

What should I bring?

A Packing Guide for the 2017 Severe Weather Field Experience

Space

With 12 people in a 15-passenger van, space is at a premium. Consequently, you may bring one reasonably-sized *soft-sided* duffle bag and a carry-on type of item (e.g., a regular backpack, camera bag, or laptop bag). You may **not** bring a suitcase with hard corners because there is simply no room. Please see the note on clothing below. If a suitcase shows up on the day we leave, it will be left behind. When packing your carry-on item, consider what you care to hold in your lap or under your feet for 10 hours a day. For snacks and other consumables, we will make frequent stops at multi-purpose stores, so please don't bring two weeks' worth of snacks. The main idea: *pack lightly!*

Gear

Though most of your needs will be met, you may want to bring the following optional items:

- Small flashlight
- Sunscreen
- Hat and sunglasses
- Cell phone and wall-outlet charger
- Camera, digital video camera, film or extra memory card, special batteries
- Laptop (please coordinate this—we do not need 12 laptops)

Clothing

Dress is generally casual except perhaps one dressy-casual evening (depending on the weather). Dress comfortably since we will spend a lot of time in the van. Prepare for large temperature swings. The weather can change from 90°F and sunny to 50°F and wet and windy in just a few minutes! Please do not bring a bulky hairdryer since they are usually available in hotels. Pack lightly and in reusable layers to minimize your use of space. Try to recycle bulky items such as jeans and sweatshirts. Be sure to pack the following:

- Rain coat (the Godfreys recommend a waterproof fabric such as Gore-Tex)
- Sweatshirt or light jacket for cool temperatures
- Shorts for hot weather (zip-off pants are particularly useful)
- Something modest to sleep in
- Change of clothes (primarily underwear) for about 6–7 days. Since space is tight, we *will* be doing laundry, so do not pack 12 shirts. Plan to reuse pants and shorts. Even though they get wrinkly, rolling clothes saves space. Most hotels have irons and nobody cares if your shorts are wrinkled anyway. We're looking at the sky, not at you.
- Sturdy shoes (e.g., sneakers or hiking boots) for chase days. You never know if you will need to dig the van out of the mud or save people from debris. We may also go for a short wilderness hike.
- Your usual toiletries in compact sizes. We will only travel for 12 days, so your large bottle of shampoo does not need to come with you. Everyone else hopes that you don't forget your deodorant!
- Swimsuit in case hotels have a pool (optional)
- Workout clothes (optional) and a plastic bag to store them
- Sandals for non-chase days (optional)

Other items

- Notebook and pencil for your chasing journal and for meetings with SPC and other NWC personnel
- Cash, traveler's checks, or debit card for all of your food and entertainment needs. There are Bank of America branches throughout the Great Plains, but otherwise all of the banks are different from those in North Carolina.
- Something to entertain yourself in the van while traveling on non-chase days (e.g., books, puzzles, clean magazines, cards, electronic games, DVD movies for all to enjoy)
- Audio books that most would enjoy
- Re-usable water bottle (very important)
- A few small snacks (for a day or two at most)
- Antibacterial hand gel
- Frisbee, kite, or football (coordinate this—we do not need 12 Frisbees)
- Any medications you normally take
- Small travel pillow or a pillowcase that you can fill with soft clothes (optional). Please do not bring a big pillow!