

The MacScouter -- Scouting Resources Online

Winter Camping & Hypothermia

Some Advice on Keeping the Tent Dry

By Tony Wesley

Some tips for the novice. Veterans of camping will have learned these and probably have a few ideas of their own.

-- Examine your camp site carefully before setting up the tent. That nice flat spot, is it a low point? If you camp in a hollow, you may end up camping in a puddle if it starts raining.

-- Is this a new or borrowed tent? If so, put that rain fly on NOW even if the sky is blue. You can take it off, now that you know how to put it on. The tent will breath better with it off. But make sure you remember where it is. I met a couple who learned the hard way just the night before. They didn't know know what the rain fly was, and put it under their tent as ground cover. It rained on them, and that's when they realize something was wrong. Reading the instructions in the middle of the night with the rain pouring down on them, they realized what they had done. So they had to unstake the tent, move it, and place the rain fly over the tent, which was rather soggy by this point.

-- Are you camping under trees? The trees will help break the rainfall, but they will continue to drip after the rain has stopped. You win some, you lose some.

-- A canvas under the tent is a good idea, but watch out. If your canvas extends out further than your rain fly, rain will run off the rain fly and onto the canvas. Depending on the slope, the rainwater may then run *under* your tent.

-- You can improve your tent's rain resistance by applying seam sealer to your tent. Spending a couple dollars and a few minutes ahead of time will help. But don't expect miracles.

-- Condensation will form on the tent's interior walls, unless you keep the tent ventilated.

-- Placing the sleeping bag on a pad or an air mattress is a good idea. It will not only improve your sleep by keeping you warmer and and bed softer, it will keep you up off the tent floor should you get water in the tent.

A little bit of water seems inevitable if you're camping in the rain. But some precautions and some common sense can make the difference between damp and wet. Oh, if you have room, toss that book you've been meaning to read in with your camping gear. If you get stuck in your tent waiting for the rain to pass, it'll be worth its weight in gold.



The MacScouter Scouting Resources Online web site is provided by
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