

## Selecting a Campsite

A campsite should be selected according to the purpose and requirements of the trip. For example, if you plan to cook a meal in an established fireplace or fire scar, make sure the site has one.

- Arrive in plenty of time to set up the campsite before it is time to eat or before it gets dark.
- Locate the bathrooms, water supply, sleeping area, tent pitching area, fire scar, and other features.
- Unload equipment in an organized manner so nothing gets lost. Determine what will be needed right away and what can be stored for later.

*A campsite should have the following areas:*

### Sleeping Area

- Check for natural hazards such as game trails, anthills and overhanging dead trees.
- Check for drainage. Set up camp in a high area where rainwater cannot collect.
- Check the terrain. If there is a slope, make sure everyone sleeps with their heads higher than their feet.
- Check wind direction. The site should be protected from the wind and at least ten feet upwind from the cooking area. During warm weather, the tent or other shelter should face into the wind for a breeze.
- Decide if you want the sun to hit your tent early in the morning or in late afternoon.
- Check to make sure the site is private and protected from intruders.
- Make sure the site is accessible to medical services.
- After choosing the sleeping area, remove rocks and sticks. Avoid digging up stones or lopping off small bushes.

### Cooking and Eating Area

- Set up 200 feet from a water source to reduce the hazard of polluting it.
- Set up the cooking and eating areas near each other for convenience.
- Set up away from sleeping area. Insects and animals are attracted to food.
- Make sure the fire area is cleared of debris, overhead and on the ground, in at least a six-foot radius.

### Program Activity Area

- The size of the area will depend on the type of activities planned.
- Where possible, keep it away from fire and sleeping areas.

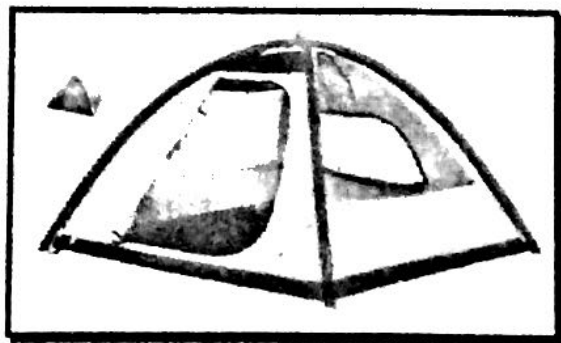
### Latrine Area

- Check for permanent latrines near site. Most camps and parks have them.
- If there are no permanent latrines, a site should be selected several hundred feet from main camp area.
- The site should be downhill from water source, 50 feet from any trails, and in an area with trees and low shrubs for privacy.
- Set up a hand washing station downhill from the water source.

## Tent Usage and Care

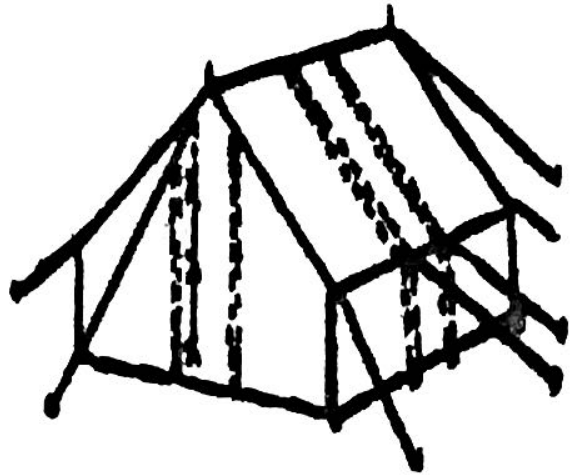
### Choosing Your Tent:

- How often will you use it?
- How many people will be in each tent?
- How much room, including headroom, is necessary for each person?
- How will it be transported? (Backpacking by car...)
- In what weather conditions will you camp?
- How easy should the set-up be?
- How is the construction? (Ideally, breathable fabric, durable zippers, stakes and poles in separate bags to protect the tent body.)



**Tent Care:**

- Dry it thoroughly after each trip.
- Always use a ground cloth.
- Review site selection criteria.
- Do not pitch near fire or flames.
- Do not use fire/flames inside the tent. This includes candles, lanterns and cigarettes.
- Do not use aerosols near the tent (ruins the waterproofing).
- Do not touch the inside of a wet tent (This breaks surface tension and causes leakage).
- Do not leave mirrors or metal dishes exposed in the tent. The reflected light can start a fire or melt fabric.
- Fix any problems before they grow to be bigger ones.
- Never hang anything on guy ropes or tie ropes. It pulls the tent out of line.
- Roll door flaps toward the inside of the tent—so they can be let down from the inside. This also prevents water from catching in the roll.
- Never roll door flaps unless completely dry. Damp canvas will mildew rapidly when not open to the air.
- Never use insect spray or other types of sprays near or in a tent. The chemicals dissolve the water repellent treatment.
- Do not pin anything to the wall of a tent. This causes tears and leaking.
- Do not write anything on the tent or poles.
- Tie ropes (ties) in a half bow so they can be untied when wet. There's nothing like a wet, tight knot to encourage the cutting or tearing of ties.
- Report all small tears, missing ropes, damage to ropes, stakes, canvas, tapes, etc., at once. This keeps repairs minor.
- Secure all parts of tent at all times. No portion should be loose and allowed to flap in the wind.
- Utilize all guy ropes equally to reduce the strain on each one and do not pull them too tightly. The tent should take proper shape, not be stretched abnormally.
- No clothes should be hung on guy ropes.
- Keep the tent floor well swept.
- Loosen guy ropes during wet weather to allow for shrinkage without straining on canvas or ropes.

**Hints:**

- Pitch your tent before the trip; try out any unfamiliar equipment and make sure all parts are present.
- Plan for on-the-spot repairs (patch kit/spare parts).
- Use seam sealant as recommended by the manufacturer.
- Roll excess ground cloth underneath to avoid creating a pond under the tent.
- Don't wear shoes inside the tent.
- Keep the instructions/care inserts with the tent.
- Borrow or rent tents and equipment from other troops/groups to avoid buying something you don't like. You can buy later if you like the item and are going to use it!