

## Unit First-Aid Kit

Does your unit or chartered organization have a first aid kit? If so, when was the last time it was inspected to make sure that it contained the items necessary to render first aid? Does your first aid kit have a list of items it should contain? Was everything in the kit within the expiration date? Do you have a SOAP sheet or a First Aid log? If you are not sure, it might be time to conduct a first aid kit inspection.

The first thing to consider when doing an inspection is the location of the kit. Is it accessible to everyone in the unit or chartered organization? If you, or your Scouts, do not know the answer to this question then you have discovered the first problem.

According to BSA guidelines, the first aid kit is to be accessible to everyone and its location known to everyone involved with the unit. The tendency is to lock the kit in a room or closet but a problem arises when someone needs first aid and the kit is locked away and the key cannot be found.

Next there must be consideration for the items in the kit. Does someone in your unit have a latex allergy? Does someone in your unit have a sulfa drug allergy? If you answered yes to either of these questions, then the contents of your kit must change. Nitrile gloves are better as they are sturdier gloves and easier to put on the hand as well as being latex free, so they generally do not cause an allergic reaction. Bacitracin is a better option for antibiotic cream in that it does not contain neomycin, a particular type of antibiotic that cause many people to have allergic reactions. Bacitracin can actually aid in healing the wound quicker.

The unit leader should then look for the expiration dates of products in the kit. Most items in a kit will have dates and it is important that expired items be discarded because the products can undergo chemical processes that actually reduce the effectiveness of the product. A good simple rule of thumb is if it's expired, toss it!

Another item that can be helpful to first responders is the SOAP sheet. This is a sheet that gives first responders a quick guide for patient assessment. SOAP stands for:

Subjective (what the patient says)

Objective (what the first responder sees/measures)

Assessment (problem list); and

Plan (treatment plan.)

By quickly reviewing this sheet, the responders can quickly determine the extent of any injuries and collect valuable information for emergency services in case the victim should become unconscious while waiting for EMS to arrive at the scene.

Lastly the first aid kit should contain a First Aid Log.

In addition to other Scouting resources, the *Guide to Safe Scouting* has a suggested list of items that could be in a first aid kit (see below). The American Red Cross also maintains a list of suggested items for a first aid kit. When assembling the first aid kit, leaders are encouraged to consider making two kits. One kit could be put together for the “small” accidents like a scrape or cut. This kit would be small enough to carry with the unit during a brief day trip, etc. The second kit could be a larger, better stocked kit to be used for more serious injuries and in locations where EMS are farther away from the unit. For example, if the unit is camping at Flaming Arrow Scout Reservation, it may not be necessary to carry the large kit all over the camp when the smaller kit could contain the supplies necessary to handle a small scrape or cut. It would still be important to have the large kit at your campsite in case of a more serious injury and for everyone to know where the kit is located in case of an emergency.

By following these simple suggestions, your unit will be ready the next time first aid is needed.

### ***Guide to Safe Scouting Suggested First Aid Kit Contents***

A unit first-aid kit, well stocked with the basic essentials, is indispensable. Choose one sturdy and lightweight, yet large enough to hold the contents so that they are readily visible and so that any one item may be taken out without unpacking the whole kit. Keep a list of contents readily available for easy refilling. Keep the kit in a convenient location. Make one person responsible for keeping the kit filled and available when needed. Quantities of suggested items for your first-aid kit depend on the size of your group and local conditions.

#### ***Suggested First-Aid Kit Contents***

- Bar of soap
- 2-inch roller bandage
- 1-inch roller bandage
- 1-inch adhesive
- 3-by-3-inch sterile pads
- Triangular bandage
- Assorted gauze pads
- Adhesive strips
- Clinical oral thermometer
- Scissors
- Tweezers
- Sunburn lotion
- Lip salve
- Poison-ivy lotion
- Small flashlight (with extra batteries and bulb)
- Absorbent cotton
- Water purification tablets (iodine)
- Safety pins
- Needles
- Paper cups
- Foot powder



- Instant ice packs

Because of the possibility of exposure to communicable diseases, first-aid kits should include **latex, nitrile, or vinyl gloves, plastic goggles or other eye protection,** and **antiseptic** (such as bacitracin) to be used when giving first aid to bleeding victims, as protection against possible exposure. **Mouth barrier devices** should be available for use with CPR.