or pliers handy.

Become familiar with your ropes, their safe working loads, applications, etc. When a rope is past it, get rid of it, or cut it up into lengths, which make it unuseable for critical activities (e.g. flying fox main hawser; tower guy ropes, block and tackle; monkey bridges, etc.). If you don't do this, it will be used on the one occasion that you are not present.

Gas cylinders

Cylinders must be pressure tested every 10 years. Check the date stamp, it is illegal to fill time-expired cylinders.

Use the spring balance from the Troop fix it box to weigh each cylinder when empty, and when freshly filled. Mark both weights on the cylinder and use the spring balance to measure the amount of gas left.

Assign one cylinder per Patrol to ensure economical use of gas, as nobody likes to run out first.



Saws

Check and replace blades, practice safe handling and carrying, practice using saws on construction spars which are unfit for further use.

Lanterns

Train the Scouts to change mantles in the hall.

Clean the glass with soap and water, get rid of the dead beasties, etc.

Learn to light lanterns when it doesn't matter if you put a match through the mantle.



Tomahawks

Sharpen with vice and file. Make masks from scrap leather, laces, buckles, straps, etc. Practice safe handling and carrying. Let the inexperienced Scouts have a chop at some tough old spars to prove that tomahawks are for light timber only.

Wooden handled tools

Sand out rough parts and splinters in the handles, oil with linseed, Check handles are tight on axes, mattocks, picks, etc.

Construction spars

Hold one end and "ring" the other end by dropping on to a hard (concrete) surface. Rattles and cracks are warning signs. If the spar does not ring true, get rid of it, or cut it into shorter spars.

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Field Maintenance & Crisis Management

Tentage

Tears and holes in fabric

Tape them up while they are still small. If necessary use herringbone stitches to hold the edges in place. Discuss the cause of the problem with the PL.

Mismatched poles and tents

This is a real pain and best avoided by careful preparation in the Scout Hall.

If poles are too short, either stand them on bricks, boxes, etc, to gain the required height, or round lash another pole alongside to increase the length.

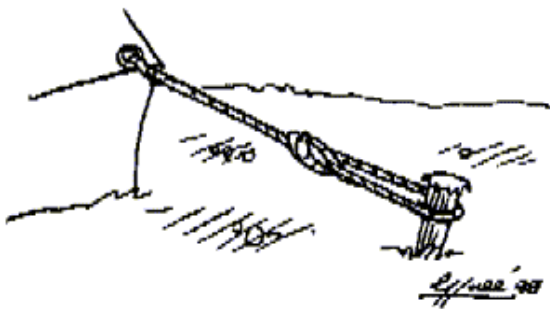
If poles are too long, get a mattock, dig a hole where the pole should be, and drop it into the hole. Try not to put the mattock through the tent canvas.

Breaks in bendy poles

Many hike tents have bendy poles, which form hoops. If they break, they are not easily fixed. A hacksaw blade laid alongside like a splint and both blade and pole taped over with tent repair tape will probably get you through.

Not enough guy ropes

Use lashings and rolling hitches.



Not enough pegs

This is difficult. Scavenge all the pegs, which can be spared from tent walls. Be nice to the camp warden - he'll probably have a bucketful collected from campsites. Try anchoring a spar behind a couple of big construction pegs (or handy trees) and running the tent guys from tent to spar.

In the morning, unless the makeshifts are doing exceptionally well, organise the missing pegs to be brought to the camp. Patrol tents cost a lot of money and applying stress in the wrong places, especially in windy weather, can do a lot of damage.

Eyelet torn out of fabric

If practicable, make do with the other eyelets, and if the damaged eyelet is in a corner, tape the flapping part up out of the way.

If a field repair is essential, first find a small smooth pebble, about the size of a woggle. At a location close to the damaged eyelet, gather the fabric around the pebble and attach the guy rope by a clove hitch over the fabric. The final appearance is similar to a mushroom, with the clove hitch forming the stem. This is inclined to stretch the tarp where it passes over the pebble, but it is effective.

Stuck poles

Wet wooden poles sometimes jam, and cannot be pulled apart. If the pole can be transported, there is no problem - it will dry out in the Q Store, and can be separated the following week.

If it has to be separated at camp carefully heat the metal joint over a gas ring.

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Field Maintenance & Crisis Management

Wet tents

If rain is coming through tent roof or walls secure a tarp over the outside of the tent. Always have a few spare tarps around, just in case.

Water coming under tent walls may require trenching, on the uphill side only, at the foot of the walls. If the Scouts are on camp stretchers, don't bother, just keep the gear up away from the water. Before starting major excavations, ask yourself if the tent is pitched in the best place available.

Floods in the night are a problem. Organise the Patrol's gear (apart from sleeping bags) to be packed and placed up out of the water. With Scouts carrying their sleeping bags (inside garbage bags if time permits), take them under a tarp to somewhere dry.

Toilet Troubles

YUK !!!! You can have some awful experiences with campsite toilets.

If the toilets won't flush; check that water is coming into the cistern. If not, and there is no obvious reason like a stopcock turned off, call the friendly camp warden. Campsite plumbing is one of the more mysterious areas of Scouting, often cobbled together from old brass bedsteads, and sometimes only somebody who knows which part to kick has any hope of success.

If water is running straight through the cistern, check if silt (especially on sites where toilet water is pumped from a river) has blocked or prevented proper sealing of the discharge washer. If there is silt in the cisterns, use a hose or lots of buckets to wash it out.

Another tent, a hall, the toilet/shower block, anywhere dry will do till morning. Make sure the tent is secure. Go back to bed and sort out the mess in the morning.



A general hose out and wiggle of all moving parts can work wonders. If it doesn't, call the warden, because campsite plumbing is one of the more mysterious areas of Scouting, often cobbled together etc, etc, etc.

If the toilets are blocked, don't have lunch. Get rid of all the Scouts (they'll run a mile to get away, so this isn't difficult) and find the rubber gloves, bleach, fire hose, buckets, toilet brush, etc.

First use the hose to push and wash through the accumulated material. Go outside for fresh air. Clean up the toilet bowl, and then tackle the cause of the problem which is usually lack of flushing water.

Afterwards the Scouts will look at you with new respect, while remaining ostentatiously upwind.

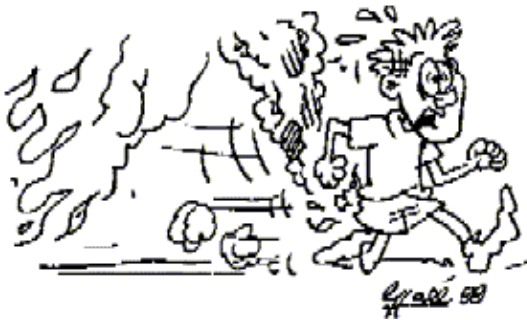
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Fire

Tent fire

Tents burn very quickly. Never, ever, allow naked flames or lanterns inside sleeping tents and be ultra-careful in store tents.

Are your Scouts trained in the fastest way out of a sleeping bag? If not, teach them to draw their knees up to the chest, push the bag down with both hands, and get out quickly.



We have been told that the best way to combat a tent fire is to drop the tent and thus smother the flames. Lift the guys off the pegs to let the tent collapse, then beat out the flames if it is safe to do so.

Water

Water from the taps is grotty

If the water is pumped from a river, and the river is turbid, there's not much you can do about it. Try to use tank water for drinking and cooking. Boil washing up water if it is from the river.

If the water is from the mains, let it run for a while to flush out sediment, etc, from the pipes. Use the lowest tap in the system for this, if practicable, but don't make a swamp in the wrong place.

Remember DRABC. Don't make more casualties!

Bushfire

Make sure the local Fire Brigade or forest ranger know where you are camping during the fire season. Work out where the best fire refuge would be and have a plan worked out just in case. Check the escape routes. Keep in touch with the Fire Brigade and follow their advice.

Fires and Cooking

Ensure all Scouts know how to set up a safe cooking fire that follows all the fire regulations. There are state regulations and often-local areas or campsites have special regulations, which you must know.

Always deal very seriously with kids who play with matches' - unless you've seen it you cannot begin to imagine how quickly dry grass can burst into flames.

Always check local rules before having a campfire.

Weather

Extremes of weather

You're a Scout Leader, not Superman or Superwoman. There will be times when circumstances outside your control dictate the programme, or force an evacuation or change of venue.

When the temperature is too hot, forget the programme and just try to keep people comfortable. Keep out of the sun, find some quiet activities, and enjoy cold drinks.

High winds in camp are a problem. Rig storm guys on tents, and check that walls are well pegged down. Review the emergency plan in case you lose any tents.

Torrents of rain can send you home in disarray. Every Leader has a horror story of the time the tents were so wet that water was running out on the hall floor; or when lashings had to be chopped off a tower to take it down and get the spars home. If things are really bad, get the Scouts and gear out, and come back when the rain stops, with parents and the PLs, to collect the leftovers and clean up the site.

If conditions are awful at the campsite, consider carefully before taking a Scout Troop and all the equipment out of the hall. The intelligent decision might be to stay in the Hall and have each Patrol plan and implement its own programme during the weekend. (Go to the zoo, planetarium, museum, bike hike, watch videos at night, eat pizza, finish off parts of badges, but don't cancel the weekend.)



General

To finish off this section of Field Maintenance and Crisis Management we present a few ideas we have picked up on the way, which may be of help to you.

Patrol identity

Issue each Patrol with a complete set of camping gear. If there are no suitable boxes in the Troop to hold utensils, etc, they can build one for a PA badge.

The Patrol is then responsible for the maintenance and replacement of its own kitchen gear.

Try to assign tents permanently to Patrols. Encourage them to mend their own gear, and to write their names under their table, etc. It all helps to foster pride in their own gear, flag, tent, etc, and to minimise losses.

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Count out the pegs

Know your tents, and issue no extra pegs.

Paint all peg tops.



Never remove a guy from a peg without immediately pulling the peg and adding it to the peg pile.

Count the pegs back into the peg box.



With the PLs, inspect campsites very carefully before leaving.

Gear to avoid

If it can fall to bits, it will fall to bits, and just when you need it most.

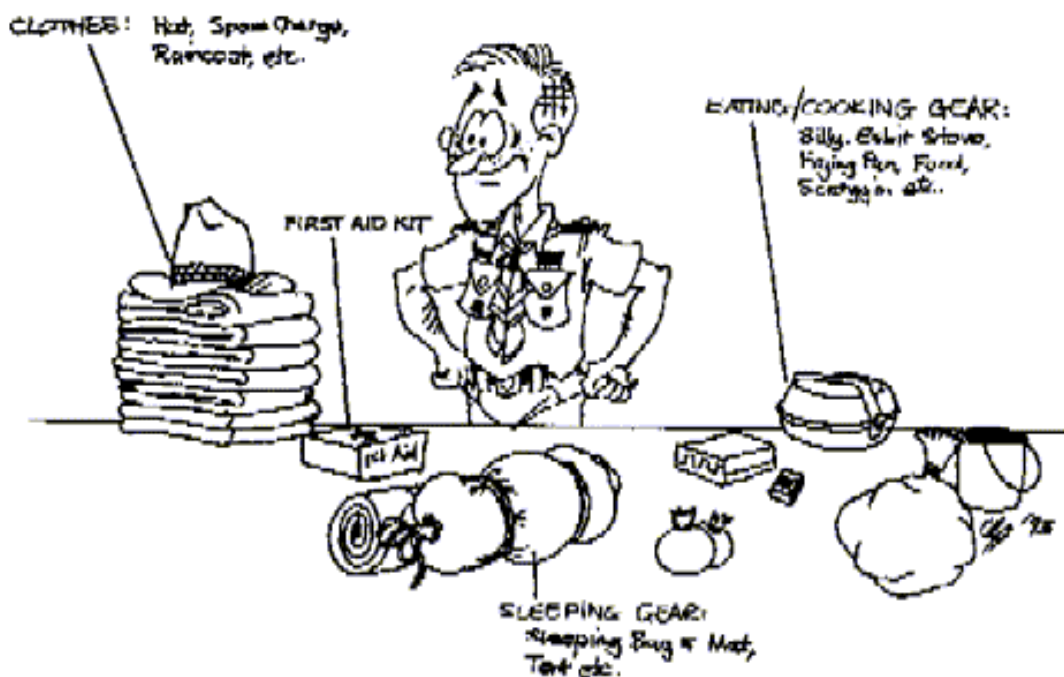
Some of the main culprits are:

- Anything that has fiddly components -they will get lost or broken.
- Anything fragile - sure to break under Scout use. Kids don't try to break things, but gear must be robust.
- Wooden handled tomahawks - to be avoided.
- Telescopic tent poles - two piece poles are far easier for Scouts to use, and have no fiddly little grub screws to lose.
- Hard to open taps on water containers are difficult for Scouts to use and lead to lots of extra water carrying because water is lost.
- Unfamiliar or non-standard gear (tents, gas gear, lanterns), and similar are all bad news. Having a standardised set of gear saves a lot of Leader time, and prevents confusion all round.
- Having more than one liquid fuel in the Q-store is to be avoided if possible. It is not difficult to fill a lantern with kero or metho instead of Shellite. The wrong fuel in the wrong place can lead to a very nasty fire.

Bushwalking

If Scout training is to give full value to the youth members, leaders have to learn to stand back. This applies particularly to bushwalking. By the time Scouts get to their Adventurer Hike, they should be planning and implementing the activity with limited direct involvement by leaders. For a lot of leaders and parents, the idea of letting Scouts go bush on their own for 3 days is not acceptable. However, there are ways to maintain safety cover without walking with the Scouts. Here are some suggestions:

- Use every way you can to teach the confident use of map and compass. Scouts must be able to recognise the features, which are marked on the map. Basic compass skills like back bearings and correcting for magnetic deviation must be done correctly every time. This takes time and training, both in the Scout Hall and in the bush. If the Scouts can't demonstrate their competence, you can't let them go out bush without you.
- When you're confident, tell the parents how much their children have learned, and sell the idea of reduced direct adult involvement as Scouts gain skills.
- Teach the Scouts never to trust manmade features on a map. They can all change, sometimes very quickly. Roads, tracks, dams, buildings, power lines, plantations, etc, can all appear and disappear in the time since the map was prepared. Rely as much as possible on natural features.
- At every track junction or feature along the way, train the Scouts to STOP, ORIENT THE MAP, AND APPLY THE COMMON SENSE RULE - DOES THIS ALL FEEL RIGHT AND MAKE SENSE.
- If it doesn't feel right and make sense, train them to take a break, have some scroggin and a drink, and think back to the last point where they were sure of their position. If they went the wrong way from there, what were the possible errors? Do any of them make sense? Make sure they know what to do in this situation -and your instructions may vary according to the terrain, weather and capability of the group.



Training Scouts in Bushwalking

- When walking, make sure the PL stays at the back of the Patrol. It's the only position, which allows the PL to see everything and everyone. Let the APL go up front, with the map and clear instructions to stop at every junction and feature.
- Train everybody to carry as little gear as practicable. They'll enjoy it more and travel faster. Tired Scouts who are behind time can make serious mistakes in navigation.
- Start to stand back well before the Adventurer Hike. Allow the PLs and APLs to lead day and overnight hikes while leaders stay in the background. Sure - you're watching like a hawk, without being too obvious about it, and checking all kinds of things along the way, but you've got two ears, two eyes, and one mouth, and if they're used in that ratio your Scouts will become a lot more self reliant, a lot faster.
- Train, train, and retrain the PLs and APLs. Take them out for a day walk, so you can check their ability to lead and navigate. If they get it wrong, keep quiet for a while. By the time they realise there's something wrong, or you finally have to tell them, they will have to move very fast to get to the finish on time. That sort of lesson isn't quickly forgotten.
- Train the Scouts to get out of bed in the morning and get moving. They can have a bludge in the evening when they're safely in camp
- Aim to be in camp by about 4 pm. If Scouts have been on the track for 6 or 7 hours they will have done well. If there are problems, there will be some daylight in reserve. If they get in on time, there will be enough daylight to get the tents pitched and dinner at least started.

Managing the activity

First choose the area very carefully, and match it to the capability of the Scouts and the expected weather conditions.

Is there the potential for a walking group to drop off into the wrong valley ("dispersing country") or will the natural features tend to contain the Scouts ("gathering country")? This greatly influences how you structure the safety cover.

Can you set up checkpoints every few hours along the way or do leaders have to follow the Scouts? Show a bit of common sense.

If it's necessary to follow behind, stay an hour or two back. If the Scouts need you, they know where to find you.

Make sure the Scouts put in their track notes that they will leave you a message at an agreed point. It's entirely possible to provide safety cover without talking to the Scouts. A message scratched in the roadside mud or beach sand saying AOK 13:40 2 R.P. might not mean much to the average pedestrian, but it says all that needs to be said to the leaders who can then go back for another cappuccino.

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Training Scouts in Bushwalking

- A pair of binoculars can be a great help in monitoring a group without intruding on their experience of "doing it for themselves".
- Make sure the emergency plan is part of the track notes, and if necessary check it out with the Police, National Parks office, etc. For example, what are you going to do if somebody gets sick when it's a long walk to get out to the cars?
- Allow Scouts enough time to enjoy being out in the bush. Bushwalking is about a great deal more than walking quickly from A to B.
- You must know your Scouts well; particularly their fitness levels and health status, and you must be prepared to make the hard calls.

A Scout should not be excluded from a hike automatically because of an existing illness or condition, however the Bushwalking Leaders must consider the safety of the individual and party in the context of the particular walk at that particular time. They may decide that the risks at that time are simply unacceptable.

The worst case

There are few worse experiences for Leaders than waiting at the rendezvous an hour after the Scout bushwalking group is due to arrive, and there are no Scouts to be seen or heard. This generally happens late in the day, so there's not a lot of time available, and it's necessary to make the hard call.

Do you:

- Do nothing and wait?
- Go looking for them, possibly alone?
- Get backup from other leaders, etc?
- Front up to the local Police and trigger a search?

If you don't have plenty of time and capable people to immediately assist you, then the only responsible

course of action is to talk to the Police. This will most likely trigger a search involving Police and SES, with many people greatly inconvenienced, and may attract media attention.

Leaders should make themselves familiar with the Branch Incident Audit Procedure. To avoid people possibly hearing inaccurate information from ' the media, contact parents and the Scout Association immediately.

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Bushwalking gear

For personal gear (jackets, sleeping bags, mats ' etc) it is a good idea to distribute catalogues to the Scouts. Parents and grandparents find the idea of presents, which support wholesome outdoors activities quite appealing. After a cold night or a wet bushwalk, most Scouts will agree (if they ever go bushwalking again!) It may be possible to organise a discount night for the Troop at an outdoor equipment store.

Most leaders are limited in their choice of new equipment by some combination of their own experience and preferences, the existing gear in the Group, and a limited budget.

A book worth reading is *"Basic Bushwalking"* by Marcus O'Dean (ISBN0858811596, Southwood Press, Marrickville, 1998). Snowgum was selling it for under \$10, and it's highly recommended for good solid practical tips on equipment and food for bushwalking in Australia.

Where to buy gear

Scouting is a training organisation, but there's no point providing youth members with equipment, which is so valuable that damage to it seems like a disaster. However, the equipment we use must be fit for the purpose. The trick is to strike the balance.

Snowgum sells serviceable entry-level equipment, which suits Scout needs very well. If you can get similar gear at a lower cost elsewhere, be prepared to discuss pricing with Snowgum, especially if you want several items. While buying from Snowgum supports Scouting, every dollar you spend has to be raised, and the Committee will want to know that you are spending its money wisely.

Ex-hire equipment is often very good quality, and can be sold off at a large discount with years of good life left in it. Corporate clients in particular are fussy about the gear looking new as well as being functional, so equipment is turned over much faster than a Scout Group would ever consider. There are also shops which sell second-hand gear, and manufacturers' seconds / prototypes / end of run items, etc.

After many years of doing running repairs on tunnel tents and backpacks which were "cheap and cheerful" without being at the bottom of the range, we've had recent experience of second hand higher quality tents and packs. In future we'll look at recycled expensive equipment as well as new equipment from further down the price range, and then choose what's best for the planned activities. To do this, somebody needs to have the time to find the gear, the skill to recognise a good buy and reject the lemons, and the capacity to organise minor repairs if necessary.

Bushwalking gear can also be hired, especially if you are in a capital city, where the Yellow Pages will list camping equipment hire companies. Some outdoor shops also hire equipment. The costs of hiring can be lower than the cost of buying, especially if the equipment is not much used. The quality of the equipment varies between hire companies, but in some cases is very good. The main drawback is the messing around involved in collecting and returning equipment. A lesser problem is not having the equipment for training purposes in advance of the activity.

What to buy for the Q-Store

Backpacks

Only buy adjustable length backpacks. The smallest Scout could climb inside the pack, which fits the tallest Scout, so you might have to explain carefully to the Treasurer that it's most unlikely that every pack will be used on every trip. You'll need enough spares to cater for a range of body sizes. Hired packs are useful for the years when all the keen bushwalkers seem to be about the same body size.



A single compartment pack with a pocket on top of the lid and capacity of 50 to 65 litres will be about right for most Scouts, but you'll need some smaller ones for the little kids. The best fabric is good quality canvas - it's a lot more waterproof than nylon or Cordura. The harness system will have to be adjusted for length frequently, probably by the Leaders, so make sure it's user-friendly. Minimise the number of zips - they're the weakest point on the pack.

Don't rely on manufacturers' estimates of pack sizes. Several different methods are used, and some of them don't mean much in real life. If you're buying a pack,

stuff it with tents, etc, and see if it really is about the right size.

Tents

Very few tents will keep you dry if you pitch in a low spot, and a puddle forms under the tent, so the most basic rule in keeping dry in hike tents, is "don't pitch in puddles".

If your Scouts have mastered that lesson (and for some it'll take a wet night to convince them), the essential items are good poles and a waterproof flysheet. On a hike, Scouts can cope with a broken zip on the inner tent, or some tape on a hole in the floor, but a leaky fly or a broken pole can ruin the trip.

After an activity when gear has been dried, checked, and is being returned to the Q-Store, train the Scouts to roll the tent poles **INSIDE** the tent and then slip the whole lot inside the tent bag. Do not push poles, even in a pole bag, down the side of the tent bag after the tent and fly are inside. It's very easy to tear the fabric with the end of a pole, and you won't find out till the tent is next used.

There are hundreds of silver domes and tunnel tents in Scout Troops, and they work quite well. Try to buy several of the same type at the same time, so that as poles break or flysheets and inner tents get beyond repair, you can combine the remaining parts to make a "new" tent. It really is a lot easier to maintain a fleet of tents when there are as few models as practicable.

If you can afford better tents, good luck to you. If most of your camping is below the snowline, hiring snow tents for the occasional alpine trip can save a lot of money.

Stoves

Arguments rage over bushwalking stoves. Shellite explodes, kerosene stinks, metho is heavy, gas uses disposable cylinders, etc, etc. There are no ideal stoves. Most Scouts use Trangias or similar metho burning stoves for general walking but if you are going to the snow, you'll want something more technical, probably a pressure stove burning Shellite.

Trangias are stable, easy to use, and metho (although low energy for its weight) is relatively safe to handle. The billies pack inside the unit, and food or whatever can be stored in the centre.

The frypan is rather heavy, so lightweight walkers generally go without it, and use foil as a lid for the billies.

Always keep the burner (made from brass) in a plastic bag. Brass and aluminium corrode where they touch,

but the layer of plastic prevents this. Train the Scouts to wait till the burner is cold before putting on the screw cap, or the O ring will melt and fuel will leak. If up to 10% water is added to the metho it will still burn OK, but the amount of soot on the bottom of the billies will be reduced. If you wash Trangias in seawater they corrode. Aluminium and salt is a bad combination.



Standing Camps

Camping Equipment

Leaders would typically take the following equipment to a Troop standing camp, regardless of what facilities the campsite is said to offer. Every Troop will have its own ideas on equipment, but the lists below evolved over some 100-weekend activities and worked well in a wide range of circumstances (planned and unplanned).

It is a good idea to have these items set up in advance in separate containers or storage cubes. Keep an eye on use-by dates (both on food and First Aid supplies), and replace when necessary.

Car

- Tarpaulin to cover boot/back of station wagon
- Small spotlight that plugs into cigarette lighter (to find campsites in the dark)
- Large torch e.g. Dolphin
- First Aid Kit

Hardware

- Sunscreen - large pump-pack
- Insect repellent
- Multi-fit sink plugs
- Toilet paper - at least two rolls
- Soap - at least three cakes (girls' toilet, boys' toilet, QM Food)
- Bleach in squirty pack (for cleaning toilets/ showers)
- Two large scrubbing brushes (for cleaning toilets/showers)
- Rubber gloves (as above)
- Old newspaper
- Matches
- Fire starters
- Bin bags with drawstring closure (rubbish, wet boots/clothes, emergency raincoat)
- Spare battery for large torch

Welfare

- Strepsils
- Mylanta
- Box of large strong tissues
- Sanitary pads/slim tampons
- Hot water bottle
- Spare hat Spare woollen jumper
- Spare pair of baggy trousers (one size fits all)

Other

- Pencils
- Paper

Food-related equipment held at the camp Q-store

Troops vary in the degree to which Patrols store their own food, supplying their own hot water, etc.

The list below assumes central preparation of some lunches, and issue of food to Patrols for all other meals. Patrols keep their dry stores between meals, but whatever needs to be kept cold is returned to the Q-store car fridges. This is much easier to manage over 2/3 days than keeping multiple eskies supplied with ice and ensuring that they are properly cleaned each time.

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Training Scouts in Standing Camps

Items marked * should be taken in sufficient numbers to resupply patrols during the activity.

- Car fridges (see separate entry)
- Two large water containers
- Two large washing up basins for the QM food
- Washing up brushes
- Washing up liquid *
- Disposable cleaning cloth Steel wool*
- Chopping board
- Two sharp knives
- Assorted cutlery
- Two stainless steel bowls
- Large plate
- Assorted small/medium size plastic containers with screw-tops (e.g. for jam, sugar, tea)

Camping equipment permanently allocated to each Patrol

If Patrols are to be accountable for the care and maintenance of a set of equipment, they have to be given the responsibility for it. This means in practice that a Patrol needs its own box of camping gear which nobody else touches Without the Patrol's permission. Likewise if a Patrol is to be accountable for keeping their gas stove spotless, it has to be theirs' alone, and others mustn't use it without permission.

The Patrol box will become a food larder at camp, and the gear will mostly be stored on a rack, in the wood

chopping area, or by the fire, etc. Apart from the gas stove and gas cylinder, all the gear below should fit into the Patrol box.

A set of gear for a new Patrol could consist of:

- First Aid Kit
- Tomahawk
- Bush saw
- Gas stove (three burners are good)
- Gas cylinder (3 kg is a handy size)
- 2 washing up bowls (rectangular ones are a lot easier to pack)
- Camp oven irons
- Oven glove
- Billies
- Frying pan
- A plastic jug Colander
- Chopping board
- Large sharp knife (e.g. Staysharp)
- Small sharp knife
- Peeler
- Two wooden spoons
- Egg-flip
- Tongs
- Can opener

By the time equipment is wearing out and needs to be replaced, Patrols will know enough to customise the replacements to suit their own preferences. This means that as time passes, each Patrol's camping gear will

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Camping equipment not permanently allocated to each Patrol

Each Troop will have its own variations on this theme, but one system that worked well was to allocate to each Patrol the equipment listed on page 25, and manage centrally all the equipment listed below.

- Patrol tents, poles, guys, pegs, hammers, groundsheets
- Shelter tarps, ropes (to hang tarps over), poles, guys, pegs
- Stores marquees, poles, guys, pegs
- Hike tents
- 20 L drums for boiling water on fires
- Hot water ladles
- Folding benches
- Tabletops
- Trestle legs
- Water containers
- Fire buckets
- Camp ovens
- Tea tree stakes
- Rubber bands
- Large anchor pegs
- 5 m lashings
- All activities ropes
- Lanterns, mantles, fuel



Equipment for the QM Food

- Table top, trestles
- 2 washing up basins
- 2 water containers
- Triple burner gas ring (for boiling 20 L drums of hot water for central hot water)
- Gas cylinder for the triple ring burner
- Windshield for the triple ring burner (a tatty old bit of flat steel which bends around)
- Big billy to make hot chocolate or frankfurts for the whole Troop
- Troop First Aid Kit
- A possum-proof, cool and shaded place to store food
- A big tarp, under which to work

Activity equipment for the QM Gear

(The gear will depend on the planned activities)

- Full axe (not for Scouts)
- Bush saw
- Saw blades
- Spades
- Mattock
- Rake
- Posthole digger
- Canvas repair box
- "Fix it" box (see page 9)
- Ropes, hawsers, wire rope, Telecom rope
- Blocks
- Sacking to protect trees
- Wire coat hangers
- Cans to make billies
- Resuscitation mannequin
- Fire starters
- Catapult rubber
- Compasses
- Map cases
- Maps
- Fertiliser bags
- Spars

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Gear for ceremonies, award scheme, etc

- Scout record books
- Badges
- Prayer book
- Scouts' Own book
- Australian flag
- Troop flag
- Flag halyards
- Pulley

Gear for games, etc:

- Large balls
- Tennis balls
- Volleyball net
- Cricket gear
- Blindfolds
- Chalk
- Pens, pencils
- Paper
- Playing cards

Trailers

A trailer for the Troop is always a very handy addition to the gear and can be used for many jobs.

Only cage and box trailers fully support the Patrol System. The best trailer by far is about 8ft x 5ft (trailers don't come in metric), with a stock crate on top, and a fitted tarp over the whole lot. This means that Scouts can load it - the cage holds in all the gear - and good tarps don't get wrecked. As long as it is balanced correctly, slightly drawbar heavy, there's not a great deal to go wrong. Patrol Leaders can take charge of loading the gear, leaving Leaders to organise the parents who are driving to camp, distribute mud maps to drivers, fiddle with the trailer electrical connections, etc, etc.

Flat trailers hold less than box trailers, and loading them properly is a work of art. How many drivers will trust the Scouts to load a flat trailer without very close supervision? How many Patrols could do it without adult intervention? Only cage and box trailers fully support the Patrol System!

Jockey wheels enable Scouts to handle even large trailers. Please take the jockey wheel off before you drive away. When you don't, it becomes a Troop legend, and generations of Scouts will remind you about it.

If different cars are likely to tow the trailer, it's worth having a gender bender available to connect at least 7 pin round to 7 pin flat. They seem to be the most common electrical connectors.

It's worth taking a typically loaded trailer over a weigh-bridge, just to find out how much is being towed. This is important to know as overloaded trailers and trailers that are too heavy for the car can invalidate insurance policies.

Cage trailers with fitted tarps also make excellent possum-proof and well-ventilated food stores when in camp.

Food

Food

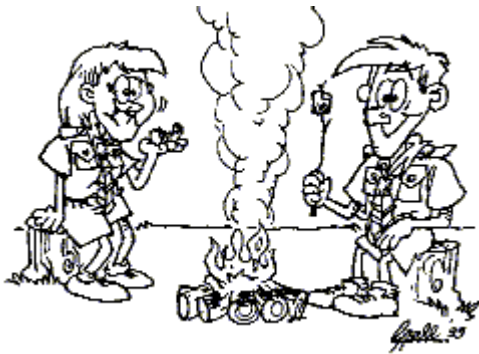
Menu selection & food purchase

Menus should be designed by each Patrol and reviewed by the Leaders at least one week before the camp to ensure a reasonably budgeted and balanced diet.

If Leaders are buying the food, depending on the availability of time/energy/cash you may choose to buy more or less in bulk. However, it is very important that Patrols are supplied separately and that they do not have to share any food or related-equipment items; you will therefore need to divide the goods accordingly.

If Scouts are buying the food it is important to check: -

- that they have a budget and stick to it
- that they have bought the agreed items
- that they cook the agreed items
- that there is sufficient quantity for all Scouts in the Patrol; and
- that the receipts and cash balance out.



Backup food

These items are not intended to be part of general stores for the weekend, but are taken to use immediately if something goes wrong with existing food/storage/supply lines or if the activity does not proceed as planned. It provides a short-term fix only. If the Scouts cremate their leg of lamb in the camp oven, they'll be grateful to have beans on toast, which can be a powerful incentive to be a bit more careful next time.

- Instant soup (i.e. quick hot drink)
- Dry crackers e.g. Salada
- Family packs of biscuits
- Sultanas
- Chocolate
- Rice/pasta
- Prepared sauces
- Beans in tomato sauce

Sample menus

How much time is spent in food preparation will depend on the purpose of the camp, the style of activities and the cooking facilities available. However cooking from basic ingredients is a useful skill, and if time is allowed for this, it can be a tremendously social activity in its own right. Under time pressure, something quick and easy is sensible.

Cordial should be available at each Patrol site at all times to encourage Scouts to keep drinking. While there should be a break to drink in both morning and afternoon, elevenses/snacks may or may not be required, depending on the menu/weather

conditions/energy expended. Fruit should be offered at least once a day; we have found that supplying cake only with fruit ensures that almost all Scouts will eat both.

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Typical standing camp menus

	Prepared from scratch	Quick & Easy
Breakfast	Pancakes French toast Scrambled eggs Bacon & eggs etc.	Cereal Toast Tinned spaghetti/beans
Lunch	Salad rolls/cake/fruit Soup	Hot dogs/cake/fruit Instant Soup
Dinner	Stir-fry & rice Kebabs & rice Spaghetti Bolognese Roast (usually rack of lamb, or chicken) and vegetables Banana Surprise (a banana split on one side, filled with choc drops and a few marshmallows, wrapped in foil and warmed gently at the edge of a fire) Tinned pudding (to be boiled) & custard Baked apples Cheesecake	BBQ anything Pre-prepared raw food e.g. stir-fry (more expensive) Pre-prepared sauces Couscous Tinned fruit & custard Prepared desserts e.g. yoghurt
Supper	Milo/Quik/biscuits/fruit	Milo/Quik/biscuits/fruit

Food

More complex menus

Obviously depending on Leader/Scout levels of skill and interest, menus can range from very basic to quite exotic.

At long camps we have often run cooking competitions, which can be set up in various ways e.g. start with the same ingredients, purchase from list of ingredients, Patrols purchase own ingredients to fixed budget and so on. This has produced some memorable meals, including entrees beautifully carved from fresh vegetables, baked garlic mushrooms, baked apples in pastry, stuffed with raisins and covered in a honey and lemon glaze, a Chinese banquet, and on one occasion, a full Christmas dinner! Some Scouts have chosen to elaborate even further, with themed meals, written

invitations, tablecloth and wildflowers, waiters in dinner jackets, menus written on tree bark, live background music.

The arrangements have been that the Scouts must all eat together, and prepare an extra plate at table for the judges. Apart from the normal criteria of teamwork and hygiene (during preparation, eating and clearing up), we would award points as for a restaurant review including such items as timing, atmosphere, and nutritional balance of the meal, presentation and taste.

Special dietary requirements

There are many reasons why Scouts may have special dietary requirements. These can include Scouts with medical conditions requiring certain foods; those who are on medically supervised exclusion diets to test for allergies; those who have specific religious beliefs; those from firmly committed vegetarian families etc. There will be some who are simply exploring the boundaries - in this case, provide them with (say) vegetarian supplies for as long as they remain consistent - if they lapse, then revert to normal arrangements. Hunger prompted by an active outdoors programme seems to overcome many minor dislikes and supposed allergies.

These requirements can all be managed, mostly within the Patrol. If stove space is at a premium, it may be best for Leaders to provide space for a billy of, say, vegetarian sauce.

Other than by such special arrangement, do not allow Scouts to bring their own personal supplies (other than a reasonable quantity of sweets), and ensure that Patrol members eat with their Patrol - after all, they chose the menu.

Examples of special food requirements are: -

REQUIREMENT	REASON	ALTERNATIVE
No dairy products	Irritable Bowel Syndrome	Soy milk/margarine
No meat	Vegetarian	Vegetarian sauce / patties / sausages
No MSG	Asthma	Read labels carefully

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Food Handling & Cleaning Up

Here are a few thoughts on handling food in various situations and the on-going job of cleaning up at the end of the camp.

Food during a total fire-ban

If possible, move stoves inside a building with a concrete floor and avoid the issue. If you know in advance that it is likely to be very hot and dry adjust menus accordingly. This means more cordial, fruit, salad, etc.

Very hot weather requires even more care than usual in handling car fridge (e.g. resupply of ice) and rubbish (Patrols deliver to a central point after each meal).

Cleaning up after meals

Each Patrol does its own thing. Washers-up are known as "Slushies", and are usually those members of the Patrol who did not cook, under the supervision of the PIJAPL. Use two washing up bowls, one with hot/warm water, and one lukewarm/cold for rinsing. Start with cleanest items and work towards the billies. Replace the water if necessary.



Until you have full confidence in your PLs, check the washing up, and if the result is unsatisfactory, ensure that the whole Patrol repeats the process until an adequate standard is achieved, even (especially) if this means missing part of the next activity.

Hang tea towels to dry under the dining-fly.

During food preparation

Either the PIL or the APL should be in charge, with up to two other Scouts assisting. The remainder of the Patrol is responsible for wood/water. Make sure the PIL rotates the jobs at each meal.

Good hygiene is essential. Patrols should wash down table-tops before any food preparation takes place. Arrange warm water and soap for the cooks to wash their hands when they collect stores, and for everyone before they eat.

One leader only should check on progress at regular intervals - too many add confusion and distract attention from the task. Ask the PL or APL how the Patrol is getting on. Remember that some Scouts have little or no experience of cooking, and need to be encouraged to understand both the fun and the risks involved.

Food

Leader food

Depends primarily on number of Leaders in camp. It is reasonable for one Leader to eat with each Patrol, and a good way of interacting informally with the Scouts, but may cramp their style if this is a permanent arrangement.

If there are several Leaders (and any parents who are not Leaders) in camp, it is better to appoint a Leaders' Chef and for the adults to eat separately.

Using eskies

While learning about eskies is a useful exercise, we have found that Leader time taken in maintaining a supply of ice is generally better spent elsewhere over a normal weekend.

On a longer, say 7-day camp it is good training for each Patrol to have its own esky.

However you do it, the basics are straightforward: -

Keep eskies in shade
Drain eskies regularly (say each morning)
Open as little as possible
Keep meat in one esky away from everything else
Minimise empty space

Cleaning eskies

With care, even old eskies can be sparkling clean, but too many are very grubby indeed. Not only is this a poor example to the Scouts, it's also unhygienic and potentially a source of illness in camp.

Nobody is very keen to clean an esky when they get back from camp. If half a bucket of water and half a cup of bleach is left in the fridge it will be a great deal easier to clean when you get round to it (say the next Troop night, or the weekend after the camp). Don't leave it too long - the metal fittings such as screws holding the hinges on are inclined to corrode with the bleach vapours.

Any liquid cleaner and a scrubbing brush, and some elbow grease will clean the outside and inside of the esky. Don't put bleach plus water, or the cleaner and wash water on the garden - it's not very good for plants.

When the esky is clean, dry it well and store it somewhere clean.

At the end of a camp

- Make sure that your PLs have been trained to:
- Return all food to the Q-store
- Remove all cleaning cloths etc. from the Patrol boxes
- Return all wet tea-towels to their owners
- Ensure that Patrol box is clean inside (e.g. no spilled jam)
- Ensure that all equipment in the Patrol box is clean and dry
- Record missing/damaged items

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Camp Oven Cooking

Scouts get a huge thrill out of making a roast leg of lamb, with roast vegetables, in a camp oven. It also tastes great. There are lots of recipes, and if you are camping anywhere with timber (mulga, ironbark, red gum, etc), which forms good hot coals, it's an experience to be remembered. Forget it unless you can get the right timber.

"Outback cooking in the camp oven" by Jack and Reg Absalorn (ISBN 0 86788 006 6, The Five Mile Press, Hawthorn, Victoria, 1982) is a great reference. There are also Web pages about camp ovens or Dutch ovens (same thing).

What kind of oven?

Choose the oven carefully - many of those sold in disposal stores have lids which don't fit tightly and they don't keep in the heat very well. Pick out one with a tight fitting lid which doesn't rock around. Furphy (Shepparton, Victoria) make an excellent cast iron oven.

Bedourie ovens are made from steel, and don't break when dropped, but don't hold the heat so well.

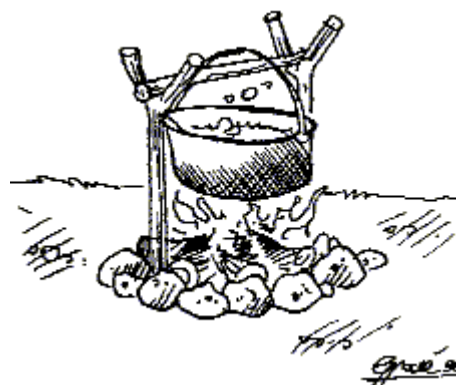
Care and maintenance of camp ovens

Like new cast iron kitchen gear, new cast iron ovens should be seasoned to reduce the tendency of food to stick to them. Buy a couple of litres of vegetable oil, and boil it up **VERY CAREFULLY** in the oven. We once did this to a brand new Furphy oven but we got distracted.

The oil boiled over, into the fire, and the lid was forced off by the commotion inside. The Troop watched in awe, as the new oven became the source of a 3-metre pillar of fire and smoke. You have been warned! Be very careful!

To clean a messy oven (e.g. after roasting meat), put it on the fire and burn out the remains. If the oven is clean inside (e.g. after making an apple pie), just leave it to cool. It shouldn't be necessary to wash camp ovens. When cold, wipe ovens inside with vegetable oil to prevent rusting. Don't put cold water in a hot oven, as it will crack.

Cast iron ovens have to be transported with care, as the iron is brittle. Nest a couple inside each other, and put the whole lot in a tight fitting box. Put an old tea towel or whatever between each oven or lid so that metal isn't bearing on metal. Bedourie ovens need less care in transport but more in cooking, so take your pick.



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Camp Oven Cooking

Camp oven irons

Camp oven irons best handle hot camp ovens. These can be easily made by Patrols from 6 mm steel rod and light chain from the hardware store. The Patrol will also need a source of heat to get the steel hot enough to bend, and some pliers, hammers, gloves, etc.

The camp oven irons consist of a pair of steel rods, about 50 or 60 cm finished length. Each rod has a hook about the size and shape of a hike tent peg hook, at one end. The other ends are linked together by about 30 cm of light chain. Camp oven irons allow large hot ovens to be safely handled, lids to be lifted easily, and are very handy for stirring the fire or pushing burning sticks around. Store them in the fire bucket when they're not in use.

Estimating the temperature in a camp oven

The objective is to cook the food, not incinerate it, but Scouts sometimes forget this. After getting the oven hot on the fire, and putting it on a prepared bed of coals, and a shovel full more on top, you're about ready to start cooking. How hot is the oven? Absalom uses this test, which works pretty well:

Place a piece of paper (the corner of a page of newspaper is OK) inside the oven to find out how hot it is. Put the lid back on. After a couple of minutes take it out and look at it. The table below gives some guidance to the heat of the oven.

If the oven's not hot enough, put it back on the fire, or add coals. If too hot, remove some coals.

Paper looks like	Oven heat	Approximate temperature in degrees C	Approximate temperature in degrees F
Black or burning	Too bloody hot		
Dark brown	Very hot oven	240	500
Light brown	Hot oven	200	375-400
Yellow	Moderate oven	180	325-375
Dry /crusty	Slow oven	150	250-325

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