



Boy Scout Troop 868

# New Member Information: Basic Equipment

The single biggest investment of getting a boy started in Scouting is the uniform. Most everything else the boy will eventually need (or just want) is not that urgent and parents should NOT feel pressured to go out and buy everything imaginable before the first campout. In fact, it's probably wise to proceed slowly and let a boy go on several troop outings to be sure he really likes the program before making a huge investment in outdoor equipment. The troop owns tents, lanterns, cookware, woods tools, and all the "heavy" equipment needed to conquer the outdoors in relative comfort. Following are the personal items that scout will need.

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| Scout Handbook    | The single most important item for every new scout. A boy can't really get started without his own Scout Handbook. Available in 3 binding styles. We have found the spiral binding to be most durable, but any are acceptable.   |
| Flashlight        | Boys always want big, heavy ones that project a beam 2 miles. In reality, small, durable ones like the penlight Mag-Lites that come with a belt holster are really more practical. Whatever the boys bring, make sure it works and has good, fresh batteries. (A spare set of batteries is always a good idea.)  |
| Personal Cup      | We try to avoid using paper plates & cups. Most of the patrol boxes have metal plates, but each scout needs to bring his own drinking cup. The huge mega-mugs are not practical. Try to find a reasonably sized 8~10 ounce plastic or metal drinking mug with a sturdy handle (so it can be carried on a belt clip).   |
| Personal Flatware | Each scout will need his own knife, fork, and spoon for eating. They don't have to be matched or part of a fancy set. They do need to be metal, not plastic. Acquire these at the local dollar store or at a yard sale.  |
| Sleeping Bag      | This has the potential to be a big ticket item, but Troop 868 doesn't do much of the really harsh cold weather backpacking that justifies spending hundreds of dollars on a sleeping bag. Sleeping bags are rated by temperature ... i.e., comfortable to 30 degrees. The lower the temperature rating, the warmer the bag. Mummy bags will be warmer than rectangular bags. Cotton bags (like slumber bags) should be avoided since cotton totally loses its ability to retain heat when wet. The temperature rating of ANY bag can easily be increased by lining the inside with blankets. Each blanket will increase the temperature rating by about 15 degrees. For warm weather camping, a good blanket or two may work just as well as a sleeping bag. |
| Pocket Knife      | All boys want a pocketknife and these are useful when camping. Cheap ones collapse or break during use and are more hazardous than better ones. Sheath knives are discouraged in favor of knives with a folding blade no longer than 4 inches. Many boys prefer a good Leatherman or Gerber style multi-tool, and that's fine. Such tools do have their advantages. But the cheaper ones break!  |
| FRS Radio         | Spend about \$14 for a good basic radio --- extra features aren't needed. Brand is not important. Expect your scout to lose at least one radio in the first 6 months (you might want to buy a multi-pack). Buy and use rechargeable NiMH batteries. Look for NiMH batteries with at least a 2400 charge rating.  |
| Compass           | Not needed immediately. A see-through plastic, fluid-filled compass like the Silva® ones available at Wal*Mart for under \$10 are ideal.   |