

Storm Lashing!

Gail Temmel, BC Camping Committee

Storm lashing is the act of tying down your tent, tarp or shelter so it does not fly away, blow over or become a tumble weed in a strong wind.

You need to start with a well pitched tent. Pitching a tent is a basic outdoor skill that Guides should practise before any major event so that they are familiar with their equipment and the time frame needed to properly set up their site.

Choose a site that is level and free of sticks, stones and pine cones. Spread your ground sheet out as you want your tent situated, figuring out which way you want the door to face.

Unfold the tent on top of the ground sheet and pull out the corners of the floor and stake them to the ground. You will want to replace the small aluminum tent pegs that likely came with your tent. These bend very easily and do not hold in the ground very well. Instead, invest in 8–10" spikes. They can be bought at most hardware stores and the spiral style is even better for holding into the ground. They are worth the cost, will last forever, can be pounded in securely and will hold your tent like no little peg would ever be able to! Assemble the poles, making sure there are no broken poles that can damage the tent or hurt the girls. Put the poles in place and erect your tent. Stake out the guy lines that stretch the tent into shape and tie each line through a tent grommet with a bowline. The tent is finished when your rain fly is in position and staked so that there is an air space between the fly and the tent—this allows the rain to flow off and away from the base of your tent.

There are some who claim the newer dome tents don't need to be storm lashed as their design keeps them snuggler to the ground and having the floor stops the wind from being able to lift the sides. It does not, however, stop them from being pushed over

and becoming flattened, which could snap the poles. One tip to help prevent this from happening when the wind kicks up is to open your doors and windows about half way, allowing the wind to pass through the tent, instead of pushing only on one side. But for those who want the security of knowing they have prepared for every eventuality and will not have to panic when a strong wind hits, there is a method of lashing a dome tent that can be prepared prior to camp, ready to install as soon as your tent is pitched. This method will also work for your shelter or canopy.

1. Begin by tying a ring of rope around the dome of a tent (above the door) or around the upper third of a pop-up canopy. Tie the ends together using a reef knot. This rope will be referred to as the rope-ring. The length of the rope will vary with the size of your tent.
 2. Attach additional ropes to the rope-ring using a Lark's head knot. See Diagram 1. The length of each rope should be twice the distance from the rope-ring to the ground plus a metre. One rope is attached for each upright pole supporting the tent or shelter. See Diagram 2.
- If the tent is square with four poles you will need four additional ropes. If the tent is a pentagon or hexagon with six poles, you will need to attach 12 additional ropes to the rope-ring.
3. Position the ropes around the rope-ring so that there is one at each pole.
 4. Use more of those wonderful spikes to secure the ropes.
- Securing the tent on either side of a tent pole reduces the amount of twisting that can occur in a strong wind.

If you are able to securely storm lash your tent and canopy you will be prepared for all weather conditions.

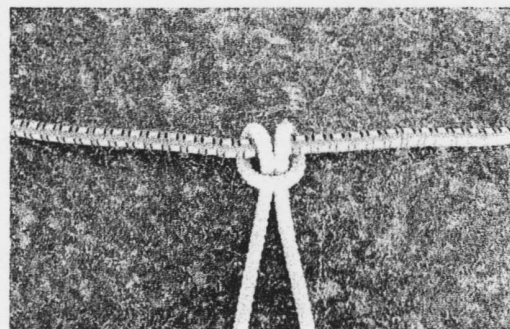


Diagram 1:

To make a Lark's head: fold the rope in half, slide the looped end of the folded rope under the rope-ring, then pull the two free ends of the rope through the loop.

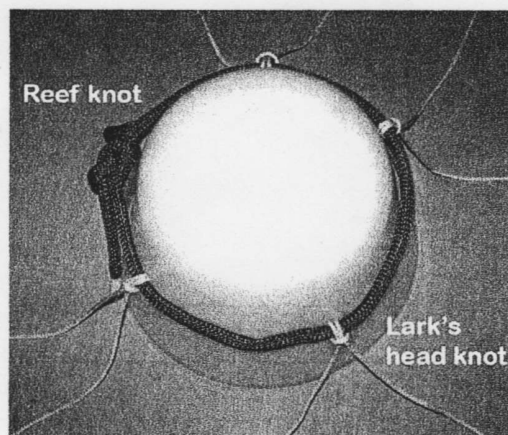


Diagram 2:

A completed rope-ring displayed on a bowl. Photo: Cynthia Parkin



Diagram 3:

Ready for SOAR! Photo: Cynthia Parkin