

MANTIS TARP



Your Mantis Tarp package includes:

- Tarp
- One short one-piece (prop) pole
- One long multi-section (arch) pole
- Aluminum pegs and nylon guylines



SET-UP

1 Assemble the long pole carefully section-by-section, making sure that each piece slides completely into the next. Forcing an improperly assembled pole into place can damage the pole and/or the tarp. (Do not hold one section while whipping the rest of the pole back and forth, or toss the poles into the air; either procedure will excessively stress the pole joints and shockcord.)

2 Lay out the tarp so that the pole sleeves on the top of the tarp are in a straight line, and then slide the pole through the pole sleeves from one corner of the tarp to the other.

Having the pole sleeves in a straight line makes inserting the pole easier and less stressful on the tarp fabric. In wind, you may find it easiest to temporarily lay out the tarp so that the pole sleeves are lined up with the wind direction. You can then feed the pole through from the upwind corner, holding on to the corner tab to keep the tarp from being blown away.

3 Peg out the tarp's back end (the corner with the window) facing into the wind.

Facing the back end into the wind presents the most stable and streamlined shape to the weather, and also positions the open end of the tarp where it is downwind and sheltered. One easy way to get the back end facing straight into the wind is to peg out the back corner, then pivot the tarp around behind the peg until the tarp is properly lined up downwind.

4 Insert the pole ends into the grommets on the corner tabs.

Do not peg out the pole corners yet; this allows you to adjust the height of the arch pole when you set up the height of the front corner.

5 Suspend the front (downwind) corner of the tarp at the desired height.

Most users prefer to save weight and cost by improvising a front pole out of dead wood, paddles, lines running to trees, etc. For this reason, the Mantis does not come with a front pole. For those who prefer maximum convenience (and don't mind a bit of extra weight), we offer the optional MEC Adjustable Tarp Pole 5000-947.

For maximum stability, peg out the two front pole guylines at about ninety degrees to each other, so that each guyline extends the line made by one of the front sides of the tarp.

6 Peg down the two side corners of the tarp (where the arch pole reaches the ground).

7 If conditions require it, rig guylines from the two triangular guyline tabs on the pole sleeves.

Angle these guylines so that the tabs are tight and flat along both outside edges. This ensures the guylines are pointed in the right directions for maximum wind stability.

8 Lay the skirting along the bottom edges towards the inside of the tarp.

Laying the skirting out flat and wide will block insects most effectively. The skirting can be anchored in place by rocks, stuffsacks, etc. It can also be pegged down if desired, using the peg loops provided.

9 If desired, prop the window flap open using the short single-piece pole and the grommets in the flap and tarp body.

To open and shut the window flap from inside the tarp, reach through the zipper on one side of the bug netting. To store the prop pole, run it through the webbing loop on the outside of the window netting and into the grommet on the tarp body. This keeps it handy for the next time you want to open the flap.

Rigging as an Extreme Weather Shelter

In severe winds, the Mantis can be configured like a small single-arch tent. To do this, remove the two pegs from the side corners so that the arch pole is free to spread out. Lower the front corner of the tarp to the ground and peg it there, leaving enough slack along one side for you to crawl inside. Re-peg the two pole corners.

Anchoring the Tarp

The pegs included with the tarp are suitable for general use on relatively soft ground. However, in very hard-packed ground you will need stronger (and heavier!) pegs or stakes that can withstand the force needed to drive them in. On snow, sand, or other loose-packed surfaces, wider T-Stakes or aluminum snow stakes will hold better. These can be buried horizontally for maximum stability. You can also improvise with other "stakes" (hiking staffs, ice axes, branches, rocks, trees), using the tarp's stake loops or cord as required.

When packing for your trip, consider the conditions you'll likely encounter and the type of anchors needed. You can often leave several of the supplied pegs at home and replace them with improvised anchors, to save weight and space in your pack or boat.

Packing the Tarp

If possible, fold and roll the tarp rather than stuffing it into its sack—rolling makes a smaller package, and causes fewer creases in the polyurethane coating. The tarp and poles may be carried separately for easier packing or load sharing. There are two drawcords on the tarp sack. Use the lower one when carrying the tarp separately from the poles; this makes a shorter package that fits sideways into a pack. If carrying the pole sack on the outside of a pack, securely attach the drawcord to the pack to avoid loss.

Protecting the Tarp

Ultraviolet damage is the single largest hazard your tarp faces in its lifetime. Fabrics should not be exposed to sunlight for extended periods of time; this will eventually result in colour fading and fabric failure. If extended exposure is unavoidable, cover the tarp with another tarp or a sheet of nylon.

Lighting the Tarp

Using a candle lantern in a tarp carries definite risks. Never leave a candle lantern burning unattended; always watch for fire hazard from overheating fabrics or spilling wax. Spilling wax can be dangerous, particularly to eyes and other sensitive areas. It is your responsibility to use candle lanterns wisely and with extreme caution: we do not endorse the use of any flame or heat source in a tarp. Unlike campfire smoke and other fumes, which cause you to gasp for air, **carbon monoxide can render you unconscious without any warning.**

Cleaning

Clean the tarp by hand while it is set up, using a sponge, a mild non-detergent soap, and warm water. Rinse thoroughly. Do not dry clean, machine wash, or machine dry. Stubborn stains like tar can be left in place and dusted with talcum powder to prevent transfer to other areas of the tarp in storage. After cleaning, a spray-on water repellent designed for synthetic fabrics may be applied to the flysheet if surface water repellency is weakening. (This is apparent when water droplets no longer bead up on the fabric.)

If the poles are exposed to salt or salt water, rinse them in fresh water and allow them to dry before storing. (While aluminum does not rust, it can become brittle through unseen corrosion over time.)

Lubricating the Pole

Occasionally apply a light coating of a silicone-based lubricant like 303™ protectant to the tarp pole connections. If the poles are used extensively in marine environments, treat them more frequently.

Storing the Tarp

Dry the tarp and poles completely before storage to avoid mildew or hidden pole corrosion. Store in a cool, dry place out of direct light.

Mildewed tarps can be cleaned as described above, but there is no way to remove the dark stains without damaging the fabric. Mildew will probably take some time to affect the waterproof coatings, so the tarp should still be usable.



REPAIR

Fabric Tears

Watertight repairs to rips can be made with seam sealant such as McNett Freesole™, Aquaseal™, or Seam Grip®. For tears shorter than about 1.5cm (1/2in.), apply duct tape to one side and sealant to the other. For longer tears, apply duct tape to one side of the tear and, on the other side, a patch of no-see-um netting that extends about 6-12mm (1/4-1/2in.) beyond each edge of the tear. Use oval or circular patches (rounded edges are less likely to peel away than sharp corners). Cover the patch thoroughly in sealant. Once the sealant is completely dry, the duct tape can be removed from small and large repairs alike.

For longer trips, we recommend taking an expedition sewing kit and extra nylon, webbing, a spare pole section, and narrow-diameter (2.5mm) tarp pole shockcord. Coghlan's Seam Saturant or the like will prevent wicking through a tarp fly via seams or webbing.

Replacing a Broken Pole Section

Carefully tug out the pole end tip nearest to the broken section. Being mindful of how to retie it later, untie the end tip. Slide pole sections off the cord until you reach the damaged section. Remove the broken piece, being careful not to damage the shockcord. Thread on a new section of appropriate length and diameter, followed by the other sections, then retie the end tip knot.

Zippers

A worn slider is the cause of most zipper problems. An occasional application of 303 Protectant or a silicone-based lubricant will help reduce wear. Grit accelerates slider wear. Keep zippers clean by rinsing them under water after use in windy/sandy environments. Sometimes, carefully squeezing the top ends of the slider with a pair of pliers will restore some life. If an inner door slider fails, run it as far as possible toward one end of the zipper, and use only the other slider for the duration of the trip. A sewing repair shop can replace inoperable sliders.