



Overnight Camping

Good Practice Guide

Version 1

2018

Overnight Camping

Overnight camping in shelter of some description (tent, fly, bivy or hut), with or without road access. It includes camping that occurs on the Department of Conservation estate and council campsites, school grounds and private land. There may or may not be permanent toilets, tap water, a power supply or fixed (landline) communications.

This guidance has been developed for overnight camping that is under direct supervision. However, it may also be helpful for indirectly supervised activities such as solo camping.

This guidance is specific to **Overnight Camping** activities and is designed to be used in conjunction with the **General Guidance for Organised Outdoor Activities** and the **Overnight Camping Planning Template**.

Potential value of activity

OVERNIGHT CAMPING CAN PROVIDE:

- A chance to explore new areas and stay overnight.
- Excitement, fun and a sense of mystery and adventure.
- An opportunity to learn and practice new skills.
- Social interaction that doesn't happen when people go home at the end of a day.
- Development of resilience in dealing with sleeping/sheltering in a new environment.
- Opportunities for taking care and responsibility.
- Being part of a team working on a shared challenge like shelter setup, and other camp activities.
- Environmental experiences (clean air, sounds at night, night sky/stars).
- Freedom from media, cellphones and other digital devices **or** find new ways to engage with technology.

“Who knew there were so many stars out there”

Planning considerations

See the [General Guidance for Organised Outdoor Activities](#) document.

Participants

Guidance on:

How to ensure the activities match the participants' abilities and needs.

- Are there any special sleeping needs or vulnerabilities that leaders need to know about? For example, poor mobility, night time anxiety or bedwetting.
- Can participants be relied on to bring sufficient medications or personal supplies to get through an overnight stay (as opposed to those they might need for a day activity)? An example of nighttime medications would be contact lens solution and spare contact lenses.

Supervision

Guidance on:

The level and style of supervision typically required for this activity.

CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING WHEN DETERMINING THE APPROPRIATE SUPERVISION STRUCTURE FOR OVERNIGHT CAMPING:

- If overnight supervision is likely to be draining or result in broken sleep, you need to factor this in your supervision structure for the following day's activities. *Will leaders be fresh and alert enough to do the job effectively?* Designating a specific 'night supervisor' to ensure those on duty during the day get enough rest may be appropriate.
- For a capable group of adults or teenagers, a single overnight leader is often adequate. In some cases, responsible adults may be left without direct supervision (but with a leader 'on call' to assist in the case of an emergency). In these cases you need to be able to demonstrate that the participants have the knowledge (e.g. first aid training) and resources (like communications) to manage emergencies and summon help effectively on their own.
- For a group of vulnerable individuals like children, people with disabilities or older participants you need as many leaders as are required to get them through the night comfortably with some staff resources in reserve to manage the situation and participants if there is an emergency. For example, in some cases, you may need leaders in the tent next to participants with 'one eye open' to manage night toileting and other challenges.
- Consider whether your participants need to sleep in single sex groups or not. Generally accepted practice in mixed sex school aged groups is that boys and girls sleep in separate tents and that there are both female and male leaders.
- Consider how can you provide safe spaces for toileting, changing and sleeping that support the inclusion and wellbeing of students who identify as sex, gender, or sexuality diverse.
- Consider how can you provide appropriate toileting and waste facilities for those who are menstruating.

Leader competence

The experience and knowledge required by those running the activity, both for normal operation and for managing emergencies.

Camping skills and knowledge

Are the leaders competent in establishing a safe and effective camp, including evaluating the suitability of the site?

Can they set up the tents?

Can they use the cooking stoves safely to hygienically produce a nourishing meal if this is required?

Are they going to be able to manage in bad weather?

Are there any specific tasks that they also need to do as part of the activity? For example, loading trailers, knowing the camp layout, and obtaining water, connecting power and managing communications equipment if relevant.

Overnight participant care

Are leaders able to help participants with any specific or supportive needs where relevant?

Overnight stays introduce additional supervisory challenges that may not be present during a day activity. For example, are they able to help with toileting contingencies (e.g. bedwetting or managing wheelchair access to a latrine site)?

Relevant Qualifications

The following qualifications contain an overnight camping component:

- National Certificate in Outdoor Recreation (Leadership) Level 3, with strand in Bush Walking and additional assessment in US27843 (Overnight Tramping Leader).
- National Certificate in Outdoor Recreation (Leadership) Level 4-5, with strand in Tramping
- New Zealand Certificate in Outdoor Leadership (Instruction) (Level 5) with strand(s) in Bush
- NZOIA Bush 1



*“Experience can make
all the difference in a tricky
situation”*

Resources and equipment

Consider what equipment and resources are required to ensure the activity can be run safely. The participants may be required to bring this or it may be provided to them.

Participant

- Personal sleeping gear (sleeping bags, camp mattress). Consider the season and how to ensure participants are warm enough during the night.
- Toiletries, including overnight medications (and spares of critical medications).
- Warm dry clothes for sleeping (if daytime clothing gets wet).
- Personal lighting (headlamps and torches).

Group

- Shelter (tents, flys). Consider the likely weather, particularly wind, when choosing the appropriate shelter.
- Check tents/shelters are in working order before you go. When tenting at a drive-in site it is often useful to bring extra guy lines, pegs and tarps.
- If planning to walk in to use a public back country hut always carry a form of emergency shelter for the whole group (a fly for example). This may be needed in the event that the hut cannot be reached or found (e.g. due to getting lost or flooded rivers) or in the case that the facility is full when you arrive.
- Cooking equipment and food. Ensure cookers and lanterns have the correct type of fuel in sufficient quantities. Also check that fuel and gas lines do not leak when under pressure/during use. Consider bringing spare seals and/or stove repair equipment.
- Hygiene. Make it easy for participants to toilet and keep hands clean. Bring hygiene/toileting supplies (hand cleaning, toilet paper). If a latrine or toileting holes need to be dug bring an appropriate shovel or trowel. Consider reflective markers to allow participants to find toilet areas easily in darkness. Make sure there are opportunities for participants to wash or sanitise hands after toileting and before or after eating. Generally a vigorous soap and water wash is more effective than hand sanitizer at limiting the spread of bugs amongst participants.
- Group lighting (lanterns, candles). Make sure all leaders and participants have access to effective night lighting (torches, headlamps etc with adequate spare batteries) for getting around safely after dark. It is useful to make sure these are readily available if a group is likely to be arriving late/setting up in the dark.
- First aid kit and other emergency gear (e.g. fire extinguisher, fire blanket). An example of a generic group first aid kit contents list can be found here:
<http://www.supportadventure.co.nz/system/files/Peak%20Safety%20Outdoor%20First%20Aid%20Kit%20List.pdf>



Smoke alarms:

When sleeping in bunkrooms, huts or other built structures on organised outdoor activities it is good practice to have a working smoke alarm. Some camp facilities or backcountry huts do not have smoke alarms or smoke alarm batteries maybe flat. Consider whether it is appropriate to have a set of smoke alarms that you can bring and temporarily place in rooms where participants are sleeping overnight.

Leader

- List of participants, including any health or other needs that the leader should know about.
- Safety plan including emergency contact numbers (see **Overnight Camping Planning Template**).
- Site map and information (e.g. instructions for using the camp, how to turn on the power).

Leave No Trace (LNT)/Environmental Protection

Consider how you can plan your activity to minimize long term damage to the environment. Overnight camping has a higher impact on the environment than other outdoor activities because participants are present at a site for longer with more concentrated traffic and waste.

There are seven key LNT principles which are:

1. Plan Ahead and Prepare
2. Travel and Camp on Durable Ground
3. Dispose of Waste Properly
4. Leave What You Find
5. Minimise the Effects of Fire
6. Respect Wildlife and Farm Animals
7. Be Considerate of Others

For further information about LNT see

Leave No Trace teaching tips for overnight camping

http://www.leavenotrace.org.nz/uploads/files/leave_no_trace_education_pack_-_doc-2777090.pdf

Exemplars

Examples of good practice

Mountain Safety Council – Get Outdoors series

<https://www.mountainsafety.org.nz/resources/?MetaData=Camping>

Further support

Places to gain more information from, e.g. specialist websites, industry bodies or clubs.

Mountain Safety Council – Bushcraft Manual – Outdoor Skills for the NZ Bush

<http://shop.mountainsafety.org.nz/>

Mountain Safety Council – Plan My Trip

<https://www.mountainsafety.org.nz/plan-my-trip/#/>

[Overnight Camping Planning Template](#)

[Overarching Risk Management Guidance](#)