

Be Prepared for Summer High Adventure



Headwaters of the Kings River, Western Sierra, Blackcap Basin, Courtright Reservoir Trailhead

Summer is here and it's time to get your unit into the great outdoors; on the trails and in the mountains. Here is a list of things that you need to be concerned about that will help you to have a safe, fun and exciting summer High Adventure. Go over and teach these important safety features with your scouts before you ever hit the trail. Test them and try them. Make sure everyone on the trip is an expert and understand these important principles.

Hydrate, hydrate, hydrate...

Water helps you cope with temperature extremes and high altitude, plus it's a great natural mood enhancer. Drink plenty and develop an 'eye' for clear urine which means you're hydrated—dark urine means you're not. Munch on salty snacks to keep sodium levels balanced. Make sure any water sourced the backcountry is treated or filtered and safe to drink.

Get the right fit...

Properly fitted backpacks and hiking boots are key to comfort and safety. Preventing back injuries, blisters and potentially nasty falls. Remember: snug around the waist, loose in the toe.

Watch your step...

About 50 percent of all injuries in the wilderness are strains or sprains related to slips and falls. Take it slow at first, adjusting to the terrain and your pack's weight before increasing your pace.

Protect your provisions...

Bears aren't the only threat to your Varsity team's food supply. Raccoons, squirrels, possums, skunks and even those cute little chipmunks will eagerly gnaw through your pack for unguarded trail mix. Depending on where you're going, you may need either an animal-proof container, or a light cord and reinforced stuff sack to hang your food.

Pack hats for all seasons...

Protect yourself from the sun with a shady brimmed hat. Pack a warm beanie to keep you warm from the cold. A beanie will also help to keep your feet warm when worn on your head when you sleep. A hot day can quickly turn to a cold night in the great outdoors. A sunny day can also turn into a drenching cloudburst.

Manage risk and look out for your scouts...

Know what hazards to expect and either be skilled in managing risks or be ready to back off. It's okay to back off if something is too hard or too dangerous. Let someone know where you're going and when you'll be back. Have an emergency plan in case someone gets hurt, and have a plan for how to get help. Know your Varsity Scouts limits and establish a pace that suits everyone. Bring them all back home safe and sound.

Learn some 'common sense'...

Bring a GPS unit, map and compass and check them often. Don't wait until you're lost to use them. Check the weather forecast before you leave for your trip. Bring a first aid kit and know how to use it. Teach your scouts how to use all of these safety items before you leave on your trip.

Make it an outdoor learning experience...

Pack a BSA fieldbook to learn about the flora and fauna. Learn about the animal life you may encounter for of the particular region or time of your adventure. Study the constellations you will see at night. Speak with locals for tips on things to do and sights to see.

Care for the places you visit...

Leave No Trace is a guideline of ethical use and behaviors in wild places. It was developed by the Boy Scouts of America in collaboration with Several land managing agencies.

Mix it up and keep it fun...

Always look for a new adventure destination for your Varsity Scouts so that they can prove their wilderness experience and knowledge.