

Good gear is essential for your son's safety and comfort when participating on troop campouts. The troop provides tents, tarps, lanterns, cook stoves, stove fuel, ice chests, water containers, food containers, cooking utensils, pots, pans, etc.

It is the boy's responsibility to have a sleeping bag & pad, personal mess kit & utensils, water bottle, flashlight, proper clothing for the season, rain gear, personal hygiene items, personal first aid kit, and a backpack to carry all the gear in.

Most of the above items can be found around your home or are relatively inexpensive. The more expensive items should be purchased only after doing some research. Camping gear makes great Christmas & birthday gifts however it is recommended that your son earn some or all of the money to purchase these items. It will instill a sense of value and you son will take better care of the items if he has worked to purchase them. Also, money earning tasks such as cooking and dishwashing are valuable skills on campouts.

Do your homework, know what you want and don't be in a hurry; you might catch the item you need on a clearance sale.

Below are some guidelines for the more expensive items.

Sleeping Bags – Consider a low priced bag for the first year of scouting.

Cotton-filled rectangular bag – This type of bag can be purchased at Target or Wal-Mart for \$29 to \$39. They are good for summer camp and camping where the campsite is within easy walking distance from the parking lot. This type bag is not good for backpacking or cold, wet, winter camping. This type of bag is heavy, about 5 lbs., and bulky and usually warm only to about 40 degrees. It will not keep you warm if wet, and if wet takes a long time to dry.

Synthetic-filled mummy bag – If your son has been in scouts for one year or more and has been on 6 or more campouts and has a continued interest in camping then you should consider upgrading to a synthetic filled mummy bag. This type of bag is essential for backpacking trips where all gear must be carried for several miles. A synthetic bag will usually weigh from 3 to 4 lbs. and when rolled up be about half the size of a cotton-filled bag. This type of bag is usually found at stores like Sports Authority, REI, Dick's Sporting goods, and internet shopping sites like www.rei.com or www.campmor.com. Youth bags that are rated to 30 degrees can be found from \$39 to \$89 and will accommodate persons up to 5 feet tall. Regular size bags start at about \$69 and go up to well over \$100. Generally, the lighter the bag is for the same degree of warmth the higher the price. A 30 degree rated bag with a liner (see **Use a Liner** below) is normally what a scout needs for year-round comfort.

Down-filled mummy bag – Down filled bags are the lightest and least bulky for the amount of warmth, however they do not keep you warm if wet and they are by far the most expensive. For these reasons down filled bags are not recommended for scouts.

Use a liner – It is recommended your son have a liner for his sleeping bag. A liner can be made from an old cotton or flannel sheet. It will increase the warmth and allow the bag to be used in both warmer and cooler conditions. In warmer conditions your son can sleep on top of the bag inside the liner; if it turns cooler in the night just slip into the bag. In cooler conditions the liner plus the bag will increase the bag's warmth. Additionally the liner keeps the inside of the bag much cleaner.

Sleeping Pads

Blue closed-cell pads can be purchased at Wal-Mart for about \$10. This type pad is light, inexpensive and practically indestructible. This is the pad a scout needs. More expensive closed cell pads can be purchased at sporting goods stores for about \$29. Self-inflating pads start at about \$39 and go over \$100. When inflated they are thicker than closed-cell pads but they weigh more and are subject to puncture.

Backpacks

There are two types of backpacks, internal frame and external frame. Both have a waist belt that supports the weight on your hips, not your shoulders. Both types are fine for scouts. A good backpack can be found starting at about \$69. Like shoes, a person can outgrow a backpack. For youth that weigh less than 100 lbs you may need to buy an inexpensive youth backpack for about \$40 then upgrade in a few years. Again, Sports Authority, REI, Target (small selection), and Wal-Mart are good places to start shopping. If you know what you want and have tried on backpacks in the store you might want to do some shopping on the internet. REI has very knowledgeable sales people. They also have weights you can put inside a pack to fit and try it with a load. Sports Authority may or may not have a knowledgeable sales person and at Target and Wal-Mart you are on your own! There are two REI stores close by. One is near Perimeter Mall, the other in Kennesaw near Town Center Mall. For non-backpacking camping trips a military surplus duffel bag is ideal for carrying personal gear. For summer camp a foot locker that can be locked with a padlock is required. Plastic foot lockers are available for about \$35.

The backpack below from Campmor.com is ideal for scouts and is reasonably priced at \$39.99 on 10/30/2013

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A Foot locker is required for Summer Camp. The storage locker shown below is from Wal-Mart (\$34.97) on 10/30/2013.

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