

Proper Care and Storage of Your Camping Equipment

Cleaning and Storing Camping Stoves, Grills, and Lanterns:

Thoroughly clean your camping stoves, grills, and lanterns before putting them away for the season. Use warm water and a mild dish soap. Disassemble the items as needed to clean away all grease and food debris in your stove or insects and other debris that may be trapped in your camping lantern. If necessary, you can clean the inside of your stove with a high pressure hose like those found at carwashes. Dry your camping gear completely. Turn the stove upside down if you have rinsed it with a hose to empty out any water inside. Replace bulbs, mantles, seals, and other parts that are damaged or worn and empty liquid fuel tanks to prevent buildup while the equipment is not in use. If your camping gear doesn't have a protective case for storage, place it inside a plastic bag and seal it tightly to keep spiders and other insects out.

Cleaning Your Cooler:

Coleman coolers are popular because they are so easy to care for. Before putting away your cooler until next camping season, give it a good cleaning with soap and warm water. Wash the inside and outside of the cooler, using baking soda to remove stains. To get rid of odors, wash the cooler using a mixture of bleach and water. You can also wipe the inside of the cooler with vanilla or peppermint extract, leaving saturated cotton balls inside the cooler overnight. Before storing your cooler, let it air dry completely with the lid off. Remember to wash drains and faucets thoroughly as well.

Tents:

Set it up in the backyard when you get home. Make sure everything is dry, because a tent packed away wet can quickly mold, mildew and rot. Clean the dirt or sand off tent stakes and poles. Tents can be stuffed loosely into the storage bags also, if you fold it up when storing it, this will eventually cause the tent to start leaking in the folds. Another suggestion if you are storing the tent long term is if you have shock-corded poles, put them together like you would if you were using them and store them along a wall. This takes pressure off the shock-cord and will make it last a lot longer. They should also be stored in a cool dry place, attics are normally not a good place to store them because they tend to get hot in the summer and that is not good for the gear

Sleeping bags: These you will want to store clean, dry, and loose. After making sure they are clean and dry, store them loosely in large laundry bags, Rubbermaid tubs or something similar to them. You do not want to store them stuffed or rolled up tightly. Sleeping bags need to be loose so the insulation will not be compressed over a long period. This will eventually destroy the insulation.

Self-inflating sleeping pads: After cleaning them, store them unrolled with the inflating valve open, under a bed is a good place to store these. If stored rolled up, it will collapse the foam inside of them and they will not inflate fully.

Cooking gear: Make sure your pots, pans, utensils and stove are all clean. Stray food drippings and crumbs will eventually attract insects and rodents.