



# Troop 1518 Guidance for Camping

## **Electronic devices - game players, CD players, iPods, mp3 players, walkman, radios, etc.**

The Troop and adult leaders cannot accept responsibility for a Scout's electronic devices. Electronic devices are a distraction from the purpose of Scout camp which is to enjoy and experience the outdoors, to learn Scouting skills, and to make friends.

Scout summer camps prohibit all types of electronic devices including cell phones. Scouts usually travel to and from summer camp by bus. Once at camp, an electronic device can easily be lost or ruined. They run out of battery power rather quickly. Younger Scouts tend to misplace their possessions and drop things. Rain, temperature and changing humidity can quickly ruin expensive electronics as camping is done outdoors and a Scout's shelter is a tent. Camps do not provide electricity to recharge batteries. Rechargeable electronic devices become dead weight when the batteries are discharged. There is no place to safely store these devices until the return home.

On Troop outings, most travel is by private vehicle. The use of an electronic device in a private vehicle is at the discretion of the driver and permission must be obtained by the Scout before the trip. Upon arrival at the destination, electronic devices should be turned off and left in the vehicle if the vehicle is staying or given to the Scout's parent if the parent is staying.

Cell phones are a type of electronic device designed for communication. Although discouraged, a Scout may have good reasons for having a cell phone. The cautions above are also valid for cell phones. For summer camp, younger Scouts and first time campers are especially discouraged from bringing a cell phone. Many Scout camps do not have cell phone connectivity or limited connectivity at best. Younger Scouts often experience homesickness. Calling home can make the homesickness and separation anxiety more intense. Without a cell phone, a Scout will look to his tent buddy, other patrol members or Scouts in the Troop. The daily activities and shared experiences will usually overcome homesickness.

Digital cameras are a wonderful way to record a Scout's adventures. Digital cameras share the same problems as other electronic devices. Disposable film cameras may be a safer alternative for younger Scouts. Raft and canoe trips are especially destructive on cameras. More than one Scoutmaster has "lost" a camera after falling into a river.

## **Snacks**

Scouts are discouraged from bringing snacks and other personal food items. The availability of "food" attracts a variety of critters from the small (insects and mice) to the large (bears, deer, and horses). Summer camps provide a chuck box for food storage if the Troop is cooking its own meals. High adventure outings and Venturing Crews are equipped with bear bags for food storage.

Even small critters can make a mess out of a pack and a tent. Stinging insects can make a camping trip into a less than pleasant experience. Mice will chew through a pack to get food. Mice have made nests in packs. Sweet odors from something spilled on skin or clothing will attract bees. Deodorants can also attract bees and wasps.

Arrangements will be made for Scouts with special dietary requirements. The Scout and his parents will need to make those requirements known to the Scoutmaster (SMIC) in charge of an activity. The SMIC will make arrangements when Troop cooking is being done. When Patrol cooking is going to be done, the Scout must also make his needs known to the Patrol and Patrol Advisor when the Patrol is planning its menu for the activity. Parents should never assume that telling one SMIC will inform all the Troop's Scoutmaster and ASMs. See the item on food allergies below.

## **Edged tools – knives, axes, saws, etc.**

BSA rules prohibit Scouts from having sheath knives and any type of knife with a blade longer than 3 and 1/2 inches in length.

A Scout may carry a pocketknife but cannot use, display, or handle a knife or other edged tool until the Scout has earned his "Totin Chip". The permission to carry a pocketknife allows a Scout to have his personal pocketknife for learning and only for learning about edged tools in a learning environment, i.e., a class. A Scout is awarded the "Totin Chip" when he has learned and demonstrated the proper handling (when, where and how), the use and care of edged tools and has

accepted the responsibilities attached to having and using edged tools. The misuse of an edged tool can cause a Scout to lose his "Totin Chip" and the permission to use or handle edged tools.

### **Fires and fire starting materials – matches, "hot sparks", butane lighters, cigarette lighters, etc.**

BSA rules prohibit Scouts from having or using any liquid / chemical fuels or materials except under adult supervision. At no time are open flames permitted within tents. This probation also extends to using propane camp stoves and lanterns in tents.

Scouts must earn the "Fireman Chit" before carrying and using matches. For the "Fireman Chit" a Scout learns when, where and how to properly use matches and other fire starting materials. He also learns and accepts the duties and responsibilities attached to having a fire. These duties and responsibilities extend to the proper use and handling of a variety of camping stoves and lanterns.

### **Food when traveling to / from campouts**

The Troop generally does not provide for a meal while traveling to a campout. Scouts are expected to either have eaten before departure or to bring a sack meal. The sack meal is usually eaten after arrival at the campsite and the camp is set up. The specific arrangements for each outing are determined by the Scoutmaster in charge (SMIC) of the outing after consideration for time of travel and where the Troop is going. Meals are only eaten in private vehicles with the permission of the driver.

When returning from the campout, the SMIC will determine if a food stop will be made. If a stop is indicated, the parents of the Scout will need to provide the amount of money needed for the Scout's meal.

### **Uniforms while traveling to / from an activity**

The Troop generally travels in Class "A" uniform shirt. When in uniform, Scouts are easily identified if and when the Troop stops for a rest stop or a food break. The Scoutmaster in charge (SMIC) of the activity can and often will modify the uniform rules according to the nature of the activity. For some activities, the Troop will travel in its Class "B" T-shirt.

### **Raingear and damp weather conditions**

A Scout should always "Be Prepared". Weather conditions can quickly change during an activity. For hikes and campouts, a Scout must bring appropriate raingear. Raingear can be a waterproof poncho or rain suit (separate pants and jacket). A waterproof or water-resistant nylon jacket may serve during the summer when temperatures are warm to hot.

When temperatures are cool to cold a nylon jacket will not suffice as a jacket does not protect below the waist. Wet and cold clothing can lead to hyperthermia.

The Troop recommends that a Scout should have and use clothing made from synthetic materials. Products such as Gore-Tex are known for the ability to shed water. The retail market has a variety of synthetic based clothing that wicks moisture away from the body. This can help keep a Scout cooler and dryer in the summer and warmer and dryer in the winter than products based on cotton.

Although plastic garbage bags have been used as emergency raingear, the bags are not proper raingear.

### **Footgear**

All Scouts should have a pair of hiking boots (preferably water-resistant) for use on camping trips and hikes. Hiking boots provide support for the ankle and protection for the feet on a trail or around a campsite. Often in the early morning, the grassy areas around a campsite can be wet with dew. Hiking boots will help to keep the feet dry.

Trail shoes can be a good alternative to hiking boots as trail shoes are specifically manufactured for rough use. Many trail shoes are water-resistant.

*Sneakers, even well worn comfortable ones, do not provide the support or protection that a Scout's feet need on a hike or campout. Sneakers tend to get quite wet during rain or in the mornings from dew. Wet feet can lead to blisters and other foot problems. During cold weather, sneakers do not keep a Scout's feet warm.*

*Open toed shoes, such as sandals, flip flops, and beach shoes, are not allowed as no protection is provided for a Scout's feet. Sticks, thorns, rocks, and other hazards can cut or puncture toes and feet if they are not protected.*

*Socks are also an important part of footgear. Socks should be matched to the type of activity and the temperature range expected to be experienced during the activity. Old and worn out socks often lead to blisters. Socks can be high tech synthetics, wool, cotton, or blends. Cushioning, moisture wicking, support, thickness, and warmth for cold weather activities should be considered when purchasing socks.*

## **Cold weather camping**

*Scouts should always "Be Prepared" for the temperatures experienced during different seasons of the year. Cold temperatures, especially at night, can be experienced from early October to late April. Colder temperatures exist in the mountains than in the "warmer" areas around our homes. Ski trips are scheduled for locations with snow and cold weather conditions. Misery comes naturally. It does not need training. A Scout who is cold or has frozen feet is not happy.*

*Periodically, the Troop has instruction on cold weather camping and what to wear.*

*A Scout needs to be dressed appropriately. Hiking boots with heavier socks will keep feet warmer than sneakers with cotton athletic socks. Synthetic underwear that wicks moisture will keep a Scout dryer and warmer. Layering clothing allows the Scout to keep warm without sweating or freezing as layers can be added or removed. Hats and gloves should always be brought for cold weather camping.*

*A good synthetic sleeping bag rated for 20 degrees F or lower is necessary for nights. Sleeping in a tent is warmer than sleeping without a tent. Two or more Scouts sharing a tent will keep the tent warmer than sleeping with one Scout in a tent. Additional clothing allows the Scout to have dry clothing to change into before sleeping or to use as insulation.*

*The emphasis on proper cold weather clothing is to keep a Scout warm and dry while avoiding hyperthermia and frostbite.*

## **Troop departure times**

*A Scout should arrive at the time requested by the Troop or early if additional paperwork needs to be turned in to the Scoutmaster in charge (SMIC) or special arrangements need to be made. Upon arrival, a Scout needs to check in with the SMIC, turn in any necessary paperwork including permission forms, finish paying fees, report to the assigned vehicle and driver, stow gear in the assigned vehicle, etc. Late arrivals delay the Troop's departure plans and create uncertainty if a Scout will not be going on the activity.*

*If a Scout will not be going on an activity, the SMIC should be notified as early as possible.*

*If a Scout will be arriving or departing separately from the Troop, the SMIC should be notified as early as possible. When a SMIC is planning an activity, the SMIC needs to arrange for the Troop's transportation needs. If a Scout or several Scouts are traveling separately, it can make a difference in the number of vehicles needed and the information required to be filed by the SMIC for a BSA travel permit. Upon arrival or at departure, the Scout and parent need to contact the SMIC so that the SMIC knows the Scout has arrived or departed.*

## **Family participation**

*Parents are encouraged to participate in the activities of the Troop. Going on the same campout with the Troop and your Scout leads to memories cherished by your Scout and yourself. Siblings are welcome on most campouts. Parents are responsible for any siblings brought on a campout or to an activity. Where restrictions exist on the accommodations or activity, Scouts have preference over any others and any others must meet the same requirements as the Scouts.*

## **Medications**

*All medications that a Scout needs to bring to an activity or a camping trip should be in the original prescription containers and in a plastic Ziploc type bag with the Scout's and Patrol's names on the bag. For summer camp, the Troop number also needs to be on the bag. A Sharpie pen should be used to write the bag. The number of items in the bag and the prescription names should also be on the bag. All medication should be turned in to the Scoutmaster in charge (SMIC) before the activity or campout. BSA summer camps require that all medications be turned in to the camp for dispensing. If a Scout needs medical attention on the activity, the SMIC or summer camp can then provide information on what medications a Scout has taken.*

*For special situations, the parent needs to discuss with the SMIC. The use of Asthma and other inhalers are examples of what needs to be discussed with the SMIC. If necessary, a parent may need to come on the activity to insure that their Scout receives the proper medications on the correct time schedule.*

*A campout, especially summer camp, is not the time or place for a Scout to be changing medications or stopping a medication.*

## **Food allergies**

*A parent needs to make it known to the ASM of their Scout's Patrol and to the Scoutmaster in charge (SMIC) of an activity about any food allergies that their Scout may have. Younger Scouts often forget to mention critical information to those who need to know. This information is necessary when planning meals and before food is purchased.*

*If the food allergies are severe enough, the parents of a Scout may need to provide appropriate food for their Scout.*

## **Identification of a Scout's possessions**

*All Scout handbooks should have the Scout's name clearly written on the outside edges. Almost all clothing and gear have tabs or a spot which are large enough to have the Scout's name discretely attached or affixed. Sharpie pens come in a variety of colors, as well as black, and are a good means for writing a Scout's name on his clothing and gear. Scout's frequently get separated from their possessions and proper identification allows the Troop to return the gear.*

## **Returning from activities and campouts**

*The Troop either delivers Scouts to their homes or drops off Scouts in the parking lot next to the SUMC chapel.*

*When a Troop returns a Scout to their house, a parent or older sibling should be home to greet their Scout. If a parent or sibling will not be home, the Scout should have a means to get into the house. The Troop will not leave a Scout sitting alone on the edge of a driveway. A Scout needs to know their address and where their house is located. It is very hard for the Troop to return a Scout to their house if the Scout cannot provide direction to where they live.*

*When the Troop is dropping off Scouts at the parking lot next to SUMC, a parent needs to be at the parking lot to receive their Scout. The Troop posts the arrival time before the activity begins and makes an effort to contact parents while on the way home. The Troop will not leave a Scout alone in the parking lot.*