

Cataraqui Canoe Club Overnight Camping



Camping Safety

1. Pay special attention to drinking water. Surface water should not be consumed without treatment to avoid Giardia ("Beaver Fever") and other such waterborne contaminants. We suggest using the following methods of treatment alone or in combination:
 - a. Mechanical filters. These work quite well, but must be cleaned frequently and maintained and stored properly to avoid problems.
 - b. Chemical disinfectants. Iodine or chlorine may be used, but must be of the proper quantity and have enough contact time.
 - c. Boiling. The accepted standard is that bringing the water to a rolling boil is sufficient.
2. Tents should be placed well away from campfires, dead trees, and areas of hillside run off. Place tent away from tree roots (a hazard during lightning), shaded from the wind and sun, and away from animal trails
3. Do not travel alone in remote areas. An injury or loss of equipment could be disastrous.

Travel and Campsite Ethics

4. Minimum impact means enjoying the outdoors without altering its natural state. A clean campsite is a safe one: aim to leave your campsite cleaner than when you arrived.
5. Keep your group size relatively small. A large group may cause expansion of an existing site through trampling and destruction to trees and ground cover.
6. Use existing campsites, trails and portages. Do not camp on the ends of portages in heavily-used areas, as this obstructs the progress of others along the trail.
7. Never cut live trees or shrubs to make shelters or tent poles and never strip live bark from trees.
8. Do not dig drainage trenches around your tent. Trenches scar the site and accelerate erosion. Take advantage of natural drainage and use floored tents.
9. Use lightweight camp stoves. These are convenient to use in all weather, present minimal fire hazard and are much cleaner and faster than fires. They also free up time from collecting and chopping wood.
10. Restricted travel zones are sometimes declared as a result of dangerous forest fire conditions. Check with the nearest Ministry of Natural Resources district office before starting your trip to see whether a travel permit is required. Anyone convicted of starting a forest fire can be charged with the expense of fighting that fire under the laws of Ontario.
11. Use only dead wood for your fire. On small islands, do not collect firewood; repeated searching over a small area soon destroys the vegetation. Gather your firewood away from the island, not concentrated in any one area. For most purposes wood need not be thicker than your thumb.
12. Gather wood so the area remains natural. Do not collect wood near campsite; collect wood farther afield. Do not break branches off standing trees.

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13. Keep fires small and build them in existing fire pits. If the area is untravelled, remove evidence of the fire after use. Where there is no fire pit, dig to the mineral level of the soil, avoiding the burnable soil, roots and overhanging trees.
14. To extinguish your fire, let it burn out to a white ash. Retrieve non-combustible items (e.g., foil, tin cans) and carry them out with you. Douse the fire thoroughly. Stir the ashes and the area surrounding the ashes. Continue dousing and stirring until the fire is out.
15. Respect private property. Some canoe routes, especially in southern Ontario, traverse private land. The utmost courtesy should be exercised. Stay on portages. Ask permission before camping on private land. Use only those campsites indicated on the map or posted with a sign. Leave no trace behind. If you break trust with the landowner, he or she may withdraw canoeing privileges for others.
16. Leftover food must be eaten or packed out if it cannot be burned completely.
17. Provincial Park regulations may prohibit bringing metal cans and glass into parks (interior camping)
18. Consider using a fire pot to build your fire, so as not to leave a trace of the fire.
19. Avoid making new paths or tent sites. Camp on flat soil, grass or rock, but not on flourishing vegetation.
20. We encourage car pooling on club trips to minimize pollution and alleviate congestion at put-ins and take-outs.

Hygiene and Personal Waste

21. Don't use soap or detergent in a watercourse; even biodegradable soap pollutes. The word "biodegradable" just means that the product breaks down faster than conventional brands.
22. What is carried in must be carried out. Either burn it or bag it and bring it back with you.
23. Water alone is an effective cleanser and can be used without soap to freshen up.
24. Bathing, shaving and brushing teeth. Carry a bucket of water to a spot at least 15 metres from its source and from campsites. Lather your body, shave or brush your teeth, rinse and disperse the water at that spot.
25. Washing dishes. Never rinse plates, pots or pans directly in the lake or watercourse. Rinse dishes, strain dirty water and disperse the water at least 15 metres away from any water source and campsites. The strained particles should be disposed of appropriately as garbage.
26. Accept the wearing of dirty clothes. Do not wash or rinse your clothes directly in any water source. If you must wash your clothes, use the bucket method (as described in 24, above).
27. Toilet paper, tampons and sanitary pads. Place in a plastic bag to be burnt in the campfire (do not burn the plastic) or carried out. Even biodegradable toilet paper takes a long time to break down. Minimize toilet paper use. Crush one or two Aspirin or similar tablets in the plastic bag to help reduce odours.
28. Human waste. Use outhouses when available. If not, stay at least 15 metres from water or campsites, in a low traffic area. It is best to urinate directly on bare rock or soil; otherwise, carry a trowel and dig a hole 15 cm square and deep, and cover it after use.

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29. Hand washing. Wash your hands regularly and before preparing food. Giardia and other parasites can spread rapidly if group hygiene is poor. Do not rinse or wash your hands in the same bucket as other people. Instead, lather your hands with soap and rinse by pouring water over top. This prevents contamination in the main bucket.

Safety with Animals

30. Be aware of potential danger with all wild animals.
31. Wild animals rarely cause injury to human beings; they are more likely to cause problems with food. Animals are attracted to the smell of food, garbage and toiletries; it is important to keep your site as clean and odour-free as possible. Never bury garbage; animals will detect the scent and dig it up.
32. Keep all food wrapped in plastic to reduce odours. Safely store all scented items when not in use. These are suggested methods:
- Hanging method. Hang the pack away from the campsite. Suspend a rope from a tree branch and hang your food pack three metres above the ground, two metres out from the trunk and 1.5 metres beneath the branch.
 - Barrel method. Place food in an airtight barrel at least 15 metres away from any tent. Tie the barrel to a tree to prevent it from rolling away. Although the barrel may be airtight, odours can remain on the outside of the barrel.
 - Overwater method. A canoe or kayak is loaded with waterproof food packs. Placing paddles under packs may prevent the bottom of the packs from getting wet during rain. The boat is then anchored at one end with a rope tied to a rock (or mesh bag filled with rocks) and the other end secured to a tree on shore with a safety line. This method is efficient for large groups or lots of food.
33. Other items to place in a food pack include toothpaste, perfume, sunscreens, skin creams, deodorant (avoid, or use unscented), used tampons, clothing with spilled food, juice bottles, all food items, used pots and pans, dishes, and garbage.

Bear Encounters

34. The Ministry of Natural Resources estimates that there are about 75,000 to 100,000 black bears in Ontario. Bears are generally timid and avoid encounters with people, but they can come into conflict with people when natural foods are scarce. The following strategies can be used to minimize the chance of a bear encounter:
- Make noise (e.g., whistle, talk, sing, carry a bell) while hiking and portaging, especially if you are travelling upwind or through thick bush.
 - Use a flashlight if travelling after dusk.
 - Learn to recognize and watch for bear signs (e.g., fresh digging and feces). Avoid campsites and other areas where there is recent evidence of bear activity.
 - There is safety in numbers. No bear has attacked a group of four people or more.
 - Leave your dog at home. While a well-trained dog may deter a bear, a poorly-trained one may only excite it, resulting in the bear following the dog back to its owner.
 - When setting up a campsite, remember to leave an escape route for wild animals. If a wild animal enters a campsite and feels trapped by the placement of tents, it is likely to charge.

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35. The Ministry of Natural Resources recommends the following actions for dealing with bears. If you spot a bear on a trail or if one enters your campsite:
- Do not approach the bear. Slowly back away while watching the bear and wait for it to leave. Never turn your back on a bear. Allow it a clear escape route.
 - If you are near a building or car, get inside it as a precaution. If the bear was attracted to food or garbage, make sure it is removed after the bear leaves to discourage the bear from returning.
 - If a bear is in a tree, leave it alone. Remove people and dogs from the area. The bear will usually come down and leave when it feels safe.
36. If a bear is trying to get at food in your campsite, or if a bear tries to approach you, here is how you should react:
- Stop. Face the bear. Do not run. Stay with your group. Yell, wave your arms, and make yourself look bigger. Be aggressive and try to persuade the bear to leave
 - If the bear is not frightened away, slowly back away and give it a wide berth.
37. Bear attacks may stem from the following causes: if the bear is cornered, a mother bear is protecting her young, or (in extremely rare cases) if the bear is a predatory one.
38. An anxious or annoyed bear may stand upright to get a better view, make huffing or popping sounds, swat or beat the ground with its forepaws or even bluff charge. If you find yourself in one of these situations:
- Slowly back away, watching the bear
 - If the bear approaches, stop. Be aggressive, yell, and throw rocks. Never turn and run!
 - If the bear continues to approach, resume backing away while continuing to be aggressive.
 - If the bear makes contact, do not play dead. Fight back with whatever you have on hand to hurt the bear. This is the best chance of persuading the bear to stop its attack
39. Bears are rarely a problem for backcountry travellers. Raccoons and mice are generally the greatest nuisance, and more people in Ontario are hurt by moose each year than by bears.
40. Protect your campsite from wild animals; your safety and that of the campers who come after you depend on your camping etiquette. When wildlife locates garbage that you have left behind, they may come to associate people with food. Any animal that has made this association is apt to become bolder and aggressive; these behaviours may lead to the killing of the “nuisance” wildlife.
41. For more information about bear attacks, refer to the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources [website](#)