



## Novice's guide to camping

This guide is designed to support Leaders taking their Units away to residential events where an experienced licence holder is organising the event (an umbrella event) and it is assumed that the necessary paperwork, catering, First Aid and activities are being organised centrally.

### Clothing

If you are outside, you will have little protection from the elements and if you get cold and/or wet it is difficult to get dry & warm without centrally heated houses. Prevention is better than cure!

Ensure campers wear warm clothing: - socks, hats & gloves are handy, even in bed!

Jeans are very difficult to dry and when wet the wind blows through them; they also rub when walked in - best to be avoided in wet weather.

Coats need to be properly waterproof - not just shower-proof. Waterproof over-trousers are a great asset if you already have them but probably not worth investing in unless you are camping regularly. It is a good idea for Leaders to bring spare waterproof coats for those who forget!

Ensure coats are done up and hoods/hats are worn in wet weather or clothes will get wet and you don't want anyone to go to bed with wet hair or they'll be cold. Hoodie jumpers should be under the waterproof coat to avoid the hood getting wet.

If it is warm & wet, campers may prefer shorts & walking sandals - legs are easier to dry than trousers.

In hot weather, ensure that shoulders are covered to avoid sunburn - no vest tops.

### Footwear

Shoes need to be sturdy - trainers, walking boots or walking sandals are good. Flip flops and fashion sandals must be avoided. Wellington boots or waterproof walking boots are essential for camping; even if it doesn't rain, the grass is likely to be very wet from overnight dew and on campsites is often fairly long.

Trousers should be rolled up or tucked into boots to avoid soggy bottoms.

Never let anyone walk around the field without shoes on.

Enclosed shoes, not sandals, should be worn around open fires.



## Nightwear / bedding

It can be very cold at night even in the summer. It's much better to bring too much bedding than too little.

Campers need warm pyjamas. An extra jumper, bed-socks & hat are to be recommended. Dressing gowns and slippers are superfluous at camp.

A warm sleeping bag is essential plus extra blankets or a second sleeping bag for added warmth. There should be as much bedding underneath as on top so fold blankets around the sleeping bag.

A foam sleeping mat can be bought very cheaply and helps both the bumps and for warmth. Air filled mattresses however, take up a lot of space in a tent and are awkward to inflate.

Leaders are recommended to bring a set of spare bedding in case of accidents, damp or cold.

## Tents

Check with the organisers what tents they are expecting you to bring. The girls may have their own tents if your Unit doesn't own any or you may be able to borrow some.

Festival tents are generally not waterproof and are therefore unsuitable.

Ensure tents are thoroughly dry before packing away or they will quickly rot. If it is wet when you pack up you will need to dry the tent as soon as you return home. It is advisable to make contingency plans before the camp to arrange a suitable space to do this.

Remember that one adult may not share a sleeping space with girls (unless they are related).

It is a good idea to practice putting up the tent in your meeting place before the camp, especially if it is dark and/or wet when you arrive. Ensure that all the tent bags are stored safely inside the tent.

A rubber mallet to knock in pegs and a dustpan & brush to sweep out the inside are useful additions if using lightweight tents.

If you are using lightweight tents, ensure there is a gap between the inner & outer tents - if they are touching each other, the tent will not be waterproof.

Ensure the porch groundsheet is well inside the tent as moisture will run down the tent and onto the groundsheet and girls will get up to a swimming pool.

If you are using ridge tents, it is important that groundsheets are used to cover the whole floor of the tent and placed over the sod cloth (the hessian or canvas material at



the bottom of the sides). This will ensure that rain doesn't come in through the bottom of the tent. Be particularly careful at the doors that the groundsheets don't stick out the bottom and that the doors are done up. Tip: Lay all the groundsheets out first before unrolling the sleeping bags.

If it is wet and before you go to bed, rope guy-lines on ridge tents should be slightly loosened as they shrink when wet.

If you are sleeping on a hill, place sleeping bags so your head is uphill or side-wards and lay the sleeping bags as far uphill as possible so there is some room to slide before falling out of the tent.

Ensure that no-one touches the roof or side of the tent themselves or with their belongings as this will make it leak.

Do not hang anything from the inside of your tent - only use the pockets provided. No-one should walk on groundsheets or bedding with shoes on - it brings in mud and damages the groundsheet - either remove them at the door (and place in the porch or just inside the tent) or crawl on hands & knees.

Highlight the dangers to girls of running around tents - tripping over guy ropes can cause personal injury and damage to tents.

## Sleeping

Put bedding out & sort out nightwear before it gets dark if possible.

It is very dark in the countryside; campers will need torches and should be reminded to get them out before dusk.

Ensure warm drinks or food are offered before going to bed, but not too much to avoid too many toilet trips.

Encourage campers to go to the toilet before going to bed.

Encourage everyone to put waterproof coats, boots & torches handy (by the tent door or at the end of the bed) in case they need to get up - and to put them on!

Noise carries at night and canvas isn't sound-proof! Check what time silence is expected and adhere to it. You will be expected to supervise your own girls.

Likewise, in the summer, it can get light as early as 4am. Warn the girls that because it is light it is not necessarily time to get up and others will be upset if woken early.

Before going to bed and if it starts raining during the night, Leaders should check the tents are all waterproof i.e. the inner & outer of the tents are not touching, the doors are shut, groundsheets, belongings & girls are not outside the tent and nothing is touching the side of the tent. Loosen rope guy-lines on ridge tents.

Make sure all clothes are put away in bags and bags are zipped up.



## General

Don't sit directly on the grass; use a sitter, even a carrier bag or a plastic bag with a newspaper inside will protect against getting damp.

Pick up all rubbish and dispose of carefully.

Do not wash-up or clean teeth under a running tap, it wastes water and causes muddy patches; use containers to collect water and take to the washing-up area.

Empty washing-up water through a 'grease-pit' (a colander lined with grass and sited in the bushes) so that greasy food waste doesn't cause smelly areas.

Ensure all food is covered or in containers, sweets or food in tents attract insects & wildlife.

Do not allow naked flames or smoking in or around tents as it can result in a fire risk.