

## THE BUDDY SYSTEM

The buddy system is when two Cub Scouts work together, share, and keep each other safe. Your den leader decides how buddies are paired. If there is an odd number of Cub Scouts, you can have a buddy group of no more than three.

Having a buddy is especially important when you are doing an activity outdoors, particularly near or on the water.

When you have a buddy, you are not to let your buddy out of your sight. As buddies you are friends, so remember the points of the Scout Law to be friendly, courteous, and kind to each other. You keep each other safe by following any rules or instructions for the activity.



## THE SCOUT BASIC ESSENTIALS

The Scout Basic Essentials can make every outdoor adventure better. In an emergency, they can help you get out of a jam.

### POCKETKNIFE

As an Arrow of Light Scout, you must complete the Knife Safety Adventure before you may carry a pocketknife, even if you completed the Whittling Adventure as a Bear Cub Scout and/or the Chef's Knife Adventure as a Webelos. A pocketknife truly is a multipurpose tool with hundreds of uses. It can cut a rope, open a can, whittle a tent stake, punch a hole in a belt, or slice a biscuit for breakfast at a campsite. It's also handy for tightening a screw on a pack frame or camp stove and for making wood shavings to start a fire. Pocketknives come in a variety of sizes and styles. A good general-use pocketknife has a can opener, a screwdriver, and one or two blades for cutting, but some knives also include scissors, magnifying glasses, and other tools. A multitool is an elaborate version of the pocketknife that unfolds to reveal a dozen or more tools. Bigger is not always better. On most campouts, you're unlikely to need a wire stripper, magnifying glass, hex screwdriver, or fish scaler — and it's not much fun to carry around a knife

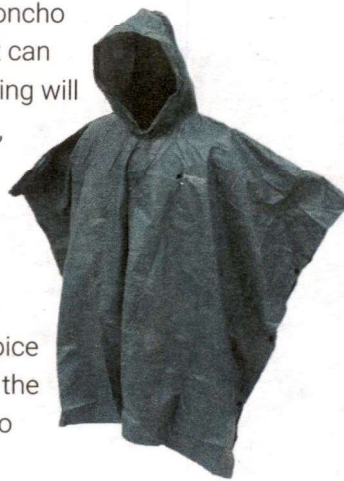


that weighs half a pound. When you join a Scouts BSA troop, you will be required to earn the Totin' Chip before you can use a pocketknife during a Scouting activity. The Totin' Chip requirements also include knowing and understanding the proper use of a saw and axe.

## RAIN GEAR

Even when there is no chance of rain, you should pack rain gear. Like your other Scout Basic Essentials, you should always have them packed and ready to go. Staying dry in the outdoors is an important part of being comfortable and having a good time. Wearing or carrying rain gear such as a poncho or rain parka, rain pants, gaiters, and a hat can also add to your safety, because dry clothing will keep you much warmer than shirts, pants, and jackets that have become wet.

**Poncho** — A poncho is a waterproof cape that can protect you from summer rains. Because a poncho is loose-fitting and can flap in the wind, it may not be the best choice for severe weather or for winter travel. On the plus side, many ponchos are big enough to also cover your backpack.



**Rain Parka** — A rain parka is a long jacket that repels rain, sleet, and snow. It should have a hood that you can pull over your head.

**Rain Pants** — Rain pants extend the protection of a poncho or parka down to your ankles.



**Gaiters** — Gaiters can shield your feet and lower legs from rain. During winter hikes, they'll help keep snow out of your boots.

**Hat** — A broad-brimmed hat protects your face and neck from sun and from storms. If you wear eyeglasses, the brim of a hat can keep them clear when it's raining.

### TRAIL FOOD

A small bag of granola, some raisins and nuts, or a couple of energy bars can give you a boost when you get hungry on the trail. High-energy foods are especially important if you are out longer than you had expected.



### FLASHLIGHT

If you are going out for a walk during the day, you may think that having a flashlight isn't that important. A flashlight is part of the Scout Basic Essentials because it is better to have it and not need it than it is to need it and not have it.

When deciding what kind of flashlight to bring, remember you have to carry it. There are some you carry in your hands, some that you wear on your head, and even some that you wear around your neck.

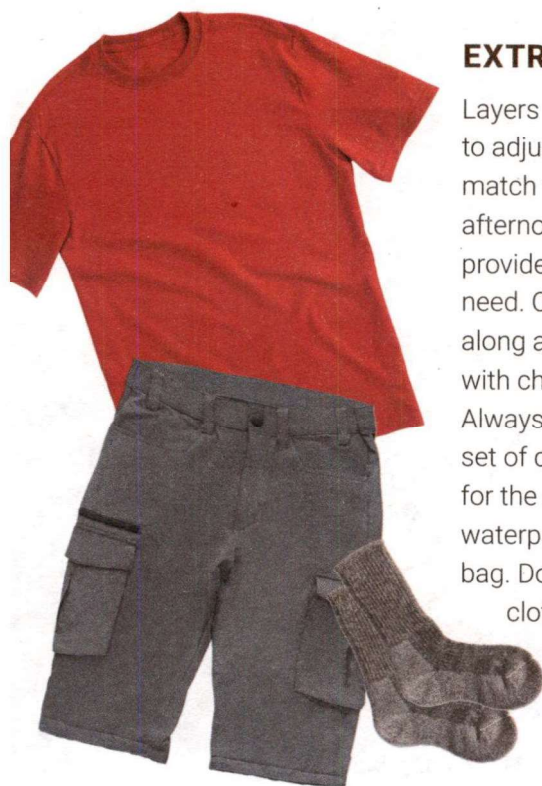
You also want to consider how your flashlight is powered. If it uses batteries, what type does it need? Do the batteries come with the flashlight? Is it easy to replace the batteries?

An LED flashlight will cast a strong beam with just one or two AA batteries. LED headlamps are a good option, too, because they leave your hands free. It's a good idea to carry spare batteries with you, and reverse the



batteries in your flashlight during the day to prevent the light from accidentally turning on in your pack and draining the power.

When using your flashlight, remember to keep it pointed down and not at someone's face.



### **EXTRA CLOTHING**

Layers of clothing allow you to adjust what you wear to match the weather. During an afternoon hike, a jacket might provide all the extra warmth you need. On camping trips, bring along additional clothing to deal with changes in temperature. Always have at least one extra set of clothes that is appropriate for the season packed in a waterproof container, like a dry bag. Don't plan to use these clothes unless it's necessary.

If you don't use them on a campout, you can just keep them packed.

### **FIRST-AID KIT**

Your patrol leader or a Scouts BSA troop adult volunteer will bring a group first-aid kit on most Scout trips, but you should also carry a few personal supplies to treat blisters, small cuts, and other minor injuries.

Carry a personal first-aid kit on hikes and campouts. You can put everything in a resealable plastic bag and take it with you whenever you set out on a Scout adventure. Here are some important things to have:

- ▶ 6 latex-free adhesive bandages in assorted sizes
- ▶ 2 sterile 3-by-3-inch gauze pads
- ▶ A small roll of latex-free adhesive tape
- ▶ A 3-by-6-inch piece of moleskin
- ▶ A small bar of soap or small bottle of alcohol-based hand-sanitizing gel
- ▶ A small tube of triple first-aid ointment\* (optional)
- ▶ A small tube of hydrocortisone cream\* (optional)
- ▶ Scissors
- ▶ Tweezers
- ▶ Disposable latex-free gloves
- ▶ CPR breathing barrier
- ▶ Pencil and paper or small notebook

\*Some people are allergic to antibiotics and hydrocortisone creams. Be sure to ask permission before applying either of these ointments for first aid.

Why use latex-free gloves, adhesive bandages, and other supplies? Because some people are allergic to latex. Touching it can cause them to experience mild to severe allergic reactions ranging from itching and skin redness to difficulty breathing and even anaphylactic shock.





## SUN PROTECTION

Just like you need water when it's hot or cold outside, you need sun protection in all types of weather. You can protect yourself from the sun by wearing appropriate clothing and using sunscreen.

Sunscreen and some clothes indicate a sun protection factor, or SPF. The higher the SPF number, the more protection the sunscreen or clothing will provide from the sun's damaging rays. The SPF number is not related to how long you can stay out in the sun. The effect the sun has on your skin can be different based on the time of year, time of day, and what type of skin you have.

Guard your skin by applying a good sunscreen (SPF 30 or greater) and wearing a broad-brimmed hat, sunglasses, and lip balm that contains sunscreen ingredients. To provide good sun protection, your hat should cover not only your head, but also your ears and neck. If your hat doesn't cover your ears or neck, make sure to apply sunblock to those areas.

When using sunscreen, always follow the directions on the container, and know if your sunscreen is waterproof or sweatproof. Apply sunscreen 20 minutes before you hit the trail and every two hours after that — more often if you get wet or sweat a lot. Most sunscreen will wear off after a while, and you'll need to apply more if you're outside for a longer period of time.





## MAP AND COMPASS

A map and a compass can show you the way in unfamiliar areas. Learn the basics and then enjoy practicing with a compass and a map when you are in the field.

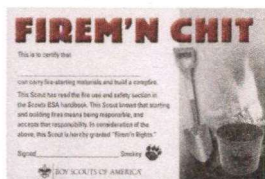
Maps we use today are often digital, and as long as you have a signal, they're great. You may find yourself on a trail that has little or no signal. In those situations, you want to have available a printed map of the trail you're going to follow.

Compasses are basic tools that work with the Earth's natural magnetic field and will make the compass needle point north. A compass doesn't tell you where you are; it only tells you what direction north is. A good compass has a needle that is encased in fluid and has a dial that easily rotates. It should have a baseplate that has scales and a direction-of-travel arrow on it that will allow you to easily place it flat on a map. A good compass will also have orienteering lines (parallel lines) that help you orient the compass with a map. Finally, a good compass will have a cord attached to it so you can wear it around your neck or attach it to your backpack.



## MATCHES AND FIRE STARTERS

Before a Scout can use or carry matches they must earn the Firem'n Chit. This certification grants a Scout the right to carry fire-lighting devices (matches, lighters, etc.) to build campfires. With strike-anywhere matches or a butane lighter, you can light a stove or kindle a fire in any weather. Fire starters can be store-bought, homemade, or collected from a campout. Protect matches and other fire starters from moisture by storing them in a self-sealing plastic bag or canister.



Before you can use matches or fire starters you must first earn the Firem'n Chit. You may want to ask for help from your local Scouts BSA Troop. If you earn this certification as an Arrow of Light

Scout you will be required to earn it again in Scouts BSA before you are permitted to use matches or fire starters in Scouts BSA.

**Firem'n Chit Requirements** – The Scout must show their Scout leader, or someone designated by their leader, an understanding of the responsibility to do the following:

- ▶ I have read and understand use and safety rules from the *Scouts BSA Handbook*.
- ▶ I will build a campfire only when necessary and when I have the necessary permits (regulations vary by locality).
- ▶ I will minimize campfire impacts or use existing fire lays consistent with the principles of Leave No Trace. I will check to see that all flammable material is cleared at least 5 feet in all directions from fire (total 10 feet).

- ▶ I will safely use and store fire-starting materials.
- ▶ I will see that fire is attended to at all times.
- ▶ I will make sure that water and/or a shovel is readily available. I will promptly report any wildfire to the proper authorities.
- ▶ I will use the cold-out test to make sure the fire is cold out and will make sure the fire lay is cleaned before I leave it.
- ▶ I follow the Outdoor Code, the Guide to Safe Scouting, and the principles of Leave No Trace and Tread Lightly!

The Scout's "Fireman's Rights" can be taken away if they fail in their responsibility.

## **WATER BOTTLE**

Always take along at least a 1-quart bottle filled with water. On long hikes, on hot days, in arid regions, and at high elevations, carry two bottles or more.

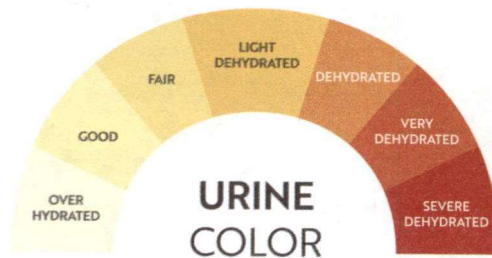
No matter the weather or activity, your body always needs plenty of water to keep it going. You always carry water with you when you're going outside to replace the water your body loses by sweating and even just breathing. Have you ever seen your breath when it's cold outside? That's water your body has lost!

When your body has lost too much water, it will tell you it needs water in different ways. You'll feel thirsty, get a headache, or even get a stomachache.

Get in a good habit of drinking water when you plan to be outside. Drink before you start an activity, take small drinks during your activity, and drink again when you're finished. It is better to take a lot of small drinks than to drink a large amount all at once.

How do you know if you're drinking enough water? One way is by checking your urine (pee). Your urine should be clear and light.

If it's yellow, your body could use more water. If it's dark yellow, your body needs more water.



Plastic water bottles are the most popular way to carry water. These come in all shapes and sizes. When choosing a plastic water bottle, think about how you'll carry it and how much water it will hold. Another important part of a plastic water bottle is how you drink from it. Some have straws, some have a valve, and others have just an opening with a screw cap.

Some backpacks are designed to carry a water bladder with a flexible straw attached. These make drinking water easy and gives you a place to carry your other Scout Basic Essentials.

It is best to keep water only in your water bottle or water bladder. Make sure to wash it after each use to keep it fresh and clean so your water always tastes good.



Depending on your destination, the length of your trip, and the season, other essential items may include insect repellent, a whistle, and other items, such as water treatment tablets. Remember the Scout motto and Be Prepared.



## WHAT TO DO IF YOU GET LOST — STOP

One day you might accidentally wander off a trail and be unsure how to find it again. Or you may take a wrong turn and not know which way to go. If you think you're lost, stop where you are and follow the four steps that spell STOP.

### **STAY CALM. THINK. OBSERVE. PLAN.**

**Stay calm.** Sit down and have some water and something to eat. If you're cold, put on a jacket or sweater. Breathe slowly and relax.

**Think.** Try to remember how you got where you are. If you have a map, open it and see what you can learn from the symbols and contour lines.

**Observe.** Look for your footprints in soft ground or snow. Notice any landmarks that can be clues to your location. Listen for sounds of other Scouts.

**Plan.** If you're convinced that you know which way to go to get back on track, move carefully. Use a compass to set a bearing in the direction of your destination. Then clearly mark the way you're going with broken branches, piles of stones, or whatever else is handy in case you need to find your way back to the spot where you've been sitting. If you don't have a clear idea where you are, though, stay right where you are. People will start looking for you as soon as someone realizes you're missing.