

Campsites

Essentials

Good campsite selection is vital to running a successful camp. It is important to consider location and the surrounding environment as well as site layout and facilities.

In the UK, Scout campsites include Scout Activity Centres and locally-managed sites. A list of UK Scout campsites can be found at campsites.scouts.org.uk and in the Camping and Adventure supplement to Scouting magazine.

Other places that may be suitable for camping with Scouts include privately owned land, public campsites and National Trust properties. However, check suitability before booking a site or pitch. If you wish to camp on common land or in other local areas, check local byelaws do not prohibit camping. Scouts do not have the right to camp anywhere they like.

The choice of where to camp depends on several factors; cost, accessibility, suitability for intended purpose, the time of year and so on. General considerations are listed opposite. Often it may not be possible to find a site that has all these advantages. In this case you will need to prioritise by deciding the most important considerations for your camp; the table below can help to determine the best option depending on which type of camp you are planning.

- **Water.** Safe drinking water should be available within a short distance. If none is available or you are uncertain of water quality, the water should be filtered, boiled or chemically sterilised.
- **Drainage.** The site must be well drained and unlikely to flood. Avoid clay and peat soils or sites adjacent to the sea, a river, or other stretches of water.
- **Level ground.** Make sure there is sufficient level ground for all tents and recreation areas.
- **Firewood.** The site should have an adequate supply of wood for open fires, if permitted, and for the construction of pioneering projects such as camp gadgets.
- **Shelter.** Check that there is protection from prevailing winds.
- **Accessibility.** If the site needs to be accessible for vehicles; a road or track is essential.
- **Proximity.** The campsite must be close to planned activities, whether on-site or off-site.
- **Facilities.** Fixed campsites should have toilet, washing and waste disposal facilities. If not then suitable locations to correctly dispose of waste and refuse will need to be considered.

Campsite considerations	Fixed campsite	Greenfield camp	Lightweight camp
Water	✓	✓	✓
Drainage	✓	✓	✓
Level ground	✓	✓	✓
Wood	✓	✓	
Shelter			✓
Road access	✓	✓	
Away from natural hazards	✓	✓	✓
Proximity to on-site activities	✓		
Accessible before sunset		✓	✓
Toilet/washing facilities	✓		
Rubbish disposal facilities	✓	✓	
Suitable location to bury waste		✓	✓

Good practice

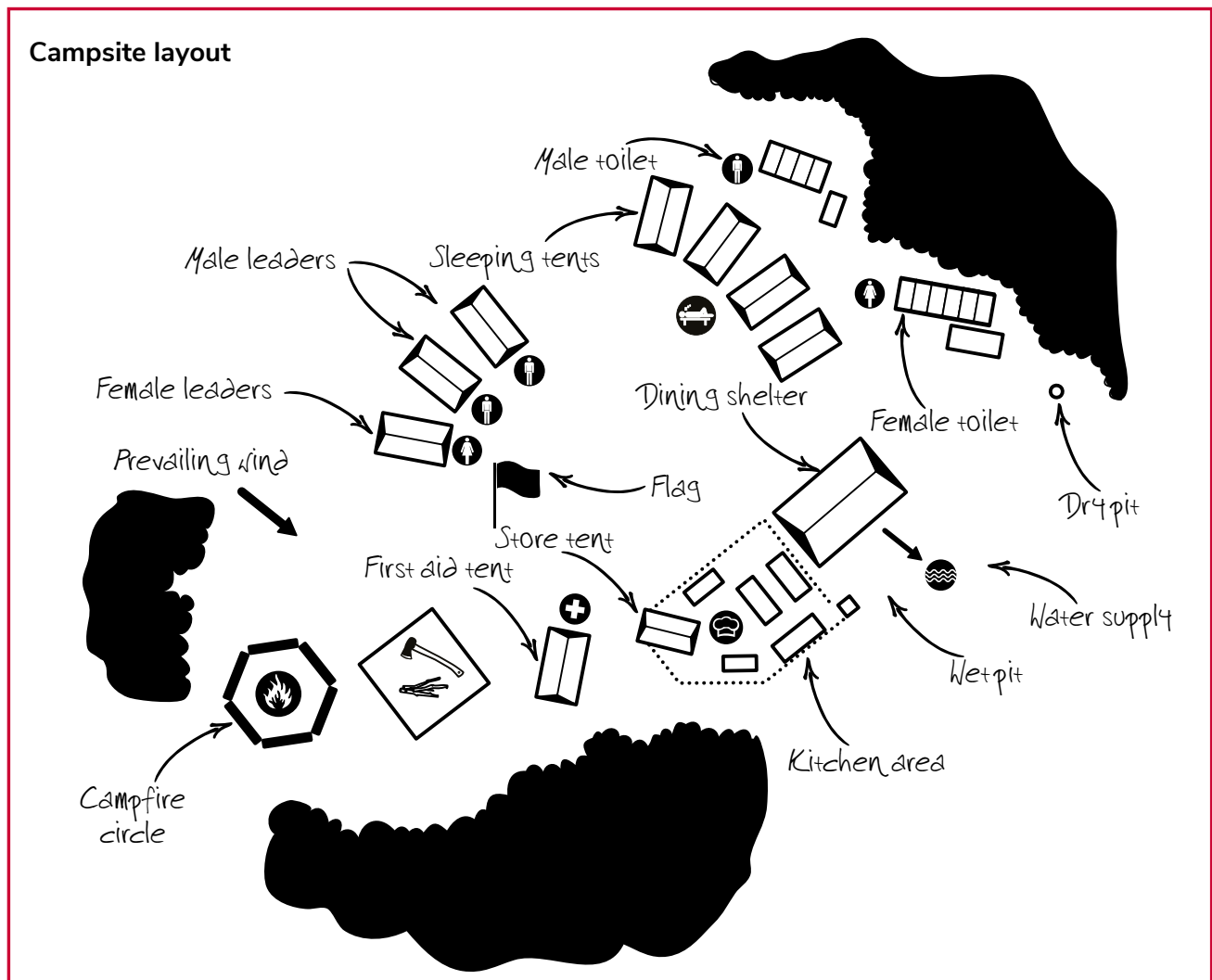
- If practicable, visit the site before arriving with your Scouts to look at the lay of the land and investigate the facilities available. Use this information to draw a plan of your proposed campsite layout.
- Beware of natural hazards. Do not camp directly under large trees because of the risks of falling branches, a lightning strike or the continual drip of water after rain has stopped. Avoid overhanging cliffs with risk of falling rocks and rock slides.
- If you are backpacking, ensure that you will be able to reach a site to set up camp at least one hour before sunset.
- Leave your campsite as you would wish to find it. If you are camping on a Greenfield site you should abide by leave no trace principles.
- Good hygiene is vital in camp. All campers must wash their hands after using the toilet.
- In mixed camps, males and females will need separate sleeping, washing, and toilet facilities. You will need to think carefully where you put these to maintain privacy.

- Monitor the state of toilet facilities. If staying on a fixed campsite with permanent toilet facilities, find out who is responsible for cleaning the toilets during your stay – in many cases this is the job of a service team. Greenfield sites will require you to bring or build toilet facilities as you need them. The most popular solution is chemical toilets, with the waste appropriately disposed of. A more traditional approach is to construct a latrine with wet and dry pits.

Campsite layout

Whatever type of camp you are planning, the layout of your site is important. A well-laid out campsite helps to ensure good hygiene and makes the lives of all campers easier. After all, your site and its surroundings will be a temporary home, so it is worth making life as comfortable as possible.

Deciding where to place tents and other facilities largely depends on individual circumstances. However, the following diagram shows an example layout for a typical campsite.



Sleeping tents (adults) – should be positioned appropriately for your section. They may need to be fairly near to Cubs, while for Explorers they could be further away. Where possible pitch with the back/tail end pointing into the prevailing wind.

Sleeping tents (Scouts) – should be at least 2 metres apart. Where possible pitch with the back/tail end pointing into the prevailing wind.

Recreation space – Remember to leave a suitable space for recreation and camp activities.

First aid tents – should be centrally located in camp and easily accessible.

Dining shelters – should be close to the kitchen so that hot food can be served, but not in line with smoke from cooking fires.

Kitchens or mess tents – should be set up close to the water supply and positioned so that smoke will not blow into camp. Cooking tents must be 6 metres apart from all other tents.

Chopping area – should be situated close to the woodpile, in a clear area that is roped off from rest of camp.

Woodpile – should not be too close to fire sites.

Washing areas – should be positioned between the latrines and the camp, preferably in a central location.

Water points – should be positioned in well drained areas if possible.

Latrines (toilets) – should be placed close enough for convenience, but downwind of the camp itself so that odours blow away from the main camping area.

Find out more

More information on planning and running a camp can be found in the Nights Away handbook.