



# PREP & PACKING SUPPLEMENT FOR STAFF

## INTRODUCTION

The Tamakwa *Green Book* is an invaluable resource for preparing to go to camp. It has been developed and fine tuned over the years to provide as much information as possible. That being said, it has always been written for the camper/family audience. Often times, questions arise from new staff members about how to pack and prepare for camp that may not be covered in other materials. The purpose of this brief guide is to answer those questions. In some cases, this guide will refer to specific pages or places in the *Green Book* as well as the *Staff Manual* for reference. It is still essential that you read the *Staff Manual* in its entirety before camp. An online version will be emailed to you soon and a hard copy will be given to you at camp.

With respect to making purchases for camp, you probably own almost everything you'll need for the summer. The intention is not to have you spend a lot of money preparing for camp. Please keep that in mind as you begin packing.

## PACKING

No two people will pack exactly the same stuff to come to camp this summer, so giving you an exact list of what to bring and how to pack is not realistic. Some of it is based on personal preference or one's job at camp.

We ask everybody coming to camp to use duffel bags, but that requirement is mostly directed at local staff members who are driving or taking the bus. If you're from out of country or are flying in, please feel free to use whatever luggage you already have. Just keep in mind that it's best to start with light bags when they're empty. Duffel bags work best for packing because they are durable, cheap and lightweight. If you have other luggage and want to use that instead, don't worry. Just keep in mind that Tamakwa's shores are not the ideal surface for rolling luggage and **pretty much everything that comes to camp gets dirty**. Our strict luggage policy is more applicable to campers than to staff. When campers arrive, we must move 600 large duffel bags by boat in a short period of time. Staff members arrive in smaller waves and it isn't as much of an issue.

Some of the recommendations in our packing list (*Green Book*, pg. 22) are geared towards campers. You may find it unnecessary to bring the quantity listed for some of the items, but you should understand that when we say bring 10 towels, it's written with the 7 year old in mind. Things get dirty, campers lose things, staff members lose things, which leads to...

Labeling your clothing (and all other belongings) is not just for campers. Stuff gets lost, misplaced, mistaken for somebody else's, etc. If you want to go home with the stuff you arrived with, label it.

## TRAVELING FROM AFAR

The majority of Tamakwa Staff members are from Southern Ontario and the Detroit area. Most of our campers come from these areas and many grow up to be staff members. In recent years, many of our staff members have also come to us from places such as Mexico, England, Scotland, Ireland, New Zealand, South Africa, Germany and Australia. Traveling thousands of miles by plane to Toronto, taking a lifeguarding course, and then catching a bus up to Algonquin Park to begin staff training can all be a daunting concept. Don't worry! You're not the first person to follow this path and we've been doing this for over 75 years now.

Flying is an expensive proposition, even if you manage to get a good deal. With changes in the airline industry over the last few years, it can be difficult and expensive to pack every item for every conceivable scenario. There is no need to pack so much stuff for the flight that you get slapped with extra fees.

**Just about anything you can buy in your home country can be bought in Canada.** Remember, you shouldn't have to purchase too much for camp, you can likely make do with what you have. However, if you are intending to buy something to travel with, it may save you money to pack lighter and make that purchase once you arrive. Even if you're already up at camp and decide there is something you need, there are opportunities to get into the nearby town of Huntsville.

## CAMP LAUNDRY

If you opt for the camp laundry service (details on pg. 9 of the *Staff Manual*), it's important to know that it goes out once a week and returns in about a day and a half. So, for packing purposes you should keep in mind that you'll get fresh, clean clothes weekly. The *Staff Manual* also explains the option for opting out of the camp laundry service, which includes doing it on your day off at a laundromat in a nearby town.

## WEATHER

The weather ranges from chilly nights that require long sleeves, sweats and maybe a light jacket, to 30°C (86°F) with lots of sun and humidity.

Sometimes we get a bit of liquid sunshine (A.K.A. rain) and **a rain jacket is essential**. Some will say rain pants are necessary also, others never wear them. If you find yourself out on canoe trip and it rains for an entire day, you'll wish you had them.

Layering is the best approach as the weather changes throughout the day.

## PACKING FOR COUNSELORS

Counselors live in cabins with campers and go on canoe trips. Labeling is even more important when you're in a camper cabin, even though you have separate sleeping quarters. If you already own hiking boots/shoes, you might want to bring them for your canoe trip or in camp on rainy days, but they are not necessary.

## PACKING FOR CANOE TRIP STAFF

You don't spend that much time in camp so most of what you'll need to pack will be related to how you choose to trip. Camp provides all essentials for tripping including canoes, paddles, tents, packing, cooking equipment, etc. You will need a sleeping bag, properly fitting lifejacket, raingear, and other personal items. Check the *Canoe Tripper Handbook* for further details.

## **PACKING FOR ACTIVITY LEADERS AND SPECIALISTS**

Since you won't be going on canoe trip, you can scratch any required tripping gear from your packing list, unless you want to bring something for your days off. If you already own a properly fitting lifejacket, you should definitely bring it. Purchasing a new lifejacket is optional unless you're working on a waterfront activity. If you wish to use canoes, kayaks, sailboats, etc. during the summer, you will still need to use a properly fitting lifejacket.

If you have materials related to your activity, such as books or printed ideas from the internet, you should definitely bring them! We have lots of resources available, but feel free to supplement this with your own materials.

## **WHAT NOT TO BRING TO CAMP**

The "What Not to Bring to Camp" List (*Green Book*, pg. 24) is most definitely geared toward campers, but it all applies to staff as well. Electronics at camp are disruptive to the camp atmosphere and are generally unnecessary. The only exception made for staff is that staff may bring a cell phone to camp for use on days off, but it must be checked into the office while in camp (*Staff Manual*, pg. 8). Many people find freeing themselves of their daily use of electronic devices for two months to be a liberating and refreshing experience.

For those of you who are international travelers, traveling before and/or after the summer that definitely want to have their laptop during their travels, you may have a laptop with you but **it must be checked into the office while you are at camp.**

## **HEALTH HISTORY FORM**

Please fill out this form with as much information as possible. **It is NOT necessary to get a medical exam or additional shots or immunizations prior to camp.** We simply want as much information about your medical history as possible so that, in the unlikely event of an emergency, our medical team will be as informed as possible.

## **MOST IMPORTANTLY**

Get Excited! You're about to meet an amazing bunch of new people in our staff group as well as the campers arriving at the end of pre-camp training. Many of our staff members have been at Tamakwa since they were small children and have life-long friends there. Even though most of our new staff arrive knowing nobody, most of them leave on the last day with tears in their eyes, hugging and kissing all of the new friends they have made. If you come to camp with a good attitude, excited to meet people and participate, you'll have an amazing summer. You might even get a nice tan.