

EAST BAY BIG

Backpacking Training Handout

updated January 2020

OVERVIEW OF TRAINING

Welcome to Part 1 of the training you need to get on the trail with the Girl Scout Backpacking Interest Group (BIG). What you'll learn tonight, followed by three pack inspections and in-field training (Part 2), will get you confident in taking care of yourself during this athletic activity.

- Part 1 – attend 1 classroom training, review packing list and gear
- Part 2 – attend 3 pack check and planning meetings to check your gear and prep for meals etc for planned trip
- Part 3 – field training during a trip includes tent/shelter set up, cooking skills, biffy use, on the trail safety, knots as needed, blister care, etc

Part 1: Classroom Training that teaches you what you need to know to pack and prepare for a trip. We'll follow the BIG Packing List during the training, and you'll use that list again and again with each trip.

After your Part 1 classroom training:

- Sign up for our Butterfly Share site so you will receive all communications
- Email EastBayBig@gmail.com to join
- RSVP for a Beginner trip. Signups are sent out after Part 1 trainings are held. Trips are rain or shine!
- Use the BIG PACKING LIST to find what equipment you need to rent, borrow or buy.
- Come to the Pack Check and Planning Meeting before the trip with your pack **fully packed and ready to go**. At that time, you'll work with an experienced backpacker to check everything in your pack, making notes of what you need to add or replace.
- You'll get your pack inspected at a Pack Check Meeting for 3 trips. After you've had approximately 3 pack inspections (and have been on 3 trips), you won't need to bring your loaded backpack to a Pack Check Meeting unless a trip leader tells you to.
- Part 3 training is done during a backpacking trip in the field. You'll learn and practice various skills such as setting up tents, lighting stoves, biffy procedures, safety, blister care, etc.

Part 2: Pack Check/Planning Meetings The Pack Check and Planning Meetings for a trip are generally held on a weeknight preceding each trip. The main purpose of the meeting is to bring together the group that will be hiking, eating, and sleeping together.

At the meeting, you will:

- Turn in dues payment, trip payment, permission slips, driver forms, and health forms
- Learn details of the trip, including any special considerations (such as weather)
- Divide into sleeping and cooking groups
- Dinners and breakfasts are done as group meals
- Within each cooking group, plan menus and assign who will bring what
- Each person brings their own lunches (2) and own snacks for both days
- Divide up the group equipment that BIG provides: tents, cooking kits, fuel, etc.
- Arrange carpools as needed
- On the morning of the trip, you'll arrive at the meeting place all packed and ready to go, with water bottles filled with water. (Typically, there are no bathrooms available at the meeting site.)
- On the way home from the trip, we'll call families to tell them what time to arrive at the meeting site (typically mid-afternoon) for pickup.

Part 3: Field Training is done during a backpacking trip in the field. You'll learn and practice various skills such as setting up tents, lighting stoves, biffy procedures, safety, blister care, etc.

EQUIPMENT INFORMATION

These notes provide guidance to parents and girls unfamiliar with backpacking equipment. Our backpacking group provides tents/shelters and all cooking equipment. We do have some personal equipment to loan, but you can rent too.

<u>Where to RENT Backpacking Gear</u>	<u>Where to BUY Backpacking Gear</u>
REI in Berkeley, Mountain View, SF	Sunrise Mtn Sports/Livermore, REI, Any Mountain
Sports Basement in San Ramon	Dom's/Livermore, Sports Basement/San Ramon
Outback Adventure in Fremont	Sporting goods stores such as Big 5, Dicks etc for rain gear, boots, pants, etc
	Costco, Walmart, Campmor.com, other online, thrift shops are excellent sources

Boots

Hiking boots are not required unless you are attending a long summer trip. Until then, sturdy sneakers or other athletic shoes with good support and a non-slip grip will be adequate for our Bay Area trips. But hiking boots will keep your feet drier in the rain and bigger is better than snug. While on the trail, feet will swell and will need room to expand.

Backpack

Backpacks come in two varieties. External frame backpacks have a visible metal frame on the outside, while internal frame backpacks have an internal frame that frames a large pouch. When buying or renting, make sure the pack is fitted by an expert in the store, and that you load it approx. 20% of your body weight and hike in it around the store for 20+ minutes. Trip leaders can make adjustments to the hip belt and shoulder straps at the Planning Meetings or on the trail as needed.

Sleeping Bag and Pad

A mummy style, lightweight bag is needed. The mummy shape, vs. rectangular, has the best warmth to weight ratio. We backpack in rain also, so down fill is not recommended because when it gets wet, it loses its ability to keep you warm, unless it is one of the new “dry down” treated products. A closed-cell foam sleeping pad is best. The closed-cell construction, will not absorb water and they roll or fold for carrying. A three-quarter-length pad is fine and weighs less. No yoga mats.

Clothing

Warm layer Wool is best for keeping you warm, even when wet, and is wind-resistant, lightweight, and packable. I have found cashmere sweaters at the thrift shop for \$5-\$10 ea. Some synthetics, such as Polartec fleece, retain their warmth even in wet conditions. Fleece does not provide much resistance to wind, so it must be combined with a rain jacket or windbreaker. One disadvantage of synthetics is that they melt and adhere to skin when burnt, making burns more severe.

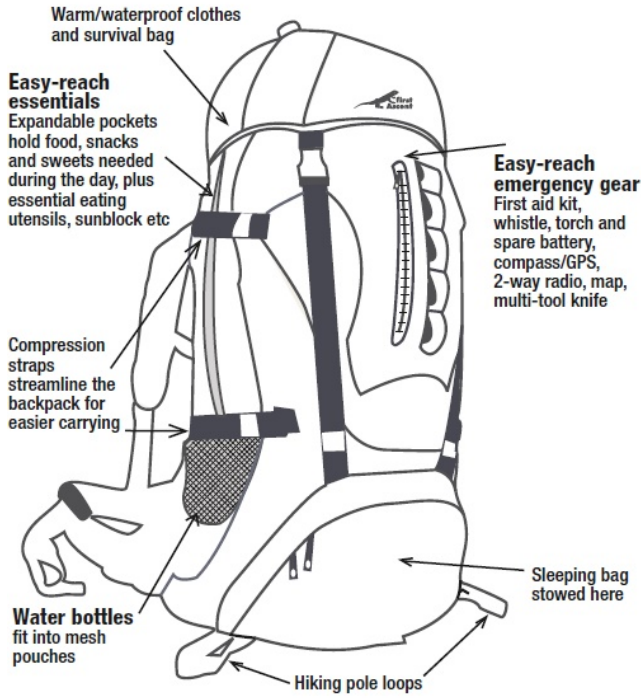
Rain Gear Your rain gear (pants/jacket) must be water proof and must fit over your clothing. You will be putting this on over your hiking pants, fleece, etc. The best way to test your gear is to put it on and get in the shower! You don't want to find out it's not waterproof in the rain, on a trip!

Socks Wool or acrylic socks are recommended with either silk or acrylic wicking liners to prevent blisters. Above all, no cotton! If you're wearing cotton socks, your feet will perspire, and you will end up with cold, damp feet. When it gets wet, cotton loses all insulating properties, so you may as well not be wearing anything on your feet at all. Wool is best, acrylic is second best.

Stoves, Fuel, Cooking Gear, Water Bottles

BIG provides stoves, fuel and cooking pots/billie kits. We use compressed fuel, which is a mixture of butane and propane. “Billie kits” consists of a pot, lid, stove, lighter, soap, scraper and sponge. You will need to bring your own utensils, cup, and plate and two unbreakable 32 ounce/one liter water bottles, at least one MUST BE one liter/quart size/unbreakable, non-BPA ones, are great but Gatorade bottles work too. Your other bottle can be a bladder and can be larger.

HOW TO PACK YOUR PACK



For moderate terrain

For steeper terrain

