

# HIKER-NOTE:

## Staying Warm in the Tent

UGA OUTDOOR RECREATION CENTER  
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### **The ORC carries sleeping bags with ratings as low as 15° F**

Cold weather sleeping bags with a barrier between the ground and the sleeping bag are important. A foam mat or air mattress used for comfort during summer camping, doubles as a ground barrier for cold weather camping. In cold weather, you may even need a couple of barrier layers. However, you will need a properly rated sleeping bag in the cold.

Sleeping bags have a temperature rating in degrees Fahrenheit or Celsius, depending on where you buy them. People react differently to cool temperatures; a sleeping bag that feels comfortable to you at 30 degrees F, may leave others shivering through the night. It is best to buy a sleeping bag with a rating several degrees below the lowest temperature you expect.

Consider these points when deciding the right rating for you. Do you feel warmer or colder than others do under similar situations? Smaller bodies in a large bag may not create enough heat to stay warm. Large bodies tossing and turning during the night crush the insulation, reducing its performance. Look for a sleeping bag with the stuffing divided into compartments, the stuffing should not shift. Also, when purchasing one should realize that a lower temperature rating means more insulation. Therefore, buy a bag rated lower than the coldest temperature you expect to camp in because you can always unzip it if you get to warm.

Another option is buying a tent heater; there are many styles to choose from but most operate on propane or electricity. Electric models will need an outlet, propane heaters need ventilation, so read the instructions carefully. Several models burn propane outside, using a hose to blow heat into the tent. However they give off deadly carbon monoxide gas and should not be run while sleeping. Do not use a heater without a switch that automatically turns itself off, if knocked over. Many models do double duty to warm you when sitting outside the tent.