

For the average camper, bad weather and camping aren't words we like to put together. Especially if you have young kids. Winter can put a dampener on any camping trip, quite literally, and there is nothing worse than trying to ride out the storm only to have your tent collapse on top of you, leaving you and your gear soaking wet at 2 am in the morning. While I would assume most campers wouldn't intentionally go away when the weather is foul, sometimes it's unavoidable and we can get caught out unexpectedly in the middle of nowhere, with nothing to hide us from the storm except our tent. It's important to point out that there are different 'levels' of tents on the market, all with different tolerances to the elements. But remember, even the most expensive tent is still 'just a tent'. A temporary shelter, if you will, that may not be able to stand up to the full force of mother nature. Especially when compared to a \$10k camper trailer or \$60k caravan, or dare I utter the words with a 6-figure price tag, Winnebago? But it isn't all doom and gloomy afternoons. Here are some great tricks to help you ride out the storm and come out dry and in good spirits on the other side:

1. Set Your Tent Up Properly

Sounds silly, doesn't it? I am constantly amazed when out camping at the shocking attempts people make to set their tents up. I know sometimes they aren't easy but you will pay the price if it's not set up correctly.

- Use all the poles provided.
- Use all the peg points on the tent.
- Pegs should go firmly in the ground at a 45° angle, away from the tent, with the head hit into the ground.
- Use all the guy ropes attached - make sure they are pegged at least 1.5m out from the bottom of the tent. (If you peg them too close to the base of the tent they won't do much.)
- Lastly - one that almost always gets overlooked - attach the tent fly to the poles using the velcro or ties. Most tents have these attachments, so make sure you look for them and use them!



Guy your tent out properly and add more guy ropes if necessary.

2. Set Up in a Sheltered Spot

The Wind is a tent's biggest enemy. Avoid it as much as you can.

- Hide behind sand dunes, trees and bushes, buildings or other campers (caravans make excellent windbreaks). Be mindful of the direction of the wind and shelter your tent from it.
- Do not pitch your tent under any tree, especially large gum trees! This is extremely dangerous and people have died from tree branches, or even the entire tree, coming down on top of their tent.
- Don't pitch your tent where water can pool or you may wake up to find yourself lying on a waterbed!

3. Use Extra Guy Ropes and Pegs

Guy ropes are the most important part of the tent when it comes to protecting it from extreme weather. They take the pressure off the tent poles/frame and support the entire tent.

- Use guy ropes correctly – see Tip 1.
- Some tents have the options of adding more guy ropes, especially where there are windows that can be pegged out like small awnings.
- Peg the guy ropes in different directions so the tent is braced from all angles in case the wind changes direction.

✘ **Extra guy ropes** can be purchased and will really beef up your tents ability to stand up to heavy wind.

4. Awnings / Verandahs

- If you can, drop the awning and peg it down / zip it up. A lot of tents have the option to collapse the front awning or verandah and close up the front of the tent
- If you cannot drop the awning and have side and front panels (such as with Black Wolf Turbo tents), use the panels as they will stop the wind from getting under the awning and trying to lift it off the ground. If this happens, the poles may fall out leaving the front of the tent flapping around and susceptible to damage.
- Don't rely on the sewn on guy rope tabs over the awning poles. Place additional guy ropes over the spigot of the tent-pole and anchor the awning from all directions.

✘ *That sky is looking pretty ominous.*

5. Put a Tarp Over Your Entire Tent!

- If possible, place an industrial-sized tarp over your entire tent and rope it down! These things are very strong and waterproof and will add a huge amount of protection to your tent.
- Depending on the strength of the poles in your tent, you may need to add extra steel tent poles to the tarp arrangement so as not to place too much pressure on the poles.

6. Dig a Trench Around Your Tent

- If there is a lot of rain, you may find your campground turning into a river and it may run right under your tent. This may not be allowed depending on where you are camping, so be mindful when considering using this technique.

- By digging a trench around your tent you will be able to direct the water around your tent in order to keep the floor dry and avoid finding out just how waterproof the floor of your tent is! You may find out the hard way if there are any holes in the floor!



Sometimes it's best just to stay at home.

At the end of the day, there is only so much a tent can handle. We usually offer the advice at Snowys that most tents can handle any weather up to the point that warnings are issued. If you are camping in an area that has a severe weather warning issued maybe think twice about putting your tent to the test.

If there is shelter to be taken - a cabin or motel or even a shed - then choose these options first as it could not only save your tent but the rest of your holiday as well.

Do you have any winter camping tips to add to Dave's list? Comment below.