

# "All The Dirt" On Camp Laundry

The problem of lost belongings is one we must address each year. Admittedly, a certain degree of loss is inevitable. With over two hundred campers generating hundreds of pounds of dirty laundry each week, some of it's bound to be missing at the end of the summer. Even in our own homes we end up spending hours searching for the lost shoe or the t-shirt we're sure was in the dresser drawer just yesterday! Science still hasn't been able to explain the laundry room version of the Bermuda Triangle into which so many unmatched socks have been sucked. With this in mind, you can imagine the kinds of challenges with which we're faced when it comes to keeping track of camper laundry. A high percentage of the loss, however, can be avoided. You can help us out tremendously by tending to some important details before sending your child off to camp.

First, it's probably important to know **how** the laundry service works. Except for those who decline the laundry service, laundry goes out once each week. All of the girls' laundry goes to town on one day and all of the boys' goes to town on another. The clothes arrive at the laundry in huge cabin group laundry bags. Inside the laundry bags is each camper's own laundry in his or her own laundry bag. After washing, drying, sorting, and folding the clothes, the laundry service sends all the clean clothes back in individually-marked packages. The folks at the laundry must, therefore, be able to read the name of the camper on **each and every** article of clothing. On the day the laundry comes back, our office often receives a large bag of unmarked laundry that we must attempt to reunite with each owner. We will set out all the unmarked laundry returned that day and have the campers come by to inspect it. When campers find something that belongs to them, a staff member puts the camper's name (with indelible pen) on the article immediately. This method works most of the time; unfortunately, we find that some of the campers, particularly the younger ones, aren't able to identify their own jeans (since they all do look pretty much the same)! In many cases, campers don't even realize that the clothing is missing until the day the counselor packs them to go home.

Below are some things that **YOU** can do to avoid losing things at camp:

- 1. IT IS ABSOLUTELY CRITICAL THAT YOU MARK ALL YOUR BELONGINGS! (whether or not you choose laundry service).**  
This point is so important, we'd like to repeat it. **It is absolutely critical that you mark all your belongings!**
- 2. USE INDELIBLE METHODS OF MARKING LAUNDRY.**  
Waterproof laundry markers such as Rub-A-Dubs, or one of the labeling systems (about which we have enclosed information in this mailing) are best. Anything else will simply wash away.
- 3. MARK THE CLOTHES IN AN EASY-TO-FIND LOCATION.**  
We strongly suggest that you mark inside and to the back of the neck band of shirts, sweatshirts, jackets, raingear, PJs, etc. Mark shorts, underwear, jeans, swim-trunks, PJ bottoms, etc. within and to the back of the waistband. Mark socks along the foot or toe, if written, or attach label to top of sock; towels, pillow cases, and blankets along the hem area. Some folks like to "hide" the camper's name for fear that marking the article in an obvious location will "ruin" it. As a result, they'll mark the item in a location so obscure that you'd need a treasure map to find it. A little rule of thumb: If you have an article of clothing that you feel will be "ruined" by a marker or label tape, **please leave that article at home!**
- 4. DON'T MARK DARK MATERIAL WITH A DARK MARKER!**  
This may seem like a "no-brainer," but it's surprising how often someone will use a black laundry marker to write the camper's name on the collar of a black shirt. Situations like these call for the white label tape that you iron on or sew on the garment. You can even buy a **white** laundry marker! (See the lavender information sheet in this mailing).
- 5. BE SURE TO MARK EVERYTHING!**  
Label not only those items typically going to the laundry, but also things like bathrobes, belts, jackets, boots, pillows, sleeping bags, cameras, toothpaste, soap dish, and toiletries. In short, to reduce the risk of losing it, **write the camper's name on it!**
- 6. HAVE AN ADULT DO THE MARKING ON ALL CLOTHING AND BELONGINGS!**  
Like filling out enrollment applications and medical forms, the job of marking the camper's belongings is best handled by an adult. Though we think it's a good idea to have your camper help in getting ready to go to camp, we don't think it's wise to hand a child a marker and a stack of clothes and tell him "have at it". Needless mistakes will occur, and some of those mistakes can be costly.
- 7. LEAVE EXPENSIVE CLOTHES AT HOME!**  
The beauty of camp is that fashion is irrelevant. Here we're free from the burden of having to be "in style." By bringing expensive clothes, you're only running the risk of losing them or having them destroyed. We think it's best to bring clothes that won't upset you should they happen to get worn-out or misplaced over the course of the summer. Let's be honest. At camp, clothes get dirty, sometimes real dirty. Up at 7 AM, campers spend a full 14 hours horseback riding, climbing, hiking, cooking by campfire, playing in the creek, helping in the pet farm, and camping out. Though we stress cleanliness, good grooming, and hygiene, it's important that the boys and girls are free to learn and play without being preoccupied with worrying about frayed hems, grass-stained elbows, or soiled socks. You might consider factory outlets, clothing exchange stores, yard sales, and/or thrift shops - why not?

Of course, you always have the option of sending a full session's worth of clothes to camp. They'd return home, ready to be laundered, promptly. This, however, will not prevent the possibility of lost clothing and belongings. Unmarked items can be just as easily lost right here at camp.

Note: Please refer to ❖❖❖ on clothing check list (yellow form) regarding your decision to accept or decline laundry service. Please mark "yes" or "no", then sign and date. If neither is indicated, your child's clothing will be sent out for laundry service. There is no additional cost for laundry service unless the poundage exceeds our standard offering.

We hope you find this little insert helpful. If you have any questions, please give us a call.