

# Clothing Check at Chilkoot Pass

This is the Clothing Check write-up that Chilkoot Pass Mayor Jim Rose has prepared and which is included in the "Event Descriptions" in the Derby Patrol Leader Brochure. Please share this information with your adult leaders and visiting parents.

Proper clothing is one of the most important ways to ensure your survival on a winter outing. If you are well prepared you are warm and dry, but if unprepared your feet are wet and freezing and your body loses its heat dangerously fast. The survival rule: when the poorest equipped Scout becomes too cold or wet to continue, the whole Patrol must stop and care for him and return to base camp.

Prepare your Patrol by copying and distributing the checklist included in this brochure. Sometime before the Klondike Derby, conduct a "shakedown" inspection of your Patrol to make certain everyone has the proper clothing. When your Troop meets to leave for the Klondike, check them again.

You should plan to assemble your Patrol in the staging area behind the Starting Line at least 30 minutes before your assigned start time. Staff will be judging your Derby Sledge and Patrol Flag at the same time that you are running final equipment and clothing checks for your Patrol. Once you are satisfied, introduce yourself to the Mayor (Territorial Constable) so that one of his Mounties can be assigned to conduct a clothing inspection for your Patrol before it's time for you to hit the Trail.

When we check your Patrol's clothing at Chilkoot Pass, the following minimum requirements must be met by EACH member of the Patrol.

- Wearing insulated & waterproof boots,
- Wearing a warm hat that covers the ears,
- Wearing warm & waterproof mittens or gloves,
- Wearing warm, snow-resistant pants, and
- NO COTTON CLOTHING

If just one Scout is not adequately prepared to head out on the Derby Trail, your Patrol will not be allowed to start the event until he is properly dressed for the weather conditions. You will lose points; you will lose time; you may have to return to your campsite to obtain proper clothing; your Patrol might be disqualified! Patrol leaders, this is your responsibility - check your Patrol before you arrive!

There is much discussion each year regarding "adequate" clothing. The staff at Chilkoot Pass have to consider the variety of clothing worn with respect to the rules, the weather conditions, and ultimately, the safety of the Scouts. The Clothing Checkers are the clothing experts at the Klondike Derby and they will set the standards against which each member of each Patrol will be measured on Derby Day. The rules above are only minimum requirements - the information below will help you understand the philosophy.

"Cotton kills" is the first rule of the winter dress code. Cotton jeans, sweat pants, sweatshirts, or long underwear are disqualifiers. Carhartt outerwear is made from cotton!! Cotton absorbs moisture, whether from the snow or from perspiration, and loses its ability to insulate. "Wicking" layers won't help if the moisture flows through them into an outer cotton layer. The second rule is "no sneakers." Everyone needs to have waterproof and insulated footwear for any outdoor wintertime activity. Keep in mind that waterproof, insulated hiking shoes are unacceptable in snow deeper than the shoes, unless you also have gaiters. Remember, as well,

that you will be judged as to whether your boots are waterproof. Waterproofing wears off. If we see the boots absorbing water, they may not be accepted.

Third rule: Be Prepared - Exceed the minimum. Here's how: Your boots are in contact with the frozen ground all day long. Keeping feet warm and dry is absolutely essential. If you or your Patrol members are going out to buy new boots, spend a little extra and get a good pair. You should also wear two pairs of socks (preferably polypropylene undersock and wool oversock) that will wick moisture away from perspiring feet. Do we need to remind you not to wear cotton socks? Rubber boots or boots with rubber bottoms and leather uppers are best. All-leather boots will leak eventually (even if religiously "waterproofed"). Carry an extra pair of socks and a couple foot-size plastic bags in your daypack, so that if your feet do get wet you can change socks and then slip on the plastic bags to keep water from wet boots from getting the fresh socks wet.

Hats that protect your head and ears are essential for winter activities. No baseball caps. You need warm, wool or wool/poly hats that come down well over your ears. During the day, keep your hat on, even if rolled up for cooling off. Your hat is your thermostat; most body heat is lost from your head and neck. "If your feet get cold, put on your hat" is a good rule to remember.

Please make sure last year's mittens/gloves still fit, and leave cotton work gloves at home! Mittens work better than gloves because the fingers share heat. In colder weather, thick wool or wool/poly ones with water resistant overmitts are great. Fingerless gloves are useful for short periods during skill events - for tying knots or striking matches, for example - but should not be used for the entire day.

You shouldn't need us to remind you that if you're going to be in snow for hours, you'd like your pants to keep you warm and dry. Cotton jeans, dockers, and sweat pants are unacceptable even under nylon overpants or ski pants. Remember the caution about what is judged as "waterproof" - if we see it absorbing water, it will fail inspection!

Ski pants over long underwear, snow pants and the like are adequate as long as the long underwear is non-cotton. Wool pants are fine, since they insulate well even when they are a little wet. Pants should be tucked into boots or covered by gaiters or otherwise worn to prevent snow from getting into boots when hiking in 12-15" of fresh powder.

The ideal way to cover your upper body is a layering approach to allow for adjustments in the thickness of insulation required for different activities. Polypropylene or wool/poly blend long underwear is the first layer. Then a poly fleece shirt or wool sweater is next. (Avoid cotton sweatshirts - they get wet, stay wet, and you get cold!) Over the shirt or sweater goes a light to medium weight jacket or "shell" depending on the weather conditions. The fourth layer (which may be in your day pack) is a rain coat or poncho to protect you from the elements. As you work harder, open up or remove layers; when you rest, zip back up or put layers back on.

Finally, consider what you carry inside your clothing. Many inexperienced Scouts are observed drinking "Gatorade slush" pulled from their packs, then shivering uncontrollably. Powerbars can become hard as rock when frozen. Patrols should carry these items inside their layers.