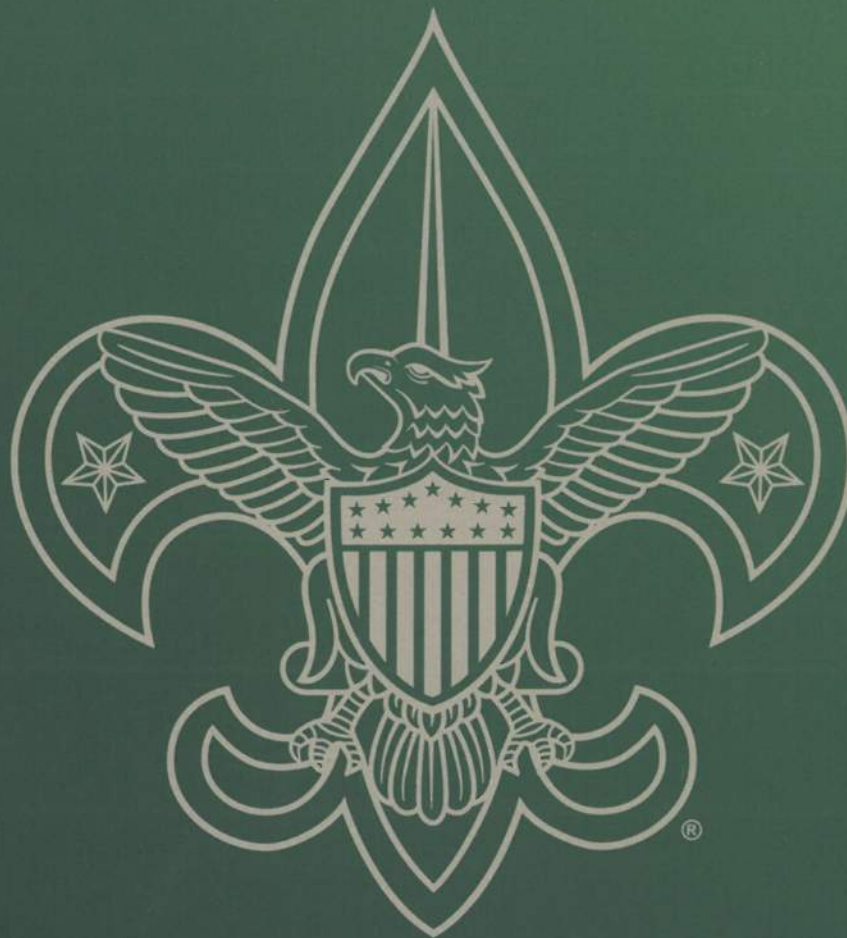


SCOUTS BSA

TROOP LEADER GUIDEBOOK

VOLUME 1



BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA®

The BSA's Commitment to Safety

In Scouting, we will not compromise the safety of our youth, volunteers, and employees. Safety is a *value* that must be taught and reinforced at every opportunity. We are all responsible and must hold each other accountable to provide a safe environment for all participants.

We are committed to abuse prevention by utilizing:

- Mandatory youth protection training.
- Criminal background checks.
- Banning one-on-one adult and youth interactions.
- Mandatory reporting of suspected abuse to law enforcement.
- A volunteer screening database.

We are committed to injury and illness prevention by integrating safety measures in our handbooks, literature, and training materials including the [Guide to Safe Scouting](#). We expect leaders to use the four points of **SAFE** when delivering the program. **SAFE** Scouting measures include:

- Youth are **Supervised** by qualified and trustworthy adults who set the example for safety.
- Activities are **Assessed** for risks.
- Pre-requisite **Fitness** and **skill** levels are confirmed before participation.
- Appropriate **Equipment** is utilized and **Environmental** conditions are monitored.

When incidents do occur, we expect a timely, clear, and complete incident report. We are committed to learning from the data and modifying program guidance for the prevention of future occurrence.



Prepared. For Life.®

www.scouting.org/health-and-safety



Scouts and their parents expect all Boy Scouts of America activities to be conducted safely. To ensure the safety of participants, the Boy Scouts of America expects leaders to use the four points of **SAFE** when delivering the Scouting program.

SUPERVISION

Youth are supervised by qualified and trustworthy adults who set the example for safety.

- Accepting responsibility for the well-being and safety of youth under their care.
- Ensuring that adults are adequately trained, experienced, and skilled to lead the activity, including the ability to prevent and respond to likely problems and potential emergencies.
- Knowing and delivering the program of the Boy Scouts of America with integrity.
- Using qualified instructors, guides, or safety personnel as needed to provide additional guidance.
- Maintaining engagement with participants during activities to ensure compliance with established rules and procedures.

ASSESSMENT

Activities are assessed for risks during planning. Leaders have reviewed applicable program guidance or standards and have verified the activity is not prohibited. Risk avoidance or mitigation is incorporated into the activity.

- Predetermining what guidance and standards are typically applied to the activity, including those specific to the Boy Scouts of America program.
- Planning for safe travel to and from the activity site.
- Validating the activity is age-appropriate for the Boy Scouts of America program level.
- Determining whether the unit has sufficient training, resources, and experience to meet the identified standards and, if not, modifying the activity accordingly.
- Developing contingency plans for changes in weather and environment and arranging for communication with participants, parents, and emergency services.

FITNESS AND SKILL

Participants' Annual Health and Medical Records are reviewed, and leaders have confirmed that prerequisite fitness and skill levels exist for participants to take part safely.

- Confirming the activity is right for the age, maturity, and physical abilities of participants.
- Considering as risk factors temporary or chronic health conditions of participants.
- Validating minimum skill requirements identified during planning and ensuring participants stay within the limits of their abilities.
- Providing training to participants with limited skills and assessing their skills before they attempt more advanced skills.

EQUIPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT

Safe and appropriately sized equipment, courses, camps, campsites, trails, or playing fields are used properly. Leaders periodically check gear use and the environment for changing conditions that could affect safety.

- Confirming participants' clothing is appropriate for expected temperatures, sun exposure, weather events, and terrain.
- Providing equipment that is appropriately sized for participants, is in good repair, and is used properly.
- Ensuring personal and group safety equipment is available, properly fitted, and used consistently and in accordance with training.
- Reviewing the activity area for suitability during planning and immediately before use, and monitoring the area during the activity through supervision.
- Adjusting the activity for changing conditions or ending it if safety cannot be maintained.

SCOUTS BSA

TROOP LEADER GUIDEBOOK

VOLUME 1



BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA®

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INTRODUCTION: WELCOME TO SCOUTS BSA



Whether you are a Scoutmaster,
an assistant Scoutmaster,
or a parent volunteer, you play a
key role in delivering this program
to the youth of your community.

Scouts BSA: A Program As Strong As Its Leaders

Somewhere this evening, a Scoutmaster will watch proudly as a parent or guardian pins an Eagle Scout badge on their Scout's uniform. Somewhere this weekend, an assistant Scoutmaster will feel her heart soar as the most tender of Tenderfoot Scouts make it through a campout without losing a compass—or their composure. Somewhere tomorrow, a parent or guardian will smile while teaching a young daughter with words once heard from a Scoutmaster. Somewhere next week, a business analyst facing an ethical challenge will hear the words echo internally, "A Scout is trustworthy."

And somewhere years from now, you will look back in awe at the lives you have touched, at the adults your youth have become.

For more than a century, Scouting has been America's preeminent program for developing leaders of character. Its alumni include some of the most prominent figures on the national stage, along with key leaders in communities across the country and around the globe. In fact, however, the program is only as strong as *you* are. That is why the Boy Scouts of America is committed to giving you all the support you need so you can give your Scouts all the opportunities they deserve.

Support Resources

Our support for you starts with this two-volume *Troop Leader Guidebook*. Volume 1 offers an introduction to the Scouts BSA program and addresses new or relatively inexperienced leaders, although we trust that leaders of all experience levels find it useful. Volume 2 goes into more advanced topics, everything from visioning and high-adventure planning to conflict resolution and reaching underserved populations.

See the appendix for an extensive list of resources, including catalog numbers and internet references.

But troop leader support only begins with paper and ink. The BSA website, www.scouting.org, offers extensive resources that complement the *Troop Leader Guidebook*, many of which we will highlight in these pages.

Another key support resource is training, which is available online and in person. Chapter 18 covers adult leader training in detail. Training is critically important to your success—and satisfaction—as a leader.

Finally, you can count on support from other Scouting volunteers, including a couple of key people in your district (the BSA's geographic area around your troop). One is your unit commissioner, an experienced volunteer whose sole responsibility is to support your unit. The other is your district executive, a Scouting professional who oversees the whole Scouting program in your area.

We offer these resources because we want you to be successful. We know that you are uniquely positioned to make a difference in the lives of the youth in your community, youth who will one day make a difference in their communities, our nation, and the world.

Thank you, and welcome to Scouts BSA!

Troop Leader Essentials

These BSA publications are troop leader essentials that provide valuable information and insight:

- **Scouts BSA Handbook for Boys and Scouts BSA Handbook for Girls**—The primary resource for Scouts (and for Scout leaders who need to learn basic Scouting skills)
- **Fieldbook**—A companion volume to the Scouts BSA handbooks that covers advanced outdoor skills
- **Troop Leader Guidebook (Volumes 1 and 2)**—The primary resource for Scoutmasters and assistant Scoutmasters
- **Troop Committee Guidebook**—The primary resource for troop committee members
- **Program Features for Troops and Crews (volumes 1, 2, and 3)**—Complete monthly program features, 16 per volume, that include meeting plans, outing ideas, and resources
- **Scouts BSA Requirements**—Requirements for ranks, merit badges, and special awards
- **Guide to Awards and Insignia**—A comprehensive guide to wearing uniforms and badges correctly
- **Guide to Advancement**—The official source for administering advancement in all Boy Scouts of America program phases
- **Guide to Safe Scouting**—The primary source for information on conducting Scouting activities in a safe and prudent manner
- **Patrol Leader Handbook**—The official guide for patrol leaders
- **Senior Patrol Leader Handbook**—The official guide for senior patrol leaders and other troop-level youth leaders
- **Scouting magazine**—The official online magazine for Scout leaders and parents; scoutingmagazine.org
- **Scout Life magazine**—The BSA's official youth magazine; published 10 times a year; scoutlife.org
- **Online resources**—www.troopleader.org; www.programresources.org



Overview of the *Troop Leader Guidebook*

Volume 1

Section 1: Scout Basics. An introduction to Scouts BSA, including mission, aims, methods, ideals, troop structure, and membership and leadership requirements.

Section 2: The Scouts BSA Program. An introduction to the elements of the troop program and program planning, including camping and other outings.

Section 3: All About Youth. Working with every Scout from the new recruit to the senior patrol leader.

Section 4: All About Adults. Working with every adult from the new parent to the troop committee chairperson.

Section 5: Advancement and Awards. An introduction to the youth advancement program and the array of awards Scouts, adults, and units can earn.

Section 6: Troop Administration. An introduction to troop administration from a Scoutmaster corps perspective, including financing the troop, chartered organization relationships, and communications.

Appendix: Resources, Scouting websites, and glossary.

Volume 2

Section 1: Assessing Where You Are. Developing a vision of success, setting goals to realize that vision, and laying out the steps to reach each goal.

Section 2: Effective Leadership Today. Exploring Scouting's toolbox of leadership techniques and how they can help you make your troop better.

Section 3: The Power of Program and High Adventure. Adding excitement to every activity and making high adventure an integral part of your troop program.

Section 4: The Value of Service and Stewardship. Powerful tools for infusing direction, excitement, responsibility, and achievement into your troop's program.

Section 5: Keeping Scouts Involved and Interested. Ways to keep Scouts of all ages engaged in Scouting.

Section 6: Dealing With Special Challenges. Tried-and-true approaches to understanding pressures your Scouts may be experiencing and what to do about them.

Appendix: Resources, Scouting websites, and glossary.





SCOUT BASICS



Knowing the basics of Scouts BSA helps keep
troop leaders focused on how to apply those
basics and how the program works.

CHAPTER 1

Mission, Aims, Methods, Ideals

You have probably heard the old Indian parable about six blind men examining an elephant. In the story, the man who touches the elephant's tail thinks it is like a rope, the man who touches its side thinks it is like a wall, the man who touches its ear thinks it is like a hand fan (and a very large one at that!), etc., etc.

Scouts BSA can seem a lot like that elephant:

- Scouts are the biggest users of America's public lands, so it must be a camping society.
- Scouts spend tens of millions of hours in community service every year, so it must be a service club.
- Scouts earn badges in subjects like art and architecture, archery and archaeology, so it must be an educational institution.
- Scouting alumni are disproportionately represented at the country's service academies and in all manner of public and private leadership positions, so it must be a school of leadership.
- Most Scout troops are chartered to religious institutions, so it must be a character factory or an extension of the place of worship.

So what is Scouts BSA? It is all of those things and more, as we will discuss in this chapter.

Scouts BSA Defined

Scouts BSA serves youth aged 10 or 11 through 18. Its mission is the same as the larger organization: to prepare young people to make ethical and moral choices over their lifetimes by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Scout Law. Scouts BSA seeks to achieve three specific aims by using eight interdependent methods.

The Aims of Scouts BSA

The aims are character development; citizenship training; leadership; and mental and physical fitness.

Character Development. Character has been defined as what someone does when no one is looking. It is the set of ethical and moral principles that guide a person's every decision—whether to study for the test or cheat off a friend, whether to surf the web for baseball scores or for pornography, whether to step forward or backward in a time of crisis.

Youth don't inherit character as they inherit height or hair color. Nor can they learn character in a classroom as they might learn algebra or grammar. Instead, they develop character in the crucible of experience. As author Helen Keller wrote: "Character cannot be developed in ease and quiet. Only through experience of trial and suffering can the soul be strengthened, ambition inspired, and success achieved."

"Knowledge without character is mere pie-crust."

—Scouting founder Robert Baden-Powell

Citizenship Training. Citizenship is more than residency. True citizens accept the responsibilities of citizenship as quickly as they claim the rights that citizenship confers. They agree with President Theodore Roosevelt's assertion that "this country will not be a good place for any of us to live in unless we make it a good place for all of us to live in." Scouts may be too young to vote, serve on juries, or join the military, but they make America a better place to live through service projects and environmental stewardship.

What is more, a Scout troop is a laboratory of democracy. By learning to lead and follow in Scouting, youth prepare themselves to be active citizens and members of community organizations, religious institutions, and families.

"Passive citizenship is not enough to uphold in the world the virtues of freedom, justice, and honor. Only active citizenship will do."

—Robert Baden-Powell

Leadership. A leader steps up in times of crisis and is able to think and act creatively in difficult situations. A leader establishes a clear vision, then shares that vision with others so that they can willingly follow. Scouting encourages youth to learn and practice leadership skills. Every Scout has the opportunity to participate in both shared and total leadership situations. Understanding the concepts of leadership helps each Scout accept the leadership roles of others and guides them toward better citizenship.

Mental and Physical. Childhood obesity has tripled since the 1960s, and doctors are treating younger and younger patients for conditions like diabetes. Binge drinking has become rampant in college, and younger kids are finding newer and more dangerous ways to get high. Schools are dropping art classes and recess for academics, yet young people in America are falling behind their international peers in math and science achievement.

Against that backdrop of bad news, Scouting promotes mental and physical fitness through a rigorous program of outdoor activities and a varied array of merit badges and other awards that encourage youth to stretch both their muscles and their minds. As philosopher John Locke wrote, "A sound mind in a sound body is a short but full description of a happy state in this world."

"Our object should be to make the individual boy understand personal self-care and his responsibility for his own health and strength. It is a duty to himself, to the nation, and to his Maker."

—Robert Baden-Powell

The Methods of Scouts BSA

If the four aims are our destination, the eight methods are our mode of transportation. In fact, you can think of the methods as an eight-cylinder engine powering a car. When all eight pistons are firing, the car moves powerfully yet smoothly toward its destination. When a few pistons get fouled, the car lurches haltingly along. When only one or two pistons are firing, you might as well get out and walk.

Here is a quick introduction to the methods and what they mean. They are presented here in alphabetical order, but they could be listed in any order because they are all equally important. None of them, however, is more important than the aims of Scouting.

Most of the methods will be covered in detail later in this book.

Adult Association. During adolescence, youth begin looking for guidance from adults other than their own parents (who often seem in their eyes to grow less intelligent by the second). Scouts BSA offers Scouts positive role models in the form of Scoutmasters and assistant Scoutmasters, merit badge counselors, camp staff members, and other caring adults who are willing to listen, encourage, challenge, and guide. As youth move into leadership positions in the troop, adults become their colleagues, assisting them in running the program.

Advancement. Scouts BSA's ranks, merit badges, and special awards recognize Scouts for learning skills and taking on responsibilities, and that recognition encourages them to learn more skills and take on greater responsibilities. Some Scouts reach the highest rank, Eagle Scout, demonstrating their leadership abilities and service commitment while earning merit badges in a broad array of subjects. Others stop short of Eagle Scout rank but still learn valuable skills such as first aid and money management and gain exposure to careers or hobbies they may pursue for a lifetime.

Ideals. The ideals of Scouts BSA are spelled out in the Scout Oath, the Scout Law, the Scout motto, and the Scout slogan (see box). The Scout reflects on personal performance in relation to these ideals and continually tries to improve—and so does the Scout leader. Scouts and Scouters (adult Scout leaders) who incorporate the ideals into their daily lives are said to have Scout spirit.

Leadership Development. The ideal troop is led by Scouts who are guided by adults. Through formal training, informal coaching, and on-the-job experience, Scouts learn and practice how to lead others and manage projects. Every Scout has the opportunity to lead in some way, whether as part of a team, as a leader of a patrol, or as a troop leader such as the senior patrol leader (the top youth leader in the troop) or quartermaster (the youth leader in charge of equipment). A number of approved positions of rank outlined in the *Senior Patrol Leader Handbook* can satisfy rank advancement requirements. Adults understand that their role is to create a safe place where Scouts can take on responsibilities, learn from their failures, and achieve success.

Outdoors. Youth don't join Scouting to have their character developed. They join Scouting to camp, to hike, to get dirty, and to have fun. The program is built around outdoor activities; to a large extent, troop meetings should be devoted to learning outdoor skills and getting ready for the next outing (and occasionally washing dirty dishes from the last outing).



The Ideals of Scouting

Scout Oath

On my honor I will do my best
To do my duty
to God and my country
and to obey the Scout Law;
To help other people
at all times;
To keep myself
physically strong,
mentally awake,
and morally straight.

Scout Law

A Scout is trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean, and reverent.

Scout Motto

Be Prepared.

Scout Slogan

Do a Good Turn Daily.

Patrol Method. Each troop is made up of one or more patrols: groups of about eight Scouts who camp, cook, play, and learn together. In patrols, Scouts learn citizenship and practice leadership at the most basic level, and strong patrols are essential building blocks of strong troops.

Personal Growth. While personal growth sounds like an aim of Scouts BSA, it is actually a method—assuming that the troop's leaders ensure opportunities for growth. Those opportunities include individual Good Turns and patrol and troop service projects, as well as the Scoutmaster conferences that are held before boards of review and at other times. Troop leaders constantly look for ways to encourage each Scout to grow and stretch. Another aspect of personal growth is the religious emblems program, in which Scouts can receive recognition for growing in their faith.

Uniform. The Scout uniform does several things: It demonstrates unity within the troop and the larger Scouting movement. It minimizes the racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic differences between Scouts. It gives a reminder that the wearer is a Scout and is expected to act like one. And it serves as a sort of wearable trophy case where individual Scouts can display the badges that symbolize what they have achieved in Scouting.

The Scouts BSA Methods and Cub Scouting

If you are a former Cub Scout leader, you may look at the Scouts BSA methods and think they are a lot like the methods you used in Cub Scouting. While there are plenty of similarities, there are some important differences, too. Here is a quick overview.

Adult Association. In Cub Scouting, adults serve as out-front leaders. In Scouts BSA, adults are more likely to watch from the sidelines, quietly coaching during Scoutmaster conferences, patrol leaders' council meetings, and casual conversations along the trail.

Advancement. Unlike Cub Scouts, youth in Scouts BSA work on advancement at their own pace, especially after they leave the new-Scout patrol, where they typically spend their first year in the troop. How fast (or even whether) Scouts advance is up to them.

Ideals. Especially as they enter their teens, youth in Scouts BSA live in a world that is far less clear-cut than Cub Scouting. Through Scoutmaster conferences and boards of review, you can help your Scouts learn to apply clear moral principles in situations that can seem ambiguous and difficult to navigate alone.

Leadership Development. In Cub Scouting, denners and den chiefs are like extensions of the den leader, carrying out the

den leader's plans. In Scouts BSA, youth leaders make and carry out their own plans as they lead the patrol and troop.

Outdoors. Youth in Scouts BSA camp and hike much more often than Cub Scouts—at least one weekend a month plus a week in the summer. Pack-style family campouts are rare, however, and parents who do attend troop and patrol outings should refrain from “smothering” their Scouts (a behavior seen in both moms and dads).

Patrol Method. Unlike Cub Scout dens, patrols elect their own leaders, and those leaders (along with troop-level leaders like the senior patrol leader) run the troop. Patrols are less likely than dens to hold separate meetings and outings, although they are encouraged to do so.

Personal Growth. As with advancement, personal growth happens more on an individual basis in Scouts BSA than in Cub Scouting. At one extreme are new Scouts struggling to master the daily Good Turn; at the other end of the spectrum are Eagle Scout candidates who run service projects that galvanize their abilities to plan, organize, and lead others.

Uniforming. Unlike most Cub Scouts, some Scouts BSA youth are, sad to say, embarrassed to wear the uniform in public. The savviest leaders promote uniforming by example and encouragement, not by edict.

Maintaining Your Balance

In terms of the aims and methods, Scouters tend to make a couple of mistakes. The first mistake is forgetting that the methods are simply a means to an end. It is great if your Scouts become Eagle Scouts or lifelong campers, but it is much more important that they become honorable adults.

The second mistake is focusing on some of the methods to the exclusion of the others. Yes, patrol meetings might be more effective with adults running them, but that negates the patrol method. Yes, your outdoor program might be stronger if you spent less time on service projects and merit badges, but that eliminates personal growth and advancement.

To gauge how your troop is using the methods to reach the aims, think about your last meeting or outing. List the specific ways each method was used. How did the meeting or outing help you achieve the aims of Scouting?

Balancing the Methods: A Parable

Troop X is a typical troop. Scoutmaster Smith, a retired Marine, is a strong leader and sets a great example for the youth. That is good—**adult association** is one of the eight methods—but that is also not so good.

As a strong leader, Scoutmaster Smith has a hard time stepping back and letting the youth leaders do their jobs. They don't develop the skills **leadership development** would have fostered, and so the patrol leaders' council drops the ball on organizing an upcoming trip. That is not so good—**outdoors** is one of the eight methods—but it is also good, because it gives Assistant Scoutmaster Jones a chance to demonstrate leadership.

You see, the assistant Scoutmaster is a great planner as well as a gourmet chef, and creates a good experience by throwing together a quick trip at the last minute and even offers to cook for the weekend.

That is good—the Scouts get to camp and eat great food—but it is also not so good because the Scouts do not get to function in patrols, and the **patrol method** is one of the eight methods.

Fortunately, the Scouts learn from the assistant Scoutmaster's example. They plan a series of outings that all revolve around cooking and eating. The highlight of every outing is a cook-off between the patrols, with the assistant Scoutmaster as judge. That is good—the troop is camping, the patrols are functioning, and they have the adult-association thing going—but it is also not so good. You see, the program is so skewed toward one type of activity that Scouts are having a hard time with **advancement**—one of the eight methods—and are not doing any service projects—which relates to the **ideals** and **personal growth** methods.

In fact, the only personal growth they are doing stems from all that eating: Their uniforms no longer fit!

That is not so good, of course, because **uniforming** is one of the eight methods.

Scouting As a Safe Place

Throughout this guidebook, we talk about the policies and guidelines designed to keep our Scouts physically safe. But Scouting is safe in other ways. It is a secure environment where:

- Scouts are free from hazing, name-calling, corporal punishment, and physical aggression.
- Scouts are free to express their thoughts and feelings without fear of ridicule.
- Scouts are encouraged to do their best, test their limits, move beyond their comfort zones, learn from their mistakes, and triumph over adversity.
- Scouters spend more time praising and less time criticizing.

CHAPTER 2

Troop Structure

Scouts BSA happens in the context of a troop (with the rare exception of the Lone Scout arrangement). Today, some 33,000 troops serve more than 753,000 youth throughout the Boy Scouts of America. Whether large or small, urban or rural, brand spanking new or a hundred years old, each of those troops share some familiar characteristics. But each also has its own distinct personality.

In this chapter, we will look at the typical troop structures and discuss membership requirements for youth and adults. First, however, we will briefly consider the impact your troop's structure has on its ability to deliver the Scouting program.

Form and Function

As anyone who has lived in a studio apartment can attest, you do not need much space to have a home. A bedroom, a bathroom, a kitchenette, and a sitting area will suffice. Move to a three-bedroom house, however, and you have room for more people and more functions. Move to too big a house, and you may find yourself with more house than you can afford or maintain.

People often say that form follows function, that the way something is going to be used should determine its design. But the opposite also can be true. Form can define function, preventing you from doing the things you want to do.

Architect Frank Lloyd Wright argued that "form and function should be one, joined in a spiritual union." As you think about the structure of your troop, it is important to think about how that structure supports or restricts its function and whether some remodeling makes sense.

Troop Basics

Every troop has four basic elements: the chartered organization (and its representative), the troop committee, the Scoutmaster corps (the Scoutmaster and assistant Scoutmasters), and the Scouts. Here is an introduction.

The Chartered Organization

As odd as it might sound, the Boy Scouts of America does not operate Scout troops. Instead, it grants annual charters—franchises, if you will—to local religious institutions, schools, civic organizations, and similar groups, allowing them to use the Scouting program to serve youth in their communities. Some chartered organizations use Scouting as their official youth program. Others use Scouting as an adjunct to their youth program. Still others use Scouting as an outreach tool or as a way to fulfill their commitment to serve young people and families.

Each chartered organization agrees to:

- Conduct the Scouting program according to its own policies and guidelines as well as those of the BSA.
- Include Scouting as part of its overall program for youth and families.
- Appoint a chartered organization representative—a member of the organization who coordinates the organization's Scouting units, represents the organization to the Scouting district, and serves as a voting member of the BSA local council. (We will talk about districts and councils in chapter 4.)
- Select a troop committee of parents and members of the chartered organization who will screen and propose troop leaders who meet the organization's standards as well as the leadership standards of the BSA. The committee includes a chairperson and at least two members.
- Provide adequate facilities for the troop to meet on a regular schedule with time and place reserved.
- Encourage the troop to participate in outdoor experiences.

Note that financial support is not required. That said, many chartered organizations help cover expenses like equipment and leader training, and chartered organization members are usually happy to support troop money-earning projects.

The Chartered Organization Representative. The chartered organization representative heads the organization's Scouting department and serves as a liaison between the organization and its Scouting units. The chartered organization representative is a member of the organization and should have at least a working knowledge of the Scouting program. A good chartered organization representative will represent the interests of both the troop and the chartered organization.

Scouting unit is an umbrella term that refers to Cub Scout packs, Scouts BSA troops, Venturing crews, and Sea Scout ships.

The chartered organization representative may serve as a member of the troop committee. At a minimum, the chartered organization representative should always be invited to troop committee meetings, receive written minutes of the meetings, and be aware of what is going on in the troop. The chartered organization representative is also a voting member of both the district committee and the local council in their annual business meetings.

The Troop Committee

The troop committee is a cross between a board of directors and a parent support group. It sets troop policies and handles administrative functions, allowing the Scoutmaster and assistant Scoutmasters to focus on working directly with the Scouts.

The troop committee can be as large as needed, but at a minimum it consists of one chairperson and two committee members. The members can be parents or other relatives, former Scoutmasters or assistant Scoutmasters, or members of the chartered organization who are interested in serving young people. The committee can be a good place for people to serve whose schedules don't allow them to participate in weekly troop meetings and monthly outings (or who simply need a break from the week-to-week responsibility of being a Scoutmaster or assistant Scoutmaster).

Some committee members do not have assigned functions, but most take on specific roles. A typical committee may include but is not limited to these positions:

Chairperson—organizes and leads the committee

Advancement coordinator—oversees advancement records and boards of review

Chaplain—provides spiritual support to Scouts and leaders

Chartered organization representative—acts as a liaison between the troop and the chartered organization

Equipment coordinator—manages the troop's camping equipment

Membership coordinator—coordinates recruiting and retention efforts

Outdoor/activities coordinator—supports and promotes the outdoor program

Secretary—handles communication with troop families

Training coordinator—promotes leader training

Treasurer—handles troop funds and financial records

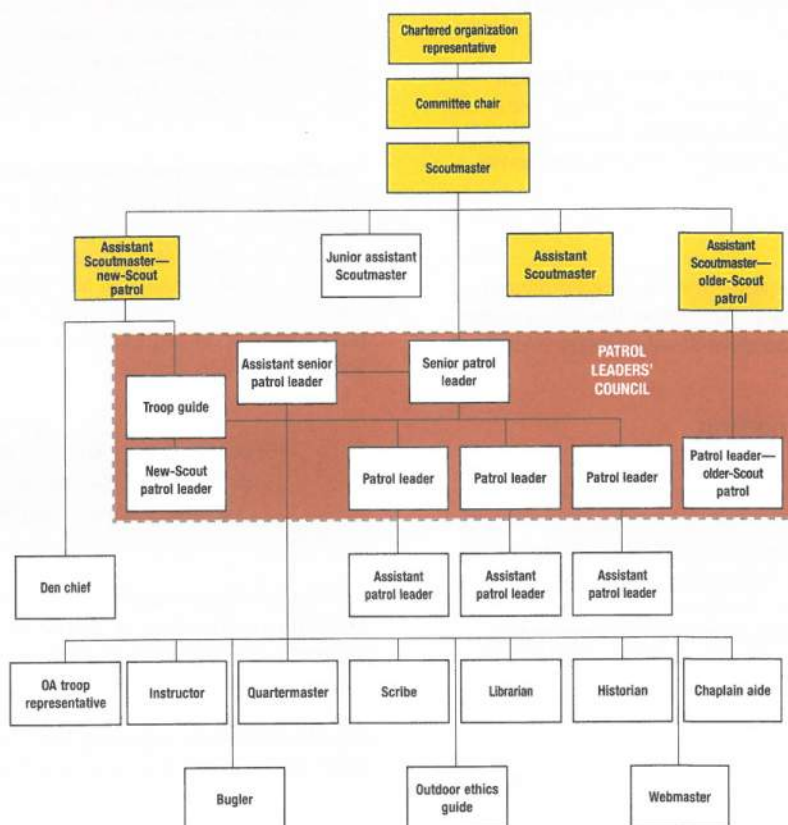
Parent coordinator—welcomes all new Scout parents and provides them with information about the troop

Unit religious emblems coordinator—encourages Scouts to work toward the religious emblems offered by their religious institutions

Other positions will depend on the troop's needs. If your troop has a strong high-adventure program, you might have both an outdoor/activities coordinator and a high-adventure specialist. If your troop is responsible for maintaining its meeting place, you might have a Scout house superintendent.

Sample Youth Leader Organizational Chart for a Large Troop

In this sample, there are enough members to fill all of the patrols and positions of responsibility.



Some committee members have counterparts on the patrol leaders' council. For example, the chaplain works with the chaplain aide, and the equipment coordinator works with the quartermaster. In these cases, the committee member should ensure that the work is getting done—and that as much of it as possible is being done by the Scout.

Here are some of the things the committee does:

- Propose quality leaders for the troop (its most important function).
- Approve the troop's annual budget and calendar.
- Develop service projects to benefit the community and/or the chartered organization.
- Arrange transportation and permits for outings.
- Plan and assist in fundraising.
- Coordinate recruiting efforts, including the Webelos-to-Scout transition process.
- Serve on advancement boards of review.
- Maintain records of troop finances and advancement.
- Assist in the annual charter renewal process.
- Help with the annual Friends of Scouting campaign.

The Scoutmaster and assistant Scoutmasters are typically not voting members of the troop committee, though they do provide

valuable feedback to the committee. However, holding frequent formal votes is less desirable than engendering a spirit among committee members that leads to a consensus of opinion.

While the committee and the Scoutmaster corps have different responsibilities, they have the same goal: to provide a quality Scouting program. An atmosphere of collegiality is essential. The Scoutmaster should always be able to turn to the committee for assistance, support, and encouragement. The relationship between the Scoutmaster and the committee chair should be one of friendship and trust.

For more information, see the *Troop Committee Guidebook*, No. 34505.

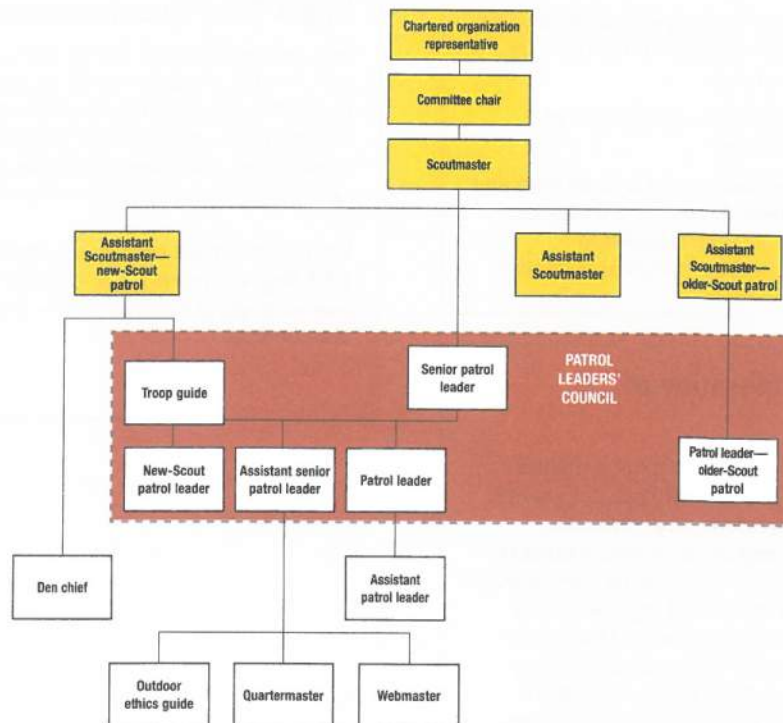
Having in-depth, one-on-one discussions at troop or troop committee meetings can be difficult. If you are the Scoutmaster, you might consider meeting your committee chairperson for coffee or lunch every couple of weeks to touch base.

The Scoutmaster Corps

The Scoutmaster and assistant Scoutmasters work directly with the Scouts on a weekly basis. The rest of this book will discuss what they do. At this juncture, two points are important.

Sample Youth Leader Organizational Chart for a Small Troop

As more youth join, more patrols can be formed and more positions of responsibility filled.



First, as with troop committee members, some assistant Scoutmasters will serve at large while others will have assigned functions. The more functions you can assign—including who is in charge in the Scoutmaster's absence—the more smoothly the troop will run. Second, the Scoutmaster and assistant Scoutmasters should always be trying to work themselves out of their roles by mentoring and supporting junior leaders. The more effective the senior patrol leader is, for example, the more the Scoutmaster can recede into the background.

While having assistant Scoutmasters is not required to obtain a charter, only the smallest troops can get by with only a Scoutmaster. Having one or more assistant Scoutmasters lets you share the workload and more easily comply with the BSA's policy of two-deep leadership during meetings and on all trips and outings.

Adult Leadership Requirements

To serve as a registered leader in Scouts BSA, an adult must:

- Agree to abide by the Scout Oath and the Scout Law, to respect and obey the laws of the United States, and to subscribe to the precepts of the BSA's Declaration of Religious Principle.
- Be at least 21 years of age (except assistant Scoutmasters, who must be at least 18 or older).
- Complete and sign the Boy Scouts of America adult application.
- Be screened and approved by the chartered organization.
- Submit to a criminal background check conducted through public records sources.
- Complete Youth Protection training within 30 days of registering with the BSA and before direct contact with youth members can begin.
- Complete position-specific and introduction to outdoor leader skills trainings.

All leadership positions are open to men and women and to both citizens and noncitizens. However, a chartered organization may impose additional leadership requirements, such as membership in that organization.

Excerpt From the Declaration of Religious Principle

"The Boy Scouts of America maintains that no member can grow into the best kind of citizen without recognizing an obligation to God and, therefore, recognizes the religious element in the training of the member, but it is absolutely nonsectarian in its attitude toward that religious training. Its policy is that the home and organization or group with which the member is connected shall give definite attention to religious life. Only persons willing to subscribe to these precepts from the Declaration of Religious Principle and to the Bylaws of the Boy Scouts of America shall be entitled to certificates of leadership."

The Scouts

A troop must have at least five registered members, although most troops have considerably more. (The average troop has about 20 members, but some have 50 or even 100 members.) Assuming the troop is large enough, it will be divided into two or more patrols, as we discuss in chapter 3. Each patrol elects its own leaders, as does the troop as a whole. The senior patrol leader (the top elected youth leader in the troop) appoints other troop-level youth leaders in consultation with the Scoutmaster.

Some troops elect positions like scribe and quartermaster in addition to patrol leader and senior patrol leader. However, it is a good idea to appoint at least some positions so the senior patrol leader and Scoutmaster can ensure that all Scouts who want to have a chance to hold a position of responsibility.

Youth Membership Requirements

To be a member of Scouts BSA, a youth must have completed the fifth grade and be at least 10 years old, or be at least 11 years old, or have earned the Arrow of Light rank and be at least 10 years old. The youth must not have reached age 18. The youth must complete the BSA youth application, sign it, and return it with fees to the Scoutmaster. The youth must also secure a copy of the *Scouts BSA Handbook for Boys* or the *Scouts BSA Handbook for Girls*, as appropriate.

Scouts with qualifying permanent disabilities may be eligible to register beyond the normal registration age. The chartered organization determines, with approval of appropriate medical authorities, whether to request a waiver, which must be approved by the local council.

Scout Rank Requirements

Requirements for the Scout rank, which became effective Jan. 1, 2016, must be completed as a member of a troop. A youth who has already completed any of the requirements as part of the Webelos Scouting Adventure must simply demonstrate the required knowledge or skills to the Scoutmaster or other designated leader.

For the full Scout rank requirements, see the *Scouts BSA Requirements* book (current year) or go to www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/advancement-and-awards.

CHAPTER 3

Patrol Method

In chapter 2, we said that Scouts BSA happens in the context of a troop. It might be more accurate to say that Scouts BSA happens in the context of a patrol within a troop. You see, the patrol—that subgroup of eight or so Scouts—is more than an organizational convenience or a Scouts BSA version of the Cub Scout den. It is the place where young people learn skills, take on leadership responsibility for the first time, and develop friendships that will often last a lifetime.

The Patrol Defined

A patrol is a semi-permanent group of compatible Scouts who elect their own leader. Each patrol has its own name, flag, and yell. Patrol members camp and hike together during troop and patrol outings, sit together (when sitting happens!) at troop meetings, compete together as a team in troop games and camporee events, and sometimes work on advancement together.

Often at troop meetings, a designated program patrol leads the opening and closing ceremonies, while a designated service patrol sets up chairs and cleans up afterward. When the senior patrol leader needs to get attention during meetings, the Scout sign is held up, and patrol leaders corral the members of their respective patrols. When a message needs to get to the troop between meetings, the senior patrol leader contacts the patrol leaders, who, in turn, pass on the message.

Types of Patrols

Historically, patrols were made up of Scouts of all ages and ranks. This approach offers several advantages:

- Each patrol always has members who need to learn Scouting skills and members who are able to teach those skills.
- Each patrol always has experienced leaders and members who need leadership experience.
- Patrols thus are fairly evenly matched for games and skill competitions.
- All members don't "age out" at the same time.

The downside of the mixed-age approach is that Scouts who are 10 years old and Scouts who are 17 years old often have little in common. Moreover, Scouts making the transition from a Webelos Scout den may benefit from a more gradual change.

A better approach is to have three types of patrols: new-Scout patrols, regular patrols, and older-Scout patrols.

New-Scout Patrols

As the name implies, a new-Scout patrol serves Scouts who have just joined the troop. The patrol elects its own leader, just like other patrols, but usually for a shorter term—perhaps one month instead of six months. An older Scout called a troop guide works with the Scouts to help them get acclimated to Scouts BSA and to reach the rank of First Class. Backing up the troop guide is an assistant Scoutmaster whose main responsibility is to work with new Scouts.

Scouts typically remain in a new-Scout patrol for their first year in the troop or until they reach First Class rank (whichever comes first), although the transition happens sooner in some troops. At that point, members can either choose which regular patrol they want to join or opt to stay together as a regular patrol.

In some troops, Scouts join a patrol together and stay together throughout their time in the troop.

Regular Patrols

Members of a regular or traditional patrol have similar interests and abilities. They enjoy spending time together and may well be friends outside of Scouting. Ideally, they have chosen to be in the same patrol.

Traditional patrols typically serve Scouts who have reached First Class rank or completed the seventh grade. However, a new Scout should join a traditional patrol if there are not enough newcomers to form a new-Scout patrol or if the Scout was invited to join the troop by an older friend.

Many troops assign an assistant Scoutmaster—called a patrol advisor—to each patrol. The patrol advisor advises and supports the patrol leader but does not take over this youth's responsibilities in any way.

Older-Scout Patrols

Older-Scout patrols serve older Scouts who want to pursue more challenging high-adventure outings and sports activities while remaining in the troop. These Scouts often have a been-there-done-that attitude, so their patrol activities offer them new challenges while keeping them involved in troop leadership. You might think of the older-Scout patrol as a safety valve; it lets older Scouts blow off steam and then willingly re-engage with the troop.

An assistant Scoutmaster may be assigned to the older-Scout patrol to help the members turn their outing ideas into action. This adult leader works to ensure that patrol activities complement, rather than conflict with, troop activities and may also guide the members along the trail to Eagle Scout rank.

Scout Patrols vs. Cub Scout Dens

A PATROL . . .

- Is led by a patrol leader who is supported by an assistant Scoutmaster
- Can include Scouts of all ages
- Has eight or so members
- Is identified by name (e.g., the Pedro Patrol)
- Meets as a group as often as or less often than the troop
- Typically focuses on activity planning

A DEN . . .

- Is led by an adult den leader who is supported by a denner (Cub Scout) and a den chief (a Scout from a troop)
- Typically includes Cub Scouts in the same grade
- Has six to eight members
- Is identified by number (Cub Scouts) or name (Webelos Scouts)
- Meets as a group more often than the pack
- Typically focuses on advancement work

Patrol Size

The ideal patrol size is eight members. Eight Scouts can hike and camp together efficiently while minimizing their impact on the environment. They can share work without anyone having too much or too little to do. If a few members miss an outing or if someone brings a friend, the group can still function.

That being said, you may need to adjust patrol sizes based on your troop's makeup. A new-Scout patrol might need to be smaller since members need more personal attention and are more likely to recruit friends. An older-Scout patrol might need to be bigger so that enough members are available for activities despite conflicts with sports and school activities that affect Scouting participation.

Determining patrol size and structure is a good task for the patrol leaders' council. They are most affected by such decisions and understand at least as well as adults the personality issues that should be considered.

The Patrol Method in Small Troops

If your troop is patrol-sized, you may be wondering whether the patrol method even applies to you. It does, although you will need to implement it a little differently than in a larger troop. Here are some suggestions.

- Instead of having patrol- and troop-level youth leaders (patrol quartermaster and troop quartermaster, for example), just have troop-level positions.
- Create two sub-patrols for games and competitions. With some friend-to-friend recruiting, these groups could grow into full-fledged patrols.
- Work hard to recruit a patrol's worth of graduating Webelos Scouts at one time. (See chapter 14, "Recruiting and Retention.")
- Identify a similarly sized sister troop, perhaps in a nearby community, that you can camp with occasionally.
- Seek out events like district camporees where your troop can compete as a patrol against other patrols.

Building Patrol Spirit

When patrols are strong, members have the same devotion to their patrols that sports fans have to their favorite teams. And when patrols are strong, the troop is strong.

Patrol spirit starts with the patrol name, which the members choose and which should say something about them. (Are they the Wise Owls? The Stinging Scorpions? The Wily Foxes?) Once members have chosen a name, they make their own flag, develop their own yell, and sew patrol emblems on the right sleeves of their uniforms. If the patrol buys or makes its own equipment, it should emblazon its name and emblem there as well.

The BSA Supply Group offers 39 different emblems, as well as a blank emblem for patrols that want to design their own. Patrol flags from national Scout jamborees and National Youth Leadership Training courses can serve as good examples for patrols that need a jolt of creativity.

Names, flags, and emblems are just the beginning. You can foster friendly rivalry between patrols in many ways, including:

- Pitting patrols against each other in games and skill competitions (rather than creating ad hoc teams each time)
- Recognizing patrols that do the best in uniform or campsite inspections
- Rewarding the patrol with the best overall attendance each month
- Holding a troopwide Dutch-oven cook-off where the Scoutmaster does the winning patrol's dishes

Some troops create formal honor-patrol systems where the patrol that earns the most points each month gets to display a special ribbon on its patrol flag. (See the information about the National Honor Patrol Award.)

It is easy to create patrol spirit, but it is even easier to unintentionally destroy it. How? By frequently reorganizing patrols, by creating temporary patrols on outings where attendance is low, or by cooking as a troop on outings to save time. As Robert Baden-Powell said, "Patrols should be kept intact under all circumstances."

If you absolutely must reorganize patrols, do so in collaboration with the patrol leaders' council, and try to cause as little disruption as possible. For example, you might achieve your aim by merging two patrols or asking a few Scouts to switch patrols. Try not to have patrol leaders pick members like in a sandlot baseball game or make random assignments by drawing names out of a hat. And once you settle on new patrols, give them plenty of time to work before making further changes.

National Honor Patrol Award

An easy way to build patrol spirit is to promote the National Honor Patrol Award, which goes to patrols that meet the following requirements over a three-month period:

- Have a patrol name, flag, and yell. Put the patrol design on equipment and use the patrol yell. Keep patrol records up to date.
- Hold two patrol meetings every month.
- Take part in at least one hike, outdoor activity, or other Scouting event.
- Complete two Good Turns or service projects approved by the patrol leaders' council.
- Help two patrol members advance one rank.
- Wear the full uniform correctly at troop activities (at least 75 percent of the patrol's membership).
- Have a representative attend at least three patrol leaders' council meetings.
- Have eight members in the patrol or experience an increase in patrol membership over the previous three months.

Members of patrols that earn this award wear an embroidered gold star (No. 367) beneath their patrol emblems.

Patrol Leadership

Each patrol elects one of its own members to serve as patrol leader for a defined term, typically six months (although patrol leaders in new-Scout patrols often serve shorter terms so more members have an opportunity to lead). The patrol leader then appoints an assistant patrol leader, who serves in the patrol leader's absence and may have other assigned duties. The patrol leaders' council, in consultation with the Scoutmaster, should determine any rank or age requirements for the patrol leader and assistant patrol leader.

Patrol leadership, however, does not end with these two Scouts. Rather, most members of the patrol should have responsibilities, such as those described below. This spreads the workload across the membership while letting Scouts practice leadership on a small scale before taking on larger tasks.

Note that, within the patrol, only the patrol leader gets advancement credit for service.



Patrol Leader. The patrol leader's responsibilities are discussed in detail in the *Patrol Leader Handbook*. In short, a patrol leader should:

- Take a leading role in planning and conducting patrol meetings and activities.
- Represent the patrol as a member of the patrol leaders' council (and communicate the PLC's decisions back to the patrol).
- Keep patrol members informed about upcoming events and deadlines.
- Encourage patrol members to complete their advancement requirements.
- Set a good example by living up to the Scout Oath and Scout Law.

Assistant Patrol Leader. The assistant patrol leader runs the patrol in the patrol leader's absence. An assistant patrol leader may carry out special assignments given by the patrol leader, such as working with patrol members on advancement.

Patrol Scribe. The scribe is the patrol's secretary, checking attendance, maintaining the Patrol Record Book, collecting and recording patrol dues (if any), and helping to prepare budgets for outings.

Patrol Quartermaster. The patrol quartermaster takes care of any equipment the patrol owns, checking out troop gear from the troop quartermaster and ensuring that it is returned in good condition.

Patrol Grubmaster. The grubmaster oversees menu planning, shopping, and cooking for the patrol on outings. Note that the grubmaster's responsibility may be delegated when other patrol members need to plan menus or cook to complete advancement requirements.

Patrol Cheermaster. The cheermaster leads the patrol in songs, yells, and stunts during meetings and campfire programs.

In chapter 13 we will discuss more about working with youth leaders. Suffice it to say that most youth leaders, especially at the patrol level, need plenty of ongoing support to succeed. Remember that most are leading their peers—the hardest group for anyone to lead—for the first time.

Patrol Meetings

Patrols need to meet regularly to get their work done. Most troops set aside part of their weekly meetings for patrol breakouts (sometimes called *patrol corners*). Others encourage patrols to meet outside the troop meeting, either just before or after the troop meeting or at a different time and place, perhaps on a Sunday afternoon at the patrol leader's home.

Whenever and wherever the patrol meets, each meeting should be well planned and businesslike. Typically the patrol leader calls the meeting to order, the scribe collects dues, the assistant patrol leader reports on advancement, and the patrol leader reports on what happened at the latest patrol leaders' council meeting. The bulk of the meeting is then devoted to planning upcoming outings. Other work could include designing a new patrol flag, outfitting the patrol box with cooking gear, or (especially in new-Scout patrols) working on advancement requirements. It is also a good idea to save some time for fun; something as simple as a rock-paper-scissors tournament can keep the meeting lively.

Patrol Activities

Most patrol activities take place in the context of troop activities, but that does not mean that every patrol must do the same things on every outing. Here is how a troop's weekend outing to a nearby state park might look: The troop travels together to the park on Friday afternoon. On arrival, the older-Scout patrol and two adult leaders leave for a one-night backpacking trip, while the other patrols set up camp in adjacent campsites.

On Saturday, the traditional patrols take a 10-mile hike toward completing a Hiking merit badge requirement. The instructor and two assistant Scoutmasters stay back to work with the new-Scout patrol on cooking and hiking skills and then lead them on a short afternoon hike. That evening after dinner, all the patrols reunite for a campfire program where each performs a couple of skits or songs.

Besides doing their own thing during troop activities, all three types of patrols can conduct activities separate from the troop if they follow these guidelines:

- The Scoutmaster and the participants' parents give permission.
- The activity does not conflict with the troop calendar.
- The policies in the *Guide to Safe Scouting* are followed, including the need for two-deep adult leadership.



CHAPTER 4

The Troop in Context

To paraphrase the poet John Donne, no troop is an island entire of itself. Although you may sometimes feel isolated in the church basement on Tuesday night or at the local Scout camp on a Saturday afternoon, a host of groups and individuals stands ready to support you. This chapter introduces that support structure.

The Chartered Organization

As we said in chapter 2, each troop is owned and operated by a community group called a chartered organization—typically a religious institution, school, or civic club. We discuss chartered organizations more in chapter 22, but here is an overview of what your chartered organization may have to offer.

While your chartered organization agrees to provide the troop a meeting place, designate a chartered organization representative, and approve your adult leaders, it can do more than that. If it is a school or place of worship, for example, it can be a ready source of members, so be sure to recruit there. If it is a civic club, it is probably full of people who could serve as merit badge counselors. Whatever type of organization it is, it is a natural place to conduct service projects. You may even be able to get financial support from the organization, especially for demonstrable needs like summer-camp scholarships.

The key is to demonstrate how your mission aligns with the organization's mission. Emphasize that your troop is a ministry or program of the organization, not an outside group it sponsors.

The Local Council

To administer Scouting effectively, the BSA works through some 260 local councils across the country. These councils vary greatly in membership size and geographic reach, but all agree to provide the following:

- Training and support for troop leaders and chartered organization representatives
- General liability insurance to cover chartered organizations
- Camping facilities
- A service center
- A professional staff to assist you

Local councils extend beyond America's borders. The Far East Council, headquartered in Japan, serves U.S. Scouts in several Asian nations; the Transatlantic Council, headquartered in Livorno, Italy, serves U.S. Scouts in most of Europe; and the Direct Service Council, headquartered in Texas, supports U.S. Scouts in some 40 other countries around the world.

Through the Journey to Excellence recognition program, your council's success is tied to your success. The council has a vested interest in helping you recruit and retain Scouts and promote advancement, camping, and community service.

The Journey to Excellence program encourages and rewards success and measures the performance of units, districts, and councils. It uses a "balanced-scorecard" approach to define goals and measure performance.

Council Executive Board. Each council is operated by an executive board of community leaders who have made a commitment to serve young people. The board is responsible for the fiscal management of the local council and for the quality of its Scouting program. The executive board employs the council Scout executive.

Council Scout Executive. The council Scout executive serves as the council's chief executive officer and manages its day-to-day operation. Among the Scout executive's duties are hiring and leading professional, clerical, and camp staffs.

Council Service Center. Your council office is known as a service center. The typical service center includes offices for professional and support staff members, conference and training space, and a trading post or Scout shop where you can purchase BSA uniforms, equipment, and literature. The service center is the place to turn in paperwork, pick up badges your Scouts have earned, make Scout camp reservations, and get answers to your questions.

Some councils operate satellite offices for easy access. Also, you can save yourself a trip by conducting a lot of business online, such as submitting advancement reports. Keep in mind that most Scouting professionals spend as much time in the field as they do in their offices, so it is a good idea to call ahead when you need to see someone.

Council Camp. Every council is charged with providing year-round camping facilities for Scouts. Some council camps are small; others sprawl over thousands of acres. Some are steeped in decades of memories and tradition; others offer state-of-the-art facilities and programming. Council camps get their heaviest use during the summer, when most councils operate full-blown summer-camp programs, but they are typically available during the off-season for troop camping. Many camps have facilitators on call who can open shooting ranges or put your Scouts through COPE (a confidence course found at many council camps).

You are not limited to using your own council's camping facilities. Check with nearby councils to find out what they offer.

The District

Most local councils are divided into geographic districts. Your district might encompass a sliver of a large city or many counties in a rural area. Regardless of its size and shape, the district is responsible for these four functions:

Membership. The district seeks to grow Scouting by organizing new Scouting units, recruiting new members and adult volunteers to join existing units, and retaining current members.

Program. The district supports units by promoting camping and community service, training adult volunteers, and supporting youth advancement and recognition.

Finance. The district works to provide its share of funds to the total council operating budget.

Unit Service. The district provides direct coaching and consultation to unit leaders to help them succeed.

Carrying out these functions are two groups of volunteers: the district committee and the commissioner staff, and (usually) one Scouting professional, the district executive.

District Committee

Led by the district chair, the district committee handles the membership, program, and finance functions. It is typically divided into the following subcommittees.

District Membership Committee. The membership committee works throughout the year to organize new units, support the Webelos-to-Scout transition process (a year-round process that culminates in the spring), and maintain healthy relationships with chartered organizations. It organizes fall and spring recruitment drives that can give your troop an infusion of new members.

Since the committee has relationships with local Cub Scout packs and schools, this is a good place to start if you are trying to attract new members, either former Webelos Scouts or youth who have never been in Scouting.

District Camp Promotion and Outdoor Committee. The camp promotion and outdoor committee promotes camping and other outdoor activities. It works closely with the Order of the Arrow (Scouting's national honor society) to encourage Scout attendance at the council's summer camp.

Committee members are often experienced Scouters who are well versed in camping techniques and know the best camping and hiking destinations. Start here if you are looking for new places to camp, want to learn about skills like backpacking, or have questions about BSA policies and procedures involving health and safety.

District Activities and Civic Service Committee. The activities and civic service committee plans districtwide events like camporees, Scouting shows, recognition dinners, and other activities designed to enhance the success of troops. The committee promotes district-level recognition of Scouting Anniversary Week, the week that contains February 8, Scouting's birthday.

As the name implies, the committee is also responsible for civic service. Start here if you are looking for creative service-project ideas.

District Training Committee. The training committee is responsible for ensuring that adult and youth leaders receive the training needed for their positions. The committee offers basic and supplemental training throughout the year. It also promotes online training and advanced training offered at the council level (such as the Wood Badge course or university of Scouting) and at the national level (such as conferences at the Philmont Training Center). The committee records the training histories of all volunteers in the district and coordinates the granting of training awards when requirements have been met.

Start here if you are not sure what training you and other troop leaders need. The committee can help you determine next steps and may be able to refer you to nearby districts if you face scheduling conflicts. Trainers may even be able to bring training to your troop.

District Advancement and Recognition Committee.

The advancement and recognition committee promotes advancement and special recognition opportunities. It recruits merit badge counselors and maintains a list of these counselors. It is also responsible for overseeing or conducting Eagle Scout boards of review. Also serving on the committee is the district religious emblems coordinator, who is responsible for working through troop leaders to encourage all youth members to earn the religious emblem of their faith.

Start here if your Scouts want to earn merit badges for which your troop does not have counselors, if you have questions about advancement policies and procedures, if you need ideas for planning courts of honor (the ceremonies where advancement is recognized), or you need a speaker to discuss the religious emblems program at a troop or parent meeting.

District Finance Committee. The finance committee ensures that the district raises its share of the council budget. Much of this work happens in the larger donor community, but the committee works with Scout units to conduct annual Friends of Scouting campaigns that encourage Scouting families to support the council financially.

While you probably won't have much interaction with the finance committee, it is a good resource for information on troop fundraising projects. It may also be able to help you find funding for special causes like scholarships for needy Scouts.

Commissioner Staff

The district's fourth function, unit service, is the responsibility of the commissioner staff. Most commissioners are experienced Scouters who have been there, done that, and gotten more T-shirts than they can count. They understand the challenges you face and are dedicated to helping you meet those challenges.

The commissioner staff is headed by the district commissioner, who may be supported by one or more assistant district commissioners who oversee specific geographic areas. You will see these people from time to time, but you will more often interact with your unit commissioner and the roundtable commissioner.

Unit Commissioner. A unit commissioner is responsible for supporting three or so units, either all the units at a chartered organization or several units in the same area. The position description is simple: Do whatever is necessary to help assigned units succeed.

Depending on your troop's situation, the unit commissioner can play several roles.

A representative. Your unit commissioner can bring you up to date about upcoming activities, new programs, or changes to BSA policies.

A teacher. Your unit commissioner can provide on-the-job training to supplement what you have learned in other settings.

A coach. If your troop is facing challenges, your unit commissioner can help you and other leaders think through possible solutions.

A "paramedic." If your troop faces a serious crisis, your unit commissioner can bring to bear whatever council and district resources are necessary to get you through.

Most importantly, you should get to know your unit commissioner as a friend of the unit. Make sure the unit commissioner is on the troop mailing list and receives invitations to troop courts of honor and other key events.

Besides offering general support, your unit commissioner can help your troop with two important tasks.

Charter renewal. Each year, your troop must renew its charter with the BSA, a process that involves conducting a membership inventory, collecting registration fees and *Scout Life* magazine subscription fees, and submitting paperwork to the local council, including paperwork for the Journey to Excellence performance recognition program. This process is led by the committee chair.

Charter presentation. The completion of a troop's charter renewal is a good time to emphasize and celebrate the chartered organization's relationship with Scouting. This can be done by having uniformed Scouts present the new charter to the head of the chartered organization at a full meeting of the organization.

Roundtable Commissioner. The roundtable commissioner hosts monthly roundtable meetings that bring together leaders from across the district to share program ideas, successes, and solutions to problems.

Key Council and District Contacts

Council name _____ Phone No. _____

Website _____

Scout executive _____ Phone No. _____

Email Address _____

District name _____

Website _____

District chair _____ Phone No. _____

Email _____

District commissioner _____ Phone No. _____

Email _____

District executive _____ Phone No. _____

Email _____

Unit commissioner _____ Phone No. _____

Email _____

Roundtable commissioner _____ Phone No. _____

Email _____

Your district's monthly Scout roundtable is designed to help your troop succeed by giving unit leaders

- Skills, techniques, and know-how to enhance troop operation
- Usable program ideas for your Scoutmaster to share with the patrol leaders' council
- Updates on BSA policies and program changes
- Information on upcoming training opportunities and council and district events
- An opportunity to network with district volunteers and peers in other units to share experiences and ideas, resolve problems together, and enjoy fun and fellowship
- An opportunity to network with leaders from partner packs to enhance unit-to-unit interactions and Webelos-to-Scout retention
- Morale, enthusiasm, inspiration, and motivation to refresh your desire to continue serving youth through Scouting

Similar roundtables serve Cub Scouting and Venturing leaders. In some districts, leaders from all three program phases meet together and then break out for program-specific sessions.

Check with your unit commissioner or district calendar to find out where and when your district roundtable meets.

To make roundtable meetings more valuable, try to get as many leaders from your troop to attend as possible. By traveling as a group or sharing a meal before the roundtable, you can spend time together—something that is hard to do during busy troop meetings—and discuss how things are going in the troop.

District Executive

All members of the district committee and commissioner staff are volunteers. Supporting them is a full-time Scouting professional called the district executive. This person reports to the council Scout executive (or a middle manager like a field director) and works with the district committee and the commissioner staff to support your troop. Your district executive has a vested interest in your troop and is well versed in the resources available in your district. If you are not sure whom to call, contact your district executive.

Getting the Most Out of District and Council Relationships

Your district and council exist to support you. Here are a few ways to maximize that support.

Be present. Roundtables are the most efficient way to communicate with all district volunteers, so make sure your troop is represented.

Be on time. Meeting (or beating) deadlines for tasks like charter renewal saves innumerable follow-up phone calls.

Be up to date. Promptly turn in new Scout and adult applications and inform your unit commissioner if meeting times or leadership roles change.

Be involved. Find ways to help out, such as by providing a color guard for the district dinner or running a competition at the district camporee. You will find the help reciprocated.

Be honest. Every troop faces occasional challenges. Let your unit commissioner know when you need help.

Other Units

Other Scouting units can play important roles in your troop's success. We will discuss these roles more in chapter 14. For now, here is a quick introduction.

Cub Scout Packs. Most youth begin their Scouting careers as Cub Scouts. By building strong relationships with Cub Scout packs in your community, you make your troop the natural next step for their members. Cub Scouts also serve as a ready audience when your Scouts need to teach skills or as eager "victims" during first-aid simulations.

Scout Troops. A little friendly competition with another troop can make your troop better. Also, you can learn a lot from other troops (and probably teach them a thing or two). If your troop is small, you can pair up with another troop to ensure that you have enough adult leaders for summer camp or enough Scouts to mount a high-adventure trip.

Venturing Crews and Sea Scout Ships. Scouting's young-adult programs keep older Scouts interested in Scouting, making it less likely that they will leave the program altogether to participate in other activities. The Venturing advancement program in particular requires Venturers to teach what they have learned to youth in Cub Scouting and Scouts BSA or other young people.



CHAPTER 5

Uniforms and Insignia

Few elements of the Scouting program are as recognizable as the Scout uniform. But most people—including many Scout leaders—do not realize that the uniform is more than just clothing. It is one of the eight methods of Scouting. In this chapter, we cover the basics of the uniform, beginning with a discussion of what uniforming accomplishes.

The Uniform as a Method

When worn properly, the uniform does a couple of things that, at first glance, seem contradictory. First, it establishes uniformity across troop members, putting everyone on an equal footing regardless of physical appearance, race and ethnicity, or a family's ability to buy the latest popular brands. Second, it serves as a sort of wearable trophy case that shows what the wearer has accomplished in Scouting. At a glance you can tell what rank a Scout has earned, what position of responsibility the Scout currently holds, and what special honors have been received. The uniform also supports the other methods of Scouts BSA:

Adult Association. Adult leaders also wear the uniform, setting an example for Scouts while showing they are part of the same movement.

Advancement and Personal Growth. As described above, the uniform displays patches and emblems the wearer has earned.

Ideals. The Scout emblem, parts of which appear on each rank patch, serves as a reminder of the ideals; the American flag on the right sleeve emphasizes duty to country.

Leadership Development and the Patrol Method. The badge of office represents the wearer's position of responsibility; the patrol emblem ties each Scout to the patrol.

Outdoors. Today's Scout uniform, with its performance fabrics, zip-off pant legs, and other features, is designed for action. (Note, however, that most troops switch to an activity uniform, as described below, for hiking and camping.)

Uniform Basics

For Scouts and Scouters alike, the full uniform (also called the field uniform) consists of:

- Scout long-sleeved or short-sleeved shirt
- Scout pants or shorts (Switchback uniform pants with zip-off legs offer both options.)
- Scout socks or knee socks
- BSA baseball-style cap or campaign hat (troop option)
- Scout belt and buckle (although pants are self-belted)
- Scout neckerchief, bolo tie, or no neckwear (troop option)

The troop can choose its headgear and neckerchief or bolo tie, or can also choose to use no neckwear. These are good decisions for the patrol leaders' council to revisit occasionally. Beyond those options, troops are not allowed to modify the uniform by, say, specifying blue jeans instead of Scout pants or shorts.

Troops typically wear the field uniform during troop meetings, courts of honor, evening meals at summer camp, and perhaps while traveling. For physically active outdoor events or informal activities, most troops switch to an activity uniform by substituting a Scouting T-shirt for the uniform shirt and neckwear.

Whenever the uniform is worn, it should be worn correctly and neatly. Unbuttoned shirts and untucked shirttails reflect poorly on the wearer and the troop alike.

Many troops have special troop T-shirts produced so members look as consistent in their activity uniforms as they do in their field uniforms. Having your Scouts dressed alike makes them easier to spot during camporees, museum visits, and other activities where they might otherwise get lost in the crowd.

New uniforms can be purchased from official Scouting distributors located in selected retail stores, from local council service centers and Scout shops, and from the BSA Supply Group website (www.scoutshop.org). Many troops maintain a bank of "experienced" uniforms that they loan out to Scouts in need. A request to troop families, troop alumni, and members of your chartered organization could probably generate enough donations to start a uniform bank.

Here are a few more things you should know about the Scout uniform:

- Only registered members are allowed to wear the Scout uniform.
- Older versions of the uniform are still considered official and may be worn.
- A Scout is not required to have a uniform to participate in Scouting or to pass an advancement board of review.
- No alterations of, or additions to, the official uniform may be made by any Scout, leader, or Scouting official without permission from the National Executive Board of the Boy Scouts of America.
- In accordance with the provisions of the BSA's congressional charter, any imitation of United States Army, Navy, Air Force, or Marine Corps uniforms is prohibited.

Encouraging Uniforming

The best way to encourage proper uniforming is to make sure adult leaders in the troop set a good example. Beyond that, you can hold occasional uniform inspections and recognize the best-uniformed patrols. Take care, however, to ensure that your Scouts view inspections as positive reinforcement rather than an exercise in fault-finding. The Uniform Inspection Sheet is a handy tool to use during uniform inspections.

When Not to Wear the Uniform

Do not wear the uniform

- While selling a commercial product or service, even for Scout fundraising purposes. Note, however, that your council executive board can approve the use of uniforms for certain fundraisers, like selling Scout show tickets.
- While engaged in any activity that could dishonor or discredit the BSA, the uniform, or the person wearing it.
- As a costume on occasions like Halloween.
- In situations that might mistakenly imply an endorsement by the BSA of a product, service, political candidate, or philosophy. Scouts and Scouters are encouraged to take part in the political process as private individuals but not while wearing the uniform. It is OK for Scouts to participate in a flag ceremony at a partisan political event, but they must retire after the ceremony and not remain on stage where their presence might imply an endorsement.

Some people incorrectly refer to the field and activity uniforms as class A and class B uniforms, respectively.



Insignia

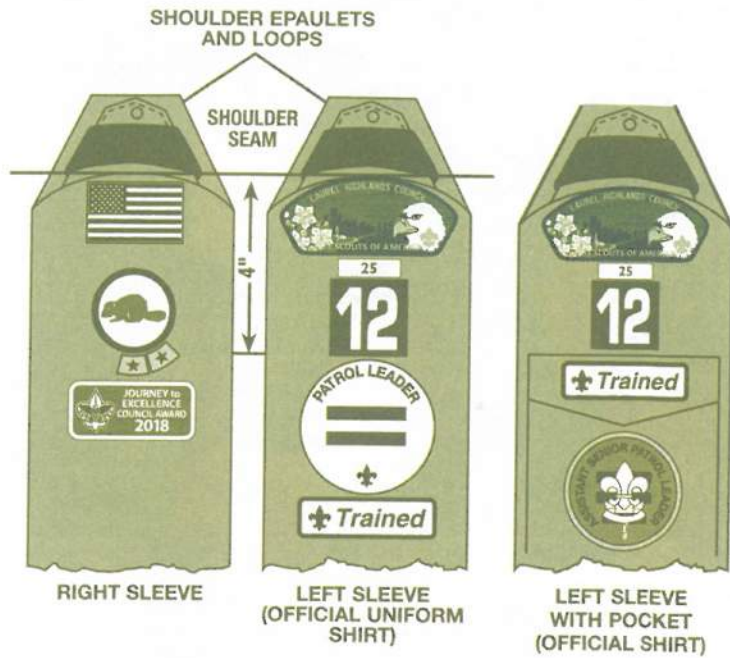
Somebody could write a book about how to wear Scout patches and other insignia. In fact, somebody has. The *Guide to Awards and Insignia* tells you everything you need to know about patch placement, when and where to wear medals, and more. The guide is also available online. Here are a few points about Scouting insignia that are frequently misunderstood:

- Members wear only the insignia that show their present status. Previously earned badges and insignia may be displayed on a BSA patch vest, trophy hide, or blanket.
- Members may wear only temporary patches (no badges of rank) on the back of the merit badge sash.
- Members should wear only one temporary patch at a time on the right pocket (either sewn on or suspended from the button.)
- Adults should not wear youth insignia. However, some youth awards such as the Eagle Scout Award, the Sea Scout Quartermaster Award, and the youth religious emblem are represented by knot patches worn on the adult uniform.
- The color of the shoulder loops should match the primary registered position in which the wearer is functioning.
- The Order of the Arrow sash and merit badge sash should not be worn at the same time, and neither should be worn folded over the belt.

It is against BSA policy to sell or trade rank medals and patches, position patches, and other earned awards such as training awards.

The accompanying graphic shows the placement of basic insignia, as does the Uniform Inspection Sheet. The Adventure Ahead! chapter of the *Scouts BSA Handbook for Boys* and the *Scouts BSA Handbook for Girls* also includes these graphics to help Scouts check the alignment of pocket and shoulder patches.

Keep in mind that neatness, not perfection, should be the goal in uniforming. It is better for Scouts to sew on their own patches and get them a little crooked than for a parent or seamstress to do the job.





THE SCOUTS BSA PROGRAM



Youth don't join Scouting to develop their character.

They don't join Scouting to wear uniforms.

In fact, they don't join Scouting to do much
of anything we discussed in section 1.

Instead, they join Scouting to have fun,
and fun is what happens on hikes,
at summer camp, and in the backcountry.

CHAPTER 6

Program Overview

This chapter will discuss the basics of troop programming; the following chapters will discuss various program elements in more detail.

The Annual Program Cycle

If you are a sports fan or have been involved in youth sports, you understand the rhythm of a sports season. There is a draft period when teams are formed, training camps where players practice and sharpen their skills, a handful of preseason games, the season itself, and then—if your team is skilled enough and lucky enough—a postseason period that includes playoffs, a championship game, and various awards banquets. After a brief off-season, the cycle begins again.

The annual program cycle in Scouting looks much different.

- Scouting is a year-round program, so the only “off-season” is perhaps a short break after summer camp or a couple of weeks off over the winter holidays.
- Learning the game and playing the game are intertwined. During each month’s troop meetings, Scouts learn and practice skills they will use on that month’s outing.
- Scouts don’t play just one game. They might go backpacking one month, rappelling the next, and whitewater rafting the month after that.
- Awards are given throughout the year. Scouts receive badges as soon as they earn them and then are formally recognized at courts of honor that take place three or four times a year (in addition to separate courts of honor that recognize new Eagle Scouts).
- Youth can join Scouting throughout the year, although most come from Webelos Scout dens and join in the winter or spring.

Troops that take the summer off lose valuable momentum.

Although the Scouting cycle looks different from the sports cycle, it still has a natural rhythm. The year typically kicks off when school starts in the fall and culminates with major summer activities—summer camp for all Scouts and a high-adventure trip for older Scouts. In between, the troop meets each week, camps or hikes each month, and holds occasional service projects and fundraisers. Courts of honor provide deadlines for Scouts to complete advancement requirements and an opportunity to reflect on their progress during Scoutmaster conferences and boards of review. An annual planning conference ensures continuity from one program year to the next.

Typical Annual Program

Here is a typical troop’s annual calendar. It includes weekly meetings (on Thursdays in this example), monthly outings (which offer a mix of activities and something for every Scout), monthly meetings of the patrol leaders’ council and troop committee, three courts of honor, two service projects, and two fundraisers. Some troop calendars also include major holidays, school breaks, and community events.

You don’t have to limit your troop to one outing per month. Some large or solidly established troops hold outings nearly every weekend. That approach allows for a wider variety of activities, offers more opportunities for leadership, and helps ensure that every Scout can go camping or hiking every month if desired.

As you review the calendar, note these features:

- The troop misses its regular Thursday meetings when holidays and school breaks conflict.
- The patrol leaders’ council and the troop committee have designated meeting days (in this example, the first Monday and the second Sunday, respectively).
- Outings and other weekend events are spread out as evenly as possible.
- The calendar takes advantage of long weekends and school breaks (in March and May, for example).
- The calendar avoids potential conflicts (like camping during Mother’s Day weekend) and, in this example, sneaks a day outing into the weekend of Scout Sunday in February. (Note that some faith-based chartered organizations may ask for troop participation on Scout Sabbath or Sunday.)

Some troops set aside one regular meeting night each month for patrol meetings or patrol leaders’ council meetings. Attendance tends to be better; the arrangement avoids dragging Scouts and leaders out for a second night that week. Nights like that also give Scouts a chance to catch up on advancement work and for youth leaders to work in their areas of responsibility. When scheduling monthly meetings, earlier in the month typically works better. If you shoot for, say, the fourth Sunday of the month, you will often conflict with the Memorial Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas holidays.

In chapter 7, we discuss how to help your patrol leaders’ council craft a calendar. On the next page is a typical troop calendar.

August 2022

30 Troop meeting

September 2022

6..... Troop meeting

7-9..... Pioneering campout

9..... Troop committee meeting

13..... Troop meeting

20 Troop meeting

27 Troop meeting

October 2022

4..... Patrol leaders' council

7..... Troop committee meeting

11..... Troop meeting/popcorn sale begins

11..... Troop meeting

18..... Troop meeting/popcorn sale ends

19-21..... Fall camporee

25 Troop meeting

30 Patrol leaders' council

November 2022

1..... Troop meeting

3..... Scouting for Food

8..... Troop meeting

11..... Troop committee meeting

15..... Troop meeting

23-25..... Thanksgiving campout

29 Troop meeting/troop elections

December 2022

3..... Patrol leaders' council

6..... Court of honor

9..... Troop committee meeting

13..... Holiday party/lock-in

15..... Introduction to Leadership
Skills for Troops

January 2023

3..... Troop meeting

6..... Troop committee meeting

7..... Patrol leaders' council

10..... Troop meeting

11-13..... Jack Frost campout

17..... Troop meeting

24 Troop meeting

31 Troop meeting

February 2023

2..... Ski trip

3..... Scout Sunday

5..... Patrol leaders' council

7..... Troop meeting

9..... Day hike

10..... Troop committee meeting

14..... Troop meeting

21 Troop meeting

28 Troop meeting

March 2023

2..... Pancake breakfast fundraiser

4..... Patrol leaders' council

7..... Troop meeting

9-11..... Spring break backpacking trip

10..... Troop committee meeting

14..... Troop meeting

21 Troop meeting

28 Troop meeting

April 2023

1..... Patrol leaders' council

4..... Troop meeting

5-7..... Get-acquainted campout

7..... Troop committee meeting

11..... Court of honor/troop banquet

18..... Troop meeting

25 Troop meeting

29 Patrol leaders' council

May 2023

2..... Troop meeting

4..... State park service project

5..... Troop committee meeting

9..... Troop meeting

16..... Troop meeting

23 Troop meeting

24-27..... Canoe trip

30 Troop meeting/troop elections

June 2023

3..... Patrol leaders' council

6..... Troop meeting

7-8..... Annual planning conference/Introduction
to Leadership Skills for Troops

9..... Troop committee meeting

13..... Troop meeting

16-22..... Summer camp

27 Troop meeting

July 2023

3..... Troop meeting

5-15..... Florida Sea Base trip

7..... Troop committee meeting

11..... Troop meeting

13..... Theme park trip

18..... Troop meeting

25 Troop meeting

August 2023

1..... Court of honor and program kickoff

5..... Patrol leaders' council

8..... Troop meeting

9-11..... Sports campout

11..... Troop committee meeting

15..... Troop meeting

22 Troop meeting

29 Troop meeting

A Program With a Purpose

Scouting is often called a game with a purpose, but you can actually apply that description to every element of the troop program. Everything the troop does should lead toward some sort of goal—even if it is just blowing off steam after a busy season of activities. Scouts learn knots and lashings at troop meetings so they can build signal towers on the next campout. They practice hiking techniques in February so they can take their first backpacking trip over spring break (and perhaps head to Philmont Scout Ranch or the Appalachian Trail over the summer). They do service projects because that helps them live out the Scout Oath and because service projects are required for advancement. They do fundraisers to pay for equipment or outings.

Scouts need to see that the things they do are leading somewhere. If outings feel like reruns, if Scouts learn skills they never get to use, if fundraisers don't yield tangible benefits, Scouts will quickly lose interest in the program.

The Monthly Program Cycle

While the annual program cycle can be a little hard to visualize, the monthly program cycle is pretty straightforward, consisting as it typically does of weekly troop meetings, monthly patrol leaders' council and troop committee meetings, and at least one monthly outing. We will talk in chapter 7 about how the PLC and troop committee meetings fit in; for now, we will focus on the troop meetings and monthly outing.

To see how those pieces fit together, consider the month of May in the troop calendar shown on the previous page. The outing for the month is a canoe trip over the Memorial Day weekend. We will assume this will be an easy trip on flat water that is appropriate for new Scouts.

According to the BSA's Safety Afloat guidelines, several things need to happen before the trip can take place.

- The troop must secure qualified supervision (a task for the Scoutmaster and troop committee).
- Participants must have complete health histories.
- Participants must take the BSA swimmer classification test.
- Participants must demonstrate skill proficiency in canoeing or have a minimum of three hours of training and supervised practice.

In addition, as with all trips, patrols need to plan menus and prepare duty rosters. That is a lot of work, but the troop has four meetings before the trip to get it all done. Here are highlights of what each meeting might feature.

- **May 5:** Promote trip; begin sign-ups; distribute Annual Health and Medical Record forms to Scouts who have not completed them; discuss canoeing safety rules.
- **May 12:** On dry land (using the Scoutmaster's canoe), teach the parts of the canoe and paddle, equipment usage, and basic paddling techniques; collect health forms and fees.
- **May 19:** At a nearby city park's lake, hold swim tests and teach how to enter and exit the canoe; collect health forms and fees; have patrols plan menus and make shopping assignments.
- **May 26:** At a nearby city park's lake, practice paddling techniques and what to do in an emergency; have patrols prepare duty rosters.

As you can see, each meeting focuses on the month's outing, and the last three feature hands-on skills development. That means Scouts will have fun at the meetings and be prepared to have even more fun on the canoe trip.

Scouters say you can't take the outing out of Scouting, but many do so unintentionally by always meeting inside. Whenever possible, move all or part of your troop meetings outside.

Modifying the Monthly Cycle

Every month won't be as straightforward as the one described here. Sometimes you will have more or fewer weeks between outings. Monthly outings will require varying amounts of preparation. You will usually have other business you need to handle at troop meetings. That is all OK. The key is to ensure that you have regular outings and that most troop meetings point toward those outings. Just as football players will put up with two-a-day practices when a big game is looming, Scouts will put up with the occasional less-than-exciting troop meeting when they have a great weekend outing ahead.



CHAPTER 7

Troop Program Planning

Without effective planning, meetings will be boring, outings will be unimaginative, Scouts won't advance, and the troop will fail to achieve the aims of Scouting. To put it another way, prior proper planning prevents pitifully poor performance—not to mention lower morale and higher attrition.

Planning is important for another reason. Since program planning is the responsibility of the patrol leaders' council, the process teaches Scouts a valuable skill they will use on their Eagle Scout service projects and throughout their lives.

Two Types of Planning

In Scouts BSA, planning is a two-phase process. **Long-term planning** results in a calendar like the one shown in chapter 6 and a set of troop goals for the year. **Short-term planning** yields detailed plans for one month's meetings and outings—and sometimes a little more. Since most new youth leaders have not planned anything more complicated than a trip to the movies, breaking the planning process into stages makes it more manageable.

Planning is one of the core skills taught in Introduction to Leadership Skills for Troops, which we discuss in chapter 13. Planning is a critical skill for youth leaders to learn and a key ingredient in building a successful troop.

Long-Term Planning

Long-term planning happens at the annual planning conference, which is typically held in late spring or early summer, as soon as possible after school, community, and council calendars have been published. By waiting until you know key dates like spring break and district camporees, you avoid having to change the troop calendar during the year. By not waiting any longer, you are able to finalize the calendar a month or two before it takes effect.

The fewer times you must change your troop calendar, the more troop families will come to trust it and schedule other activities around Scouting. It is generally better to change the theme or destination of a month's outing rather than the actual date.

Assuming your troop year starts in September, holding your planning conference in late spring or early summer lets the patrol leaders' council review plans for that summer (which were made at the previous year's planning conference) and then plan the next 12 months. In other words, 15 months of programming is on the agenda.

In the case of high adventure, the patrol leaders' council may actually need to look more than 15 months out. For example, if you are planning a trip to the Philmont Scout Ranch in New Mexico, you must sign up during the fall two years *before* the summer you want to go.

If you elect youth leaders in the fall and the spring for six-month terms, only those Scouts elected in the spring will have a say in the troop calendar. That is why some troops opt for semiannual planning conferences where they fine-tune the upcoming six months' plan and develop the following six months' plan from scratch.

Preparing for the Annual Planning Conference

However you schedule your planning conference, the committee chair, Scoutmaster, and senior patrol leader should perform the following steps a month or two before the formal meeting.

Step 1—Gather necessary information:

- Key school dates, such as holidays and exams
- Community event dates, including events the troop might want to participate in and dates you should avoid
- The chartered organization's key dates, again considering opportunities to collaborate as well as potential scheduling conflicts
- Personal dates that may affect the troop's activities, such as the Scoutmaster's anniversary cruise
- Key district and council dates, including summer camp, camporees, National Youth Leadership Training, and Order of the Arrow lodge functions
- Data collected from the troop resource survey
- Last year's troop annual plan, if you have one
- Troop priorities and goals
- Scouts' advancement records
- General outline of next year's program

Step 2—Discuss the planning process with your senior patrol leader, explaining the importance of this process and the senior patrol leader's role in it. Discuss your options for programs and activities and your troop goals. Share your draft outline for next year's program, and ask the senior patrol leader for input and thoughts. Be flexible at this point. Review the electronic program planning conference guide (available at www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/planning) so the senior patrol leader will understand the agenda and can work ahead.

As you develop your draft plan, focus more on likely dates for outings than on outing themes or destinations. Leave those details for the Scouts at the planning conference.

Setting Goals

Here are possibilities for types of troop goals your draft plan might include:

- Attend summer camp.
- Have an outdoor adventure at least once a month.
- Strengthen chartered-organization relations by planning a service project to benefit the organization and by increasing your presence on Scout Sunday or Scout Sabbath.
- Earn the National Camping Award and a gold Journey to Excellence rating.
- Conduct a fundraiser to help pay for troop expenses such as new tents and other camping gear.
- Have each patrol earn the National Honor Patrol Award at least once.

Step 3—Your senior patrol leader shares the draft plan with patrol leaders, who then share it with Scouts to get their input and ideas. Patrol leaders schedule a meeting to gather information and ideas from the Scouts. Take good notes.

Besides reviewing the draft plan, patrols could evaluate the current year's plan. A useful tool is the Start, Stop, Continue method, which uses three simple questions:

1. What should we **start** doing that we are not currently doing?
2. What should we **stop** doing that is not working?
3. What should we **continue** doing that is working well and helping us succeed?

It is useful for Scouts to have copies of the current year's calendar available for review, as well as your draft plan. They should not limit themselves to those materials, however. They might, for example, see a need to focus more (or less) on advancement during troop meetings or to build more opportunities into the calendar for patrol outings, priorities you have not considered.

Step 4—Invite the following people to attend the conference to maximize the efficiency of your planning:

- Your troop's youth leaders
- Troop committee members and other adult leaders
- Chartered organization representative
- Your unit commissioner (optional)
- Anyone else who might be helpful, such as other parents

Keep in mind that these people will play very different roles at the conference:

- In an active role—senior patrol leader, assistant senior patrol leader, patrol leaders, troop guide
- In a supportive role—Scoutmaster, assistant Scoutmasters, junior assistant Scoutmasters, and any other adults

To keep the planning conference as purposeful and efficient as possible, invite only those who actively and regularly engage in troop activities and decision making.

Holding the Annual Planning Conference

You can hold the annual planning conference at your regular meeting place in three or four hours on a Saturday morning or Sunday afternoon. However, if you have access to a cabin or retreat center, you might consider turning the conference into an overnight retreat to allow time for fellowship and team building. Some troops also combine the planning conference with Introduction to Leadership Skills for Troops (ILST), the first step in the youth leadership training continuum, if the conference follows closely after troop elections. (See chapter 13 for more information.)

Most adults should not play active roles in the planning conference. Instead, they should give their input ahead of time to the Scoutmaster or assistant Scoutmaster for program. If extra adults attend, put them in charge of cooking and cleanup to keep them busy and allow the youth leaders to focus on the task at hand.

Besides the materials described above, you might prepare poster-sized calendars for each month you will be planning. (Office supply stores offer a variety of products that will work, including laminated wall planners with write-on/wipe-off surfaces.) Pencil in the dates from your draft plan, as well as other important district, council, community, school, and chartered organization dates.

Another useful tool is the Troop Program Planning Chart (shown on the next page), a worksheet where you can record by month your program features, activities, courts of honor, service projects, leader meetings, and more. The worksheet can help you ensure, for example, that leader meetings are scheduled every month and that your courts of honor and service projects are evenly distributed across the year.

The outcome of the conference should be an annual calendar, a list of monthly program features (e.g., hiking, engineering, wilderness survival), and a set of troop goals. The amount of detail in your plan will vary. For some months, the patrol leaders' council will decide both where it wants to go and what it wants to do. For other months, the PLC may choose either the destination or the outing's focus.

Ideally, the calendar should include a mix of familiar and unfamiliar activities and destinations. A few traditional outings each year are fun; more than a few can make the program feel repetitive. And even traditional outings can benefit from occasional tweaks, such as doing a favorite activity at a new location.

Troop
Tropa

TROOP PROGRAM PLANNING CHART TABLA DE PLANIFICACIÓN PARA EL PROGRAMA DE TROPA

Charter Expiration Date
Fecha de vencimiento
del estatuto:

Month Mes	Program Features Características del programa		Troop/Program Planning Date(s) Fecha(s) de Planificación del Programa/Tropa	Troop Outdoor/ Camping Activity Actividad al aire libre/campamento de la tropa	District/Council Activity Actividad de Distrito/Concilio	Chartered Organization Dates/Charter Renewal/ Charter Presentation/ Service Project Fechas de la Organización Autorizada/ Renovación de estatutos/Presentación de estatutos/Proyecto de servicio	Special Events/ Holidays Eventos especiales/ Días festivos	(For Troop Use) (Para uso de la tropa)	Board of Review/ Court of Honor Consejo de Revisión / Corte de Honor	Leaders' Meeting Junta de líderes		
	New-Scout Patrol Patrulla de nuevos Scouts	Experienced Scouts Scouts con experiencia								Patrol Leaders/ Council Concilio de guías de patrulla	Troop Committee Comité de Tropa	District/Council Roundtable/ Training Capacitación de Distrito/Concilio/ Mesas redondas
Sept. Sept. 2022												
Oct. Oct. 2022												
Nov. Nov. 2022												
Dec. Dic. 2022												
Jan. Ene. 2023												
Feb. Feb. 2023												
Mar. Mar. 2023												
Apr. Abr. 2023												
May Mayo 2023												
June Jun. 2023			Conduct annual troop program planning conference this month. Realizar una reunión de planificación del programa anual de la tropa.									
July Jul. 2023												
Aug. Ago. 2023												



BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA

While discussing ideas at the conference, use these ground rules:

- It is important to respect each other's views. Listen and don't interrupt.
- Keep focused on your task to plan your annual program. Don't get sidetracked.
- Write out your ideas so everyone can see them.
- Be in agreement.

The Annual Planning Conference, Step by Step

Step 1—The Scoutmaster leads a discussion on the troop's goals for the coming year. Write the goals on a flipchart or eraser board and agree to a list of goals.

Step 2—Share with the rest of the meeting attendees the draft printed calendar that shows the dates you researched (or review the dates you have listed on poster-sized calendars around the room). Ask if anyone has any other dates they need to add.

Step 3—Take a few minutes to discuss these dates and events. Once you feel comfortable with this stage of the calendar, you might take a vote to approve the dates you have so far.

Robert Baden-Powell once said that "a boy is not a sitting-down animal." Be sure to take frequent breaks during the planning conference for stretching, refreshments, or a quick game.

Step 4—The senior patrol leader shares updates from the patrol leaders about what Scouts want to do. This can be the most challenging exercise in your program planning conference, so take as much time as you need. You could use *Program Features for Troops and Crews* (described later in this chapter) as a base for your Scouts' desired programs or themes. You might take it one month at a time. Don't forget to add in advancement opportunities. The flow of your troop's program is up to you and could be driven by your goals. As an example, if one of your goals is for the troop to take a wilderness trip to Alaska, some of your programs could focus on traveling to Alaska, wilderness survival, trip planning, wilderness first aid, and van safety.

Again, as you agree on a monthly feature or program theme, write it on a flipchart or board and take a vote. Designate someone to write all this in a master calendar and take good notes!

It is important to consider issues like weather and travel time. A float trip in August might not be a good idea if your favorite river will be all but dried up then; trips to distant campsites work better on three-day weekends. Also consider how much planning time is required. If the troop has never been backpacking, be sure there are enough troop meetings before the trip to allow time for training.

Step 5—Add other important dates such as:

- Troop meetings and patrol leaders' council meetings
- Boards of review
- Courts of honor
- Troop and patrol elections
- Troop open house
- Service projects
- Webelos Scout joint outings and transition ceremonies
- Any other troop and patrol activities that can be scheduled this far in advance

Step 6—Hold a final discussion on the plan, calendar, and goals, and then take a vote for approval. Once you approve your annual plan, it will go to the troop committee for final approval. Work with your chartered organization representative to make any facilities reservations at your chartered organization. As soon as possible, begin making campsite reservations for the dates and locations selected.

Step 7—To make this plan a truly valuable tool, it must be shared with each troop family, your chartered organization, and all other interested parties. You must follow your plan, share it with everyone, and review it regularly to see if modifications have to be made.

After the Planning Conference

Type up the calendar in an easy-to-use format for distribution. Here are some features to consider:

- Include as much detail as possible, including meeting start and end times.
- Indicate when regular meetings won't be held or will be held at different times.
- Color-code events for easy reference. For example, you might use blue for troop meetings and outings, green for meetings that don't affect all members (such as patrol leaders' council, troop committee, boards of review), red for special notices (such as meeting cancellations), and black for external events (such as national Scout jamborees, roundtables, and training courses).
- Add a revision date at the bottom of every page. If you later must update the calendar, change the revision date and highlight the changes.

Distribute copies of the final plan to Scouts and their families, adult leaders, members of the troop committee, and representatives of the chartered organization. Be sure to include Cub Scout pack leaders, your unit commissioner and district executive, and the chartered organization's leader, secretary, and facilities manager. Also be sure to post the calendar on your troop website and in your meeting place.

Program Features for Troops and Crews

The three-volume *Program Features for Troops and Crews* may be your unit's next best friend. Each volume contains a colorful mix of features—outdoor, sports, health and safety, citizenship and personal development, STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics), and arts and hobbies. Units can use these to plan fun, exciting, and challenging events suitable for the experience level of their group.

Each program feature includes general information about the topic, advancement and awards-related requirements, games, ideas for using the Scouting EDGE method (Explain, Demonstrate, Guide, Enable), four meeting plans, outlines of three main events (outings) that build in length and intensity (and that also can be tied to the tiers used in the revamped Venturing program), plus related print and online resources. Keep in mind that some of the activities have special leadership and safety requirements, as described throughout this guidebook.

The plans were made to be adaptable; use them as a starting point and to spur creativity. The patrol leaders' council could also use the blank templates provided in each volume to create its own monthly theme and activities. The innovative format—designed to support Scout troops and Venturing crews—reflects feedback from volunteers who were surveyed. Best of all, the fresh design and layout capture input from some very active youth members who represented each program area. Their efforts have led to an adaptable and easy-to-follow format designed to enhance the program of any meeting.

Volume I	Volume II	Volume III
Camping	Archery	Caving
Climbing and Rappelling	Backpacking	Cooking
Communication	Citizenship	COPE
Cycling	Engineering	Duty to God
First Aid	Fishing	Emergency Preparedness
Games	Fitness and Nutrition	Ethics
Geocaching	Living History	Financial Management
Hiking	Mathematics	Multimedia
Outdoor Ethics	Mentoring	Nature and Environment
Paddle Sports	Music	Project Planning
Pioneering	Orienteering	Shotgun Shooting
Rifle Shooting	Scuba Diving	Skateboarding
Safety	Soccer	Sustainability
Science	Special Needs and Disabilities	Swimming
Snowboarding and Skiing	Wilderness Survival	Technology
Spectator Sports	Wildlife Management	Winter Camping

Short-Term Planning

No matter how comprehensive and well planned your troop calendar is, it is simply a skeleton on which to build your troop program. Short-term planning puts flesh on the bones.

Patrol Leaders' Council Meeting

At each regular monthly meeting, the patrol leaders' council plans in detail the coming month's outing and troop meetings. If the PLC is really on the ball, it actually looks at three months' programming each time:

- It briefly reviews the month that is just ending using the Start, Stop, Continue model.
- It plans in detail everything the troop will do in the month that is just beginning (or will soon begin).
- It briefly previews the following month and makes assignments for tasks like reserving campsites.

See the *Senior Patrol Leader Handbook* for complete information on leading patrol leaders' council meetings.

That is a lot to accomplish in a 60- to 90-minute PLC meeting that also includes other business, so the senior patrol leader may want to delegate parts of the planning process. For example, a patrol or a subcommittee of two PLC members and an assistant Scoutmaster could be charged with planning each outing (an assignment made at the previous month's PLC meeting or at the troop program planning conference). By using different planners each month, you spread the work and allow each group to better focus on their assigned event.

Some planning details can be automated. Rather than let the PLC argue for 15 minutes over who should do the opening next week, have the senior patrol leader set up a duty roster that rotates basic tasks such as the opening and closing ceremonies, room setup and cleanup, and the interpatrol activity.

The Scoutmaster's role before and during the patrol leaders' council meeting is to

- Coach the senior patrol leader ahead of time on the agenda and what needs to be accomplished during the meeting.
- Be familiar with the troop's annual program plan and what is coming up that the youth leaders may not be thinking about.
- Provide resources gleaned from *Program Features for Troops and Crews*, that month's roundtable meeting, and other sources.
- Be alert for plans the group makes that will call for special physical or leadership resources or for heightened troop committee support.
- Help the senior patrol leader keep the meeting on track and on schedule.
- Share a Scoutmaster's Minute and perhaps a brief training module.

After the patrol leaders' council meeting, the Scoutmaster should inform the troop committee of decisions made so committee members can discuss how to most appropriately provide support. (Given this sequence, it makes sense for the patrol leaders' council to meet prior to the troop committee each month.) As with the annual program plan, the Scoutmaster should ensure that the monthly plan is distributed to the Scouts, their families, other adult leaders, and members of the chartered organization. Distribution could be in the form of a troop newsletter, a troopwide email, posted PLC minutes, outing fliers, or some combination of these methods.

As an adult leader, you can serve as the conscience of the patrol leaders' council. If the group is skipping over details on troop meeting plans—like which game they will play or who will teach a skill—push them to decide. If they try to defer to a Scout who is absent, encourage someone to call the Scout. If they are not sure of details, for example, how much a campground charges, see if a PLC member can look up the information on a smartphone or tablet.

Patrol Leaders' Council Huddles

Before each meeting or troop activity, the senior patrol leader should communicate with each individual responsible for a part of the event to ensure that everyone is prepared. PLC members should also arrive at the meeting or activity earlier than other Scouts for a quick huddle.

After each troop meeting or activity, the senior patrol leader should hold a brief meeting of the patrol leaders' council to review the activity just completed, go over the plan for the next event on the troop's calendar, and modify any parts of the monthly plan that require adjustment.

CHAPTER 8

Troop Meetings

Over the course of a year, the typical troop will hold dozens of troop meetings. In fact, the number of these meetings will probably exceed the number of outings, service projects, and leader meetings combined. Troop meetings, then, give you plenty of opportunities to achieve the aims of Scouting.

They also give you plenty of opportunities to fail. When troop meetings are not planned and executed well, Scouts get bored, parents get frustrated, and every other part of the troop program suffers. One of the most important duties of adult leaders is to help their Scouts put on effective troop meetings.

On campouts, Scouts can happily spend hours poking sticks in a fire or tossing a football. At meetings, they can grow restive if nothing engaging happens for five minutes. Be sure your troop meetings offer a variety of interesting activities.

Scheduling Troop Meetings

As a general rule, troops meet once a week on the same day and at the same time for 60 to 90 minutes. Weeknight meetings are the most common, but some troops find that weekends work better for their members.

Some troops meet every other week, perhaps for a longer period, while others skip the week after a campout (or the weekend of a campout if they meet on Friday, Saturday, or Sunday). These options can work as long as you communicate the schedule effectively. Keep in mind, however, that a Scout who misses a biweekly meeting may have only one contact with the troop during an entire month.

Another variation is to hold three troop meetings per month and use the fourth week for patrol meetings, patrol leaders' council meetings, boards of review, or other advancement work. Again, clear communication is essential.

Most troops meet at their chartered organization's location, and some are even lucky enough to have dedicated space. But don't let your meeting space control what you can do. Whenever possible, get outside—even to the chartered organization's parking lot or a nearby city park—to play games or practice Scout skills.

The Purposes of Troop Meetings

Troop meetings serve many purposes, including the following.

Preparing for outings. Scouts make plans, develop menus, check equipment, choose tent mates, and handle other details related to upcoming outings.

Learning and practicing Scouting skills. Scouts spend part of the troop meeting learning and practicing skills that they will need on upcoming outings or that will help them advance in rank.

Exercising leadership. The Scouts themselves plan and conduct troop meetings. This autonomy lets them strengthen skills that can only be learned through practice and demonstrate that they are fulfilling their positions of responsibility. Often, the only time an adult addresses the troop is when the Scoutmaster presents badges and gives the Scoutmaster's Minute.

Strengthening patrols. Patrols sit together, meet together in breakout sessions, compete together in interpatrol activities, and lead meeting elements like flag ceremonies.

Promoting advancement and personal growth. Individual Scouts have the chance to get advancement requirements signed off or to complete Scoutmaster conferences. Occasionally, the troop may offer classes for popular merit badges (although this tends to work better as an optional activity before the troop meeting). Also, share information and emphasis on the religious emblems program, an excellent opportunity for the chaplain aide to demonstrate leadership.

Inspiring Scouts. The opening and closing ceremonies and the Scoutmaster's Minute emphasize the ideals of Scouting.

Having fun. Games, hands-on learning, and fellowship with friends all make troop meetings fun. Your Scouts already sit in school for seven or more hours a day; do not let your meetings feel like drudgery.

The best troop meetings incorporate all eight methods of Scouting, as described in chapter 1, without overemphasizing any of them.

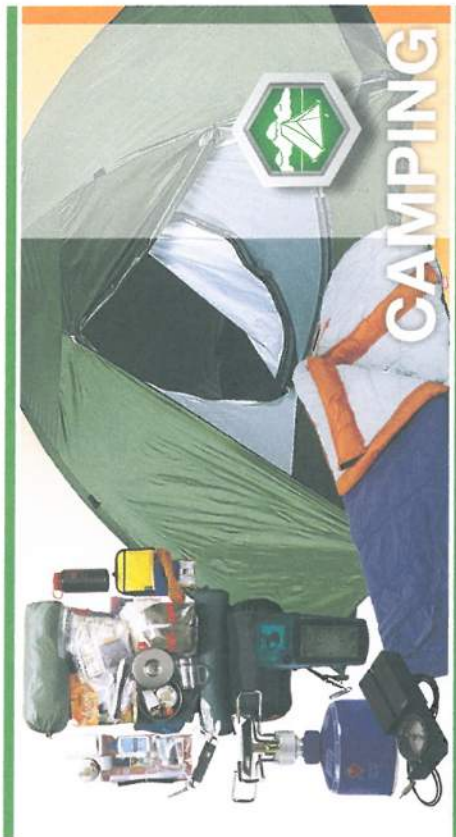
Beyond these big-picture purposes, every Scout should accomplish something specific at every meeting. Each troop member should go home feeling good because they learned a new skill, completed an advancement requirement, got prepared for an upcoming outing, enjoyed fellowship with other Scouts and leaders, or accomplished something as a leader. If a Scout can't see what was accomplished, there is a risk that the Scout may decide not to come back next week. (The same goes for adult leaders; the best volunteers want to do more than drink coffee and share stories.)

The Parts of a Troop Meeting

Troop meetings include these eight parts:

- | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Preopening | 5. Patrol meetings |
| 2. Opening | 6. Interpatrol activity |
| 3. Group instruction | 7. Closing |
| 4. Skills development | 8. After the meeting |

Parts 2 through 6 take 60 to 90 minutes total. Parts 1 and 8 each add 15 minutes.



Living Comfortably in the Outdoors

Rudyard Kipling wrote, "Who hath smelt wood-smoke at twilight? Who hath heard the birch-log burning? Who is quick to read the noises of the night? Let him follow with the others, for the young men's feet are turning to the camps of proved desire and known delight!" In other words, camping is fun! It's a chance to get away from the "busy-ness" and distractions of everyday life and spend time hanging out in the woods with your closest friends.

Camping is also the foundation of many other Scouting activities. Scouts camp for fun, but they also camp so they can be closer to great spots for fishing, rock climbing, geocaching, hiking, and a host of other activities. Comfort in the outdoors means finding a balance between skills and equipment. The more you know, the less equipment you need. The goal is not to be like a Navy SEAL but to have good outdoor skills so you feel more comfortable and confident while living outdoors.

This month's meetings and main event will help your Scouts develop good camping skills so you can enjoy outings more and open the door to many fun outdoor activities.

Objectives

This month's activities should:

- Instill the knowledge and skills to be comfortable in camp.
- Emphasize the use of outdoor ethics to protect the environment.
- Teach knots and when to use them.
- Help Scouts understand outdoor shelters.
- Teach the importance of keeping camp clean.
- Foster a sense of communion with nature and God.
- Build self-confidence by learning and demonstrating skills.
- Help Scouts work cooperatively in small groups while living outdoors.

RELATED ADVANCEMENT AND AWARDS

- Tenderfoot requirements 1a, 1b, 2a, 2b, 2c, 3b, and 3c
- Second Class requirements 1a, 1c, 2a, and 2d
- First Class requirements 1a and 3d
- Camping merit badge
- Firem'n Chit



E.D.G.E. Ideas

Explain how it is done—Tell them.
Demonstrate the steps—Show them.
Guide learners as they practice—Watch them do it.
Enable them to succeed on their own—Have them practice/teach it.

EXPLAIN

- Describe the Kodiak Challenge.
- Discuss the principles of Leave No Trace and Tread Lightly!
- Explain how to choose a good campsite.
- Discuss how to properly dispose of human waste.

DEMONSTRATE

- Demonstrate the three-bin dishwashing technique.
- Show different types of tents and backpacks, and explain their features.
- Set up a model campsite at your meeting place.
- Show the proper way to pack a backpack, taking into account weight distribution and ease of access.

GUIDE

- Have Scouts discuss essential vs. nonessential camping gear.
- Teach Scouts knots, and have them practice tying them.
- Have Scouts practice setting up tents.
- At the end of an outing, have Scouts inspect the site for any traces of the group's presence.
- Using old tent parts, teach Scouts how to make field repairs, and let them practice.

ENABLE

- Have Scouts teach camping skills to Webelos Scouts.
- Have Scouts clean and season the unit's Dutch ovens.
- Make fire starters for camping.
- Encourage Scouts to make posters illustrating outdoor ethics principles.

MAIN EVENT SUMMARIES

ESSENTIAL

Overnight Activity

Overnight car camp—Find a campsite that you can drive to and that offers plenty of opportunities for outdoor adventures. Camp overnight and hone your camping skills.

CHALLENGING

Overnight Activity

Camping in the teens—Return to Scouting's early days by camping using techniques found in the earliest Scout manuals.

ADVANCED

Five to Six Days

Kodiak Challenge—Complete the Kodiak Challenge, an opportunity for older Scouts to reinforce their leadership skills on an exciting trek adventure of five to six days.



CAMPING Meeting Plan: Campsites		Week 1 Date	
ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	RUN BY	TIME*
Preopening 15 minutes before meeting	Prepare several decks of index cards listing various items of camping gear, one item per card. Have small groups sort the cards in order of importance, setting aside items that shouldn't be taken camping.		6:45 p.m.
Opening Ceremony 10 minutes	Flag presentation Oath and Law Uniform inspection		7 p.m.
Group Instruction 10 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Youth leaders lead a discussion using a diagram of model campsites as a point of reference.Youth leaders show how to set up a dining fly.		7:10 p.m.
Skills Instruction 35 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Learn to tie two half-hitches and a taut-line hitch.Learn how to tie a clove hitch over an open-ended vertical pole.Review the above skills.Learn how to join two poles with two round lashings. <p>Using the above skills, erect a dining fly as quickly and efficiently as possible.</p>		7:20 p.m.
Breakout Groups 15 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Discuss plans for the main event.Review what personal and group equipment will be needed.		7:55 p.m.
Game 15 minutes	Play Sloppy Camp, Taut-line Hitch Race, or Dining Fly Race (described earlier).		8:10 p.m.
Closing 5 minutes	Announcements Leader's minute Closing		8:25 p.m.
Total 90 minutes of meeting			
After the Meeting 15 minutes	Leadership team reviews plans for the next meeting and for the main event.		

*All times are suggested.

Volume 1

Camping

1-7

 <h1 style="text-align: center;">CAMPING</h1> <h2 style="text-align: center;">Main Event: Overnight Car Camp</h2>		
Logistics Location: _____ Departure time: _____ Return time: _____ Duration of activity: Overnight Budget: Completed _____ Approved _____ Camping: Duty roster _____ Menu _____ Transportation: Group _____ Self _____		Essential (Tier I) Find a campsite that you can drive to and that offers plenty of opportunities for outdoor adventures. Camp overnight and hone your camping skills.
Equipment List • Camping gear (individual and group) • Backpacks, canoes, or bicycles to get the group to and from the campsite (optional) • Food • Water • Scout Basic Essentials (Review the list and take what you need.)		Activity • Choose your campsite and event location. • Plan camping duty roster and meal plan. • Develop a schedule that allows plenty of time for setting up camp the right way, including establishing defined sleeping, social, and cooking areas. • Practice camping skills Scouts need to work on (fire building, cooking, knots, etc.). • Participate in other activities as desired (hiking, boating, mountain biking, etc.). • On departure, be sure you are leaving no trace of your presence.
Safety • Normal camping safety guidelines apply. Use the buddy system; cellphones are a good idea as appropriate. Have a first-aid kit handy. • Two-deep adult leadership is required for all activities.		Notes For an added challenge, plan for all Scouts to reach camp under their own power—by hiking, cycling, or canoeing. If possible, have them carry their own gear. All could travel by the same means, or different groups could choose different options.

Volume 1

Camping

1-11

1. Preopening (15 minutes)

Several things happen during the preopening:

- The designated service patrol prepares the meeting place by setting up equipment, arranging chairs, getting flags and flag stands out of storage, and doing whatever else must be done ahead of time.
- The senior patrol leader huddles with those in charge of specific parts of the troop meeting to review the tasks they were assigned at the patrol leaders' council meeting.
- An assigned youth leader engages arriving Scouts in a game or project to keep them busy and perhaps prepare them for the skills-instruction part of the meeting. For example, if you will be teaching lashings later, the activity might be to make sure each Scout can tie a clove hitch and a timber hitch.

2. Opening (10 minutes)

The senior patrol leader calls the meeting to order—on time!—instructing the Scouts to line up by patrol. The designated program patrol conducts a flag ceremony and leads troop members in reciting the Scout Oath and Scout Law. Strive for variety in opening ceremonies to keep things fresh.

Troop Program Resources, a BSA website at www.programresources.org, offers suggestions for creative openings and closings.

3. Group Instruction (10 minutes)

This part of the meeting focuses on a few aspects of the monthly outing that all Scouts should know before the outing. When possible, have the youth leaders conduct the instruction, or bring in an expert to lead it.

4. Skills Development (35 minutes)

This part of the meeting focuses on specific skills Scouts need for an upcoming outing or for advancement. If all your Scouts are about the same age or rank or if you are about to undertake a brand-new type of activity, everyone may need to work on the same skills. Otherwise, this is a good time to divide and conquer.

- The new-Scout patrol might work with its troop guide to learn basic skills.
- Experienced Scouts might work with the instructor and/or adult leaders to learn more advanced skills.
- The older-Scout patrol might help teach the younger Scouts, might spend the time planning a special patrol outing, or might meet with the troop's Life-to-Eagle coordinator about Eagle Scout service project ideas.

Whoever is teaching should use Scouting's Teaching EDGE. First, *explain* the skill, then *demonstrate* it while explaining again. Next, *guide* the Scouts through trying the skill. Finally, *enable* them by creating an environment where they can continue to be successful—for example, by having them practice so they can eventually use the skill on their own. You can do this by removing any obstacles to success, enabling the learner to succeed.

You might also split the group along different lines. Scouts who plan to attend an upcoming camporee could practice the competitions they will do there, while Scouts who don't plan to attend could work on advancement requirements. Leaders like the quartermaster and scribe might opt out altogether to work in their areas of responsibility.

As you might expect, this part of the meeting will look different nearly every week. One thing should not change: Any instruction should be relevant to the participants and be as hands-on as possible. Do not teach knot-tying for its own sake, and don't spend 20 minutes lecturing on the parts of a canoe. Keep in mind this wisdom from the 1947 *Handbook for Scoutmasters*: "(Young people) have a thousand muscles to wiggle with and only one dozen to sit still with. That dozen get mighty tired mighty quickly."

5. Patrol Meetings (15 minutes)

At the conclusion of skills development, the patrols break off for their own short meetings. These meetings can be held in separate corners of the troop meeting space, in different rooms, or outdoors. The patrol leader runs the meeting, perhaps being backed up by an adult patrol advisor.

Business items can include taking attendance, collecting dues, planning the patrol's involvement in upcoming troop activities, planning menus (and assigning someone to shop), and working out any other details required for the smooth operation of the patrol. The agenda should be clear, and the patrol leader should be held accountable by the senior patrol leader for getting key tasks accomplished.

See the *Patrol Leader Handbook* for more information on patrol meetings.

6. Interpatrol Activity (15 minutes)

After patrol meetings, the troop comes back together for an activity that lets patrols interact with one another in a competition or a cooperative effort. For example, if you taught lashings during the skills-development period, you might run a Roman chariot race, where patrols build and race "chariots" (trestle frames made of Scout staves lashed together). Or, you might opt for a game that is just designed for fun.

See Troop Program Resources at www.programresources.org and *Belay On* for appropriate activities, including the Roman chariot race.

7. Closing (5 minutes)

The closing is the Scoutmaster's time. Any necessary announcements are made and recognition is given to Scouts who have advanced since the last meeting or who have excelled in other ways. The heart of the closing is the Scoutmaster's Minute, a brief opportunity to share a story based on Scouting's values.

Troop Program Resources (www.programresources.org) includes examples, but the best Scoutmaster's Minutes stem from the Scoutmaster's personal experience or from areas, like sports, that are of interest to the Scouts. It is always a good idea to make a direct connection to a Scouting value: "You have all promised on your honor to be loyal. Well, let me tell you about a pro football player I read about this week who took loyalty to a whole new level ..."

Finally, the senior patrol leader or the program patrol closes the meeting—on time!—with a simple flag ceremony, a song, or a prayer. Note that, unless troop members all are of one faith, prayers should be interfaith. You can find examples in *Reverence: A Resource for Interfaith, Christian, Jewish, and Muslim Worship at Scouting Events*.

Many troops use a traditional closing like this:

All: "May the Great Scoutmaster of all Scouts be with us until we meet again." (The Scout Benediction)

Scoutmaster: "Be prepared."

Scouts: "We are prepared!"

Scoutmaster: "Good night, Scouts."

8. After the Meeting (15 minutes)

After the closing, the service patrol puts away any troop equipment and returns the room to its original setup and condition. Meanwhile, the patrol leaders' council meets briefly with the Scoutmaster to review the meeting, go over plans for the next meeting or activity, and conduct any other important business.

Every troop meeting won't rigidly follow the suggested times shown here. If you travel to a nearby city park to learn canoeing techniques, you may spend most of the meeting on skills development. If the patrols need to work on patrol flags, you may need to allow them half an hour or more.

Understanding Troop Meetings

As you can tell from the previous section, a troop meeting is not like a Cub Scout den meeting, where everyone has the same experience and one or two people lead from start to finish. Instead, it is more like a legislative session. The whole group comes together at big moments, but much of the work happens in smaller committees and caucuses where the members lead themselves. There are also plenty of ad hoc meetings around the margins (Scoutmaster conferences, for example) that affect even smaller groups.

The fluid nature of good troop meetings leads to a couple of potential problems:

- Parents, former Cub Scout leaders, and other outsiders can see chaos where you see accomplishment. It is important to help these people understand how troop meetings work and what visitors can do to be helpful.
- Scouts can get lost in the shuffle. When youth and adult leaders see a Scout who is not doing anything, they need to get that Scout engaged in what is going on.

Using Adult Leaders at Troop Meetings

Just as Scouts tend to get bored more quickly at troop meetings than on outings, adults tend to get more involved, making it hard for youth leaders to fulfill their responsibilities. Here are some good things designated adult leaders can do:

- Give the Scoutmaster's Minute.
- Recognize Scouts who have advanced.
- Keep track of what should be happening at the moment according to the troop meeting plan, and quietly remind the senior patrol leader when things are off schedule.
- Teach specific skills that no youth leaders are qualified to teach.
- Touch base with the youth leader running the next part of the meeting to be sure this Scout is prepared.
- Sit in on patrol meetings and skills instruction to provide quiet support to the youth leaders. (By quietly standing or sitting near a youth leader, you show support without undermining authority.)
- Work with their youth leader counterparts; for example, the equipment coordinator and quartermaster might meet to discuss equipment purchases.
- Conduct Scoutmaster conferences and boards of review.
- Counsel on merit badges and sign off on advancement requirements.
- Watch for Scouts who are not involved or who wander away from the meeting place.

Adults should never do these things:

- Take over the meeting, except in an actual emergency.
- Criticize or call out Scouts. A good rule is "Praise in public; criticize in private."
- Yell "Sign's up!" The Scout sign is a silent signal, and getting control of the group is the senior patrol leader's responsibility.

Nature abhors a vacuum, and so do strong leaders. If you are tempted to intervene in a nonemergency situation, sing "Happy Birthday to You" under your breath. By the time you finish, a youth leader may well have stepped into the breach and done what you thought only you could do.

Be wary of letting your youth leaders fail too often as they plan and lead troop meetings. While a few Scouts may be learning from their failures, everyone else is suffering. It is far better to work behind the scenes to ensure that your troop meetings are well planned, effective, and still youth-led. Teach your youth leaders how to be successful rather than letting them learn—or not learn—from the failures of their predecessors.

Tips for Effective Troop Meetings

- Start on time and end on time.
- Include variety, action, and purpose.
- Vary your routine on occasion by having a special visitor, planning a round-robin game tournament, or preparing a Dutch oven feast.
- Get outdoors whenever possible.
- Encourage youth leaders to use the Scout sign to get attention—and to wait until everyone is quiet to start talking.
- Don't wear out activities the Scouts enjoy. If the troop has a favorite game, keep things lively by alternating it with other games on occasion.
- Mix up your games so that some rely on skill, some rely on speed, some rely on dexterity, and some rely on wits.
- Plan your Scoutmaster's Minutes well and keep them to a minute (roughly 120 words).
- Always leave the Scouts wanting more.

Evaluating Troop Meetings

How do you know whether a troop meeting was successful? You can have the patrol leaders' council discuss the Start, Stop, Continue questions:

- What are we not doing that we should start doing?
- What is not working that we should stop doing?
- What are we doing well that we should continue doing?

You can also evaluate a meeting by looking at how many of the eight methods of Scouting were used during it and at how well it met the needs of new Scouts, experienced Scouts, and older Scouts. But the real proof may come later. Is the next troop activity successful? Do most Scouts receive recognition at the next court of honor? Does the Scoutmaster receive a minimal number of phone calls from confused parents between meetings? If so, you can congratulate yourself and your youth leaders on a job well done.



CHAPTER 9

The Outdoor Program

The outdoor program is where Scouting—*real* Scouting—happens. Trying to do Scouting without the outdoor program is like reading a cookbook but never cooking, joining a gym but never exercising, or practicing a sport but never competing.

"Camp is the boy's Elysium and the Scoutmaster's opportunity. And, moreover, it is Scouting."

—Robert Baden-Powell

When Scouts hike through pristine wilderness, they discover the beauty of nature and begin to accept responsibility as stewards of the environment. When they cook together as a patrol, they discover what it really means to be part of a team. When they guide their peers through a crisis, they learn valuable lessons in leadership. And when they climb or cycle or swim just a little farther than they ever imagined they could, they discover their own capabilities.

Even so, the outdoor program is a method of Scouting, nothing more. As Baden-Powell once said: "To whatever degree it may be perfected, camping is not the end-all of Scouting. It is only one of the steps—though perhaps the most potential of the steps—toward our aim of building up happy, healthy, helpful citizens."

As a result of the outdoor program, some of your Scouts may become lifelong family campers, climbers, or canoeists. Others may go on to hike the Appalachian Trail or stand atop Mount Everest. Still others may hang up their hiking boots forever the day they leave Scouting. None of that matters so long as they take the lessons of Scouting with them wherever they go.

Scouting's Continuum of Outdoor Activities

Outdoor activities are important at every level of Scouting, but the specifics change as young people mature and progress through the program. Over the years, the BSA has developed definitions of which activities are age-appropriate and which may be a little too challenging. The point is not to withhold fun activities from younger Scouts only so they have something to accomplish down the road. (The fun of activities like rappelling does not diminish.) Instead, the point is to make sure the challenge level is right. An 11-year-old who has never slept away from home likely won't do well if the first Scout outing involves hiking five miles into camp, sleeping under a tarp, and using a cathole latrine. Similarly, a 16-year-old Life Scout won't get very excited about camping in the backyard.

As the Troop Program Planning Chart in chapter 7 shows, new Scouts are ready for weekend outings, summer camp, and events like camporees—activities that are a step above what they did in Webelos Scouting and that mostly take place in the frontcountry. Older Scouts, meanwhile, are ready to venture into the backcountry for canoe trips and backpacking treks. In keeping with this philosophy, the BSA's national high-adventure bases set minimum age requirements for participation, as do many council-run programs.

The task for troops is to develop activities that combine the right amounts of fun and challenge for Scouts of all ages. Here are some ways you could do that:

- On a weekend campout, younger Scouts could ride to the campsite while older Scouts backpack in.
- At summer camp, younger Scouts could work on early-rank requirements, Scouts in the middle could work on merit badges, and older Scouts could participate in COPE or an older-Scout program that takes them away from camp for a short backpacking trek.
- During the spring, you could hold a special orientation campout for new Scouts, bringing along a handful of older Scouts to teach skills.
- Over the summer, you could take your older Scouts on a trip to one of the BSA's national high-adventure bases.
- During the fall, you could set aside one month for patrol outings.

Also keep in mind that Scouts face challenges in more than just physical activities. A day of camporee competitions can be as challenging for the patrol leader who must prepare and lead Scouts as it can be for the Scouts themselves.

Planning Patrol Activities

With the proper training, guidance, and approval by the troop leaders, patrols may conduct day hikes and service projects as long as they follow two rules:

- The Scoutmaster must approve the patrol activity.
- The patrol activity cannot interfere with any troop function.

A patrol day hike or service project can be allowed only when it has been thoroughly planned and the Scoutmaster is satisfied the activity is well within patrol members' levels of training and responsibility. If the Scoutmaster has any doubts, the patrol should revise or reconsider its plans until those concerns are satisfactorily addressed.

Patrol activities require the same adult coverage as any other Scouting activities: two registered adult leaders, or one registered leader and a parent of a participating Scout, one of whom must be 21 years of age or older. Scouting's Barriers to Abuse, found in the *Guide to Safe Scouting* and at www.scouting.org/training/youth-protection, should always be followed.

Activities

Activity Planning and Risk Assessment

No organization, including the Boy Scouts of America, can anticipate every possible activity that could be conducted as part of a unit, district, or council event. As such, it is neither the intent nor the desire of the BSA to provide specific guidance on subjects that are not core to the program or part of our literature.

For those activities that support the values of the Boy Scouts of America, there are several tools available for participants that will help them plan for a fun and safe tour, activity, or event. Good planning and preparedness prior to executing the activity is key to success. The *Guide to Safe Scouting* is one of those tools. Other resources are the Program Hazard Analysis, SAFE safety checklists, and the PAUSE card.

As you use these tools, reflect on the words of Robert Baden-Powell: *Be Prepared...the meaning of the motto is that a Scout must prepare himself by previous thinking out and practicing how to act on any accident or emergency so that he is never taken by surprise.*

Program Hazard Analysis

This tool is primarily used for program areas within camps or high-adventure bases. It covers specific risks to the program areas. This tool has a defined way of assessing probability and severity of risks. This tool assesses risks initially, as if there are no protective measures in place, then looks at the risks again with protective measures.

Safety Checklists

These tools are used to inspect a vehicle or meeting place when you have small events or campouts. Checklists are a “body of knowledge” for running Scouting activities safely. Like an airline pilot who uses a checklist before takeoff, these tools help to make sure critical things are in place in order to conduct a safe Scouting activity. Many safety-related program materials include SAFE checklists; Safe Swim Defense, Safety Afloat, and Climb on Safely are examples.

Safety PAUSE

The Safety PAUSE process stresses the importance of a last-minute safety check in the field. By encouraging each Scout or adult leader to pause and reflect on the tasks at hand just before beginning, you have an opportunity to take necessary precautions to prevent any present or potential hazards.

Outdoor Ethics

There was a time when Scouts cut cedar boughs to make ground beds and ditched their tents to keep out the rain. Today's Scouts pride themselves on taking nothing but pictures, leaving nothing but footprints, and killing nothing but time. They practice the Outdoor Code, which sets forth Scouting's aspirations in the outdoors, and they follow the principles of Leave No Trace and Tread Lightly!, described below.

The Outdoor Code

As an American, I will do my best to—
Be clean in my outdoor manners.
Be careful with fire.
Be considerate in the outdoors.
Be conservation-minded.

Leave No Trace

Leave No Trace principles are just as applicable to frontcountry activities at Scout camps, state parks, and private campgrounds as they are in the backcountry.

1. Plan Ahead and Prepare.

Proper trip planning helps you accomplish trip goals safely, be prepared for emergencies, minimize damage to natural and cultural resources, and ensure a better experience for your troop and other groups.

2. Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces.

Stay on established trails—even when they are wet or muddy—and use existing campsites whenever possible.

3. Dispose of Waste Properly.

Pack it in, pack it out. This simple saying motivates visitors to take their trash home with them, from food scraps to human waste.

4. Leave What You Find.

Leave rocks, plants, animals, archaeological artifacts, and other objects alone; instead, sketch, do pencil rubbings, or take photographs. In some places, it is illegal to remove artifacts.

5. Minimize Campfire Impacts.

The naturalness of many areas has been degraded by overuse of fires and increasing demand for firewood. To minimize campfire impacts as well as the potential for brush and forest fires, use backpacking stoves for cooking and flashlights for lighting. When fires are permitted, use established fire rings and only use sticks from the ground that you can break by hand.

6. Respect Wildlife.

Camp quietly, and observe wildlife from afar, giving animals a wide berth. Store food securely and keep garbage and food scraps away from animals.

7. Be Considerate of Other Visitors.

Thoughtful campers travel and camp quietly and in small groups, select campsites away from other groups, wear clothing and use gear that blend with the environment, respect private property, and leave gates open or closed as they were found. Be considerate of other campers, and they will likely return the favor.

The member-driven Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics teaches people how to enjoy the outdoors responsibly. This copyrighted information has been reprinted with permission from the Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics: www.LNT.org.

Tread Lightly!

Tread Lightly! principles promote safe and responsible shooting, boating, and use of motorized vehicles.

Travel Responsibly. Stay on designated roads, trails, and recreation areas; avoid wet, muddy trails. Launch and use watercraft only in designated areas.

Respect the Rights of Others. Allow others to enjoy the outdoors peacefully. Leave gates the way you found them—open or closed. On trails, yield the right of way to those who are passing you going uphill. Move to the downhill side of the trail to allow those on horseback to pass.

Educate Yourself. Study maps and regulations of places you plan to visit. Be sure you know how to operate all equipment safely. Carry adequate supplies of food and water.

Avoid Sensitive Areas. Stay on designated routes. Avoid areas like meadows, lakeshores, wetlands, and protected sites. Give wildlife a wide berth; avoid nesting and breeding sites.

Do Your Part. Leave the area better than you found it. Properly dispose of waste; minimize your use of fire; repair damaged areas; avoid transporting invasive species or pests; practice catch-and-release fishing.

This copyrighted information has been reprinted with permission from Tread Lightly!, a national organization that promotes responsible recreation. Learn more at www.treadlightly.org.

Being Conservation-Minded

The Outdoor Code encourages Scouts to be “conservation-minded.” This means thinking about the environment as more than just ground to be hiked over and rivers to be conquered, but as a larger community of soil, plants, and animals to which we also belong. As members of this community, we have responsibilities to help protect, preserve, and conserve the environment and the land for future generations. Known as the “land ethic,” this commitment to conserving the land has been part of Scouting for many years. Keeping this tradition alive is an important part of Scouting leadership.

Types of Outings

Some troops tend to specialize in one type of activity, like backpacking, but most offer a wide variety of outings throughout the year. Variation in activities keeps the outdoor program fresh and ensures that every Scout can find something enjoyable, an opportunity to excel, and a source of personal challenge.

What kinds of outings can troops take? It is easier to list those they can't take. The *Guide to Safe Scouting* includes a short list of activities that are unauthorized, including hunting, parasailing, boxing, bungee jumping, and paintball (except for target shooting). A longer list of activities requires special training and/or certification.

Avoid the temptation to pursue an unauthorized activity as a “group of friends”—all of whom happen to be Scouts and adult leaders in the same troop. Doing so sends the wrong message about what is meant by “A Scout is obedient.” Scouts are free to do non-Scouting activities with their friends, of course, but such activities should be clearly separate and distinct from troop operations.

The list of program features in chapter 7 gives you a good idea of the sorts of outings you could do; any of them can be the basis for an outing. In fact, most program features could lead to many different outings. Consider, for example, these hiking options:

- A simple day hike
- Simultaneous hikes of varying lengths at a state park; each patrol chooses its own challenge
- A 10- or 20-mile hike to complete Hiking merit badge requirements 5 and 6

- A nature hike to identify native animals and plants for Second Class requirement 6 and First Class requirement 6
- A night hike that ends at an observatory for star study
- A fitness hike with stations where Scouts complete fitness tests
- An orienteering hike, where Scouts navigate by map and compass
- A geocaching hike, where Scouts navigate from cache to cache in a large city park
- A service hike along the shoreline, where patrols compete to see which can pick up the most trash
- A shakedown hike, where Scouts practice carrying full backpacks and cook trail meals in preparation for a high-adventure trek
- A “duty to God” hike, where the troop visits various places of worship in the community to learn about the ways people worship
- A historic hike, such as one through a Civil War battlefield, in pursuit of the Historic Trails Award

As you can see, several of these options incorporate other methods of Scouts BSA, including advancement, the patrol method, and personal growth. When you think creatively, a hike becomes more than a walk through the woods; it becomes a vehicle for achieving Scouting's aims: character development, citizenship training, leadership, and mental and physical fitness..

Don't assume that everything you do on every outing must fulfill a larger purpose or lead to advancement.

More than ever before, today's Scouts are overscheduled and under pressure to perform in sports and on standardized tests. Allowing them time on outings to unplug, relax, and have fun is a priceless gift.

Planning for the Camping Merit Badge

To earn the Camping merit badge, a Scout must camp at least 20 days and nights and do at least two of the following:

- Hike up a mountain, gaining at least 1,000 vertical feet.
- Backpack, snowshoe, or cross-country ski for at least 4 miles.
- Take a bike trip of at least 15 miles or at least four hours.
- Take a nonmotorized trip on the water of at least four hours or 5 miles.
- Plan and carry out an overnight snow camping experience.
- Rappel down a rappel route of 30 feet or more.

Frequently incorporating these activities into your outdoor program will help Scouts advance and ensure they are having fun along the way.

Duration and Frequency of Outings

Outings may be day trips, short-term outings of one or two nights, or long-term outings like summer camp and high-adventure treks. The 72-hour threshold is important to keep in mind because trips that exceed this length require

participants to have a current medical-exam record on file (part C of the Annual Health and Medical Record). Shorter trips—unless they involve strenuous and demanding activities—require only a health history, informed consent form, and hold harmless/release agreement (parts A and B of the Annual Health and Medical Record).

How many outings should you schedule? As a rule, Scouts should spend at least 10 days and nights outdoors each year and should participate in summer camp or a high-adventure trip annually. Troops that camp more often tend to retain and attract members at a higher rate. Moreover, with proper planning, camping 10 nights a year helps Scouts reach First Class rank within a year and earn the Camping merit badge within two years. This is especially important for those working toward the Eagle Scout Award.

Of course, many of today's Scouts participate in multiple sports, music programs, and other extracurricular activities that make it hard for them to attend every outing. If your Scouts are extremely busy, it may be helpful to schedule more—not fewer—activities to give them better chances of getting out with your troop most months.

You might also need to schedule outings more creatively to increase participation. You could start an October outing on Saturday morning instead of Friday night to let high-school football players and band members participate. Or you could take advantage of a teacher in-service day to squeeze in a day hike.

Resources for Leadership and Teaching

Scheduling one or more outings each month can put a strain on a small corps of adult leaders. It can also give you the opportunity to get more adults involved. Remember that—at a minimum—you can hold an outing with one registered leader plus the parent of a participating Scout or another adult, one of whom must be 21 years of age or older. In other words, parents don't have to register as adult leaders or commit to a lifetime of service to help lead an outing. That said, getting parents on outings is a great first step toward recruiting them as assistant Scoutmasters.

Although you can hold an outing with two adults, a good target ratio is at least one adult per patrol. Also, some activities, like aquatics activities, have more stringent rules.

Troop parents are the most obvious source of outing leadership, but don't overlook these sources:

- Troop committee members
- Members of the chartered organization
- Alumni of your troop
- Venturing leaders
- Members of the local Order of the Arrow lodge
- Former Scouts at local colleges (You may be able to find them through your council's National Eagle Scout Association committee or through Alpha Phi Omega, a national service fraternity with Scouting roots.)

Holding joint activities with another troop is a good way to pool leadership resources. If your troop is small, try building a relationship with a troop in a neighboring community.

When your troop decides to try a new type of activity—planning its first canoe trip, for example—look for experts in that activity among your troop parents, troop committee members, members of your chartered organization, and registered merit badge counselors. You can also find resources in other local troops, on the council camping committee, and through your unit commissioner and district executive. Many local councils maintain a campmaster corps. Campmasters are experienced Scouters who specialize in outdoor programs and techniques and who are trained to assist in short-term camping, primarily at council camp facilities.

But don't limit yourself to the Scouting community. Almost every outdoor sport and hobby has clubs and groups of experts who can help your troop plan and run a safe and exciting event. (Many of these experts may have first experienced their sport or hobby in Scouting.) Ask for leads at local outdoor stores, or do an internet search using a query like "hiking club Omaha" or "Georgia rappelling." Of course, sports like whitewater rafting have communities of professional guides and outfitters.

People who have a passion for a particular sport or activity will often put on a better presentation than an assistant Scoutmaster who is learning along the way. Moreover, these outside experts may have access to equipment you can borrow, which can make activities easier and cheaper to plan.

When using outside experts, be sure to follow BSA rules, not the rules of another group if they are more relaxed. Also, while these experts may be happy to help lead an activity, don't expect them to help supervise other parts of the outing, like cooking and cleanup. Effective June 1, 2010, all BSA registered volunteers—regardless of their position—must have current certification in BSA Youth Protection training. For more information about BSA Youth Protection policies, go to www.scouting.org/training/youth-protection.

Planning Outings

Assembling equipment, recruiting adult leaders, transporting Scouts to a campsite, making sure they are safe and well fed, and offering them activities that are both fun and instructive can seem a daunting task. And the task becomes even more daunting the farther you venture from civilization.

Fortunately, the BSA offers plenty of resources to support you and your youth leaders (who should be doing the bulk of the planning). The Scouts BSA handbooks cover basic camping techniques, while the *Fieldbook* addresses more advanced topics like cold-weather camping, aquatics, and mountain travel.

BSA training courses, which we discuss in chapter 18, are another important resource. In addition to Introduction to Outdoor Leader Skills (part of basic training for adults), courses like Safe Swim Defense, Safety Afloat, and Climb On Safely offer training for specific types of activities. Powder Horn, meanwhile, is a hands-on resource management course for registered adults and older Scouts who want to conduct unit-based high-adventure activities.

Here, we cover some basics of planning outings from an adult leader's perspective. Later in this chapter, you will find a Scoutmaster's campsite checklist and an outing planner.

Basic Planning Details

Planning an outing begins at the annual planning conference, as described in chapter 7, when the theme and dates (and perhaps location) are set. Then, as the outing gets closer, the patrol leaders' council (or designated PLC members) plan the outing in earnest. At the previous month's PLC meeting, you should have determined key details such as location, cost, and departure and return times.

Once key details are established, Scouts can begin signing up for the outing, and patrols can begin planning their menus. By requiring Scouts to sign up at the troop meeting at least one full week before the outing—or, even better, two weeks out—you allow patrols time to shop for food and allow yourself enough time to make sure drivers and adult leaders are in place.

Use your youth leaders during the sign-up process. Have Scouts sign up through their patrol leaders, who can report totals to the scribe or the lead Scout. To help Scouts develop personal responsibility, discourage parents from signing up their children for outings.

Major events like summer camp and high-adventure trips will, of course, require early planning and payment. Set up internal payment schedules so you have enough money in hand before you must send fees to the camp or high-adventure base you are attending.

In many troops, outings are designed to break even; if expenses run \$20 per Scout, they charge \$20 per Scout. (For a good learning experience, have the Scouts in charge of the outing develop a basic event budget.) Ideally, the troop budget should cover the expenses of adult leaders and prospective members so they do not have to pay; those expenses also should not be borne by the Scouts. Also, it is important to have funds available to assist Scouts who cannot afford to pay.

Many troops with strong fundraising programs charge only for major events like summer camp. This policy can simplify trip administration and eliminate one reason for Scouts not to attend outings.

Choosing Campsites

How do you find a good campsite? Your local council might have a list of suggestions. Scouters at district roundtable meetings, your troop committee, parents and guardians, and chartered organization members might know of places. National, state, and local parks and forests often have camping areas set aside especially for groups the size of a Scout patrol or troop. Also, many Order of the Arrow lodges publish "where to go camping" booklets.

Look for campsites where each patrol can have its own clearly defined space and where adults can camp at some distance from the Scouts (within earshot but not in the middle of the action). This strengthens youth leadership by encouraging Scouts to turn to their patrol leaders and the senior patrol leader, not an adult, when they have questions. Also, in keeping with Leave No Trace principles, you won't overload an existing patrol-sized campsite to accommodate the whole troop.

Contact the owners or managers of any potential campsite well in advance of the Scouts' arrival. If this is the troop's first trip to a campground, try to make a personal visit to the person in charge of the area. This individual can be a great ally to you over the

years and a tremendous source of information, support, and guidance. Get off on the right foot by doing all you can to build a good working relationship.

When you meet, explain what the Scouts are planning, the size of the troop or patrol, and the group's level of expertise in using Leave No Trace camping skills. Explore the opportunities available in that particular forest, park, or private land, including service project possibilities. Pay close attention to any regulations the land manager might explain. To protect natural resources or to enhance the outdoor experience of other people, a land management agency or property owner might limit group size, prohibit the use of campfires, or impose other guidelines on activities.

Scouts and their leaders must understand all regulations and obey them to the letter. Scouts are guests on public and private lands. By acting responsibly, they will ensure that they and future Scouts will have similar opportunities to enjoy the outdoors. Troops that break the rules and Scouts who act irresponsibly give Scouting a bad name.

To avoid crowds, practice contrarian thinking. Visit a popular state park in the off-season, or go hiking in a national forest that is better known for canoeing.

Program Activities and Schedules

The Scouts planning each outing should already have a basic idea of what the outing's focus will be, such as hiking, special cooking, or wilderness survival. With that basic idea in place, they should develop a schedule for the outing and think about any special equipment they need to secure or consultants they need to recruit for the activities they have planned.

Schedules are important because they ensure that you have time to accomplish your goals for the outing. They also prod Scouts who might otherwise waste all Saturday morning doing their breakfast dishes.

As you have done with troop meetings, you can create an expectation among troop families that you will start and end outings on time. (Have Scouts call home from the road if you will return late.) The more consistent you are, the more likely parents will be to show up on time to pick up their Scouts after outings.

While you should go into every outing with a schedule, be flexible and take advantage of opportunities that arise along the way. Stop at that country store on the way to the campsite. Explore that abandoned railroad track that crosses your hiking trail. Climb that hill overlooking the ocean—or race Scouts to the top. Latch onto these exciting opportunities, which can turn a conventional overnighter into an unforgettable experience.

Similarly, you will want to allow for unstructured play and old-fashioned free time—essential elements of childhood that are increasingly scarce in our achievement-oriented world. When younger Scouts play a game like capture the flag, they learn to negotiate rules and mediate conflicts without adult intervention. When older Scouts chat around a campfire, they build friendships that can sustain them through the challenges of high school and beyond.

*"Play is the first great educator."
—Robert Baden-Powell*

Rainy-Day Activities

The first Scoutmaster to see the need for rainy-day activities was the one who spent a rainy day without any activities to occupy a damp and restless troop. Be prepared when that rainy day comes, because it will.

Scouting publications such as the Scouts BSA handbooks, *Patrol Leader Handbook*, *Senior Patrol Leader Handbook*, *Fieldbook*, and *Program Features for Troops and Crews* overflow with ideas for games, skits, skills, contests, and problem solving that can be adapted for use in tents or under a tarp. Ask a youth leader to pull together some of the best of these before the rain begins. Another idea: Take along a rainy-day kit of supplies such as card games, travel versions of popular board games, word puzzles and quizzes, and rope to practice splicing.

If you have tarps over your patrol cooking areas, the weather may not affect cooking. However, there is nothing wrong with swapping menus around. Eat your ready-made trail lunch during a morning rainstorm; then cook your elaborate Dutch-oven breakfast at noon after the sun comes out.

Rainy days will come, along with snowy days, frigid days, and blisteringly hot days. But there is good news: Your Scouts will remember those days far more fondly than the perfect spring days that were so enjoyable at the time.

Note that there is a big difference between rainy days and hazardous weather. At least one adult who has completed Hazardous Weather training is required for all tours and trips.

Menus and Shopping

Camp cooking gives Scouts and leaders the fuel they need for rugged outdoor activities, but it also offers valuable lessons in nutrition, planning, and teamwork. Patrol cooking tests patrols—and their leaders—more than most Scouting activities. Whenever possible, Scouts should cook and eat by patrols, perhaps inviting the senior patrol leader or an adult leader to join them as a guest. Besides being a gracious gesture, this encourages patrols to do their best in preparing the meal and provides a pleasant way for Scouts and troop leaders to more closely share the outdoor adventure.

Just as each patrol cooks together, so should each patrol plan its menu, estimate the cost, and buy the food. Typically, the patrol quartermaster or a member working on a cooking-related advancement requirement will take care of the shopping. In some troops, patrol members contribute money to cover food expenses; in others, patrols are asked to stay within the budget set by the patrol leaders' council. The senior patrol leader, troop instructors, and adult leaders may help patrols, especially the new-Scout patrol, review their menus and price lists.

How elaborate patrol menus can be will depend on the type of outing you are planning. On backpacking trips, you will be limited to lightweight foods that require minimum refrigeration and can withstand hours of being jostled in a backpack. For more sedentary trips, your Scouts can branch out, creating elaborate feasts or experimenting with different techniques like cooking in Dutch ovens, foil packs, and reflector ovens.

As of Jan. 1, 2014, the Cooking merit badge is required for the Eagle Scout rank, giving Scouts another good reason to eat more than hotdogs and toaster pastries on campouts.

The Scouts BSA handbooks contain menu-planning tips, recipes for camp meals, an overview of cooking methods, and a chart to help Scouts estimate the serving-size quantities they will need. Other resources include the *Camping* merit badge pamphlet; *Camp Cookery for Small Groups*, which features patrol-sized recipes for entrees, side dishes, and desserts; and the Cooking program feature, which includes a section on special cooking.

You can add variety to menus by coming up with a theme (international cooking, perhaps) or planning a cooking contest where patrols must create a meal based on a predetermined set of ingredients.

Since shopping is typically delegated to one or two Scouts, parents usually get involved in the process. While you should welcome parents' help, discourage them from going beyond the menu the patrol planned. It is OK (and a good object lesson) if Scouts forget to buy milk for their cereal. Keep in mind that no Scout has ever starved to death on a weekend campout. Later in this chapter, you will find a patrol menu planner.

When Scouts are first learning to plan menus, consider taking them to a nearby grocery store to shop during a troop meeting.

Duty Rosters

Cooking can be hard work. Someone must fuel and light the stoves or gather kindling and build a fire. Someone must haul water for cooking and washing. Someone must cook. Someone must clean up afterward. Also, someone must make sure the campsite is litter-free and that—depending on the type of outing—the latrine is clean and the flags are posted in the morning and retired in the evening.

While most adults and older Scouts can handle these chores collaboratively, younger Scouts benefit from a duty roster that clearly spells out who does what each day. Below is a simple duty roster for a weekend outing's meals. Notice how the tasks rotate so that no one is stuck washing dishes after every meal.

	Stoves/Fire	Water	Cooking	Cleanup
Friday Cracker Barrel	Omari, Tyler	Neil, Peyton	Nguyen, Michael	Angelo, George
Saturday Breakfast	Chase, Jamal	Omari, Tyler	Neil, Peyton	Nguyen, Michael
Saturday Lunch	Angelo, George	Chase, Jamal	Omari, Tyler	Neil, Peyton
Saturday Dinner	Nguyen, Michael	Angelo, George	Chase, Jamal	Omari, Tyler
Sunday Breakfast	Neil, Peyton	Nguyen, Michael	Angelo, George	Chase, Jamal

The patrol leader's name should also be on the duty roster. This Scout, as well as the assistant patrol leader, should be available to help at each meal beyond their duty roster assignments.

Cleaning up at the end of an outing is everybody's responsibility. Before departing a campsite, each patrol leader should lead the Scouts in cleaning up their area and making a thorough sweep through the camp. Their goal is to leave the site with no sign that the patrol has ever been there. In many troops, the patrol cannot depart until the senior patrol leader inspects the campsite and approves the Scouts' efforts to leave it better than they found it.

Adult Leaders on Outings

Much as at troop meetings, adults on outings should let the youth leaders lead and the Scouts learn from their mistakes. Setting up camp a short distance from the patrols can help in this regard.

That is not to say the adults should be unapproachable or distant. Far from it. On outings, the adult association method thrives, mentoring relationships are strengthened, and Scouts can seek guidance from trusted adults. Outings are also great for conducting Scoutmaster conferences for advancement—or for working with Scouts who should be advancing but are not.

Remember that the BSA's Youth Protection guidelines require one-on-one conferences to be held in full view of others—at a picnic table in the middle of the campsite, for example, or on the porch of the camp dining hall.

Here are some specific ways adults can help make outings enjoyable:

- Make sure tents are pitched properly and that ground beds will keep Scouts comfortable, warm, and dry.
- In cold weather, make sure each Scout's sleeping bag is sufficiently warm. Encourage Scouts to change from sweat-soaked clothing into dry sleepwear before going to bed.
- In hot weather, make sure each Scout uses sunscreen and drinks plenty of water. (Encourage Scouts to monitor their urine output; it should be clear and copious.)
- Watch out for signs of homesickness, health problems, or other issues.
- Help the senior patrol leader and patrol leaders enforce bedtimes so that everybody has the chance to get enough sleep. Typically, an adult will be the last to go to bed and the first to rise the next morning.

Outdoor Equipment

Equipment requirements vary greatly depending on the type of outing you are planning. Here we focus on the personal gear and troop and patrol equipment you will need on most overnight outings.

Keep in mind that the lightweight gear suitable for backpacking works just as well when you are car camping or participating in activities like district camporees. By promoting the use of lightweight gear, you make it easier for the troop to camp anywhere from the backyard to the backwoods.

Personal Gear

The Scouts BSA handbooks simplify the issue of what a person needs to take on outdoor adventures by suggesting that each Scout carry the Scout Basic Essentials on every outing. That way all Scouts will be in the habit of having what they need to be self-sufficient.

Scout Basic Essentials

- ☐ Pocketknife
- ☐ First-aid kit
- ☐ Extra clothing
- ☐ Rain gear
- ☐ Water bottle (and method to treat water in the backcountry)
- ☐ Flashlight
- ☐ Trail food
- ☐ Matches and fire starters
- ☐ Sun protection
- ☐ Map and compass
- ☐ Insect repellent, a whistle, and other items might also be considered essential, depending on the destination, the length of the trip, and the season.

The Scout Basic Essentials will see Scouts through most day hikes. For campouts and trips of greater duration, a Scout can add the personal overnight camping gear listed below. Each item on this and the following lists is more fully described in the Scouts BSA handbooks.

When new Scouts join the troop, have an adult or experienced older Scout advise them on what to buy, what features to look for, and where to shop. Knowledgeable advice can save them from buying gear they do not need or gear that is inappropriate for Scout camping.

Personal Overnight Camping Gear

- ☐ Scout Basic Essentials
- ☐ Clothing appropriate for the season
- ☐ Backpack with rain cover
- ☐ Sleeping bag, or two or three blankets
- ☐ Sleeping pad
- ☐ Ground cloth
- ☐ Eating kit (spoon, plate, bowl, cup)
- ☐ Cleanup kit (soap, toothbrush, toothpaste, dental floss, comb, washcloth, towel, hand sanitizer)
- ☐ Plastic garbage bags
- ☐ Nylon cord, 50 feet

Personal Extras (Optional)

- ☐ Watch
- ☐ Camera
- ☐ Small notebook
- ☐ Pencil or pen
- ☐ Sunglasses
- ☐ Small musical instrument
- ☐ Swimsuit
- ☐ Gloves

Electronic Devices on Outings

Among the more contentious issues facing troops today is whether, and under what circumstances, to allow Scouts to carry cell phones, portable music players, and other electronic devices on outings. Although it might make sense to ban them altogether once you reach camp, many such devices have features that can be useful in the outdoors. (The *Scouts BSA Handbook* is available as an iPhone app, and the new edition of the *Fieldbook* is available as an e-book. Most phones can take pictures; and smartphones can double as GPS units—although you should always have a backup plan.)

Also complicating the situation is the reality that many parents expect to be able to reach their Scouts at all times. Some will even encourage their children to defy your ban, putting Scouts in a position where they must be disloyal to either you or their parents.

Your troop needs to develop its own policy, which the patrol leaders' council should have a voice in determining. Short of a total ban, your policy might allow certain devices during certain times of the day or give troop-level youth leaders more privileges than other Scouts.

Keep in mind that today's Scouts are digital natives, people who don't remember a time before cell phones and MP3 players. Through your troop policy—and personal example—you have the opportunity to teach them how to use technology responsibly and respectfully.

Troop and Patrol Gear

The following checklist includes those items that will outfit a troop or patrol for nearly any outing. The BSA Supply Group sells much of the equipment Scouts need. You may also be able to borrow or "inherit" usable items from troop families, members of the chartered organization, or other local supporters of Scouting. Surplus stores, yard sales, and secondhand outlets are other potential sources of gear.

Many troops keep a few backpacks and sleeping bags on hand as loaners for new Scouts. This reduces a new member's initial costs of joining the troop.

Troop Overnight Camping Gear

- ☐ Tents with poles, stakes, ground cloths, and lines
- ☐ Dining fly
- ☐ Nylon cord, 50 feet
- ☐ Backpacking stoves and fuel
- ☐ Group first-aid kit
- ☐ Washbasin
- ☐ Cook kit—one per patrol and one for the adults (pots and pans; spatula, large spoon, and/or ladle, depending on menus; two plastic sheets, each 4-by-4-feet; matches and/or butane lighters in waterproof containers)
- ☐ Cleanup kit—one per patrol and one for the adults (sponge or dishcloth; biodegradable soap; sanitizing rinse agent/bleach; scouring pads, no-soap type; plastic trash bags; toilet paper in plastic bag)
- ☐ Repair kit (thread, needles, safety pins)

Troop extras (optional):

- ☐ Hot-pot tongs
- ☐ Camp shovel
- ☐ Water container, one 1-gallon or two ½-gallon collapsible, plastic
- ☐ Grill
- ☐ Pot rods
- ☐ Patrol flag
- ☐ Small U.S. flag
- ☐ Ax
- ☐ Camp saw
- ☐ Lanterns and fuel

Before buying a new piece of equipment, consider these questions:

- Will it fill a definite need?
- Will it enhance or detract from the troop program? For example, heavy plywood patrol boxes are useful for long-term camping, but they limit your mobility and are best transported in pickup trucks or trailers.
- Is there space to store it?
- Is it in good condition and safe to use?
- Are there hidden costs? Must the troop buy a rooftop carrier, for example, to use a “free” canoe?

Plastic bins are light, inexpensive, and versatile replacements for traditional patrol boxes.

The final question might be, “Can we afford it?” Sometimes paying more for quality equipment is a better decision in the long run than buying cheaper gear that won’t be so durable or useful.

Storing and Caring for Troop Equipment

Here are a few commonsense guidelines.

- Write, stencil, or engrave identifying information on equipment. If possible, include a telephone number. Doing so will increase the likelihood that items will be returned if you inadvertently leave them behind or they become mixed-up with the gear of other troops.
- Store equipment in a locked space where dampness and extreme temperature are not a concern.
- The troop quartermaster should work with a member of the troop committee to organize the gear and set up an efficient checkout system.
- Check the condition of an item after each use. If it should be cleaned or repaired, arrange for that to be done as soon as possible, or retire the item from the troop’s inventory and remove it from storage. Be sure wet tents and tarps are allowed to dry thoroughly before being packed away.
- Keep a list of the gear on hand. That will help troop leaders plan future equipment acquisitions to meet the troop’s needs.

Tents and Tarps

Two-person tents are ideal for most patrol and troop camping. They can be carried in backpacks and are available with sewn-in floors and insect netting. (Be sure they are seam-sealed.) Two Scouts in a tent can also strengthen a troop’s use of the buddy system. Also, the fewer Scouts in a tent, the more likely they will get to sleep promptly.

A tarp or dining fly (about 12 feet square) will fend off rain and hot sun when the patrol is eating and protect gear stored underneath it at night.

When tenting, follow the Youth Protection guidelines and Scouting’s Barriers to Abuse, found at www.scouting.org/training/youth-protection.

Trailers

Many troops haul their gear to camp in trailers, which can certainly come in handy, especially if your troop is large. Just keep these ideas in mind.

- When purchasing a trailer, be aware of its towing requirements. A very large trailer full of patrol boxes might require a heavy-duty pickup truck with a towing package, something that can be hard to find. You also need drivers available who are experienced at pulling trailers.
- If possible, unload the trailer completely after each outing. This forces your youth leaders to plan what gear they will need for the next outing instead of just assuming everything they may need will be in the trailer.
- Do not become tied to your trailer. Some of the best campsites can only be reached on foot.
- Be sure to budget for the costs of insuring, licensing, and maintaining your trailer.

Unfortunately, trailers are tempting targets for thieves. If yours is stolen, you can be out thousands of dollars for the trailer and its contents. Actions you can take to protect your trailer include:

- Buy and use a wheel lock similar to a common wheel boot used by police officers to disable illegally parked cars. These can be bought through the internet or by checking with local boat dealers.
- Add padlocks to all the doors. Do not rely on built-in locks, which can be flimsy.
- Park your trailer in a highly visible location with its rear doors butted up against a wall or other permanent structure. Situate it against parking blocks or a curb so it cannot be turned or moved.

Scoutmaster's Campsite Quick Checklist

With the senior patrol leader and patrol leaders showing the way, the Scouts themselves will have the responsibility of setting up and running their camp. Though there are dozens of details that, when properly addressed, can increase the success of a campout, the following checklist can serve as a reminder of key issues for adult leaders to watch for as a troop goes camping. Share any concerns with the senior patrol leader so that those concerns can be addressed with the Scouts.

The checklists provided here appear also in the appendix but on separate pages. Those checklists will come in handy for the individuals who will be responsible for those tasks.

While Setting Up Camp

- ☐ Choose a campsite according to Leave No Trace and Tread Lightly! guidelines.
- ☐ Determine the kitchen area and tent locations before setting up camp.

Tents

- ☐ Properly pitch tents to keep out wind and rain.
- ☐ Tie guylines with correct knots; properly stake them down.
- ☐ Use ground cloths under tents to shield tent floors from abrasion and ground moisture.

Personal Gear and Bedding

- ☐ Stow sleeping bags and pads inside tents.
- ☐ Store clothing and other personal gear neatly in packs.

Kitchen Area

- ☐ Set up the dining fly.
- ☐ Stow food to keep it safe from weather and wildlife.
- ☐ Properly set up the cooking area, stoves, and open fires using Leave No Trace and Tread Lightly! guidelines.
- ☐ Make and follow plans for proper wastewater disposal and trash management.
- ☐ Set out soap and water for Scouts to wash hands before cooking and eating.

Latrine

- ☐ Arrange for cleaning (if required) and monitoring of toilet facilities (if available).
- ☐ Be sure the general locations of catholes (if used) are understood by all.
- ☐ Be sure every Scout has been trained to use catholes and latrines in an environmentally sound manner. (If not, teach Scouts before they begin their campout rather than when they are in dire need.)
- ☐ Keep toilet paper on hand.

During the Campout

Campsite

- ☐ Keep the area clean and orderly.
- ☐ Pick up all litter, even debris left by other groups.

Tents

- ☐ Keep tents taut.
- ☐ Neatly stow bedding and personal gear.

Kitchen Area

- ☐ Properly store all food.
- ☐ Keep utensils and dishes clean and orderly.
- ☐ Keep cooking and dining areas neat.
- ☐ Have patrols follow duty rosters for meal preparation and cleanup.
- ☐ Be sure Scouts wash their hands with soap and water before cooking and eating.
- ☐ Dispose of dishwater and manage trash and leftovers according to Leave No Trace and Tread Lightly! guidelines.

Scouts

- ☐ Dress appropriately for the weather and the activities.
- ☐ Follow personal cleanliness habits (within reason).
- ☐ Be sure the general health of all Scouts is good.

While Breaking Camp

- ☐ Check to make sure personal and group gear has been packed and is ready for the trip home.
- ☐ Pack out all trash for transport and proper disposal.
- ☐ Check that all catholes have been properly covered. Properly dispose of all toilet paper.
- ☐ In permanent fire sites, be sure all fires have been put cold out and fireplaces have been cleaned of any litter and bits of leftover food.
- ☐ Where appropriate, as a courtesy for the next campers, leave a supply of firewood.
- ☐ Look over the campsite again from a Leave No Trace and Tread Lightly! point of view. Note any other steps Scouts can take to remove evidence of their presence in the area.

Outing Planner

Description _____

Location _____

Departure date and time _____

Return date and time _____

Youth leader in charge of planning _____

Adult leader in charge of planning _____

Expected attendance (Scouts) _____

Expected attendance (adults) _____

Three Months Out

- ☐ Assign youth and adult coordinators.
- ☐ Confirm dates and times.
- ☐ Reserve campsite.
- ☐ Recruit program specialists (e.g., certified COPE instructor).

Two Months Out

- ☐ Plan the budget; set the price.
- ☐ Submit required forms (e.g., campsite reservation, fishing and boating licenses).
- ☐ Begin promotion.
- ☐ Plan special training or shakedown, including troop meeting content.
- ☐ Begin signups and distribute permission slips, including those required by outfitters.
- ☐ Begin recruiting adult leaders and drivers.

One Month Out

- ☐ Finalize the activity plan, including a schedule.
- ☐ Collect any missing Annual Health and Medical Record forms.
- ☐ Begin teaching needed skills at troop meetings.
- ☐ Ensure at least one leader has training in basic first aid (wilderness first aid for backcountry trips), hazardous weather, and—depending on the activity—Safe Swim Defense, Safety Afloat, and/or Climb On Safely.
- ☐ Include a schedule.
- ☐ Continue promotion.
- ☐ Secure any special troop and patrol equipment (e.g., canoes, climbing gear).

Two Weeks Out

- ☐ Make sure you have enough drivers and enough gear haulers.
- ☐ Check the route and prepare maps as needed.
- ☐ Confirm the location of rest stops on long trips. (Groups should not travel in tight convoys.)
- ☐ Confirm the nearest medical facility and emergency phone number.
- ☐ Confirm the campsite contact and phone number.
- ☐ Prepare rainy-day activities.

One Week Out

- ☐ Confirm Scout and adult attendance.
- ☐ Collect permission slips.
- ☐ Confirm the campsite reservation.
- ☐ Confirm the participation of program specialists.
- ☐ Have patrols plan menus, assign shopping duties, and prepare duty rosters.
- ☐ Assemble troop and patrol equipment.
- ☐ Do a personal gear shakedown, if necessary.
- ☐ Check the weather forecast.
- ☐ Announce the departure and arrival times, if not already announced.

Day of Outing

- ☐ Do a final gear and food check.
- ☐ Distribute emergency contact information to parents.
- ☐ Share travel plans with someone who is staying behind.
- ☐ Leave on time, have fun, and be safe.

Patrol Menu Planner

Campout Description	Location	
Dates	Expected Attendance (Including guests)	Food Budget \$
Patrol Leader (Name and phone No.)	Shopper (Name and phone No.)	

Friday Cracker Barrel (Late-Night Snack)

Menu Food Needed	Equipment Needed	On Hand	Need to Buy
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Saturday Breakfast

Menu Food Needed	Equipment Needed	On Hand	Need to Buy
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Saturday Lunch

Menu Food Needed	Equipment Needed	On Hand	Need to Buy
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Saturday Dinner

Menu Food Needed	Equipment Needed	On Hand	Need to Buy
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Saturday Cracker Barrel

Menu Food Needed	Equipment Needed	On Hand	Need to Buy
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Sunday Breakfast

Menu Food Needed	Equipment Needed	On Hand	Need to Buy
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Sunday Lunch

Menu Food Needed	Equipment Needed	On Hand	Need to Buy
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

General Supplies and Miscellaneous Equipment Needed

Soap, salt and pepper, spices, paper towels, matches, charcoal, etc.

CHAPTER 10

Service Projects

Scouting has a long and noble heritage of community service. A simple Good Turn by an unknown Scout in London led William D. Boyce to found the Boy Scouts of America in 1910. During World War II, Scouts sold \$355 million in war bonds (worth \$5 billion in today's dollars) and collected 210,000 tons of scrap metal, 590,000 tons of wastepaper, and enough milkweed floss to make nearly two million lifejackets.

More recently, Scouting for Food has become the largest single-day food drive in many communities. The Order of the Arrow has mobilized thousands of Scouts to build and maintain trails and eradicate invasive species on public lands from Virginia to Missouri to California. In a typical year, Scouts report 17 million hours of community service.

Service projects are an important part of the troop program. Scouts must complete service hours for the Second Class, Star, and Life ranks, and for many Scouts the Eagle Scout service project is the last hurdle on the road to Scouting's highest rank (and by far the most difficult project of any kind they have undertaken). Service projects are also a great way to build goodwill with your chartered organization and to demonstrate the program's value to troop parents. Finally, service projects are a component of the Journey to Excellence performance recognition program.

Frequency and Scheduling

You should strive to hold at least four service projects per year, at least one of which benefits your chartered organization. These could include Eagle Scout projects, projects organized by your district or council, and even projects you conduct as part of an outing. (When you take an hour during a canoe trip to clean up a riverbank, you demonstrate that service is a natural part of being a good Scout.)

While it is important to put service projects on the troop calendar at your annual planning conference, you should also allow for flexibility. For example, if a natural disaster hits your community, service opportunities will arise that you could not have predicted six months earlier. Also, if you have a number of Life Scouts planning Eagle Scout service projects, you may need to alter your schedule to prevent conflicts with those projects.

Service projects (including Eagle Scout service projects) require two-deep leadership like any other Scout activities. At all times at least one registered female adult leader must be present whenever girl members are participating in a Scouting activity.

Planning Effective Service Projects

The place to begin developing troop service projects is the patrol leaders' council. Members of the PLC might have ideas of their own for worthwhile efforts the troop could undertake to help the chartered organization, people in the community, or some other group. The PLC members will also be a good gauge of whether Scouts will find a given project attractive. Troop service projects must be well planned and properly led. They should:

- Be real and significant.
- Be democratic.
- Be clearly defined.
- Be well prepared.
- Be followed by reflection and recognition.

Be Real and Significant

Young people who invest time and energy in volunteer work want to know they are doing something significant. When the project is finished, they should be able to look back and see that their effort has made a difference. (It helps when they get to meet the people who will benefit from their work.) Busywork projects that only keep Scouts occupied waste their enthusiasm and provide little value to others.

Every year, Scouts undertake projects of truly amazing scope and significance. To see what Scouts are capable of, visit the National Eagle Scout Association website (www.nesa.org) and read about the winners of the Glenn A. and Melinda W. Adams National Eagle Scout Service Project of the Year Award.

Be Democratic

Scouts are far more likely to throw themselves into a service project if they have taken part in selecting, planning, and organizing the effort. Service work is also a tremendous opportunity for a troop's youth leaders to gain hands-on leadership experience. As with most other troop activities, adult leaders may offer direction and coaching, but, as much as possible, they should allow the Scouts themselves to put together and complete service projects.

Be Clearly Defined

A project should have definite beginning and ending points, with logical steps in between. The purpose of the service effort should be understandable to Scouts who are taking part, and they should know the full scope of the work even if their role is to complete just one part of it. A clear goal allows Scouts to measure their progress along the way, increasing their sense of participation and their pride in a job well done. The beneficiary of the project should also understand what the project will accomplish and how long it will take.

Whenever possible, select projects that offer diverse work opportunities and tasks that are appropriate for Scouts of different ages.

Be Well Prepared

Preparation for a project often begins long before the day of the effort. With the guidance of adults, youth leaders should lay the groundwork so that everything is ready when troop members arrive to carry out the work. Answer the following questions before beginning any service project:

- What is the purpose of this project? Consider both what the beneficiary might gain and what the Scouts might learn.
- Who should be contacted as resources? Consider city officials, park or forest managers, members of the chartered organization, or directors of groups for whom the service is being provided.
- How many Scouts must be involved to complete the work within the allotted time?
- What tools, equipment, and supplies will be needed? How can they be acquired?
- What expertise will be needed? If special skills are required, who can provide the training and oversight to ensure that the work is done correctly?
- What safety issues must be addressed before the work begins? Will Scouts need gloves, hard hats, safety glasses, or other protective gear? Will there be an adequate first-aid kit on site and people qualified to use it? Developing an emergency response plan will allow Scouts and their leaders to think through ways they would react in the event of an accident or other emergency.
- Is this project worthy of media coverage? If so, how will that be handled?

The "Unit Public Relations" brochure offers tips on getting publicity for service projects and other troop activities.

Be Followed by Reflection and Recognition

Reflection is a process of careful listening and sharing that allows Scouts and leaders to assess an experience and get from it the greatest value it has to offer. It can be an effective technique in many teaching situations.

Hold a reflection session as soon as possible after the service project is completed. The session should be conducted in an informal setting, and the ground rules should be made clear: no put-downs and no interruptions. Here are some suggested questions:

- What is something new you experienced today?
- What skills did you use today that you had never used before?
- If we did this again, what could we do to improve the outcome?
- What should we change in order to work together better?

The reflection session should last no longer than 10 to 15 minutes. The senior patrol leader or an adult leader should be prepared to close the reflection in a positive, upbeat manner, summarizing key points stated by the Scouts. This can be a great opportunity to encourage them to think through the experience and recognize how Scouting ideals served as guidelines as they planned and carried out the project.

Recognition does not always involve badges and awards. The most important recognition Scouts receive is internal: the confidence built as they master new skills and the self-esteem they gain from taking part in worthwhile acts of service. Often, a passing comment of "Nice job!" or "You're really good at that!" can be the most welcome form of recognition and a powerful boost to a young man's self-confidence. If a project calls for a tangible reward, a stop at an ice cream shop on the way home from a hard day's work—Scoutmaster's treat—is probably more than sufficient.

Planning Eagle Scout Service Projects

Eagle Scout projects share many of the elements of troop service projects, with some important differences. Most notably, the Eagle Scout candidate's project proposal must be approved by the appropriate district or council representative before the work begins. Also, all work must be documented. We will discuss Eagle Scout service projects in volume 2.

Suggested Projects

The array of projects your troop can undertake is limitless. Good sources of ideas are the district activities and civic service committee and your chartered organization. Adult leaders and parents who are members of service clubs may have ideas, as may Scouts who are involved in school groups like the National Honor Society or Key Club. You can find additional ideas at the Journey to Excellence website (www.scouting.org/awards/journey-to-excellence).

Pursue service opportunities related to causes your chartered organization supports. Doing so can solidify your relationship with the organization and show that you are not an outside group just using its facilities.

Conservation Work and Trail Improvement. Scouts spend more time in the outdoors than most people, so conservation-related projects are a natural fit. Projects could include trail repair, tree planting, streambed enhancement, and removal of invasive species. (For a full discussion of ways to set up and complete worthwhile conservation projects, see the BSA's *Conservation Handbook*.)

Environmental Stewardship. Perhaps around Earth Day (April 22), your troop could conduct a project to promote environmental stewardship. Possibilities include setting up a recycling center at your chartered organization or collecting old batteries and electronics to keep them out of landfills.

Drives and Collections. Scouting for Food was first held in 1988 (collecting 60 million food items), and food collections remain popular service projects. But your troop can collect many other items as well, including toys and holiday gifts for children, health supplies for third-world countries, pet food for animal shelters, and care packages for U.S. troops stationed overseas. Check with your chartered organization and local charities to identify needs.

Disaster Response. When disaster strikes, relief agencies provide food, health kits, and flood-cleanup buckets, items that your troop could provide at any time for future use. With the guidance of local emergency response officials, some troops achieve and maintain the skills required to work at disaster sites.

Cleanup Programs. Even the most picturesque communities must deal with litter, graffiti, and unsightly vacant lots. Your troop could get involved in an annual communitywide cleanup day, participate in an adopt-a-road program, or simply contact local beautification officials about potential projects.

Pruning Community Trees. Trees may be damaged by severe weather conditions. Scouts taking part in a BSA spring cleanup day can reduce the danger from broken or fallen branches by pruning limbs and gathering them for disposal. Careful planning with an authorized tree expert is essential to determine where and how the work should be done. Scouts can use bow saws for cutting and rakes for gathering the limbs to carry off the site for proper disposal. Power saws should be used only by adults certified in the use of that equipment. (See Age Guidelines for Tool Use and Work at Elevations or Excavations in the appendix for details on what tools Scouts can use.)

Supporting Local Schools. Scouts can serve local schools through landscaping and cleanup projects or by helping with activities like school open houses. Older Scouts could tutor at-risk children or paint classrooms. The BSA Adopt-a-School program (<https://adoptaschool.scouting.org/>) encourages partnerships between units and schools and offers recognition items to participants.

Caring for Cemeteries. Many small cemeteries, including some that are quite historic, suffer from neglect. With the assistance of those in charge, determine how Scouts can do the most good in returning a cemetery to a respectable condition—cleaning and straightening grave markers, for example, or cutting grass, removing weeds, planting flowers and shrubs, and identifying unmarked graves. A troop might accept a cemetery maintenance effort as an ongoing service project.

Restoring Historic Sites. Places of historic significance sometimes fall into disrepair and are gradually forgotten. Reconstructed historic sites, on the other hand, are often sources of community pride. Scouts can research a site to find out all they can about it and then ask to assist in the restoration effort. Actual restoration work must be done under the supervision of qualified local authorities.

Refurbishing Monuments. Monuments honoring historic events or community residents who served in the nation's wars are sometimes neglected. Scout troops can complete onetime efforts to clean and fix up monuments, or they might accept the responsibility of annually maintaining a monument. The service project can also provide an opportunity for Scouts to learn about the meaning of the monument and the people who are honored there.

Shoveling Snow. Where the snow falls heavily and often, troops can provide much-needed service by keeping fire hydrants clear of drifts. A troop could assign every patrol a certain number of fire hydrants, or appoint each Scout one or two hydrants near the Scout's home. Assignments could also be made to clear snow from the sidewalks and house steps of senior citizens and shut-ins.

Get-Out-the-Vote Campaigns. A natural follow-up to a voter registration campaign is a nonpartisan effort to get every eligible voter to a polling site. This project calls for an educational and promotional push to remind citizens of their right and duty to vote. Before an election, Scouts might distribute nonpartisan get-out-the-vote materials. On election day, they could be stationed outside polling sites to babysit young children, assist elderly or disabled people, or (as permitted) hand out "I Voted" stickers to voters as they are leaving.

Aiding Shut-Ins. Many elderly or disabled people live alone and might have difficulty dealing with some day-to-day tasks. A troop can "adopt" one or more of these people and visit them regularly to run errands, read to them, help them write letters, take them shopping, or just chat.

Visiting Nursing Homes. Residents of nursing homes are community members who might be very appreciative of the service that Scout troops can provide. A troop might conduct a onetime project for a nursing home or adopt the facility as an ongoing part of its service effort. Meet with the administrators of the home to learn how Scouts can be of greatest benefit.

Youth Protection Awareness. Your troop could work with the children at your chartered organization or a nearby elementary school to teach them the three R's of Youth Protection: recognize, resist, and report. You could also work with local police on related safety efforts such as voluntary child fingerprinting programs.

For a checklist to help you plan your next service project, download Service Project Planning Guidelines, No. 680-027.

CHAPTER 11

Ceremonies

In every society, ceremonies mark the key moments in life. They say, in effect, "Slow down and watch. What is happening is important." Flag ceremonies celebrate (and strengthen) patriotism. Religious rites demonstrate devotion to God. Graduations and weddings symbolize the passage from one phase of life to the next. Even in our overscheduled, hyperkinetic world, people still slow down for these important events.

As in the larger society, Scouting has plenty of ceremonies. Some are patriotic, some are religious, some are rites of passage, and some simply mark the start and end of meetings or activities. Giving these ceremonies the time and attention they deserve can go a long way toward helping Scouts grasp the deeper meaning of what they are doing on a week-to-week basis.

Keys to Good Ceremonies

Good ceremonies share these features:

- They are impressive and dignified.
- They are as brief as possible.
- They start on time and end on time.
- They show enthusiasm and sincerity.
- They are well planned and well presented (which often means they are rehearsed).
- They focus on the needs and interests of the Scouts.
- They are Scout-planned and Scout-led to whatever extent possible.
- They avoid horseplay, embarrassment, or any whiff of initiation or hazing.
- They avoid uncomfortable situations, such as standing at attention for too long or straining to hear the speakers.

When Scouts are being recognized (such as at a court of honor or in an investiture ceremony), be sure to:

- Focus on one Scout at a time.
- Have the Scout face the audience, not the front wall.
- Allow time for people to applaud and take pictures. (If you are recognizing six new Scouts, picture-taking could happen after all six badges have been presented.)

Ceremonies like flag presentations can be performed with military precision, but they do not have to be. The key is for Scouts to be respectful. If they are also in step, that is a bonus.

Types of Ceremonies

Troop Program Resources, a BSA website at www.programresources.org, includes an extensive set of ceremony scripts. Many more can be obtained from fellow Scouters at roundtable meetings. Below is an introduction to the types of ceremonies.

Opening and Closing Ceremonies

An opening ceremony signals that it is time to settle down and get serious. A closing ceremony caps off a meeting and leaves Scouts with a final thought or challenge they can carry with them through the next week. As discussed in chapter 8, openings and closings typically include flag ceremonies and recitation of the Scout Oath or Scout Law.

To keep these ceremonies from becoming stale, add variety. Some possibilities: Call on your newest Scout (or your newest Eagle Scout) to lead the Scout Oath and Scout Law. Instead of reciting the Pledge of Allegiance one week, sing "God Bless America." If you are working on Leave No Trace, use the Outdoor Code in your opening. Ask Scouts who are studying a foreign language to translate the Scout Oath—or look up the version from a country where that language is spoken—and build your opening around the translation.

Patriotic Ceremonies

The most common patriotic ceremonies involve presenting and retrieving the colors at the beginning and end of a meeting and raising and lowering the colors at camp. You can augment these ceremonies by singing patriotic songs or reading patriotic poems. Also, Troop Program Resources (www.programresources.org) includes a simple candle ceremony that highlights the meaning of the U.S. flag's colors.

On outings, many troops hold solemn ceremonies to retire U.S. flags that are no longer serviceable and cannot be cleaned or repaired. When done well, these ceremonies can be quite moving. For best results, use a simple, dignified ceremony and a small but intense fire.

You may have heard certain "rules" about flag retirement ceremonies (only authorized groups may retire U.S. flags, the stripes must be separated before burning, the metal grommets must be retrieved from the ashes, etc.). In reality, the U.S. Flag Code—United States Code, Title 36, Chapter 10—simply states, "The flag, when it is in such condition that it is no longer a fitting emblem for display, should be destroyed in a dignified way, preferably by burning."

Investiture and Graduation Ceremonies

Joining a Scout troop is an important step in a young person's development. It can also be a frightening time. Few people, especially adolescents, enjoy being thrown into a group of dozens of strangers.

An investiture ceremony lets the troop celebrate a youth's decision to join Scouting and offers a chance for everyone to warmly welcome the new Scout to the group. When you present the new member with a troop neckerchief or other token of membership, you say, in effect, "This Scout is one of us now; let's be welcoming and inclusive."

Graduation ceremonies are usually more elaborate than investiture ceremonies. They mark Webelos Scouts' graduation from Cub Scouting and transition to Scouts BSA and are usually planned jointly by pack and troop leaders. In most graduation ceremonies, Webelos Scouts literally cross a bridge—either a simple footbridge set up in the meeting place or an actual bridge at a park or other facility. Representatives of the troop stand at the end of the bridge to welcome the new Scouts and present them with tokens of membership such as green shoulder loops or copies of the *Scouts BSA Handbook*.

Installation Ceremonies

As soon as possible after every round of troop elections, the Scoutmaster should lead a ceremony to formally install new youth leaders. Typically, the new leaders place their left hands on the pole of the troop flag, make the Scout sign with their right hands, and give a simple pledge like this:

"I promise to do my best to be worthy of my office as _____, for the sake of my fellow Scouts, my patrol, my troop, and the world brotherhood of Scouting." The Scoutmaster or senior patrol leader then presents the new leaders with their badges of office (perhaps safety-pinning the badges onto their uniforms) and congratulates them.

Youth leader installations symbolize the transfer of power and highlight the importance of the leadership roles, much like presidential and gubernatorial inaugurations, and offer a chance to recognize those whose terms are ending. The Scoutmaster's involvement demonstrates full support for the new youth leaders and, by extension, the importance of other troop members supporting them too.

Courts of Honor

Award ceremonies in Scouts BSA are called courts of honor. Held three or four times a year, they offer formal recognition of Scouts who have advanced in rank in recent months or earned merit badges or other awards. (As we discuss in chapter 19, Scouts should also receive informal recognition as soon as they complete the requirements for a rank.)

A well-planned court of honor will spur Scouts on to further advancement—especially those who did not receive as many badges as their peers. It will also demonstrate to troop parents that their children are making progress, even if the parents are not yet seeing evidence of improved behavior at home.

Planning and leading a court of honor is a way for a Scout to complete requirement 8 of the Eagle-required Communication merit badge.

Besides Scouts and leaders, courts of honor should be open to parents, siblings, and members of the chartered organization. In addition to presenting badges, you can use a court of honor to promote upcoming high-adventure trips, show a video of recent troop activities, or have patrols demonstrate Scouting skills. A September court of honor could kick off the program year, while an April court of honor could double as a welcome for families who have just crossed over from Cub Scouting. Since attendance by Scouts and parents should be high at courts of honor, you could use the events as deadlines for turning in fundraising orders, medical forms, or summer-camp paperwork.

A little creative planning can boost interest and attendance. Instead of holding your spring court of honor at your usual meeting place, for example, use the amphitheater at a local park. If you are planning a campout close to town, incorporate a court of honor into Saturday evening's program. Once a year, consider combining a court of honor with a potluck dinner for troop families.

Most troops hold separate courts of honor for Scouts who have reached the rank of Eagle Scout. These ceremonies typically honor a single Eagle Scout or a small group of close friends, such as members of the same patrol who have been together since they were Tigers. The best Eagle Scout courts of honor are planned jointly by the troop and the honoree's family. The audience often includes not only extended family but also the families of troop members, school and church friends, coaches, and other people who have been important in the honoree's life.

Worship Services

Leading simple worship services on outings is the chaplain aide's responsibility. These services offer Scouts the chance to slow down, enjoy the beauty of God's creation, and reflect on the meaning of "A Scout is reverent." Planning and leading an interfaith worship service is a way for a Scout to complete requirement 8 of the Eagle-required Communication merit badge.

In some troops, all the Scouts and leaders are members of the same faith tradition, so worship services are specific to that faith. In most cases, however, interfaith worship services are more appropriate. Troop Program Resources (www.programresources.org) offers suggestions. For more ideas, see *Reverence: A Resource for Interfaith, Christian, Jewish, and Muslim Worship at Scouting Events*. As the title implies, this booklet offers resources for interfaith worship as well as for worship that is specific to the Christian, Jewish, and Muslim faiths.

Some definitions may be useful. The term interfaith spans all faith traditions, while the terms ecumenical and nondenominational are typically, although not exclusively, used with services that encompass the various branches of Christianity but not other faiths.

If you are planning a service for an event such as a camporee, be sure to label it correctly so no one is caught off guard.



ALL ABOUT YOUTH



Scouts BSA neatly coincides with adolescence, a time that can be unsettling for young people—and the adults around them. This section provides information that will help the troop leader understand what makes Scouts tick and how you can best work with them.

CHAPTER 12

Understanding and Working With Youth

Everything changes during adolescence—a youth's body and brain, the relationship with their parents, attitudes toward the opposite gender, likes, dislikes, their very identity. Many adults, including some parents, would rather not take another ride on the adolescent rollercoaster. Scout leaders consider it a privilege. With that privilege comes the responsibility of understanding adolescent development.

Ages and Stages

A youth can join Scouts BSA as a fifth-grader and leave it as a college freshman. A youth can join Scouting with household chores and leave it with a job. A youth can join Scouting riding a kick scooter and leave it driving a car. A youth can join Scouting worrying about cooties and leave it worrying about prom dates. The relationship between Scouts and their parents may similarly and dramatically change during the years in Scouting.

If you understand the continuum of adolescent development and where your Scouts fall along that continuum, you will be more effective as a Scout leader. You will also be less surprised when your 11-year-old Scouts act like 11-year-olds, your 14-year-old Scouts seem to be regressing, and your 17-year-old Scouts begin to show adultlike maturity.

This section covers some of what you can expect from Scouts at different ages. As you read, and as you work with Scouts, keep in mind these essential points:

- The brain and the body grow on different schedules. That adult-looking body may be hiding a child's brain.
- Everyone is unique. Some Scouts will mature much faster or slower than others.
- Adolescent development does not happen on a smooth, linear path. Some Scouts will take two steps forward and one step back. Others will go through growth spurts (and lulls).

As you reflect on the ages and stages of adolescent development, keep your own experiences in mind (as unpleasant as it may be to dredge up middle-school memories).

If you assume your Scouts are just a little more mature than they really are, they will likely rise to the occasion. However, if you assume they are significantly more (or less) mature than they are, you and they both will probably get frustrated.

Late Childhood (Age 10)

According to child development experts, young people at 10:

- Are still children
- Are beginning to transfer feelings for parents to other adults
- Are beginning to look to friends for emotional support
- May pretend not to need their parents (although the parents should not believe this)
- Still play primarily with others of the same gender
- Operate in a group of friends rather than having a best friend
- Look to friends for cues on what shoes to wear, what TV shows to watch, etc.
- Are getting better at remembering things and thinking logically
- Are more able to regulate their emotions and often to mask their true feelings
- Still have trouble harnessing their energy and focusing attention
- Are beginning to push boundaries and experiment with breaking rules, such as by using curse words
- Moderate their behavior because of the consequences of getting in trouble
- Ask "why?" (and do not think "because I said so" is an adequate response)

Early Adolescence (Ages 11 to 13)

Young people of 11 to 13:

- Are fully immersed in middle school
- Live in a world where teasing, sarcasm, and bullying are common
- Are beginning to go through puberty
- Are growing rapidly in both height and weight, although different parts of the body may be growing faster than others so that a youth may be clumsy at times
- Begin showing more interest in physical appearance
- Identify more strongly with a peer group than with their parents (and may even say their parents embarrass them)
- Are expanding their circle of friends to include both genders
- May struggle in school because their innate abilities are no longer sufficient
- Can have difficulty controlling their emotions, especially around their parents

- Are finally starting to develop the prefrontal cortex, the part of the brain that lets them manage impulses and weigh the consequences of potential actions
- Are beginning to align their behavior with the expectations of people they respect
- Are beginning to be tagged (or typecast) as athletes, good students, outsiders, or nerds
- Are exploring identity and the question, “Who am I?”

Middle Adolescence (Ages 14 and 15)

Young people of 14 or 15:

- Are in the early years of high school
- May be struggling academically for the first time as courses become more challenging and homework increases
- Are in the full throes of puberty
- May be as tall as many adults
- Are dating or at least interested in dating
- Are spending significant amounts of time away from home
- Are loosening ties with their parents and relying more on a peer group
- Yearn for the independence that they perceive will come with a driver’s license and a job
- May be engaging in risky behavior like smoking or drinking alcohol
- Are continuing to experiment with their identity and may seem to change their personality in different settings
- May seem to regress in maturity, showing less self-control and more egocentricity
- Are increasingly aware and critical of hypocrisy and adult failings
- Are better able than before to think abstractly, solve problems, and plan ahead, although still not on par with adults

Late Adolescence (Ages 16 to 18)

Older teenagers of 16 to 18:

- Are nearly full grown physically and look more like adults than adult-size children
- Are in the latter years of high school
- Are already thinking (and worrying) about life after high school
- Are painfully aware that the decisions they are making now—such as whether to attend college, join the military, or enter the workforce—will affect the rest of their lives
- Want to prove to their parents and themselves that they are ready to be independent
- May be employed and have access to a car, so that they have spending money, mobility, and a measure of independence
- Are spending more time than ever on homework, athletics, school activities, and dating
- Are more comfortable with their academic and social status (honor student, jock, band nerd, party animal, Scout) as peer pressure evolves
- May have a romantic attachment and a smaller but tighter group of same-gender friends than before

- Can reason abstractly and think analytically nearly as well as adults, although they lack the life experiences that guide adult decision-making
- Are beginning to think about politics, social issues, and global causes
- Have developed a relatively stable personal identity, which is consistent across different settings

Working With Scouts With Disabilities

No Scout follows the same developmental path or responds to the same leadership techniques. The differences are just more pronounced with Scouts who have disabilities. The best guide to working with Scouts who have disabilities is to use good common sense. It is obvious that a Scout in a wheelchair may have problems fulfilling a hiking requirement, but it might not be so obvious when it comes to the Scout with a learning disability.

Fortunately, you have many resources available to you. Begin with the Scout and parents; seek guidance from them on how best to work with the Scout. Talk with the Scout’s teacher, doctor, or physical therapist. If the troop is short on personnel, ask the Scout’s parents to help, or assign one or more skilled older Scouts to be of assistance. It will take patience, but the rewards will be great, for you and for the members of your troop.

For more information, see *A Guide to Working With Scouts With Special Needs and Disabilities* and the *Scouting for Youth With Disabilities Manual*.

Techniques for Working With Youth

Working with Scouts of all ages can be exciting, enlightening, and educational, and you might quickly discover that they have much more energy than you do. On the other hand, you possess more life experience. You have been through much of what they are experiencing now. By building a supportive, trusting relationship with troop members, you can put your wisdom to good use as you encourage Scouts to channel their energy into worthwhile activities and help them make sense of their changing circumstances.

Here are some proven techniques.

Meet Scouts where they are. As discussed under “Ages and Stages,” recognize where Scouts are developmentally and treat them appropriately. Do not expect too much or too little from them.

Be friendly and respectful. Scouts thrive on the friendly, nonthreatening interaction with adults that Scouting can provide (and that they may not be getting anywhere else). Treat each Scout with the same respect you would extend to an adult.

Be consistent, firm, and fair. Scouts want to know what they can expect from you as an adult leader and what you expect of them. Strive to be consistent in word and action. Make it clear to Scouts that you are working together with them to make the troop go. Hazing, harassment, name-calling, and bullying have no place in Scouting and must not be tolerated.

Let Scouts run their own troop. Establish yourself as the leader and then, to the greatest degree possible, turn that leadership authority over to the Scouts.

Be a leader, not a participant. Scouting is for the Scouts. While you will undoubtedly enjoy sharing in many of their adventures, that is not why you are there. If you want them to build signal towers, but the patrol leaders' council votes to go rock climbing, then go along with rock climbing.

Guide, don't tell. Rather than saying what you think should be done, help Scouts figure out how to solve their own problems.

Recognize and praise Scouts for the right things they do. (This is not to say that every Scout should get a trophy just for showing up; kids can see through false flattery.) If you must criticize, do it in a constructive manner and without drawing the attention of other people. Praise in public; criticize in private.

Stay calm. Do not respond in anger to the actions or words of Scouts, even if what they have said or done upsets you. Scouts will emulate you in many ways, including in how you resolve differences. By seeking reasonable solutions to situations rather than reacting in haste or finding someone to blame, you can often diffuse a potential conflict and show by your actions the way others in the troop can act when they are upset.

Be authentic but aware. You probably don't like the same music or use the same slang as your Scouts, and that is fine. Don't pretend to be something you are not; you will come across as phony, and it will lessen your authority. At the same time, however, be aware and respectful of what is going on in your Scouts' world.

Be honest but reserved. It is fine as an object lesson to mention mistakes you have made or challenges you have faced, but don't share more than is necessary and don't inadvertently turn your Scouts into therapists or marriage counselors.

Listen. Make yourself available to your Scouts during Scoutmaster conferences, on hikes and campouts, and on other occasions when they want to talk. Often they will simply be eager to share the excitement of a moment or the pride of having learned a new skill. At other times they might have concerns about something happening in the troop or in their lives. Train yourself to pay attention to what they are saying and to listen without passing judgment. When you are willing to hear what they want to share, you can address issues in ways that are coherent, meaningful, and effective.

Be fully present. To the greatest extent possible, leave work and family concerns at the door of the meeting room. Engage with your Scouts, not your smartphone. In doing so, you will be a more effective leader while modeling good behavior.

Celebrate what your Scouts do beyond Scouting. Congratulate Scouts who make the honor roll or join the National Honor Society. Drop by the occasional sporting event or high school band concert. Support your Scouts' school or charity money-earning projects.

Let the Scout Oath and Scout Law be your guide. One of the best ways to teach Scouting values is to model them in your own life.

Teaching Values

As we discussed in chapter 1, the mission of the Boy Scouts of America is to prepare young people to make ethical and moral choices over their lifetimes by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Scout Law. That doesn't happen automatically. Scouts don't learn values by osmosis any more than they learn to tie knots just by watching demonstrations or holding pieces of rope. So how can you teach values? There are many ways, four of which we cover here.

Scoutmaster's Minutes

Every troop meeting and troop court of honor should end with a Scoutmaster's Minute. This is a chance for the Scoutmaster (or another designated leader) to offer a simple, memorable lesson about values.

Here is a shorter-than-average example from Troop Program Resources (www.programresources.org):

Have you ever squeezed too much toothpaste out of a tube of toothpaste and tried to put it back in the tube? It can't be done, can it? No matter how hard you try, the toothpaste is out of the tube forever.

Toothpaste is similar to unkind words. Once unkind words come out of your mouth, you cannot take them back. So when you are tempted to say something unkind, remember the parable of the toothpaste, and keep the unkind words to yourself.

If you delivered that Scoutmaster's Minute well (and used a tube of toothpaste as a prop), you would give your Scouts something to think about long after the end of the troop meeting.

Troop Program Resources includes dozens of Scoutmaster's Minutes, and you can find many more on the internet. But the best Scoutmaster's Minutes may come from your own experience—from lessons you learned as a young person, from things that have happened at work, or from sermons you have heard.

Another great source is the sports section of your favorite newspaper. Every week, you should be able to find at least one example of an athlete overcoming adversity or giving back to the community, or squandering their talent or behaving poorly. Whether positive or negative, these stories can serve as good object lessons. And since many youth are interested in sports, the stories will feel relevant to them.

Whatever your source, be sure your Scoutmaster's Minute is short—hence the name—and teaches a single, clear lesson. Props are helpful, and practice is a must.

If your troop publishes a newsletter, consider reproducing your Scoutmaster's Minutes there. That will let you reach Scouts who miss meetings (or don't listen), along with their parents.

Teachable Moments

Some of the best learning happens when especially good, bad, or simply unexpected things happen in the troop. If a Scout gets hurt because a troop meeting game got out of hand, take a minute to talk about self-control. If you discover a pile of trash along a hiking trail, clean up the mess and talk about why cleanliness is important. If a former troop member donates new tents to the troop, talk about how the Scouts could best show gratitude.

But perhaps “talk” is the wrong word. Instead of telling Scouts what lesson they should take away from a situation, draw them out with open-ended questions. When they have to process and verbalize ideas, those ideas become their own. (It is a lot like math class. The students can watch their teacher solve problems on the whiteboard all day, but the learning process isn’t complete until each of them can solve the problems on their own.

Children start to develop adult brains at around age 11 for girls and age 12 for boys, so that is a good time to start asking more and telling less.

Teachable moments can be powerful, but don’t overemphasize them. Every situation does not call for an in-depth ethical discussion. Also, some situations might be better addressed later in a Scoutmaster’s Minute or at a patrol leaders’ council meeting.

Ethical Dilemmas

Ethical dilemmas are situations (real or invented) where two or more values are in conflict or where the right answer is not always clear. Here is a simple example:

During your American history test, you notice that your best friend is apparently cheating off the class’s top student. A Scout is trustworthy, so you should report your friend’s misbehavior. But a Scout also is loyal, so you should not betray a friend. What do you do?

By presenting a situation like that to a group of Scouts and asking a series of probing questions, you can help prepare them for the sorts of real-world decisions they will have to make their whole lives. Such discussions work especially well with older Scouts, who are able to think abstractly (and often enjoy debating). For ideas, see the “Ethics” column on www.scoutingmagazine.org or do an internet search.

“Why?” is always a good question to ask. It forces a speaker to think about and justify what has just been said.

An action-packed troop program does not allow a lot of time for discussing ethical dilemmas. However, you can find opportunities, such as a rainy day at summer camp or a quiet evening on a backpacking trip.

Reflection

Reflection is a form of careful listening and sharing that allows Scouts and leaders to assess an experience and get from it the greatest value it has to offer. In many ways, Scoutmaster conferences are reflections as a Scoutmaster guides a Scout in exploring the meaning of completing advancement requirements (or failing to complete them, in the case of a Scoutmaster conference for a Scout who is not advancing). Reflection can also be important at the end of an activity. It might even take place in the middle of an activity, especially if Scouts are struggling to solve a problem or need to stop and work through a disagreement.

Sit down for a few minutes with the Scouts involved and lead a reflection by asking questions that cannot be answered with a simple “yes” or “no.” Guide Scouts in thinking through what they just did, the effect of the experience, and the lessons they can draw from it.

The real discoveries of reflection often lie beneath the surface. For example, Scouts might at first assume that a campout on a rainy weekend was not very worthwhile. Through reflection, however, they might come to see that they gained a great deal in practicing patience, making decisions under difficult circumstances, and putting their camping skills to a more rigorous test than ever before.

Reflection is also a means by which Scout leaders can instill the values of Scouting. Scouts might not always realize when they have behaved honorably, been trustworthy, or acted in service to others (or when they missed opportunities to do so). Encourage them to think through their experiences and recognize how to use Scouting ideals as guidelines for the decisions they must make.

Your ease in leading reflections will increase as you gain experience in doing it. Scouts becoming accustomed to participating in reflection will also become better at it, to the point that they can lead similar discussions in the future. Here are a few pointers:

- Think about the kinds of questions you will use during a reflection, perhaps jotting down notes while the event is in progress.
- Have Scouts sit so they can see each other.
- Establish rules. Scouts should agree not to interrupt one another or make fun of each other. Any individual should be free to remain silent if desired.

If you suspect that a Scout wants to speak but is hesitant, try something like this: “It looks like you have something to say.” That offers the Scout an opening to speak if they want—or, if not, the freedom to decline.

Doing reflections by patrol reinforces the patrol method and can make for more meaningful discussions.

- Reserve your judgment about what the Scouts are saying. Instead, help them come to their own conclusions and make their own evaluations.
- Guide but don't dominate the discussion. Get the ball rolling, then let the Scouts take over. Limit your involvement to guiding them back to the subject if they stray too far. A well-placed question or two can inspire others to share their understandings, concerns, and vision. Here are a few questions to use when appropriate:
 - What was the purpose of this activity?
 - In what ways did the patrol or troop work together on this project?
 - What did you learn by doing this exercise?
 - What would you suggest we do differently next time?
 - To what degree did everyone get to participate?
 - Who gave leadership and how?
 - What can we do to solve this particular problem?
- Be positive. Reflection can be enlightening and often fun.
- Encourage the group to determine the value of the experience they just had, focusing first on positive aspects.
- Generalize the experience. A frequent goal of reflection is to help Scouts make the connection between the activity they have just completed and regular troop experiences:
 - How could we use the ideas we learned today in our troop?
 - How can we use what we just learned about decision making when we are on our next campout?

- Steer Scouts toward setting goals based on what they have learned about their recent experience. As always, begin with the positive, but leave the door open for discussion of changes that will improve activities in the future.

Thorns and Roses

A good model for self-directed group reflection, especially on intense activities like high-adventure trips, is Thorns and Roses. Here is how it works:

- Set aside some time each evening to discuss what happened that day. Have the participants sit in a circle facing each other with adults interspersed throughout. Starting with the senior patrol leader or crew leader and ending with the Scoutmaster, go around the circle and give each participant the opportunity to present a thorn (a negative experience from the day), a rose (a highlight of the day), or a bud (something the speaker is looking forward to the next day or farther in the future). As in all reflection, participants should be able to speak freely and without interruption. (If a thorn is particularly painful, a short group discussion may be beneficial after everyone has had a chance to share. Look for ways to turn thorns into roses.)
- Go around the circle only once, and try to end on a high note, perhaps with a Scoutmaster's Minute.



CHAPTER 13

Working With Youth Leaders

Perhaps no method of Scouting causes more apprehension among adult leaders than developing youth leaders. While all eight methods are equally important, some Scouters feel that youth leadership is “more equal” than the others. And so they feel guilty every time they make a decision their senior patrol leader could have made. Or they worry the troop program will fall apart if the patrol leaders’ council drops the ball. Or they suspect they don’t have the skills to teach teenagers how to lead. Or they realize they enjoy being in charge too much to even try.

Working with and developing youth leaders are among the most challenging parts of being a Scouter, but they are also among the most rewarding. There is little more satisfying than watching a youth who fell short as patrol scribe and did not want to run for patrol leader grow into a great senior patrol leader or lead an Eagle Scout service project that is more ambitious than most adults could handle.

“The object of the patrol method is not so much saving the Scoutmaster trouble as to give responsibility to the boy.”

—Robert Baden-Powell

Meeting Youth Leaders Where They Are

In chapter 12, we talked about figuring out where Scouts are developmentally and meeting them there. We also said that both you and they will get frustrated if you assume they are much more or less mature than they really are.

The same is true for youth leaders. When you know what training and experience a Scout has had, and when you have watched that Scout in action as a leader, you should have a good idea of how much support is needed. The trick is to give just enough support to enable success but not so much support that the Scout feels stifled or does not have to stretch a bit.

A good analogy is teaching a child to ride a bicycle. The goal is to learn how to ride. Your role is to figure out when to take off the training wheels and when to let the new cyclist circle the block solo.

Leadership is often a matter of providing what is missing.

The Youth Training Continuum

Perhaps even more than adults do, youth leaders need training. While they have a good understanding of the Scouting program (at least as they have experienced it), they know little about leadership or what must happen behind the scenes to make the program run. Receiving a badge of office does not make a Scout a leader any more than getting a backpack makes the Scout ready for outdoor adventure.

The BSA has developed a continuum of training experiences to give youth leaders the tools they need when they need them. The core courses are Introduction to Leadership Skills for Troops (ILST), National Youth Leadership Training (NYLT), and the National Advanced Youth Leadership Experience (NAYLE). Also available are Kodiak Challenge, Den Chief training, and Powder Horn.

But training actually begins before the first course.

Personal Coaching

As soon as a Scout takes a position of responsibility (whether it is their first time as a youth leader or not), an adult leader should sit down with them to introduce the new position and provide a position description. Besides setting expectations, this coaching session conveys the clear message that the Scout will be trusted to handle the position and will get all the support and guidance needed to succeed.

In most cases, the Scoutmaster is the one who can most effectively conduct this introduction for the senior patrol leader and other new troop leaders. However, other adult or youth leaders may be called on to conduct the introductions for some troop positions. For example, patrol advisors could coach new patrol leaders, or the equipment coordinator could coach the new quartermaster.

Ongoing Coaching

Coaching does not end when a Scout sews on a badge of office. Each youth leader should have an adult counterpart who mentors them throughout the term in office. That adult’s responsibility, simply put, is to help the youth leader succeed. Here are some suggestions:

- Help the Scout set goals. What does the Scout want to accomplish during the term? What needs to be accomplished before the next troop meeting?
- Offer feedback. Provide honest, specific feedback about what is being done well or poorly. Find things to praise and sandwich any criticism inside that praise.
- Offer on-the-job training. If help is needed in a specific area, arrange for a short training on the topic. Remember: This Scout may have never been a leader before.
- Touch base before troop meetings and outings. Connect by phone a few days before each meeting or outing to see if any help is needed and if the Scout is ready for the upcoming responsibilities.
- Make sure the Scout receives recognition. When an especially good job has been done, tell the Scout, the senior patrol leader, and the Scout’s parents.

Introduction to Leadership Skills for Troops

ILST is intended to help Scouts in positions of responsibility understand their tasks and to introduce the organizational and leadership skills they will need to fulfill those tasks. Organized and led by the Scoutmaster and senior patrol leader as a team, it includes three training modules, each of which should take 60 to 90 minutes to complete.

Module One—Troop Organization includes a description of each position of responsibility in the troop, including roles and responsibilities, troop organization, and introductions to vision and servant leadership.

Module Two—Tools of the Trade covers some core skill sets to help the Scout lead, including communicating, planning, and teaching.

Module Three—Leadership and Teamwork incorporates additional leadership tools for the Scout, including discussions of teams and team characteristics, the stages of team development and leadership, inclusion and/or using your team, ethics and values of a leader, and a more in-depth review of vision.

Since the modules stand alone, you could present them on three separate occasions. A better option, however, is to conduct an all-day or overnight leadership retreat. The sample troop calendar in chapter 6, for example, shows the training being offered semiannually: as a one-day event in December and as an overnight event in June combined with the annual program planning conference.

All Scouts should complete ILST as soon as possible after they assume positions of responsibility. Because team-building is a key goal of the training, Scouts should participate again when they assume new positions or are reelected or reappointed. The second or third time around, however, they should play more of a leadership role in the training, as should any Scouts who have completed National Youth Leadership Training or the National Advanced Youth Leadership Experience.

Scouts who complete Introduction to Leadership Skills for Troops are eligible to wear the Trained patch on their uniforms.

ILST Keys for Success

The Introduction to Leadership Skills for Troops syllabus includes detailed suggestions for running the course effectively. Here are some keys to success:

- Be sure the training is added to the troop calendar at the annual planning conference and that it occurs soon after troop elections.
- Let Scouts who are running for office or seeking appointed positions know ahead of time that participation is expected.
- Find a special site for the training, such as a troop family's cabin or a retreat center affiliated with your chartered organization. Make the experience unique.
- Aim for patrol-sized participation of at least six Scouts, which will make discussions and group activities more effective.

- Use youth leaders who have been previously trained as trainers. The senior patrol leader should play an especially prominent role alongside the Scoutmaster.
- Plan breaks between modules so Scouts don't become overloaded or bored and so they have some time to think about, discuss, and even apply the skills they have just learned.
- Aim for variety. When you repeat the course, choose different activities from the syllabus.
- Have adult leaders cook, serve, and clean up after meals during the course. This will let the Scouts focus on the training and demonstrate their importance as youth leaders.
- Present position and Trained patches to participants at the end of the training, and also recognize the youth leaders in front of the troop at the next troop meeting.

National Youth Leadership Training

The second course is the council-level, weeklong National Youth Leadership Training. Often held at a council camp, this course is an in-depth training covering a wide variety of leadership ideas and skills. It simulates a month in the life of a unit and uses fun and hands-on learning sessions to teach the concepts in the toolbox of leadership skills. The Scouts hone their understanding of service-based leadership as they undertake a team quest for the meaning of leadership.

Because it is a weeklong course, NYLT is typically offered in the summer. However, some councils have had great success holding courses during local schools' winter and spring breaks. An alternate two-weekend schedule is also an option some councils choose. Check with your local council (and with nearby councils) for training dates and details.

To attend National Youth Leadership Training, a Scout must:

- Have completed Introduction to Leadership Skills for Troops.
- Be at least 13 years of age.
- Be at least a First Class Scout.
- Have the Scoutmaster's recommendation.

All NYLT courses are open to Scouts, Venturers, and Sea Scouts.

A Toolbox of Leadership Skills

National Youth Leadership Training introduces the following skills.

Vision—Goals—Planning: Creating a Positive Future Success

SMART Goals: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Timely

Planning and Problem-Solving Tool: What, How, When, Who

Assessment Tool: SSC—Start, Stop, Continue

Teaching EDGE: Explain, Demonstrate, Guide, Enable

Stages of Team Development: Forming, Storming, Norming, Performing

Leading EDGE: Explain, Demonstrate, Guide, Enable

Conflict Resolution Tool: EAR—Express, Address, Resolve

Making Ethical Decisions: Right vs. Wrong, Right vs. Right, Trivial

Communication: MaSeR—Message, Sender, Receiver

Valuing People: ROPE—Reach out, Organize, Practice, Experience

National Advanced Youth Leadership Experience

The National Advanced Youth Leadership Experience is an exciting weeklong program where participants enhance their leadership skills while learning skills such as wilderness first aid, GPS navigation, and search and rescue. Courses are held at national high-adventure bases across the country. At NAYLE, Scouts, Venturers, and Sea Scouts expand on the team-building and ethical decision-making skills they learned in National Youth Leadership Training. NAYLE emphasizes leadership, teamwork, and selfless service using the core elements of NYLT to make these skills intuitive.

To attend NAYLE, a Scout must:

- Have completed Introduction to Leadership Skills for Troops and National Youth Leadership Training.
- Be at least 14 years of age.
- Have the Scoutmaster's recommendation.

Kodiak Challenge

The Kodiak Challenge offers Scouts an opportunity to reinforce their leadership skills on an exciting trek adventure. A Kodiak trek can be an expedition, a road trip, a visit to another country, a whitewater rafting trip, a cross-state bicycle adventure, or running a sports week for special-needs youth—anything that helps push the participants out of their personal comfort zones for the sake of adventure and learning.

Before and during the trek, participants explore these leadership skills:

- Creating a shared vision of success
- Planning
- Communication
- The stages of team development
- Inclusiveness
- Values and ethical decision making
- Servant leadership

A Kodiak adventure can take place after ILST, after NYLT, or after NAYLE. The personal growth that occurs depends on what the participant brings to the adventure. More-skilled leaders will progress as well as younger Scouts and Venturers; they will simply have a different but equally rewarding experience. Indeed, Kodiak and the process of developing and implementing a vision can be done more than once.

The course may be run at any level (unit, district, or council) but must be approved by the council training chair or the chair's designee.

To participate in a Kodiak trek, a Scout must:

- Have completed Introduction to Leadership Skills for Troops.
- Be at least 14 years of age and have completed the eighth grade.
- Have the Scoutmaster's recommendation.

Den Chief Training

Training for den chiefs (Scouts from troops who work with Cub Scout or Webelos Scout dens) is offered to help these Scouts understand how to assist Cub Scouts and their leaders. The course is available in two forms: a half-hour interactive online course at www.scouting.org/training/youth and a one-day Den Chief training conference that districts and councils offer. Scouts should take the online course as soon as they become den chiefs and attend the den leader training conference the next time it is available.

Powder Horn

Powder Horn is a hands-on resource management course designed to give adult and youth leaders the contacts and tools necessary to conduct a unit-level high-adventure program. Originally aimed at adult leaders, Powder Horn is now also open to Scouts who are at least 13 years old and have completed the eighth grade. The course exposes participants to various adventure activities and introduces them to consultants who can provide further support. Powder Horn courses run three to six days and often encompass two weekends.

Unlike other training courses, Powder Horn does not follow a strict syllabus. While there are specific course requirements, the content depends heavily on locally available adventure activities and consultants. That keeps the course as relevant as possible to your troop's needs.

Your troop will benefit most from Powder Horn if you and your youth leaders attend together.

Youth Leader Position Descriptions

Besides training, youth leaders need two other things to be successful: a clear position description and an adult counterpart to provide ongoing support and coaching. In some cases, the adult counterpart to a specific youth leader is obvious. The Scoutmaster works with the senior patrol leader, for example, and the equipment coordinator works with the quartermaster. In other cases, such as the Order of the Arrow troop representative, the Scoutmaster needs to make an assignment.

Below are suggested position descriptions for each youth leader position. Your troop may need to modify these descriptions somewhat to address your troop's needs and youth leaders' capabilities. (Rather than set up a youth leader to fail, it makes sense to reduce their responsibilities.) Also, if two Scouts hold the same position, you will want to clarify how their responsibilities differ. For example, a large troop might have two assistant senior patrol leaders, one for program (working with the Order of the Arrow troop representative, instructor, quartermaster, and chaplain aide) and one for administration (working with the historian, scribe, and librarian).

Senior Patrol Leader

- Preside at all troop meetings, events, activities, and the annual program planning conference.
- Chair the patrol leaders' council.
- Appoint youth leaders with the advice and consent of the Scoutmaster.
- Assign duties and responsibilities to other youth leaders.
- Work with the Scoutmaster in training youth leaders.
- Set and enforce the tone for good Scout behavior within the troop.

- Set a good example.
- Wear the Scout uniform correctly.
- Live by the Scout Oath and Scout Law.
- Show and help develop Scout spirit.

Assistant Senior Patrol Leader

- Be responsible for training and giving direct leadership to the following appointed youth leaders: historian, Order of the Arrow troop representative, scribe, librarian, instructor, quartermaster, and chaplain aide.
- Help lead meetings and activities as called upon by the senior patrol leader.
- Guide the troop in the senior patrol leader's absence.
- Perform tasks assigned by the senior patrol leader.
- Function as a member of the patrol leaders' council.
- Help set and enforce the tone for good Scout behavior within the troop.
- Set a good example.
- Wear the Scout uniform correctly.
- Live by the Scout Oath and Scout Law.
- Show and help develop Scout spirit.

Patrol Leader

- Plan and lead patrol meetings and activities.
- Keep patrol members informed.
- Assign each patrol member needed tasks and help them succeed.
- Represent the patrol at all patrol leaders' council meetings and the annual program planning conference.
- Prepare the patrol to take part in all troop activities.
- Work with other troop leaders to help make the troop run well.
- Know what patrol members and other leaders can do.
- Set a good example.
- Wear the Scout uniform correctly.
- Live by the Scout Oath and Scout Law.
- Show and help develop patrol spirit.

Assistant Patrol Leader

- Help the patrol leader plan and lead patrol meetings and activities.
- Help the patrol leader keep patrol members informed.
- Help the patrol leader prepare the patrol to take part in all troop activities.
- Lead the patrol in the patrol leader's absence.
- Represent the patrol at all patrol leaders' council meetings in the patrol leader's absence.
- Work with other troop leaders to help make the troop run well.
- Set a good example.
- Wear the Scout uniform correctly.
- Live by the Scout Oath and Scout Law.
- Show and help develop patrol spirit.

Troop Guide

- Introduce new Scouts to troop operations.
- Guide new Scouts through early Scouting activities.
- Help set and enforce the tone for good Scout behavior within the troop.
- Ensure older Scouts never harass or bully new Scouts.
- Help new Scouts earn the First Class rank in their first year.
- Coach the patrol leader of the new-Scout patrol on the duties of the position.
- Attend patrol leaders' council meetings with the patrol leader of the new-Scout patrol.
- Work with the patrol leader at patrol leaders' council meetings.
- Assist the assistant Scoutmaster with training.
- Coach individual Scouts on Scouting challenges.
- Teach basic Scout skills.
- Set a good example.
- Wear the Scout uniform correctly.
- Live by the Scout Oath and Scout Law.
- Show and help develop Scout spirit.

Den Chief

- Serve as the activities assistant at Cub Scout den meetings.
- Meet regularly with the den leader to review the den and pack meeting plans.
- If serving as a Webelos den chief, help prepare Webelos Scouts to join Scouts BSA.
- Project a positive image of Scouts BSA.
- Set a good example.
- Wear the Scout uniform correctly.
- Live by the Scout Oath and Scout Law.
- Show and help develop Scout spirit.

Historian

- Gather pictures and facts about past activities of the troop, and keep them in scrapbooks, wall displays, or information files.
- Take care of troop trophies and keepsakes.
- Keep information about troop alumni.
- Set a good example.
- Wear the Scout uniform correctly.
- Live by the Scout Oath and Scout Law.
- Show and help develop Scout spirit.

Order of the Arrow Troop Representative

- Serve as a communication link between the lodge or chapter and the troop.
- Encourage year-round and resident camping in the troop.
- Encourage older-Scout participation in high-adventure programs.
- Encourage Scouts to actively participate in community service projects.
- Assist with leadership skills training in the troop.
- Encourage Arrowmen to assume positions of responsibility in the troop.
- Encourage Arrowmen in the troop to be active participants in lodge and/or chapter activities and to seal their membership in the Order by becoming Brotherhood members.
- Set a good example.
- Wear the Scout uniform correctly.
- Live by the Scout Oath, Scout Law, and OA Obligation.
- Show and help develop Scout spirit.

Librarian

- Establish and maintain a troop library.
- Keep records on literature owned by the troop.
- Add new or replacement items as needed.
- Have literature available for borrowing at troop meetings.
- Maintain a system to check literature in and out.
- Follow up on late returns.
- Set a good example.
- Wear the Scout uniform correctly.
- Live by the Scout Oath and Scout Law.
- Show and help develop Scout spirit.

Quartermaster

- Keep records of patrol and troop equipment.
- Keep equipment in good repair.
- Keep equipment storage area neat and clean.
- Issue equipment and see that it is returned in good order.
- Suggest new or replacement items.
- Work with the troop committee member responsible for equipment.
- Set a good example.
- Wear the Scout uniform correctly.
- Live by the Scout Oath and Scout Law.
- Show and help develop Scout spirit.

Scribe

- Attend and keep a log of patrol leaders' council meetings.
- Record attendance and dues payments of all troop members.
- Record advancement in troop records and on the troop advancement chart.
- Handle correspondence appropriately.
- Work with the appropriate troop committee members responsible for finance, records, and advancement.
- Set a good example.
- Wear the Scout uniform correctly.
- Live by the Scout Oath and Scout Law.
- Show and help develop Scout spirit.

Instructor

- Teach Scouting skills as needed within the troop or patrols.
- Prepare well in advance for each teaching assignment.
- Set a good example.
- Wear the Scout uniform correctly.
- Live by the Scout Oath and Scout Law.
- Show and help develop Scout spirit.

Chaplain Aide

- Keep troop leaders apprised of religious holidays when planning activities.
- Assist the troop chaplain or religious coordinator in meeting the religious needs of troop members while on activities.
- Encourage saying grace at meals while camping or on activities.
- Lead worship services on campouts.
- Tell troop members about the religious emblems program for their faith.
- Set a good example.
- Wear the Scout uniform correctly.
- Live by the Scout Oath and Scout Law.
- Show and help develop Scout spirit.

**For more information on the chaplain aide's role—
including a more detailed position description—
see *Advanced Unit Chaplain/Chaplain Aide Training* at
[www.scouting.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/
Chaplain-Training-V-4-04042018.pdf](http://www.scouting.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Chaplain-Training-V-4-04042018.pdf).**

Webmaster

- Establish and maintain a safe and secure troop website.
- Ensure the troop website is a positive reflection of Scouting for the public.
- Manage the troop's electronic communication tools.
- Work with the Scouts to provide up-to-date troop information.
- Work with the scribe.
- Set a good example.
- Wear the Scout uniform correctly.
- Live by the Scout Oath and Scout Law.
- Show and help develop Scout spirit.

Outdoor Ethics Guide

- Have a thorough understanding of and commitment to Leave No Trace principles and Tread Lightly! guidelines.
- Help the troop plan and conduct an outdoor program that effectively practices the principles of outdoor ethics.
- Work with Scouts to help improve their outdoor ethics decision-making skills to minimize impacts as they participate in outdoor activities.
- Support Scouts who are working to complete the relevant requirements for Tenderfoot through First Class ranks.
- Set a good example.
- Wear the Scout uniform correctly.
- Live by the Scout Oath and Scout Law.
- Show and help develop Scout spirit.

Junior Assistant Scoutmaster

- Be 16 or 17 years old
- Function as an assistant Scoutmaster (except for leadership responsibilities reserved for adults 18 and 21 years of age or older).
- Accomplish any duties assigned by the Scoutmaster.
- Set a good example.
- Wear the Scout uniform correctly.
- Live by the Scout Oath and Scout Law.
- Show and help develop Scout spirit.

Setting Leadership Expectations

It is not fair to the troop (or ultimately to the Scout) to reward work that has not been done. Holding a position and producing no results is unacceptable. Each troop can set expectations for youth leaders' performance, but those expectations must be reasonable and evenhanded and take into account that Scouts have activities outside of Scouting that place legitimate demands on their time.

It is important to communicate early and often with a youth leader who is not meeting expectations. A Scout might not realize that the job is not being done well enough, or may feel overwhelmed and in need of help. Ask questions like these:

- What is the youth leader's understanding of the position?
- What do the troop leaders—youth and adult—expect?
- What has been done well?
- What needs improvement?

If it becomes clear that nothing will improve a youth leader's performance, then it is acceptable to remove them from the position. However, it is unfair and inappropriate to tell a Scout for the first time at the end of the term that their performance has been unsatisfactory. In a case like that, the Scout must be given credit for their time in the position. Rarely, if ever, should troop leaders inform a Scout that time, once served, will not count.

For more information, see topic 4.2.3.4.5 in the *Guide to Advancement*.



CHAPTER 14

Recruiting and Retention

No matter how good your program is, Scouts will eventually leave—if only because they turn 18. So it is important to have a constant influx of new Scouts to take their place. But new Scouts do more than help the troop maintain or increase its size. They give youth leaders somebody to lead, each one brings a newcomer's enthusiasm for Scouting that can reenergize old-timers, and they come equipped with parents who may become future adult leaders in the troop.

In this chapter, we look at some ways you can recruit new Scouts, integrate them into the troop, and retain them as members.

If a current troop parent works in sales or marketing, involve that parent in the recruiting process.

For additional resources,
visit www.scoutingwire.org/marketing-and-membership-hub.

Webelos-to-Scout Transition

More than 90 percent of all youth in Scouts BSA were Cub Scouts first, so ensuring a smooth transition from Webelos Scouting (the fourth- and fifth-grade level of Cub Scouting) is critical. The Webelos program is designed to ease that transition—the word itself means **WE'll BE LOyal Scouts**—but that does not mean the transition is automatic. Cub Scout and Scouts BSA leaders alike must work hard to ensure that all Webelos Scouts make the leap from the pack to the troop. This step often gets overlooked.

A Webelos Scout who has earned the Arrow of Light rank, Cub Scouting's highest rank, can join a Scout troop at age 10. (Otherwise, the Scout must be at least 11 years old or have completed the fifth grade.) In practice, Webelos Scouts typically graduate and cross over as dens, often at the blue and gold banquet in February or at the March pack meeting.

Preparing for Scouts BSA

Before we talk about Webelos-to-Scout transition, it is helpful to understand how the Webelos program prepares youth for joining a troop. Five of the six requirements for the Scouting Adventure—which is required to earn the Arrow of Light rank—relate directly or indirectly to Scouts BSA.

Requirement 1. Prepare yourself to join a troop by completing at least A–C below:

- Repeat from memory the Scout Oath, Scout Law, Scout motto, and Scout slogan. In your own words, explain their meanings to your den leader, parent, or guardian.
- Explain what Scout spirit is. Describe for your den leader, parent, or guardian some ways you have shown Scout spirit by practicing the Scout Oath, Scout Law, Scout motto, and Scout slogan.

- Give the Scout sign, salute, and handshake. Explain when to use each.
- Describe the First Class Scout badge, and tell what each part stands for. Explain the significance of the First Class Scout badge.
- Repeat from memory the Pledge of Allegiance. In your own words, explain its meaning.

Requirement 2. Visit a troop meeting with your parent or guardian and, if possible, your den members and leaders. After the meeting, do the following:

- Describe how the Scouts in the troop provide its leadership.
- Describe the four steps of Scout advancement.
- Describe ranks in Scouting and how they are earned.
- Describe what merit badges are and how they are earned.

Requirement 3. Practice the patrol method in your den for one month by doing the following:

- Explain the patrol method. Describe the types of patrols that might be part of a Scout troop.
- Hold an election to choose the patrol leader.
- Develop a patrol name and emblem (if your den does not already have one), as well as a patrol flag and yell. Explain how a patrol name, emblem, flag, and yell create patrol spirit.
- As a patrol, make plans to participate in a troop's campout or other outdoor activity.

Requirement 4. With your Webelos den leader, parent, or guardian, participate in a troop's campout or other outdoor activity. Use the patrol method while on the outing.

Requirement 5. Do the following:

- Show how to tie a square knot. ...

Beyond advancement requirements, Webelos Scouts and their parents are familiar with the structure and language of Scouting. They understand about money-earning projects and charter renewal and medical forms, they know where the Scout shop is, and they have spent time at camp, so they have at least some basic camping gear. Finally, if their Webelos den opted for the tan and olive uniform, they already have the basic elements of the Scouts BSA uniform.

Your most important ally in recruiting Webelos Scouts is the Webelos den leader. The den leader may well have been with the Scouts since they were Lions or Tigers and thus has a vested interest in finding the right troop for them.

The Webelos-to-Scout Transition Process

The transition from Webelos Scouting to Scouts BSA takes at least a year. Here are some typical milestones along the way.

August

- The troop membership chair begins building relationships with local Webelos leaders. If you have a Cub Scout pack at the same chartered organization, that is the place to start, but don't stop there. Reach out to other packs in your community, especially those that don't have a troop at their chartered organization.
- The troop membership chair develops a spreadsheet of prospects, including Webelos Scouts' names, parents' names, and contact information.
- The Scoutmaster assigns den chiefs to each Webelos den.

With nearly 20 percent more packs than troops in America, there are plenty of packs with no clear destination for their Webelos Scouts.

September

- The Scoutmaster sends a welcome letter to each prospect.
- The troop membership chair adds all prospects to the troop mailing list. Don't rely exclusively on the Webelos den leader. If the den leader is burned out on Scouting or is not interested in your troop, information may not get relayed.

October

- The troop holds a joint campout with one or more Webelos dens. Be sure the location and theme are appropriate for novice campers; this is not a good time to backpack a section of the Pacific Crest Trail.

December and January

- Webelos dens visit troop meetings. Webelos Scouts should participate in the troop meeting, not merely observe, so the content should be age-appropriate. Between the opening and closing, parents should meet with the troop membership chair. This is a good time to distribute troop calendars and other materials and talk about what sets your troop apart.

Many Webelos leaders like their Webelos Scouts to visit more than one troop, even if they have a troop that seems to be the obvious destination. Their goal is to make sure each youth finds the troop that best meets their personal needs and situation.

February and March

- Webelos Scouts graduate from Cub Scouting and into Scouts BSA. The Scoutmaster and a few Scouts (especially the Webelos den chief) participate in the transition ceremony and welcome new Scouts with such items as Scout shoulder loops, a troop neckerchief, or a Scouts BSA handbook. (See "Webelos Crossover Ceremonies" at www.programresources.org/webelos-crossover.)

March

- The troop membership chair and assistant Scoutmaster for new Scouts work together to integrate new Scouts into the troop. Tasks include processing applications and medical forms, adding the Scouts to the troop database, and making sure they are on the road to earning the Scout badge. (See the section "Integrating New Scouts" later in this chapter.)
- A troop committee member orients the new Scouts' parents on how the troop works and encourages every parent to take a leadership role in the troop. It is important to tell parents at the outset that their involvement is expected. (See the section "The New Parent Conference" in chapter 16.)

April

- The troop holds a campout to welcome the new Scouts and begin teaching them Scout skills. As in October, the location and activities should accommodate novice campers.
- Summer camp promotion begins.

May

- The new Scouts work on Scout and Tenderfoot (and perhaps Second Class) requirements, especially those that can't be completed at summer camp. (Do not focus too much on advancement since many Scouts may be burned out on advancement after having hustled to finish the Arrow of Light rank requirements.)

A heavy focus on advancement may tend to divide the new Scouts from the rest of the troop.

June or July

- All new Scouts attend summer camp. The first summer camp is crucial. Scouts who attend can come home with the Tenderfoot badge, a merit badge or two, and strong relationships with troop leaders and other Scouts.

August

- Advancement and integration into the troop continue with the Scouts who joined in the spring.

One-on-One Recruiting

Most Scouts come straight from a Webelos den, but Cub Scouting is not a prerequisite for Scouts BSA membership. Many youth experience Scouting for the first time as 12-, 13-, or 14-year-olds when they lose interest in other activities or hear about a friend's trip to one of the BSA's high-adventure bases. Others return to Scouting a few years after quitting Cub Scouting when they discover the fun and excitement the troop program offers. Some even join in high school when peer pressure finally starts to release its hold.

A Scout can invite a friend to try Scouting at any time. In fact, every Scout must do so to fulfill First Class requirement 10:

Tell someone who is eligible to join Scouts BSA, or an inactive Scout, about your Scouting activities. Invite this person to an outing, activity, service project, or meeting. Provide information on how to join, or encourage the inactive Scout to become active. Share your efforts with your Scoutmaster or other adult leader.

While the friend does not have to join, or even show up, the Scout must extend the invitation. Here are several things you can do to encourage effective one-on-one recruiting:

- Designate occasional, visitor-friendly outings as "bring a friend" weekends.

- Allow prospective Scouts to attend their first outing at no cost.
- Exempt Scouts who bring prospects on outings from chores like washing dishes or offer other incentives.
- Reassure Scouts that friends they recruit can join the same patrol rather than being put in the new-Scout patrol. (This is really the best option for Scouts who join the troop one at a time.)
- Make a big deal of presenting Recruiter patches to all successful recruiters.
- Offer an incentive for the Scout or patrol that recruits the most new members during a specified time period. (These could be incentives you create or incentives offered by your local council during a fall or spring roundup.)

The BSA's council and unit accident insurance plans automatically cover non-Scouts, non-Scouters, and guests who are "attending scheduled activities for the purpose of being encouraged to become registered leaders or Scouts."

Troop Open Houses

A troop open house combines the recruiting efforts of individual Scouts, as described above, with promotion at the troop or district level. By focusing on a specific date, you create a deadline and generate excitement that can energize Scouts and prospects alike.

Identifying Prospects

Your best source of prospects is your current Scouts, so challenge each of them to invite at least one friend to the open house. Take time at a troop meeting to have Scouts identify prospects and write their names on a whiteboard or easel pad. To prompt their thinking, suggest categories like these: neighbors, friends from homeroom, friends from sports (especially where the season has just ended or is about to end), friends from a place of worship, friends who used to be in Scouting, and friends who are not involved in extracurricular activities.

Beyond friends of Scouts, these sources can be valuable:

- **Schools.** Check with your district membership chair about the possibility of doing presentations in area middle schools a week or so before the open house.
- **Your chartered organization.** Promote the open house in your chartered organization's newsletter. If your troop is operated by a school or religious institution, set up an information table in the weeks leading up to the open house.
- **"Charter-less" organizations.** Set up information tables or displays at places of worship and schools in your neighborhood that do not have their own troops.
- **Orphan packs and Scouts.** Check with your district membership chair or district executive to connect with packs that do not have troops at their chartered organization, Webelos Scouts who did not graduate from Cub Scouting, and Scouts who did not reregister or who have recently moved to the area.

Planning the Open House

The open house itself is a special troop meeting designed to showcase your troop's program to prospects and their parents. Held shortly before a visitor-friendly outing, it should inform and entertain prospects and entice them to give Scouting a try.

Timing is critical. Do not schedule your open house before an outing that prospects would not be able to attend or enjoy. It is much better to schedule it right after that big canoeing or backpacking trip.

Features include:

- A friendly greeting at the door by older Scouts and the Scoutmaster
- Nametags for all visitors and Scouts
- Pairing of each prospect with a current Scout (either the Scout who invited the prospect or a friendly older Scout)
- Displays related to the troop program: photo albums, posters, maps from backpacking treks, a model campsite, etc.
- A video or slide show of recent troop outings (perhaps available on DVDs that prospective Scouts can take home)
- A round-robin by patrols of fun, hands-on Scout activities and games
- A separate parent breakout with the troop's parent coordinator to explain the program, answer questions, and discuss leadership needs
- Distribution of applications, troop calendars, and handouts about the next campout and summer camp
- Food for all and prizes for those who turn in applications that night

Be sure to capture contact information for all visitors. Send an email to the parents, and have Scouts send postcards to the prospects with whom they were paired. Pursue prospects until they join the troop or decline to do so; do not just assume someone does not want to join.

Integrating New Scouts

When youth join your troop, 15 or more things need to happen in fairly rapid succession. The list might look something like this.

All new Scouts:

- Complete a membership application and pay the registration or transfer fee
- Turn in an Annual Health and Medical Record
- Encourage their parents to turn in troop resource surveys
- Join a patrol
- Receive a patrol emblem and sew it on the uniform shirt

The troop:

- Gives each new Scout such items as a troop neckerchief or troop T-shirt
- Adds the Scouts to its database
- Adds the Scouts to its newsletter mailing list and/or email distribution list
- Sets up a Scout account for each Scout (if these are used in the troop)
- Scoutmaster meets with each Scout
- Has its parent coordinator meet with the Scouts' parents to orient them and distribute troop calendars and other information
- The Scouts meet other key leaders, including the senior patrol leader and assistant Scoutmaster for new Scouts
- The assistant Scoutmaster for new Scouts explains to the Scouts and their parents what uniform parts and equipment are needed—and what they do not yet need
- The Scouts attend a troop meeting for the first time
- The Scouts complete the Scout rank requirements and receive their Scout badge
- The Scouts sign up for summer camp

The troop membership chair should make sure all these things happen before assuming that the Scout has been fully integrated into the troop. The more things on the list that do not happen, the more likely a Scout is to disappear from the program.

If you have an entire Webelos den joining at one time, it can be hard to keep track of all these steps. One solution is to create a spreadsheet where you can check off each task for each Scout. Another solution is to put some of the responsibility on the Scouts themselves. Give each new Scout a "passport" listing the things they need to accomplish (such as turning in their membership application, meeting with the Scoutmaster, and completing the requirements for the Scout rank). As each Scout does these things, the appropriate troop leaders should sign the Scout's passport. Then, when all the signatures have been collected, give the Scout a troop T-shirt or other recognition item.

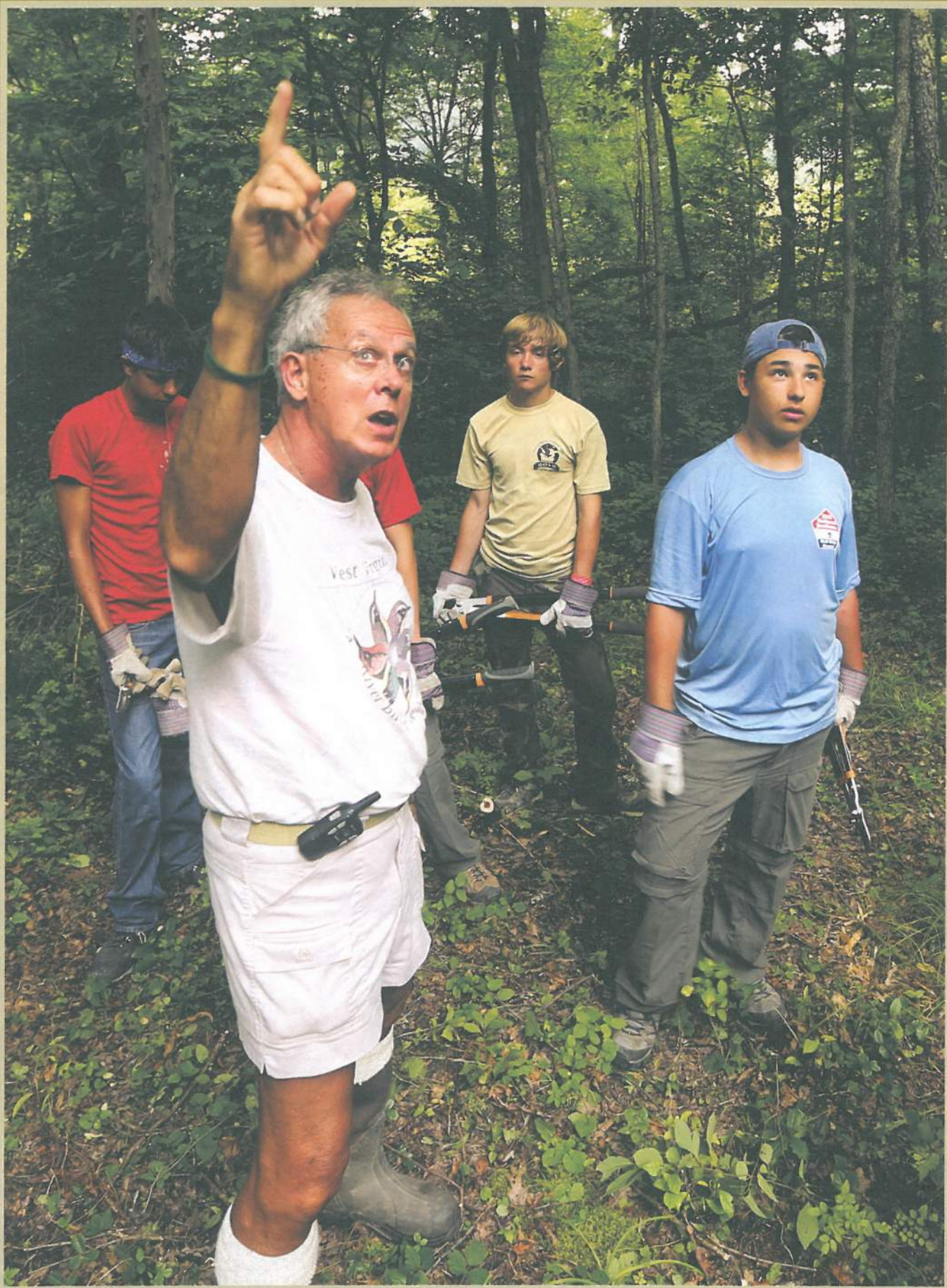
The passport method shifts the burden from adult leaders to the Scout. It also gives new Scouts specific responsibilities and something to do at their first few troop meetings, when they can often feel lost.

Retaining Troop Members

No matter how effective your troop is at recruiting, it will struggle if it can't retain members. While some attrition is inevitable as Scouts age out, move away, or decide to pursue other interests, strong troops hold on to most Scouts who reach First Class rank, well into their high school years. The secret to strong retention is understanding—and addressing—the reasons Scouts leave. Volume 2 of the *Troop Leader Guidebook* provides information on ways to retain older Scouts.







ALL ABOUT ADULTS



Some adults who are new to Scouts BSA see an apparent paradox. The program relies on strong adult leaders, and yet it asks those adult leaders to step back and let the Scouts lead themselves. Veteran Scouters even talk about the “rocking-chair Scoutmaster,” as if the best leaders do nothing but relax in a corner and drink coffee or “bug juice.”

The truth, of course, is much different. While adult leaders in Scouts BSA are rarely in the spotlight, they are always present and leading. Like successful coaches, they stay off the playing field, but they have a huge impact on how the game is played.

CHAPTER 15

Adult Leader Roles and Responsibilities

This chapter covers the roles of adult leaders and how they can play supporting roles in the troop.

Adult Leadership Requirements

As discussed in chapter 2, adult leaders must:

- Agree to abide by the Scout Oath and the Scout Law, to respect and obey the laws of the United States, and to subscribe to the precepts of the BSA's Declaration of Religious Principle.
- Be at least 21 years of age (except assistant Scoutmasters, who must be at least 18 or older).
- Complete and sign the Boy Scouts of America adult application.
- Be screened and approved by the chartered organization.
- Submit to a criminal background check conducted through public records sources.
- Complete Youth Protection training within 30 days of registering with the BSA and before direct contact with youth members can begin.
- Complete position-specific and Introduction to Outdoor Leader Skills trainings.

All leadership positions are open to men and women and to both citizens and noncitizens. However, a chartered organization may impose additional leadership requirements, such as membership in that organization.

Essentials of Scout Leadership

The 1938 *Handbook for Scoutmasters* identified 10 essentials for what it called "Scoutmastership." Here is a slightly updated—and still quite relevant—version of the list:

- A belief in youth that will make you want to invest yourself and your time on their behalf
- A zeal focused on one point: the young person's happiness through the formative years (Translation: "A happy youth is a good youth; a good youth is a good citizen.")
- An immense faith in Scouting as *the* program that will best serve to mold our youth into fine adults
- A realization that to the youth Scouting is a game—and to you a game with a purpose: character building and citizenship training
- A knowledge that to the youth you serve, *you* are Scouting (Translation: "What you are speaks so loudly that I cannot hear what you say.")

- A steadfastness of purpose to carry out a planned program with energy, perseverance, patience, and good humor
- A willingness to submerge yourself and make youth leaders lead and grow through an effective application of the patrol method
- A desire to advance in Scout leadership by making use of training offered and material available on the subject
- A readiness to work hand in hand with the home, religious institution, chartered organization, school, local council, and National Council for the good of the individual youth and the community as a whole
- A love of the outdoors in all its phases and a vision of the hand that created it

Servant Leadership

More than anything, a Scout leader is a servant leader, someone who values persuasion over telling, listening over speaking, empathy over unrealistic expectations, community over isolation, and other people's growth over personal glory.

Although the term *servant leadership* was coined by Robert K. Greenleaf in 1970, the concept is thousands of years old. This passage from the *Tao Te Ching*, a Chinese text dating to the sixth century B.C., embodies the concept.

A leader is best when people barely know he exists,

Not so good when people obey and acclaim him,

Worse when they despise him.

Fail to honor people,

They fail to honor you.

But of a good leader who talks little,

When his work is done, his aim fulfilled,

The people will say, "We did this ourselves."

If your youth leaders proudly say, "We did this ourselves," you have been an effective servant leader. (And don't worry; they recognize the role you have played, even if they do not acknowledge it.)

"The Scoutmaster's job is like golfing, or scything, or fly-fishing. If you 'press' you don't get there, at least not with anything like the extent you do by a lighthearted effortless swing."

—Robert Baden-Powell

Defining Adult Leader Roles

The roles and responsibilities of youth leaders in a troop—senior patrol leader, patrol leader, and others—are clearly defined. Although the details may vary from troop to troop (or from one Scout to the next), the position descriptions remain basically the same, as described in chapter 13.

Adult leaders are different. Some troops have a Scoutmaster and one or two assistant Scoutmasters who work as a team without any formal assignments. Others have a dozen or more assistant Scoutmasters, each with a unique, detailed position description. Still others have formal succession plans that specify when a leader rotates out and how a successor is elected.

General Principles

In thinking about adult leadership roles, it is important to keep some general principles in mind:

- Youth leaders should lead the troop. The role of adult leaders is to train, coach, and support those youth leaders.
- The troop will function better if adult leaders have defined areas of responsibility. When everybody is in charge, nobody is in charge.
- The leadership roles you create should address the troop's needs. If you want to develop strong patrols, for example, assign an assistant Scoutmaster to each patrol.
- Everyone—including Scouts and their families—should know who is in charge in the Scoutmaster's absence. Many troops designate a first assistant Scoutmaster who fills that role, though a temporary designee might or might not be the Scoutmaster's designated successor.
- The troop can establish minimum expectations of assistant Scoutmasters, including completion of basic training. Adults who can attend only the occasional meeting or outing might serve more effectively as troop committee members. Note, however, that all adult leaders should be trained for the leadership positions they hold.

Adult Leader Position Descriptions

Below are position descriptions for the Scoutmaster and a basic complement of assistant Scoutmasters. If your troop has more adult leaders available, it could designate assistant Scoutmasters to work with advancement, Eagle Scout candidates, Webelos-to-Scout transition, and training. If your troop has fewer adult leaders available, individuals may need to take on more than one role, or the Scoutmaster may need to do less delegating.

This chapter deals only with the Scoutmaster corps.
For troop committee position descriptions,
see the *Troop Committee Guidebook*.

Scoutmaster Corps

Scoutmaster

- Complete position-specific training, including IOLS.
- Ensure that the troop program achieves the aims of Scouting by using the methods of Scouting.
- Train and guide youth leaders.
- Work closely with the senior patrol leader, and attend patrol leaders' council meetings.
- Coordinate the work of assistant Scoutmasters.
- Work closely with the troop committee, and make reports at troop committee meetings.
- Ensure that Scouts have the chance to participate in at least 10 days and nights of camping each year.
- Ensure that Scouts have the chance to advance to First Class rank in a year and one rank per year after that.
- Conduct or delegate Scoutmaster conferences.
- Ensure that BSA policies are followed.
- Set a good example.
- Wear the Scout uniform correctly.
- Live by the Scout Oath and Scout Law.
- Show and help develop Scout spirit.

Assistant Scoutmaster for Program

- Complete position-specific training, including IOLS.
- Work closely with the Scoutmaster and the senior patrol leader to ensure adequate planning of meetings and activities.
- Attend patrol leaders' council meetings (in a support role).
- Serve as a resource to the patrol leaders' council for program ideas.
- Monitor troop meetings to ensure that youth leaders are carrying out the planned program.
- Work with the outdoor/activities coordinator to ensure adequate support of planned programs (such as sufficient equipment, trained leaders in attendance, and drivers).
- Ensure that BSA policies related to activities are followed.
- Promote pursuit of the National Camping Award.
- Promote participation in high-adventure opportunities.
- Set a good example.
- Wear the Scout uniform correctly.
- Live by the Scout Oath and Scout Law.
- Show and help develop Scout spirit.

Assistant Scoutmaster for Advancement

- Complete position-specific training, including IOLS.
- Promote advancement and other awards.
- Identify merit badge counselors and coach instructors.
- Work with the patrol leaders' council to ensure that planned activities give Scouts the opportunity to advance.
- Coordinate scheduling of Scoutmaster conferences and boards of review.
- Work with the scribe to ensure that advancement records are up to date.

- Support Scouts who are planning courts of honor.
- Oversee Life-to-Eagle counseling efforts.
- Set a good example.
- Wear the Scout uniform correctly.
- Live by the Scout Oath and Scout Law.
- Show and help develop Scout spirit.

Assistant Scoutmaster for Administration

- Complete position-specific training, including IOLS.
- Work closely with the assistant senior patrol leader as this youth supervises troop-level youth leaders.
- Coordinate support of troop-level youth leaders by their troop-committee counterparts.
- Promote participation in youth leader training opportunities.
- Set a good example.
- Wear the Scout uniform correctly.
- Live by the Scout Oath and Scout Law.
- Show and help develop Scout spirit.

Assistant Scoutmaster for the New-Scout Patrol

- Complete position-specific training, including IOLS.
- Ensure that each new member is fully integrated into the troop, as discussed in chapter 14.
- Work with the instructor(s) and the patrol's troop guide to ensure patrol members learn basic Scouting skills.
- Coach the patrol leader on preparing for and leading patrol meetings.
- Monitor patrol members' attendance and advancement.
- Ensure that Scouts have the chance to advance to First Class rank in 12 to 18 months.
- Prepare new Scouts for Scoutmaster conferences and boards of review.
- Promote pursuit of the National Honor Patrol Award.
- Set a good example.
- Wear the Scout uniform correctly.
- Live by the Scout Oath and Scout Law.
- Show and help develop Scout spirit.

Assistant Scoutmaster for Traditional Patrols (one per patrol)

- Complete position-specific training, including IOLS.
- Coach the patrol leader on preparing for and leading patrol meetings.
- Support the patrol as it carries out duties in the troop.
- Support the patrol in planning patrol activities.
- Monitor patrol members' attendance and advancement.
- Promote participation in youth leader training and high-adventure opportunities.
- Promote pursuit of the National Honor Patrol Award.
- Set a good example.
- Wear the Scout uniform correctly.
- Live by the Scout Oath and Scout Law.
- Show and help develop Scout spirit.

Assistant Scoutmaster for the Older-Scout Patrol

- Complete position-specific training, including IOLS.
- Coach the patrol leader on preparing for and leading patrol meetings.
- Support the patrol as it carries out duties in the troop.
- Serve as a resource for planning high-adventure activities.
- Encourage the patrol to plan quarterly patrol activities.
- Monitor patrol members' attendance and advancement.
- Promote participation in youth leader training and high-adventure opportunities.
- Promote pursuit of the National Honor Patrol Award.
- Set a good example.
- Wear the Scout uniform correctly.
- Live by the Scout Oath and Scout Law.
- Show and help develop Scout spirit.

Young Assistant Scoutmasters and Junior Assistant Scoutmasters

While the Scoutmaster must be at least 21 years old, assistant Scoutmasters may be as young as 18. Moreover, a junior assistant Scoutmaster (a youth position described in chapter 13) can do most of the work of an assistant Scoutmaster.

As you develop roles for adults in your troop, do not overlook these young leaders. While they may lack the maturity and life experiences of older adults, they can offer a youthful perspective, mastery of Scout skills, rapport with troop members, and an abundance of energy and available time.

Developing *Esprit de Corps* in the Scoutmaster Corps

Unlike the patrol leaders' council and the troop committee, the Scoutmaster and assistant Scoutmasters do not have regularly scheduled meetings. As a result, it can be hard for them to gel as a group and easy for them to work at cross purposes.

Adding yet another meeting to a crowded troop calendar can be difficult, but there are simple ways to create "**the spirit of the group**" among these essential leaders. Here are some ideas.

- Camp and eat together on troop outings. Doing so also makes space for patrols to do the same thing and keeps adults out of the Scouts' way.
- Attend roundtables and training courses as a group. Travel together if these events are held far from home.
- Meet for half an hour before or after troop committee meetings.
- Huddle before or after troop meetings. For example, if the patrol leaders' council huddles before each meeting, the Scoutmaster corps could huddle after each meeting.
- Share a meal before troop meetings. Designate a time at a restaurant near your meeting place, and encourage adult leaders to stop by for food and fellowship.
- Plan occasional social events for adult leaders and their spouses or significant others.

CHAPTER 16

Working With Parents

Parents play an essential role in the life of the troop. They drive their children to meetings and pay most of their expenses. They bring refreshments to courts of honor and transport gear to camp. They participate in money-earning projects as volunteers and customers. And they are the pool from which most adult leaders will come.

At the same time, Scouts become increasingly independent of their parents as they progress through the program. When Scouts are old enough to drive themselves to meetings and pay their own way through money-earning projects, it can be easy to assume their parents are no longer important to the troop.

The truth, of course, is that parental support remains key, even as the nature of that support evolves. Savvy leaders realize that they will be most successful when they work with parents as partners. In this chapter, we look at parents in several roles: as parents, as helpers, and as potential leaders.

When we refer to parents in this chapter, we are including stepparents, grandparents, legal guardians, and adult siblings—whoever is helping to raise a Scout.

Parents As Parents

Early in your relationship with a new Scout's parents, it is important to let them know what you expect from them and from their Scout. These expectations could include:

- Scout attendance standards
- Troop uniform policy
- Scout and parent participation in money-earning projects
- Parent attendance at courts of honor and parent meetings
- Support of the Scout's advancement work
- Parent review of *How to Protect Your Children From Child Abuse: A Parent's Guide*, which is found in the front of the Scouts BSA handbooks
- Completion of a troop resource survey by each parent
- Completion of an Annual Health and Medical Record for the Scout
- Communication with the Scoutmaster about important health and behavior issues, medications, allergies, and limitations
- Communication with the Scoutmaster about issues that could affect participation (everything from baseball practices that conflict with spring troop meetings to the family's need for financial assistance to pay for summer camp)

While it is not mandatory for parents who are not volunteers to take BSA Youth Protection training, encourage all parents to take advantage of this free and valuable training.

At the same time, you should let parents know what you expect them *not* to do, including:

- Signing off on their child's advancement (unless they are registered as leaders or merit badge counselors)
- Doing things for their child that can be done without parental assistance, such as packing gear for a campout, carrying gear, or setting up a tent
- Buying camping gear without checking on what is needed and appropriate for troop activities

These expectations should be discussed at the new parent conference, as described below. Many troops also distribute family handbooks that include parental expectations or post the information on their websites.

Per the *Guide to Safe Scouting*, all aspects of the Scouting program are open to observation by parents and leaders.

Communicating With Parents

As we discuss in chapter 23, the primary means of communication within the troop should be from Scout to Scout. However, relying solely on Scouts to take information home is a risky strategy. It is important to communicate directly with parents in ways that supplement Scout-to-Scout communication.

Besides ongoing communication through newsletters and emails and general parent meetings, there are several times when Scout-specific parent meetings are warranted:

- When the Scout joins the troop, as described below
- When problems, such as behavior issues, arise that troop leaders can't handle without input and support from the Scout's family
- When the Scout first takes a leadership position (so that both the Scout and the parents understand the extra responsibility this will involve)
- When the Scout is ready to begin an Eagle Scout service project (so both the Scout and the parents understand the intricacies of planning and carrying out such a project)
- When it is time to plan their son's Eagle Scout court of honor (an event that typically relies on extensive parental involvement)

The New Parent Conference

A key element in the process of integrating new Scouts into the troop is the new parent conference. Shortly after joining, the parents of all new Scouts should meet with an adult leader in the troop, either individually or as part of a group of new parents. The conference, which ideally is held in a separate room during the troop meeting, has several purposes:

- To introduce parents to the Scouts BSA program (and explain how it differs from Cub Scouting if they came from that program)
- To show parents how Scouts BSA gives youth what they want and parents what they need from a program for their children
- To introduce parents to how your specific troop works
- To explain to parents what your troop expects of them and their children
- To show parents how their participation in the troop can help their children succeed and be personally rewarding for them as well
- To introduce parents to some of the troop leaders with whom they and their children will be involved

The meeting is also a good opportunity to distribute and explain youth and adult applications, medical forms, troop calendars and handbooks, information about summer camp, and troop resource surveys.

For more information, see the supplemental training module Orientation for New Scout Parents.

It is OK if some of the content of the new parent conference repeats what you discussed during a Webelos den visit or troop open house. Parents who visited several troops with their Webelos Scouts may not remember what they heard at your troop vs. the troop down the street.

The Annual Parent Meeting

Consider holding a parent meeting at the beginning of each program year. Topics could include a "state of the troop" report by the Scoutmaster, an overview of the upcoming year's calendar by the senior patrol leader, and a recruiting pitch by the troop committee chair or parent coordinator.

To maximize attendance, you could combine the meeting with a family cookout or the court of honor where you hand out badges from summer camp (typically the biggest court of honor of the year). Plan separate activities for the Scouts during the parent meeting, and recruit someone to babysit younger brothers and sisters.

Parents As Helpers

It is important for parents to act as parents, but it is equally important to move them quickly to the next stage: helpers. There are far more tasks to be done in the troop than you and the other members of the Scoutmaster corps can handle. Moreover, many of those tasks can distract you from your primary focus, working with the Scouts themselves—not to mention from career and family.

What sorts of tasks can parent helpers handle? They can pick up supplies from the Scout shop, collect fees and medical forms, make phone calls, make photocopies, assemble troop handbooks, handle the charter-renewal process, lead money-earning projects, coordinate service projects, provide tools for service projects, organize meeting-place cleanups, take their children to buy groceries, build props for ceremonies, organize courts of honor, bring refreshments to meetings, send birthday cards, welcome new families to the troop, renew the vehicle registration for the troop trailer, maintain the troop's office equipment, and much more.

Decide ahead of time how you will need help during the year and create signup sheets. Put these sheets on clipboards, and attach a pen and a pad of sticky notes to each clipboard (so parents can sign up and also keep a record of what they have agreed to do). Then, circulate the clipboards during the annual meeting. Few people will pass along a clipboard without signing up for at least one task.

If necessary, parents can also serve as adults on outings. In lieu of two registered adult leaders, you can meet the two-deep leadership requirement with one registered leader and a parent of a participating Scout or another adult (one of whom must be 21 years of age or older). Parents can also supervise approved patrol day hikes and service projects, which don't require registered leaders.

Be sure to coach untrained parents on their roles before they attend an activity. It can be difficult for untrained parents to let youth leaders do their jobs without unsolicited help. Also make sure these parents take Youth Protection training for their own protection and that of the Scouts.

Scout leaders are doers by nature, stepping up without a second thought when there is a task to be done. Unfortunately, that is also why many Scoutmasters struggle to let their youth leaders lead and find it difficult to delegate responsibilities. When faced with a new task, ask yourself these questions:

- Does this task require a trained leader?
- Am I the best person to handle this task?
- Is this the best use of my time right now?

If your answer to these questions is "no," then delegate the task to a parent. The first time around, you may spend more time than if you had just done the task yourself. Eventually, however, you will end up saving time. It really is true that many hands make light work.

When recruiting a parent helper, meet in person; ask for help with a specific, manageable task; and avoid scary words like "leader" and "in charge." Remember that four of the strongest words in the world are, "Can you help me?"

Some troops establish standards for parental involvement, perhaps expecting each parent (or one parent from each family) to take on one task each year. They communicate their expectations when prospective Scouts visit, at the new parent conference, and at annual parent meetings. Besides helping to spread the workload, such a standard emphasizes that Scouting is not a program to which you *take* your children, but instead is a program in which you participate *with* your children. This communicated expectation breaks down the wall between leaders and parents and shows that you are a group of adults working together to raise youth using the Scouts BSA program.

Parents As Potential Leaders

Using parents as helpers has another important benefit. When a parent helps out, you get the chance to evaluate his or her leadership potential. Did the task get done? Did the parent work well with Scouts or other adults (depending on the type of task)? At the same time, the parent gets to evaluate the possibility of volunteering more with the troop. Was the task enjoyable? Was the task a good use of the parent's time and talents?

This two-way tryout is a good first step toward turning a parent helper into a full-fledged adult leader. In fact, it is a much better approach than starting an untested volunteer in an important role like assistant Scoutmaster for program.

Do not expect every parent helper to become an adult leader. Many parents don't have the time or the temperament to work as Scoutmasters or assistant Scoutmasters.

From Webelos Leader to Assistant Scoutmaster

When a den of Webelos Scouts crosses over, it seems obvious to recruit their den leader as the assistant Scoutmaster for the new-Scout patrol. While that can work quite well, you should consider the potential pitfalls. The first is that someone who has been serving as a "hands-on" den leader may have a hard time shifting from that mindset to being a "hands-off" assistant Scoutmaster, resulting in a patrol that operates more like a den. The other is that a longtime Cub Scout leader may be ready for a break from volunteer service.

One solution might be to give the former Webelos leader a less demanding role—for example, assistant Scoutmaster with no defined tasks for the first six months to a year. Just don't allow the former Cub Scout leader to disengage completely; it can be much harder to get people to reengage later after they have been inactive for a while.

Get Scout Parents Involved

Scout parents may need some encouragement to get more involved with Scouting and their son's unit. Help them take that leap by giving them simple tasks at first. Until they warm up to taking on more responsibility, engage them in the following types of assignments:

- Perform an occasional task to assist the unit's program.
- Go to and observe Scout meetings.
- Assist with outings.
- Support the program financially.
- Coach their Scout's advancement and the earning of recognitions.
- Influence their Scout's continued participation.

Perhaps an assistant Scoutmaster can be assigned to

- Help parents find ways to participate in the Scouting program.
- Provide an orientation for all parents in understanding how the unit works and how it benefits their family.
- Keep parents updated on the unit's program and their child's involvement.



CHAPTER 17

Working With the Troop Committee

The 1966 Disney comedy *Follow Me, Boys!* tells the story of a longtime Scoutmaster named Lem Siddons. When health problems sideline Lem, he worries about a host of details related to a campsite his troop is building on the outskirts of town: Who will get the free lumber? Who will recruit the volunteers? Who will make sure everything is ready for dedication day?

Lem's doctor tries to reassure him that the troop committee will handle everything, but Lem isn't so sure. "The troop committee?" he says. "They will gum everything up."

That is one of the best laugh lines in the movie, but it also points out the disconnect that can occur between the Scoutmaster corps and the troop committee. In this chapter, we discuss ways you can work effectively with your troop-committee colleagues.

Understanding Roles and Responsibilities

As we discussed in chapter 2, the troop committee functions as the troop's board of directors and as a sort of parent support group, while the members of the Scoutmaster corps work directly with the Scouts. In school terms, the troop committee is like the school board and the PTA rolled into one, while the Scoutmaster corps is like the faculty. You can also think of the relationship this way: The troop committee sets policies, and the Scoutmaster corps carries them out, relying on the support of the troop committee to do so.

Dividing up responsibilities this way has many advantages. Here are a few:

- The Scoutmaster and assistant Scoutmasters are better able to focus on working with the Scouts because they don't have to worry about chores like maintaining the troop checking account or picking up badges at the Scout shop.
- Boards of review are more meaningful because they are made up of troop committee members, not the leaders whom Scouts see every week. (And those leaders don't get pulled away from other tasks to sit on boards.)
- Troop committee members may have a clearer perspective on problems that arise because they are not directly involved in the week-to-week troop program.
- While the Scoutmaster corps handles short- and medium-term planning, the troop committee is free to focus on long-term and strategic planning.

- Having more adults involved gives you a natural system of checks and balances. This perhaps is especially important in terms of financial management and making sure BSA policies are being followed.
- In challenging situations, such as conflict with a parent, the committee can provide support the Scoutmaster needs.
- When a Scout drops out, a committee member may be more comfortable than the Scoutmaster at following up (and, as a neutral third party, more successful at finding out why).
- New volunteers can easily see which setting better fits their skills, interests, and available time.
- No leader gets burned out by taking on too much responsibility—and the troop is not overly dependent on any one volunteer.

Working With Your Troop Committee Counterpart

In theory, the division between committee and Scoutmaster corps is clear. In practice, things are a little muddier. For example, the committee's outdoor/activities coordinator and the assistant Scoutmaster for program are both concerned with troop outings—but there is a difference. The assistant Scoutmaster works with the patrol leaders' council to plan outings, while the outdoor/activities coordinator provides the support needed to make those outings successful, such as securing transportation.

Clearly, it is important for leaders working in related areas to work together. This starts with the Scoutmaster and committee chair but extends to many other leaders. Adults with overlapping responsibilities should communicate early and often to make sure they are coordinating their efforts, not working at cross purposes.

Attending Meetings

The troop committee generally meets monthly, typically for an hour and a half. The Scoutmaster is expected to attend and participate (although not as a voting member). Assistant Scoutmasters generally do not need to attend, although they probably should when topics on the agenda involve their areas of responsibility. (See the suggested troop committee meeting agenda in the box.)

Suggested Troop Committee Meeting Agenda

1. Call to order—troop committee chair
2. Welcome and introduction of new members and guests—troop committee chair
3. Approval of previous meeting's minutes—secretary
4. Reports:
 - Scoutmaster (troop progress, actions of patrol leaders' council, disciplinary problems, attendance, monthly outing plans, other troop needs)
 - Secretary (newsletter or website, additional resource surveys)
 - Outdoor/activities coordinator (outdoor plans, special activities, district and council activities, summer camp update)
 - Treasurer (troop's current financial standing, money-earning projects, Friends of Scouting)
 - Advancement coordinator (troop advancement progress, boards of review, courts of honor)
 - Chaplain (chaplain support to troop members, religious emblems program, participation of Scouts in the religious emblems program)
 - Training coordinator (new training materials, youth leader and adult volunteer opportunities for training)
 - Equipment coordinator (status of new and existing troop equipment and of troop needs, new procedures for safe use and storage of equipment)
 - Membership coordinator (status of Webelos Scout graduation ceremonies, troop open houses, and youth-to-youth recruiting)
 - Parent coordinator (status of new Scout parents and their involvement in the troop)
5. Old business (reports on task assignments from previous meeting)
6. New business (including new task assignments as issues are discussed)
7. Announcements (including date of next month's troop committee meeting)
8. Adjournment

Troop committee meetings are the logical time to request help with an issue or clarification of a policy, so be sure to get such topics on the agenda. You can also avoid playing phone tag or scheduling a one-on-one meeting by connecting with your troop committee counterpart before or after a troop committee meeting.

If assistant Scoutmasters don't attend committee meetings, it is important for them to hear the results of those meetings. They (like troop parents) should receive copies of the meeting minutes. Also, the Scoutmaster should update assistant Scoutmasters on key decisions each month. If your troop's Scoutmaster corps holds regular meetings, be sure to include a brief troop committee update.

Just as assistant Scoutmasters can skip most troop committee meetings, most troop committee members are not expected to regularly attend troop meetings (or outings). It is helpful for them to occasionally attend to see the results of all their hard work. In practice, most committee members will attend troop meetings from time to time as the need arises or as they are called on to participate in boards of review. A few members, such as the advancement coordinator and treasurer, will attend regularly because their roles require them to work directly with specific Scouts.

Bridging the Gap With the Troop Committee

Most troops operate on a collegial basis with little daylight between the Scoutmaster corps and the troop committee. Occasionally, however, one group or the other starts to focus so much on its own area of responsibility that it loses sight of the bigger picture.

Several actions can help maintain this connection:

- Troop committee members occasionally should visit troop meetings and outings and should always be invited to courts of honor, troop banquets, and similar events.
- Troop committee members should be encouraged to attend Scoutmaster and Assistant Scoutmaster Leader Specific Training, while Scoutmasters and assistant Scoutmasters should be encouraged to complete the Troop Committee Challenge. (See chapter 18 for more information.)
- Leaders who have been on the troop committee for several years should consider serving as assistant Scoutmasters for a while (and vice versa).

CHAPTER 18

Adult Leader Training

Every Scout deserves a trained leader. In fact, every Scout deserves a troopful of them. While the Scouts BSA program is not rocket science, trial and error is not the best way to learn how to run it. After all, when you learn by trial and error, your Scouts end up being your research subjects!

In the early days of the Boy Scouts of America, someone asked Chief Scout Executive James E. West what were the three greatest needs of the new movement. He replied, "Training, training, and training." That is still true today.

Training is important for every leader, regardless of background. You will need (and want) to be trained if you are a parent who has never put on a Scout uniform, but you will also need to be trained if you are a recent Cub Scout leader or an Eagle Scout from 20 years ago. Without training, you can easily miss the differences between Cub Scouting and Scouts BSA or between the Scouting program today and two decades ago. What is more, training puts you in touch with fellow Scouters, both trainers and fellow participants, who can offer insights and ideas that go far beyond the course syllabus.

The BSA's adult and youth leader training courses are designed to complement one another. For example, Wood Badge teaches adults the same leadership skills that National Youth Leadership Training teaches Scouts. Troops benefit the most when both adult and youth leaders go to training because everyone can then speak a common language.

The Adult Training Continuum

Training is not a once-in-a-lifetime experience like getting an immunization. Instead, it should happen continually throughout your time as a Scout leader. Just as teachers and doctors complete regular continuing education, Scouters never stop learning.

To make sure the right training is available at the right time, the Boy Scouts of America has developed a five-level training continuum for adult leaders. The levels are joining, orientation, basic, supplemental, and advanced. The first level is required of all registered leaders, the next two are more role-based training, and the last two focus more on advanced skills and leadership.

Joining

The BSA requires Youth Protection training for all new leaders before their membership applications can be approved. This training, which covers prevention and recognition of child abuse, can be completed online or in a classroom setting. It must be taken before a volunteer can have direct contact with Scouts.

All leaders must retake Youth Protection training every two years. If your training is not current when your troop charter is renewed, you can't be reregistered.

Completing Training Online

Youth Protection training and several other courses can be completed through the BSA's E-Learning Course Management System. To get started, go to www.my.scouting.org, and establish an account using the member number you received when you registered. You can then take a variety of general and program-specific courses. If you take a course before getting a membership number, you can return to the site later to enter your number for training-record credit.

The site keeps track of the courses you have completed and allows you to print (or reprint) training certificates. You can also review courses you have taken to refresh your memory.

Basic

Every leader should complete basic training as soon as possible—ideally before beginning to work with Scouts. What this training looks like depends on the leader's position; hence the term "leader-specific training." For position-specific training requirements, see www.scouting.org/training/adult/. In addition, members of the Scoutmaster corps must complete these two courses:

- Scoutmaster and Assistant Scoutmaster Leader Specific Training
- Introduction to Outdoor Leader Skills

The first course covers the role of the adult leader, the outdoor and advancement programs, and program planning and administration. The second course introduces the practical outdoor skills adults need to lead Scouts in the out-of-doors. These courses are usually offered in the classroom and at camp, respectively.

Members of the troop committee, meanwhile, must complete the Troop Committee Challenge, an interactive course designed to help the troop committee work as a team. The Troop Committee Challenge is available both online and as an instructor-led course.

Once you have completed the basic training for your position, you are considered trained and can wear the Trained Leader emblem on your uniform. It goes on the left sleeve below the emblem of office for which it was earned.

Note that the Trained Leader emblem is specific to your current position. If you go from being an assistant Scoutmaster to a troop committee member, you need to complete the Troop Committee Challenge before again wearing a Trained Leader emblem.

Supplemental

Supplemental training includes a variety of courses given on a district, council, or national basis. These courses offer additional information on targeted areas of the program through a combination of additional knowledge of Scouting in general, additional skills and roles knowledge, and/or beginning advanced leadership skills knowledge. Some supplemental training courses expand on what was covered in basic training; others break new ground. Some follow a set syllabus; others draw on the experience and expertise of the participants.

Here are some examples:

This Is Scouting. This online course, which is also available on DVD, presents an overview of the core elements of Scouting, including the organization's mission, aims, and methods. It also provides leaders with a look at BSA resources and a clear understanding of Scouting's expectations of its adult leadership. Completion is necessary to earn the Scouter's Training Award and the Scouter's Key.

Hazardous Weather. This online course, which is also available on CD, prepares Scouters to deal with lightning, extreme temperatures, flash floods, tornadoes, and other weather hazards. Every outing must include at least one leader who has completed this training.

Safe Swim Defense, Safety Afloat, Climb On Safely, and Trek Safely. These courses prepare leaders to safely lead aquatic, climbing, and backcountry activities. They can be completed online or in the classroom. Many summer camps offer them to in-camp leaders.

Roundtables. Led by a roundtable commissioner and roundtable team, roundtables are designed to help your troop succeed by providing a monthly time of training, program ideas, fellowship, and idea sharing with district volunteers and peers in other units.

University of Scouting. Many councils offer Scouting "universities," which are day- or weekend-long events that serve leaders at all levels of Scouting. You can typically take several courses during the event, including homegrown courses and standard courses like Safe Swim Defense.

National Conferences. The Philmont Training Center, part of the 137,000-acre Philmont Scout Ranch near Cimarron, New Mexico, offers a variety of weeklong summer and fall conferences for unit, district, and council Scouters. (Spouses and children can participate in simultaneous age-specific family programs.) Similar conferences are offered during the winter at the Florida High Adventure Sea Base in the Florida Keys. Some national conferences focus on a particular position like Scoutmaster; others cover broad-based topics like advancement or leader training.

Advanced

Leaders who are looking for a deeper understanding of Scouting or additional leadership development will find it in advanced training courses. Successful completion of basic training is usually a prerequisite for these courses, which build on the skills developed at other levels of training.

Advanced training courses include:

- **Wood Badge.** Designed for all adult Scouters, Wood Badge is the most well-known example of advanced leadership training. Over two three-day weekends (or one week), participants learn and practice an array of leadership skills—the same skills Scouts learn in National Youth Leadership Training. The first part

of a Wood Badge course reflects unit meetings, while the second part uses a unit camping activity as its delivery model. Participants then complete a "ticket," a list of goals that will allow them to use their new leadership skills in ways that strengthen Scouting back home.

- **Kodiak Challenge.** The Kodiak Challenge is a three- or six-day, trek-based course for adult leaders, older Scouts, and Venturers. It is designed to be an adventure that pushes the boundaries of participants and encourages them to try new things that may be out of their comfort zone. It is an experience that has its underpinnings in the application of the leadership skills they learned in other courses. (See chapter 13 for more information.)
- **Powder Horn.** This exciting weeklong or two-weekend experience is a high-adventure resource management course for adult leaders, older Scouts, and Venturers. The course introduces participants to high-adventure skills through presentations by outside consultants and hands-on practice. Besides learning introductory skills, participants learn how and where to secure resources and how to integrate exciting, creative high-adventure activities into their unit-level programs.
- **Philmont Leadership Challenge.** Held at the Philmont Scout Ranch, this weeklong conference helps participants learn to internalize and practice leadership skills. The action-packed, backcountry experience hones the skills taught in Wood Badge in an outdoor experiential learning environment and underscores the values of teamwork and servant leadership.

At All Levels of Training

Training may begin in the classroom or online, but it does not end there. Across the training continuum, you can benefit from personal support, informal sharing, and self-development.

Personal Support

All leaders need someone to talk to about Scouting, to share their involvement, and to help them see their leadership positions in perspective. If you have not already, seek out an experienced leader who can mentor you and serve as a sounding board as you work through challenges. This could be your troop committee chairperson, a former Scoutmaster, or someone you have met at a training course.

Informal Sharing

Sharing experiences with other adults in similar leadership positions is a means of resolving problems together, giving deeper insight into one's own performance, and learning new ideas. Events such as roundtables are excellent opportunities to exchange ideas with district volunteers and your peers in other units. In fact, many Scouters find the "meeting after the meeting" to be especially valuable.

Self-Development

Don't overlook opportunities to educate yourself, especially in areas where you know you need help. Take time to study *Scouting* magazine, *Scout Life* magazine, and other Scouting literature. Keep up with Scouting blogs and the latest additions to www.scouting.org. Don't overlook training available outside Scouting that can apply to your leadership role, such as leadership training through your employer or safety training through groups such as the American Red Cross.

Recertification

Keeping Scouts safe, and keeping Scouting leaders up-to-date with current information and methods, means some training courses need to be retaken every two or three years. The following courses that troop leaders are likely to take must be retaken every two years:

- Youth Protection
- Safe Swim Defense
- Safety Afloat
- Chain Saw Safety
- Hazardous Weather
- Physical Wellness
- Climb On Safely
- Trek Safely

These certifications are good for three years:

- Paddle Craft Safety
- Aquatics Supervision/Swimming and Water Rescue
- Trainer's EDGE

Training Recognition

Training truly is its own reward. The satisfaction of being more successful and comfortable in your role as a leader is well worth the investment of time and money to attend training courses. That said, the BSA also offers more tangible recognition of training completion.

As described above, Scouters who complete basic training are eligible to wear the Trained Leader emblem on their uniforms. Those who complete advanced training courses like Wood Badge receive distinctive, course-specific recognition items. And Scout leaders can earn other training awards for achieving standards of training, tenure, and performance.

For more information about these and other awards, see chapter 20, and visit www.scouting.org/awards/awards-central.







ADVANCEMENT AND AWARDS



The advancement and awards aspects
of the Scouting program complement
each other and are meant to enhance the
Scout's experience and competitive edge.

CHAPTER 19

Advancement Overview

Few aspects of Scouts BSA are in the popular consciousness more than the advancement program. The idea of merit badges is so familiar that one social networking website has offered “merit badges” for doing things like checking in at the gym. And just about everybody knows that being an Eagle Scout is a high honor, though they do not know exactly what becoming an Eagle Scout entails.

But what many people—including some Scout leaders—don’t realize is that earning badges is an outcome of Scouting, not its aim. Ultimately, it is more important that Scouts *learn* than that they *earn*. Moreover, advancement is just one of the eight methods of Scouting, as discussed in chapter 1. Don’t focus so much on this method that you forget to use the other methods; that would be like going to the gym and only exercising one arm.

The Elements of the Advancement Program

The advancement program includes two primary elements: ranks and merit badges. Scouts can also earn various other awards, which we discuss in chapter 20.

The best source for information on advancement policies and procedures is the *Guide to Advancement*. The best source for rank and merit badge requirements is the *Scouts BSA Requirements* book (current year), which also includes a section on special awards and recognitions. The publication is revised annually, and the inside front cover details all changes in requirements since the previous year. Current requirements also appear on the BSA website at www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/advancement-and-awards.

Ranks

Scout Rank

New Scouts earn the Scout rank by completing the requirements for that rank. The Scout must complete requirements for the Scout rank as a member of a troop. Scout rank requirements include the most basic ones such as the square knot and reciting the Scout Oath, Scout Law, motto, and slogan. If any of the requirements have already been completed as part of the Webelos Scouting Adventure, a Scout must simply demonstrate the required knowledge or skills to the Scoutmaster or other designated leader after joining the troop. The Scout can then start working through the ranks of Tenderfoot, Second Class, First Class, Star, Life, and Eagle Scout.

Tenderfoot, Second Class, and First Class

The next three ranks have very specific requirements that cover all the basic skills Scouts should master in the areas of camping, cooking, first aid, physical fitness, nature, and citizenship. Many of these topics are spread across the three ranks, becoming progressively harder at each step. For example, a Scout helps cook a patrol meal for Tenderfoot rank, plans a meal and learns about nutrition for Second Class rank, and plans and cooks a whole weekend’s worth of meals for First Class rank.

A Scout may work on the requirements for Scout through Tenderfoot ranks simultaneously, but the ranks must be earned in sequence. There are no tenure requirements for these ranks. However, completing First Class requirement 3 (“Since joining, have participated in 10 separate troop/patrol activities ...”) will take many Scouts close to a year.

The BSA recommends that all Scouts strive to achieve First Class rank within the first 12 to 18 months. Research has shown that Scouts who reach that rank within that time are more likely to remain active in the program.

Star, Life, and Eagle Scout

For the upper ranks—Star, Life, and Eagle Scout—the requirements offer more flexibility than the specifically detailed requirements of the lower ranks. For each upper rank, a Scout must earn a certain number of merit badges, amass a certain number of service hours (plan and lead a service project for Eagle Scout rank), and serve a certain number of months in positions of responsibility within the troop. The specific choices, however, are left up to the individual Scout. Few Scouts will follow the same path to Eagle Scout rank, and few merit badge sashes will feature the same array of badges.

Scouts also advance at very different rates. While the members of a Cub Scout den typically advance more or less together, the members of a Scout patrol do not. Some Scouts will fly through the ranks, becoming Eagle Scouts at 13 or 14. Some Scouts will reach Scouting’s highest rank just before their 18th birthdays. Some will end their Scouting careers as First Class Scouts or Life Scouts.

Eagle Palms

Scouts who have reached the Eagle Scout rank and are not yet 18 years old may work toward Eagle Palms, which are degrees of the Eagle Scout rank. To earn a Palm, a Scout must remain active in the troop and patrol for three months, earn five additional merit badges beyond those required for Eagle Scout rank (or for the previous Palm), and demonstrate leadership ability and Scout spirit. Scouts may earn multiple Palms. The Bronze Palm recognizes five merit badges beyond Eagle Scout, the Gold Palm represents 10 merit badges, and the Silver Palm represents 15 merit badges. Beyond that, Scouts wear a combination of Palms to denote the number of badges earned.

The *Scouts BSA Requirements* book has more details about Eagle Palms.

Baden-Powell on Badge Hounds

Some Scouts are more interested in collecting badges than in learning skills. As Robert Baden-Powell explained in *Aids to Scoutmastership*, the first handbook for Scoutmasters: "There is always the danger of badge-hunting supplanting badge-earning. Our aim is to make boys into smiling, sensible, self-effacing, hardworking citizens, instead of showy, self-indulgent boys. The Scoutmaster must be on the alert to check badge-hunting and to realize which is the badge-hunter and which is the keen and earnest worker."

Merit Badges

Scouts may choose from approximately 130 merit badges—the number varies from year to year as badges are introduced or discontinued—in subjects ranging from American Business to Woodwork. Many of these badges cover core Scouting skills like camping, first aid, and swimming. Others cover life skills like cooking, fitness, and money management. But most merit badges are designed to introduce Scouts to careers or hobbies as varied as truck transportation, robotics, and golf.

Scouts may begin earning merit badges as soon as they join a troop, and many will come home from their first summer camp with one or two—perhaps Swimming or Basketry. That said, Scouts do not have to earn merit badges to advance until they begin working on the Star rank.

Merit badges on the required list for the Eagle Scout rank have a silver border on the patch. All others have a green border.

There is no deadline for completing the requirements for a badge except the Scout's 18th birthday.

What Happens When Requirements Change?

Rank and merit badge requirements change from time to time, typically with an effective date of January 1. Unless otherwise stated in the *Scouts BSA Requirements* book, a Scout who has already begun work on a rank, merit badge, or Eagle Palm when a revision is introduced may switch to the new requirements or continue with the old ones until the badge is completed. However, if the Scout has not already begun fulfilling the requirements for a badge when the new requirements become effective, the new requirements must be used. Only if work has already begun on a merit badge when it is discontinued, and active work continues, may the Scout complete the badge requirements and count the badge toward advancement. In the case of a discontinued badge, presentation of the cloth badge itself depends on availability.

It is a misconception that discontinued merit badges may be earned as long as the patch and requirements can be found. See the *Guide to Advancement*, topic 7.0.4.4.

Advancement for Scouts With Disabilities

Scouts who have permanent physical or mental disabilities (or disabilities expected to last more than two years or beyond the 18th birthday) may request permission to complete alternate requirements for Scout, Tenderfoot, Second Class, or First Class ranks. They may also request permission to substitute alternative merit badges for those required for Eagle Scout rank. (They are not permitted, however, to change merit badge requirements.) For detailed information, see the *Guide to Advancement*, topic 10.2.2.0; the *Scouting for Youth With Disabilities Manual*; and the Application for Alternative Eagle Scout Rank Merit Badges.

The Four Steps to Advancement

Four basic steps lead to the ranks of Scout through Eagle Scout:

1. The Scout learns.
2. The Scout is tested.
3. The Scout is reviewed.
4. The Scout is recognized.

Step 1—The Scout Learns

Learning is a natural outcome of Scouting activities. A Scout begins learning the Scout Oath and Scout Law immediately upon joining a troop. Scouts going on their first campout might learn more about the outdoors than ever before—and might come home surprised to discover how many rank requirements were completed during the trip.

Nothing inspires advancement so much as a lively troop program. Take care of the program, and advancement will be an inevitable outcome. The monthly program features chosen during the annual planning conference are loaded with chances for Scouts to learn skills and complete tasks that lead to rank advancement. (For more information, see chapter 7, "Troop Program Planning.")

While advancement is a natural outcome of program, some requirements place demands on the troop to provide opportunities for Scouts to show their abilities. At its annual planning conference and monthly meetings, the patrol leaders' council should keep advancement opportunities in mind. Cooking by patrols on every campout allows Scouts to complete their cooking requirements, for example, while many first aid requirements can be covered during monthly program features that focus on preparing Scouts to meet emergencies.

In many cases, subtle tweaks allow activities to contribute to advancement. For example, to earn Second Class rank, a Scout must complete a five-mile hike using a map and compass. If you plan ahead and bring those tools, a simple hike can become an advancement opportunity.

Instruction in Scouting skills comes from a number of sources. Most important are the Scouts themselves, sharing what they know with one another and helping each other along the advancement trail. Scouts serving as troop instructors can provide guidance in their areas of specialization, as can other older Scouts. The troop guide and the assistant Scoutmaster for the new-Scout patrol play major roles in helping young Scouts get a solid foundation as they are starting out.

Older Scouts will find knowledgeable resources in registered merit badge counselors. Experts outside of Scouting who specialize in various outdoor skills and other subjects could be invited to troop meetings from time to time to help Scouts prepare for upcoming adventures. Powder Horn training, discussed in chapters 13 and 18, can put you and your older Scouts in contact with a variety of program consultants.

Step 2—The Scout Is Tested

A Scout who wants to complete an advancement requirement must demonstrate to a leader that the skill has been mastered at the level expected. In a new-Scout patrol, that leader might be the assistant Scoutmaster or the troop guide assigned to the patrol. A Scout in a traditional or older-Scout patrol might be tested by an adult troop leader or by the patrol leader, troop guide, or another junior leader, provided that the youth leader has already earned the rank for which the Scout is being tested.

Completing a requirement is often more a check-off process than a formal examination. It is easy to tell when a Scout has taken part in a required number of troop and patrol activities, when a Scout has successfully pitched a tent and spent a night camping out in it, and when a Scout has swum a certain distance. In other cases, such as knot tying, a Scout will need to demonstrate the skills involved.

When a Scout successfully demonstrates completion of a requirement, a leader acknowledges that fact and records the achievement in the youth's Scouts BSA handbook and with the troop scribe. The scribe keeps track of every Scout's advancement progress in the Troop Record Book or with a computer software program. Each Scout's requirement completions can also be recorded on a troop wall chart for all to see—a valuable incentive for Scouts to achieve higher ranks. Finally, a designated adult submits an advancement report to the local council.

Each Scout is expected to meet the requirements—no more and no less—and to do exactly what is stated. If a requirement specifies “show or demonstrate,” that is what must be done; “telling” or “describing” is not enough. The same holds true for words and phrases such as “discuss with your counselor,” “make,” “list,” “in the field,” “collect,” “identify,” and “label.”

The Scoutmaster Conference

For each rank, a Scout must participate in a Scoutmaster conference. This conference is a visit between the Scoutmaster and a Scout that can provide a forum for discussing the Scout's ambitions and life purpose and for establishing goals for future achievement. It is also a valuable opportunity for the Scoutmaster and the Scout to discuss activity in the troop and the Scout's understanding and practice of the ideals of Scouting. Together they can set objectives for the Scout not only in Scouting but also as a family member, student, and citizen in the community. In fact, it is a good idea to schedule Scoutmaster conferences with Scouts who *are not* advancing; otherwise, you miss out on these important discussions.

Remember to conduct all Scoutmaster conferences in accordance with the Youth Protection requirements.

The Scoutmaster can also encourage a Scout's advancement by reviewing with the Scout the requirements for the next rank. This is perhaps especially important during Scoutmaster conferences for First Class and Life ranks since the Star and Eagle Scout ranks add requirements Scouts have not encountered before.

A Scoutmaster conference can be held at any time during a Scout's pursuit of a given rank, not just after completion of all the other requirements.

Among other things, the Scoutmaster conference can accomplish the following goals:

- Establish trust and understanding between a Scout and Scoutmaster
- Reinforce the ideals of Scouting
- Allow the Scout and Scoutmaster to share ideas and ask questions of one another

If you and a Scout set goals during a Scoutmaster conference, be sure to review progress in a follow-up conference. It makes sense to keep notes of each conference and review those before meeting with a Scout again.

Conferences for the ranks of Scout through Life Scout should last 10 to 15 minutes. Those for Eagle Scout might last 30 minutes or somewhat longer. They can be conducted during troop meetings, during outdoor activities, or in the Scout's home (provided a parent is also present). Each conference should be a private discussion between the Scoutmaster and a Scout, but it must be held in full view of other people. Remember to conduct all Scoutmaster conferences in accordance with the Youth Protection requirements.

These pointers will help make every Scoutmaster conference a success:

- Make the conference special. Give the Scout your undivided attention throughout the meeting.
- Invite the Scout to share in the discussion.
- Keep the setting relaxed. Don't sit behind a desk or across a table from the Scout.
- Keep the tone positive. If there are areas of improvement to discuss, be sure to bring up behavior and achievements you can praise, too.
- Close the meeting with the Scout handshake as you remind the Scout that you always welcome the chance to visit and that you are available anytime to discuss a question, a problem, or a success that the Scout wants to share.

A Scout can't “pass” or “fail” a Scoutmaster conference. The Scout meets the requirement simply by participating.

Conference for Scout, Tenderfoot, Second Class, and First Class

If you are holding the conference after all the requirements for the rank have been met, congratulate the Scout on completing the advancement requirements, then explain what can be expected at the board of review. Look over the requirements for the next rank, and make sure the Scout understands them. The following are some subjects that might lead to further insights:

- School (favorite and least favorite subjects)
- Sports and hobbies
- What the Scout liked best about the last troop outing
- Changes the Scout would like to see in troop meetings
- Interactions with older Scouts in the troop
- The Scout's family activities
- How the Scout defines concepts such as Scout spirit, being morally straight, and duty to God
- How the Scout spends free time
- When appropriate, the Scout's interest in and ability to handle a patrol position such as scribe or quartermaster, or one of greater responsibility such as patrol leader

Conference for Star, Life, Eagle Scout, and Eagle Palms

Scoutmaster conferences with Scouts working toward Star, Life, and Eagle Scout ranks and Eagle Palms can be every bit as meaningful and important as those meetings conducted with younger Scouts. Consider asking experienced Scouts questions that explore some of these subjects:

- Thoughts about how the troop as a whole is doing and what the Scout can do to help improve it
- Troop leadership positions that the Scout seeks or desires
- Being a role model for younger Scouts
- How to deal with issues of drugs, alcohol, and tobacco
- How the Scout defines concepts such as Scout spirit, being morally straight, and duty to God
- Part-time jobs and extracurricular activities
- Required and elective merit badges that the Scout is interested in earning
- Special Scouting goals such as Order of the Arrow membership, attending a jamboree, or working on a camp staff

Eagle Scout Requirement Due Dates

All the requirements for the Eagle Scout rank must be completed before the Scout's 18th birthday. The only exception is the board of review, which can be conducted up to three months after the Scout's 18th birthday without special approval. Boards of review that occur three to six months after that date must be preapproved by the local council. Boards of review that occur beyond six months after the Scout's 18th birthday must be preapproved by the National Council.

For more detailed information about the Eagle Scout board of review beyond the Scout's 18th birthday, see the *Guide to Advancement*, topic 8.0.3.1.

Step 3—The Scout Is Reviewed

After a Scout has completed all the requirements for a rank, the Scout appears before a board of review. For Scout through Life ranks, the board consists of three to six members of the troop committee. For Eagle Scout rank, the membership is determined by local council policy. The board could be made up of members of the troop committee joined by a representative from the district or council; or a combination of unit, district, and council volunteers; or only district or council volunteers.

Specific information about the composition of boards of review can be found in the *Guide to Advancement*, topics 8.0.2.0 and 8.0.3.0.

The purpose of the board of review is not to retest the Scout, but rather to determine the quality of the Scout's experience, decide whether the requirements have been completed, and if so, encourage the Scout to continue the quest for the next rank. Each review should also include a discussion of ways in which the Scout lives up to the Scout Oath and Scout Law in everyday life.

Won't Scouts forget the skills they have learned if they are not retested? Probably so. However, the best way to make sure Scouts retain their skills is not to retest them but to plan meetings and outings that encourage them to regularly use or teach those skills. "Use it or lose it" is a good watchword.

Boards of review for the ranks of Scout through Life should each last about 15 minutes. An Eagle Scout board of review generally lasts 30 minutes or somewhat longer. Every session should be set up so that members of the board can share a meaningful discussion with the Scout about important matters including personal goals, personal growth, and Scout spirit. The following guidelines will help foster an atmosphere of trust and support:

- Make every effort to put the Scout at ease.
- Smile and create a friendly, nonthreatening mood.
- Enliven the discussion by asking about the Scout's recent Scouting adventures.
- Ask open-ended questions; yes or no questions do not lead to meaningful discussion.
- Ask about family, school, and religious activities.
- Offer encouragement and praise.

At the end of the review, the Scout should leave the room while the board members discuss the Scout's qualifications. Then they should call the Scout back to say the new rank has been approved—or to outline very clearly what more the Scout must do to fulfill the requirements successfully. The board can close the session by congratulating the Scout on the progress already made and encouraging continued good efforts.

A troop should schedule its boards of review to occur regularly—perhaps during one troop meeting each month—so that Scouts and leaders can plan for them well in advance.

Besides reviewing Scouts who have completed requirements for advancement, boards that meet regularly might also choose to meet with Scouts who are not advancing. A board could give those Scouts support and perhaps help them discover ways to overcome obstacles hindering their progress.

Section 8 of the *Guide to Advancement* includes extensive information on conducting boards of review, including the appeals process.

Step 4—The Scout Is Recognized

Immediate recognition is a powerful incentive built into the BSA's advancement program. A Scout should receive the new rank badge as soon as possible after the achievement has been approved by a board of review. A simple ceremony at the conclusion of a troop meeting or during a campout is ideal, with the Scoutmaster making the presentation of the badge.

Every three or four months, the troop should hold a court of honor—a formal recognition with families, friends, chartered organization members, and the public in attendance. All Scouts who have advanced to any rank except Eagle Scout, or who have earned merit badges since the last court of honor, should be recognized.

Eagle Scout Court of Honor

A special Eagle Scout court of honor is held after an Eagle Scout board of review has verified that the candidate has completed all the requirements for that rank and the application has been approved by the National Council. The Scout and family should be involved in planning the ceremony and selecting those who will make the presentation of the award and credentials.

Courts of honor can be deeply meaningful experiences for Scouts. These ceremonies should be chaired by a youth leader and planned with the support of the Scoutmaster or the troop committee member responsible for advancement. To make the most of the opportunity, those planning a court of honor might consider these guidelines:

- Publish the dates for courts of honor in the troop calendar.
- Promote an upcoming court of honor throughout the troop.
- Involve troop families and the chartered organization.
- Invite local media.
- Have all awards on hand and certificates signed well in advance of the event.
- Ensure that the meeting place is appropriate and properly set up. Consider outdoor locations, weather permitting.
- Use decorations and props that befit the occasion.
- Make the ceremony dignified and meaningful, both for Scouts and for the audience.
- Consider serving refreshments afterward and providing adults and Scouts time to visit.
- Watch the time. Most courts of honor should last no longer than one hour.
- Having a Scout plan and lead a court of honor can fulfill requirement 8 of the Eagle-required Communication merit badge.

For more information about planning and conducting courts of honor, see chapter 11 and Troop Program Resources (www.programresources.org).

The Merit Badge Program

While troop leaders teach and sign off on rank requirements, merit badge counselors sign off on merit badges. These counselors are registered volunteers who have skills and education in the field and have been approved by the local council. (A troop leader may serve as a merit badge counselor. However, registration and approval as a merit badge counselor is separate and in addition to the leader's primary registered position in the troop.)

Merit badge counselors are registered with the local council and must complete Youth Protection training before they begin working with Scouts.

When used effectively, the merit badge program does several things for Scouts:

- It provides them opportunities to learn valuable skills and introduces them to lifetime hobbies and career interests.
- It helps them build confidence by overcoming obstacles—even ones as simple as picking up the phone to call a stranger or making a presentation to a group of fellow Scouts.
- It lets them develop social skills by interacting with a variety of adults.
- It gives them avenues to further explore topics of interest. For example, a counselor might offer a workplace tour or suggest books to read. (Note, however, that counselors cannot add to or subtract from badge requirements.)

There is no limit to the number of merit badges a Scout may earn from one counselor, and counselors may work with and pass any Scouts, including their own children. That said, Scouts should be encouraged to reach out to counselors beyond their families and troops. Only by doing so will they get the most out of the merit badge program and achieve the aims of Scouting.

When a Scout has decided on a badge to be earned, the following steps must be followed:

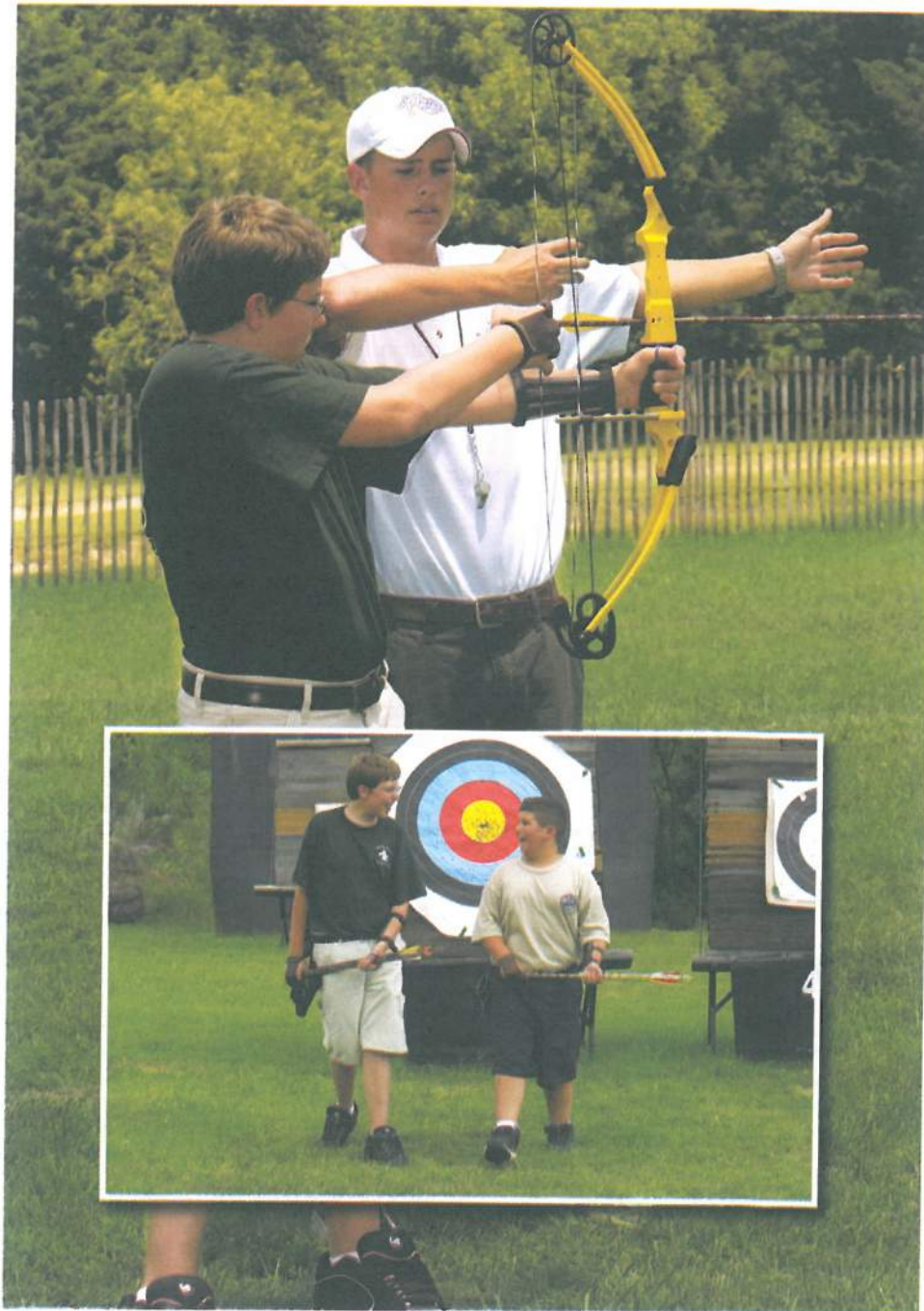
1. The Scout obtains from the Scoutmaster a signed Application for Merit Badge (often called a "blue card") and the name of at least one registered and approved counselor for that merit badge.
2. The Scout sets up and—along with another Scout, a relative, or a friend—attends the first appointment with the merit badge counselor.
3. The counselor explains the requirements for the merit badge and helps the Scout plan ways to fulfill them.
4. The Scout works on the badge requirements until completion, meeting with the counselor whenever necessary.

Sessions with merit badge counselors must take place where others can view the interaction. A Scout must have another person present at each of these meetings. This person can be the Scout's parent or legal guardian or another registered adult. In addition, having another Scout along is a great way to help that friend advance in Scouting. However, each Scout must complete the badge requirements individually.

A Scout works with adult troop leaders to identify merit badge counselors. The council advancement committee is responsible for approval of all counselors before they begin service, although it can delegate this function to the districts. Troop leaders can help identify potential counselors by reviewing the troop resource surveys that parents fill out.

Another great source is the chartered organization. Many troops assemble a list of approved counselors in their areas who have indicated a willingness to work with Scouts; others identify contacts in categories like science, sports, communications, and public service and rely on those persons to recruit counselors as needed. In addition, each district advancement committee is responsible for developing a merit badge counselor list, keeping it current, and providing copies to every troop in the district.

Friendstorming On Tour, No. 510-003, outlines a volunteer-prospecting method that can identify large numbers of potential volunteers.



CHAPTER 20

Other Awards

Ranks and merit badges are far from the only awards that Scouts can earn. A host of other awards let Scouts gain recognition for special skills and accomplishments—everything from speaking a foreign language to saving a life. The awards and recognitions can be powerful motivators on the path to (or after) the Eagle Scout rank. They also give adult leaders additional tools to encourage participation and continued learning.

If you have a Scout who is more interested in scholarship or sports than camping and hiking, steer that Scout toward some of the awards described in this chapter. You may be able to sustain interest in Scouting as the youth realizes that the program celebrates all these accomplishments and pursuits.

Awards are not limited to Scouts. While adult leaders cannot participate in the advancement program, they can achieve many other awards and recognitions that offer tangible recognition of their contributions to Scouting both within the organization and in the community at large. This chapter discusses the most common recognitions Scouts and Scouters can earn.

Requirements for most awards described in this chapter can be found in the *Scouts BSA Requirements* book and in the Awards Central section of the BSA website (www.scouting.org/awards/awards-central). Detailed information explaining how, when, and where to wear various patches, badges, and medals can be found in the *Guide to Awards and Insignia*.

Awards for Scouts

Boardsailing BSA, Kayaking BSA, Scuba BSA, and Snorkeling BSA. These swimsuit emblems are earned by Scouts who learn the basics of the designated aquatic sports.

Cyber Chip. This award covers the principles of internet safety.

Den Chief Service Award. This award recognizes Scouts who attend Den Chief training, understand Cub Scouting, and serve as den chiefs for at least a year.

Firem'n Chit. This award emphasizes wise use of open fires.

Glenn A. and Melinda W. Adams National Eagle Scout Service Project of the Year Award. This award program recognizes top Eagle Scout service projects at the local and national levels.

Keep America Beautiful Hometown USA Award. This award recognizes Scouts who undertake outstanding efforts to promote citizenship and environmental improvement in their communities.

Mile Swim BSA. This swimsuit emblem recognizes Scouts who swim a mile and complete certain other requirements.

National Honor Patrol Award. Members of a patrol may earn this award for completing the requirements listed in chapter 3 and in the *Patrol Leader Handbook*.

National Outdoor Badges. These five badges, which are segments that go around a center emblem, recognize achievement in the areas of adventure, aquatics, camping, hiking, and riding. Gold and silver devices represent additional achievement in the subject area.

National Medal for Outdoor Achievement. This award is the highest recognition a Scout can receive for outdoor achievement. To earn it, a Scout must reach First Class rank, earn the National Outdoor Badge for Camping with the silver device and two other National Outdoor Badges with gold devices, earn specified merit badges, complete Wilderness First Aid training, plan and lead an outing, and either plan and lead an adventure activity or complete a season on summer-camp staff in an outdoor area.

Nova and Supernova Awards. These awards are part of the BSA's STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) initiative. The Nova awards are designed to whet Scouts' appetite for STEM, while the Supernova awards recognize more advanced achievement.

Paul Bunyan Award. This award requires Scouts to build on and teach the skills covered by the Totin' Chip.

Recruiter Strip. This award goes to Scouts who recruit friends to join Scouting.

Totin' Chip. This award indicates that a Scout understands the appropriate handling of such woods tools as knives and saws.

World Conservation Award. Scouts may qualify for this award by earning these merit badges: Environmental Science, Citizenship in the World, and either Soil and Water Conservation or Fish and Wildlife Management.

Awards for Adults

Most adult awards are bestowed upon their recipients rather than being pursued. Here are a handful.

Asian American Spirit of Scouting Service Award. This award recognizes involvement in the development and implementation of Scouting opportunities for Asian American youth.

District Award of Merit. This is the highest award a district can present for volunteer service.

George Meany Award. This award recognizes union members who have made a significant contribution to the youth of their communities through Scouting.

¡Scouting Vale la Pena! Service Award. This award recognizes involvement in the development and implementation of Scouting opportunities for Hispanic and/or Latino youth.

Scouting Service Award. This award recognizes adult volunteers who have earned one of five different awards, each celebrating a leader's dedication to a special segment of Scouting:

- Asian American Spirit of Scouting Service Award
- ¡Scouting Vale la Pena! Service Award
- Whitney M. Young Jr. Service Award
- American Indian Scouting Association Grey Wolf Award
- Special Needs Scouting Service Award

Each of the first three awards listed above previously had its own square knot. But once supplies of those knots run out, the new Scouting Service Award knot will be used to recognize recipients.

Silver Antelope. This is the highest award a territory can present for volunteer service.

Silver Beaver. This is the highest award a local council can present for volunteer service.

Silver Buffalo. The Silver Buffalo is the highest award the National Council can present for volunteer service.

Unit Leader Award of Merit. This award recognizes Cubmasters, Scoutmasters, Coaches, and Advisors for effective leadership of their units.

Whitney M. Young Jr. Service Award. This award recognizes involvement in the development and implementation of Scouting opportunities for rural or low-income urban youth.

Woods Service Award. This award recognizes individuals who provide outstanding service to Scouts with special needs.

Adult leaders can pursue several recognitions that promote training, service, and tenure while allowing them to set an example of achievement for their Scouts. Among these recognitions are the Scouter's Training Award and the Scoutmaster's Key.

Scouter's Training Award Requirements

Training

- Complete basic training for any Scout leader position.
- Complete This Is Scouting training.
- Attend a university of Scouting (or equivalent), or attend at least four roundtables (or equivalent) during each year of the tenure used for this award.

Tenure

Complete a total of two years as a registered adult leader in a Scout troop.

Performance

- Participate in an annual troop planning meeting in each year.
- Serve as an adult leader in a troop that achieves at least the Bronze level of Journey to Excellence in each year.
- Give primary leadership in meeting at least one troop Journey to Excellence objective in each year.
- Participate in at least one additional supplemental or advanced training event at the council or national level during the two years.

Scoutmaster's Key Requirements

Training

- Complete basic training for Scoutmasters.
- Complete This Is Scouting training.
- Attend a university of Scouting (or equivalent), or attend at least four roundtables (or equivalent) during each year of the tenure used for this award.

Tenure

Complete at least three years of registered tenure as a Scoutmaster within a five-year period (can include the tenure used to earn the Scouter's Training Award).

Performance

- Achieve at least the Silver level of Journey to Excellence for at least two years.
- Earn the National Outdoor Challenge Award at least once.
- Conduct an annual troop planning session and have a published troop meeting and activity schedule for the troop's parents in each year.
- Participate in at least one additional supplemental or advanced training event at the council or national level.

Awards for Scouts and Adults

BSA Lifeguard. Adult leaders and Scouts 15 years of age and older can earn this recognition by successfully completing the BSA Lifeguard course and demonstrating the ability to perform each of the skills taught in the course.

Conservation Good Turn Award. This award goes to Scouts and adult leaders who join with conservation or environmental organizations to carry out conservation projects in their home communities.

Emergency Preparedness Award. This award goes to Scouts and adults who take steps to be prepared for emergencies.

50-Miler Award. This award recognizes Scouts and adult leaders who complete a trek of at least 50 miles over five days by foot, boat, or bicycle and who do a minimum of 10 hours of conservation work on trails, waterways, campsites, or other natural areas.

Historic Trails Award. This award recognizes Scouts and adult leaders who study a historic trail or site, hike or camp along the trail or near the site, and work to restore and mark the trail or site.

International Spirit Award. This award recognizes Scouts and adult leaders who have gained a greater knowledge of international Scouting and a greater appreciation of different cultures and countries.

Interpreter Strip. This patch recognizes Scouts and adult leaders who are conversant in a foreign language, American Sign Language, or Morse code.

Lifesaving and Merit Awards. The National Court of Honor presents these awards to Scouts and Scouters for rare Scoutlike action:

- **Honor Medal.** The highest special award in Scouting, the Honor Medal is given to Scouts and Scouters who show heroism, resourcefulness, and skill by saving or trying to save a life at great risk of their own. In exceptional cases, it is awarded with crossed palms.
- **Medal of Merit.** This award is given to Scouts and Scouters who have performed an act of service that was rare or exceptional and that reflected an uncommon degree of concern for the well-being of others.
- **National Certificate of Merit.** This award is given to Scouts and Scouters who have performed a significant act of service deserving of special national recognition.
- **Local Certificate of Merit.** This award is given to Scouts and Scouters who have performed a significant act of service that is deserving of special local recognition.

Messengers of Peace. This award recognizes Scouts and adult leaders who participate in service projects that promote the cause of peace. Scouts around the world can earn this award.

Outdoor Ethics Awareness and Action Awards. Scouts and adult leaders can earn these awards for learning how to make ethical decisions regarding the outdoors by following the principles of the Outdoor Code, Leave No Trace, Tread Lightly!, and similar programs.

Service Stars, Attendance Pins, and Veteran Scouter Awards. These awards recognize length of tenure with the BSA.

Torch of Gold. This award recognizes Scouts and adult leaders who have provided outstanding service in the area of Scouts with special needs.

Trained Leader. This emblem recognizes adult leaders who have completed basic training for their current position and youth leaders who have completed Introduction to Leadership Skills for Troops (or den chiefs who have attended the Den Chief Training Conference).

BSA Distinguished Conservation Service Award Program. These awards recognize Scouts and adult leaders who have done exceptional and distinguished service in conservation.



Religious Emblems

Dozens of faith groups—from the African Methodist Episcopal Church to the Zoroastrian Association of Greater New York—offer religious emblems programs for Scouts who are members of the respective faith group. While these are not Scouting awards, they are approved for wear on the Scout uniform. Depending on the faith group, there may be several age-specific emblems that youth members can receive, along with an adult recognition that may be bestowed upon the recipient by the religious body.

More information is available in the *Duty to God* brochure, No. 512-879.



The Order of the Arrow

Scouts and adult leaders are eligible for induction into the Order of the Arrow, Scouting's national honor society. Youth members are elected by their peers. To be eligible for election, they must be at least First Class rank, must have camped 15 days and nights during the past two years (including one long-term camp), and must have the approval of their Scoutmaster. Adults are nominated by the troop committee and approved by the lodge adult selection committee; they must meet the same camping requirement and, if under 21, must have reached the First Class rank. The Order itself offers numerous recognitions for its members. (For more on the Order of the Arrow, see volume 2 of the *Troop Leader Guidebook*.)





TROOP ADMINISTRATION



Your ability to create an exciting, engaging troop program is limited only by your imagination, your leadership resources, sound administration, and the troop's financial resources.

CHAPTER 21

Financing the Troop

Troops that raise money effectively are able to buy good equipment, travel to high-adventure bases and even foreign countries, and ensure that youth and adult leaders are properly trained. Those that struggle to raise money—or that don't do so efficiently—often fail to deliver the promise of Scouting.

Money-earning projects and financial management are primarily the responsibility of the troop committee. However, everyone in the troop has a vested interest in making sure the troop has the resources it needs and is using its resources wisely.

Planning a Budget

In consultation with the Scoutmaster and patrol leaders' council, the troop committee should develop an annual budget and then track income and expenses throughout the year. Surprises will no doubt occur, but the budget is an important tool for planning and monitoring troop finances.

Building a responsible budget for a troop is a four-step process:

1. The troop treasurer, Scoutmaster, and scribe consider the troop's expenses and prepare a rough draft of a budget to cover them.
2. The patrol leaders' council reviews the proposed budget and puts it into final form.
3. The troop committee approves the budget.
4. The budget is presented to the Scouts and their families.

Typical expenses include:

- Registration fees
- Unit charter fee
- *Scout Life* subscription fees
- Unit accident and liability insurance
- Advancement and recognition
- Activities
- Summer camp
- Program materials
- Training expenses
- Uniforms
- Reserve fund
- Other expenses

Typical income sources include:

- Weekly or monthly dues
- Annual membership fees (covering registration, *Scout Life*, and insurance)
- Money-earning projects
- Chartered organization support

Part of budgeting is deciding who pays for what. For example, the troop might decide that Scouts pay their own registration fees while the troop covers adult registration fees. Or it might decide to pay all adults' fees for basic training but offer only partial reimbursement for Wood Badge.

The troop budget should take into account future plans. If you anticipate adding a new patrol next spring, build in the cost of patrol camping equipment. If you want to save up for a troop trailer, make that a line item in each year's budget over the course of three or four years.

While troops are not in business to make money, there is nothing wrong with carrying a cash balance from year to year if you are saving up for a major expense. It is also a good idea to maintain a cash reserve in case of emergencies.

Notice that outings are not included in the income and expense lists above. In many troops, outings are self-supporting, with the expenses divided evenly among the participants. If food, gas, and camping fees cost \$25 per person, they ask each participant to pay \$25. If summer camp costs \$250 per Scout, they ask each Scout to pay \$250—or perhaps a little more to cover gas and other incidentals.

Adult costs are a special case. On a weekend outing where food is the largest expense, you might not ask adults to pay since their expenses could easily be prorated among the Scouts (or adults could bring their own food). For outings with higher fixed costs, like summer camp or whitewater rafting, adults could pay their own way or the troop could cover at least some of those costs through the troop budget.

Some troops let adults who have completed basic training attend outings for free while other adults pay their own way. The first option offers adults a good incentive to attend training, as does having the troop cover training fees.

Making each outing self-supporting gives you the chance to teach youth leaders the basics of budgeting. As discussed in chapter 7, put the Scouts in charge of planning each outing, figure out what their expenses will be, and then set the outing cost based on those expenses. Ideally, any positive balances or cost overruns will average out over time. Then, if you come out ahead at the end of the program year, spend the extra money on something fun like a pizza party to reward the troop for staying within budget.

For more information on troop budgets, including a budget worksheet and other helpful resources, go to www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/program-planning-tools.

Money-Saving Tip

If you itemize deductions on your federal income tax return, you may be able to deduct many of the expenses you incur as a BSA volunteer; examples include leader uniforms, mileage, and training fees. To qualify, the expenses must be unreimbursed, directly connected with your volunteer service, and incurred only because of that service. Personal, living, or family expenses do not count, nor do expenses incurred for your children who are in Scouting. Reasonable and necessary standards apply. For more information, see IRS Publication 526 or consult your tax advisor.

Membership Fees and Dues

Most troops charge each Scout an annual membership fee at charter-renewal time that covers the cost of registration, *Scout Life*, and insurance (and perhaps a little more for operating expenses). Depending on the amount of any financial reserves, troops might waive or prorate this fee for new members who join during the charter year.

Note that currently registered Webelos Scouts who graduate into Scouts BSA can transfer their membership at no cost. Their *Scout Life* subscriptions continue at no additional charge, and they are covered under the unit's accident and sickness insurance policy (if the unit has purchased a policy) until you renew the charter.

Supporting Scouts With Financial Needs

Be sure the dues and fees the troop charges do not pose a financial burden to families who are struggling financially, especially new troop families who also need to buy equipment and uniforms and pay for summer camp. Give troop families a discreet way to request assistance or a deadline extension; for example, they could directly contact the Scoutmaster or troop committee chair. Many troops build financial assistance into their budgets. You may also find the chartered organization willing to help Scouts who need financial support. Needless to say, it is important to protect the privacy of families who request assistance.

Try to schedule a money-earning project during the spring so new Scouts have a chance to pay for at least part of their initial expenses. Your council may offer "campership" assistance for low-income Scouting families to cover part of the cost of attending council camps. You could even let second-year Webelos Scouts who are headed to your troop participate in winter fundraisers to get a head start on earning money.

Finally, note that payment of dues cannot be considered a prerequisite for advancement—that would amount to adding to the requirements, which is not permitted.

Many troops also charge weekly or monthly dues that help fund troop operations. Dues give Scouts a chance to pay their own way and also give the troop and patrol scribes a manageable task to handle on a regular basis.

Here is one way the system can work:

1. Before the first meeting of every month, the troop scribe prepares a patrol monthly dues envelope for each patrol.
2. Each patrol scribe collects dues from the members of the patrol, records the contributions on the envelope, and puts the money inside.
3. The troop scribe collects the patrol envelopes and records the amounts in the Troop Record Book, or in the troop's record-keeping software.
4. The troop scribe submits the dues to the troop treasurer (a member of the troop committee).
5. The troop treasurer deposits the dues into the troop's checking account.

Money-Earning Projects

The bulk of the troop's income will likely come from money-earning projects. Such projects allow Scouts to pay their own way while reducing the financial burden on families. Before starting a money-earning project, you should submit a Unit Money-Earning Application (see Appendix) to the council service center. (Council-sponsored product sales, such as popcorn sales, are the exception since they have already been reviewed to make sure they follow BSA guidelines.)

Here are some project ideas that have proven successful:

- Collecting recyclable paper, cans, plastic bottles, toner cartridges, and Christmas trees
- Conducting rummage sales, yard sales, and auctions (auctions are permissible; raffles are not)
- Providing lawn-care services
- Washing cars
- Preparing pancake or spaghetti suppers, fish fries, and other community meals
- Selling Christmas trees, wreaths, mulch and fertilizer, bedding plants, fruit, and other seasonal items
- Caring for pets when their owners are away
- Selling "scrip" (vouchers) or prepaid gift cards
- Selling discount cards and coupon books
- Offering gift-wrapping (for donations) at stores during the holidays
- Hanging American flags in front of homes and businesses on major holidays
- Holding Scout nights at local restaurants, where a portion of the proceeds goes to the troop
- Offering a "parents' night out" to allow couples in the chartered organization to have date nights

Evaluating Potential Money-Earning Projects

Besides prompting you to have a neutral third party review the plan, the Unit Money-Earning Application provides important guidance on what constitutes an appropriate project. When evaluating a potential money-earning project, consider these questions, which are found on the back of the Unit Money-Earning Application.

Do you really need a fundraising project? There should be a real need for raising money based on the unit's program. In fact, the Unit Money-Earning Application asks how the funds will be spent. Do not engage in money-earning projects merely because someone has offered an attractive plan.

If any contracts are to be signed, will they be signed by an individual, without reference to the Boy Scouts of America and without binding the local council, the Boy Scouts of America, or the chartered organization? Before any person in the unit signs a contract, the signer must make sure the venture is legitimate and worthy. If a contract is signed, the signer is personally responsible. No individual can sign on behalf of the local council or the Boy Scouts of America or bind the chartered organization without its written authorization.

Will your fundraiser prevent promoters from trading on the name and goodwill of the Boy Scouts of America? Because of Scouting's good reputation, customers rarely question the quality or price of a product. The nationwide network of Scouting units must not become a beehive of commercial interest.

Will the fundraising activity uphold the good name of the BSA? Does it avoid games of chance and gambling? Selling raffle tickets, conducting lotteries, or engaging in other games of chance is a direct violation of the Rules and Regulations of the Boy Scouts of America, which do not permit gambling. The product must not detract from the ideals and principles of the BSA.

If a commercial product is to be sold, will it be sold on its own merits and without reference to the needs of Scouting? All commercial products must sell on their own merits, not the benefit received by the Scouts. The principle of value received is critical in choosing what to sell.

If a commercial product is to be sold, will the fundraising activity comply with BSA policy on wearing the uniform? The official uniform is intended to be worn primarily for use in connection with Scouting activities. However, council executive boards may approve use of the uniform for certain fundraising activities. (Typically, council popcorn sales or Scouting show ticket sales are approved fundraisers for uniform wear.)

Will the fundraising project avoid soliciting money or gifts? The Rules and Regulations of the Boy Scouts of America state, "Youth members shall not be permitted to serve as solicitors of money for their chartered organizations, for the local council, or in support of other organizations. Adult and youth members shall not be permitted to serve as solicitors of money in support of personal or unit participation in local, national, or international events."

Does the fundraising activity avoid competition with other units, the chartered organization, the local council, and United Way? Check with the chartered organization representative and the district executive to make certain the chartered organization and the council agree on the dates and type of fundraiser.

You should be able to answer "yes" to all of the above questions. That is just the beginning, however. Consider the following questions as well.

Does the fundraiser offer a reasonable return on your investment of time and effort? If you raise only a few dollars per Scout at an all-day carwash, for example, you might need to find a new money-earning project.

Does the fundraiser support, rather than detract from, the troop program? If a project consumes four straight Saturdays, it will be impossible to hold an outing that month. Decide whether the income is worth that impact on the program.

Does the fundraiser require little upfront risk? Be wary of product sales that require a large upfront investment unless you are confident that you can sell everything you have committed to buy.

Does the fundraiser primarily involve customers beyond troop families? If troop families are your only customers, they might prefer to pay an activity fee instead, which would likely be less than they would pay to support the fundraiser.

Does the fundraiser provide customers with a needed product or service? If you sell products or services that people actually need, they will be more likely to buy and to feel good about their purchase.

Is the fundraiser repeatable? When you sell a product or service that people need year after year, you can build up a base of repeat customers. For example, a pancake breakfast at the chartered organization on Scout Sunday could become a tradition that needs relatively little promotion after the first few years.

Encouraging Participation in Money-Earning Projects

Money-earning projects work best when Scouts (and their parents) have an incentive to participate. Incentives can include prizes for the top few salesmen or for all Scouts who reach a certain threshold. The prizes can be tangible—such as camping gear or waived outing fees—but they can also be more creative. For example, the Scoutmaster could serve as personal chef on the next outing for the patrol that sells the most popcorn.

Chartered Organization Support

Chartered organizations have no obligation to provide financial support to their troops. Many do, however, which can strengthen the bond between the troop and the organization.

Rather than putting money from the chartered organization in the troop's general fund, earmark it for special purposes, such as leader training, summer-camp scholarships, or Eagle Scout recognition items. Doing so lets you demonstrate Scouting's value in tangible ways. For example, you could encourage a Scout who received summer-camp assistance to send the organization a thank-you letter from camp, or you could invite the chartered organization representative to Eagle Scout courts of honor to present the recognition items paid for by that organization.

CHAPTER 22

Chartered Organization Relationships

As discussed in chapter 2, every Scout troop is owned and operated by a local religious institution, school, civic organization, or similar group. The group is called a chartered organization because it receives a charter—a sort of franchise—to use the Scouting program to serve its members and its community. Each year, the organization and the BSA local council sign a new charter agreement, renewing the commitments they originally made to each other and to the young people they serve.

The chartered organization can be an important source of support for the troop. In fact, you can picture the troop as a three-legged stool, with the Scoutmaster corps, the troop committee, and the chartered organization as its legs. When all three legs are strong, the troop stands tall and strong.

For more information on chartered organization relationships, visit www.scoutingwire.org/marketing-and-membership-hub/new-unit-development/chartered-organizations.

People and Purpose

Chartered organization relationships are strongest when people are connected and purposes are shared. Relationships are weakest when people in the troop and the organization do not know each other and when the troop and the organization work at cross purposes.

People

The primary liaison between the troop and the organization is the chartered organization representative, that member of the chartered organization who oversees its Scouting department. This individual should be on the troop's mailing list and should be invited to troop committee meetings, courts of honor, banquets, and other high-profile functions. This person should also be consulted when problems arise that require chartered-organization involvement.

In addition to the chartered organization representative, you will want to stay in touch with the organization's executive officer (such as its religious leader or president) and extend invitations to events like Eagle Scout courts of honor. Build a relationship with other staff members or volunteers, such as a religious institution's youth director or a civic club's youth committee chair. Staying connected with these people gives you additional allies within the organization and makes it easier to coordinate activities.

In some cases, the chartered organization may be a group within a group, such as a Knights of Columbus council within a Catholic parish. Even so, it is a good idea to maintain a relationship with the larger group.

From the troop side, it is usually helpful to have adult leaders (and troop families) who are members of the chartered organization. By their very presence, they emphasize that the troop belongs to the organization. What is more, they can be on the lookout for potential problems—a window that gets broken on Scout night, for example—and for potential opportunities—such as an organization-wide day of service in which the troop could participate.

Purpose

It is easy enough to figure out why the chartered organization exists. But why does it have a Scout troop? Once you understand that purpose, you can make sure you are helping the organization achieve it.

Assume for a moment that the troop belongs to a religious institution. If that institution sees Scouting as a way to serve existing member-families as part of its youth ministry, you would want to coordinate calendars with the youth director so activities do not conflict. On the other hand, if the institution sees Scouting as an outreach tool, you might offer the religious leader ways to connect with troop families from the greater community (through Scout Sunday and Scout Sabbath observances, for example). In either event, you will want to be aware of key religious holidays and events as you plan the troop calendar.

Working Together

Once you know the organization, its people, and its purpose for operating a Scout troop, you can find many opportunities to work together. Here are a few things you could do.

- Ensure that the troop has a presence on the organization's website, in its membership materials, and on its bulletin boards and literature racks.
- Include chartered organization information in troop membership materials and on the troop website.
- Participate in the organization's annual kickoff events and open houses.
- Provide Scout color guards or speakers for organization meetings—especially around Scouting Anniversary Week, the week that includes February 8 (Scouting's birthday).
- Participate in worship services during Scouting Anniversary Week.
- Hold a charter presentation and give a "state of the troop" report at an organization meeting.
- Set up recruiting tables at the organization to coordinate with School Night for Scouting or troop open houses.
- Set up tables at the organization to sell products during troop money-earning projects.

- Plan occasional service projects to benefit the chartered organization or to benefit other groups the chartered organization supports.
- Offer troop support of major chartered organization activities throughout the year.
- Look for opportunities for Scouts to do Eagle Scout service projects for the organization.

Scout Sunday and Scout Sabbath

In troops belonging to religious institutions, participation in Scout Sunday or Scout Sabbath services is an important way to celebrate and strengthen the chartered organization relationship. Scout Sunday is typically the Sunday that begins Scouting Anniversary Week, while Scout Sabbath is typically the Saturday that ends Scouting Anniversary Week. However, religious institutions can set their own dates, either locally or at the denominational level.

There is no one way to hold a Scout Sunday or Scout Sabbath service. Observances should be coordinated well in advance, perhaps through the chartered organization representative, with the religious leader. Activities could include:

- Attendance by troop families and leaders, whether or not they are members of the chartered organization
- Participation in the service by Scouts as ushers, readers, liturgists, speakers, or other roles
- Presentation of religious emblems to troop members and leaders of that faith
- Recognition of troop leaders
- A responsive reading that connect the points of the Scout Law with religious teachings
- A message by the religious leader based on Scouting values
- A Scouting information booth
- A model campsite on the front lawn
- A pancake breakfast or chili luncheon that serves as a troop fundraiser

BSA Adopt-a-School

The BSA Adopt-a-School program encourages Scouting units to connect with schools in their communities (whether chartered organizations or not). To participate, a unit pledges to complete one service project per quarter for the school over the course of a year. Scouts who participate in service projects receive Adopt-a-School patches. At the end of the year, the school receives a plaque. For information, visit <https://adoptaschool.scouting.org>.

National Chartered Organization Resources

Some chartered organizations that have a national presence and operate thousands of Scouting units have offices that are charged with supporting Scouting. The National Catholic Committee on Scouting, for example, seeks to sustain and strengthen the relationship between the BSA and the Catholic Church in the United States, while in the United Methodist Church, Scouting falls under the Office of Civic Youth-Serving Agencies/Scouting.

Many national chartered organizations also have official or quasi-official committees that coordinate Scouting programs and support Scouting units. You can find links to many of them at www.scoutingwire.org/marketing-and-membership-hub/new-unit-development/chartered-organizations/religious-chartered-organizations.

While every group is different, many oversee religious-emblem and adult-recognition programs, publish newsletters, hold conferences and training courses, and offer scholarships for Eagle Scouts. Most also offer publications and other resources that can help you strengthen the troop's relationship with its chartered organization. If the chartered organization does not understand how the troop supports its mission, seek out the relevant national group.

The district executive is charged with visiting the executive officer of each chartered organization once a year. The district executive can be a good ally if you need to strengthen your troop's relationship with its chartered organization.



CHAPTER 23

Troop Communications

Americans today are awash in information. Every season seems to bring a new way to read the news, find sports scores, check the weather, or see what your friends and family have been doing. In many cases, older technologies continue to exist alongside their newer counterparts, meaning people have more and more ways to get information—and to miss out on it.

In fact, you could argue that it is now *easier* than ever to send a message and *harder* than ever to make sure your message gets received. That is why it is not unheard of for a Hollywood studio to spend nearly as much money marketing a summer blockbuster as it does creating it.

Scout troops do not have marketing budgets—aside from the costs of photocopies, stamps, and website hosting—but they still must make sure Scouts, leaders, parents, and other audiences are getting the information they need. This chapter discusses ways to do just that.

What to Communicate

When you think about troop communication, the first things that probably come to mind are upcoming activities and deadlines: What time will the court of honor start? Where will the campout be held? When are registration fees due? How can you sign up for summer camp? Whom can you call if you have more questions?

This kind of information is usually shared through announcements and fliers at troop meetings or phone trees initiated by the senior patrol leader. However, as any experienced Scout leader (or parent, for that matter) knows, much of that information never gets to its intended destination. That is why many troops publish some sort of newsletter that goes both to Scouts and to their families. Printed, monthly newsletters were common in the past, but they have mostly given way to weekly or monthly email newsletters, which are often also posted on the troop's website or social-networking page.

As a rule, people need to hear a message seven times in seven different ways before they will take action.

You should not communicate solely about future events. It is also important to capture pictures and stories from past events. You could create photo galleries of outings on the troop website, for example, and include stories in the newsletter about those outings. Stories and pictures are great ways to sell the program to prospective members, to show the chartered organization what the troop is accomplishing, and to encourage current members who missed a fun outing to not miss the next one.

There is one more category of information you need to communicate: “evergreen” information about the troop that might appear in a brochure or troop handbook or on the troop website. New and prospective members need to know when and where the troop meets, what fees the troop charges, and how to contact key leaders. Current members need to know how to sign up for boards of review, what rank they must be to run for troop offices, what the troop's weather-cancellation policies are, where to buy uniforms and equipment, and how to access password-protected content on the troop website.

With Whom to Communicate

Besides having different kinds of information to communicate, a troop has different groups of people with whom to communicate. The key audience, of course, is current troop families and leaders. Other audiences include prospective members, the chartered organization, the schools where the troop recruits members, and the general public.

Different audiences obviously need to hear different messages. It is also important to safeguard certain information, as described below. A troop website, for example, might have a public section with general information about the troop and contact information for key adult leaders, and a password-protected, members-only section with photo galleries and rosters.

Communication Principles

The technologies you use to communicate will change over time, but basic principles stay the same. Here are a few.

Be complete. In your communications, try to answer the questions *who*, *what*, *when*, *where*, *why*, and *how*. Rather than send out a message with key information missing, such as the departure time for an outing, nail down that information first, if at all possible. (A deadline can be a useful tool for forcing decisions.)

Be clear. Avoid jargon and unfamiliar abbreviations, especially with audiences beyond the troop. If information has changed since a previous communication, highlight the changes. Include revision dates on documents like troop calendars.

Be consistent. Send out communications like newsletters or emails on a regular schedule. For example, if you send your email newsletter by 5 p.m. on the day before every troop meeting, people will quickly get used to looking for it at that time.

Don't overdo it. Rather than send out half a dozen emails in a single week, bundle all those messages into one. Send home every document related to an event like summer camp (medical forms, permission slips, activity sign-up forms, etc.) in one packet instead of handing out the documents separately.

Use diverse media. When you really need to get people's attention, send your message through multiple channels. For example, you could promote a high-adventure trip through the troop calendar, the troop newsletter, fliers, a special mailing, a page on the troop website, a Facebook event, Twitter announcements, text messages, a bulletin board or display, phone calls to Scouts and parents, and announcements at troop meetings and courts of honor.

Leverage the resources of the chartered organization. Promote events like troop open houses through the chartered organization's newsletter, website, social-networking sites, bulletins, electronic sign boards, and other media.

Understand people's communication preferences. Find out how people want to get information. For many Scouts, email feels old-fashioned. For some parents, social-media sites are foreign territory.

If Scouts and parents are not reading the troop newsletter, try this trick: Hide a secret word in the next issue, along with an announcement that the first three Scouts who tell the senior patrol leader the secret word will win a prize (perhaps a gift card to a local ice-cream shop). Repeat the contest every few issues on a random schedule.

Unit Website Guidelines

These days, people frequently visit websites to screen new restaurants, stores, hotels, places of worship, and tourist attractions. The same goes for Scout troops. An attractive website can be an effective tool for promoting the troop 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It can also be a good repository for information that current members and leaders need to access, from forms to photos.

That said, you must make sure the website does not put Scouts, leaders, or the troop at risk by, for example, including Scouts' full names in photo captions or making the troop roster publicly available. (To give site visitors contact information, consider setting up a separate, generic Scoutmaster or webmaster email address through a service like Gmail.) The BSA uses the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act as its standard for protecting children online. You can read the details on compliance at www.coppa.org/comply.htm.

A second concern is copyright infringement. Copyrighted photos, graphics, music, videos, and publications are commonly reused on the web without permission. This is illegal and violates the ethics of Scouting. Be sure to get permission for any media you use on the troop website, or use only materials you know are in the public domain.

A third concern is commercialism, including advertising. For example, "free" website services often contain advertisements, which might reflect poorly on Scouting. Any online fundraising activities must be approved by the local council; independent sales, solicitations, or collection of donations are prohibited.

Be sure the troop website adheres to these guidelines:

- The content of the site must be appropriate to Scouting.
- The site cannot link to any sites that contain material that is not appropriate to Scouting.
- The unit site should not contain any advertisements or commercial endorsements.
- The site cannot engage in the electronic sale of BSA Supply Group merchandise or competing products.
- The site cannot replicate any BSA publication currently for sale through the Supply Group.
- Unit sites must abide by all laws regarding copyrights, trademarks, and other intellectual property, and by those pertaining to the internet.
- Unit sites must consider the safety and privacy of members and participants by obtaining the necessary permissions to release information about or images of any individual.
- Unit sites cannot engage in fundraising except as directly approved by, and under the supervision of, the local council.

For more information, see the BSA's unit website guidelines at filestore.scouting.org/filestore/marketing/pdf/Social_Media_Playbook.pdf.

Be a Scout

You might not realize it, but every troop already has an online presence. The BSA created a web resource at beascout.org as an easy way for people to find Scouting units and local councils in their area. When a visitor chooses Scouts BSA and enters their zip code on the site, a list of nearby troops pops up, complete with a locator map. By default, the site uses the BSA local council as the point of contact for each troop. However, you can edit the troop's "pin" to include a brief description of its program, troop-level contact information, and a link to the troop website. Contact the local council for details on how to get started.

Social Media Guidelines

Social media such as Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter offer additional communication options and raise additional concerns. As with any Scouting activity, safety and BSA Youth Protection should be a key focus. It is critical that troops stay true to the commitment of the BSA to be an advocate for youth and to keep children and their privacy safe, both online and off.

To help ensure that all communication on social-media channels remains positive and safe, these channels must be public, and all communication on or through them must be public. This enables administrators to monitor all communication and help ensure there is no inappropriate communication between adult leaders and Scouts or between Scouts themselves. Therefore, no private channels (e.g., private Facebook groups or invitation-only YouTube channels) are acceptable. Private channels and private communication put both the Scout and the leader at risk. If you feel the information you seek to share via social-media channels should not be shared in public, do not share that information via social media.

Abiding by the two-deep leadership policy that governs all Scouting activities also applies to use of social media. As it relates to social media, two-deep leadership means there should be no private messages and no one-on-one direct contact through email, Facebook messages, Twitter direct messaging, chats, instant messaging (Google Messenger, AIM, etc.), or similar messaging features provided through social-media sites. All communication between adults and youth members should take place in a public forum (e.g., the Facebook wall) or, at a bare minimum, electronic communication between adults and youth members should always include one or more authorized adults openly "copied" (included) on the message or message thread.

If you set up a troop page on a site like Facebook or YouTube, you should designate at least two administrators who have access to the login, password, and page management or monitoring information. At least one of these page administrators should be a registered volunteer who has taken Youth Protection training.

For more information, see the BSA's social media guidelines at www.scoutingwire.org/marketing-and-membership-hub/social-media/social-media-guidelines.

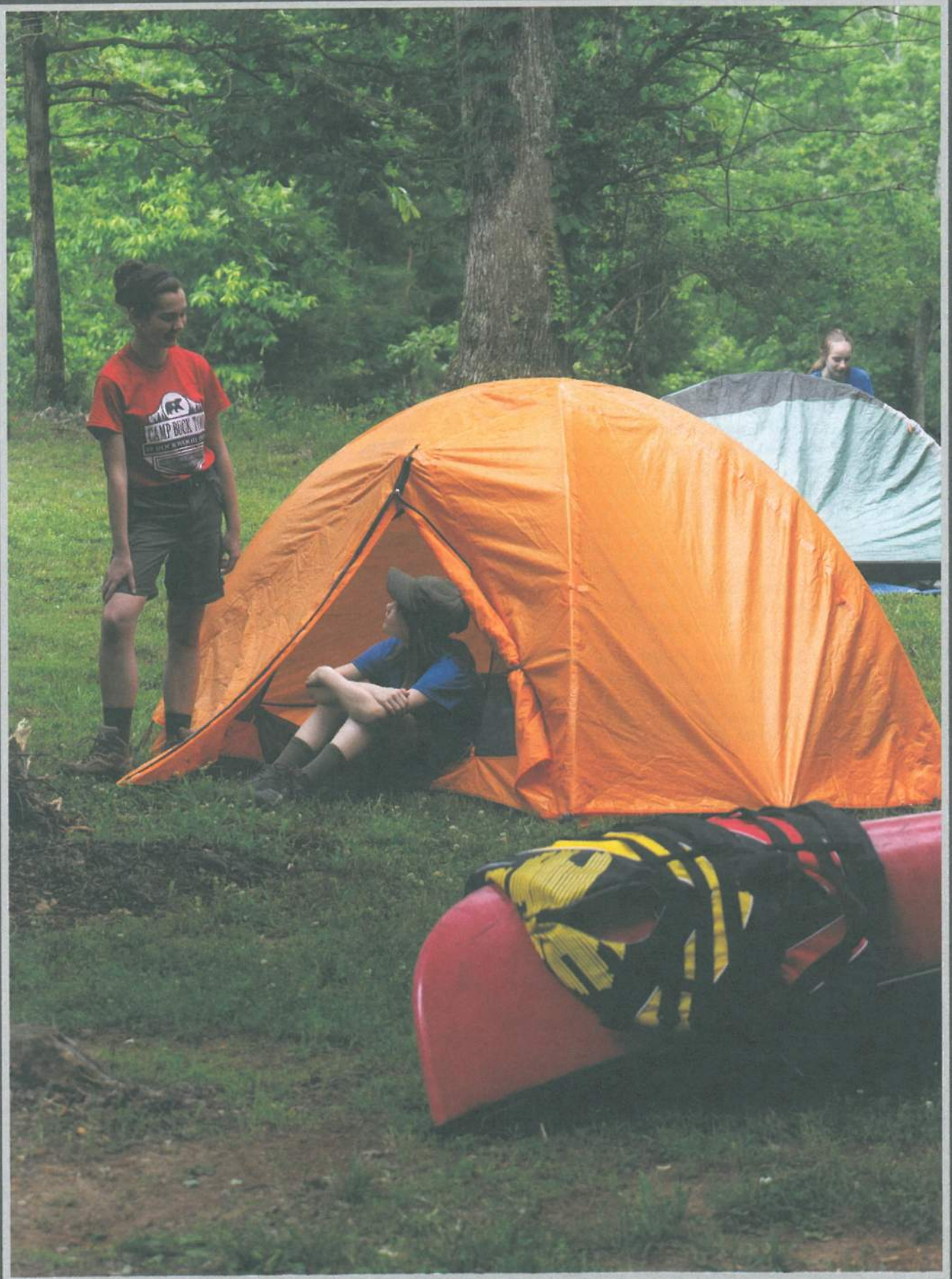
Supporting Your Youth Leaders

Some Scouters feel that communication is such an important function that it can't be entrusted to youth leaders. While Scouts do need guidance in this area, as in every other area, there is no reason they can't be closely involved. In fact, several positions of responsibility—scribe, historian, and webmaster—are directly related to communication, and communication is a big part of what patrol leaders and senior patrol leaders do. Moreover, Scouts are often more adept than adults at building websites and using tools such as social media.

Here are a few suggestions for getting Scouts more involved in troop communication:

- Set a troop standard that adult-driven communications only supplement, not replace, Scout-driven communications.
- Have the senior patrol leader, not an adult, make all announcements at troop meetings.
- Do not overlook the old-fashioned phone tree, where the senior patrol leader calls all the patrol leaders each week and they, in turn, call all their members.
- Encourage the historian to provide outing stories and pictures to the newsletter editor.
- Have the youth leaders in charge of outings create fliers for those outings.
- Set reasonable expectations. For example, if the troop webmaster has never created a website before, set it up yourself using a template, and then put this youth leader in charge of managing the site.





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Advancement Checklist

- ☐ What percentage of troop members advanced in the past year? _____
- ☐ What percentage of Life Scouts achieved the Eagle Scout rank in the past year? _____
- ☐ What percentage of new Scouts achieved First Class within 18 months? _____
- ☐ How many courts of honor does the troop hold each year? _____
- ☐ Do Scouts receive immediate recognition when they advance in rank? When they earn merit badges? _____
- ☐ Do meetings and outings offer advancement opportunities? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Tips for Success

- ☐ Include immediate recognition during the closing of each meeting.
- ☐ Make advancement visible by using the Troop Advancement chart or other method.
- ☐ Hold regular Scoutmaster conferences for all Scouts, whether advancing or not.
- ☐ Offer merit badge sessions before meetings or at other times.
- ☐ If you use recordkeeping software like TroopMaster, use the report function to identify Scouts who are not advancing or to identify advancement needs several Scouts share (e.g., five-mile hike for Second Class).
- ☐ Each month, highlight a different type of award (religious emblems, STEM awards, aquatic awards like Mile Swim BSA, etc.)

Sources for Guest Instructors

- ☐ Council or district merit badge counselor directory
- ☐ Venturing crews that specialize in outdoor adventure
- ☐ Neighboring troops with expertise in a particular topic
- ☐ Camp staff members in the offseason
- ☐ Employees of local outdoor outfitters, bike shops, etc.
- ☐ Members of organizations like the Audubon Society or Orienteering USA
- ☐ Instructors with organizations like the American Red Cross or the American Canoe Association
- ☐ High school teachers, college faculty members, and graduate students
- ☐ Members of the chartered organization

Preparing for the Annual Planning Conference

Participants

- ☐ Committee Chair
- ☐ Scoutmaster
- ☐ Senior patrol leader

Step 1: Gather key information.

- ☐ School dates (holidays, exams, etc.)
- ☐ Community event dates
- ☐ Chartered organization dates
- ☐ Personal dates
- ☐ District and council dates
- ☐ Troop Resource Survey data
- ☐ Last year's troop annual plan
- ☐ Troop priorities and goals
- ☐ Scouts' advancement records
- ☐ General outline of next year's program
- ☐ Dates already committed to (scheduled Philmont trek, national Scout jamboree, etc.)

Step 2: Involve the senior patrol leader.

- ☐ Explain importance of process and the senior patrol leader's role.
- ☐ Discuss program and activity options.
- ☐ Discuss troop goals.
- ☐ Share outline of next year's program.
- ☐ Ask for the senior patrol leader's input and thoughts.
- ☐ Be flexible.

Step 3: Gather input from Scouts.

- ☐ Senior patrol leader shares draft plan with patrol leaders.
- ☐ Patrol leaders share plan with Scouts.
- ☐ Patrol leaders schedule a meeting to get Scouts' feedback.
- ☐ Compare the current plan with the draft plan.
- ☐ What should we start doing that we are not doing?
- ☐ What should we stop doing that is not working?
- ☐ What should we continue doing that is working well?

Step 4: Invite people to attend the conference.

- ☐ Troop youth leaders
- ☐ Troop committee members
- ☐ Other adult leaders
- ☐ Chartered organization representative
- ☐ Your unit commissioner (optional)
- ☐ Anyone who might be helpful (e.g., parents)

Holding the Annual Planning Conference—Checklist

Part 1: Preparation

- ☐ Where should you hold the annual conference?

- ☐ Who should play an active role in it?

- ☐ What role should most adults play?

- ☐ What supplies will you need in the way of planners and calendars?

- ☐ Do you have a copy of the Troop Program Planning Chart?

- ☐ What do you record month by month on your calendar? _____
- ☐ What should the outcome of your conference be?

- ☐ What program features do you want to include?

- ☐ What timetable have you established for your troop goals?

- ☐ How many traditional outings have you included on your calendar?

- ☐ Do you have a mix of familiar and unfamiliar activities?

- ☐ What are your conference ground rules?

Part 2: The Conference, Step by Step

- ☐ **Step 1:** Lead a discussion on troop goals and arrive at an agreed list.
- ☐ **Step 2:** Share the draft calendar, review dates, and solicit additional input.
- ☐ **Step 3:** Discuss and then vote to approve dates and events.
- ☐ **Step 4:** Invite the senior patrol leader to share updates from patrol leaders about programs and themes.
 - ☐ Write the monthly feature and program themes on flipchart or board.
 - ☐ Vote on these items, and take good notes.
- ☐ **Step 5:** Add other important dates:
 - ☐ Troop and patrol leaders' council meetings
 - ☐ Boards of review
 - ☐ Courts of honor
 - ☐ Troop and patrol elections
 - ☐ Troop open house
 - ☐ Service projects
 - ☐ Webelos Scouts joint outings and transition ceremonies
 - ☐ Any other activities that can be scheduled in advance
- ☐ **Step 6:** Hold final discussion and vote on plan, calendar, and goals.
 - ☐ Go to the troop committee for final approval.
 - ☐ Work with your chartered organization to make reservations.
 - ☐ Begin making campsite reservations for selected dates and sites.
- ☐ **Step 7:** Share the plan with each troop family to make it a living, breathing document.

Patrol Leaders' Council Meeting—Checklist

- ☐ What is the purpose of the patrol leaders' council meeting? _____

- ☐ How many months' programming does the meeting cover? _____

- ☐ Why is delegating part of the planning so important for a successful PLC meeting? _____

- ☐ What are the advantages of automating some planning details? _____

- ☐ What are the rotating duty roster tasks that can be determined ahead of time? _____

- ☐ Describe the Scoutmaster's role before and during the PLC meeting. _____

- ☐ Coach the senior patrol leader on the agenda ahead of time.
- ☐ Be familiar with the troop's annual program plan.
- ☐ Provide resources.
- ☐ Be alert for plans the troop makes that call for special resources or support.
- ☐ Help the senior patrol leader keep the meeting on track.
- ☐ Share a Scoutmaster's Minute or training module.
- ☐ Why should the Scoutmaster keep the troop committee informed of committee decisions? _____

- ☐ To whom should the Scoutmaster distribute the monthly plan after the meeting? _____

The Purposes of Troop Meetings—Checklist

- ☐ Prepare for outings.
- ☐ Learn and practice Scouting skills.
- ☐ Exercise leadership.
- ☐ Strengthen patrols.
- ☐ Promote advancement and personal growth.
- ☐ Inspire Scouts.
- ☐ Have fun.

You know the troop meeting is a success when each troop member...

- ☐ Learns a new skill
- ☐ Completes an advanced requirement
- ☐ Prepares for an upcoming outing without parental assistance
- ☐ Enjoys fellowship with other Scouts and leaders
- ☐ Accomplishes something as a leader

Using Adult Leaders at Scout Meetings—Checklist

Designated adult leaders can...

- ☐ Give the Scoutmaster's Minute.
- ☐ Recognize Scouts who have advanced.
- ☐ Keep track of the meeting, and quietly remind the senior patrol leader when it goes off schedule.
- ☐ Teach specific skills if no youth leaders are qualified.
- ☐ Touch base with youth leaders running part of the meeting to be sure they are prepared.
- ☐ Sit in on patrol meetings and skills instruction to provide quiet support to the youth leaders.
- ☐ Work with their youth leader counterparts.
- ☐ Conduct Scoutmaster conferences and boards of review.
- ☐ Serve as a merit badge counselor, and sign off on advancement requirements.
- ☐ Watch for Scouts who are not involved or who wander off.

Adult leaders should never...

- Take over the meeting (unless it is a true emergency).
- Criticize or call out Scouts.
- Yell "Sign's up!" (Controlling the group is the senior patrol leader's responsibility, and the Scout sign is a silent signal.)

Tips for Success

- ☐ Contact all individuals contributing to the event beforehand to ensure that they are prepared.
- ☐ Ensure that senior patrol leader and assistant senior patrol leader arrive early for a quick huddle.
- ☐ Plan your Scoutmaster's Minutes well.
- ☐ Include variety, action, and purpose.
- ☐ Vary the meeting routine with visitors, games, or food.
- ☐ Move the meeting outdoors when possible.
- ☐ Encourage youth leaders to use the Scout sign to get and hold attention.
- ☐ Do not wear out activities; alternate a favorite game occasionally with others.
- ☐ Mix up your games alternating between skill, speed, dexterity, and wits.
- ☐ Always leave the Scouts wanting more.
- ☐ Start and end on time.

Planning Patrol Activities—Frequently Asked Questions

Question: When can a patrol day hike or service project without adult supervision be allowed?

Answer: Never. Two-deep adult leadership is now required for all patrol activities.

Q: What should a Scoutmaster consider before allowing a patrol day hike or service project?

A: The Scoutmaster should be satisfied that the activity has been thoroughly planned and that it is well within each patrol member's level of training and responsibility. The patrol activity cannot interfere with any troop function.

Q: What should the Scoutmaster do if there are any doubts?

A: The Scoutmaster should encourage the patrol to reconsider its plans.

Q: What are the requirements for overnight patrol activities?

A: Overnight patrol activities require two registered adult leaders, or one registered leader and the parent of a participating Scout or other adult, one of whom must be 21 years of age or older.

Planning Outings—Checklist

Basic Planning Details

- ☐ Start planning as far back as the annual planning conference.
- ☐ Refer to key details like location, cost, and departure finalized at the previous month's PLC meeting.
- ☐ Have Scouts sign up a week or two in advance to allow time to shop for food and have drivers and adult leaders in place.
- ☐ Have youth leaders be responsible for the sign-up process.
- ☐ If expenses are involved, have the Scouts develop the basic budget, and collect just enough to cover the event.

Choosing Campsites

- ☐ To find a good campsite, use your contacts, experience, and resources.
- ☐ Look for campsites where each patrol can have its own clearly defined space.
- ☐ Have adults camp at a convenient distance to allow for youth leadership development.
- ☐ Contact the campsite owner or manager well in advance and foster that relationship.
- ☐ Explore the opportunities available to your troop or patrol.
- ☐ Pay attention to the landowner's or land manager's regulations and possible limitations.
- ☐ Ensure that Scouts and adults act responsibly and in keeping with Leave No Trace and Tread Lightly! guidelines, even in developed campsites.

Program Activities and Schedules

- ☐ Have the Scouts develop a schedule based on the outing's focus, whether it is hiking, special cooking, wilderness survival, etc.
- ☐ Have Scouts secure equipment as needed and recruit consultants as needed for planned activities.
- ☐ Create an expectation for starting and ending on time.
- ☐ Be sure to allow time in the schedule for unexpected opportunities that arise along the way.
- ☐ Don't be so rigid with the schedule that there is no time for unstructured play and free time.
- ☐ Be prepared with rainy-day activities.

Menus and Shopping

- ☐ Have each patrol plan its menu, estimate the cost, buy the food, and properly repackage the food for the outing.
- ☐ Have the patrol quartermaster or a Scout working on a cooking-related advancement requirement take care of the shopping.
- ☐ Create menus depending on the type of outing—limit backpacking patrols to lightweight foods, for example, or create more elaborate menus for sedentary trips.
- ☐ Refer to the *Scouts BSA Handbook* and *Cooking* merit badge pamphlet for menu planning tips, camp meal recipes, an overview of cooking methods, and a chart to help determine serving sizes.
- ☐ Refer to other resources like *Camp Cookery for Small Groups* for patrol-size recipes and the Cooking program feature, which includes a section on special cooking.
- ☐ Discourage parents, who typically help Scouts do the shopping, from going beyond the planned menu.

Tips for Success

- ☐ Keep in mind that as of Jan. 1, 2014, the Cooking merit badge is required for the Eagle Scout rank.
- ☐ Add variety to menus by using themes or creating cooking contests.
- ☐ For Scouts who are learning to create a menu, consider taking them to a grocery store.

Duty Rosters

- ☐ Address the fact that there are many chores involved in cooking a meal on a patrol outing that make it a collaborative effort.
- ☐ For younger Scouts, you may need to spell out clearly who does what and when by creating a duty roster.
- ☐ Create a chart that lists each meal vertically down the left side and each chore horizontally across the top. (Chores typically include stoves and fire, water, cooking, cleanup.)
- ☐ Rotate who performs each chore from meal to meal to create a sense of fairness.
- ☐ Remember, cleanup is everyone's responsibility; have each patrol leader lead the patrol in making a thorough sweep of the campsite and leaving it better than they found it.

Planning Outings—Checklist (continued)

Using Adult Leaders on Outings

- ☐ Keep to the principle of letting youth leaders lead and Scouts learn from their mistakes.
- ☐ Have adult leaders set up camp a short distance from the camp, but near enough to be approachable.
- ☐ Make the outings a place where mentoring relationships are strengthened, and Scouts can seek guidance from trusted adults.
- ☐ Conduct Scoutmaster conferences for advancement or for Scouts who should be advancing.
- ☐ Follow the BSA's Youth Protection guidelines, which require one-on-one conferences to be held in full view of others.
- ☐ Share with adults a list of specific things they can do to make outings more enjoyable. These include:
 - ☐ Make sure tents are pitched properly.
 - ☐ Make sure ground beds will keep Scouts comfortable, warm, and dry.
 - ☐ In cold weather, make sure each Scout's sleeping bag is sufficiently warm.
 - ☐ Encourage Scouts to change from sweat-soaked clothing to dry sleepwear.
 - ☐ In hot weather, make sure Scouts use sunscreen and drink plenty of water.
 - ☐ Encourage Scouts to monitor their urine output to avoid dehydration; it should be clear and copious.
 - ☐ Watch out for signs of homesickness, health problems, or other issues.
 - ☐ Help the patrol leader and patrol leaders enforce bedtimes so that everyone gets enough sleep.
 - ☐ Typically, adults go to bed last and get up first.

Outdoor Equipment—Checklist

- ☐ Know the requirements for the specific type of outing you are planning.
- ☐ Promote the use of lightweight camping gear to make it easier to camp anywhere.
- ☐ Suggest that each Scout carry the Scout Basic Essentials as listed in their Scouts BSA handbook.
- ☐ Refer to the *Scouts BSA Handbook for Boys* (No. 34622) or the *Scouts BSA Handbook for Girls* (No. 39006), as appropriate, for additional personal overnight camping gear a Scout might need for campouts or trips of greater duration.
- ☐ Have an adult or experienced older Scout advise new Scouts on what to buy, what features to look for, and where to shop.
- ☐ Bear in mind that while carrying cell phones and other electronic devices on outings can be a contentious issue, many such devices have useful features.
- ☐ With the input of the patrol leaders' council, guide your troop in developing its own policies about what to allow and when.

Scout Basic Essentials—Checklist

- ☐ Pocketknife
- ☐ First-aid kit
- ☐ Extra clothing
- ☐ Rain gear
- ☐ Water bottle (and method for treating water in the backcountry)
- ☐ Flashlight
- ☐ Trail food
- ☐ Matches and fire starters
- ☐ Sun protection
- ☐ Map and compass

Insect repellent, a whistle, and other items also might be considered essentials, depending on your destination, the length of your trip, and the season.

Personal Overnight Camping Gear—Checklist

- ☐ Scout Basic Essentials
- ☐ Clothing appropriate for the season
- ☐ Backpack with rain cover
- ☐ Sleeping bag, or two or three blankets
- ☐ Sleeping pad
- ☐ Ground cloth
- ☐ Eating kit
 - ☐ Spoon
 - ☐ Plate
 - ☐ Bowl
 - ☐ Cup
- ☐ Cleanup kit
 - ☐ Soap
 - ☐ Toothbrush
 - ☐ Dental Floss
 - ☐ Comb
 - ☐ Washcloth
 - ☐ Towel
 - ☐ Hand sanitizer
- ☐ Plastic garbage bags
- ☐ Nylon cord, 50 feet
- ☐ Optional personal extras and gear for specific activities
 - ☐ Watch
 - ☐ Camera
 - ☐ Small notebook
 - ☐ Pencil or pen
 - ☐ Sunglasses
 - ☐ Small musical instrument
 - ☐ Swimsuit
 - ☐ Gloves
 - ☐ Fishing pole and gear

Troop and Patrol Gear—Checklist

Be aware of the recommended Group Camping Gear Checklist (found in the Scouts BSA handbooks) and the many sources where items can be purchased, borrowed, or “inherited.”

- ☐ Before purchasing a new piece of equipment, be sure that:

- ☐ It fills a definite need.
- ☐ It enhances the troop’s program.
- ☐ There is space to store it.
- ☐ It is in good condition and safe.
- ☐ There are no hidden costs.
- ☐ You can afford it.

- ☐ Troop Overnight Camping Gear

- ☐ Tents with poles, stakes, ground cloths, and lines
- ☐ Dining fly
- ☐ Nylon cord, 50 feet
- ☐ Backpacking stoves and fuel
- ☐ Group first-aid kit
- ☐ Washbasin
- ☐ Cook kit—one per patrol and one for the adults (pots and pans; spatula, large spoon, and/or ladle, depending on menus; two plastic sheets, each 4-by-4-feet; matches and/or butane lighters in waterproof containers)
- ☐ Cleanup kit—one per patrol and one for the adults (sponge or dishcloth; biodegradable soap; sanitizing rinse agent/bleach; scouring pads, no-soap type; plastic trash bags; toilet paper in plastic bag)
- ☐ Repair kit (thread, needles, safety pins)

- ☐ Troop extras (optional)

- ☐ Hot-pot tongs
- ☐ Camp shovel
- ☐ Water container—one 1-gallon or two ½-gallon collapsible, plastic
- ☐ Grill
- ☐ Pot rods
- ☐ Patrol flag
- ☐ Small U.S. flag
- ☐ Ax
- ☐ Camp saw
- ☐ Lanterns and fuel

Storing and Caring for Troop Equipment—Checklist

Follow commonsense guidelines:

- ☐ Write, stencil, or engrave identifying information on equipment.
- ☐ Store equipment in a locked space that is temperature and dampness controlled.
- ☐ Have the troop quartermaster work with a member of the troop committee to organize the gear and set up an efficient check-out and check-in system.
- ☐ Check the condition of each item after use, and arrange for any cleaning or repair.
- ☐ Maintain a list of the gear on hand.

Tents and Tarps

- ☐ Two-person tents are ideal for most patrol and troop camping because they can be carried in backpacks, and their use fosters the buddy system.
- ☐ Use a tarp or dining fly to fend off the weather or to protect gear stored underneath.

Trailers

Keep these ideas in mind regarding trailers:

- ☐ Be aware of its towing requirements when purchasing a trailer.
- ☐ Unload the trailer completely after each outing to ensure that everything gets packed on the next outing.
- ☐ Don't be a slave to your trailer; some campsites can only be accessed on foot.
- ☐ Protect your trailer by buying and using a wheel lock.
- ☐ Add padlocks to all the doors.
- ☐ Park your trailer in a highly visible location in such a way that it can't be easily moved.

Scoutmaster's Campsite Quick Checklist

While Setting Up Camp

- ☐ Choose a campsite according to Leave No Trace and Tread Lightly! guidelines.
- ☐ Determine the kitchen area and tent locations before setting up camp.

Tents

- ☐ Properly pitch tents to keep out wind and rain.
- ☐ Tie guylines with correct knots; properly stake them down.
- ☐ Use ground cloths under tents to shield tent floors from abrasion and ground moisture.

Personal Gear and Bedding

- ☐ Stow sleeping bags and pads inside tents.
- ☐ Store clothing and other personal gear neatly in packs.

Kitchen Area

- ☐ Set up the dining fly.
- ☐ Stow food to keep it safe from weather and wildlife.
- ☐ Properly set up the cooking area, stoves, and open fires using Leave No Trace and Tread Lightly! guidelines.
- ☐ Make and follow plans for wastewater disposal and trash management.
- ☐ Set out soap and water for Scouts to wash hands before cooking and eating.

Latrine

- ☐ Arrange for cleaning (if required) and monitoring of toilet facilities (if available).
- ☐ Be sure the general locations of catholes (if used) are understood by all.
- ☐ Be sure every Scout has been trained to use catholes and latrines in an environmentally sound manner. (If not, teach Scouts before they begin their campout rather than when they are in dire need.)
- ☐ Keep toilet paper on hand.

During the Campout

Campsite

- ☐ Keep the area clean and orderly.
- ☐ Pick up all litter, even debris left by other groups.

Tents

- ☐ Keep tents taut.
- ☐ Neatly stow bedding and personal gear.

Kitchen Area

- ☐ Properly store all food.
- ☐ Keep utensils and dishes clean and orderly.
- ☐ Keep cooking and dining areas neat.
- ☐ Have patrols follow duty rosters for meal preparation and cleanup.
- ☐ Be sure Scouts wash their hands with soap and water before cooking and eating.
- ☐ Dispose of dishwater and manage trash and leftovers according to Leave No Trace and Tread Lightly! guidelines.

While Breaking Camp

- ☐ Check to make sure personal and group gear has been packed and is ready for the trip home.
- ☐ Pack out all trash for transport and proper disposal.
- ☐ Check that all catholes have been properly covered. Properly dispose of all toilet paper.
- ☐ In permanent fire sites, be sure all fires have been put cold out and fireplaces have been cleaned of any litter and bits of leftover food.
- ☐ Where appropriate, as a courtesy for the next campers, leave a supply of firewood.
- ☐ Look over the campsite again from a Leave No Trace and Tread Lightly! point of view. Note any other steps Scouts can take to remove evidence of their presence in the area.

Scouts

- ☐ Dress appropriately for the weather and the activities.
- ☐ Follow personal cleanliness habits (within reason).
- ☐ Be sure the general health of all Scouts is good.

Outing Planner

Description _____

Location _____

Departure date and time _____

Return date and time _____

Youth leader in charge of planning _____

Adult leader in charge of planning _____

Expected attendance (Scouts) _____

Expected attendance (adults) _____

Three Months Out

- ☐ Assign youth and adult coordinators.
- ☐ Confirm dates and times.
- ☐ Reserve campsite.
- ☐ Recruit program specialists (e.g., certified COPE instructor).

Two Months Out

- ☐ Plan the budget; set the price.
- ☐ Submit required forms (e.g., campsite reservation, fishing and boating licenses).
- ☐ Begin promotion.
- ☐ Plan special training or shakedown, including troop meeting content.
- ☐ Begin signups and distribute permission slips, including those required by outfitters.
- ☐ Begin recruiting adult leaders and drivers.

One Month Out

- ☐ Include a schedule.
- ☐ Collect any missing Annual Health and Medical Record forms.
- ☐ Begin teaching needed skills at troop meetings.
- ☐ Ensure at least one leader has training in basic first aid (wilderness first aid for backcountry trips), hazardous weather, and—depending on the activity—Safe Swim Defense, Safety Afloat, and/or Climb On Safely.
- ☐ Include a schedule.
- ☐ Continue promotion.
- ☐ Secure any special troop and patrol equipment (e.g., canoes, climbing gear).

Two Weeks Out

- ☐ Make sure you have enough drivers and enough gear haulers.
- ☐ Check the route and prepare maps as needed.
- ☐ Confirm the location of rest stops on long trips. (Groups should not travel in tight convoys.)
- ☐ Confirm the nearest medical facility and emergency phone number.
- ☐ Confirm the campsite contact and phone number.
- ☐ Prepare rainy-day activities.

One Week Out

- ☐ Confirm Scout and adult attendance.
- ☐ Collect permission slips.
- ☐ Confirm the campsite reservation.
- ☐ Confirm the participation of program specialists.
- ☐ Have patrols plan menus, assign shopping duties, and prepare duty rosters.
- ☐ Assemble troop and patrol equipment.
- ☐ Do a personal gear shakedown, if necessary.
- ☐ Check the weather forecast.
- ☐ Announce the departure and arrival times, if not already announced.

Day of Outing

- ☐ Do a final gear and food check.
- ☐ Distribute emergency contact information to parents.
- ☐ Share travel plans with someone who is staying behind.
- ☐ Leave on time, have fun, and be safe.

Resources

Boy Scouts of America print and video resources change frequently. The following list of key resources for Scout leaders was current at press time.

A Note About Catalog Numbers

Free items (sometimes known as bin items) have five- or six-digit numbers with hyphens, while retail items have five- or six-digit numbers without hyphens. Note, however, that many retail items are also available as free downloads at www.scouting.org, as are most bin items. You can purchase retail items at your local Scout shop or at www.scoutshop.org.

Youth Protection

The Boy Scouts of America places the greatest importance on creating the most secure environment possible for our youth members. To maintain such an environment, the BSA developed numerous procedural and leadership selection policies and provides parents and leaders with resources for the Cub Scout, Scouts BSA, and Venturing programs.

See www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/youth-protection

Health and Safety

Age-Appropriate Guidelines for Scouting Activities

filestore.scouting.org/filestore/HealthSafety/pdf/680-685.pdf

Annual Health and Medical Record

www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/ahmr

Bullying Awareness

www.scouting.org/training/youth-protection/bullying

Guide to Safe Scouting

The primary source for information on conducting Scouting activities in a safe and prudent manner

www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/gss

Health and Safety Training Course Syllabus

www.scouting.org/training/adult/supplemental/planning-and-conducting-a-safe-scout-outing

Policies, Guidelines, and Model Plans

www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/guidelines-policies

Safety Moments

www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/safety-moments

Trek Safely

www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/gss/toc

Incident Reporting

Timely, clear, concise, and complete incident reports allow for an appropriate response and an opportunity for analysis while promoting continuous improvement of our programs. You can report incidents, near misses, and youth protection/membership infraction incidents to your local council or enter them yourself. See www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/incident-report

Scouting.org

Here are some primary resources helpful to troop leaders, available from the Boy Scouts of America's official website. Many more can be found online.

Advancement and Awards for Scouts

Directories related to advancement and awards opportunities for Scouts

www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/advancement-and-awards

www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/youth/awards

Advancement Report

www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/advancement-and-awards/resources

Application for Alternative Eagle Scout Rank Merit Badges

www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/advancement-and-awards/resources

Belay On

www.scouting.org/outdoor-programs/cope

Scout Troop Open House

www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/troop-open-house

Scout Uniform Inspection Sheet

www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/adults/publications

Campfire Program Planner

www.scouting.org/resources/info-center/forms

Climb On Safely

www.scouting.org/outdoor-programs/cope/climb-on-safely

Den Chief Training

www.scouting.org/training/youth/den-chief-training

Duty to God

www.scouting.org/awards/religious-awards

Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook

www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/advancement-and-awards/resources

A Guide for Merit Badge Counseling

filestore.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/512-065.pdf

Guide to Advancement, No. 33088

The official source for administering advancement in all Boy Scouts of America program phases

www.scouting.org/resources/guide-to-advancement

Guide to Awards and Insignia

A comprehensive guide to wearing uniforms and badges correctly

www.scouting.org/resources/info-center/insignia-guide

Resources

A Guide to Working With Scouts With Special Needs and DisABILITIES

www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/the-building-blocks-of-scouting/disabilities

Handbook for Chaplains and Chaplain Aides in Scout Troops and Venturing Crews

www.scoutingwire.org/marketing-and-membership-hub/new-unit-development/chartered-organizations/religious-chartered-organizations

Introduction to Leadership Skills for Troops

www.scouting.org/training/youth

Introduction to Outdoor Leader Skills

www.scouting.org/training/adult

Leave No Trace Training

www.scouting.org/outdoor-programs/leave-no-trace

Merit Badge Counselor Information

www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/mb-counselor-guide

Nationally Approved Historic Trails

<http://bsatap.org/historic-trails>

Opportunities for Scouts

Listing of opportunities for Scouts such as training courses, scholarships, and special programs

www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/youth/opportunities

Orientation for New Scout Parents

www.scouting.org/training/adult/supplemental/orientation-for-new-boy-scout-parents

Outdoor Ethics Awareness and Action Awards Program

www.scouting.org/outdoor-programs/outdoor-ethics/awards/boy-scout

Planning Your Troop's Annual Program Budget

www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/program-planning-tools

Scoutmaster Position-Specific Training

www.scouting.org/training/adult

Selecting Quality Leaders

www.scouting.org/training/adult/supplemental/selecting-quality-leaders

Service Project Planning Guidelines

www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/guidelines-policies

Transfer Form (Youth Member)

www.scouting.org/resources/info-center/forms

Troop Budget Planning

www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/planning

Troop Meeting Plan

www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/planning

Troop Program Resources

Games, ceremonies, Scoutmaster's Minutes, and more
www.programresources.org

Troop Resource Survey

www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/advancement-and-awards/resources

Unit Budgeting and Planning Resources

www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/program-planning-tools

Unit Money-Earning Application

www.scouting.org/resources/info-center/forms

Unit Public Relations

www.scoutingwire.org/marketing-and-membership-hub/new-unit-development/education-relationships/unit-pr

Webelos Transition

www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/adults

Worksheet for Building a Merit Badge Counselor List

www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/advancement-and-awards/resources

Year-Round Guide to Scout Recruiting

www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/year-round-guide

Scoutshop.org

The following items can be obtained at the BSA's official retail website, www.scoutshop.org.

Aquatics Supervision, No. 34737

Scouts BSA Handbook for Boys (No. 34622) and *Scouts BSA Handbook for Girls* (No. 39006)—The primary resources for Scouts (and for Scout leaders who need to learn basic Scouting skills).

Scouts BSA Requirements, No. 33216—Requirements for ranks, merit badges, and special awards.

Camp Cookery for Small Groups, No. 33592

Conservation Handbook, No. 33570

Den Chief Handbook, No. 33211

Fieldbook, No. 34006—A companion volume to the Scouts BSA handbooks that covers advanced outdoor skills.

Guide to Advancement, No. 33088—The official source for administering advancement in all Boy Scouts of America program phases.

Guide to Awards and Insignia, No. 33066—A comprehensive guide to wearing uniforms and badges correctly.

Guide to Safe Scouting, No. 34416—The primary source for information on conducting Scouting activities in a safe and prudent manner.

Merit Badge Application (blue card), No. 34124 (100 pack) and No. 34130 (25 pack)

Resources

Okpik: Cold-Weather Camping, No. 34040

Order of the Arrow Handbook, No. 34996

Patrol Monthly Dues Envelope, No. 33816

Program Features for Troops and Crews (Volume 1, No. 33110; Volume 2, No. 33111; Volume 3, No. 33112) Complete monthly program features, 16 per volume, that include meeting plans, outing ideas, and resources.

A Scout Is Reverent, No. 34248

This Is Scouting (DVD), No. 610460

Patrol Leader Handbook, No. 32502—The official guide for patrol leaders.

Senior Patrol Leader Handbook, No. 32501—The official guide for senior patrol leaders and other troop-level youth leaders.

A Time to Tell (DVD), No. 605696

Troop Committee Guidebook, No. 34505—The primary resource for troop committee members.

Troop Leader Guidebook (Volume 1, No. 33009; Volume 2, No. 33010)—The primary resource for Scoutmasters and assistant Scoutmasters.

My.Scouting.org

The following resources can be found at [My.Scouting.org](https://www.myscouting.org).
(A login is required to take My.Scouting.org training courses.)

Fast Start Orientation Training

How to Protect Your Children From Child Abuse:

A Parent's Guide—found in the *Scouts BSA Handbook for Boys* and the *Scouts BSA Handbook for Girls*

Physical Wellness

Safe Swim Defense

Safety Afloat

This Is Scouting

Trek Safely

Weather Hazards

Youth Protection Training

BSA Websites

Be a Scout, www.BeAScout.org

Boy Scouts of America, www.Scouting.org

BSA Training, www.Scouting.org/training

BSA Health and Safety, www.scouting.org/health-and-safety

BSA Supply Group, www.Scoutshop.org

MyScouting, My.Scouting.org

Scout Life magazine, www.scoutlife.org

—The BSA's official youth magazine; published 10 times per year

Scouting magazine, www.Scoutingmagazine.org

—The official digital magazine and website for all families and BSA volunteers

Glossary

Scouting has a language all its own. Here are some common terms you should be familiar with. For definitions of other terms, visit www.scouting.org/Media/LOS.aspx.

assistant Scoutmaster. A volunteer Scouter, 18 or older, appointed by the chartered organization to help the Scoutmaster by working with a patrol or carrying out other assigned tasks.

board of review. A review held to determine whether a Scout has satisfactorily completed rank requirements. A review may also be held to encourage Scouts who are not advancing.

campmaster. A volunteer Scouter trained to assist in short-term camping.

charter. In the BSA, charters authorize (1) an organization to operate BSA Scouting units; (2) a local council to incorporate as a BSA local council; (3) operation of an Order of the Arrow lodge; or (4) the Boy Scouts of America to incorporate.

charter presentation. A formal ceremony at which the charter, Scouter commissions, and membership certificates are presented to organization authorities and members of the unit.

charter renewal. An annual meeting attended by the chartered organization representative, head of the chartered organization, troop leaders, and unit commissioner for the purpose of completing the charter application and making plans for the charter presentation.

chartered organization. A religious, civic, fraternal, educational, or other community-based organization that has applied for and received a charter to operate a BSA Scouting unit.

chartered organization representative. A manager of Scouting in a chartered organization who also represents this organization in the local council and district.

commissioner. A commissioned Scouter who works with Cub Scout packs, Scout troops, and Venturing crews to help units succeed.

council service center. See local council service center.

council. An administrative body chartered to be responsible for Scouting in a designated geographic territory.

court of honor. A recognition ceremony for those who have met the requirements of any one of the Scouts BSA ranks, merit badges, or other awards.

Cub Scouting. That part of the program of the Boy Scouts of America for youth who are kindergarten age through fifth grade (or are 5 through 10 years old).

district. A geographical area of the council determined by the council executive board to help ensure the growth and success of Scouting units within the district's territory.

district executive. A professional Scouter who works under the direction of the local council Scout executive and acts as an advisor to the volunteer leaders in the district.

Friends of Scouting. An annual opportunity for Scouters and interested people in the community to be identified with the local council through their financial support and influence in the expansion of the council program.

Good Turn. A distinctive feature of Scouts BSA is its emphasis on service to others. The Good Turn habit is one that all Scouts endeavor to acquire.

jamboree. A national or international gathering of Scouts.

Journey to Excellence. A performance recognition program designed to encourage and reward success and measure the performance of units, districts, and councils.

junior assistant Scoutmaster. A 16- or 17-year-old youth appointed by the Scoutmaster, approved by the troop committee, and responsible to the Scoutmaster for tasks assigned.

Leave No Trace. A nationally recognized outdoor skills and ethics awareness organization that seeks to reduce impacts on the environment and other people; its mission informs the BSA's outdoor ethics principles.

local council. An administrative body chartered by the National Council to be responsible for Scouting in a designated geographic territory.

local council service center. The business center for the local administration of Scouting.

lodge. A local council Order of the Arrow group chartered annually by the National Council.

My.Scouting. An internet portal for our members that provides access to their account data, the E-Learning Course Management System, and more.

new-Scout patrol. Upon joining a Scout troop, a new youth member may become part of a patrol composed of new Scouts, where an assistant Scoutmaster and a troop guide help ensure a good start in Scouting.

older-Scout patrol. A patrol of Scouts ages 13 and older in a troop; the patrol participates in high-adventure activities.

Order of the Arrow. Scouting's national honor society. The aim of the OA is to promote the outdoor program and service to Scouting.

outdoor ethics. A set of principles that guide Scouts' ethical decision making in their relationship to the natural world.

patrol. A small group of Scouts (usually five to eight) who belong to a troop and work together in and out of troop meetings. Normally, there are several patrols in one troop.

patrol leaders' council. Each patrol leader, representing the patrol, meets with other patrol leaders and the senior patrol leader to plan their troop program. The Scoutmaster acts as an advisor.

Glossary

roundtable. An event conducted by a roundtable commissioner and roundtable staff to help the unit leaders of a district plan and carry out their own unit programs.

Scout benediction. "May the Great Scoutmaster of all Scouts be with us until we meet again."

Scout executive. The chief executive officer of the local council responsible for the administration, financing, marketing, motivation, recruitment, and staffing required for successful council operations.

Scout Life. The magazine for all Scouts, published by the Boy Scouts of America.

Scout Sabbath. The Saturday after February 8, Scouting Anniversary Day.

Scout shop. A BSA-owned store, operated by the Supply Group, that sells official Scouting merchandise.

Scout Sunday. The Sunday before February 8, Scouting Anniversary Day.

Scouter. An adult leader in the Boy Scouts of America.

Scouting Anniversary Week. The week, beginning on Sunday, that includes February 8, Scouting Anniversary Day. During the week, units are encouraged to conduct rededication ceremonies and to demonstrate Scouting's purposeful activities.

Scouting magazine. The official digital magazine app and site for all Scouters. It aims to interpret the program, stimulate action, and strengthen a desire to serve.

Scoutmaster. A volunteer Scouter, 21 or older, appointed by the chartered organization to lead a Scout troop.

Scoutmaster's Minute. A part of the closing ceremony of a troop meeting or campfire in which the Scoutmaster encourages Scoutlike conduct by telling a story.

Sea Scouting. A branch of Venturing that specializes in traditional nautical activities, e.g., sailing, motorboating, and maritime careers.

senior patrol leader. A Scout elected by the Scouts to help all the patrols succeed. Each troop has one senior patrol leader who may be assisted by one or more assistant senior patrol leaders.

service center. See local council service center.

square knot. Generally, embroidered square knots are representative of pin-on medals or around-the-neck awards and are designed for the greater convenience of the wearer.

Supply Group. The arm of the Boy Scouts of America that supplies official uniforms, equipment, literature, and other resources to the field. Includes administrative offices located in the national office, the National Distribution Center, and Scout shops located nationwide.

trading post. The camp or reservation store where campers may purchase equipment and supplies. A distributor's Scouting department is sometimes referred to as the trading post.

Tread Lightly! A national nonprofit organization with a mission to promote responsible outdoor recreation through ethics education and stewardship; its mission informs the BSA's outdoor ethics principles.

troop. The entity that conducts the Scouts BSA program for the chartered organization; it is typically composed of several patrols.

unit. The entity that conducts Scouting for the chartered organization; it consists of registered youth members and registered adult volunteer members. A unit may be a Cub Scout pack, Scout troop, Venturing crew, or Sea Scout ship. Its affairs are administered by the unit committee, which is appointed by the chartered organization.

Venturing. The young adult program of the Boy Scouts of America for men and women ages 14 through 20, or 13 with completion of the eighth grade.

Youth Protection. This BSA emphasis fights child abuse by teaching youth the "three R's" (recognize, resist, and report child abuse); by helping parents and Scouters learn to recognize indications of child abuse and situations that could lead to potential abuse; and by teaching them how to handle child abuse situations or reports.

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See also Glossary for definitions of specific terms

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Scout Oath

On my honor I will do my best
To do my duty to God and my country
and to obey the Scout Law;
To help other people at all times;
To keep myself physically strong,
mentally awake, and morally straight.

Scout Law

A Scout is trustworthy, loyal, helpful,
friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful,
thrifty, brave, clean, and reverent.

Scout Motto

Be Prepared.

Scout Slogan

Do a Good Turn Daily.

Prepared. For Life.®



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