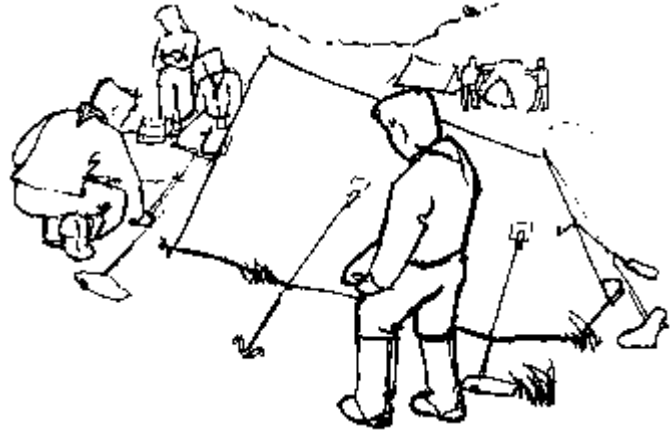


## TENTS

Tents come in all shapes and sizes from single-person tunnel tents to family frame tents. However the principles of care for all types of tent remain the same.

The purchase of lightweight tents need not be considered unless you intend to undertake adventures in the out of doors lasting more than one night. In summer conditions, the more experienced of you may wish to just bivouac using a bivvy bag if in low level terrain.



Tents come in all shapes and sizes and careful consideration of design features will be necessary before buying. Proper mountain tents do not come cheaply, and certainly tents suitable for use on Mountain Pursuit Challenges will cost you money. Check out well know names such as Wild Country, Blacks, Phoenix etc, as well as other specialist manufacturers. Their tents will be well designed and tested. Any of their catalogues will provide you with detailed specs for all their tents. Seek advice from the Scout Shop "Outdoors" and also camping specialists before you buy. Also talk to other Leaders about the tents they have brought and seek their suggestions.

### Points to consider

The weight of the tent; remember you are going to have to carry the tent on your back - a rule of thumb is that you should not carry more than 2 kilos per person, a 2 man tent therefore should be about 4 kilos.

The pole system; modern tents employ a fibre glass pole system which are usually extremely stable. However, in high wind conditions or in driving wind and rain this design can be very fiddly to erect.

Pegging points; made sure you have strong guy points and provision for including extra pegging points as required.

Space; apart from the sleeping space provided look out for extra space in bell ends and doorways you will need this space for storing gear and perhaps cooking (with extreme care) in bad weather etc.

Spare parts; in the course of a tent's lifetime, tent poles, pegs, and guys etc. will be damaged. By buying a good brand name you can be sure that spare parts are easily available.

# Tent Accessories

## Flysheets

All flysheets will eventually degrade as a result of exposure to UV light. To minimise damage, keep the tent packed away in a cool, dark place when not in use. If pitching your tent in one location for more than two or three weeks, consider covering the flysheet with a sheet of coloured plastic.

Guylines will need adjusting after a heavy downpour in order to keep the flysheet taut.

Some nylon flysheets come with taped seams. Those that do not will need a proprietary sealant applied to all major seams in order to prevent water from penetrating through the stitch lines. Ensure that this is carried out in a dry, well-ventilated area several days before departure in order to allow the sealant to 'cure'. Tent flysheets (particularly those made from cotton) can be periodically 're-proofed' to extend their useful life with a reproofing agent. Consult your retailer for advice on the most appropriate sealant or reproofing agent for your tent.



## Groundsheets

Ensure that all groundsheet seams are sealed. Groundsheets are expensive to replace if ripped. Much better than to place a piece of plastic sheeting or a dedicated nylon sheet that matches the floor shape under your tent. On particularly rough ground place your closed-cell foam mat under the groundsheet. In cold weather a piece of thin foam cut to fit the inside of the tent floor will create a warm 'carpet' for the occupants to sit and sleep on.

## Tent Poles

Tent poles should be separated, wiped down with a clean cloth (especially if the poles have been exposed to salt air) and dried thoroughly before storing. If the poles are shock-corded pull them apart and lay them side-by-side so that they cannot self-assemble. The tips of shock-corded poles are usually removable so that the cord can be shortened/replaced if it loses its elasticity. Carry a short length of metal piping of an appropriate diameter to tape over a section of pole if one becomes broken in use. Occasionally spray the ends of metal poles (and door zips) with a silicone-based spray.

## Trailer Tents

If you are towing a trailer tent, ensure that

- the hitch is properly connected;
- the snatch/brake cable is attached;
- that all lights are working.

Pack heavy items as close to the road and as near to the axle area as possible. Lighter items - such as sleeping bags - can go higher up on the roof rack but make sure they are in waterproof bags!

## General Advice

Inner tents pretty much look after themselves. They should not be waterproofed as this will impair their breathability. However all parts of the tent must be thoroughly dried before storing away in order to stop mildew taking hold. Cotton tents may take several days to dry completely.

Do not use detergents to clean your tent; plain water and a brush should remove most dirt.

Always take the time to practice pitching a new tent at home in fair weather and foul - and at night! - before departure.

Pack a small quantity of adhesive tape for running repairs.

## Top Tent Tip

If you use your tent for backpacking, purchase a second stuff sack so that your inner tent can be packed separately from the flysheet. This allows the tent to be packed away more quickly, and in wet weather allows the relatively dry inner to be separated from the wet flysheet.