

# Voyageur's Guide

A 2009 Camp Birchwood for Boys Parent Handbook

## Important Camp Numbers

Camp Office (until 5/22/2009).....	800.451.5270
Camp Office (after 5/22/2009).....	218.388.4402
Camp Fax (until 5/22/2009).....	785.865.4313
Camp Fax (after 5/22/2009).....	218.388.0311
Dan's Cell-Phone(does not work at camp).....	954.649.6938
Melissa's Cell-Phone(does not work at camp).....	954.270.3179
Girls Camp Office.....	218.335.6706

## The Prep-List

- Read the Handbook
- Make travel arrangements
- Fill out and mail the following in enclosed env.:
  - Health History 1 & 2(yellow)
  - Data Info Sheet (Parchment tan)
  - Daily Med Sheet (green)
  - Travel Confirmation Sheet (orange)

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## BIRCHWOOD ON THE WEB

**Boys site: [www.birchwoodforboys.com](http://www.birchwoodforboys.com)**

See photos of camp events on a daily basis, email your camper, download the parent handbook and/or the packing list.

**Boys blog: <http://blog.birchwoodforboys.com>**

See frequent articles/posts about what is going on at camp. Includes pictures and an area to leave comments. Fun and interactive.

**Boys pics: <http://birchwoodboys/digitaleventsonline.com>**

**Camp Email:** [info@birchwoodforboys.com](mailto:info@birchwoodforboys.com)  
[dan@birchwoodforboys.com](mailto:dan@birchwoodforboys.com)  
[melissa@birchwoodforboys.com](mailto:melissa@birchwoodforboys.com)

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**\*\*MAKE SURE YOU SEND ALL PRE-CAMP PAPERWORK (12) TO CAMP PRIOR TO YOUR SON'S ARRIVAL. IF WE HAVE NOT RECEIVED YOUR PAPERWORK, YOUR SON WILL NOT BE ABLE TO PARTICIPATE IN CAMP ACTIVITIES UNTIL ALL FORMS HAVE BEEN RECEIVED.**

**THANK YOU**

### The Planning Phases

There is no denying that sending kids to camp is often harder for parents than it is for the kids. A great way to make yourself as comfortable as possible is to be fully prepared and know what to expect before the first day of camp. Reading and following the guidelines in this book will make the transition easier for you and your son.

With 50 years of successful camping at Birchwood, it is safe to say that we have tried many different guidelines, a number of different ways. What has stayed consistent though is the underlying goal for the happiest and healthiest community based on fairness and respect for others.

As parents you are our biggest ally in achieving this goal. Please help us in explaining to your son how important it is for us to have guidelines and how much fun camp will be if we ALL follow them.

I know questions will arise as you read this handbook. Take some notes on the pages and call or email me with your questions. Chances are you will not be the only one with the same question. Even if you don't have any questions and just want to call and talk about your son and camp, please do, its my favorite topic.

So, start your planning early. If you loose this book, you can always go download it at our website [www.birchwoodforboys.com](http://www.birchwoodforboys.com). I can't wait to see everyone at camp in '09, another one of our best summers ever.

*Danny Bredemus*

## The Basics of Camp Travel

Campers travel to camp on Mondays and return home on Sundays.

Parents make all travel arrangements to and from camp. **Our camp tuition does not include transportation costs (i.e. chaperone, bus and/or luggage fees).**

Coordinating travel is a big job. Make sure you confirm your travel plans with us well in advance to make the journey safe and comfortable for your son. The camp office gets extremely busy beginning in June so please have your Travel Plan Form sent/faxed/emailed to us between March and June.

### Each Camper is Designated as Air or Bus

**AIR:** The child is flying to/from the Minneapolis, MN airport to meet Dan and other camp representatives. When you are listed as AIR, we automatically assume you are taking the bus ride from the Minneapolis airport to camp. There is a \$70 round-trip fee to cover this travel cost. The charge will appear on your child's store account after camp as "Travel Expense." If you choose to fly your son to the Duluth Airport please see the *Alternative Travel Options* on PAGE 6.

**BUS:** For non-flying campers, we offer a charter bus or van transportation to and from camp via the Minneapolis/St.Paul Airport. Those who ride the bus/van are charged \$70 round-trip to cover the travel cost. This charge will appear on your child's store account after camp as "Travel Expense."

The bus TO CAMP will leave at 1pm sharp. Park in short term parking and follow signs to the Ground Transportation Level (level T). Take the hub tram to the charter bus location.

The bus FROM CAMP will arrive at the Minneapolis airport at the same location. Depending on traffic, the bus will arrive at the airport between 12:30 and 1:30. Please feel free to call the camp office on travel days for the status of the bus.

## Airline Reservations for your Camper

It is best that you book your reservations through our Minneapolis travel agency, Travel One. They will find you the best deals and make sure you don't miss the bus up to camp. For a reasonable fee, they will: find your flight, correspond the flight with our tight schedule in the airport, book kids from the same areas on the same flights and sit campers together on the plane when possible.

We use Northwest Airlines (NWA) for a couple of reasons: Minneapolis is a major NWA hub providing for cheaper flights in most cases, their schedules for morning flights have all campers at the airport before the bus leaves for camp, and once your son checks in at your home airport he never has to worry or handle his bags to and from camp, because NWA does that for us.

Most airlines now charge for each checked bag. You will pay the fee on the flight TO camp. The charges for the return flight will be reflected on your store account bill, sent after your session is over.

### Chaperoned Flights: Only on Northwest Airlines

This year we will chaperone specific flights that arrive and depart from St. Louis, Chicago O'Hare and Kansas City. IF you make your travel plans through our agency you will likely be on one of the specific flights. Instead of \$200 Unaccompanied Minor (UM) fee you would pay through the airlines on a non-chaperoned domestic flight, we charge \$30 each way. If you are on a chaperoned flight, DO NOT let the airlines charge you the UM Fee.

An identifiable Birchwood representative (boys or girls) will meet all parents near the NWA ticket counter two hours before the flight. The chaperone will lead all campers through security and make sure everybody is on the plane and comfortable. Upon arrival in Minneapolis the chaperone will take your son to meet the rest of the group. At this time your son will be able to grab lunch in the airport before meeting the camp bus for the ride up the trail.

### **Booking Your Own Airline Reservations**

If you decide to make reservations on your own, please try to book a Northwest Airlines flight. Campers who fly other airlines require very difficult pick-up and drop-off procedures.

To avoid any additional travel expenses, book your son's arrival and departure times according to the following:

**TO CAMP**- Arrive at the Minneapolis/St.Paul Airport: **9am - 11am**  
**FROM CAMP** - Depart the Minneapolis/St.Paul Airport = **2-4pm**

### **Flights NOT Chaperoned and Flights from all other Cities**

Airline carriers require passengers under age 14 to fly as an Unaccompanied minor (UM). When your son travels as a UM, the airline assumes strict custody of him until the proper adult meets the camper at the gate.

The UM addition to the ticket requires filling out and paying for the UM form. It is recommended that the form be filled out before you check in at the airport. The fee will be collected by the airline when you check in, and it changes from time to time, but is usually ranges form \$75 to \$100 each way.

You need to fill out **TWO** UM forms. One for the trip to camp and one for the trip home. These forms will ask for the name of the person who will meet your child at the gate. For the trip to camp, write "Dan Brede-mus or Camp Birchwood Representative." On the second form for the return home, fill in the name of the adult who will be picking up your son. We will collect the return UM form from your son upon his arrival to camp.

### **Arrival at the Minneapolis Airport**

Unaccompanied Minor campers will be met at the gate by a camp staff member wearing a camp shirt and carrying camp identification. In case of early arrivals, late arrivals or other hang-ups please make sure your son knows to **WAIT AT THE GATE** until a camp staff member arrives.

### **Alternative Travel Options**

Historically, the Duluth Airport is were we required campers to arrive. Because of the recent cost increases to arrive at this airport, we will now be meeting your son at the Minneapolis airport. If you prefer to make reservations into and out of the Duluth Airport the camp bus will make a brief stop to pick up your son. Please arrive and depart as indicated below to avoid added travel expense.

**To Camp** - Arrive at the Duluth Airport between 11am - 2:30pm  
**From Camp** - Depart the Duluth Airport between 12 - 3pm

If your son will arrive at the Duluth Airport he may be subject to the airline Unaccompanied Minor program and the accompanying charges from Minneapolis to Duluth, even if his flight was chaperoned to Minneapolis. Also, if your son is flying into Duluth, we automatically assume you are taking the bus ride from the Duluth airport to camp. There is a \$70 round-trip fee to cover this travel cost. The charge will appear on your child's store account after camp as "travel expense."

### **Picking Up Your Child from the Minneapolis Airport**

For those parents who choose to pick up their child from the Minneapolis airport, the camp bus arrives at the airport at or near 1:00pm. If your son's ride is going to be late, please contact the camp office and provide your circumstances.

In addition, if someone other than the camper's parent/guardian will be picking him up at the Minneapolis airport, please provide us with the name(s) of the individual(s) who will be picking him up to avoid any delay or confusion.

### **Airport Travel Money**

Birchwood campers will eat lunch or grab a snack in the airport both on the way to camp and on the way home. Please provide about \$25 for your son to purchase these two meals. Unused money will be collected and kept in a valuables envelope while your son is at camp. Valuables envelopes are returned on departure day.

### **Camp Communication with Parents**

Soon after campers arrive at camp, you will receive a letter of introduction from your son's cabin counselor. At least one time during your son's session(s), you will receive a personalized letter from letting you know how your son is doing.

### **Via Telephone**

Campers do not make or receive phone calls unless it is an emergency. This policy allows campers to make the healthy and necessary detachment from home while gaining a great deal of independence and self-sufficiency.

So that this policy isn't a surprise to your son upon arriving at camp, please explain the policy and have alternatives planned such as mail, and/or bunk notes.

### **Mail at Birchwood and Checking Up On Your Child**

Mail is a big deal at camp! Campers really treasure notes, cards and letters from family and friends. Campers who do not receive any mail often feel left out and sometimes homesick.

Our staff constantly encourage campers to write home, but it is not unusual for them to ditch writing a letter to run off and do something fun with their new friends. It is not an easy notion for a parent to live by, but rest assured that at camp "no news, is good news."

One way to better your odds of receiving letters from your son is to send a bundle of self-addressed stamped envelopes, paper and pens to write with.

### **Director's Tip:**

Many parents are alarmed to receive letters expressing strong feelings of discomfort and sickness. Professionals who consult with camps explain that many children use the act of writing home as an emotional outlet to shed stress and to connect with someone they love and trust. Once they vent, it allows them to move forward and enjoy camp. If you receive such a letter, don't panic, call the camp office and we will work together to make sure your son is comfortable and having fun.

### **Arriving at Camp**

Back to the "no news is good news" idea. Once the busses arrive at camp, we are in full swing. Rest assured that if you have not heard otherwise, travel was successful and your child has arrived safe and sound.

Phone calls are best made at the airport before boarding the busses. If you want to receive a phone call, instruct your child to let us know that they are to call home and we will make sure they have access to a phone.

### **Faxes to Camp**

(218) 388.0311

All campers may receive faxes, but return faxes are not permitted. All faxes received are printed and handed out with regular mail. If you desire a return response use our bunk note system.

### **Bunk Notes**

(e-mailing your child)

To email your son and receive handwritten replies, go to our website [www.birchwoodforboys.com](http://www.birchwoodforboys.com) and click on the link to the left of the screen that says "send email to your camper." If it is your first visit, you will need to register. Once you sign in you will be able to purchase a package allowing you to send bunk notes and replies.

### **On-Line Photos**

To view photos on-line for free, go to our website [www.birchwoodforboys.com](http://www.birchwoodforboys.com) and click on the link that says "View Photos." You will then have the option to select a category of photos. Once selected enter the password: bwb2009. To purchase any of the photos, follow the on-line directions.

### **Care Packages**

Sorry, but we do not allow campers to receive care packages. This policy has actually been more of a relief than a disappointment to parents, and it has cut down on so much clutter and trash throughout camp! A package is considered ANYTHING over \$.43 (or \$.58 for the square envelopes). Anything bigger will be returned to the sender, for a flat fee of \$10 charged to your son's store account. IF your son MUST be sent something **essential** in the mail, or if it is his birthday, label the package.

### **Cabin Assignments**

At Birchwood, campers live in a cabin according to age and grade completed. We try very hard to make sure campers in a cabin together are within one year in age and/or one school year of each other. For example, a cabin group consisting of boys completing 4th grade may have some boys completing 5th grade.

Assigning cabin groups is a complicated task. We try hard to honor cabin-mate requests. Campers greatly increase their chances of being with a friend if they both request each other. Also, we do our best to avoid placing large groups of friends together in the same cabin. This tends to deflate the camp experience and makes it difficult for new campers to make friends.

### **Outdoor Adventure Trips**

On the first full day your child is in camp, EVERYONE participates in Gunflint School. This day is spent teaching/refreshing wilderness skills. Our staff will teach/refresh campers as though everyone is new to the wilderness so that everyone is comfortable and ready for their first trip.

The first adventure trip your child will take is a cabin trip. Your child, his fellow cabin-mates, and their counselors will take a 2-3 night trip via canoe/kayak into the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW). This provides your son a great opportunity to make friends with others in his cabin. It also provides our counselors insight into your child's comfort level on the trail for subsequent trips.

After the cabin trip, campers will spend a few days in camp participating in our in-camp programming before heading out on another adventure. The second and subsequent trips are selected by your son based on age and experience.

### **In-Camp Activities: "Island Activities"**

Campers can choose to stay in-camp and participate in "Island Activities," or sign up for an out of camp adventure trip. The in-camp option includes instructional and group activities such as: riflery, archery, sailing, windsurfing, swimming, fishing, arts and crafts, knee-boarding, tubing, and day trip options like horseback riding, hiking, canoeing and fishing.

### **Birthdays**

At camp, birthdays are recognized with a fun song of celebration at meal time and A special birthday cake is provided. ALL staff help make your child's birthday fun and special. The only exception to the "No Package" policy is a Birthday Package. Please label the package as a "Birthday Package" and permit the shipping company to leave without signature.

### **The Camp Store**

The camp store, referred to as the "Gunflint Trading Post," has some outdoor equipment that can be purchased by your child. The trading post carries water bottles, flashlights, batteries, toothpaste, envelopes and other items your son may lose, break or forget at home. We also have novelty equipment like hats, sweatshirts, tee shirts and maps. Please discuss spending limits with your child. If you desire to limit the amount your child may spend at the trading post, please contact the camp office.

### **Camp Clothing and Equipment**

We do not allow campers to use their own technical equipment like climbing ropes, climbing harnesses, mountain bikes, carabineers, kayaks, etc. Campers may use their own personal equipment such as backpacks, head-lamps and fishing poles.

When shopping for camp clothing and equipment don't feel you have to go out and buy the best gear. There are a number of resources for reasonably priced camping gear.

### **Packing for Camp**

Our packing list (on the next page) offers a guideline for what to pack. Depending on your child a couple more of something and less of another is perfectly ok. Make sure all of your child's clothes and equipment fit into TWO bags. Soft, large duffle bags work best at the airport and at camp. Please do not use footlockers or trunks.

Campers have the opportunity to submit clothing that needs to be laundered after they return from each adventure trip. To help this process run smooth, please talk to your child about when something is ok to wear again or when it needs to be washed.

### The Packing List

(remember to pack items that can get dirty, ripped, soiled, torn...)

- |  |                                |
|--|--------------------------------|
| 1 warm jacket (fleece)                           | 1 camera                       |
| 1 hat with brim                                  | 1 fishing rod (optional)       |
| 3 pairs of shorts                                | 1 water bottle                 |
| 4 pairs of jeans/pants                           | 2 sweatshirts                  |
| 6 t-shirts (3 short sleeve and 3 long)           | 2 swimsuits                    |
| 1 day pack (small backpack)                      | 10+ pairs of socks             |
| 10+ sets of underwear                            | 1 set of pajamas               |
| 2 bandanas (optional)                            | 1 rain suit (jacket and pants) |
| 1 pair of tennis shoes                           | 1 pair of hiking boots         |
| 1 pair of water shoes (teva, keen, chaco...)     |                                |
| 1 sleeping bag & stuff sack (synthetic material) |                                |
| 1 sleeping pad (foam or thin-air)                | 1 blanket                      |
| 1 fitted sheet and one flat sheet                | 2 towels                       |
| 1 sleeping bag liner (optional)                  | 1 washcloth                    |
| 1 washcloth                                      | 1 pillow and case              |
| 1 laundry bag                                    | 1 bottle of insect repellent   |
| 1 bottle of sunscreen (SPF 15+)                  | 1 comb/brush                   |
| 1 bar of soap with container                     | 1 small bottle of shampoo      |
| 1 toothbrush and paste                           |                                |
| 1 flashlight or head-lamp with extra batteries   |                                |
| 1 set of stationery, pen, envelopes and stamps   |                                |

### Label Everything

Make sure all of your son's items are labeled (everything). If you don't, anything left behind is almost impossible to track down.

To make this process a little easier we have provided some information about Mabel's Labels in this packet on a separate sheet. Mabel offers an easy iron-on name tag making labeling quick and easy. There is also a link to Mabel's Labels on our website [www.birchwoodforboys.com](http://www.birchwoodforboys.com).

### The YELLOW Medical Form

Every camper is required to have a completed medical form on file with a signature date within six months. We have provided the American Camping Association's official medical form in your parent packet. Though this form **MUST** be filled out within six months of your child's attendance at camp, it can be based on a health examination that was conducted within 24 months.

If your son has not had a physical within 24 months, set up an appointment for a general physical as soon as possible. Have your physician record all immunizations, current conditions, and any other issues regarding your camper's health history. The information on this med form is used in an emergency, so please make sure complete insurance information is recorded, and that the medical form is filled out in its entirety.

**SEND IN YOUR PRE-CAMP  
PAPERWORK**

**ASAP**

**IN THE ENVELOPE PROVIDED**

### The GREEN Medication Sheet

If your son will take medication at camp, please fill out the GREEN medication sheet. This helps us to administer meds correctly. Meds sent to camp Must come in the original pharmacy containers and contain enough medication for the duration of camp. The majority of meds are given out right before mealtimes. If you have special directions for managing a health condition, please attach an additional note or provide directions on the reverse side of the GREEN medication sheet.

**LOSE YOUR FORMS?  
GO TO  
[WWW.BIRCHWOODFORBOYS.COM](http://WWW.BIRCHWOODFORBOYS.COM)**

**select the tab:  
CURRENT CAMPERS AND PARENTS**

**next, select the tab on the left side of the screen:  
DOWNLOAD CAMP FORMS**

### The Data Information Sheet

Our Data Information Sheet provides you an opportunity to communicate with counselors and directors about your son's strengths, likes, dislikes, tendencies, special needs and personality traits. These sheets are kept confidential amongst the staff ONLY.

Dan will look through these sheets with the staff before the campers arrive and will keep them throughout the summer in the camp office for staff to reference. The information you share on these sheets helps our staff acclimate your son to camp right from the beginning.

We work very hard training our staff to make every camper a valuable part of the group. Sharing your child's difficulties on this sheet WILL NOT create any type of pre-disposition towards your child. However, failure to share will make it difficult for our staff to do their job the best they can.

### Personal Health Awareness

For what may be the first time ever, your child will be responsible to take care of his daily health routines. Our staff are trained to keep a close eye on a camper's health habits and provide reminders or assistance when necessary, but your son will need to be ready to handle the following on their own: regular hand washing/disinfecting, showering, brushing teeth, keeping feet and shoes dry, drinking water, changing out of bathing suits after swimming, turning sleeping-bag liner and clothes into the wash, wearing clean underclothes, applying sun screen daily, wearing a hat for sun protection and applying bug spray.

To make your son's time at camp comfortable and to prevent illness, please speak with him about when and how to take care of his personal health.

We cannot begin to emphasize the importance of PREVENTION when it comes to sunburns. Because many of our activities are outside both in and on the water the risk of sunburn is great. We will always provide reminders to apply sunscreen, but it is important for parents to educate their child about when and how to apply sunscreen before coming to camp.

**Director's Tip:** The north woods of Minnesota is blessed with beautiful scenery, sparkling waters, great forests and of course bugs - lots of them. It seems as though bugs and camping have always gone together, but that doesn't mean we cannot take some steps to prevent bites and infection. The most effective insect repellent contains DEET. When purchasing a DEET repellent look for concentrations around 30% as anything higher is not significantly more effective, but is more expensive.

### Health Care at Camp

All of our staff have current Red-Cross certification in CPR and First Aid. In addition, all of our tripping counselors are certified lifeguards and have current certifications in Wilderness First Aid.

If a health concern arises while at camp our director will assess the situation and consult with those who have advanced medical training. If a condition requires the attention of a medical professional the camper will be taken to the Cook County Hospital in Grand Marais. You will be notified by Dan Bredemus if we take your child to the hospital. If any prescriptions are required as a result of an injury/illness at camp, we will bill the charges to your camper's store account, which is sent to you after the session is over.

If, while on a trip, a camper needs medical attention that is beyond the expertise and certification of our counselors, the group will contact a medical professional and the camp office. All trips are equipped with either a cell phone or a satellite phone depending on their route. Upon speaking with a medical professional and the camp office, a plan will be prepared to transport the camper to the nearest hospital and a camp director will meet the group at a designated location.

### Taking Prescriptions/Medications at Camp

Campers who have asthma are allowed to carry their personal inhalers with them at all times. Otherwise, all medications are locked up and dispensed by qualified staff. If your camper needs to take meds while at camp, please make sure to fill out and send in the GREEN medication sheet. Please note that summer camp is not the right time and place for a child to take a break from certain medications, such as Ritalin. We cannot stress how important it is to keep children on medications that provide emotional balance and stability to regulate their behavior, cope with stress and control sleeping patterns while at camp. TIP: Maintain the same dosages at camp that are prescribed for school.

Medications should be sent to camp with your camper in original containers. Each camper will meet with a director on the 1st night of camp to collect prescriptions and ask if there have been any recent health issues that have come up since the medical form was sent to camp.

### Inappropriate Behavior and Dismissal

At Birchwood, we intend to have an environment free from discrimination, void of violence, intimidation, and/or harassment based on race, creed, color, nationality, religious beliefs or disability. Language, attitudes and behaviors that intimidate, offend, threaten or debilitate campers or staff members are not tolerated. We encourage campers to discuss any issue with their counselors or camp director at any time if they have concerns regarding these issues.

We do not tolerate emotional or physical abuse or the threat of abuse on one person by another. Such behavior may be grounds dismissal. Emotional or psychological behavior which affects a child's ability to participate in the camp program, or that significantly disrupts the program for other children, may require dismissal.

Camp policy prohibits the possession of any of the following substances while under the supervision of Camp Birchwood: alcohol, tobacco and/or illegal drugs. If a camper is suspected of possessing said substances the camp director will be informed and a search of the campers belongings will be conducted. If said materials are seized from a camper, he may be dismissed at the discretion of the camp director.

**For the protection of your child's interest, we reserve the right to dismiss, without refund of tuition, any camper whose influence or behavior is, at our judgment, inappropriate. This include but is not limited to: respect for the camp and its property, respect for other program participants and their property, possession and/or use of tobacco, alcohol, illegal drugs and weapons.**

**In all cases, parents will be notified of our decision and will be responsible for all travel expenses upon dismissal.**

### After Camp Contact with Birchwood Staff

In general we discourage our staff from having contact with your children after camp since we cannot supervise it. We hire our staff for the camp season. We do not take responsibility for their behavior off-season. As a parent you are, of course, free to make your own choice in this matter. While we cannot keep you from allowing your child to visit with one of our staff members, in so doing you take full responsibility.

We also know that many children exchange contact information (e.g., e-mail address, profile names, cell phone numbers) with counselors without ours or your specific awareness or permission. We recommend that you as the parent supervise your child's online activities just as you do other aspects of their life in your home, and oversee any off-season contact between our staff members and your child. You take full responsibility to oversee any contact that results.

This year we are happy to offer a new and exciting free way for all Birchwood campers, counselors, alumni and parents to stay connected in a supervised environment.

SmoreCamp.com was developed by a camp director to permit camp families and friends to create a profile and stay in contact similar to Facebook and MySpace. The important difference is that each profile belongs to a camp group and that group is supervised by the camp directors. Should unsafe or inappropriate photos or conversations find their way onto this site, they can easily be removed by the camp directors, unlike Facebook and MySpace.

Check it out if you are interested at [www.smorecamp.com](http://www.smorecamp.com) and join the Camp Birchwood for Boys group to begin.

**WAIT!!!**

**Don't forget to attach  
the orange baggage tags  
to EACH BAG**

**Northwest Airlines handlers look for  
our tags specifically to route the bags**

**Your bag may be lost in the shuffle  
if it does not have the ORANGE TAG**