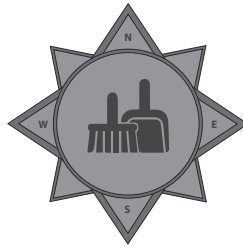


PACKING UP CHRISTMAS

If you have done Skill Trek for any amount of time, you'll know that the job is not done until everything has been put away and stored properly. And while we hate to see the Christmas season come to an end, if we are going to enjoy these festive elements year after year we are going to have to store them responsibly and make sure everything gets put where it should.



EARN THIS NUGGET

Trailblazers: You are chief helper getting everything packed up, as your parents give you direction.

Rockhoppers: You will be responsible for packing everything and making sure that everything is sufficiently protected and packed in appropriate containers.

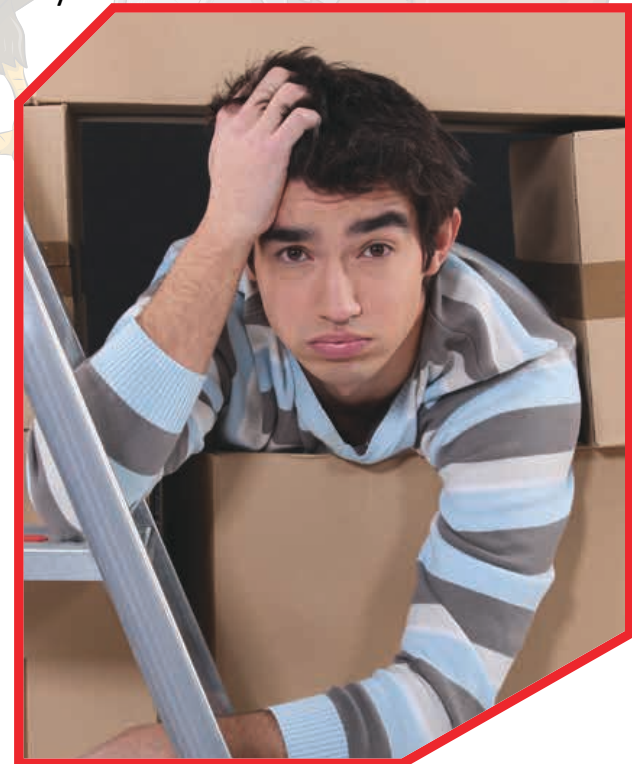
Cragman: You will oversee the location of storage, ensuring that the storage containers are appropriate for the location. Also you are responsible for ensuring that everything that is packed is in good condition, all lights work and that they are stored responsibly so that they will work right out of the box next year.

First of all, let's consider where we are going to store all this stuff. In the attic, in the basement, perhaps in a garden shed or a spare room. The very place that you will store items will tell you how you should store them.

For instance a cardboard box may be just fine if you intend to store in a spare room where the item remains climate-controlled, but if you intend to store in the shed, or a basement with creepy crawlies and dampness you could get quite the surprise next year.

Water damage is another very real possibility if the storage will take place outside of the house, so in such a case, inexpensive plastic totes will be relatively air and water tight and keep things protected from the elements.

Now when you come to place things inside those boxes or totes, don't be hasty to get the job done, but take the time to do it right. Make sure lights are not tangled. This will save you a lot of time next year and in extreme circumstances badly tangled lights can become damaged and need replacement.



PACKING UP CHRISTMAS

Place cloth items into storage without crumpling. If possible fold carefully so that the items are wrinkle free for next season.

Store small items together, like tree ornaments, so that small parts don't get lost and delicate baubles don't get chipped or damaged. You may want to consider some soft packing materials as well.



Label containers clearly so that things are easy to find next year and in the mean time you don't go through the holiday totes looking for other items because frankly you don't know what is in which container.

Placing lavender scented dryer sheets inside the totes will make things smell fresh next year when you retrieve the items and will also lower the chances of insect or moth damage on those linens.

Make sure that delicate wreaths are stored in an appropriate container, not smashed into a container that is too small. A wreath will deform horribly over the coming months and will probably be unusable by next year if you don't take a little care over this one.

Dispose of anything that is damaged or does not work, especially light and any other tempermental items. If you pack up those items "just in case," you almost certainly will not remember what was good and what was not and will spend a lot of time trying to figure it all out again.

And there you have it, some simple steps that will save you money and save you a ton of grief next year.



From all of us at Skill Trek, a sincere thank you for spending the season trekking with us, and we look forward to the next hike down the trail with you and your family