

# MERIT BADGE SERIES



# BACKPACKING



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*"Enhancing our youths' competitive edge through merit badges"*



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# Requirements

1. Discuss the prevention of and treatment for the health concerns that could occur while backpacking, including hypothermia, heat reactions, frostbite, dehydration, insect stings, tick bites, snakebite, and blisters.
2. Do the following:
  - a. List 10 items that are essential to be carried on any backpacking trek and explain why each item is necessary.
  - b. Describe 10 ways you can limit the weight and bulk to be carried in your pack without jeopardizing your health or safety.
3. Do the following:
  - a. Define limits on the number of backpackers appropriate for a trek crew.
  - b. Describe how a trek crew should be organized.
  - c. Tell how you would minimize risk on a backpacking trek.
  - d. Explain the purpose of an emergency response plan.
4. Do the following:
  - a. Describe the importance of using Leave No Trace principles while backpacking, and at least five ways you can lessen the crew's impact on the environment.
  - b. Describe proper methods of handling human and other wastes while on a backpacking trek. Describe the importance of and means to assure personal cleanliness while on a backpacking trek.
  - c. Tell what factors are important in choosing a campsite.

5. Do the following:
  - a. Demonstrate two ways to treat water and tell why water treatment is essential.
  - b. Explain to your counselor the importance of staying well-hydrated during a trek.
6. Do the following:
  - a. Demonstrate that you can read topographic maps.
  - b. While on a trek, use a map and compass to establish your position on the ground at three different locations OR use a GPS receiver to establish your position on a topographic map and on the ground at three different locations.
  - c. Explain how to stay found, and what to do if you get lost.
7. Tell how to properly prepare for and deal with inclement weather.
8. Do the following:
  - a. Explain the advantages and disadvantages of the different types of backpacking stoves using at least three different types of fuel.
  - b. Demonstrate that you know how to operate a backpacking stove safely and to handle fuel safely.
  - c. Prepare at least three meals using a stove and fuel you can carry in a backpack.
  - d. Demonstrate that you know how to keep cooking and eating gear clean and sanitary, and that you practice proper methods for food storage while on a backpacking trek.
9. Do the following:
  - a. Write a plan that includes a schedule for a patrol/crew backpacking hike of at least 2 miles.
  - b. Conduct a prehike inspection of the patrol and its equipment.
  - c. Show that you know how to properly pack your personal gear and your share of the crew's gear and food.
  - d. Show you can properly shoulder your pack and adjust it for proper wear.

- e. While using the plan you developed for requirement 9a, carry your fully loaded pack to complete a hike of at least 2 miles.
- 10. Using Leave No Trace principles, participate in at least three backpacking treks of at least three days each and at least 15 miles each, and using at least two different campsites on each trek. Carry everything you will need throughout the trek.
- 11. Do the following:
  - a. Write a plan for a backpacking trek of at least five days using at least three different campsites and covering at least 30 miles. Your plan must include a description of and route to the trek area, a schedule (including a daily schedule), a list of food and equipment needs, a safety and emergency plan, and a budget.
  - b. Using Leave No Trace principles, take the trek you have planned and, while on the trek, complete at least one service project approved by your merit badge counselor.
  - c. Keep a daily journal during the trek that includes a day-by-day description of your activities, including notes about what worked well and thoughts about improvements that could be made for the next trek.



# Backpacking Resources

## Scouting Literature

*Boy Scout Handbook; Basic Illustrated Backpacking; Be Prepared Backpacking and Hiking; Conservation Handbook; Fieldbook; Bird Study, Camping, Canoeing, Climbing, Cooking, Emergency Preparedness, First Aid, Fish and Wildlife Management, Fishing, Fly-Fishing, Geocaching, Hiking, Kayaking, Mammal Study, Nature, Orienteering, Personal Fitness, Reptile and Amphibian Study, Search and Rescue, Sustainability, Weather, Whitewater, and Wilderness Survival* merit badge pamphlets

For more information about or to order Scouting-related resources, see <http://www.scoutstuff.org> (with your parent's permission).

## Books

Berger, Karen. *Hiking and Backpacking*. DK Adult, 2005.

———. *Hiking Light Handbook*. The Mountaineers Books, 2004.

Birkby, Robert. *Lightly on the Land: The SCA Trail Building and Maintenance Manual*, 2nd ed. The Mountaineers Books, 2006.

- Connors, Christine. *Lipsmackin' Backpackin': Lightweight Trail-Tested Recipes for Backcountry Trips*. Falcon, 2000.
- Drury, Jack, and Eric Holmlund. *The Camper's Guide to Outdoor Pursuits: Finding Safe, Nature-Friendly, and Comfortable Passage Through Wild Places*. Sagamore Publishing, 2006.
- Forgey, William. *Basic Illustrated: Wilderness First Aid*. Falcon Guides, 2008.
- Foster, Steven, and Roger Caras. *A Field Guide to Venomous Animals and Poisonous Plants*. Houghton Mifflin, 1998.
- Grubbs, Bruce. *Desert Sense*. The Mountaineers Books, 2005.
- Hall, Adrienne. *The Essential Backpacker: A Complete Guide for the Foot Traveler*. Ragged Mountain Press, 2008.
- Hampton, Bruce, and David Cole. *NOLS Soft Paths: Enjoying the Wilderness Without Harming It*, 4th ed. Stackpole Books, 2011.
- Logue, Victoria. *Hiking and Backpacking: Essential Skills, Equipment, and Safety*, 2nd ed. Menasha Ridge Press, 2004.

- Marsh, Laurie Ann. *Fork in the Trail: Mouthwatering Meals and Tempting Treats for the Backcountry.* Wilderness Press, 2007.
- McGivney, Annette. *Leave No Trace: A Guide to the New Wilderness Etiquette*, 2nd rev. ed. The Mountaineers Books, 2003.
- "Nessmuk." *Woodcraft and Camping.* Dover Books, 1963.
- O'Bannon, Allen. *Allen and Mike's Really Cool Backpackin' Book: Traveling and Camping Skills for a Wilderness Environment!* Falcon, 2001.
- Pearson, Claudia, ed. *NOLS Cookery*, 6th ed. Stackpole Books, 2011.
- Petzoldt, Paul. *The New Wilderness Handbook.* Norton, 1984.
- Robbins, Michael W. *The Hiking Companion.* Storey Publishing, LLC, 2003.
- Schimelpfenig, Tod, and Linda Lindsey. *NOLS Wilderness First Aid.* Stackpole Books, 2000.
- Shillington, Ben. *Winter Backpacking.* Heliconia Press, 2009.
- Skurka, Andrew. *The Ultimate Hiker's Gear Guide: Tools and Techniques to Hit the Trail.* National Geographic Society, 2012.
- Tilton, Buck. *Outdoor Safety Handbook.* Stackpole Books, 2005.
- Townsend, Chris. *The Backpacker's Handbook*, 4th ed. Ragged Mountain Press, 2011.

## Organizations and Websites

### American Hiking Society

Telephone: 301-565-6704

Website: <http://www.americanhiking.org>

### Bureau of Land Management

Telephone: 202-208-3801

Website: <http://www.blm.gov>

### GORP (Great Outdoor Recreation Pages)

Website: <http://www.gorp.com>

### Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics

Toll-free telephone: 800-332-4100

Website: <http://www.LNT.org>

### National Park Service

1849 C Street NW

Washington, DC 20240

Telephone: 202-208-3813

Website: <http://www.nps.gov>

### Recreation.gov

Website: <http://www.recreation.gov>

### U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

1849 C St. NW

Washington, DC 20240-0001

Toll-free telephone: 800-344-9453

Website: <http://www.fws.gov>

### U.S. Forest Service

1400 Independence Ave. SW

Washington, DC 20250

Toll-free telephone: 800-832-1355

Website: <http://www.fs.fed.us>

### U.S. Geological Survey

Telephone: 703-648-4000

Website: <http://www.usgs.gov>

Website for map store:

<http://store.usgs.gov>

## Periodicals

Backpacker magazine  
2520 55th St., Suite 210  
Boulder, CO 80301  
Toll-free telephone: 800-666-3434  
Website: <http://www.backpacker.com>

The use of pack-it-out kits for human waste is becoming more common at many outdoor recreational areas. In fact, some areas *require* packing out human waste. If the land management agency does not provide kits for visitors and you must bring your own, you may want to obtain a ready-made, commercial kit for ease and sanitation purposes.

One popular brand that is readily available is the Wag Bag®, manufactured by Cleanwaste. For more information, visit <http://www.cleanwaste.com> (with your parent's permission). Another widely used line of personal sanitation products is made by Restop®. Visit <http://www.restop.com> for more information about their products.

