

OUTDOORS AT UVA

Gear Handbook

8/27/2018



outdoors-officers@virginia.edu

Outdoors at UVa
P.O. Box 400444
Charlottesville, Virginia 22904



Table of Contents

Preface	4
Gear Policies	5
Checking Out Gear	5
Renewing Gear	6
Returning Gear	6
Acceptable Use of Gear	6
Club Trips and Gear	7
Overdue Gear	7
Lost, Damaged, and Broken Gear	8
Special Considerations for Climbing Gear	8
Note on Honor Code	8
Gear Treatment Guidelines	9
Backpacking/Camping Equipment	9
Tents	9
Sleeping Bags.....	10
Backpack Care.....	11
Caving Equipment	11
Helmets, Headlamps, and Gloves:	11
Climbing Equipment	12
Whitewater Equipment	12
Kayaks & Canoes.....	12
Skirts, Helmets, Life Jackets, Dry Tops/Pants/Suits	12
Rafts/SUPs.....	12
Mountain Bikes	13
Bike Storage	13
Use of Bikes for Commuting.....	13
Broken/Damaged Bikes.....	13
Bike Usage Guidelines	14
Bike Return Guidelines	14



Where to Check Out Gear	15
The ‘Gear Room’ on Leake Drive	15
Types of Gear in this Space:.....	15
Directions to the Gear Room on Leake Drive	15
The ‘Whitewater Units’ near Carruther’s Hall	16
Types of Gear in this Space:.....	16
The Outdoors Club House (The ‘Shred Shack’)	16
Types of Gear in this Space:.....	16
Inventory	18
How to Check Out Gear	18
Getting Gear from the ‘Gear Room’ on Leake Drive	18
‘Gear Rooms’ and the Gear Room Schedule.....	18
Checking out Gear from the Gear Room	18
What do to if you can’t come to the Gear Room.....	19
‘Gear Rooms’ during Academic Breaks	19
Getting Water Sports Gear from the Whitewater Units	19
Getting Bike Related Gear from the Shred Shack	19
Special Note on Fuel and Stoves	19



Preface

This documents contains our club's rules and policies regarding the use of our gear, guidelines for how to properly care for gear and information on how and where to check gear out!

Access to free gear is one of the many benefits of joining Outdoors at UVA. The club owns an extensive collection of high quality gear for backpacking, camping, mountain biking, rock climbing, water sports (kayaking, canoeing, SUPing), snow sports, and much more. The club's stockpile of gear is meant to facilitate outdoor trips and lower the barrier to entry of adventuring outside. Our gear policy reflects what generations of officers have concluded is the most sustainable and fair way to help club members get outside while simultaneously prioritizing the preservation and accessibility of our gear.

It is important to remember that our gear is very expensive and that it has taken the club over a decade to build up its inventory to what it is today. Prolonged improper treatment of gear can easily render much of it beyond repair, impeding our goal to get people outside. The treatment guidelines detailed in this document aim to keep the club's gear in excellent condition by informing our members about how to properly handle our equipment. We humbly ask that you read the relevant guidelines in their entirety for any piece of gear you check out.

We recognize that there will be normal wear and tear on equipment that is checked out, however it is the responsibility of the members, not the club officers, to maintain the condition of borrowed club gear to the best of their ability.

Bottom line: Show our gear the love it deserves by treating it with the utmost respect.



Gear Policies

The following policies exist first and foremost to allow members easy access to our gear, but also to address safety concerns and increase the longevity of our gear. Specific instructions on how to check out gear is detailed later in this document. Gear policies are designed to also apply during winter, summer, and spring breaks unless you have arranged an exception with the officers. Please contact the officers if you have any questions or concerns about any policies.

Checking Out Gear

- Gear may be checked out for **one week** (7 days) at a time, after which it will be considered overdue.
 - Club members with overdue gear **will not be allowed to attend adventures or check out additional gear** until the gear is returned. See below for more information on overdue gear
 - Over academic breaks, gear may be checked out for longer periods of time with officer approval
- Gear is checked out in your name, meaning you are fully responsible for it the moment it leaves our gear room. Strive to return it in better condition than it was when you first checked it out.
- You are responsible for maintaining the condition of the gear! Read the treatment guidelines in the next section for more information. Ask the officers if you are unsure of how to properly use/treat/maintain any gear!
- Each member may check out *personal* gear (e.g. sleeping bag, pad, backpack) for himself/herself AND one non-member friend.
- The officers reserve the right to refuse checking gear out to members if they feel that the system is being abused or if there are serious safety concerns.



Renewing Gear

You may request a renewal of gear by going to the gear room. Your request may or may not be granted, depending on the demand for the gear. Gear can only be held for a maximum of three weeks unless an agreement is made with the officers (usually only for breaks). If you are interested in keeping our gear for longer than that, please consider buying your own gear.

Returning Gear

Gear is considered to be returned only when you have personally turned it in to an officer at a gear room.

- **YOU must turn in what you checked out.** Giving your gear to other friends to turn it in for you is heavily discouraged. This trend has historically cost the club thousands of dollars in lost gear that has "slipped through the cracks" from people passing it on to other club members/friends without letting the officers know. If the officers notice someone doing this repeatedly without good reason, his/her ability to check out gear in the future may be compromised.
- The officer to whom you are returning the gear must consider the item(s) to be in reasonable condition relative to the condition it was in upon check out. Read the gear treatment guidelines for more information. In general, always dry gear out after use! Especially tents and sleeping bags! If the gear is moldy when given to us, you are responsible for the damages.
- Read below for our policies on broken/lost/damaged gear.

Acceptable Use of Gear

Gear may only be used for outdoors activities that align with the club's mission. **We do not allow the use of our gear for things like camping out for football or basketball games.** Our gear is expensive, and using our gear for these activities does not align with the mission of the club.



Club Trips and Gear

- **Official club trips have priority on club gear.** A member may not borrow gear that has already been reserved for a club trip.
- Trip leaders may check out gear for trip attendees, but it is **highly recommended to have trip attendees check out their own gear.** This removes the burden of having trip leaders keep track of all the gear for their trip and decreases the chance of losing gear.

If you decide to check out gear for trip attendees, you must make sure the trip attendees give the gear back to you **BEFORE** the end of the trip. DO NOT ask your trip attendees to return the gear for you. Returning gear yourself will prevent the loss of gear checked out in your name. Again, YOU must turn in what you checked out.

Overdue Gear

- When your gear becomes overdue, checking out any additional gear is forbidden until you return your overdue gear. Shortly after the gear becomes overdue, you will get an email from an officer asking you to bring it back. **You must reply to this email** letting the officer know when you will be returning the gear. Do not make a habit of returning gear late.
- If your gear is more than two weeks overdue, you will officially be on our “naughty” list and will be suspended from joining trips. (The officers will manually remove you from trips if you try to sign up).
- If your gear is more than 30 days overdue, the gear is considered stolen. We will ask you for the money to replace the gear. If we have no reply from you within a week of being contacted about this, we will pursue more drastic measures. This includes filing an Honor Violation to the Honor Committee and potentially taking the case to a Small Claims Court.



Lost, Damaged, and Broken Gear

According to the waiver you signed when you joined the club, you must pay the replacement cost of equipment that you borrow if you:

1. Fail to return the gear within 30 days (or a time period agreed upon by you and the officers).
2. Damage the gear beyond normal wear and tear.

When a repair is feasible and safety is not a concern, then repairing the item is the desirable path forward. Contact the officers if you are unsure of how to go about repairing a piece of equipment. For mountain bike damages (a common occurrence), please review the section on mountain bike treatment guidelines below.

When gear is damaged beyond repair or if safety becomes a concern with damaged gear (e.g. with climbing equipment), purchase of new gear is warranted.

If you need to pay the club to replace gear, contact the officers.

Special Considerations for Climbing Gear

- Checking out individual carabiners (even for attaching to chalk bags) is strictly prohibited.
- Members must have prior approval before they can check out the traditional climbing racks for official club trips.

Note on Honor Code

Again, failure to return borrowed gear in a timely manner will be considered stealing - an Honor Offense. Club officers will report such cases to the honor council if all other methods of getting the gear back have failed.



Gear Treatment Guidelines

We recognize that not everyone is an expert on how to keep gear in good condition, but you should *always* strive to return gear in better condition than it was when you received it. Proper cleaning and storage is essential for this. Thus, we have composed a set of treatment guidelines for all of our gear (using both professional input and officer input). Please refer to this guide whenever you check out gear.

Backpacking/Camping Equipment

Tents¹

Before your trip:

Practice pitching your tent to ensure you have all the stakes, guy-lines, and accessories.

During your trip:

Avoid leaving your tent set up in direct sunlight for extended periods of time (or leave the rain fly on over your tent, since the rain fly is more UV resistant). Keep shoes outside; don't leave food or toiletries strewn about the tent, and do not bring any pets inside.

At the end of your trip:

1. Shake your tent out to clean out dirt and debris
2. Dry the tent as much as possible before stuff-sacking.
Drape your tent & fly over a branch if you can. If you must pack up the tent in wet conditions, dry the tent out AS SOON AS YOU RETURN HOME.
3. **If the tent is wet and muddy, you absolutely must clean the mud off of it and dry the tent before returning it to a gear room.** Use a non-abrasive sponge, cold water, and a non-detergent soap. Do not use anything scented because it can ruin the tent's water-repellant coating.
4. Roll up your tent rather than stuffing it like a sleeping bag.

¹ <https://www.rei.com/learn/expert-advice/caring-tent.html>



Sleeping Bags²

Storing your sleeping bag:

Never store your bag in its itty-bitty stuff sack! The longer you compress the insulation, the more loft it loses. It's fine to use a stuff sack on the trail, but the minute you get home, get your sleeper out of that confined space, give it a good shake to fluff up the fill material, then store it in a cool, dry place. Spread it out under your bed, hang it in a closet, or put it in a big, breathable storage bag (often provided by the manufacturer).

During your trip:

If you are not using your sleeping bag in a tent, protect your bag from exposure to wet dirt/rocks by using a sleeping pad. Air out your sleeping bag daily.

At the end of your trip:

1. Dry your sleeping bag before stuffing it into a stuff-sack as much as possible (just like with tents!)
2. To stuff a stuff sack, start with the foot of the sleeping bag with the zipper partially closed. Push the foot of the bag firmly into the bottom of the stuff sack and stuff evenly as you go. This releases air & makes it easier to stuff.
3. SPOT CLEAN the mud off of your sleeping bag! Even fine dust or sand. Use non-detergent soap and water with a gentle towel, sponge, toothbrush, or even your bare hands. By holding the shell or liner fabric away from the insulation, you can wash and rinse the area without getting the inside filling wet. Avoid using too much soap.

Biggest takeaway for tents and sleeping bags: There is no such thing as too much drying. Do not return a moist, crusty, dirty, sandy, neglected tent or sleeping bag to the gear room. Do not let caked mud dry. Make sure the tent or bag is 100% dry before storing it.

² <https://www.rei.com/learn/expert-advice/caring-sleeping-bag.html>



Backpack Care

Wear and tear is inevitable but taking care of your backpack can increase its lifetime. Here are some general tips:

1. Wipe down your backpack regularly with a damp cloth to minimize the buildup of dirt while camping
2. Keep water out and dry your gear if it gets wet!! Moisture kills!
3. Pack sensibly. Pack anything that may cause damage to the bag (e.g. poles, knives, any sharp edges) in a way that they won't pierce through the material.
4. A lot of seasoned backpackers differ in opinion on how to pack a rucksack. [Here is a general guide.](#)
5. Spot clean the mud off your pack.

Caving Equipment

Helmets, Headlamps, and Gloves:

1. Rinse all gear with water.
2. Scrub all the mud and dirt off.
3. Wash gear thoroughly with bleach and/or soap as appropriate (50% water, 50% bleach/soap is good)
 - o This is vital to prevent the spread of White Nose Syndrome³, a devastating bat disease!
4. Set it out to dry.

Gear must be returned to the gear room clean and dry.

Note: You should also wash your personal gear (backpack, clothing, boots, etc.) in the same fashion.

³ <https://www.whitenosesyndrome.org/>



Climbing Equipment

Make sure to keep all gear off the ground while out climbing at the crag. It should either be on your harness or in/on a bag at all times.

When returning from a trip

1. Make sure every piece of gear is clean of dirt and grime.
2. Connect all quickdraws before returning a set.
3. Remove all dirt and sticks from the rope bag

Whitewater Equipment

Kayaks & Canoes

Make sure there isn't too much dirt or sand on the boat, especially the inside. Spray down and rinse out as much as needed to get all of it out.

Skirts, Helmets, Life Jackets, Dry Tops/Pants/Suits

All gear should be dirt and sand-free and returned dry. Lay all wet gear outside *immediately* after your trip so that it doesn't mildew. Make sure to empty any trash from life jacket pockets.

Rafts/SUPs

Dry, dirt-free, and folded back in their proper configuration. Return to gear room with pump and any other associated gear. The tighter the rafts are rolled, the better.



Mountain Bikes

Our mountain bikes are very costly to buy and maintain - namely maintain. Thus, we need members to take extremely good care of our bikes both on the trails and off them. Failure to adhere to the following guidelines will jeopardize the ability for members to use those bikes in the future, so please follow them!

Bike Storage

1. **Bikes MUST be stored inside** to protect it from rain damage.
2. **Bikes MUST be stored in a secure location** (e.g. inside a house with locked doors) or locked securely to something if there is nowhere safe to leave it alone for any period of time. Keep those puppies safe! The club provides sturdy locks that you can check out with the bike if you need it.

Use of Bikes for Commuting

Our mountain bikes are NOT for commuting. This is a *gross misuse* of club gear that can quickly ramp up the wear and tear on the bike. If you are found commuting with our bikes, you are jeopardizing your ability to check out bikes again in the future.

Broken/Damaged Bikes

Ask the officers (best to email us) if you have questions on bike repair and maintenance. If you break a bike or a part on a bike, you will be required to bear the cost of replacing the part/bike. If you choose to have the repair done yourself (i.e. you take it to a shop, or do it yourself), you should do so by the time the gear is due (we may allow extensions for this).

Of course, the biking advisors may decide to take care of the repair, in which case you will have to pay for the required parts or shop labor fees. Our goal is simply to have the bike in usable condition available to others as soon as possible.



Bike Usage Guidelines

- Treat the bike gently when handling it and putting it down; try to avoid scratching the frame or its paint.
- When laying the bike down, make sure to put the side of the bike without the chain face down to protect the drivetrain.
- When riding, shift gears ONLY while pedaling. Otherwise you risk an abrupt gear shift that can break a part of the drivetrain.
- When riding, if you begin to feel a large resistance in your pedal strokes combined with unusual sounds coming from the bike (aside from any normal gear shift crunching/resistance), STOP IMMEDIATELY. DO NOT try to pedal through it - the chain has likely become misaligned, or some other part of the bike is not functioning correctly. If you continue pedaling, you risk breaking the chain or another component of the bike. Dismount the bike and try to see if anything is out of the ordinary, especially with the chain. If you're on the trail, attempt to fix the issue if you can, or walk the bike out if you can't. As soon you can, contact the officers about the issue if it persists.

Bike Return Guidelines

- Be sure to wipe off any excess dirt or grime on the bike before returning it.
- If you had any mechanical issues with the bike while it was checked out, inform the officers via email or when you return the bike.

If you have any questions about how to use or maintain gear, email the officers!



Where to Check Out Gear

Currently, Outdoors at UVA has 3 different locations where we store different types of equipment. Below is a rough list of what gear is kept in which location. Continue reading to learn how to check out gear from the different locations.

The 'Gear Room' on Leake Drive

The Gear Room on Leake Drive is our primary storage space for gear, and the space that is made accessible most often by the officers. The officers regularly host 'Gear Rooms' - times where we open up this space for members to drop in and check out gear. Read the section on "How to Check Out Gear" for more information.

This space was kindly given to us by UVA Facilities Management and is located in one of their buildings. Please be respectful of Facilities Management employees while you are in the area.

Types of Gear in this Space:

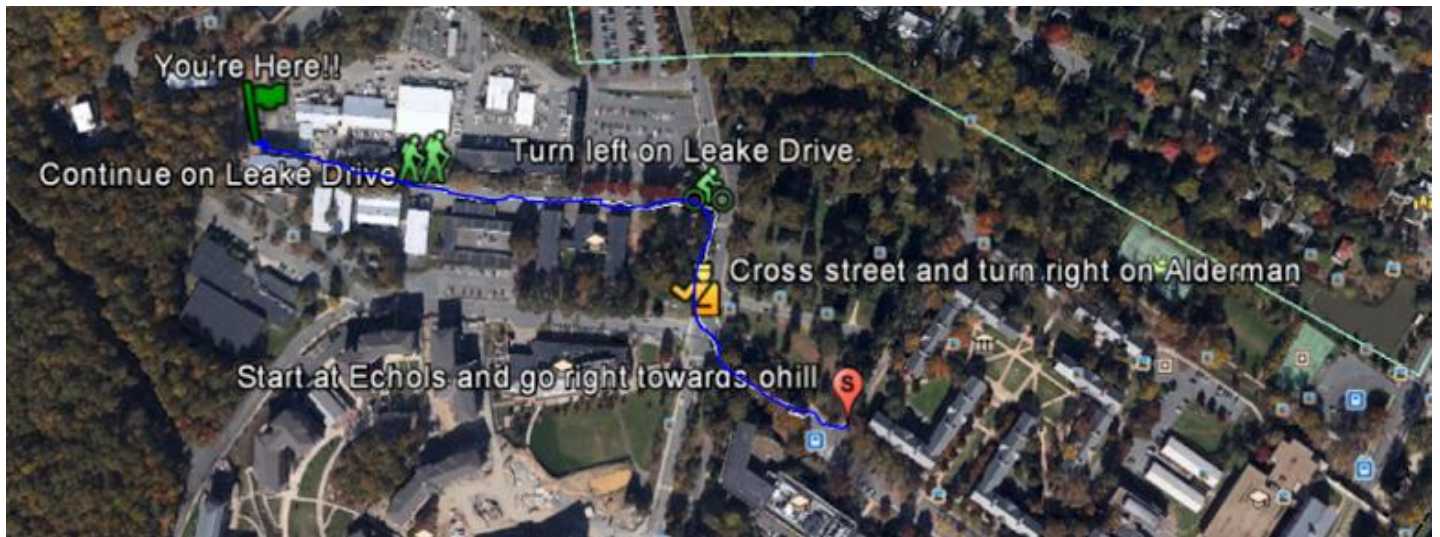
- Backpacking/Camping Gear
 - Backpacks + Backpack Raincovers
 - Tents + Ground Tarps
 - Sleeping Bags and Pads
 - Trekking Poles
 - Headlamps
 - Water Filters
- First Aid Kits
- Cooking Equipment (Pots, Pans, and some Stoves⁴)
- Hammocks and Hammock-Camping Equipment
 - Underquilts
 - Hammock Rainflies
- Cross Country Skis, Poles, and Boots
- Snowshoes
- Trail Maintenance/Service Tools
- Club Merchandise
- Caving Helmets and Headlamps
- Climbing Gear
 - Ropes
 - Bouldering Pads
 - Quickdraws
 - Belay Devices
 - Climbing Shoes (several pairs for all sizes)
 - Carabiners (Locking and Non-Locking)
 - Traditional Climbing Racks/Equipment
 - Climbing Helmets
- Guidebooks/Maps for Virginia and West Virginia

⁴ Some stoves and stove gases are kept in different locations. Please see the "Special Note on Stoves and Fuel" for more information.

Directions to the Gear Room on Leake Drive

Many people have trouble finding the gear room on their first visit. If you cannot find it after following the directions below, simply call/text the officer who is hosting the gear room and they should be able to get you there in no time.

1. Starting from Echols dorm (part of Old Dorms) walk westward on McCormick Road towards O'Hill Dining Hall.
2. Turn right on the intersection of McCormick/Alderman to get onto Alderman Road.
3. Turn left onto Leake Drive
4. Walk straight all the way to the end of the road to the very last building (**right behind the building is a forest**).
5. Go around the left side of the building and up the stairs.
6. Go through the door and walk to the back of the room.





The ‘Whitewater Units’ near Carruther’s Hall

The club owns two large shipping containers known as ‘The Units’ where we keep all of our boats and water sports equipment. The Units are located in the parking lot of Carruther’s Hall and can only be opened by the current white-water advisors in the club.

Types of Gear in this Space:

- Kayaks
- Canoes
- Rafts
- Dry Suits
- Dry Tops
- Cam Straps
- Kayak Skirts
- PFDs
- Paddles
- Inflatable Stand Up Paddleboards and pumps (SUPs)
- Helmets

The Outdoors Club House (The ‘Shred Shack’)

Many of the club’s officers and members live together in a castle off-Grounds. Currently, the Shred Shack houses the club’s fleet of mountain bikes (and associated equipment) and contains an epic space for the biking advisors to maintain and repair the bikes.

Types of Gear in this Space:

- Mountain bikes
- Mountain biking Helmets
- Bike Racks (trunk and hitch-mounted)
- Tubes, Portable Pumps, and Multi-Tools
- A workbench with all the tools and supplies for bike maintenance/repair that you would find in a fully-stocked bicycle shop



Inventory Reference

Please check our inventory [here](#) before coming to a gear room. Email the officers if you have any questions about our inventory.

How to Check Out Gear

The process for checking out club gear is dependent on what kind of gear you want to check out and thus, where that gear is located. Please read the section above for information on where our different types of gear are stored.

Getting Gear from the ‘Gear Room’ on Leake Drive

The Gear Room on Leake Drive is our most popular and most frequently visited storage location for gear as it contains the gear needed for the majority of our trips.

‘Gear Rooms’ and the Gear Room Schedule

The officers make this space accessible to members by hosting ‘Gear Rooms’. ‘Gear Rooms’ are sessions where the officers open the Gear Room for approximately 45 minutes, 3-4 times per week, so that members can check gear out. ‘Gear Rooms’ follow a regular schedule announced at the beginning of every semester.

At least a day before every Gear Room, an email announcement will be sent out to the club’s listserv by the officer leading the Gear Room. This email includes navigation instructions as well as the current semester’s Gear Room schedule. If there is no email sent out for a scheduled Gear Room, please assume that the Gear Room is cancelled. The officers will do their best to announce any changes in the gear room schedule.

Checking out Gear from the Gear Room

Simply show up at a scheduled gear room and choose the gear that you need. There is no need to make an additional appointment. At the gear room, we will record the items that you are checking out, your name, email, phone number, and the due date. These are all required to keep our inventory up-to-date.



You must be on time to gear rooms. An officer will stay at the gear room only as long as people are coming by. Most gear rooms are over within 30 minutes of starting. If you think you will be late, contact the officer leading the gear room to see if they can wait for you.

What do to if you can't come to the Gear Room

If none of the scheduled gear room times work for you, please email the officers at outdoors-officers@virginia.edu and we'll arrange an alternative time to meet to check out gear. **Please email us a few days in advance of when you need the gear if you cannot make the scheduled gear rooms.**

'Gear Rooms' during Academic Breaks

We do not have regular gear room times during summer or winter breaks. Email the officers a few days in advance to schedule a time to meet.

Getting Water Sports Gear from the Whitewater Units

If you want to check out water sports gear (kayaks, canoes, etc.) you **MUST** email the officers a few days in advance. The subject of your email should be 'Water Sports Gear Rental Request', and you should include in the email your name, phone number, and email address.

Getting Bike Related Gear from the Shred Shack

If you want to check out a mountain bike, you must email the officers a few days in advance. The subject of your email should be 'Mountain Bike Rental Request', and you should include your name, phone number, computing ID, height, and riding ability.