

Camelot Keyholder's User Manual

Last updated: 4/2006

Introduction

This document is intended as an instruction set for Camelot Cabin Keyholders. It is similar to the instructions told to new keyholders during the keyholder training trips. However, this document is not a substitute for a keyholder training trip. If you want to become a keyholder for Camelot, you must attend one of these trips. Normally, there are two trips per year, once in late spring and once in early fall. The trips are announced on the following mailing lists: [mitoc](#), [mitoc-announce](#), and [camelot-cabin](#). Contact mitoc-owner@mit.edu if you would like to be added to these mailing lists.

If you have any questions about Camelot, or about these instructions, please contact the current [Camelot Manager](#) for more info.

Camelot Managers for 2006:

Chris Glazner (*primary*)
glazner
617 816 3076

Martin Zalesak (*co-manager*)
martinz
617 417 3151

Why Keyholders?

Every group that uses Camelot, no matter how small or large, must be accompanied by a keyholder. The purpose of the keyholder policy is to ensure that there is always at least one person at the cabin who is familiar with its quirks. The policy requiring a keyholder to accompany every group was begun after MITOC's other cabin, Intervale II (and I), burned to the ground. It was clear that this unfortunate incident was the result of simple mistakes made by people unfamiliar with the rustic nature of the cabin, and that it could have been easily averted had there been someone more responsible present. Safe usage of the cabin is relatively straightforward, but may not be intuitively obvious to someone with little experience in a rustic setting.

The cabin tends to get used in three different scenarios that determine who has responsibility for ensuring the safety of the cabin and its occupants. The first scenario occurs when a large MITOC trip (such as Circus) uses the cabin.

Then, several of the Outing Club's officers and directors are present, and share responsibility for the cabin. The second scenario is when a large group rents the cabin for one or more nights. On occasion, the keyholder is recruited from the keyholder mailing list, and is not a member of the group. In this case, the group, not the keyholder, is financially responsible for damage to the cabin. The responsibility of the keyholder is to make sure that the leaders of the large group understand the consequences of their actions. The keyholder is there to instruct the group on how to use the cabin, not to enforce proper behavior among the groups members. The third scenario is when a keyholder takes a small group of his/her friends to the cabin. Then, the keyholder generally places the deposit check for the cabin, and is ultimately responsible.

Reserving the Cabin

Anyone interested in renting Camelot should check the WWW rental schedule (http://mitoc.mit.edu/rentals/camelot_schedule.shtml). If the date desired is available, send email to the cabin manager. Be sure to indicate the actual dates you want to use the cabin. Do not just say "next weekend," or "Memorial weekend," list the dates of each night you want to rent the cabin. Also specify the size of the group, whether you desire an exclusive or a non-exclusive rental, and who the keyholder for the group will be. If you need a keyholder, let the cabin manager know and he will send you instructions for finding one. The cabin manager will email you back to confirm the reservation, and you can check the rental schedule to make sure that the dates you requested show up as reserved.

Getting a Key

A keyholder may get a key to Camelot by going to the MITOC office during office hours (usually Mon, 5pm-6pm & Thurs 8pm-9pm. Always check the online schedule: <http://mitoc.mit.edu/hours>). You may call the office at 617-253-2988 to check if it is open.

Make sure that your name gets added to the key checkout list, and that you get a copy of the Camelot checklist. Fill out the first part of the checklist when you first arrive at the cabin, and the second part as you are cleaning up and leaving. When you return the key to the office, make sure that the return is noted on the key checkout list, and that you give the Camelot checklist to the desk worker.

Deposit Checks

Before you can get a key, someone must leave a \$1000 deposit check with the MITOC desk. If you are taking a small group of your friends to the cabin, then you can leave the deposit check when you check out the key. If you have volunteered to be the keyholder for a large group, then the group leader will have to come to the MITOC office and leave a deposit check before you can check out a key.

The deposit check will be destroyed after you have returned your key, and the cabin has been verified as being left in good condition by a MITOC officer or another party.

Before You Go

Before you set out for the cabin, make sure that you know who the group leader is, and that he/she has received a copy of the Camelot Cabin Usage Instructions. Also, make sure that you and the group leader know how to get to the cabin.

Keyholder Responsibilities

This section assumes that you are acting as the keyholder for a large group. If you are the keyholder and a member of the group, or you are visiting the cabin with just a few of your friends, the group dynamics would obviously change a bit.

First of all, the keyholder is not responsible for the actions of the group. It is assumed that the keyholder will make a good faith effort to instruct the group on safe usage of the cabin, and to warn them of any dangerous or stupid activities. If the keyholder holds up that end of the bargain, and the group persists in unwise activities that damage the cabin, then the group and its leaders, not the keyholder, will be held responsible for damage.

Furthermore, it is not the responsibility of the keyholder to police the actions of each and every member of the group. At the beginning of the trip, the keyholder should identify who is the leader of the group. If there are any problems with members of the group, and the keyholder does not want to confront the individuals directly, the keyholder should inform the group leader that members of the group are behaving badly. It is then up to the group leader to enforce proper behavior.

When the keyholder first determines that a problem is occurring, he should first inform the group members or leaders as to how to correct the situation. If that does not resolve the problem, the keyholder can assess fines, to be deducted from the \$1000 deposit check, and inform the group leader that this will occur. If any such problem occurs, the keyholder should discuss the situation with the cabin manager as soon as possible after returning to Boston. As a last resort, the keyholder has the authority to revoke the group's privilege of using the cabin, and to order them to leave.

Arriving At The Cabin

Have everyone sign into the logbook located near the front door of the cabin soon after they arrive. Fill out the first part of the cabin checklist. Have people take their personal gear to the loft or the hooks at the far corners of the den. People have a tendency to dump their stuff in the middle of the floor, where it gets in everyone's way and is a fire hazard.

Camelot's Neighbors

Contrary to popular belief, Camelot is not in an isolated wilderness. There are indeed neighbors, and they can be disturbed by the actions of Camelot's users. Due to the actions of rowdy groups several years ago, some of the neighbors, and particularly the local police chief, have a pretty low opinion of Camelot's users, and hence, the Outing Club. Please respect the neighbors' privacy, and do not do anything to worsen the situation. (Note: The situation has improved in recent years thanks to new policies for group rentals)

One of the biggest problems we've had with groups annoying the neighbors and police involves parking. All of the vehicles that convey people to Camelot must fit in the parking area off the road. It is absolutely prohibited for vehicles to remain parked partially on the road surface. Additionally, vehicles may not be parked by pulling onto the shoulder, remaining parallel to the road. When everyone is leaving at the same time, make sure that waiting cars do not block the road or create a hazardous driving situation.

The nearest house to Camelot is generally not visible through the trees, but it is not all that far away. Sounds carry surprisingly well. So, make sure that the group remains reasonably quiet, especially at night. People from the cabin should not go wandering around on other people's property. In particular, the graveyard down the street is private property, and walking around in there is trespassing. The neighbors get particularly upset when people do this at night.

While people of legal age may drink alcohol at Camelot cabin, drinking

alcohol in public is illegal in New Hampshire. Thus, drinking alcohol on the road or in the parking lot is forbidden. Camelot is a great place to relax and unwind, not an excellent place for a raging party free from the laws and regulations of MIT and Cambridge.

Outdoor Fires

There is a fire ring in front of the cabin. This is the only place on the grounds where a fire is permissible. The Outing Club has a permit from the local Fire Warden allowing us to build cooking fires. This permit does not sanction bonfires. What is the difference between a cooking fire and a bonfire? The line is a fuzzy one, but a cooking fire is small. Thus the fires in the fire ring should be kept to a reasonably small size. This definitely means flames under 1m. DO NOT augment the fire with chemical compounds of your liking. If the Fire Warden or a police officer should come to the cabin and ask to see the fire permit, you may find it on the cork board above the sign in book. (Note: This permit has gone missing as of 2005.)

Whenever there is a fire or lots of smoldering coals in the fire ring, someone should be supervising it. There is a tendency for a group of people to assume that someone else is managing the fire, so make sure that one person knows that he or she is responsible for the fire and will stay with the fire until it is out.

Please do not use prepared firewood in the outdoor fire ring. It takes lots of work to prepare that firewood and it is needed to heat the cabin. Wood for the cooking fire should be gathered from the forest from downed wood, or from the supply underneath the cabin. Do not chop down any trees or limbs. There is plenty of wood lying about on the ground. Underneath the cabin is a good place to find dry tinder for starting the fire. Once it is going, you can dry out wet wood.

Heating the Cabin

Wood for the Fireplace

The tools for splitting wood are located in the kitchen near the door to the den. There should be two mauls, a couple wedges, two $\frac{3}{4}$ axes, and a hatchet. Do not use these unless you find the woodshed empty. The cabin has a chainsaw which the cabin manager usually keeps at home. If the chainsaw is in the cabin, do not use it or allow anyone else to use it. If you are experienced with using a chainsaw and would like to help out in cutting firewood for the cabin, talk to the cabin manager.

The Wood Stoves

The cabin has two working wood stoves, one in the kitchen and one in the den. The stove in the kitchen does not get used very much, since the architecture of the kitchen makes it very difficult to heat efficiently. If you are trying to heat up the kitchen, having the ceiling fan on low may help. Both stoves now have a flue. The knob sticking out of the pipe that leads to the ceiling controls the exhaust flow. Perpendicular to the pipe is closed, parallel is open. This valve must be open when the stove is in use, and closed when not in use.

Both stoves have air intake valves on their doors. Like the flue valve, the air intake should be open when the stove is in use, and closed when not in use. The more open it is, the faster wood is burned. Once the fire is going well, the vents can be partially closed to slow the burn rate. To open the air intake valve on the stove in the kitchen, twist the cover so that the hole is exposed. Contrariwise, position the cover over the hole to close the air intake. For the kitchen in the den, screw and unscrew the two silver knobs on the door to control airflow.

The wood stoves have a long lag time, both when starting them and when letting the fire die out. It will take a few hours to get the fire going nicely, heat up the wood stove itself, and heat the cabin. So, don't build a huge conflagration in the stove, it will eventually overheat the cabin and you'll have to open windows, thus wasting hard-earned firewood. Build a reasonable sized fire, maintain it at a reasonable size, and wait. Likewise, when you are preparing to leave the cabin, expect the fire to keep going for a couple of hours after you put in more wood. You should make sure that the fire is out before you leave.

Fire Safety

Before you start a fire, make sure that you know where the fire extinguishers are, and that they are full. Also check that the smoke detectors are working. The doors to the stoves should be left closed when a fire is burning. The stove will operate more efficiently and generate more heat if the door is closed. Having the door open is an increased fire hazard since bits of flaming material can easily pop out. Hopefully it doesn't need to be said, but just in case: Never remove burning material from the stove!

Even though the stove itself may remain relatively cold for quite some time after you build a fire, it will get astoundingly hot over time. Do not put anything flammable on top of the stove, even if there is no fire inside. This applies especially to clothing of any sort. Be very careful and watchful of clothing that is hanging above the stove to dry. Make sure that nothing there

is in a precarious position so that it might fall onto the stove. The area around the drying rack, even though it is a few feet above the stove, may get hot enough to melt or damage synthetic fabrics. They should generally be hung elsewhere to dry. Boots left sitting near the stove may also get hot enough to be damaged.

Building a Fire

Before building a fire, check the ashes in the stove to see if they are cool. If they are, then use the metal fireplace shovel to remove them into the **metal** ash can that's usually on the back porch. Do not set the ash can on the wood floor. Empty it as soon as is convenient in the ash pit beside the outhouse.

Gather your materials for building a fire. You'll need matches or a lighter, some paper, cardboard, or other tinder, some small pieces of wood, and some large pieces of wood. Paper and often firestarters can often be found in a container well behind the den stove.

Both stoves are designed so that incoming air enters the stove at the bottom of the door, travels back through the stove along the bottom, and then rises and exits through the flue at the back. Maintaining this airflow is crucial to sustaining a good fire. Large logs should be put lengthwise with small gaps between them to allow the air to flow from front to back.

Once you start a fire, someone should be responsible for it until it goes out. Make sure everyone knows who this person is. Do not leave the cabin for more than an hour if the fire is still going. Don't stock the stove up with wood two hours before you plan to leave, because the fire will still be going strong when you want to pull out. It takes about 3 hours for the stove's fire to burn down, about 5 to burn out.

After the stove's fire is going, don't continue to burn small kindling sized pieces of wood or paper. Doing this just wastes the resources the next person who wants to start a fire will need. However, if the fire tends to die down periodically, and you notice lots of moisture boiling out of the logs in the fire, then you may have to periodically add kindling to keep the fire going. In this case, the wood is wet, and you may want to stand some of the wood near the stove so that it can start to dry out before you need it. Make sure that this drying wood does not get too hot.

If the outside temperature is below freezing, you may find it more comfortable in the cabin if you raise the humidity level. Get a very large pot, fill it full of water, and place it on top of the stove to provide moisture. Watch the pot carefully and make sure that it does not dry up, as the pot could be damaged. If you fill the pot with snow to melt and provide moisture, make

sure that you put a few inches of liquid water in the bottom of the pot. Snow is a sufficiently good insulator that the bottom of the pot can heat up to high enough temperature to be damaged without melting a significant amount of the snow.

Before you leave, make sure that enough wood is left neatly by the stove so that some other group could show up next weekend after fighting through bitter snow and rain and not have trouble lighting a fire. You'll need to leave some paper, some tiny wood, some medium sized wood and some large pieces. Let us know if a supply of wood like this wasn't left waiting for you when you arrived. We'll fine the group that was there the weekend before.

Flue Fires

Flues sometimes have a tendency to become coated on the inside with a layer of partially burnt, highly flammable residue from past fires. If this happens, a flue fire can begin when this residue catches fire. Because of the design of the flue, such a fire burns very efficiently and hotly. If this happens, there will probably be flames shooting out of the top of the flue for several feet, and the flue itself will become incredibly hot. Obviously, this situation is very dangerous, and would likely ignite the cabin. The sound of a flue fire has been likened to the sound of a jet engine. So, if you hear a loud roaring sound coming from the flue, get everyone out of the cabin immediately. Go to the neighbors house down the hill, and call the fire department.

Fire Extinguishers, Smoke Alarms, Fire Escape

Always check all four fire extinguishers and all three smoke alarms as soon as you get to the cabin. Mark their condition on the checklist that you brought with you. If any of the fire extinguishers are discharged (or you use any of them), bring them back to Boston with you, and get in touch with the cabin manager as soon as possible. There should be extra batteries for the smoke alarms in the white cabinet beside the refrigerator. If there are no extra batteries, let the cabin manager know. There should be two fire extinguishers in the kitchen, one on the post with the sign in logbook, and one next to the electric stove. There is one fire extinguisher on the post in the middle of the den, and one, directly above it on the same post, in the loft. The kitchen smoke alarm is near the ceiling above the stove area, and you will probably have to turn out the lights to observe the flashing LED. The den's smoke alarm is on the ceiling near the door to the kitchen, and the loft's smoke alarm is on the post with the fire extinguisher.

The emergency fire escape from the loft is through the window that looks toward the kitchen. There is a emergency escape ladder that can be thrown out the window to aid the descent. There is also a wooden ladder bolted to

the outside wall of the cabin that can be used to get down from the roof after you've gone out the window. Do not remove the escape ladder from the loft.

The Kitchen

Please keep all food out of the reach of the mice. If you don't, you might go hungry! Feel free to leave behind non-perishables in the appropriate cabinets, and feel free to take some food from the cabinets in return.

The small electric stove and oven may be used for cooking. The top surface of the working stove is very easy to clean with some hot, soapy water and a scrubber or scouring pad. Please make sure that the stove top is clean and sparkly white before you leave.

Glasses, plates, bowls, and utensils all have storage cabinets. Make sure that they are all properly put away and that the cabinets are properly closed, not only when you leave Camelot, but also at night. Otherwise, the mice will get in and soil them while no one is looking.

The cabin, and the kitchen have mice. The mice will happily shred toilet paper, and paper towels. They will also eat your food. They have been documented opening jar of peanut butter. They are THAT good. Therefore, keep all food in a mouse-proof location! Hang your food on the mouse-proof lines in the kitchen, or place it inside the mouse-proof mesh box in the kitchen.

The two white ceramic sinks in the kitchen have their outputs connected to gravel beds that drain to the ground. This allows small amounts of detergents, soap, and food particles to be broken down before entering the groundwater and the stream. Thus, it is OK to dispose of water with small amounts of soap and other cleaning supplies, but try to minimize the amount used. Nothing very hazardous should be disposed of in the sinks.

The most efficient way to wash dishes at Camelot is to use the tubs in the white sink in the corner away from the electric stove. Boil some stream water (several gallons) or heat some water that you brought with you on the electric stove. If you are with a large group, you will need lots of water, and it will take a long time to boil. You should make every effort to start boiling the water immediately as soon as dinner has been cooked, and before everyone eats (or even before dinner is cooked if there is room on the stove.) You can use water that was used to boil pasta or vegetables as the first round of cleaning water. Fill one tub full of hot soapy water, and the other full of hot rinse water. Wash, rinse, and place the drippy dishes in the dish rack on the ceramic sink surface. Once the dishes have dried enough that they are no

longer dripping profusely, transfer the whole rack to the wood/wire drying rack, and place a new, empty drying rack on the ceramic sink surface. Be sure to clean the counters, and the stove, with hot water. In the winter time, the counter surfaces are often cold enough that the water freezes on them before you can clean them. If this happens, you will have to get a pot of hot water (as hot as you can stand), and a sponge. Carry the hot water around to the counters and use it to clean off the ice and dirt. Try to dry the surface as much as possible before the remaining film freezes.

All cleaned dishes must be stored in mouse-proof containers to avoid having them soiled while you are not looking. Please put away dry dishes into their respective obvious places in the cabinets. Dishes that are still wet can be left in the wood and wire cabinet near the sink.

There is no garbage service at Camelot. You must take all garbage with you. Please survey the cabin and grounds before leaving to make sure that you have cleaned up all of your trash.

Water

The Outing Club has test the stream water, and it does occasionally have giardia. Therefore, don't drink it straight from the stream without boiling it!

During the winter, spring, and fall, all water must be collected from the stream for cooking and dishes and should be boiled. Stream water used to rinse the dishes must also be boiled. If you do not do this then the next group to use the cabin after you leave may get sick from pathogens left on the dishes.

During the summer, Camelot has a water system that draws water from the stream and filters it. The water goes through a 3 stage particle filter bank, down to 1 micron (this is the filtering level required for giardia, but not all nasties). The water out of the tap has been filtered to this level. This is OK for washing your hands, but probably isn't potable. There is a diverter on the faucet that can divert the water to an ultraviolet filter that is supposed to kill anything that's made it through. The water from the UV filter has been tested in various grad students' labs, and has shown to be free of little nasties. That said, we don't guarantee that the water is absolutely potable, so drink at your own risk. (The water tastes really good 😊)

When you leave the cabin, make sure that all non-potable water (i.e. stream water) is poured out. If you have extra potable water that you want to leave, you can leave it in the metal sink. All drinkable water left in the cabin should be placed in the sinks, otherwise the container may burst as the water freezes, then the water will make a mess when it thaws. Do not leave empty plastic

water containers in the kitchen. Take them back to Cambridge with you and recycle them.

Clivus

Clivus is a composting toilet located in a separate room off of the den. Here is a list of acceptable stuff to put in clivus: excrement, vegetable scraps, white paper, sawdust, dishwater (NO bleach, no soap). The following stuff should not be put into clivus: plastic, eggshells, meat, bones, colored toilet paper, hygiene products, condoms. Presently, clivus is having trouble dealing with the volume of refuse at Camelot, so do not dispose of kitchen scraps in there, only use it for going to the bathroom. After going to the bathroom with clivus, you should dump in a cup or so of sawdust. There should be a bucket full of sawdust beside clivus. If the bucket is empty, you can refill from the large bag of sawdust in the corner. Clivus has an exhaust fan which should be left on all the time, including when you leave. If the fan sounds broken or strange, turn it off and report the incident to the cabin manager. There is also a heater for clivus. It is generally turned on sometime around November, and left on until March or April. It's on the floor in the clivus room. Please leave it on in the winter.

Despite the heater, clivus freezes up in the winter, and then quickly fills up. When that happens, the cabin manager will put a sign on the door to the clivus room instructing you to use the outhouse instead of clivus. The outhouse is located about 100m behind the cabin, to the left of the trail that leaves from the back door. The trail to the outhouse is marked with yellow ribbon. Spare toilet paper can be found in the metal cabinet in the Clivus room.

Tools

There are a variety of tools for cleaning the cabin and splitting wood. They are kept in the kitchen, right beside the door to the den. Please leave them neatly arranged in that area when you leave. Please do not let people play with them, and return them neatly to where you find them.

Electricity

The cabin gets electricity from the New Hampshire Electric Co-Op. If there is a problem with the electricity, you should call them at (603)536-1800. When reporting a problem, you should give the following pole number to the receptionist: 8D 18B. They may not ask for it, but tell them you have it

anyway. It is the number of the pole located just beside the cabin, and is their best way of finding the cabin. This information is also located on the cork board near the main entrance.

Cleaning Up

Please leave the cabin at least as clean as you found it. Clean all of the counters, sinks, and tables. Sweep out the loft, den, and kitchen. Take all of your garbage with you. Check the fire pit and area around the cabin for trash. If people from your group are leaving early, have them take some garbage with them in case it won't all fit in the remaining cars.

After Returning to Cambridge

If you experienced any problems, or you have any concerns about the cabin, please contact the cabin manager as soon as you can. If everything went well, then you just need to return the key to the MITOC office as soon as you can. Be sure to give the completed checklist to the desk worker along with the key, and your payment for using the cabin. Be sure to collect money from everyone at the cabin before they take off!