



QUARTERMASTER

Lesson Eight: Tents

Possibly the most common item found in a Scout kit store...

Types of Tent

There are many types of tent:

<p>Patrol tent</p> 	<p>Dining shelter</p> 
<p>Hike tent</p> 	<p>Tunnel tent</p> 
<p>Frame tent</p> 	<p>Marquee</p> 
<p>Pop-up tent</p> 	<p>Gazebo</p> 

But for all their different shapes, they all have similar components – poles, pegs, guy lines. Some may also have groundsheets, separate or sewn in. During the scouting year you may get an opportunity to put up or take down these tents – as a quartermaster, you should have the skills to know how these tents are best erected and taken down – and yes, it does take time to learn!

Care and storage

Canvas

By canvas this refers to the large expanse of material that any tent is made up of. The first thing is to make sure that when you store it, you store it dry. Wet material will rot and smell and will not be a nice experience for any one using it.

On the external material – and this is especially true of hike tents and lightweight tents – you should regularly proof the outside of the tent (there are many sprays on the market that provide a waterproofing to the material). Additionally, you can also get a proofing material to cover the seam lines as well – more expensive tents will have “taped” seams – where a tape covers the seams, providing strong waterproofing. If you are proofing the tent you should always work in a very well ventilated area – ideally, on a hot summers day on a campsite...

For more heavy grade tents, such as patrol tents, proofing is not necessary as the canvas becomes more waterproof when it gets wet. However – you do need to make sure that there is nothing resting on or touching the wet canvas as this will push the fibres apart – making a hole for the water to get in from.

The other thing – and again this is especially true of hike tents – you should always make sure that the inner (the sleeping area) is clear of rubbish. Old bits of food will rot down, forgotten cans can tear the tents – especially when the material is being folded up (not to mention that it is unpleasant for the next person to use it – or that it won't fit in the bag!)

Pegs

Wooden pegs should be cleaned of mud (rubbing them together can do this) and allowed to dry – this will prolong the life of the peg. You should also check that the peg isn't broken or damaged – and you should replace if it is. Also, using your checklist you should make sure that all the pegs are there... there's nothing worse than finding that you are short of an important peg.

Metal pegs should also be cleared of mud (scraping through the grass can get most of it off). For metal pegs you should also check that they are not too badly bent – you can always bang them into shape if required. Also, as with wooden pegs – make sure that all the pegs are there at the end.

Guy lines

When you have finished using the tent, you should always hank up the guy lines. Where they are fixed to the tent you don't need to untie them, but this means that no-one spends ages trying to untie a knot of guy lines when it is next used.

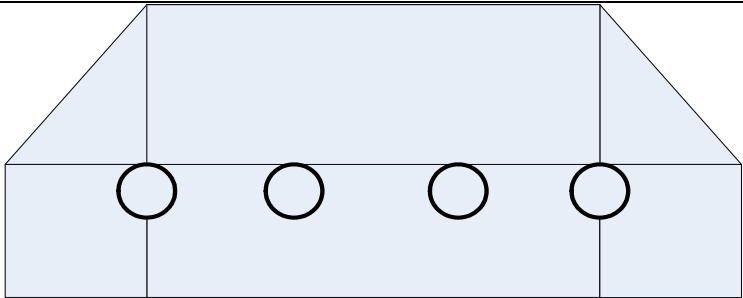
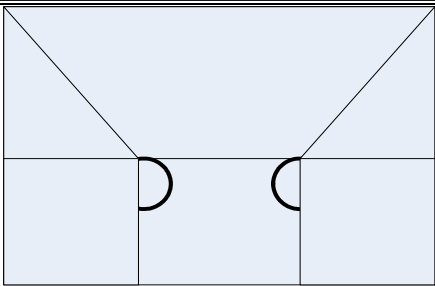

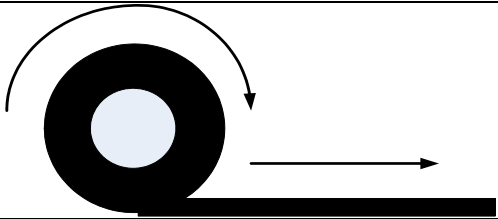
Where you do have guy lines, you should also check that the runners that hold the guy line tight aren't damaged.

Additional items

An often overlooked item is the loops at the bottom of the hike tents – are they all there? Some hike tents use rubber bands, which deteriorate over time. You should also check that any dollies, spacers or plastic feet are still there and are not damaged – it's also worth checking that the poles aren't damaged and that the spikes are still in place.

Folding a tent

Folding a tent will vary from tent to tent. However, in the main the “rule of three” seems to hold fast. The steps to folding most tents are:

<p>1.Lay the tent material flat on the ground (Note that the guy lines are all neatly tied up)</p>	
<p>2. Fold in any doors or “bell ends”</p>	
<p>3. Fold the tent lengthways in three (this should fit the length of the tent bag)</p>	
<p>4. Fold / Roll the tent. If rolling the tent, wrap the poles, pegs and other items into the roll.</p>	
<p>5. Tuck /lay the mallet into the top of the bag – and draw tight.</p>	

Exercise

Thinking back to a tent that you have used, what do you think should be on a checklist? Make up a checklist for a tent.