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## BAKER SKILLS AND CLIMB EQUIPMENT CHECKLIST

The primary goal of any alpine climber should always be to carry as little as possible. What is left out of a backpack is often just as important as what is placed inside. Conditions in the mountains vary dramatically from season-to-season, and sometimes even throughout the same day. This can make the process of preparing equipment for an alpine climb difficult. On the one hand, a climber wants to be light. But on the other, a climber wants to have everything he or she needs if there is a storm.

This list was designed for the “worst case scenario,” a trip with significant inclement weather. In serious conditions it’s not uncommon for a climber to need every piece of clothing and equipment on this list. However, if a program does not encounter significant weather, there may be items here that are not used. As you prepare for your trip, it’s important to plan for the worst and hope for the best.

On the first day of your program, an AAI guide will work with you to refine your mountain kit to ensure that you bring exactly what’s needed given the forecast. It is acceptable to bring too much clothing or equipment to your initial meeting. And it is acceptable to bring things that you have questions about. Extra equipment can always be left behind at the AAI shop or in the program vehicle.

The Cascade climbing season is defined as May 1st through October 1st. This list references Early, Mid, and Late season conditions. These periods of the climbing season are roughly defined by the different types of weather and snow conditions you are likely to encounter:

- **Early-Season Conditions** (May 1st-July 1st): There is usually significant snow both on the ground as well as on the glaciers. Climbers should expect to encounter deep wet snow during the day and firm conditions at night. Overnight temperatures range from 15-degrees to 40-degrees fahrenheit (-9-4C). Daytime highs range from 35-degrees to 70-degrees fahrenheit (1-21C). Precipitation as snow or rain is likely in the early season.
- **Mid-Season Conditions** (July 1st-September 1st): Temperatures range from 40 to 50-degrees fahrenheit (4-10C) at night, with occasional dips down below freezing. Daytime temperatures often reach 70-degrees fahrenheit (21C). Climbers should expect the possibility of freezing temperatures above 9000-feet on summit days throughout the summer season. And though mid-season tends to be dryer in the Cascades, the possibility of rain is still always there.
- **Late-Season Conditions** (September 1st-October 1st): September is a varied month. Temperatures begin to drop both during the day and at night. Late in the month, it is possible that you will encounter an increase in snow or rain.

Please be sure to check the forecast several days prior to your course to ensure that you are properly prepared.

[NOAA Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest Weekly Forecast](#)

**Rentals:** Equipment that is available for rent through the AAI Equipment Shop is designated with a “ Rent” check box. These items may be rented on the first morning of your course during your rendezvous. It is possible to reserve rentals ahead of time, but due to an extensive inventory, not necessary. Please call the shop if you have unusual sizing issues (either large or small), as those items are limited.

Underlined items in this form are hyperlinked to examples available in our Equipment Shop. Don't forget that AAI climbers receive a 15% discount off full-price items purchased through our gear shop!

**Call or E-mail the Equipment Shop for Advice on Gear**

Please feel free to contact us and to let us help you get ready for your climbing trip. Your comfort and safety depend on being well equipped. Whether you get your gear from us or just get advice, we're here to help you prepare.

Call: (360) 671-1570 Email: [shop@AlpineInstitute.com](mailto:shop@AlpineInstitute.com)  
 Equipment Shop Website: [www.Shop.AlpineInstitute.com](http://www.Shop.AlpineInstitute.com)

**Provided Equipment-** Climbing rope, anchors, solid waste bags

Clothing	Packing Checklist
<i>Head</i>	
<u><a href="#">Beanie/Toque</a></u> - Wool or synthetic, must fit under helmet. Easily replaced with hooded layers after early season.	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy
<u><a href="#">Sun Hat</a></u> - Preferred to fit under helmet.	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy
<u><a href="#">Buff/Neck Gaiter</a></u> - Look for one that is UPF rated. Brighter colors work better for warmer conditions and darker colors for colder conditions.	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy
<u><a href="#">Glacier Glasses</a></u> - These are mandatory. Look for a pair that fits well and has side shields. The lenses should be dark enough to not let more than 10% of visible light through. Photochromic (variable tint) lenses are more expensive but are usable in a wider range of activities.	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy
<p><b>NOTE:</b> Those using contact lenses should also bring a pair of prescription glasses in the event that your contacts or solutions are lost or damaged by freezing. If you only use prescription glasses, we recommend “OTG” (over the glass) or “Frame-over” style sunglasses.</p>	

<p><b>Goggles</b>- Optional for early and late-season. These are used in high winds or heavy rain, and can serve as a backup to your glacier glasses. Look for UVA/UVB protection and a lighter lens is recommended for better visibility in flat light.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy
<p><b>Headlamp</b>- Bring extra batteries, or if it has a rechargeable battery, make sure and bring a charger. 200-350 Lumens is an ideal range.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy
<h2>Hands</h2>	
<p><b>Liner Glove</b>- Thin, lightweight, wool or synthetic gloves. Size to fit snug but not too tight. Generally worn alone in temperatures above 25F(-4C) when precipitation is not present. UPF rated liner gloves are ideal for sun protection. Bring 1 pair.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy
<p><b>Work Glove</b>- These gloves are used for belaying, tying knots, rope management, etc. Dexterity and durability are key. These gloves provide slightly more insulation than a liner glove and are generally used in temps of 15F to 30F(-9C to -1C) while actively using your hands. Look for a comfortable snug fit favoring dexterity and a durable leather or synthetic palm. Water-resistant material is recommended because they dry out faster than waterproof gloves.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy
<p><b>Hard Shell Glove</b>- Waterproof and insulated gloves. If the glove lacks insulation then size it to fit a liner glove inside. Mainly worn in wet conditions, cold, or when not mobile.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy
<h2>Upper Body</h2>	
<p><b>Sports Bra</b>- Wool or synthetic, comfortable, active wear.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy
<p><b>Base Layer</b>- Wool or synthetic shirt, long sleeves preferred, ideally a “sun hoody” with UPF 30+ sun protection.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy
<p><b>Active Insulation Layer</b>- Lightweight “gridded fleece” or lightweight down or synthetic insulated jacket. Hood preferred.</p> <p>Weight: 250g-350g ideal weight.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy
<p><b>Soft Shell Jacket or Windshirt</b>- A soft shell is a weather resistant, breathable, and stretchy freedom of movement piece. This piece is versatile in the sense of movement. It is often called an “action layer.” It is weather resistant, meaning it can put up with light showers and wind. Also if it gets wet it dries fairly quickly. This enables you to not have to stop and put on another piece when the wind picks up or a light shower happens. Because it is water resistant, and not waterproof, it also breathes fairly well. This enables you to move without overheating, so you don’t have to constantly stop to change out layers to regulate body temperature. They are also made of a stretchy material so there are no restrictions to your movement during activity. Put all those together and you have a pretty versatile layer, the Soft Shell. Hood preferred.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy

<p><b>Materials:</b> Exolite, Matrix, Schoeller</p> <p><b>Windshirt:</b> Patagonia Houdini or similar.</p>	
<p><b>Insulation Jacket-</b> AKA the “puffy.” Down or Synthetic. This piece is worn in cold conditions or when not moving. Hood preferred. If choosing Down, water-resistant Down treatment is preferred to help prevent matting and loss of insulating ability if the jacket gets wet.</p> <p>Weight: 350g-450g ideal weight.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy
<p><b>Hard Shell Jacket-</b> <i>Non-insulated</i> jacket with a waterproof and breathable membrane. Three layer construction is recommended. It must have a hood, ideally a helmet compatible hood. When sizing make sure it can fit over other layers.</p> <p><b>Materials:</b> Gore-Tex, eVent, Drilite, H2NO, Pertex Shield</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy
<h2>Lower Body</h2>	
<p><b>Undergarments-</b> Wool or synthetic.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy
<p><b>Base Layer Pant (aka “Long Johns”)</b> - Wool or synthetic. Bring one for early or late-season conditions, optional for mid-season conditions (depending on the weather).</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy
<p><b>Soft Shell Pant-</b> Thin, weather-resistant, breathable, and stretchy.</p> <p><b>Materials:</b> Exolite, Matrix, Schoeller</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy
<p><b>Hard Shell Pant-</b> <i>Non-insulated</i>, waterproof and breathable membrane. Full side zips are recommended. When sizing make sure to it is able to fit over a base layer and soft shell pants.</p> <p><b>Materials:</b> Gore-Tex, eVent, Drilite, H2NO, Pertex Shield</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy
<h2>Feet</h2>	
<p><b>Socks-</b> Wool or synthetic socks that are over the ankle height. Focus on getting insulation from the boot and using a lighter weight sock, instead of using a heavy weight sock for warmth. Wearing a “silk-weight” liner sock beneath your hiking sock can reduce friction on the skin directly and mitigate blister development. Bringing 2 pairs is recommended for this 3 day course. That way you can switch one pair out in case one gets wet.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy
<p><b>Mountaineering Boots-</b> Must be stiff, crampon compatible, mountaineering boots. Synthetic or plastic double boots recommended prior to July 1st. After July 1st, plastic or synthetic double boots are not recommended.</p> <p><b>NOTE:</b> There are many makes and models out there and not all are created equal. Please consult with our Equipment Shop if you are uncertain about the acceptability of your chosen model.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy <input type="checkbox"/> Rent*

<p><b>Gaiters</b>- Knee or calf height. Best used in early-season conditions. Optional for mid or late-season. Gaiters do help protect pants from crampon holes regardless of the season.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy <input type="checkbox"/> Rent*
<h2>Climbing</h2>	
<p><b>Ice Axe</b>- A straight shaft ice axe like the Petzl Glacier or Black Diamond Raven Pro is recommended. Adze is required. Please contact our Equipment Shop if you have any questions.</p> <p>Use the following tables as a <u>rough</u> guide on length. Ice axe leashes are not required and not recommended.</p> <p><b>Straight Shaft Axe</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-5'8" or shorter : 50-55cm</li> <li>-5'9"- 6' : 55-60cm</li> <li>-6'1"-6'3" : 60-65 cm</li> <li>-6'4" and up : 65-68cm</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy <input type="checkbox"/> Rent*
<p><b>Harness</b>- Make sure the harness has a belay loop and gear loops. When sizing make sure it can fit over your clothing layers when you have multiple layers on.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy <input type="checkbox"/> Rent*
<p><b>Helmet</b>- Must be UIAA rated for climbing.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy <input type="checkbox"/> Rent*
<p><b>Crampons</b>- Must be steel crampons with front points and compatible with your mountaineering boots.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy <input type="checkbox"/> Rent*
<p><b>Carabiners</b>-Must be UIAA rated for climbing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Two large pear shaped munter-style locking carabiners.</li> <li>-Two non-locking wire gate carabiners.</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy
<p><b>Trekking Poles</b>- One is required, but two are highly recommended. These increase balance while wearing a heavy pack and making stream crossings, while also decreasing pressure on the knees during steep descents. For the early-season, your poles should have a snow basket.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy <input type="checkbox"/> Rent*
<p><b>Prusiks</b>- 6mm nylon cord in three lengths; 13 ft, 6 ft, 5 ft. Available at AAI the morning of the course. We recommend getting three different colors for easy identification.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy
<p><b>Internal Frame Pack</b>- 50L or more. Mountaineering specific packs, instead of backpacking packs, are a good way to shave weight. Should also have to ability to carry weight well (45 lbs+).</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy <input type="checkbox"/> Rent*

Camping	Packing Checklist
<p><b>Tent</b>- 3 season tents can be used if the rain flies goes all the way to the ground on all sides. A “bathtub” floor for the inner tent is also recommended. This means that the inner tent isn’t all mesh but has water resistant floor material that scoops up from the floor for 4-12” before changing to mesh, like a bathtub. If there are any questions please consult our Equipment Shop to see if your tent is okay to use.</p> <p>-Early-season conditions: Double wall 4 season tent recommended.            -Mid-season conditions: 4 season or 3 season tent.            -Late-season conditions: 4 season tent recommended.</p> <p><b>NOTE:</b> 4 season tents are available to rent at AAI the morning of the course.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy <input type="checkbox"/> Rent*
<p><b>Sleeping Bag</b>- Synthetic or Down. If you bring a synthetic bag bring one on the lower end of the temperature range since synthetic bags tend not to be as warm as down. If you sleep cold it is recommended that you bring a warmer bag than required for the seasonal conditions. If choosing Down, water-resistant Down treatment is preferred to help prevent matting and loss of insulating ability if the sleeping bag gets wet.</p> <p>-Early-season conditions: 0F to 20F(-18C to -6C)            -Mid-season conditions: 20F to 30F(-6C to -1C)            -Late-season conditions: 15F to 20F(-10C to -6C)</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy <input type="checkbox"/> Rent*
<p><b>Compression Stuff Sack</b>- For your sleeping bag. If it is a down bag, a waterproof compression sack is recommended.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy
<p><b>Sleeping Pad</b></p> <p>-Early-season: Bring two; one inflatable and one closed cell foam. The foam pad helps insulate from the snow and serves as a backup to the inflatable pad.            -Mid or late-season- One inflatable or closed cell foam pad.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy <input type="checkbox"/> Rent*
<p><b>Stove and Fuel</b>- Liquid fuel or canister stove. Fuel is available at AAI the morning of the course.</p> <p><b>NOTE:</b> Many people choose to share stoves, fuel and tents to decrease weight. However, some people prefer to camp in their own tents and use their own stoves. This can be determined on the morning of the first day of your program.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy <input type="checkbox"/> Rent*
<p><b>Pots</b>- Bring one pot.</p> <p>-Early-season: Bring a bigger pot for melting snow; 1.5L-2L            -Mid or late-season- .5L-1L</p> <p><b>NOTE:</b> If you have a complete stove system like the Jetboil or MSR Reactor, and plan on eating out of your integrated pot, then you do not need to bring a pot.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy
<p><b>Utensils</b>- Don’t forget the official “most forgotten item ever,” the spoon, or spork.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy
<p><b>Bowl</b></p> <p>-Early-season conditions: Bring a plastic bowl or mug, preferably with insulation.            -Mid or late-season conditions: Bring a plastic bowl, insulation is not necessary.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy

**NOTE:** If you have a Jetboil or MSR Reactor type stove and plan on eating out of your integrated pot, then you don't need to bring a bowl. The same applies if you plan on only using commercially packaged dehydrated or freeze dried meals.

**Lighters-** Bring two. You will have the opportunity to buy them the morning of the course.

- Own
- Buy

**Hydration-** 3L capacity is recommended, though some people need more and some people need less.

- Own
- Buy

Some people bring a bladder and a hard sided bottle. The bottle is an important backup to the bladder if it gets punctured. A hard-sided bottle may also double as a mug for hot water, though not every bottle is designed to hold boiling water.

For Camelbak style hydration bladders, bring a drinking tube insulator, as the tube can freeze up. Drinking tubes must also have a lock on the bite valve. If you choose to use this system, be aware that they require constant vigilance in order to avoid freezing. Some people are not very good at this. Blow the water out of the tube after every use and place the bite valve in the neck of your shirt to keep from freezing.

-Early-season conditions: Bring more water carrying capacity (3L-4L) to reduce the number of times you need to melt snow.

**Water Purification-** Water purification tablets are recommended, they are available at the shop the morning of the course. Pills that take an hour or less to purify are recommended. Steripens are an acceptable alternative to purification tablets.

- Own
- Buy

**NOTE:** Pumps can be damaged by silt in the glacial water.

**Food-** You are responsible to bring your own food for the duration of the course. Please consult our [meal planning page](#).

- Own
- Buy

You will need three days and two nights worth of food. Assume your first breakfast and last dinner will be in Bellingham.

## Other Essentials

Packing Checklist

### Toiletries

<p><b>-Female Urination Device-</b> Optional. Pee funnel such as the GoGirl or Freshette. Many female guides prefer a rigid pee funnel.</p> <p><a href="#">Click here for more info</a></p> <p><b>-Menstruation Collection Cup-</b> Optional. There are many things to consider concerning backcountry menstruation.</p> <p><a href="#">Click here for more info</a></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy
<p><b>Toothbrush and Toothpaste-</b> Travel size recommended.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy
<p><b>Hand Sanitizer and/or Wet Wipes-</b> Required. Used after going to the bathroom and before eating. Wet wipes can be used for the "mountain shower."</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy
<p><b><u>Pee Bottle</u></b>- Optional. Used at night or when the weather is poor so you don't have to get out of your tent.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy
<p><b>Toilet Paper-</b> The provided solid waste bags have a small amount of toilet paper with them, but most people do not find this to be adequate. Estimate how much you'll need for a program of this length and place that in a plastic zip lock bag. An extra zip lock bag can be helpful for pack-out of used paper.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy
<h2>Sun Protection</h2>	
<p><b>Sunscreen-</b> SPF 30+, zinc based is preferred. Small travel size tubes are recommended so you can put them in a close by pocket for easy access.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy
<p><b>Lip Balm-</b> Make sure it is SPF rated.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy
<h2>First Aid/Repair Kit</h2>	
<p><b>Personal First Aid Kit</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Band aids</li> <li>-Blister treatment</li> <li>-Prescription drugs</li> <li>-Ibuprofen etc.</li> <li>-If you wear contacts make sure and have spares if you can't see without them.</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy
<p><b>Repair Kit</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Inflatable sleeping pad patch kit</li> <li>-Duct tape (Can be wrapped around trekking poles or water bottle. Gorilla Tape tends to be the best brand for the mountains.)</li> <li>-Zip ties</li> <li>-6-10 ft of 3mm accessory cord</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> Own <input type="checkbox"/> Buy



-2 Trash bags that are big enough to line the inside of your pack with.

## ***Other Optional Items***

*The items below are not required, although many are nice "luxury" items that can make your expedition more enjoyable. Remember that a few ounces here and there add up to extra pounds on your back and knees during your expedition.*

### **Packing Checklist**

**Entertainment-** Books, games, cards, music player, kindle, ect. For evenings or rainy days in the tent.

Own  
 Buy

**Ear Plugs-** For defense against snoring and high winds.

Own  
 Buy

**Insect Repellent-** Biting insects such as mosquitoes and blackflies can be prevalent during different times of the season depending upon conditions and location. This is a nice item to have just in case.

Own  
 Buy

**Camera-** Phone cameras or small point-and-shoot cameras are preferred. SLR cameras are not recommended due to their size and bulk.

Own  
 Buy

**Comfortable Clothing and Footwear-** Breathable footwear -- like flip-flops -- as well as some comfortable cotton clothing can be nice to change into after you get back to the van.

Own  
 Buy

**Car Charger-** Consider bringing an extra battery pack as well, having a lot of people using car charger cables is difficult.

Own  
 Buy

**Altimeter Watch-** If you have one then bring it, it is a great tool to have in the backcountry, especially for navigation.

Own  
 Buy