

**Cold Weather Hints for Staffers** (from Multiple Sources, including John Dietrich, Tom Elliot, and Dr. Bob)

First, please read the **Cold Weather Hints for Hikers** – much of the clothing information there is also useful for staffers, and all staffers should be aware of how the hikers are supposed to prepare.

- 1) Wearing dark-colored exterior clothing will get the most heat benefit from the sun, if there is any on Hike Saturday.
- 2) Do NOT use spigot coolers for water, even hot water, if it's below freezing, and especially if the wind is blowing - the spigots will freeze shut - and so will the screw-on covers!
- 3) Regular coolers work in reverse, too; that is, they prevent items from freezing if the lid is kept shut. Cases of water bottles, or gallon jugs of water, can be kept in coolers without freezing (or usually in cars, also).
- 4) Propane is useful for both stoves and heaters; however, be aware also that propane tanks will run slower and slower the longer you use them (evaporation of a liquid is a cooling process, and the liquid inside a propane tank will eventually reach 65 below zero as the propane is boiling off). A very useful trick is to place a large hand-warmer (or several of them) on top of an insulating pad (even cardboard works) and place the propane tank on top of it. This will work even in bitter cold weather (and no, it's NOT a safety hazard!)

Liquid fuel stoves and heaters work (Coleman fuel or even kerosene), as will small charcoal grills. Most liquid fuels are effective to 30 below zero or even colder – a situation which is “highly unlikely” to occur in our area in mid-March! Charcoal requires replenishment every hour or so.

5) Setting up heavy-duty tarps as “lean-to’s” on the windward side of your staff area will greatly help your staff handle the winds. A “warming area” can be set up in the sheltered area or inside a wall tent with a propane or kerosene heater (but if a wall tent is used, maintain ventilation!) A vehicle can also be used as a warming area, but hikers who sit down for more than a few minutes usually “freeze up” and have to end their hikes right there – whereas hikers who remain standing tend to remain more limber.

6) Staffers **MUST OVERDRESS** for the conditions - the hikers will warm up as they're hiking; the staffers stand in place for hours, and have to endure the conditions without the benefit of exercise. If the ground is frozen, use of Sorel type boots, or standing on foam pads, can help keep feet warmer (not warm, warmer). Dress in layers, and if the wind will be blowing hard, wear a full rain suit over everything as 100% wind-blocking protection. Facemasks and scarves are good; ventilated ski goggles are very helpful.

7) Cold weather setups take little longer than normal setups – people move more slowly when it's cold, and even slower when it's cold and windy. Please work that into your setup schedule.

8) Support Stop Captains and Staff should include inquiries to the hikers on whether they can feel their fingers, toes, AND ALSO THEIR EARS, especially if they're wearing baseball caps. If you wish to purchase a reasonable number of chemical hand-warmers and toe warmers for "just in case", we will cover it – do not sweat the budget – buy what you need to support the hikers, bikers, and staff.

[2018 Update]