

BSA Cold Weather Camping Overview



OKPIK (Snowy Owl)

SLEEP SYSTEMS

THE KEY TO KEEPING WARM AT NIGHT IS THE WORD: COLD

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| 1) Your bedding should have a washable liner so that it stays CLEAN .
Use a bag liner or blanket |
| 2) To keep from OVERHEATING , your bedding must be ventilated.
Overheating in a sleeping bag produces perspiration just as when you wear the wrong clothing |
| 3) Your bedding should be lightweight and large enough to accommodate you. If possible use a LAYERED system.
When a layered system is used, it is easier to remove the frost build up that occurs naturally when your body produces warmth. It is a major concern if you are camping for more than one night |
| 4) Keep your equipment as DRY as possible by pumping all of the warm moist air out of the bag each morning and then airing it out in the sun. Turn the bag or bags inside-out. |

SLEEP SYSTEMS

In all cold weather camping the ground is significantly colder than your body. Proper insulation must be provided to prevent heat loss by conduction.

The layers required for a cold weather sleep system are:

- (1) TENT**
- (2) VAPOR BARRIER**
- (3) INSULATION**
- (4) SLEEPING BAG**
- (5) BAG LINER**
- (6) SLEEPING CLOTHS**

- **TENT**
 - Dig down to ground in the snow
 - Open vents about 12” on each side
 - Frost liner – lightweight inner tent made from porous material such as bed sheets.
 - Use “deadman” with snow, rock, firewood to anchor tent if ground frozen
 - Bring a small brush to clean off clothing and boots before getting to tent
 - Bring a old towel to dry boots when in tent
 - Bring carpet remnant outside of tent to clean of boots
- **VAPOR BARRIER**
 - Place vapor barrier under tent and insulation
 - Plastic tarp or sheet
 - Tyvek
- **INSULATION**
 - Insulation is used between the ground and your sleeping bag(s)
 - Foam
 - Rigid foam board, use 1” or more thickness
 - Takes up a lot of space
 - Cut into smaller pieces and use duct tape to create “hinges”
 - Available with aluminum vapor barrier also
 - Do not use open cell “sponge” foam pads, it will collect moisture and freeze over time
 - Relexitix – bubble wrap insulation with aluminum backing
 - Thin, light weight
 - Insulation and vapor barrier
 - Air mattress
 - Plain air mattress do not provide much insulation
 - Self inflating mattress provide some insulation value
 - Blankets (preferably fleece or wool) can be used over and or under sleeping bag if necessary
 - Cardboard
- **SLEEPING BAG**
 - Mummy bags most efficient
 - Rectangular bags just as effective with proper clothing
 - Use one sleeping bag inside another

- Down insulation
 - Very effective until it gets wet
 - Typically more expensive
 - Down side - collects moisture faster than man-made or synthetic materials
- Man-made or synthetic fibers better value (\$)
 - Typically cheaper
 - Easier to clean
 - Pass moisture faster than other materials
- Blankets (preferably fleece or wool) can be used over, under, and inside sleeping bag if necessary
- Leave sleeping bags and air mattress open for at least 30-60 minutes before sleeping to allow insulation to fully expand (loft)
- Do not put your head in the sleeping bag while you sleep
 - It adds moisture to your bag
- On multi-night camp outs try to air out your bag in the sun if weather permits

Your body exhales about 1 quart of water per night. For 2-3 nights most bags can absorb that much without losing insulation value. For longer periods you must be able to air out your bag or use a vapor sack, "wet system"

- **BAG LINER**
 - No cotton
 - Wool or fleece
 - Easy to make your own
 - Blanket
- **BIVY SACK**
 - External waterproof bag that sleeping bag goes into. Can also use a ground trap.
 - Can be used to sleep outside without a tent
- **SLEEP CLOTHS**
 - Use clean dry cloths at night, do not use the same cloths you used during the day
 - Avoid cotton, use wool or synthetic (polypro, polyethylene,)
 - Socks
 - Sweat pants
 - Hat, **NOT** the same one used during the day
 - Turtle neck long sleeve shirt
 - Sweatshirt with hood
 - Mittens
- **OTHER ITEMS FOR YOUR SLEEPING BAG**
 - Put your next day cloths into bottom of sleeping bag (shirt, socks, underwear)
 - Put next days cloths in to a pillow case
 - Makes a good pillow so you don't need to carry one
 - Keeps cloths warm
 - Boots in a plastic bag OR
 - Boot liners, so they dry out
 - Water bottle so it does not freeze
 - 1-2 "Heat Packs" can be put in to bag before you go to sleep
 - If you have "Body" warmer heat pack leave it in all night.
 - Hand warmers packs are too hot! Do not leave in bag while sleeping