

## BACKPACKING INFORMATION FOR PRE-HIKES AND BAREFOOT MAILMAN HIKE

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### Equipment required for the actual Barefoot mailman hike

- **Class A uniform – no exceptions. Do not arrive at the hike with non-Scout pants or shirt.**
- New Class A pants – the new Class A pants is made of nylon. In the event that it gets wet, they dry very quickly. The pants are also convertible into shorts by means of a zipper. The old Class A pants are made of cotton and once wet, they take a long time to dry.
- Tent
  - Tents need to be light. Troop tents are NOT suitable for this hike because they are heavy (they weigh roughly 13 lbs)
  - Do not bank on nice weather. You need a basic tent as it can rain or be very cold during this time of the year.
  - Scouts may share tents thereby splitting the weight of the tent.
- Food – Scouts must provide all their own food for the entire hike
  - Lunch on Sat – suggest PB&J sandwich
  - Dinner – look at the “self-heating” meals. They are available at the Bass Pro Shop.
  - Breakfast & lunch on Sun.
- Water
  - You need to carry sufficient water to last you 2 to 3 hours – at least 2 liters. We will have support staff along the way but we cannot count on having the support staff at every water break. Sometimes there are problems in finding parking, finding the break, Troop spread out etc so you must carry sufficient water. On previous practice hikes, we have had Scouts with insufficient water. Do not let this happen.
- Sleeping bag
- Raincoat / poncho – pre-hikes & Barefoot Mailman hike is rain or shine. Be prepared!
- Some plastic bags to cover your socks in the event of rain. Publix bags will do. Tuck them into your socks or tie them with a piece of string.
- Flashlight
- You need to be prepared for any weather condition. Eg it might be cold, raining etc.
- **Buddy system – all Scouts are to walk with one or more members of Troop 599.**

- Stay with your hike section - The hike is split into various sections. You must stay with your section. If you cannot keep up with the section, you may be asked to leave the hike.
- **Anything with cotton is generally bad for hiking, because once wet, it takes a long time to dry.**
- Hiking boots – sneaker are not sufficient as they will not provide protection in the event of rain.
- Backpack with internal or external support frame
- Water bottles – Nalgene bottles are good because they are very durable, and don't leak. I have purchased the cheaper knock offs at Wal-Mart before but they tended to leak. The disposable water bottles you buy at Publix are also good because they are light.

### Blisters

- **Keep your backpack weight as light as possible.**
- Moleskin or cloth tape for blisters. Although duct tape works, this leaves a glue residue in your sock which ruins the sock for future hikes so not recommended.
- We generally break for around an hour during lunch time. Take off your boots and socks and let your feet dry out during this time.
- Change your socks at the lunch break. One of the causes of blisters is feet getting damp from perspiration.

### Socks

- Socks are very important as the backpack weight increases friction in your hiking boots which is what creates blisters.
- Look for backpacking / trekker socks eg Smartwool. I recommend going with the thicker socks eg Smartwool Trekking, as this reduces blisters when carrying a backpack.

### Backpack

- **It is important to do all your practice hikes with a proper backpack filled with water filled soda bottles as weight. The rules of the Barefoot Mailman hike require you to carry your tent, sleeping bag, food, poncho, etc. You may only be resupplied with water during the hike. If you do your pre-hikes with too little weight, you will be unprepared for the actual hike.**
- When buying a new backpack, compare the capacity (in cu – cubic inches).
- Also, backpacks come in different sizes. Make sure that the “Torso length” is the correct size.
- See the attachment “Backpacking - finding your torso length.mht” – click on the link to play the video.
- **If you buy a backpack with the incorrect torso length, it will be uncomfortable and not properly distribute the weight on your back.**

### Drinking

- Drink some water half an hour before you start hiking.
- Continuously drink water throughout the day. We normally stop every hour for a few minutes.
- Drink mainly water and some Gatorade. **DO NOT ONLY DRINK Gatorade.** A few years ago we had a Scout who only drank Gatorade throughout the hike, and he dropped out 75% of the way on Day 1 because the Gatorade made him feel nauseous.
- Eat throughout the day. If you eat everything at lunch time this will tend to make you feel tired the remainder of the day.

### PRE-HIKES : Equipment required for Practice hikes& Barefoot mailman hike

- For weight on practice hikes, I suggest 2 liter soda bottles filled with water. Each 2 liter bottle weighs approx. 5 lbs.
- Scouts should carry no more than 20% of their body weight.
- Class A or B uniform (note Class B is only for the pre-hikes)
  - The new class A pants is very nice to hike in because it is made of nylon.
  - Class A shirts are also nice to hike in because they dry very quickly. When hiking with a backpack, perspiration tends to accumulate on your back. Our class B shirts are made of cotton, and once wet, they take a long time to dry.

### Where to buy equipment?

- Generally I have found [www.campmor.com](http://www.campmor.com) to have good pricing
- [www.rei.com](http://www.rei.com)