



Winter Activities

Winter Camping Safety

There is magic to camping in winter. It is one of the most challenging of outdoor adventures. The Boy Scouts of America operates the National Cold-Weather Camping Development Center at Northern Tier through the Okpik program. Special considerations for winter camping are:

1. **Qualified Supervision.** It is vital that a leader be an experienced winter camper with strong character and common sense.
2. **Equipment.** Be completely outfitted for cold weather. Equipment should be checked to ensure good condition for the activity and proper maintenance while in use. Youth should be adequately clothed, and blankets should be a suitable quality and weight.
3. **Physical Fitness.** Youth should be suitably fit for the activity. Periodic rests while building snow caves and engaging in other strenuous cold-weather activities will help prevent accidents and overheating.
4. **Buddy System.** Having Youth paired aids in monitoring each other's physical condition and observation of surroundings and circumstances.
5. **Planning.** Safe activities follow a plan that has been conscientiously developed. In winter, plan to cover no more than 5 miles per day on snowshoes or 10 to 12 miles on cross-country skis. Allow ample time to make it to camp at the end of the day.
6. **Safe Area.** Leaders should determine whether an area for winter camping is well-suited and free of hazards.
7. **Weather Check.** Weather conditions, potential hazards, and the appropriate responses should be understood and anticipated. Go to my.scouting.org for Hazardous Weather training.
8. **Burning.** Never use flames in tents, teepees, or snow shelters. This includes burning any solid, liquid, gel, or gas fuel; using features of tents or teepees that support stoves or fires; and use of chemical-fueled equipment and catalytic heaters.
9. **Discipline.** Rules are effective only when followed. All participants should know, understand, and respect the rules and procedures for a safe winter camping experience. Applicable rules should be discussed prior to the outing and reviewed for all participants when leaving for the winter campout.