



BSA SAFETY MOMENT

HAMMOCK CAMPING

SUMMARY

Camping in hammocks has gained in popularity over the past 10 years. More camping equipment manufacturers are offering hammock-style tents as a way of reducing the “footprint” on the camping area. This is helpful from a Leave No Trace standpoint. However, hammocks are not without their risks.

GENERAL INFORMATION

The following hammock safety points should be taken into consideration:

- Follow the manufacturer’s instructions for maximum and minimum hanging distances (the distances between solid supports such as trees).
- Hang hammocks in secure locations, such as to trees or solid posts. Never attach a hammock to any object that could move, such as vehicle bumpers or trailers.
- Securely fasten and check all knots prior to getting into a hammock.
- Never “stack” hammocks one above another.
- Hammocks should not be hung such that the lowest point is more than 3 feet above the ground. Severe injuries have resulted from elevated falls.
- Do not hang a hammock above water, including at a waterfront, lake, river, or stream.
- Never swing or stand in a hammock. Falls from hammocks can cause serious or fatal injuries.
- Do not use a hammock that has frayed or damaged ropes. Use only the manufacturer’s replacement ropes.
- Do not put more weight into a hammock than recommended by the manufacturer.
- Small children should be supervised when using a hammock.

If you are using solid, living trees, special care should be taken not to damage the outer bark. Some hammock-tents have wide bands for securing them around living trees. These bands of material help to spread out the stress of the hammock-tent.