

Cold Weather Leader Training Course (H-105)

Participant Guide

Welcome!

On behalf of the Staff, we thank you for registering to participate in Cold Weather Leader Training! It is the goal of the staff to provide you an opportunity to meet new friends, learn and develop skills, and use those skills for a fun weekend of cold weather camping and program. The staff has been working as a team to develop a program that will allow us to share our knowledge and experience in the framework of a fun cold weather camping weekend. We are counting the days and look forward to meeting you in person! This guide has been assembled to help you prepare for the course.

Sincerely,

Tom Whelton
Liz Muller
Garvin Louie
Jane Richardson



About this course:

Cold Weather Leader Training (Course H-105) is Scouting America's program to train leaders on key skills and knowledge so that they can enable their youth to plan and execute cold weather program and adventures. This course was developed at Scouting America's Northern Tier High Adventure Base in Ely Minnesota. The course is offered at select locations around the country typically by five or fewer local councils. On completion of this course and practical skills weekend you will earn the Okpik Instructor designation and will be authorized to wear the Okpik Instructor badge.

What is Okpik (OOK-pik)?

Okpik is the name of the cold weather camping program at Northern Tier High Adventure Base. Okpik programming can be presented by local Councils once they meet specific NCAP requirements. Okpik has been offered in the Northeast region since at least the early 1980's first by Pine Tree Council and now by Scouting America New Hampshire. The name Okpik was selected with intention; Okpik is the Inuit name for the Snowy Owl. The Okpik does not just survive, it thrives, in the cold.

Where will the course take place?

The course will be presented in two sessions in separate locations.

Classroom Session 12/13/2025

Manning Hall, Camp Carpenter
300 Blondin Road
Manchester, NH
nhscouting.org/outdoor-programs/directions-to-camps

Practical Skills Weekend 1/30/2026-2/1/2026

Hidden Valley Scout Camp, Griswold Scout Reservatuon
254 Griswold Rd.
Gilmanton Iron Works, NH 03837-4108
nhscouting.org/outdoor-programs/directions-to-camps

When should I arrive?

Classroom Session: Please arrive between 8:30 and 8:50am. Training will begin at 9am

Practical Skills Weekend: Please arrive between 5:30pm & 6:45pm. Once all participants have arrived we will rally and travel to the remote campsite at 7:00pm. You will be met by staff members at the Administration Building in the main parking lot of Hidden Valley Scout Camp.

Will meals be provided?

Lunch, snacks & beverages will be provided for the classroom training day. On the practical skills weekend we will provide your meals, beverages and snacks. However, please eat dinner before you arrive for the practical skills weekend.

Who will be attending?

Participation in Cold Weather Leader Training is open to Adult (18+) Scouting America members. There may be multiple members of any particular unit. However, please do not assume you will be paired up with members of your local Troop, Crew, Ship or Post by default. You will be assigned to a provisional patrol. As a patrol you will participate in the various training activities that have been planned. Each patrol will be assisted by Staff instructors who will work with the patrol to ensure safe and high quality experience.

Will there be youth program participants?

No. The Cold Weather Leader Training course is intended for adult (18+) participants. Youth are welcome to participate in Okpik Cold Weather Experience which will be offered the same weekend in January. Youth will be presented an appropriate subset of the training information of the Cold Weather Leader Course.

Will I be with my friends in my Troop, Crew or Ship who registered?

Maybe. We will be assigning participants to provisional patrols for the weekend. Do not assume you will be paired up with members of your local Troop, Crew, Ship or Post by default. You will be assigned to a provisional patrol. As a patrol you will participate in the various training activities that have been planned. Each patrol will be assisted by Staff instructors who will work with the patrol to ensure safe and high quality experience.

What should I bring?

Classroom Session:

1. Your favorite coffee cup, to help reduce waste.
 2. Please bring appropriate materials to take notes, pens, paper, etc.
- There will be handouts but you may wish to record additional information

Practical Skill Weekend:

Participant Clothing List:

- 2-3 Winter Hats (Wool, fleece/wool combination, etc)
- be sure that your hat will cover your ears!
- avoid non-breathable hats such as leather & fur combinations

2 Pairs of synthetic long underwear

- May be heavy weight or mid weight, this layer should fit snug, but not tight, and involve a wicking material designed to keep you dry when sweating.
- If all you have is cotton, be aware that when cotton gets damp it loses insulating value and you will be very cold.

2-3 pairs of Mittens

1-2 Pairs of glove liners

- Optional but recommended
- Thin knit gloves to provide some protection while allowing dexterity. These will be worn under thicker gloves or mittens. Should be loose enough to allow for good blood flow to fingers

2-3 Pair of Wool or Heavy Synthetic Socks

- Should be loose enough that they don't restrict blood flow to feet.

2-3 pairs of Synthetic Sock liners

- Optional but recommended, these assist in wicking sweat away from the feet.

2 Pairs of pants

- Wool blend or fleece preferred
- Avoid cotton based fabrics such as jeans

2 Sweaters

- Wool or Fleece
- Avoid cotton sweatshirts

1 Wind/Rain Jacket or pullover Anorak

- Large enough to wear over all other layers.

1 Pair of Wind/Rain Pants

- Large enough to wear over all other layers.

1 Pair High Ankle Insulated Winter Boot

- Boots with removable liners are recommended but not required.
- You will be outdoors for many hours during the weekend, be sure to wear warm comfortable boots!

Backpack or Pulk

- A backpack to carry your gear to the outdoor camping destination.
- Be sure to pack early to see if all your gear will fit!

1 10x10 tarp

- This will be your sleeping bag shell when camping outdoors. Should be large enough to completely wrap your sleeping bag.

1 Sleeping bag

- Best choice, a bag that is rated below zero.
- If you do not have a sub zero bag can you borrow a sub zero bag from a peer?
- If you cannot borrow a bag can you nest your coldest rated bag with another bag for improved winter performance.

2 Closed cell full length foam sleeping pads

- Please note that 2 is the ideal for the worst winter conditions but you will survive with one.
- Do not bring an un-insulated inflatable air mattress. Compressed sleeping bag insulation on top of cold air will effectively extract your warmth and you will be cold quickly.

1 mess kit with fork, knife and spoon

- Plastic/Poly preferred but metal will do

1 pair Snowshoes (if you have them)

1 pair Microspikes (if you have them)

1-2 Water Bottles

Nalgene style / non-metallic

Basic toiletry kit

1 snow shovel (for program use)

Sunglasses (Optional)

Lip Balm (Optional)

Will there be a trading post?

Maybe. At the time of writing this guide we do not have formal plans for a trading post however we may have a small number of surplus items (patches, water bottles, etc) they may be for sale.

