

Harford District  
2014 Cub Scout Day Camp  
June 23-27  
**Knight of the Roundtable**

# Leather



## **Station Volunteer's Guide**

Thank you for being a station volunteer! The stations are the heart of camp and truly provide our scouts with an opportunity to try out a new skill (or build on one they know) while having a great time. Our volunteers' knowledge and enthusiasm is what makes our camp great!

To make running the station easier, please take some time to read through the station guide. While **what** is being covered at the station needs to remain as outlined, **how** it is covered is only one of many methods. If you find a better way to accomplish the requirements or if the method we have outlined doesn't seem to be working...please feel free to change it! This is only a guide...do what works best for you and the scouts coming to your station.

One other thing to keep in mind - some stations will be visited by all ranks. That means you may have 6 year olds through 11 year olds and may have to simplify or intensify the methods to meet the skills and knowledge of all the scouts.

Thanks again - we are glad to have you as part of Harford Day Camp!

## **Station Procedures**

- The first station begins at 10:15 on Monday and 9:15 other days...so you have some time! We've tried to only schedule 2 dens at a time (max. 24 boys) but, there may be times when you have 3. Consult your station schedule so you will know who to expect and when.
- Greet dens as they arrive. Many will have a den cheer, ask to hear it!
- Once all the dens arrive or the start time has come, begin going through the procedures for the station. It is very important that you start and end on time! Each time slot lasts 45 minutes. If a den arrives 10 minutes late, they CANNOT stay 10 minutes past the end of the station...that would make you and then late for the next station. If a den doesn't get finished, suggest they come back during a break or take the remaining activity with them to work on at the den.
- Execute the station with energy and enthusiasm! Let the scouts do as much for themselves as possible. It doesn't need to be perfect, they just need to Do Their Best!
- Don't forget the beads. Each scout earns a bead at every station for participating. Beads can be given to the den leader for distribution.
- Once the den is finished, begin resetting for the next group.
- Close the station at the end of the day by packing/organizing the supplies and cleaning and disposing of all trash. Let the Program Director responsible for the station (either Tiger/Wolf/Bear or Webelos) know if supplies are running short!

## Station Overview

Brief introduction to leather and hands on leather crafting will make up this station. The station will be visited by Tiger, Wolf, and Bear, Webelos I ranks and the older tags. Each rank will complete the assigned project. Supplies are limited and purchased from an out of state vendor...please make sure that each rank is doing the assigned project! We are sorry, but youth volunteers MAY NOT complete leather projects.

## Core Values:

Cooperation: Being helpful and working together with others toward a common goal.

## Set-up:

Open Leather bins and:

Cover tables with brown paper. Set aside an area for staining the leather.

Distribute leather stamps, tools and *mallets (if scouts get distracted by having them on the table, you may want to wait until after instructions are given to distribute).*

"Case" projects that will be used in the next few hours and place in zip top bags (see instructions on casing below)

Locate practice leather pieces and projects for the rank that is attending (there are a few times when mixed ranks will be coming.) You'll want to have a volunteer dedicated to each rank to give specific instructions.

## Break-Down

Return items to bins. Empty water and dispose of trash and paper table covering (if needed).

Leftover "cased" pieces should be taken out of bags to dry. They will get moldy overnight.

Store bins under the tent for the night. If there is bad weather forecasted, please bring station bins to the tag building for overnight storage.

## Station Objectives:

Each scout will:

1. Participate in discussion to learn what leather is and a brief history of how it is used.
2. Learn about leather tools and view samples of what they can make with them.
3. Practice stamping on a scrap piece of leather.
4. Create a leather project. Tiger - Wristband, Wolf - Bead Tracker, Bear - Neckerchief Slide, Web I - drawstring pouch, Tags - Key fobs.

## Background that may be helpful....

### **History**

Leather working is one of the oldest skills known to man as animal hides had many uses for primitive humans. Artistic leather working is a far more recent development and is generally considered to have originated in Spain. Brought to the New World with the Conquistadors, it eventually moved north and became popular in the southwestern U.S. To this day, the most popular style of leather carving is the traditional Western floral style.

### **Stamping**

Generally the most popular type of leather craft for use with groups is stamping. Basically the design is pounded into the leather with a stamp and a mallet. Stamps are available in a wide variety of designs from geometric patterns to pictures. Stamping is very easy to do with little or no experience.

### **Carving**

Carving leather is much more challenging and requires a fair amount of dedication to master. It involves cutting the design into the leather, then using special tools to stamp the patterns desired. Because it has a fairly steep learning curve and requires the use of a very sharp knife, carving is not recommended for most youth groups, although it may be suitable for older teens.

### **Leather**

Leather is preserved by a process called tanning and different types of tanning give the leather different properties. *Leather that is to be stamped or carved should be vegetable tanned* (sometimes called tooling leather). Oil tanned leathers will generally take stamp impressions very poorly.

### **Casing**

Casing is a term that has its origins before the plastic age. Leather was soaked then placed inside a case (typically a small suitcase type of thing) - hence the term casing. These days most casing is simply done by wiping both sides of the leather with a wet sponge. Properly cased tanning leather will accept stamp imprints very well.

Use a moistened sponge to wet the leather on both sides. Do not soak it. The leather should be slightly moist throughout. Once the leather dries to near its original color, it is properly "cased". This process takes some time and you may find it helpful to case the leather ahead of time (no more than a few hours) and once it has returned to its original color place it in an airtight bag. Then you simply distribute the leather when the group is ready to begin.

## Stamping Tools

There are three basic types of stamps commonly used by groups for stamping. Pictorial Stamps, sometimes called 3D stamps. These are the most popular for youth groups as each is a complete design in itself. The average size of these stamps is 1 inch x 1 inch. These are the least expensive type of stamp. Pictorial stamps have an interchangeable handle (on left in photo) which does not come with the stamp. Typically most group crafting setups will include a handle for each person and a variety of stamps that are shared among them.



### Letter and Number Sets

These are basically the same as the pictorial stamps with one handle included with each set. These are available in several styles and sizes ranging from 1/4 inch to 1 inch in height. Lettering is best avoided with younger children as it requires some patience to do properly, and looks rather bad if not done properly.

## Carving Stamps

Carving stamps cover a broad range of designs ranging from geometric to small designs such as leaves and flowers, footprints, and musical notes. Although we call them carving stamps, many shapes are also useful for stamping patterns. Their imprints are generally smaller and they are more expensive than pictorial stamps, but the handle is built into the tool. For group work choose some that make interesting borders when used repeatedly or that can be combined to make a larger design. Some popular categories are veinners, border, camouflage, seeders, geometric, flower, leaf, sunburst, and miscellaneous shapes.



## Stamping Tool Care

With proper care your stamps will last a lifetime.

1. Never hit stamps with a metal mallet or hammer. This will chip the plating and make them rust easier. Use of a wood, rawhide, or polymer mallet is essential to preserve your stamps.
2. Never use stamps on anything but leather.
3. Never put stamps away wet.
4. Always store stamps in a dry area.
5. Avoid dropping stamps whenever possible.



## Mallets

As mentioned above, metal hammers should never be used on stamping tools. Although there are many suitable mallets on the market, simple wooden ones are the most cost effective and the mallet of choice for group use. Normally you will want a mallet for each person.

## Work Surface

A firm work surface is vital to get good stamp impressions. It will also protect your furniture from over zealous stamping which may go right through the leather. Generally the heavier this is the less noisy it will be when stamping.



## Samplers

I try not to discourage children from using the stamps in any design they like, however those under 12 years old will generally just turn the leather into an unsightly mess without some guidance. Creating a sample or two using your available tools to show some of the patterns possible will usually cause them to give a bit more thought to what they are stamping rather than just selecting stamps they like and stamping them

willy nilly all over the leather. This close up of the above sampler shows several easy patterns that were made with just 2 stamping tools (veiner and camouflage tools).

In general, samplers for groups should only have easy to copy designs.



## Finishing

For working with groups, always choose a water based stain and finish. If you are on a very tight time frame consider using an [All In One stain and finish](#). Keep in mind that leather is skin and many leather stains will stain your skin as well, so be sure to test this beforehand. Dyes that stain skin should be applied by the group leader (you can wear rubber gloves if needed). This will prevent a lot of mess. The best method for applying water based stains and finishes are cheap sponges cut into applicator size pieces and dampened slightly before use.