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International Wilderness Leadership School



Alaska Heli Ski/Snowboarding Equipment List

The weather in Alaska can be volatile. Clothing systems need to be capable of meeting the demands of an ever-changing environment. A layering system, which allows articles of clothing to be added or subtracted as the weather changes, has proven most versatile. The clothing items listed below will layer together to provide appropriate insulation in the most demanding conditions. Because it can snow or rain, materials used in clothing should keep you warm even if they are wet. Synthetics such as polypropylene, Capilene, Synchronia, fleece, and pile are best, wool will also work. Cotton is unacceptable. Please test out your gear before you arrive in Alaska.

If you own any of the following “provided” personal gear, we encourage you to bring it to your trip. This will allow you to become proficient with the gear you will continue to use post trip.

Upper Body Layers

Upper body layers are some of the most important components of a good layering system. They should be comfortable, lightweight and breathable. Cotton is unacceptable.

Equipment	Quantity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Comments	Rental
Base Layers	2		One silk weight and one heavy weight top made of synthetic material that can be layered together to increase warmth. A light-colored silk weight (white/tan/light blue, etc.) is a good idea because it will decrease the amount of solar radiation (warmth) that your shirt absorbs. Conversely, your mid-weight base-layers should be darker so that they do absorb the sun’s warmth. Mountain Hardware makes good lightweight, wicking base layers.	-
Tee Shirt	1		To be worn as a sun shirt while hiking at lower elevations. Synthetic fabric is the way to go, and can double as a bandana or extra sun protection under a baseball cap.	-
Medium Weight Top	1		To be worn over the base layers and should be synthetic or wool (a soft shell is an acceptable substitute). Both Black Diamond and Mountain Hardware offer great mid-weight layers.	-
Heavy Weight Top	1		To be worn over the base layers and medium weight top and should be synthetic or wool. Both Black Diamond and Mountain Hardware make nice thick layers.	-
Outer Wear	1		A jacket made of waterproof / breathable material such as Gore-Tex is vital for keeping you warm and dry. It needs to fit over all layers. Mountain Hardware shells are breathable, dry, and windproof.	-



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Lower Body Layers

Lower body layers should be versatile and easy to change into and out of under changing weather conditions.

Equipment	Quantity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Comments	Rental
Base Layers	1		A synthetic mid-weight bottom layer made to wick moisture.	-
Underwear	1 pair		Synthetic briefs and underwear will keep you comfortable and hygienic during high output.	-
Outer Wear	1		Pants made of waterproof / breathable material such as Gore-Tex are vital for keeping you warm and dry. They need to fit over all layers and should have side zips. Mountain Hardware shell pants and bibs work great.	-

Head, Neck, Hands & Feet

Keeping your extremities warm & dry is crucial. We lose a massive percentage of body heat through our heads, and our hands and feet are the most susceptible to inconveniences like frostbite and trench-foot. Developing a system that works for your specific needs takes time; this guide is a good place to start.

Equipment	Quantity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Comments	Rental
Ski Helmet	1		Helmets are required for all heli-skiers. An insulated ski helmet is nice for colder days.	-
Warm-Hat	2		Should be made of synthetic material or wool, cotton is unacceptable. Should layer underneath a climbing helmet. Mountain Hardware has a wide selection of warm hats.	-
Sun-Hat	1		The sun can be very bright (especially with reflection). The more protection your cap offers from the sun, the better.	-
Balaclava or Neoprene Face Mask	1		Used to protect the face from wind/snow, and can be a real life-saver under stormy conditions. Mountain Hardware has a great series of face masks and balaclavas.	-
Goggles	1		Double lens models with vents work best. POC makes some great goggles.	-
Light Weight Gloves	1		Windstopper fleece works best. Work gloves with a water proof palm are nice to have along when dexterity is more important than warmth. 'Dura-Therm' or like models (synthetic glove with rubber palm & fingers) work well, just ensure you find the warmest model available. Mountain Hardware and Black Diamond make great gloves.	-
Heavy Weight Gloves/Mitts	1		Removable shell is a must. These should be warm, water-proof and breathable, with removable liners for easy drying. Black Diamond and Mountain Hardware have durable expedition gloves.	-
Socks	1-2		These should be synthetic or wool. Having a mix of light and heavy weight socks is nice to adjust to variable weather.	-
Ski Boots	1		Don't forget your ski boots!	-



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Technical Hardware

For technical gear we recommend [Black Diamond](#).

We run their equipment on every mountain trip we operate, and find it to be among the best in the industry.

Equipment	Quantity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Comments	Rental
Avalanche Airbag Backpack	1		Should have a capacity to carry layers, shovel, probe, water, snack, Back Country Access and Black Diamond packs are versatile and rugged. Please don't hesitate to call us before making any major purchases.	YES
Ski Poles	1		Lightweight and adjustable length work best. Snow baskets are a must. Black Diamond poles are a great fit.	YES
Skis/Snowboard	1		We recommend fat width skis (110mm underfoot). Black Diamond makes solid skis. Equipment should be set up for backcountry touring. Split boards are recommended for snowboarders, however snowshoes are an acceptable alternative. Please don't hesitate to call us with any questions.	-
Avalanche Shovel	1		A sturdy metal blade shovel. Black Diamond makes convenient shovels.	Provided
Avalanche Probe	1		A retractable avalanche probe is used in avalanche rescue. BD has a lot of good avalanche equipment .	Provided
Climbing Skins			For backcountry touring. Black Diamond makes excellent skins for skiers. Voile is a great option for split boarders.	-
Lightweight Harness	1		Should fit over all layers. Adjustable leg loops are best. Check out the Couloir Harness .	Provided
Avalanche Transceiver	1		Transceivers must use the 457 kHz frequency. Pieps makes good beacons.	Provided
Locking Carabineer	1		Large aluminum locking carabineer (such as the Black Diamond Rocklock) may be used on your harness.	Provided
Ski Straps	1-2		Rubber ski straps to keep your skis and poles together while in the helicopter basket.	-
Snow Study Kit	1		Assorted tools for studying snowpack. Compass, inclinometer, crystal card, and magnifying loupe. (Complete kits available from BCA Snow Study Kit)	-



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Miscellaneous

Equipment	Quantity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Comments	Rental
Notebook	1		For recording field observations. BCA makes an all-weather notebook for snow study, other water resistant notebooks also ok.	-
Watch	1		Should have an alarm. Altimeter feature is useful for recording & observation purposes.	-
Town Clothes	3-4		Having some extra casual wear for time spent in town is a good idea. You should plan on bringing a couple changes of casual clothes.	
Lip Balm	1-2		Should have some type of SPF protection.	-
Sunscreen	4-8oz.		Should be SPF 30 or higher and be waterproof.	-
Water Bottles	2		Wide mouth 1-liter Lexan bottles ('Nalgene') work best.	-
Bandana or ' Buff '	1		Used for extra sun-protection.	-
Passport	1		<u>Some of the descents cross into Canada. Remember to bring your passport!</u>	-

Optional

Equipment	Quantity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Comments	Rental
Sunglasses	1		If you choose to wear sunglasses instead of goggles on a calm day.	-
Ear Plugs	1-2		Helps with the noise from the helicopter.	-
Hand Warmers	4		A good thing to keep in your pack for those brisk days.	-
Energy/Candy Bars	0-20		Bring bars that taste good!	-
Camera	2-4		Digital or Film. If you are buying a digital camera; one with a view finder allows you to take photos when it is too bright to see the screen and helps save batteries. A camera that is compatible with AA's allows you to bring extra batteries that don't cost an arm and a leg. Bring an extra memory card.	-



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Additional Information



We use gear from these select companies on every trip we run! Their gear has proven itself again and again on the highest mountains, roughest water, and steepest ice. We endorse these companies because they make gear that is functional and reliable.



We provide the following: tents, group climbing equipment, expedition first aid kits, cooking equipment, and trip food.

Please don't hesitate to call us with any questions 1.800.985.4957

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