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## **BACKPACKING AND WILDERNESS SKILLS**

## Bellingham, WA EQUIPMENT CHECKLIST

The primary goal of any backpacker should always be to carry as little as necessary. What is left out of a backpack is often just as important as what is placed inside. Conditions in the mountains vary dramatically from season-to-season, and sometimes even throughout the same day. This can make the process of preparing equipment for a trip difficult. On the one hand, a hiker wants to be light. But on the other hand, a hiker wants to have everything they need if there is a storm or other emergency.

This list was designed for the "worst case scenario," a trip with significant inclement weather. In serious conditions it's not uncommon for a climber to need every piece of clothing and equipment on this list. However, if a program does not encounter significant weather, there may be items here that are not used. As you prepare for your trip, it's important to plan for the worst and hope for the best.

On the first day of your program, an AAI guide will work with you to refine your mountain kit to ensure that you bring exactly what's needed given the forecast. It is acceptable to bring too much clothing or equipment to your initial meeting. And it is acceptable to bring things that you have questions about. Extra equipment can always be left behind at the AAI shop.

The Cascade climbing season is defined as May 1st through October 1st. This list references Early, Mid, and Late-season conditions. These periods of the climbing season are roughly defined by the different types of weather and snow conditions you are likely to encounter:

- **Early-Season Conditions** (May 1st-July 1st): There is usually significant snow both on the ground as well as on the glaciers. Climbers should expect to encounter deep, wet snow during the day and firm conditions at night. Overnight temperatures range from 15-degrees to 40-degrees Fahrenheit (-9-4C). Daytime highs range from 35-degrees to 70-degrees Fahrenheit (1-21C). Precipitation as snow or rain is likely in the early season.
- **Mid-Season Conditions** (July 1st-September 1st): Temperatures range from 40 to 50-degrees Fahrenheit (4-10C) at night, with occasional dips down below freezing. Daytime temperatures often reach 70-degrees Fahrenheit (21C). Climbers should expect the possibility of freezing temperatures above 9000-feet on summit days throughout the summer season. And though mid-season tends to be dryer in the Cascades, the possibility of rain is still always there.
- Late-Season Conditions (September 1st-October 1st): September is a varied month.
   Temperatures begin to drop both during the day and at night. Late in the month, it is possible that you will encounter an increase in snow or rain.

Please be sure to check the forecast several days prior to your course to ensure that you are properly prepared.

## NOAA Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest Weekly Forecast

**PROVIDED EQUIPMENT:** Climbing rope, anchors, solid waste bags

**RENTALS:** Equipment that is available for rent through the AAI Equipment Shop is designated with a "Rent" check box. These items may be rented on the first morning of your course during your rendezvous. It is possible to reserve rentals ahead of time, but due to an extensive inventory, reservations are not necessary. Please call the shop if you have unusual sizing issues (either large or small), as those items are limited.

Underlined items in this form are hyperlinked to examples available in our Equipment Shop. Don't forget that AAI climbers receive a 15% discount off full-price items purchased through our gear shop.

## Call or E-mail the Equipment Shop for Advice on Gear

Please feel free to contact us to help you get ready for your climbing trip. Your comfort and safety depend on being well equipped. Whether you get your gear from us or just get advice, we're here to help you prepare.

Call: (360) 671-1570 Email: <a href="mailto:shop@AlpineInstitute.com">shop@AlpineInstitute.com</a>
Equipment Shop Website: <a href="mailto:Shop.AlpineInstitute.com">Shop.AlpineInstitute.com</a>

Clothing	Packing Checklist
Beanie/Toque (Optional) Wool or synthetic, must fit under your helmet. Easily replaced with hooded layers after early season.	☐ Own ☐ Buy
Sun Hat Ideally fits under your climbing helmet. Baseball style hats with a button on top are generally not recommended. Visors or athletic hats from companies like Ciele or Skida are substantially more comfortable, vent better, and are easier to clean and dry out.	☐ Own ☐ Buy
Buff/Neck Gaiter Look for one that is UPF rated. Brighter colors work better for warmer conditions and darker colors for colder conditions.	☐ Own ☐ Buy
Sun Glasses Preferably with UVA/UVB protection	☐ Own ☐ Buy
Headlamp Bring extra batteries, or if it has a rechargeable battery, make sure and bring a charger. 200-350 Lumens is an ideal range.  ★ Example: Petzl Swift RL, Petzl Actik Core	☐ Own ☐ Buy
Liner Glove Thin, lightweight, wool or synthetic gloves. Size to fit snug but not too tight. Phone compatible fingertips and some sort of palm texture are nice features to have. Generally these are worn alone in temperatures above 25°F(-4°C) and when precipitation is not present. UPF rated liner gloves are ideal for sun protection. Bring 1-2 pairs.  * Examples: Outdoor Research Vigor Sensor, The North Face Etip Grip	☐ Own ☐ Buy

Hard Shell Glove (Optional)  Waterproof and insulated gloves. If the glove lacks insulation then size it to fit a liner glove inside. Mainly used in wet conditions, cold temperatures, or when not mobile.  ★ Examples: Black Diamond Renegade, Outdoor Research Highcamp.  ★ NOTE: April-May courses are often much colder and may require a more heavily insulated glove like the Black Diamond Guide	☐ Own ☐ Buy
Sports Bra Wool or synthetic, comfort is key. Avoid bras with adjusters and clasps that could get compressed by your pack straps. Racerbacks are popular options for keeping straps in place.	☐ Own ☐ Buy
Base Layer A lightweight, wool or synthetic sun hoody is ideal. Look for one with UPF 30+ sun protection. UPF Clothing protects better from the sun than sunscreen.  ★ Examples: Patagonia Capilene Cool Daily Hoody, Outdoor Research Echo, Rab Pulse	☐ Own ☐ Buy
Active Insulation Layer Lightweight "gridded fleece" or lightweight synthetic insulated jacket. Hood preferred.  ★ Active insulation jacket weight at 40g/m2 and heavier Insulation jacket at 60g/m2 or 80g/m2  ★ Example: Patagonia R1, Patagonia Nano Air, Arc'teryx Proton LT	☐ Own ☐ Buy
Soft Shell Jacket or Windproof Jacket (Optional) A soft shell jacket is considered an 'action layer'. Its materials are designed to stretch and breathe while also maintaining wind and water resistance. This allows the user to leave this jacket on for a wide range of temperatures and conditions throughout the day, without the hassle of constantly changing layers.	☐ Own ☐ Buy
Wind proof jackets are lightweight and packable, but lack the breathability and stretchy nature of the soft shell. Windproof jackets are ideal for blocking wind and light precipitation during low output activities.	
Insulation Jacket  AKA the "puffy." Down or Synthetic. This piece is worn in cold conditions or when not moving. Hood preferred. If choosing Down, water-resistant Down treatment is preferred to help prevent matting and loss of insulating ability if the jacket gets wet.	☐ Own ☐ Buy
Hard Shell Jacket (Waterproof Rain Jacket)  Non-insulated jacket with a waterproof and breathable membrane. 3-layer construction is recommended. It must have a hood, ideally a helmet compatible hood. When sizing make sure it can fit over other layers. Ski jackets are discouraged because they are usually not waterproof and have heavy insulation.  * Materials: Gore-Tex, eVent, Drilite, H2NO, Pertex Shield  * Example: Patagonia Torrentshell, Arc'Teryx Alpha AR, Mountain Equipment Lhotse.	☐ Own ☐ Buy ☐ Rent*
Undergarments Wool or synthetic. Long, compression style undergarments can help reduce inner thigh chafing.	☐ Own ☐ Buy

Base Layer Pant (aka "Long Johns") Wool or synthetic. Bring one for early or late-season conditions, optional for mid-season conditions (depending on the weather).  ★ Example: Patagonia Capilene midweight or thermal weight (Thermal is warmer)	☐ Own ☐ Buy
Soft Shell or Synthetic Hiking Pant Thin, weather-resistant, breathable, and stretchy. You will wear these a majority of the trip.	Own Buy
Hard Shell Pant (Waterproof Rain Pants)  Non-insulated, waterproof and breathable membrane. Full side zips are recommended. When sizing make sure it is able to fit over a base layer and soft shell pants. Insulated ski pants are strongly discouraged due to lack of waterproofness and heavy insulation.  * Materials: Gore-Tex, eVent, Drilite, H2NO, Pertex Shield.  * Example: Patagonia Torrentshell, Arc'Teryx Beta Pant	☐ Own ☐ Buy ☐ Rent*
Socks Wool or synthetic socks that are at least mid calf height. Modern boots are designed to insulate your feet, so a thick sock is not recommended as these tend to lead to blisters and moisture retention. Using a lighter weight sock allows for a more accurate boot fit. Wearing a "silk-weight" liner sock beneath your hiking sock can reduce friction on the skin and mitigate blister development. 3 pairs is generally sufficient.  * Example: Darn Tough Coolmax Lightweight	☐ Own ☐ Buy
Hiking Shoe (Lightweight Boots or Trail Running Shoes) Lightweight boots can be appropriate for early season programs (mid-June or earlier) when the weather forecast is cold and/or wet. By mid-season many opt for trail running shoes as they are lighter and dry out faster than traditional hiking boots. Be aware that trail running shoes do not offer as much support when traveling with heavy packs.  ** Example Trail Runner: Altra Lone Peak, La Sportiva Kaptiva, Salomon Sense Ride 4  ** Example Lightweight Boot: La Sportiva Trango Tech, Scarpa Zodiac	☐ Own☐ Buy☐ Rent*
Gaiters (Optional) Knee or calf height. Best used in early-season conditions. Optional for mid or late-season.  ★ Example : Outdoor Research Crocodile	☐ Own ☐ Buy ☐ Rent*
Trekking Poles One is required, two are highly recommended. Poles help with balance while hiking with a heavy bag and increase security during stream crossings. They also decrease the pressure on your knees during steep descents. For early season programs, your poles should have snow baskets.  ★ Example : Black Diamond Expedition 3	☐ Own ☐ Buy ☐ Rent*
Internal Frame Pack 50-65L is a recommended size range. Mountaineering specific packs, instead of backpacking packs, are a good way to shave weight.	☐ Own ☐ Buy ☐ Rent*
Camping	Packing Checklist

Tent 3 season tents can be used if the rain fly goes all the way to the ground on all sides. A "bathtub" floor for the inner tent is also recommended. This means that the inner tent isn't all mesh but has water resistant floor material that scoops up from the floor for 4-12" before changing to mesh, like a bathtub. If there are any questions please consult our Equipment Shop to see if your tent is okay to use.  -Early-season: Double wall 4 season tent recommended. (April to Mid-June) -Mid-season: 4 season or 3 season tent. (Mid-June to August) -Late-season: 4 season tent recommended. (Late August to September)  ★ NOTE: 4 season tents are available to rent at AAI the first morning of the course. There is also the possibility to pair up with other students on your course and share a tent.  ★ Example 4-Season: Hilleberg Unna, Black Diamond Eldorado  ★ Example 3-Season: Big Agnes Copper Spur, REI Half Dome	☐ Own ☐ Buy ☐ Rent*
Sleeping Bag Synthetic or Down. If you bring a synthetic bag bring one on the lower end of the temperature range since synthetic bags tend not to be as warm as down. If you sleep cold it is recommended that you bring a warmer bag than required for the seasonal conditions. If choosing Down, water-resistant Down treatment is preferred to help prevent matting and loss of insulating ability if the sleeping bag gets wet.  -Early-season: 0°F to 20°F (-18°C to -6°C)  -Mid-season: 20°F to 30°F (-6°C to -1°C)  -Late-season: 15°F to 20°F (-10°C to -6°C)  * Example: Mountain Equipment Fireflash (5), Western Mountaineering Alpinlite (20), Rab Mythic Ultra 180 (32)	☐ Own ☐ Buy ☐ Rent*
Compression Stuff Sack For your sleeping bag. If it is a down bag, a waterproof compression sack is recommended.	☐ Own ☐ Buy
Sleeping Pad  □ <u>Early-season:</u> Bring two; one inflatable and one closed cell foam. The foam pad helps insulate from the snow and serves as a backup to the inflatable pad.  □ <u>Mid or late-season:</u> One inflatable or closed cell foam pad.  ★ Example: ThermaRest XTherm	☐ Own ☐ Buy ☐ Rent*
Stove and Fuel Liquid fuel or canister stove. Fuel is available at AAI the morning of the course.  ** NOTE: Many people choose to share stoves, fuel and tents to decrease weight. However, some people prefer to camp in their own tents and use their own stoves. This can be determined on the morning of the first day of your program.  ** Example: Soto Windmaster, MSR Windburner	☐ Own ☐ Buy ☐ Rent*
Pots Bring one pot.  □ Early-season: Bring a bigger pot for melting snow; 1.5L to 2L  □ Mid or late-season: 0.5L to 1L  ★ NOTE: If you have a complete stove system like the Jetboil or MSR Reactor, and plan on eating out of your integrated pot, then you do not need to bring another pot.	☐ Own ☐ Buy
<b>Utensils</b> Don't forget the official "most forgotten item ever;" the spoon, or spork. Long-handled spoons make stirring hot liquids safer, and metal ones tend to not break as easily in cold temperatures.	☐ Own ☐ Buy

Bowl  □ Early-season: Bring a plastic bowl or mug, preferably with insulation. □ Mid or late-season: Bring a plastic bowl, insulation is not necessary.  ★ NOTE: If you have a Jetboil or MSR Reactor type stove and plan on eating out of your integrated pot, then you don't need to bring a bowl. The same applies if you plan on only using commercially packaged dehydrated or freeze dried meals.	Own Buy
<b>Lighters</b> Bring two. You will have the opportunity to buy them the morning of the course.	☐ Own ☐ Buy
Hydration 3L capacity is recommended, though some people need more.	☐ Own ☐ Buy
A common approach is to bring a 2-3 liter bladder and a 1 liter hard sided bottle. The bottle is an important backup to the bladder if it gets punctured. A hard-sided bottle may also double as a mug for hot water, though not every bottle is designed to hold boiling water.	
★ Example : Nalgene 32 oz bottle, Hydrapak Seeker 2-3L, MSR Dromedary 4-8L	
Water Purification Water purification of some form is required. The popular tabs that our guides use, Aquatabs, are available at the shop the morning of the course. Pills that take an hour or less to purify are recommended. Steripens are an acceptable alternative to purification tablets. It is strongly encouraged to use the brand Aquatabs, as they work the fastest and have the least amount of flavor once administered.  ★ NOTE: Pumps can be damaged by silt in the glacial water and can easily freeze at night and crack. However, many of our guides are finding success using some of the integrated pump/bladders like the BeFree and Quickdraw.  ★ Example : Aquatabs, SteriPen, Katadyn BeFree, Platypus Quickdraw	Own Buy
Food You are responsible for your own food for the duration of the course. Please consult our meal planning page. You should arrive on the first morning of your course with two-days of backcountry food.	☐ Own ☐ Buy
Other Essentials	Packing Checklist
Toothbrush and Toothpaste Travel size recommended.	☐ Own ☐ Buy
Hand Sanitizer and/or Wet Wipes Required. Used after going to the bathroom and before eating. Wet wipes can be used for the "mountain shower."	☐ Own ☐ Buy
Toilet Paper The provided solid waste bags have a small amount of toilet paper with them, but most people do not find this to be adequate. Estimate how much you'll need for a program of this length and place that in a plastic zip lock bag. An extra zip lock bag can be helpful for pack-out of used paper. If you plan to use wet wipes, be wary of scented or exfoliating types as these can be an irritant for some people.	☐ Own ☐ Buy

Pee Cloth (optional) A reusable, antimicrobial pee cloth. Used in place of toilet paper or wet wipes for cleanup.  ★ Example : Kula Cloth	
Urination Devices (optional) Pee funnels such as the GoGirl or Freshette. Rigid pee funnels hold their shape better. Used in conjunction with a pee bottle, or while on a rope team. These can help mitigate the need to squat.  ★ Example : Freshette	☐ Own ☐ Buy
Menstrual Cup (optional) There are many things to consider about backcountry menstruation, click on the link below for more information. Click here for more info  ★ Example : Diva cup, Saalt, Lunette	☐ Own ☐ Buy
Sunscreen At least SPF 30+, zinc based is preferred. Small travel size tubes are recommended so you can put them in a close by pocket for easy access.  ★ Example : ZBlok 45, 2oz containers are a nice size.	☐ Own ☐ Buy
Lip Balm Make sure it is SPF rated.  ★ Example : Blistex Gold Five Star Protection SPF 30	☐ Own ☐ Buy
Personal First Aid Kit  Band aids Blister treatment Prescription drugs Ibuprofen etc. If you wear contacts make sure and have spares if you can't see without them.	☐ Own ☐ Buy
Repair Kit  ☐ Inflatable sleeping pad patch kit ☐ Duct tape (Can be wrapped around trekking poles or water bottle. Gorilla Tape tends to be the best brand for the mountains.) ☐ Zip ties ☐ 6-10 ft of 3mm accessory cord ☐ 2 Trash bags that are big enough to line the inside of your pack with.	☐ Own ☐ Buy
Other Optional Items  The items below are not required, although many are nice "luxury" items that can make your expedition more enjoyable. Remember that a few ounces here and there add up to extra pounds on your back and knees during your expedition.	Packing Checklist
Gaia Navigation App Optional Smartphone App. Please have the Mt. Baker (all aspects) maps downloaded prior to the start of your course:	☐ Own ☐ Buy
Map and Compass  Map should be of Mt. Baker area (preferably Green Trails Maps #13SX). Compass must have declination adjustment.  ★ NOTE: All three items are available together in a bundle, or all sold separately, at AAI the morning of your course.	☐ Own ☐ Buy

<b>Altimeter Watch</b> If you have one then bring it, it is a great tool to have in the backcountry, especially for navigation.	☐ Own ☐ Buy
Pee Bottle Used at night or when the weather is poor so you don't have to get out of your tent. 32oz or larger is strongly recommended. Many guides use a bladder instead of a bottle for increased capacity.  ★ Example : Hydrapak Seeker 2L, Collapsible 48oz Nalgene	☐ Own ☐ Buy
Entertainment Books, games, cards, music player, kindle, ect. For evenings or rainy days in the tent.	☐ Own ☐ Buy
Portable Charging Device Phone charger, battery pack, or solar panel. You are responsible for your alarm clock each morning, if you are going to use your phone be sure you have enough power to accommodate for this.  * NOTE: Solar panels should only be used to charge battery packs. Battery packs should be used to charge devices. Inappropriate use of a solar panel could lead to the depletion of a device's power.	☐ Own ☐ Buy
Ear Plugs For defense against snoring and high winds.	☐ Own ☐ Buy
Insect Repellent Biting insects such as mosquitoes and blackflies can be prevalent during different times of the season depending upon conditions and location. This is a nice item to have just in case. Sometimes even a headnet is a nice item to have.	☐ Own ☐ Buy
Camera Phone cameras or small point-and-shoot cameras are preferred. SLR cameras are not recommended due to their size and bulk.	☐ Own ☐ Buy
Comfortable Clothing and Footwear Breathable footwear like flip-flops as well as some comfortable cotton clothing can be nice to change into after you get back to the van.	Own Buy
Car Charger Consider bringing an extra battery pack as well, having a lot of people using car charger cables is difficult.	☐ Own ☐ Buy
Ice Axe, Helmet, Crampons (Optional) Optional. Dependent on the time of year and location chosen to run the program. Some trails cross snowfields and the use of an ice axe, helmet, and crampons may be required. This equipment can be rented from our shop the morning of your first day.	☐ Own ☐ Buy ☐ Rent*