

THE TEN ESSENTIALS

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Every Scout needs to have a working knowledge of the “Ten Essentials” for camping and backpacking. This guide is a reference for Scouts and Adult Scouters.

Boy Scout Essentials

Boy Scout Essentials (from the 11th Edition of the Boy Scout Handbook):

1. Knife or Multi-tool (You must have your “Tot’n Chip.”)
2. Basic First Aid kit
3. Clothing, plus extra, to match the weather.
4. Rain gear
5. Flashlight/Headlight
6. Water/Water Bottle/Camelbak (Probably the most important of the Essentials! Important questions to ask: Where is my water source? Will I need to purify water?)
7. Matches
8. Sun protection (sunblock, sunglasses, hat, etc.)
9. Map and Compass
10. Food. (You need food to maintain your energy. However, the human body can survive for weeks without food, so we moved this to the bottom of the list.)

The Classic Ten Essentials

The “Ten Essentials” concept was originated in the 1930s by a hiking and climbing club called The Mountaineers. The Boy Scouts had similar concepts early on and to this day there are variations on the theme adjusted for regional conditions and specific needs. The Mountaineers first “Essentials” are the basis for the “Classic Ten Essentials,” which are:

- 1) Map
- 2) Compass
- 3) Sun protection
- 4) Extra clothes
- 5) Light(s)
- 6) First aid
- 7) Food and water
- 8) Fire starter
- 9) Matches
- 10) Knife

The Modern Ten Essentials

Today, the ten essentials have been updated and improved. Many people now think of the ten essentials as a system rather than individual items. If you have the ten “systems” taken care of, then your essentials are covered.

Updated Ten Essential Systems:

1. Navigation
2. Sun protection
3. Insulation (clothing, etc.)
4. Illumination
5. First-aid supplies
6. Fire
7. Repair kit and tools
8. Nutrition
9. Hydration
10. Shelter

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If you are heading out for a weekend campout and hike, you could pack a compass, sunglasses, sunscreen, appropriate clothes, headlight, personal first aid kit, matches, multi-tool, duct tape, adequate water, a protein bar, your sleeping bag and either your tent or your part of your patrol tent. This would cover the ten essential systems.

Troop 821 Essentials for Patrol Camping: “The Trusty Twelve”

Here is our own essentials list modified for patrol camping. This assumes that you and your patrol already have your shelter and food arrangements and you have a plan for carrying and/or obtaining water.

1. Map and Compass¹
2. Sunglasses and sunscreen
3. Water bottle
4. Adequate clothes
5. Headlamp/flashlight
6. First aid kit
7. Matches and fire starter²
8. Pocket Knife or Multi-tool³
9. Rain gear
10. Whistle⁴
11. Insect repellent⁵
12. Knowledge⁶

NOTES:

1. Map and Compass: A map can be a shared item. A compass is a personal item; every Scout should have one and know how to use it.
2. Fire starters must be Troop approved. No unauthorized fuels or propellants allowed.
3. Scouts must have a “Tot'n Chip” to carry and operate a knife or any bladed instrument.
4. A whistle is very useful as an emergency signaling device. A Scout should have a whistle on his person or readily accessible at all times. You might also consider a small reflective mirror-type device (not glass) in addition to your whistle.
5. Insect repellent is not needed all the time. Check for conditions and be prepared to deal with insects... they can make your trip miserable.
6. Knowledge is the best essential of all. Learn all you can and “Be Prepared!”

And one more thing...

A communication device such as a working cell phone can be a life-saver in an emergency. Scouts do not need to worry about this within Troop events, but it should be in your thinking and planning for events outside the Troop.

Helpful Links:

<http://www.scoutingmagazine.org/issues/0403/d-outs.html>
<http://www.rei.com/expertadvice/articles/ten+essentials.html>