

SENIOR
**PATROL
LEADER**
HANDBOOK



BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA®



The BSA's official uniform includes a Scout shirt, Scout pants or Scout shorts, Scout belt, Scout socks, and shoes or hiking boots. Your troop may also elect to wear a cap or broad-brimmed hat. Your uniform may be brand-new, or it might have been worn by others for many troop activities. Proudly wear your uniform to troop meetings, ceremonies such as courts of honor, and most other indoor troop functions. When you're headed outdoors, you can pull on a T-shirt with Scout pants or shorts, or wear other clothing that is right for the events of the day.

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BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA®

THE 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.

THE SCOUT LAW

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

THE SCOUT MOTTO

Be Prepared.

THE SCOUT SLOGAN

Do a Good Turn Daily.

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HOW TO BE A GOOD SENIOR PATROL LEADER

THE TROOP LEADERSHIP TEAM

[illegible]

With three green bars behind the Scout emblem, the senior patrol leader's shoulder patch symbolizes one of the oldest leadership positions in Scouting. The Boy Scouts of America has long recognized the senior patrol leader as the highest youth leadership position in a troop. The senior patrol leader is the primary link between a troop's Scouts and its adult leaders. As such, the senior patrol leader shoulders the responsibility for leading meetings of the troop and the patrol leaders' council as well as providing valuable leadership in planning and carrying out the troop's program of outdoor activities, service projects, and events.



The youth leadership roles and responsibilities of the senior patrol leader are different from the leadership model you experienced as a Cub Scout. In Cub Scouting, adults plan and lead meetings and outings because it is a parent-Scout program and because the Cub Scouts are too young to provide leadership. Scouts BSA, on the other hand, is intended to be youth-led with adults taking an advisory and support role.

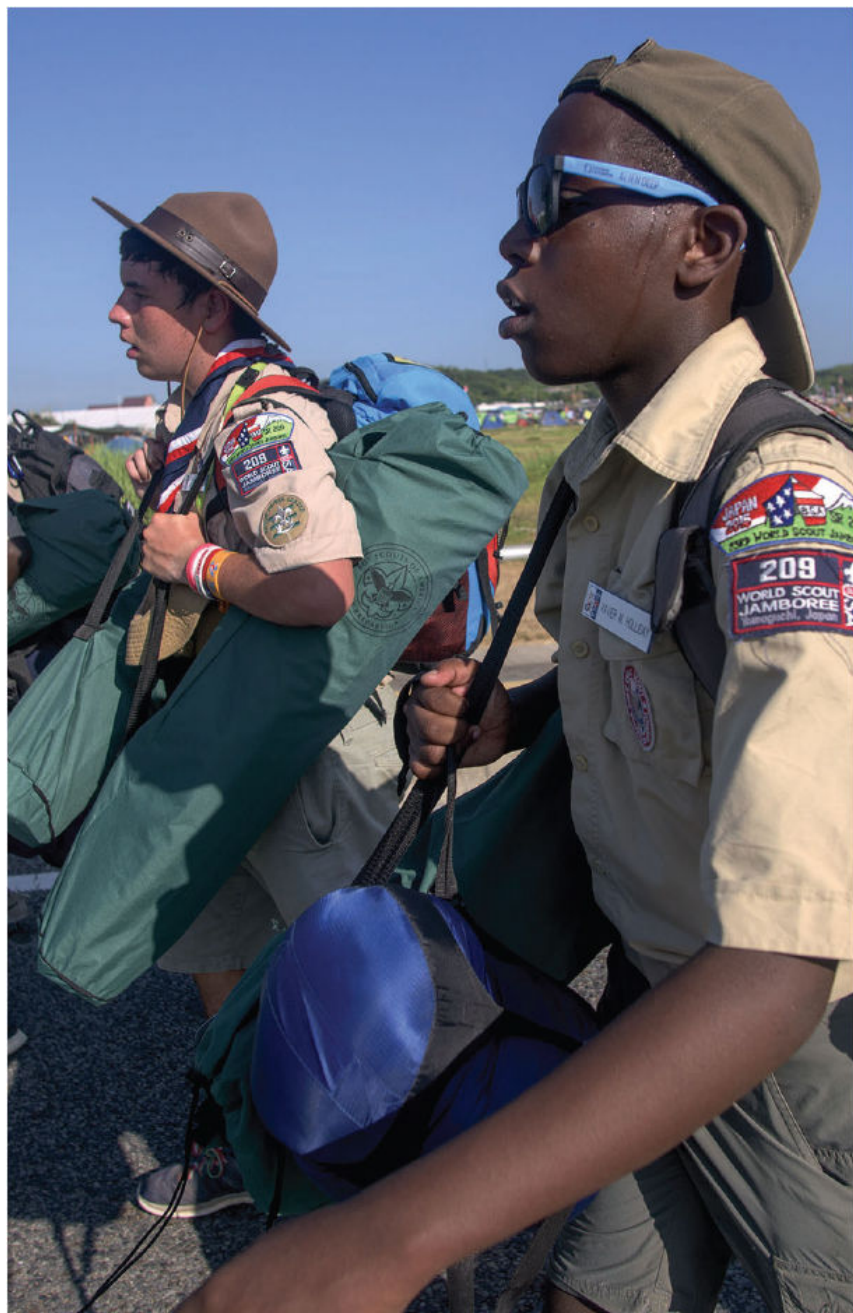
Up to this time, you have been a member of a patrol. You may have been the leader of your patrol, maybe more than once. Now that you are the senior patrol leader, you are no longer a member of any patrol until your term of office is over. Why is that? First, because patrol members are led by their patrol leaders while you now lead the patrol leaders. You can't be in the position of leading all the patrol leaders and being led by one of them at the same time. Second, there is less chance of favoritism in the way that you treat the patrols if you are not a member of any patrol.



Now you have agreed to wear the senior patrol leader patch on the sleeve of your uniform. You have been elected by your fellow Scouts to help them make the most of their Scouting experiences.

Have confidence that this is a responsibility you can handle, and that you will be able to do it well. The troop members who elected you to this position have seen much in you that has convinced them you will be a good leader. You were elected because your fellow Scouts trusted you and believe that you will help the troop be successful and help them have a better Scouting experience. Good leaders accept leadership roles because they want to make a difference. Good leaders are servant leaders. They focus on helping others succeed.

You probably have many leadership skills already, and quite a bit of experience using them. You may have played key roles in the success of Scout hikes and campouts. No doubt your efforts were important to patrol and troop service projects. You certainly have done your part to help make patrol and troop meetings run smoothly and well.



As senior patrol leader, you will continue to develop leadership skills that you will use for the rest of your life. You will be challenged many times in the coming months, but you also will find much satisfaction in the successes of your troop. When you look back upon your tenure as senior patrol leader, you may well remember this as among the most exciting times in your Scouting career.

Begin by thinking about your vision for the troop.

- What does success look like?
- What goals do you need to set to get there?
- When will you begin to develop your plans with the patrol leaders' council to accomplish those goals?

You have what it takes to be a good senior patrol leader. Draw on your strengths, be open to new ideas, and put your heart into it with the goal of making the troop the best it can be. Most of all, enjoy the opportunity to put your own special mark on a successful troop program.

As you read this handbook and begin your term as senior patrol leader, remember and practice these three ingredients of leadership:

BE everything that makes you the person you are.

KNOW the skills of teaching and leading so that you can help others—and yourself—achieve goals. This handbook will help you learn those skills. Then you will know them.

DO, as you set into action the whole toolbox of leadership skills: how to communicate well, solve problems, resolve conflict, and all the rest.

>> 1 SENIOR PATROL LEADER QUALIFICATIONS



Senior Patrol Leader Qualifications

Duties of a Senior Patrol Leader

Your Support Group

- The Scoutmaster

- The Assistant Scoutmasters

- The Troop Committee

- The Chartered Organization Representative

Understanding the Troop's Structure

Your Venturing Crew and/or Cub Scout Pack

Your Leadership Training Opportunities

- Introduction to Leadership

- Introduction to Leadership Skills for Troops

- National Youth Leadership Training, National Leadership Seminars, and
National Advanced Youth Leadership Experience

Leadership Tips to Get You Started

How Will I Know I Am Leading Well?

- Your Vision for Your Troop

Each troop sets its own age, rank, and other qualification standards for its senior patrol leader, though these may be temporarily waived if a troop is newly organized. A senior patrol leader serves from one troop election to the next, usually for a period of six to 12 months. In most troops, voting is done by secret ballot. All youth members of the troop are eligible to vote.

The senior patrol leader of an established troop is often selected from among the most experienced Scouts of a certain age and rank. In a new troop or a troop without older members, Scouts are likely to choose as senior patrol leader someone they respect and believe will provide effective leadership.



The patrol leaders' council may offer candidates for senior patrol leader the opportunity to appear before the troop to discuss their qualifications and reasons for seeking the office. This provides good practice for the candidates and enables those who do not know them well, younger Scouts in particular, to gain a better sense of what they propose to do for the troop.

Scouts in the troop can hardly wait to go on hikes, sleep in tents, and cook meals in the open. They are eager to master the skills of Scouting and to put into practice what they are learning. They want to share experiences with their friends.

Challenge, adventure, leadership, recognition, growth—the expectations Scouts bring to Scouting can be fulfilled. You can help the members of the troop pull together the pieces and make the BSA program come to life. Along the way, you will discover that your own Scouting experience is greatly enriched by serving as the troop's senior patrol leader.

DUTIES OF A SENIOR PATROL LEADER

As senior patrol leader you are the point person, up front at meetings, delegating responsibilities for troop activities and encouraging the patrols to accomplish all they can. The troop is going to count on you to live up to some clear expectations:

AS SENIOR PATROL LEADER, YOU WILL NOT BE A MEMBER OF A PATROL, BUT YOU MAY PARTICIPATE IN HIGH-ADVENTURE ACTIVITIES WITH THE TROOP'S SENIOR, OLDER-SCOUT PATROL.

- Run all troop meetings, events, activities, and the annual program planning conference.
- Chair meetings of the patrol leaders' council.
- Appoint troop members to serve in the troop's other youth leader positions (with the advice and counsel of the Scoutmaster).
- Delegate duties and responsibilities to other youth leaders.
- Assist the Scoutmaster with troop leadership training.
- Set a good example.
- Wear the Scout uniform correctly.
- Show Scout spirit.

You are called on to do your best to lead your troop. Being a good senior patrol leader will require a significant commitment of time. Consider all of your obligations to family, school, and religion, and find an appropriate balance, even if that means

temporarily putting aside some extracurricular activities.



YOUR SUPPORT GROUP

As senior patrol leader, you will want to do your best to help the troop succeed. You are not in this alone, though. Scouting provides you with a group of adults and other youth leaders eager to help you succeed.

Adults with whom you will be working include those holding the following positions:

- Scoutmaster
- Assistant Scoutmaster
- Troop committee member

- Chartered organization representative

As senior patrol leader, you can expect the following from the troop's adult leaders. They will:

- Provide direction, coaching, and support.
- Be available to help answer your questions.
- Listen to your ideas.
- Be fair.
- Serve as good examples.
- Offer advice when appropriate.
- Back you on reasonable leadership decisions.

BEING SENIOR PATROL LEADER GOES BEYOND TROOP MEETINGS. AS THE TROOP'S YOUTH LEADER WITH THE GREATEST RESPONSIBILITIES, YOU CAN REPRESENT SCOUTING'S BEST DURING TROOP EVENTS AND IN YOUR SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY.

The Scoutmaster

A Scoutmaster trains Scouts to be leaders, makes available to them the resources and guidance they need to lead well, and then steps into the background and lets them do their jobs. As you gain experience as a senior patrol leader, you will find tremendous assistance and support from the Scoutmaster. The Scoutmaster's responsibility is to ensure that the troop program delivers the promise of Scouting, that the values of the Scout Oath and Scout Law come to life in the troop, that the troop's leaders are developed, and that the environment for character development and fun is offered for every Scout.



Make no mistake, the troop's leadership starts with the Scoutmaster. This is not a passive role, even though most of the Scoutmaster's work is done behind the scenes in support of your role. Adults are responsible for providing leadership to a youth-run troop.

A SCOUTMASTER TRAINS SCOUTS TO BE LEADERS, MAKES AVAILABLE TO THEM THE RESOURCES AND GUIDANCE THEY NEED TO LEAD WELL, AND THEN STEPS INTO THE BACKGROUND AND LETS THEM DO THEIR JOBS.

Rely on the Scoutmaster to coach you from the sidelines and to give you plenty of space to step before the troop and provide the active leadership Scouts expect from you. Do not hesitate to ask questions when you are unsure of what to do next. Share your concerns and successes with the Scoutmaster, and expect guidance in learning more effective ways to conduct troop activities and meetings. The Scoutmaster will always be there to give you the help you need.

The Assistant Scoutmasters

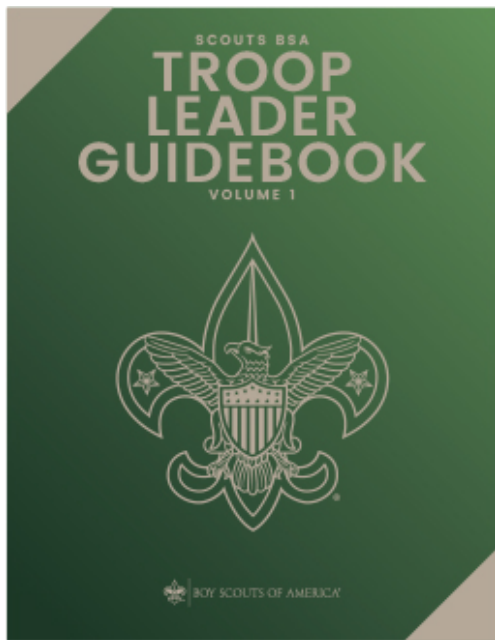
The troop probably has one or more assistant Scoutmasters. They support the Scoutmaster and carry some of the troop's adult leadership load. An assistant Scoutmaster may be assigned a specific responsibility such as working with a new Scout patrol or a senior, older-Scout patrol.

A great reward for a troop leader is helping a young person who has accepted a position of responsibility in a Scout troop develop into a senior patrol leader capable of fulfilling the high expectations of the position. For a

Scout, serving as senior patrol leader is a chance to work closely with an adult willing to provide vision, guidance, and encouragement.

The Troop Committee

The troop committee may be seen as a board of directors. Troop committees are often composed of Scouts' parents and members of the troop's chartered organization who are interested in youth programs. In support of the troop's program and administrative matters, committee members play a role in:



Troop Leader Guidebook, volumes 1, No. 33009, and 2, No. 33010, were developed to assist new and experienced troop leaders.

- Selecting adult leaders for the troop
- Developing community service projects
- Arranging transportation for outings
- Planning and assisting in fundraising
- Providing for special needs and assistance for individual Scouts
- Serving on boards of review and at courts of honor
- Helping troop leadership maintain financial and advancement records
- Maintaining adequate outdoor equipment

The Chartered Organization Representative

Every Scout troop is part of the youth program of a service club, religious institution, or other community organization that has been granted a charter by the Boy Scouts of America. The charter permits the organization to conduct the Scouting program in accordance with its own policies and guidelines as well as those of the BSA.

A chartered organization representative serves as a link between the organization and the Scout unit. A chartered institution may also have a Cub Scout pack and a Venturing crew—all of them served by the same chartered organization representative.

UNDERSTANDING THE TROOP'S STRUCTURE

Patrols serve as the building blocks of a troop. The patrol leaders and other troop leaders who make up the patrol leaders' council are deeply involved in planning the troop's program and in carrying out monthly meetings and activities. As a result, an effective troop has a program that is run by the Scouts themselves, is of the greatest interest to the most troop members, and provides many opportunities for Scouts to sharpen their leadership skills.

In addition to the troop's adult leaders, you will be able to rely on the youth leaders of the troop. Depending on the size and needs of the troop, these may include an assistant senior patrol leader, junior assistant Scoutmasters, troop guides, the leader of each patrol, and Scouts serving as the troop's quartermaster, scribe, historian, librarian, instructors, and chaplain aide. [Chapter 7](#) explains the duties of each of these positions.

The patrol method is not a way to operate a Boy Scout troop, it is the only way. Unless the patrol method is in operation, you don't really have a Boy Scout troop.

— Robert Baden-Powell

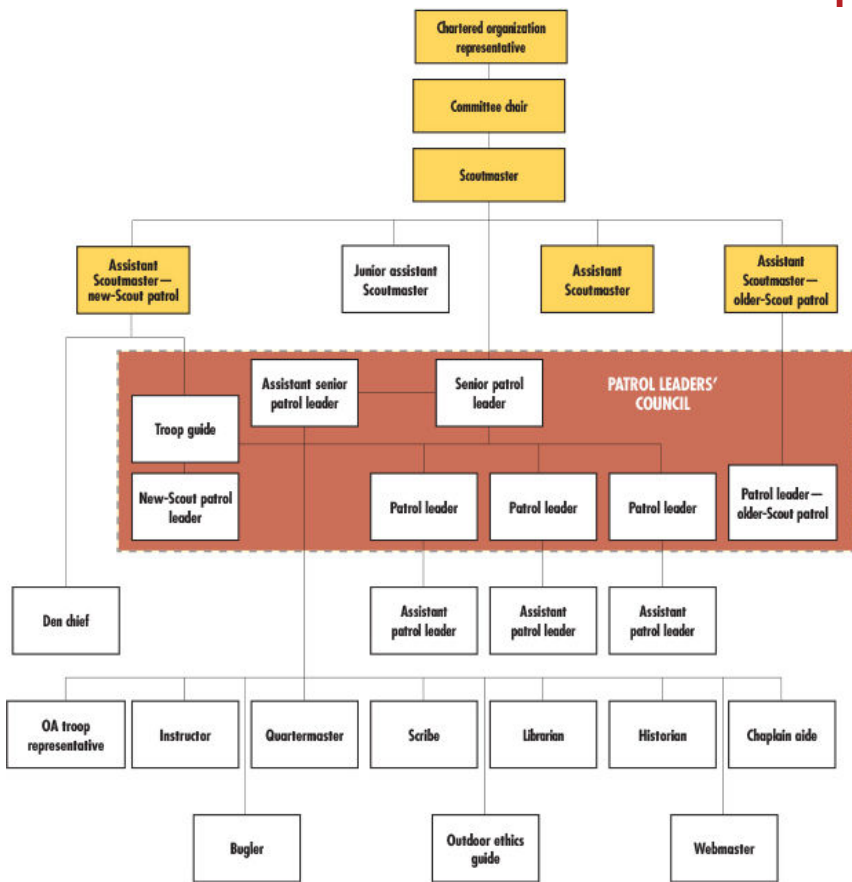
YOUR VENTURING CREW AND/OR CUB SCOUT PACK

Hopefully, your troop is associated with both a Cub Scout pack and a Venturing crew. As the youth leader in your troop, you have a responsibility to support and work with these affiliate units.

SAMPLE YOUTH LEADER ORGANIZATIONAL

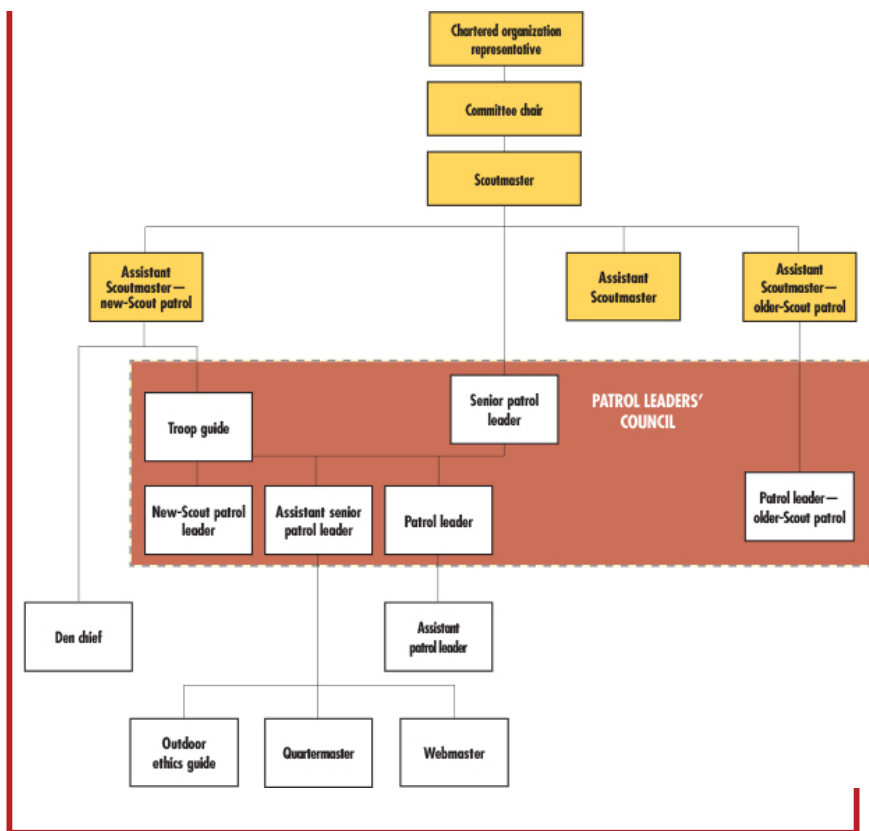
CHART FOR A LARGE TROOP

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



SAMPLE YOUTH LEADER ORGANIZATIONAL CHART FOR A SMALL TROOP

In this sample, there are not enough members to fill all of the patrols and positions of responsibility shown on the chart for a large troop.



YOUR LEADERSHIP TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Leadership training provided by the BSA will help you get off on the right foot as senior patrol leader. As you gain leadership experience, additional training opportunities can assist you in increasing your effectiveness and confidence.

Introduction to Leadership

Soon after you become senior patrol leader, the Scoutmaster has the responsibility to schedule an introductory meeting with you. The session may include a small group of other troop leaders and probably will last about an hour. No doubt the Scoutmaster will express pleasure in having you serve as senior patrol leader and will remind you how important your contribution to the troop will be.

The discussion you have with the Scoutmaster should also cover specific leadership suggestions for upcoming troop meetings and activities. Expect to learn about ways the troop's adult leaders will support you and provide guidance, and where you can find other BSA resources of value to senior patrol leaders.



Introduction to Leadership Skills for Troops

Introduction to Leadership Skills for Troops will be held soon after your election and will involve all the troop's youth leaders. The Scoutmaster will lead this training. It consists of three 60- to 90-minute modules that cover the basics of your role as a leader in the troop.

The modules are:

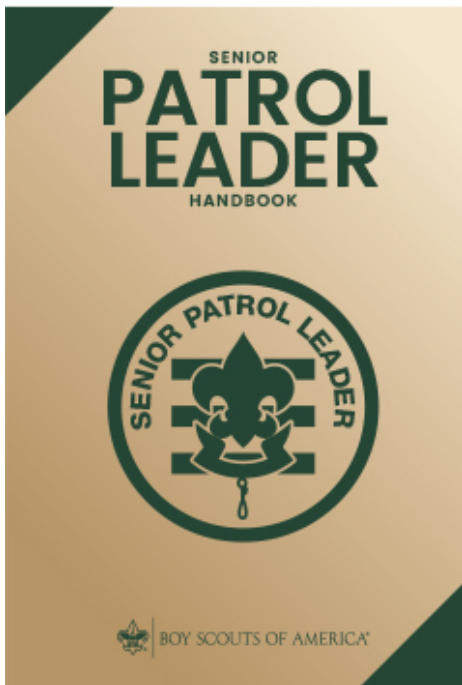
- Troop Organization
- Tools of the Trade
- Leadership and Teamwork

The objective of Introduction to Leadership Skills for Troops is to give you a clearer picture of how your position fits in the troop and how you can make a difference.

National Youth Leadership Training, National Leadership Seminars, and National Advanced Youth

Leadership Experience

You may be invited to attend a weeklong National Youth Leadership Training (NYLT) conference offered by the local council. It will introduce you to more advanced leadership skills.



THE *SENIOR PATROL LEADER HANDBOOK* YOU ARE HOLDING IS ONE OF THE MOST USEFUL LEADERSHIP TOOLS AVAILABLE TO YOU. THE *SCOUTS BSA HANDBOOK FOR BOYS* AND *SCOUTS BSA HANDBOOK FOR GIRLS*, *FIELDBOOK*, AND OTHER SCOUTING MANUALS CAN ALSO BE OF GREAT ASSISTANCE. SENIOR

In addition to NYLT, the National Leadership Seminars course is offered through the Order of the Arrow, and the National Advanced Youth Leadership Experience (NAYLE) course is now available at all four national high-adventure bases. These courses are designed to strengthen your knowledge and application of leadership skills in your troop. They will enhance your ability to serve others and make your troop successful.



More information on these additional training opportunities can be found at the end of [Chapter 7](#) of this handbook. The chapter also includes a list of other helpful resources for senior patrol leaders.

A leadership experience can be frustrating and disappointing without adequate training. The best source of training is to attend a weeklong training experience.

LEADERSHIP TIPS TO GET YOU STARTED

There are lots of ways to be a good senior patrol leader. Over time, you will learn many of them. The adult leaders of the troop and the other members of the patrol leaders' council will help you put effective leadership methods into practice. Don't be afraid or ashamed to ask your Scoutmaster for advice and tips on leadership. Training you and the other youth leaders is the Scoutmaster's most important role. On your own, you will also figure out much about leading through trial and error. [Chapter 6](#) contains more tips on leadership and examples of leadership issues you may encounter, together with possible solutions to those issues.

All of that will take time, of course. The following tips can help you lead the troop right from the start. You may already have used some of them when you were a patrol leader or while you held other offices in the troop. These tips can prove effective in nearly every setting where you are called upon to be a leader.

KEEP YOUR WORD. Don't make promises you can't keep.

BE FAIR TO ALL. A good leader shows no favorites. Don't allow friendships to stand in the way of treating all members of the troop equally. Get to know the interests of troop members and try to assign responsibilities to Scouts according to their strengths. You are responsible for the welfare of all the members of the troop. Be

sure you take care of the youngest Scouts, and make sure the other older Scouts take care of them as well.

LISTEN TO OTHERS CAREFULLY. A good leader is a good listener. You can learn many important things by taking care to actively listen to your fellow Scouts. You do not need a commanding voice, but you do need to be a good listener. Understanding what the members of the patrol leaders' council are thinking will help you guide them in the right direction.

BE WILLING TO ACCEPT IDEAS FROM OTHER PEOPLE. It shows you are open to new ideas and encourages other youth leaders to offer suggestions and ideas you may not have thought of. Their ideas may be useful in delivering a better program for the troop members. When you are receptive to their ideas and are willing to adopt good ones, the other youth leaders will have more ownership of the final plan than if you (or an adult) simply dictate to them what the troop is going to do and how the troop will do it.

COMMUNICATE CLEARLY. A good leader knows how to give information so that everyone understands. Be sure to clearly communicate your plans and instructions so everyone knows what they are supposed to do, and so the troop can cooperatively pull together as an effective unit. When you expect someone to be responsible for something, make sure that person understands what needs to be done. Encourage them to ask questions.

BE FLEXIBLE. Meetings, campouts, and other patrol events will not always go as planned. Be open to new opportunities, and be willing to shift to a different plan if original expectations change.

BE ORGANIZED. Time spent preparing for troop meetings and events will be repaid many times over. Ensure that the troop scribe keeps accurate notes of the decisions and assignments made by the patrol leaders' council. Checklists and meeting agendas can be invaluable organizational aids.

FOLLOW UP. When people are given assignments, follow up at appropriate times to make sure they haven't forgotten what they are supposed to do and when it needs to be done. This can prevent disappointments when a critical aspect of an outing hasn't been planned or the supplies weren't obtained as they should have been. However, be careful not to micromanage others to the point that they stop doing things on their own and simply wait for your instructions.

DELEGATE. Among the greatest strengths of a good leader is the willingness to empower others to accomplish all they can. Most people like to be challenged. Your other youth leaders were elected or appointed to positions with specific roles and duties. They want to be trusted to carry their share of the load. Help them learn their roles and duties, then let them do it. Coach them as needed, but don't try to do their jobs for them. Encourage all the troop members to do things they can do well and to increase their knowledge and confidence by taking on tasks they have never tried.

LEAD BY FOLLOWING. This may not seem logical at first. But when you delegate something to someone or ask them to lead an activity or event, and they are doing well, stand back and let that person be the leader you asked them to be. Resist the urge to jump in if the other Scout doesn't do it exactly the way you would have done it.

SET THE EXAMPLE. Whatever you do, whether good or bad, other Scouts in the troop are likely to do the same. Lead by example, both while you are in uniform and throughout other parts of your life. If you want a Scout to take part in a task, pitch in yourself and the other Scout will be more likely to do the same.

BE CONSISTENT. Nothing is more confusing for a group than a leader who is one way one moment and the opposite a short time later. When the troop members know what to expect from you, they will be more likely to respond positively to your leadership. If you need to change the plan or change your instructions in light of things you didn't consider earlier, explain this to the troop so they will see the need to follow you.

GIVE PRAISE. Offer honest compliments whenever you can. But don't be phony. A simple "Nice job!" can go a long way toward making Scouts feel they are contributing to the advancement of the troop. Find times and ways to praise others in public. If you compliment a patrol leader in front of the patrol members, you will enhance their respect of, and their willingness to follow, their patrol leader. It also encourages the patrol leader to continue to do the best job possible.

ASK FOR HELP. Do not be embarrassed to draw on the many resources available to you. When confronted with a situation you do not know how to handle—or just to get another opinion on a plan that seems to be going well—ask experienced troop leaders for guidance and advice.

CRITICIZE IN PRIVATE. There will be times when you must provide a Scout with critical feedback. Pull Scouts aside individually and quietly explain what they are doing wrong. Add a suggestion on how it should be done correctly. Criticizing in public will undermine Scouts' self-esteem and may cause them to quit trying. Never criticize a patrol leader in front of the patrol members. Doing so will undermine the patrol leader's authority and make it more difficult than ever to be successful.

ACCEPT CRITICISM AS A GIFT. There will be times when you will get criticism from other Scouts and possibly from the adult leaders. If someone tells you that you aren't doing a good job, don't get upset or feel defeated. Instead, ask them what they mean and how you might improve. Criticism, when offered and received properly, can give you ideas for performing your role better. Being open to suggestions and adopting those that will benefit your troop are signs of a good leader.

HAVE FUN. Most of all, have fun learning to be a leader. Your joy and enthusiasm will spread to other Scouts and will help energize the activities of the troop.

As senior patrol leader, you have a huge responsibility to influence the other Scouts in your troop. You should set a good example in every way, especially in clean speech and clean habits. Refrain from using drugs, tobacco, or alcohol, and be adamant in helping Scouts understand the damage these substances can do to the body.

HOW WILL I KNOW I AM LEADING WELL?

As senior patrol leader, you will be faced with a broad variety of leadership situations. Much of the time, the troop will experience terrific successes as the plans of the patrol leaders' council unfold in rich and rewarding ways. Now and then, though, the troop will be confronted by activities and events that bear little resemblance to what you had imagined. It is all part of the Scouting experience. This handbook includes several scenarios you are likely to encounter at some point, along with suggested solutions. You can find them at the end of [Chapter 6](#).

Through good times and bad, the first clue that you are leading well is that you are doing your best. You are using the knowledge you have and the resources around you to help the troop find a way through any situation. By staying cheerful and by always looking for solutions to problems confronting the troop members, you will set an example for others. That sort of leadership can help a group rise up to meet the toughest challenges.

Another indicator that you are leading well is when the performance of your troop is better under your leadership than it was before. One of the best measures of overall troop excellence is the Journey to Excellence program. Ask your Scoutmaster whether your troop achieved Journey to Excellence recognition last year. If not, team with your Scoutmaster to help your troop achieve at least bronze level during your term as senior patrol leader. If your troop achieved at least bronze level last year, that's good. But if the troop rated less than gold level last year, find out why and do all you can to help the troop reach gold level during your term. If the troop achieved gold level last year, do your best to make sure it doesn't slip under your leadership.

For more immediate feedback, get together with the patrol leaders' council at the end of each meeting or troop activity and take a few minutes to talk about recent events. You can learn a great deal by reflecting on some or all of the following questions:

- In what ways did things go as expected? In what ways did they not?
- How good was our planning and preparation? What could we have done better?
- What did troop members like best about this experience? What would they

change next time?

- What did we learn during this event?
- As we prepare for future events, what are some of the ways we can make our troop even better?

The Scoutmaster also can offer supportive evaluation of your leadership efforts. By sharing with the Scoutmaster your thoughts about a just-concluded event or meeting, you often will find that you can better prepare yourself to lead upcoming troop activities.

Your Vision for Your Troop

Take a few minutes to review and complete the vision statement on the next page. You probably made some sort of statement to your fellow Scouts when you announced that you would like to be their senior patrol leader. That may be the starting point for this exercise. You may also have some ideas based on your belief that your troop could be better. Write those thoughts down as a reminder to yourself of the things you would like to accomplish during your term as the senior patrol leader. Refer to this vision statement from time to time to reflect on how things are going, and don't hesitate to change your answers as circumstances unfold.

A vision is a picture of where you want to be. When you can see your destination —when you can *envision* it—you can take the steps to reach it. A vision does not say, “I want to do something” or “I’d like to do something.” A vision says, “In the future, I clearly see myself in this picture of success.” *If you can see it, you can be it.*

How do you realize a vision? By accomplishing one goal at a time. They are the bite-sized pieces of the vision that you complete step by step. Fulfilling a vision might require just a few goals, or it might take many. In setting your goals, make sure they are “SMART”: Each goal must be **specific** (clear and understandable), **measurable** (you know when you are done), **attainable** (you can do it), **relevant** (why you are doing it), and **timely** (done when it is needed).

Name _____

MY VISION FOR OUR TROOP

What does success look like for our troop? _____

HOW TO ACCOMPLISH THE VISION

What are my goals to get us there? _____

Now that you have a vision and SMART goals to get you there, you need to plan how to achieve each goal with the help of the patrol leaders' council. [Chapters 4](#) and [5](#) contain information about the planning process.

Your Troop

Scoutmaster _____

Address _____

Email _____

Telephone _____

Assistant senior patrol leader _____

Address _____

Email _____

Telephone _____

Troop guide _____

Address _____

Email _____

Telephone _____

Assistant Scoutmaster _____

Address _____

Email _____

Telephone _____

Assistant Scoutmaster _____

Address _____

Email _____

Telephone _____

Patrol leader _____

Address _____

Email _____

Telephone _____

Patrol leader _____

Address _____

Email _____

Telephone _____

Patrol leader _____

Address _____

Email _____

Telephone _____

Quartermaster _____

Address _____

Email _____

Telephone _____

Scribe _____

Address _____

Email _____

Telephone _____

Historian _____

Address _____

Email _____

Telephone _____

Librarian _____

Address _____

Email _____

Telephone _____

Chaplain aide _____

Address _____

Email _____

Telephone _____

Outdoor ethics guide _____

Address _____

Email _____

Telephone _____

Bugler _____

Address _____

Email _____

Telephone _____

Webmaster _____

Address _____

Email _____

Telephone _____

Venturing crew president _____

Address _____

Email _____

Telephone _____

>> 2 BUILDING TROOP SPIRIT



Building Troop Spirit

The Methods of Scouting

Method 1: The Ideals

Method 2: The Patrol Method

Method 3: The Outdoors

Method 4: Advancement

Method 5: Association With Adults

Method 6: Personal Growth

Method 7: Leadership Development

Method 8: The Uniform

Troop Traditions

Troop Flag

Troop Yell

Troop Uniform

Recruiting New Members

Spirit is an important concept in Scouting, both for individuals and for groups of Scouts. Scout spirit, patrol spirit, and troop spirit can energize the program of the Boy Scouts of America and bring the fullest meaning to the Scouting experience.

SCOUT SPIRIT means that you live by the Scout Oath, Scout Law, Scout motto, and Scout slogan. It means you are prepared for anything that comes along, and are willing to give time and energy to do service for others. Scout spirit cannot be measured but is a reflection of who you are and how you live your life. Showing Scout spirit is a requirement for all Scouts BSA ranks.

PATROL SPIRIT puts the spotlight on the Scouts who have formed together as a patrol. They demonstrate patrol spirit by working toward the common goal of building the best possible patrol. They move ahead as a team, achieving more as a team than they could as individuals.

TROOP SPIRIT focuses on the unity, enthusiasm, and progress of the entire troop.

As senior patrol leader, you can help the troop recognize the importance of troop spirit and guide everyone in taking full advantage of Scouting's opportunities. Among the most effective means you have for building troop spirit are the methods of Scouting.

THE METHODS OF SCOUTING

The Boy Scouts of America uses eight fundamental methods to meet its members' expectations for fun and adventure and to achieve Scouting's aims of encouraging character development, citizenship training, leadership, and mental and physical fitness. A Scout troop functions best when all eight methods are employed.

The Methods of Scouting

1. The ideals
2. The patrol method
3. The outdoors
4. Advancement
5. Association with adults
6. Personal growth
7. Leadership development

Method 1: The Ideals

The ideals of the Boy Scouts of America are spelled out in the Scout Oath, Scout Law, Scout motto, and Scout slogan. Scout meetings, outdoor adventures, and other Scout activities provide golden opportunities to put these ideals into action.

Method 2: The Patrol Method

The patrols in your troop are the building blocks of the troop. They are often made up of Scouts of similar ages and experience levels. The patrols of a troop help their members develop a sense of pride and identity. The patrol members elect their leader, divide the tasks to be done, and share in the satisfaction of accepting and fulfilling group responsibilities.

Each patrol expresses its patrol spirit with a patrol name, flag, yell, and song. Members of a patrol may also master a specialty—orienteeering, for example, or Dutch oven cooking—and use it as their trademark.



National Honor Patrol Award

Encourage all of the patrols in the troop to work toward earning the National Honor Patrol Award. Here are the requirements:

- 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.
- Note that at least 75 percent of patrol members wear the full uniform correctly.
- Have a representative attend at least three patrol leaders' council meetings.
- Have eight members in the patrol, or increase patrol membership over the previous three months.



Method 3: The Outdoors

Much of the Scouting program is designed to take place outdoors in settings where Scouts can find real adventure. Outdoor activities help put sizzle into Scouting and keep troop members coming back for more. A troop with a strong outdoor program is well on its way to finding success in all areas.

A Note on Patrol Outdoor Activities

Most patrol activities take place within the framework of the troop. However, patrols also may set out on day hikes and service projects, independent of the troop as long as they follow two rules:

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

A patrol day hike or service project can be allowed when it has been thoroughly planned and the Scoutmaster is satisfied the activity is well within patrol members' levels of training and responsibility, and complies with the Guide to Safe Scouting. If the Scoutmaster has any doubts, the patrol should be encouraged to reconsider its plans. Adults must accompany the patrol during each patrol activity.



Method 4: Advancement

The Boy Scouts of America believes that all Scouts should receive recognition for their achievements. The requirements for the ranks of Scout through First Class prepare troop members to take full advantage of all that Scouting has to offer. Earning merit badges allows them to explore many fields, helps them round out their skills, and can introduce them to subjects that will become lifelong interests and rewarding careers.

As one of the eight methods of Scouting, advancement is a natural outgrowth of the other seven. Scouts whose Scouting experiences are introducing them to BSA ideals, the patrol method, the outdoors, association with adults, personal growth, leadership development, and the uniform will almost certainly find themselves moving steadily along the BSA's advancement trail.



Method 5: Association With Adults

Scouts learn from the example set by their adult (and youth) leaders. An association with adults of high character is encouraged at this stage of a young person's life.

Method 6: Personal Growth

Youth of Scouts BSA age are experiencing dramatic physical and emotional growth. Scouting offers them opportunities to channel much of that change into productive endeavors and to find the answers they are seeking for many of their questions. Through service projects and Good Turns, Scouts can discover their place in their community. Religious award programs offer pathways for them to more deeply understand their place in the world. Scouts who complete a service project that contributes to world peace can add the Messengers of Peace ring to the World Crest on their uniform.



The troop itself provides each Scout with an arena in which to explore, to try out new ideas, and sometimes simply to embark on adventures with no design other than the joy of having a good time with good people.

Method 7: Leadership Development

Leadership is a skill that can be learned only by practice. Scouts in a patrol and troop will find over time that they are filling leadership positions of increasing responsibility. Serving as patrol leader and as senior patrol leader can give Scouts the confidence and ability to be leaders in the future.

Method 8: The Uniform

Since 1910, the Scout uniform has been a recognizable part of the American scene. Wearing the uniform helps Scouts develop a sense of belonging to their troop. It reinforces the fact that all members of the BSA are equals. People seeing a young person in a Scout uniform expect someone of good character prepared to do their best to help others. Likewise, the senior patrol leader in full uniform sets a good example for everyone in the troop.

While on hikes, campouts, and projects that require physical work, troops may wear the troop T-shirt. Otherwise, the Scout uniform consists of the

full uniform. As senior patrol leader, you should be the model for proper uniform wear, realizing that the other Scouts won't wear the uniform properly if you don't.

TROOP TRADITIONS

As senior patrol leader, you can encourage each patrol to establish an identity of its own. Strong patrol spirit leads, in turn, to troop spirit. Work with patrol leaders to ensure that every patrol has a patrol name, flag, yell, and song. Guide them toward developing specialties of their own, too. In much the same way that patrols develop patrol spirit, a troop can build on its traditions to enhance its identity. It can also develop new traditions for the future.

Troop Flag

A BSA flag with the troop's number can be presented by a color guard at the openings of meetings. It may fly over troop campsites and lead the way for the troop when Scouts are taking part in camporees, summer camps, and other Scouting activities. Ribbons and similar awards won by the troop can be secured to the flagpole for all to see.

Troop Yell

Perhaps you have seen members of a troop at a camporee hiking into camp chanting their troop yell. It was a unique way for them to announce their arrival and to share in the spirit of the event. A troop yell can be a chant related to the troop's number and hometown. It might include the names of the patrols making up the troop.





Troop Uniform

The Scout uniform can be a source of troop pride and spirit. Many troops have a special neckerchief worn by members, or a hat of a certain color and style. A troop's activity uniform may include a T-shirt emblazoned with the troop's emblem or some other significant reminder of the troop's identity.

RECRUITING NEW MEMBERS

Scouting has much to offer young people. Likewise, new members bring fresh energy and ideas to Scouting, keeping it strong and vital. Scouts who enjoy a troop's program will want their friends to join, too. Cub Scouts seeing Scouts setting out on adventures and learning outdoor skills will look forward to the time when they can join a troop and take off for the backcountry, too.

There are troops in some cities that have been around for 100 years or more. They started just a few years after the BSA was formed in 1910 and are still going strong. How have they done it? The most important way was always recruiting new members to replace the ones who turned 18 or quit for various reasons. Without recruiting new members every year, no troop will last long. So, how do you recruit new members?

The best way for a troop to increase its membership is to have an exciting program that youth of Scouts BSA age want to experience. You have a hand in that by being a good senior patrol leader. You can also help by telling potential new members about the troop and its program and by inviting them to come to a troop meeting and see what Scouting has to offer. In fact, youth-to-youth recruiting by every troop member is the most effective way to recruit new Scouts for your troop.

Look for more formal opportunities to share information about Scouting, too. In many communities, the week of the BSA's anniversary can be a chance for you to talk about the troop at school assemblies and gatherings of community organizations and places of worship. If you have them, bring along scrapbooks and photo albums showing the troop in action. You may be pleasantly surprised to discover how many people become interested in Scouting because of the example set by you and the other Scouts in the troop.

>> 3 THE TROOP PROGRAM



The Troop Program

The Annual Troop Program Planning Conference

Step 1: Do Your Homework

Step 2: Get Patrol Input

Step 3: Hold the Troop Program Planning Conference

Step 4: Consult With the Troop Committee and the Chartered Organization

Step 5: Announce the Plan

The Monthly Patrol Leaders' Council Meeting

The Parts of a Patrol Leaders' Council Meeting

Assessing the Patrol Leaders' Council Meeting

Follow-Up Makes It Happen

You would not think of setting out on a long backpacking trip without having a map to show you the way. The same is true of the troop's program—the plan you develop is an essential map that shows where the troop is headed, where the challenges lie, and the exciting opportunities that Scouts can expect to find along the way.

While you may be new to the role of senior patrol leader, you probably have been around Scouting long enough to have a good idea what needs to be done in the coming months. If the patrol leaders' council has already planned the troop's program, you should have a clear sense of the direction the troop will go. Much of your work will be in seeing that the program plan comes to life.

You also will be involved in determining the contents of the troop's program. One of your first responsibilities as senior patrol leader will be to combine your energies with those of the Scoutmaster to put together a program planning conference for the patrol leaders' council and to assist the council in developing a program plan—a map to guide the troop.

The Long and Short of Program Planning

Troop program planning has three phases: long-term, annual, and short-term.

- Long-term planning involves planning for events like the national Scout jamboree or a high-adventure outing that requires reservations more than 12 months in advance.
- Annual planning occurs at the yearly troop program planning conference. You will be helping the patrol leaders' council and the Scoutmaster determine what the troop will be doing for the next 12 months.
- Short-term planning happens during monthly meetings of the patrol leaders' council. By reviewing the annual program plan and filling in the details, troop leadership can finalize details of the troop's meetings and activities for the coming four weeks.

THE ANNUAL TROOP PROGRAM PLANNING CONFERENCE

The troop program planning conference offers the patrol leaders' council the opportunity to draw up an effective, exciting course of action. The conference is organized and conducted by the senior patrol leader with the help of the Scoutmaster. The annual troop program planning conference sets out to accomplish four things for the year ahead:

- Develop troop goals.

- Select the major events.
- Select the program features.
- Fill out the troop's calendar.

When you are planning your program for the year, think beyond just activities. Your plan should include all aspects of the troop assessment at the end of this chapter. Before you begin planning for the coming year, complete a review of the troop's performance last year, using the assessment tool. Pay special attention to any items that you score as less than "3," and plan to improve those items this year.

There is no set time of the year to conduct the conference, though many troops prefer late summer after the troop has returned from summer camp. Set the date well in advance so that all members of the patrol leaders' council can clear their schedules to attend. The conference should be in a setting that is free of distractions—a remote cabin or campsite may be ideal. The essential business of the conference usually can be conducted in one day, though the workload can be spread out over two days with an evening of camping in between. The pace of the conference should be relaxed and informal.

Scout Planning Worksheet

Whenever your troop engages in planning, you should use the Scout Planning Worksheet ("plan on a page") provided at the end of this chapter. This worksheet can be used as a tool for helping Scouts use the essential elements and steps of good planning.

Preparing for and conducting a troop program planning conference involves a five-step process:

1. Do your homework.
2. Get patrol input.
3. Hold the planning conference.
4. Consult with the troop committee.
5. Announce the plan.



Step 1: Do Your Homework

This step should be done jointly by you and the Scoutmaster at least six weeks before the planning conference:

1. Evaluate last year's troop annual plan, if there is one. Ask your troop leadership for data collected from the Troop Resource Survey.
2. Gather key district and council dates such as camporees and summer camp.
3. Gather dates of community functions, key school events and activities (including homecoming and sporting events involving a significant number of Scouts and youth leaders), religious and secular holidays, and special events of the chartered organization. Also include personal dates that may affect the troop's activities, such as the Scoutmaster's anniversary cruise.
4. Review the advancement status of the troop members and decide what kinds of activities are needed to help each Scout progress.
5. Write down the priorities you feel are most important for the troop. These could include summer camp, high-adventure activities, advancement goals, Journey to Excellence, service projects, and fundraising events. With all this information, begin a general outline of next year's program.

Step 2: Get Patrol Input

At a patrol leaders' council meeting at least a month before the planning conference, present the list of priorities you and the Scoutmaster have developed, and explore the range of options you believe are available to the troop. For example, you might feel that the needs of the troop can be best achieved by adopting any of the selected program features available from *Program Features for Troops and Crews*, volumes 1, 2, and 3, Nos. 33110, 33111, and 33112.

Paring down those possibilities to a dozen—one for each month—will be easier to do after patrol leaders have shared the list with patrol members and gotten their thoughts on the features that most interest them. Remind patrol leaders to bring their patrols' recommendations to the program planning conference.

Step 3: Hold the Troop Program Planning Conference

The troop's planning conference is an opportunity for members of the patrol leaders' council to map out the troop's activities for the year and for the troop's adult leaders to offer guidance and support. In consultation with the Scoutmaster, set a time and a place for the conference and invite the following persons to attend **in an active role**:

- Senior patrol leader
- Assistant senior patrol leader
- All patrol leaders
- Troop guide

The troop scribe may be invited to the conference to keep a log of the proceedings. However, the scribe is not a voting member of the conference.

Invite the following persons to attend **in a supportive role**:

- Scoutmaster
- Assistant Scoutmasters
- Junior assistant Scoutmasters
- Any other individuals who might be helpful, such as other adult troop leaders, the chartered organization representative, your unit commissioner, and parents. (However, to keep the planning conference as purposeful and efficient as possible, you should invite only those who actively and regularly engage in troop activities and decision-making, and gently remind them that the Scouts are in charge of the plan.)

Open the conference with a team-building activity or an action game that will promote cooperation among the participants.

During the program planning process, patrol leaders are speaking for all the

members of their patrols rather than expressing their own personal preferences. Likewise, you as senior patrol leader should do all you can to represent the wishes of everyone in the troop.



ANNUAL TROOP PROGRAM PLANNING CONFERENCE AGENDA

The annual troop program planning conference sets out to accomplish four things for the year ahead:

- Develop troop goals.
- Select the major events.
- Select the program features.
- Fill out the troop's calendar.

Develop Troop Goals

As the senior patrol leader, with the Scoutmaster's assistance, you lead a discussion that guides the group in developing a list of the goals they want to see the troop achieve during the next 12 months. You may present a list of goals and then encourage the group to expand upon them or adjust the list to better fit the needs of troop members. By majority vote, the patrol leaders' council approves the troop goals.

Select the Major Events

With the Scoutmaster's assistance, you as senior patrol leader review potential major events for the troop—summer camp, Scout shows, etc. These events may be entered on a calendar and photocopied for everyone's information. Invite patrol leaders to share input resulting from the patrols' discussions of the proposed major events for the troop. Be sure to consider the preparation time required for each event and how that will affect the troop's calendar.

Be sure that each event allows everyone in the troop to participate. No Scout or patrol should be left out due to age or skill level. For example, a long backpacking hike is probably too strenuous for new 11-year-old Scouts and should not be the focus of a monthly outing. Including a shorter hike for the younger Scouts would be appropriate, while the older Scouts could take a longer, more challenging route to the same end point. The *Program Features for Troops and Crews* offer suggestions for participation at all skill levels.

Open the floor for discussion of any or all of the proposed events. Encourage input from every conference participant.

Decide by a majority vote whether to include each major event on the troop's annual calendar. Enter the elected items on the Program Planning Chart, available online at [https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/magazine/pdf/331-018\(18\)_VENDOR.pdf](https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/magazine/pdf/331-018(18)_VENDOR.pdf) or from the appendix of the *Program Features for Troops and Crews*.

Select the Program Features

With the Scoutmaster's help, the senior patrol leader presents the list of potential monthly program features. Open the floor to discuss each program feature.

Consider the following questions:

- Will the program feature help the troop meet its goals?
- What opportunities for advancement does it present?
- Where would the feature best fit into the annual calendar?

Vote on the list of program features.

Conference Materials

You and the Scoutmaster can find a detailed agenda for an annual troop planning conference in the *BSA Program Features for Troops and Crews*, volumes 1, 2, and 3. The agenda will guide you through much of the planning for the conference and offer guidance for managing the conference itself. Have copies of essential worksheets on hand for those attending the conference. The program features also list other conference

materials you may find useful. The Scoutmaster can help ensure that these are made available.

Fill Out the Troop's Calendar

Using the Program Planning Chart, develop the troop's calendar by writing the following items in their appropriate spots:

- Monthly program features and outings
- Courts of honor
- Recruitment nights
- Webelos Scout transition
- Any other troop activities that can be scheduled this far in advance
- Service project for the chartered organization

Lead the group in a review of the Program Planning Chart. Once the group has approved the final edition of the plan, it will be ready to present to the troop committee for its review and input.

Plan the troop program for the upcoming month.

Close the troop's annual program planning conference by inviting the Scoutmaster to offer a Scoutmaster's Minute.

Program Features for Troops and Crews

The previous program features have been replaced with three new volumes called *Program Features for Troops and Crews*. The three volumes bring together 48 features for use by Scouts BSA troops and Venturing crews. Many of these are new topics, and each program feature provides a month's worth of program ideas.

Program features in volume 1 are Camping, Climbing and Rappelling, Communication, Cycling, First Aid, Games, Geocaching, Hiking, Outdoor Ethics, Paddle Sports, Pioneering, Rifle Shooting, Safety, Science, Snowboarding and Skiing, and Spectator Sports.

Volume 2 contains the following program features: Archery, Backpacking, Citizenship, Engineering, Fishing, Fitness and Nutrition, Living History, Mathematics, Mentoring, Music, Orienteering, Scuba Diving, Soccer, Special Needs Awareness, Wilderness Survival, and Wildlife Management.

Volume 3 contains the following: Caving, Cooking, COPE, Duty to God, Emergency Preparedness, Ethics, Financial Management, Multimedia, Nature and Environment, Project Planning, Shotgun Shooting, Skateboarding, Sustainability, Swimming, Technology, and Winter

Camping.





The three volumes deliver a mix of topics related to the outdoors, sports, health and safety, citizenship and personal development, STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics), and arts and hobbies. You will find general information about the topic, related advancement requirements and awards, games related to the topic (or that are just for fun), ideas for using the EDGE method (Explain, Demonstrate, Guide, Enable) to teach others, four weeks of meeting plans, outlines for main events (outings) that build in length and intensity, and a list of resources related to the topic.

The revamped structure gives every unit the flexibility to customize the program feature to suit the unit's needs. You can even make up your own program feature using the blank meeting plan and main event worksheet in the appendix. While your unit may not use the material exactly as presented, it offers a launching point to plan exciting programs that help facilitate advancement and personal growth.

Step 4: Consult With the Troop Committee and the Chartered Organization

The senior patrol leader and the Scoutmaster should present the plan to the troop committee and the chartered organization representative and ask for their support. If revisions are suggested due to lack of resources, money, adult availability, etc., the senior patrol leader must take the plan back to the patrol leaders' council for changes to be made and approved.

Step 5: Announce the Plan

Distribute copies of the final plan to troop members, families, members of the

troop committee, and representatives of the chartered organization. Post the plan on the troop Facebook page and the troop website as two more places where families can find it. (Using social media also serves as a recruiting tool, allowing potential new troop members and their parents to see an exciting plan they might want to take part in.) Copies of the plan also should be given to Cub Scout pack leaders, Venturing crew leaders, unit commissioners, the district executive, the head and secretary of the chartered organization, and the building custodian.

THE MONTHLY PATROL LEADERS' COUNCIL MEETING

The patrol leaders' council runs the troop according to the policies of the Boy Scouts of America under the leadership of the senior patrol leader with the guidance and counsel of the Scoutmaster. The patrol leaders' council plans the troop program at the annual program planning conference. It then meets every four weeks to fine-tune the plans for the coming month.

Members of the Patrol Leaders' Council

The patrol leaders' council is made up of the following people:

- Senior patrol leader
- Assistant senior patrol leader
- Patrol leaders of each patrol, including the new-Scout patrol and the patrol for older Scouts (If a patrol leader cannot attend, the assistant patrol leader should represent the patrol in his absence.)
- Troop guide(s) for the new-Scout patrol(s)



The troop scribe may attend to take minutes but is not a voting member of the council.

At the conclusion of troop meetings (and at other times the senior patrol leader feels the patrol leaders' council should consider an issue), the council meets informally (a "stand-up meeting") to review the success of a troop activity and to go over responsibilities for future meetings and events. It is called a stand-up meeting because it should be short enough that the meeting can be held while standing up in a group huddle.

The Scoutmaster is present at patrol leaders' council meetings, but only in a supportive role to provide information and insight on issues and activities. To the greatest extent possible, it is the members of the patrol leaders' council, under the leadership of the senior patrol leader, who plan and carry out the program of a youth-run, youth-led troop.

In addition to program planning, the patrol leaders' council may deal with other issues concerning the troop and its members:

- Advancement needs
- Scout Sunday, Scout Sabbath, and Scouting Anniversary Week
- Special ceremonies and awards
- Recruitment plans

- Fundraising projects
- Webelos transition
- Good Turn programs
- Special ceremonies
- Conservation projects
- Community events such as parades and festivals
- Special programs with the chartered organization

PLANNING REPAYS ITSELF MANY TIMES OVER. PLAN OUT THE DETAILS OF EACH ACTIVITY, LIST THE STEPS REQUIRED TO MAKE IT HAPPEN, AND ASSIGN RESPONSIBILITIES TO MEMBERS OF THE PATROL LEADERS' COUNCIL.

The patrol leaders' council should use the Scout Planning Worksheet, No. 512-505, as a tool to prepare for activities and events. This “plan on a page” (found at the end of this chapter) is a good starting point for all aspects of planning—the goal and the why, who, when, where, what, and how—are addressed. Then for future planning, the worksheet asks for an assessment of the event or activity so that next time, you know what worked and what didn't work.

Using the Scout Planning Worksheet as a guide and applying the process will set you on the path for successful patrol activities and events.

Patrol leaders' council meetings can be held in any private place free of distractions. The best setting will allow everyone to face each other and have adequate space in which to work. The length of each meeting will vary from 60 to 90 minutes depending on the amount of business before the council.

As senior patrol leader, you will chair meetings of the patrol leaders' council. Stick to the agenda and keep things moving along. If council members are spending too much time on an issue, it may be necessary to table that item for future consideration and move on with the agenda. Keep the council focused on issues of importance.

A Scouts BSA troop should be youth-run and youth-led. Scouts plan the program they want and then make it come to life. To a large extent, the Scoutmaster serves a troop as a coach, mentor, and resource for the senior patrol leader and other youth leaders. The Scoutmaster also has the authority and obligation to step in whenever a Scouting event or activity may violate BSA policy or could jeopardize anyone's safety or well-being. In those situations, a Scoutmaster can recommend an alternative plan that does fall within BSA guidelines.



Patrol Leaders' Council Meeting Agenda

Activity

- Opening and call to order
- Roll call and reading of the log (minutes)
- Patrol reports
- Old business
- Main event planning
- Troop meeting planning
- New business
- Scoutmaster's Minute

Run by

- Senior patrol leader
- Troop scribe
- Patrol leaders
- Senior patrol leader
- Senior patrol leader
- Senior patrol leader

The Parts of a Patrol Leaders' Council Meeting

OPENING AND CALL TO ORDER

Start the meeting on time with a simple opening ceremony such as reciting the Scout Oath or Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL AND READING OF THE LOG

Ask the troop scribe to call the roll and read the log from the previous meeting. Council members may make additions or corrections to the log before voting to approve it as part of the council's permanent record.

PATROL REPORTS

Each patrol leader should be prepared to make a report on the progress of their patrol. The report should include information about new members, advancement progress, and anything the patrol has done since the last patrol leaders' council meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

Take up any discussion items left unresolved at the last patrol leaders' council meeting. When necessary, bring matters to a close by asking for a vote.

MAIN EVENT PLANNING

Review and discuss the main event related to the upcoming month's program feature. While the event itself will have already been determined during the troop program planning conference, details may need to be worked out. Use the Scout Planning Worksheet at the end of this chapter to help determine the who, what, where, when, why, and how of the event. Patrol leaders can add to the discussion by voicing ideas raised by their patrols. Explore the issues and bring any essential matters to a vote.

TROOP MEETING PLANNING

Distribute meeting plan worksheets for each of the month's troop meetings. A meeting plan is included with each of the program features in the *Program Features for Troops and Crews*, and a blank sample is included on [page 68](#) of this handbook. As you and the patrol leaders' council review plans for each of the month's four meetings, assign responsibilities for portions of the meetings, taking care to distribute the load equally among the patrols and troop leadership.

Be sure to plan three levels of skills instruction for each meeting so that all age

groups will be equally challenged.

NEW BUSINESS

This portion of the meeting is devoted to discussions of items not previously on the agenda. A patrol may be requesting permission to embark on a patrol hike, for example, or the opportunity for a special troop service project may have recently come up.

SCOUTMASTER'S MINUTE

Up to now the Scoutmaster has probably observed the patrol leaders' council meeting and asked a question or two, but otherwise allowed you to run the meeting and guide the agenda. As a closing to the meeting, the Scoutmaster can share some constructive thoughts on what has happened and offer an upbeat, supportive Scoutmaster's Minute to provide a sense of completion to the proceedings.

Assessing the Patrol Leaders' Council Meeting

Immediately following a meeting of the patrol leaders' council, take a few minutes to review events with the Scoutmaster. The following questions can guide your assessment.

- Was there a written agenda, and was it followed?
- Were all patrols allowed input on troop decisions?
- Were specific tasks assigned to individuals or patrols?
- Were necessary resources for troop activities considered?
- Were the tasks spread evenly among patrols and individuals?
- Was a specific schedule planned for upcoming events?
- Did the group come to a consensus on handling problems?
- Was a log kept?

Follow-Up Makes It Happen

At the conclusion of an effective patrol leaders' council meeting, the troop's youth leaders should understand the plan for troop meetings and events. They also will understand who is responsible for various portions of those meetings and events and be clear about what information must be shared with the patrols.

In the weeks to come, check in with patrol leaders' council members now and then to ensure that they continue to be on top of the troop's plans. Get them together before and after meetings and activities to double-check their understanding of the manner in which events will unfold and to review the just-concluded troop events.

You and the Scoutmaster will also visit briefly before meetings and activities to look over the agenda developed by the patrol leaders' council and ensure that everything is ready to go according to plan.



A TROOP SELF-ASSESSMENT

This is a self-assessment exercise designed to help highlight areas of troop success and to discover areas open to improvement.

A troop that is performing should have a high score or should have numbers that continue to improve over time.

Share the self-assessment with other youth leaders at meetings of the patrol leaders' council, and use it to explore ways to make the troop better.

Keep the self-assessment forms with the troop log so that you can compare troop performance over time.

SCORING

3 points if the statement is always true about the troop

2 points if the statement is sometimes true about the troop

1 point if the statement is seldom true about the troop

TROOP MEETINGS

___ Troop meetings are planned at the monthly patrol leaders' council meeting.

___ The patrol leaders' council uses the eight-part meeting plan.

___ Troop meetings are run by the senior patrol leader.

- ___ Troop meetings are well-attended by a majority of the Scouts in each patrol.
- ___ Troop meetings are fun and full of action.
- ___ Skills instruction is divided into three levels of experience.
- ___ Scouts and adult leaders wear the appropriate uniform at all troop activities.

PATROL METHOD

- ___ The troop has both a new-Scout patrol and an older-Scout patrol.
- ___ Each patrol has a patrol name.
- ___ Each patrol has a patrol flag.
- ___ Each patrol has a patrol yell or song.
- ___ Each patrol has its symbol on its equipment.
- ___ Patrol members all have patrol responsibilities.
- ___ Each patrol plans at least two patrol activities a year (e.g., one in the spring, one in the fall), separate from troop activities

CAMPING

- ___ When the troop is camping, Scouts pitch their tents in patrol campsite.
- ___ Camping menus are planned and prepared by patrols.
- ___ The troop camps out at least 10 days and nights each year.
- ___ The troop tries new camping places every year.
- ___ The troop attends district and/or council camporees, Klondike derbies, etc.
- ___ The troop attends a BSA-approved long-term camp.
- ___ The troop offers high-adventure opportunities for its older Scouts, often in the form of an older-Scout patrol.
- ___ All Scouts and adults are adequately trained in outdoor skills, including health and safety.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

- ___ The troop conducts outings that help Webelos Scouts to advance and make them want to join this troop.
- ___ The troop conducts activities other than camping, such as hikes, bike trips, bowling nights, etc.
- ___ The troop tries new activities every year.

ADVANCEMENT

- ___ New Scouts achieve the rank of First Class during their first year in the troop.

- ___ All Scouts advance at least one rank per year.
- ___ Boards of review are held as often as Scouts need them for rank advancement.
- ___ Courts of honor are held regularly.
- ___ The troop helps Scouts find opportunities to earn merit badges required for advancement.

TRAINING

- ___ Newly elected or appointed youth leaders attend Introduction to Leadership Skills for Troops soon after they are elected or appointed to their positions.
- ___ Members of the patrol leaders' council are encouraged to participate in National Youth Leadership Training.
- ___ The troop conducts a Kodiak experience.
- ___ The Scoutmaster and assistant Scoutmasters are fully trained.
- ___ The troop committee has completed the Troop Committee Challenge or its equivalent.

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

- ___ Members of the troop participate in at least 10 hours of service per year.
- ___ The troop performs at least one service project a year for the chartered organization.
- ___ The troop plans at least one conservation project a year to support the Life rank service requirement.
- ___ Scouts are encouraged to "do a Good Turn daily."

MEMBERSHIP

- ___ Scouts do not quit before age 18.
- ___ The troop recruits enough new Scouts each year to replace those who leave.
- ___ The troop plans and executes recruiting events each year to bring in new Scouts other than Webelos.
- ___ The troop actively supports Webelos Scouts in a pack, so they will want to join the troop.

FUNDING THE TROOP PROGRAM

- ___ The troop earns enough money to fund its planned activities.
- ___ The troop earns enough money to fund its other needs.
- ___ The troop plans and performs enough fundraisers that parents aren't asked to pay for everything.

- ___ Each Scout participates in fundraisers to the extent possible.

COMMUNICATION

- ___ All troop families receive timely and effective communication about troop activities.
- ___ The troop maintains an up-to-date website with information about troop activities.
- ___ The troop website is accessible to the public as a recruiting tool.

ADULT INVOLVEMENT

- ___ The troop has enough adults willing to help that no troop activities are canceled due to lack of adult leadership.
- ___ The adults allow the Scouts to lead their own troop, but provide guidance to keep the Scouts safe.
- ___ All parents, not just registered leaders, take Youth Protection training—preferably every year.

Scouts earn service hours throughout the year for rank advancement, but that's not why we do community service. We do it because we're Scouts, and that's what Scouts do when they "Do a Good Turn Daily"! Rank advancement is just one of the eight methods of Scouting. For more on the aims and methods of Scouting, see **Chapter 2** of this handbook.

SCOUT PLANNING WORKSHEET (512-505)

Scout Planning Worksheet, No. 512-505 (A fillable PDF is available online at <https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/boyscouts/pdf/512-505-2016-Scout-Planning-Worksheet.pdf>.)

Plan on a Page

GOAL

Describe what you intend to accomplish, the objectives.

Describe the purpose or need for this activity—why it is important.

Teamleader.

Telephone

Team members

Team members

Name _____

Name

Name

Name

Telephone

Telephone

Telephone

Telephone

Email

Email

Email

Email

Consider creating a work-back schedule based on the completion date.
Anticipated start date _____ Projected completion date _____

WHERE?

Location

Permissions/permits required

Transportation/parking needs

Weather contingencies

Liability and possible site hazards



BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA

What resources do you need to complete the goal?

Equipment, materials, volunteers, shelter, food/water, and other resources needed and the sources

Estimated expenses and the sources

Safety issues

Health, sanitation, and cleanup

Outline the anticipated phases of your activity, specific actions to be taken in each phase, and target dates for completion. For example: choosing a location, setting an agenda, securing equipment, implementation.

Planning Phases	Steps to Completion	Target Date	Person Responsible

If you could start over, consider what you would

Start.

Stop

Continue



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>> 4 RUNNING A GOOD TROOP MEETING



Running a Good Troop Meeting

[Planning a Troop Meeting](#)

[Using the Meeting Plan](#)

[Tips for Running a Good Troop Meeting](#)

The weekly meeting is the glue that holds a Scout troop together. Well-planned meetings run by the troop's youth leaders can be full of excitement and satisfaction. Meeting time devoted to learning new skills and organizing future campouts, service projects, and other activities will help keep interest levels and enthusiasm high.

Weekly troop meetings should be fun and full of action and excitement. They can be opportunities to learn new skills and plan future activities and service projects.

Aside from the Scoutmaster's Minute, the content and conduct of each troop meeting is the responsibility of the Scouts themselves.

Troop meetings serve many purposes, including the following.

MOTIVATING SCOUTS. From Scouts' points of view, troop meetings are chances for them to get together with their friends for fun and adventure. For Scoutmasters, meetings offer many avenues to encourage Scouts to learn, to advance, and to improve themselves.

STRENGTHENING PATROLS. Patrols have opportunities at troop meetings to meet together, to learn as a team, and to share what they know. Whether they serve as the honor guard during an opening flag ceremony, as the presenters of a Scouting skill, or as the organizers of a game or activity, every patrol can contribute to every troop meeting.

LEARNING AND PRACTICING SCOUTING SKILLS. A portion of a troop meeting may be devoted to the demonstration and practice of skills that will enhance Scouts' ability to hike and camp, and to pass requirements for higher ranks.

EXERCISING LEADERSHIP. The troop's youth leaders take leading roles in planning, conducting, and assessing the success of troop meetings. Leadership is a skill that can be learned only by experience, and troop meetings serve as regular occasions for that to happen.

PROMOTING SCOUT SPIRIT. Troop meetings offer ideal settings for patrols to take part in contests and competitions that test their expertise and their abilities to cooperate with one another.



Most troops have a troop meeting or an activity every week. Meetings should occur at the same time every week to help boys and their families schedule effectively. If a troop has camped all weekend, the patrol leaders' council may decide to forego the meeting the following week. Most troop meetings occur on weeknights and should not last longer than 90 minutes to get Scouts home in time for homework and adequate rest.

Troop meetings should not always be held at the same place. For example, now and then a troop may meet at a fire station or police headquarters so the members can learn about how their town is protected.

On a summer evening, the troop might gather at a local pool to pass some of the swimming requirements for a rank or merit badge. Troop members might also complete their swim tests at the pool if they haven't already attended summer camp; that way, they won't have to spend time waiting their turn to complete the test when they get to camp.



PLANNING A TROOP MEETING

Responsibility for the conduct and content of a troop meeting falls to the Scouts themselves. Troop meetings are planned well in advance by the senior patrol leader and the patrol leaders' council.

Each troop meeting should have been planned the previous month at the meeting of the patrol leaders' council. The senior patrol leader will have assigned patrols and individuals to take care of portions of a meeting, giving as many Scouts as possible the chance to contribute. The eight-part troop meeting plan provides the framework for efficient, well-run troop meetings.

The Eight Parts of a Troop Meeting

- 1. Preopening**
- 2. Opening ceremony**
- 3. Group instruction**
- 4. Skills instruction**
- 5. Breakout groups (patrol meetings)**
- 6. Game or interpatrol activity**
- 7. Closing—Scoutmaster's Minute**
- 8. After the meeting**

	Meeting Plan: _____ Week __ Date _____		
ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	RUN BY	TIME*
Preopening __ minutes before meeting			
Opening Ceremony __ minutes	Flag presentation Oath and Law Uniform inspection		
Group Instruction __ minutes	• • • •		
Skills Instruction __ minutes	<div data-bbox="241 571 282 616" style="display: inline-block; width: 20px; height: 20px; background-color: #90EE90; margin-right: 10px;"></div> • • • • <div data-bbox="241 697 282 742" style="display: inline-block; width: 20px; height: 20px; background-color: #008080; margin-right: 10px;"></div> • • • • <div data-bbox="241 822 282 867" style="display: inline-block; width: 20px; height: 20px; background-color: #800000; margin-right: 10px;"></div> • • • •		
Breakout Groups __ minutes			
Game __ minutes			
Closing __ minutes	Announcements Leader's minute Closing		
Total 90 minutes of meeting			
After the Meeting __ minutes	Leadership team review plans for the next meeting and for the main event.		

*All times are suggested.

Using the Meeting Plan

The eight-part plan for unit meetings is an important guide, but use it flexibly. The times noted in the plan are suggestions only and can vary to fit various situations. For example, the troop may be getting ready for a campout. The usual amount of time set aside for breakout groups might be expanded to allow Scouts

time to complete their patrol camping preparations. A troop nearing the date of a district camporee may devote extra time for skills instruction so that everyone will be ready for activities involving the theme of the camporee. The interpatrol activity can include an extended competition that also focuses on the key skills.

When the minutes allotted to one part of the troop meeting plan increase, consider shortening other portions of the plan. Every troop meeting should be interesting and useful, and it should begin and end on time.

THE PREOPENING

As Scouts begin to arrive for a troop meeting, a patrol leader or an older Scout assigned by the senior patrol leader should get them involved in a preopening game or project designed so that additional Scouts can join in as they show up. The preopening is often well-suited for the outdoors. Those in charge of the preopening activity should be ready to start about 15 minutes before the scheduled beginning of the meeting. Varying the activities from week to week will keep the preopening fresh.

Scouts whose patrol has been assigned to serve that week as the *service patrol* should use the preopening time to prepare for the troop meeting. The meeting room may need to be rearranged, chairs set up, flags displayed, and other preparations completed before the meeting can begin.

THE OPENING CEREMONY

This part of the meeting should take no longer than 10 minutes. Call the meeting to order on time, instructing Scouts to line up in formation by patrol. The patrol responsible for the opening ceremony may conduct a flag ceremony and then lead the troop members in the Scout Oath, Scout Law, and Pledge of Allegiance. Ideas and examples of opening ceremonies can be found in *Troop Program Resources*, www.programresources.org.



GROUP INSTRUCTION

Set aside five to 15 minutes for group instruction. This portion of the meeting should be a short and basic review of or introduction to the topic for all members. Touch on the most fundamental skills related to this topic. Allow youth members to use this opportunity as teachable moments to help them fulfill rank-related requirements, such as using the EDGE method.

Group instruction time could also be used by inviting a guest speaker or showing how to use equipment necessary for the program feature. Other possibilities include:

- Reviewing safety guidelines
- Watching a video
- Having a discussion on issues related to first aid
- Conducting an overview of how to dress properly for the upcoming main event

SKILLS INSTRUCTION

This portion of the meeting should take 30 to 45 minutes. It focuses on the mastery of knowledge that Scouts need to participate fully in an upcoming activity or on skills they must learn to complete advancement requirements. It includes specific instruction for the three skill levels (essential, challenging, advanced).

The skills to be taught at each meeting will be determined in advance by the patrol leaders' council. Often the skills will relate directly to the month's program plan for troop activities. Instruction should be hands-on learning rather than lecturing. All skills instruction should follow a simple process called Scouting's Teaching EDGE.

THE SCOUTMASTER PROBABLY HAS A GOOD IDEA OF WHO HAS SKILLS TO TEACH. BY USING THE TROOP RESOURCE SURVEY, AVAILABLE ONLINE AT WWW.Scouting.org, THE SCOUTMASTER CAN IDENTIFY OTHER WAYS SCOUTING LEADERS AND PARENTS CAN ASSIST WITH THE TROOP'S PROGRAM.

- First, **explain** the skill.
- Second, **demonstrate** the skill.
- Third, **guide** the learner as he tries the skill.
- Fourth, the last *E* in EDGE stands for **enable**—creating an environment in which the trainee can continue to be successful (such as providing an opportunity to practice and use the skill).

Those who may be effective in teaching skills are the troop guide, instructors, junior assistant Scoutmasters, assistant Scoutmasters, and members of the troop committee. Older-Scout patrol members also can be effective instructors, though at most meetings they will be involved in their own activities.

Whenever possible, troop skills instruction should be divided into three levels:



Essential Scouting skills instruction for the new Scouts.



Challenging instruction for the experienced Scouts.



Advanced instruction for the older-Scout patrol. You could even use members of this patrol as instructors for the younger Scouts.

Each instructional area should be separated from the others so there are no distractions.

BREAKOUT GROUPS (PATROL MEETINGS)

This portion of the meeting should take 15 minutes. End skills instruction on time and ask patrols to go to their patrol areas for their breakout groups (also called patrol meeting time). Patrol leaders should take charge of their patrols for this portion of the meeting.

Matters to be dealt with during patrol time include:

- Taking attendance and collecting dues
- Planning the patrol's involvement in upcoming troop activities
- Selecting menus for hikes and campouts
- Assigning patrol members to specific tasks
- Completing the duty roster
- Working out any other details for the smooth operation of the patrol

The senior patrol leader should circulate among the groups and be ready to serve as a resource if a patrol leader asks for assistance. If you notice that groups have completed their work, call them back together and move on to the next part of the troop meeting.



GAME OR INTERPATROL ACTIVITY

This portion of the meeting should take 10 to 20 minutes. You or someone appointed by you can lead this opportunity for the patrols to interact with one

another in a competitive or cooperative game or interpatrol activity. This might be a challenge or a game that will test the skills the Scouts are learning for an upcoming activity—pitching tents or tying knots, for example.

Troop Program Resources at www.programresources.org has a wealth of games and challenges that provide opportunities to put skills into action in ways that are fun and foster friendly competition. The BSA manual *Belay On*, No. 430-500, also contains many appropriate games and challenges.



CLOSING—SCOUTMASTER'S MINUTE

This portion of the meeting should take no more than five minutes. It consists of three parts.

The senior patrol leader can give short reminders and announcements about upcoming events. Keep this part short; no one likes “death by announcements.” If

you need to, make note cards with the who, what, when, and where of the events. Have your troop webmaster and scribe create fliers and online announcements with more details about the event so you can keep this part shorter.

The leader's or Scoutmaster's Minute is a brief presentation built on one of Scouting's values, and an opportunity for the Scoutmaster to step forward and deliver a message each person can carry home. Ask everyone to sit quietly, then turn the meeting over to the Scoutmaster.

After the Scoutmaster's Minute, scheduling a meaningful ceremony serves to comfortably round out what has preceded. It also contributes to a consistent meeting structure. Ideas and examples of closing ceremonies can be found in *Troop Program Resources*, www.programresources.org.

AFTER THE MEETING

Ask members of the patrol leaders' council to stay for about five minutes after the closing to discuss with you and the Scoutmaster the quality of the just-concluded meeting. Offer praise for portions of the meeting that went well, and talk about ways that future troop meetings can be improved. Make a few written notes so that suggestions can be explored more fully at the next patrol leaders' council meeting.



Using the Start, Stop, Continue method of feedback, here are the questions to ask:

- What should we start doing that would make the meeting better?
- What should we stop doing that didn't work for us or got in the way?
- What should we continue doing that worked well for us? This is an important question, because it helps us identify our strengths.

Finally, review the troop meeting plan for the next meeting and make sure that everyone who will have a role is aware of the assignment and is prepared to do a good job.

While the patrol leaders' council is reviewing the meeting, the service patrol can put away troop gear and return the meeting room to order.

TIPS FOR RUNNING A GOOD TROOP MEETING

- Before the meeting, review the meeting plan with the Scoutmaster.
- Start the meeting on time.
- Take charge of the meeting. Scouts will follow your lead.
- When you are ready to move from one part of the meeting to the next, use the Scout sign to gain the attention of all troop members.
- Stay focused on the program feature of the month.
- Keep the meeting moving. If the proceedings of one part of the meeting seem to have run out of energy, move on to the next.
- Praise patrols when they have done something well.
- When patrol members are watching, be supportive and positive in your comments to patrol leaders. If you feel the need for constructive criticism, speak with patrol leaders in private.
- Don't wear out favorite preopening or group games and activities. Try new challenges. Ideas and examples of preopening activities, Scout meeting challenges, and games can be found in *Troop Program Resources*, www.programresources.org.
- Set a good example by wearing your complete BSA uniform to troop meetings.
- End every meeting on time.
- Review each meeting to see what can be improved in the future.



>> 5 LEADING THE TROOP BEYOND THE MEETING ROOM



Leading the Troop Beyond the Meeting Room

Troop Campouts

Camporees

Summer Camps

High-Adventure Treks

Outdoor Ethics

- Leave No Trace Principles

- Tread Lightly! Principles

Conservation Service Projects

Religious Activities

Getting Ready for the Outdoors

- Ready for the Rain

- Evening Campfires

“Scouting,” the old saying goes, “is three-quarters outing.” It’s in the outdoors that Scouts find the challenges and rewards of camping, hiking, and a host of other adventures. It’s in the outdoors where most Scouting skills are applied, and where much of the advancement toward Scout through First Class ranks takes place. It’s in the outdoors that the program of Scouting works best.

MANY YOUTHS JOIN SCOUTING BECAUSE OF A LACK OF ADVENTURE IN THEIR LIVES, BUT MANY LEAVE SCOUTING FOR THE SAME REASON.

At a minimum, Scouts in the troop should be spending at least 10 days and nights outdoors each year, in addition to the troop’s long-term (one- or two-week) summer camp. The troop’s outings program should ensure that the troop members have plenty of opportunities to achieve:

- Tenderfoot through First Class camping and hiking requirements
- Order of the Arrow camping requirements
- Camping merit badge requirements
- Service hour requirements for Tenderfoot through Life ranks

Among the opportunities for making that happen are:

- Troop campouts
- Camporees
- Summer camps
- High-adventure treks
- Religious activities

The weekly meetings of the troop often lay the foundations for big events in the out-of-doors. As senior patrol leader, you can bring together the possibilities of the outdoor program and the needs and interests of the Scouts in the troop.



Later in this chapter you will find a planning guide that will help you and the patrol leaders' council do a good job of planning your troop's outings. Each program feature in the *Program Features for Troops and Crews* has additional planning tips for you to use. Remember to use the Scout Planning Worksheet (found at the end of "The Troop Program" chapter) as a planning guide.

As with all other aspects of the troop program, do your very best to attend troop outings, and make sure the patrol leaders do their best to attend as well. If the youth leaders don't attend the outings you have planned together as the patrol leaders' council, then several poor outcomes are likely:

- The other Scouts will be deprived of the benefit of your leadership when they need it most.
- Scouts may fall into the "you're not the boss of me" mode when other Scouts who are not the elected leaders try to provide leadership in the absence of you and/or their patrol leaders.
- Scouts may not see the value in attending outings when the youth leaders

don't attend. After all, you and the patrol leaders selected each event, and if several of you don't attend it sends a message to the other Scouts that the event probably won't be much fun anyway.

TROOP CAMPOUTS

A campout is often a program feature main event. Members of the patrol leaders' council who plan a campout must consider what equipment and food will be needed and how everyone will reach the campsite. Most troops will be able to provide patrols with tents, stoves, and other group gear.

Patrols can be assigned the duties of developing menus, purchasing food, and getting provisions ready to pack. Food costs should be shared by all the Scouts and leaders who take part. (For more on planning and carrying out successful camping trips, see the the *Scouts BSA Handbook for Boys*, No. 34622, and *Scouts BSA Handbook for Girls*, No. 39006, *Fieldbook*, No. 34006, and *Program Features for Troops and Crews*, volumes 1, 2, and 3, Nos. 33110, 33111, and 33112.)

As with other aspects of being a senior patrol leader, you can often provide the most effective leadership by delegating responsibilities to other members of the patrol leaders' council. Provide them with the knowledge they need, the materials they should have, and the encouragement to do their best. You will often find that they thrive on the chance to take on much of the work of preparing for and carrying out successful troop activities.



Some troops like to go to the same places every year for campouts. This might be a fabulous troop tradition, or it might indicate that the patrol leaders' council needs to experiment with something new. After all, even the best movie gets boring if you watch it too many times.

The same happens when a troop goes to the same places all the time. Find new places for campouts, with new adventures for your Scouts to experience. State parks, nearby national parks, or camps in an adjacent council are some possible locations for new experiences.

During outdoor activities:

- Spend time with each patrol.
- Check with patrol leaders at the beginning of the outing to ensure that the tasks on duty rosters are shared equally among all members of each patrol.
- Whether tenting, cooking, or participating in activities, make sure that each patrol functions as a patrol during the outing.
- Help patrol leaders make sure that everyone has a dry place to sleep and that other issues of safety and comfort are being addressed.
- Offer patrol leaders your full attention, and stand ready to help them if they

ask for your assistance.

- Give patrols of younger Scouts special attention on their first outings to make sure they are taken care of properly and have fun. This will encourage them to stay in your troop.

Learning Together

Not every Scout who takes on the role of senior patrol leader is a crackerjack camper and outdoor expert. Perhaps yours is a newly formed troop just beginning to develop its backcountry skills, or you may have been elected to be senior patrol leader because of your abilities to organize meetings and inspire Scouts to achieve all they can.

In any case, you and the rest of the Scouts in the troop can increase your camping knowledge together while enjoying the outdoors as a group. Pay attention to the other Scouts and remember which Scouts are best at various Scouting skills. Have those Scouts serve as instructors at meetings when you are preparing for outings and on the outings themselves. This has two important effects. First, it allows those Scouts to shine at what they do best, improving their self-esteem and giving them experience in leading their peers. Second, it frees up your time for your other leadership responsibilities.

Have all your instructors practice using the EDGE method to teach skills. This method really works well, and it can help your instructors organize their thought process. See [page 110](#) of this handbook for a discussion of the EDGE method.

Adult leaders of the troop, district, and council may be able to provide guidance in the best ways to live in camp and on the trail. The Scouts BSA handbooks, *Fieldbook*, merit badge pamphlets, and other BSA literature can help, too.



CAMPOREES

Once or twice a year, most BSA districts or councils host a camporee, inviting many troops to come together for a weekend of camping fun and fellowship. Camporees are often planned around a program theme—orienteeing or outdoor cooking, for example. A camporee is a chance for the patrols in your troop to show their best stuff.

A well-planned camporee will have a leader's guide that tells what to expect for the weekend. Have your Scoutmaster get one, and the two of you should review it for information on the equipment and supplies your troop should bring, as well as the types of events and competitions in which your troop will participate.

The planning done by the patrol leaders' council in preparation for a camporee is similar to that required for a troop campout, with the added component of planning skills instruction for participating in the scheduled events and competitions. Scouts can use their patrol meetings to organize their menus, make duty roster assignments, and gather their food and gear. They may also need time during troop meetings to learn and practice some of the skills they will use during camporee events and competitions.

As senior patrol leader you can support the Scouts of all the patrols with coaching and encouragement. Be available to help patrol leaders solve any problems that may arise.

SUMMER CAMPS

Summer camp! It's often the highlight of the entire Scouting year.

A local council summer camp offers troops terrific outdoor learning experiences and plenty of fun. A council camp provides the setting (open country, campsites, room to roam), basic facilities (tents, waterfront, nature center, archery and rifle ranges), equipment (boats, canoes, nature guides, recreational gear), and a trained staff (experts in aquatics, nature, woodcraft, field sports, first aid, and other Scouting skills). Scouts attending summer camp usually will be expected to bring their own clothing, sleeping bags, and personal gear.

THE PATROL LEADERS' COUNCIL WILL DEVELOP A CAMP PLAN THAT ALLOWS TROOP MEMBERS TO WORK ON ADVANCEMENT REQUIREMENTS AND MERIT BADGES, TO HIKE, TO ENJOY BOATING AND SWIMMING, AND TO ENGAGE IN MANY OTHER CAMP ACTIVITIES.

As with campouts, consider going to a different summer camp from time to time.

Some troops intentionally go to three or even four different summer camps in rotation over a three- or four-year period, so their Scouts can have a wide range of experiences during their Scouting “career.”

Plan your summer camp week(s) when there are as few conflicting events as possible, so your entire troop has the chance to attend. As leader of the troop, make sure you do your best to attend, and make sure your patrol leaders do, too. A week without their normal leaders can cause Scouts to get into the “you’re not the boss of me” mode even more than they might on a weekend campout, so don’t leave them in that situation.

Many members of the troop will be attending summer camp for the first time. As senior patrol leader, pay particular attention to the newest Scouts who are on their first weeklong trip away from their parents. They may get homesick. Work closely with the Scoutmaster to help these Scouts make the most of their summer camp experience. The following considerations are especially important:

- Encourage younger Scouts to take part in any first-time camper programs focusing on Tenderfoot through First Class requirements.
- Encourage new Scouts to concentrate on mastering basic Scouting skills before working on more than one or two merit badges.
- Stay in touch with younger Scouts during summer camp. For some, this will be the first time they have been away from their families for an extended period of time. See that they have plenty to do, and help them get through symptoms of homesickness.

As at other troop functions, monitor the activities and progress of the troop’s Scouts by staying in touch with each patrol leader and with the Scoutmaster. The pace of summer camp will allow you to spend plenty of time with younger Scouts and other troop members. That can lead to strengthened bonds of partnership and shared experience that can help carry the troop through the rest of the year.

Planning and Financing Summer Camp

Getting ready for summer camp should begin at the troop’s annual program planning meeting. The patrol leaders’ council can organize program events throughout the year so that Scouts master the camping and outdoor skills they will use at summer camp.

Your council may offer special precamp training sessions for senior patrol leaders, other selected youth leaders, and the troop’s adult leaders. The sessions can give you a head start on making summer plans and enable you to better prepare the troop for camp.

Financing summer camp is another issue requiring long-term planning. The Scoutmaster and patrol leaders’ council should work closely with the

troop committee to devise the most appropriate way to fund the summer camp experience for every Scout who wants to go. In some cases Scouts pay their own way. Other troops conduct fundraising campaigns to gather the money to send their patrols to camp. Some councils offer reduced price “camperships” for Scouts whose families may not be able to afford summer camp; ask your Scoutmaster to find out if they are available.







HIGH-ADVENTURE TREKS

High-adventure opportunities for a troop's older Scouts are limited only by the imagination of those setting out on treks. The terrain to be explored is varied, too — whitewater rivers, mountains, deserts, lakes, forests, prairies, and oceans. National high-adventure bases offer backcountry journeys on mountain trails, along remote lakes and rivers, and across the open sea. Many local councils also offer high-adventure programs, too.

Your older Scouts may choose to do special high-adventure activities or event trips. You can do this as a troop activity or with a partner Venturing crew. If you have a Venturing crew that partners with your troop, then you might even have a shared calendar and equipment. If not, you may have to look around for a crew to partner with on high-adventure activities.

While it's great to have the older Scouts go on high-adventure treks, be careful to plan the treks in a way that does not deprive the troop of needed youth leadership at summer camp. You might need to develop a team of younger Scouts to temporarily take the place of the senior patrol leader and one or more patrol leaders at summer camp, so that you and the patrol leader(s) can attend the high-adventure outing. Before you go, train the temporary leaders and make sure everyone else in the troop knows that those other Scouts will in fact be the leaders at summer camp: The troop will be expected to follow them just as they would follow you and the elected patrol leaders.

The way to learn good outdoor leadership is to practice leading. Get outdoors with the troop as often as you can. Begin with hikes and campouts that are manageable and within the abilities of the Scouts in the troop. As your skills and those of other Scouts increase, you can plan more challenging and rewarding adventures.

OUTDOOR ETHICS

The Boy Scouts of America has embraced no-trace guidelines for enjoying the outdoors in a responsible manner. The principles of Leave No Trace and Tread Lightly! are designed to help outdoor users make the most of their adventures while at the same time protecting the environment and the experience of other visitors.

Leave No Trace Principles



Plan ahead and prepare.



Travel and camp on durable surfaces.



Dispose of waste properly. (Pack it in, pack it out.)



Leave what you find.



Minimize campfire impacts.



Respect wildlife.



Be considerate of other visitors.

Tread Lightly! Principles

Travel responsibly.

Respect the rights of others.

Educate yourself.

Avoid sensitive areas.

Do your part.

For more on Outdoor Ethics, the Outdoor Code, Leave No Trace, and Tread Lightly!, see the Scouts BSA handbooks and *Fieldbook*. For information about the Outdoor Ethics Awareness Award, go to www.scouting.org/outdoor-programs/outdoor-ethics/awards/boy-scout/.



CONSERVATION SERVICE PROJECTS

Scouts have always prided themselves on being good stewards of the outdoors. Today, the principles of Leave No Trace and Tread Lightly! allow them to camp, hike, and take part in related outdoor activities in ways that are environmentally sound and kind to other users.

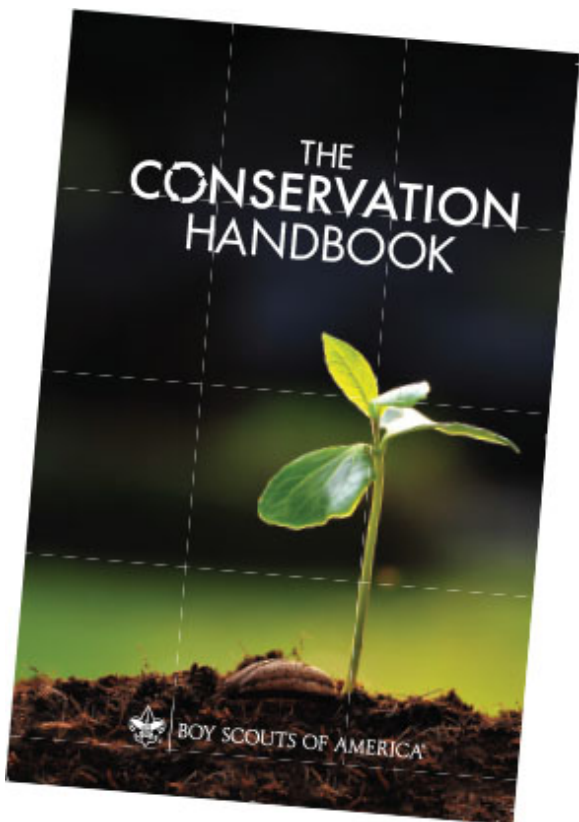
Another important lesson of Scouting is the wisdom of giving something back to the land. A well-conceived troop conservation project benefits the environment and helps instill in Scouts the sense that they can improve the world around them. Now that Life rank requires three hours of conservation-related service, it would be a good idea for the patrol leaders' council to plan conservation service projects throughout the year. Planning an hour or so on every campout to perform one of these projects would help your Star Scouts complete their three hours of conservation service without the need for a separate service project weekend (although there's nothing wrong with doing both!).

Projects vary greatly depending on the area, the skill level and enthusiasm of Scouts and their leaders, and the needs of land management personnel or private property owners. It is crucial that a project be discussed and approved well in advance by the appropriate land owner or land management agency. Conservation service projects can help the troop earn the Hornaday Unit Award, and with proper planning and leadership, a Scout can use a conservation-related Eagle project to earn a Hornaday badge. More information about the Hornaday

awards is available at www.scouting.org/Hornaday.aspx.



The BSA's *Conservation Handbook* includes meaningful conservation projects and outlines strategies for developing ongoing conservation relationships between the troop and land managers. A well-conceived conservation project:



- Meets a real need in protecting or restoring a natural resource
- Has a purpose that Scouts can understand
- Can be completed in a reasonable amount of time
- Offers opportunities for Scouts and leaders to learn sound conservation practices
- May be related to advancement or the requirements for a conservation award
- Enables Scouts to come away with a sense of satisfaction in doing a Good Turn for the environment



RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES

Most troops have a troop chaplain (an adult) and a chaplain aide (youth member) responsible for the spiritual awareness and growth of troop members. For a troop with members of mixed beliefs, or if the beliefs of members are unknown, religious services should be interfaith in nature. However, if all members of a troop are of the same faith, it is appropriate to offer a specific worship service.

Though it is not the responsibility of a patrol leaders' council to plan and conduct worship services, it should be a part of the patrol leaders' council planning process to schedule times and places for worship to occur any time a troop outing will span a weekend.

When an outing will take place over a weekend, make arrangements for the troop to have a time of worship. Be aware that planning and leading an interfaith service can help a Scout complete requirement 8 of the Communication merit badge. So be sure to keep a running list of Scouts who need to earn this Eagle-required merit badge, and give them the opportunity to do so.

Remember to include a grace before every meal on all outings.

The Boy Scouts of America has a religious emblems program supported by nearly 40 different religious groups and denominations. For more

information, see the Duty to God brochure, No. 512-879, available at www.scouting.org/Awards/ReligiousAwards.aspx. The interfaith publication *Reverence*, No. 34248, also is a good resource for helping a Scout strengthen his duty to God and a good source of ideas for grace and interfaith services.

GETTING READY FOR THE OUTDOORS

Any time the troop embarks on an outdoor activity, work with the patrol leaders' council to complete a trip plan. Leave a copy with someone who will notice if you do not return as expected. A trip plan will help you prepare for the event by answering the following questions.

WHERE ARE WE GOING? Decide on the destination and the intended route. Where is the starting point and ending point of the trek? In some cases it will be appropriate to include copies of a map marked with the proposed route.

WHEN WILL WE RETURN? If you are not back within a couple of hours of the time estimated on the trip plan, the contact people can take steps to locate you.

WHO IS GOING WITH US? List the name of everyone who is going along.

WHY ARE WE GOING? What is the purpose of the troop activity? The answer to this question will help you take what you need and make the most of the opportunities that present themselves.

WHAT ARE WE TAKING? For most day outings, the Scout basic essentials form the core of the items every Scout should carry. (For more on the Scout basic essentials, see the Scouts BSA handbooks and *Fieldbook*.)

HOW WILL WE FOLLOW THE NO-TRACE GUIDELINES? Review the Leave No Trace principles and Tread Lightly! guidelines and think about the ways you and the troop can stick to each one of them. Once you are in the field, keep outdoor ethics in mind as a reminder for the best ways to enjoy the outdoors.

TROOP TRIP PLAN

Trip plan of _____

WHERE:

Destination _____

Route going _____

Route returning _____

WHEN:

Date and time of departure _____

Date and time of return _____

WHO:

Names of persons taking part _____

WHY:

Purpose of the trip _____

WHAT:



Gear and other items to be taken:



Scout basic essentials



Other clothing and gear _____

Permits required _____

Special equipment needs _____

Special clothing needs _____

HOW:

List the principles of Leave No Trace that relate to your trip. For each one, write a sentence explaining what the patrol will do to follow that principle.

Scoutmaster approval:

Signature

Date

Ready for the Rain

Before you leave for an outing, check the weather forecast for your destination one more time. Make sure all the Scouts have the proper clothing for the expected weather. Remember, it is often colder at higher altitudes, and the winds are often a bit stronger up there. Keep this in mind if your outing involves significant change in altitude, and make sure all your Scouts are prepared accordingly.

During bad weather, you may want to jump in to assist patrols in setting up dining flies and getting their gear secured in their tents. Or perhaps you'll want to suggest to the patrol leaders that they fire up the stoves and provide hot drinks for patrol members.

Do you have some good games and other activities for troop members to pass the time when the weather turns for the worse? BSA literature such as *Program Features for Troops and Crews*, volumes 1, 2, and 3; the Scouts BSA handbooks; *Fieldbook*; and *Troop Program Resources* (www.programresources.org) overflow with ideas for games, skits, skills, contests, and problem solving that can be adapted for use in tents or under a tarp. Pull together some of the best of these ahead of time for use when the rain begins to fall.

Evening Campfires

A highlight of many troop campouts is an evening program of stories, songs, and skits. As senior patrol leader, you will often be the logical choice to serve as master of ceremonies. However, be aware that planning and leading a campfire program can help a Scout complete requirement 8 of the Communication merit badge. So be sure to keep a running list of Scouts who need to be the MC in order to earn this Eagle-required merit badge, and give them the opportunity to do so.

Campfire programs can offer entertainment, fellowship, and education. The setting of a campfire, the darkness that envelops it, and the fact that it is part of a larger outdoor adventure can make it an ideal time to offer messages of inspiration. For some troop campfire opening and closing ceremonies, refer to *Troop Program Resources*, www.programresources.org.



A good campfire program, like a good troop meeting, will not happen by accident. It should have elements of fun and fellowship. The program need not be an elaborate production, but a bit of planning will go a long way toward giving a campfire program purpose and direction.

The patrol leaders' council should take the lead in planning a troop's evening program and assigning its various parts to the patrols. Scouts who have attended previous camporees and summer camps may have ideas for skits, stunts, and songs. A useful guide is the BSA publication *Campfire Program Planner*, No. 430-696.

As with all BSA events, campfire programs must be done in good taste. You and other members of the patrol leaders' council can reinforce the fact that there is no place in Scouting for poor manners; racial, ethnic, or gender slurs; or vulgarity. A good test of appropriateness is to hold ideas for skits up against the Scout Law. Any skit that is not friendly, courteous, and kind has no place in a campfire

program.

A useful way of enforcing these principles is to have each patrol give you a summary of their skit and jokes before the campfire, so you can help weed out those that are inappropriate before they are performed. If an inappropriate presentation makes it onto the stage, the master of ceremonies should step in and stop it.

The troop does not need an actual campfire to share in the enjoyment of an evening program. In fact, Scouts may find their awareness of their surroundings is enhanced by the absence of a fire. Sitting by a river or lake, looking out over a vista, even gathering around a candle or lantern can be every bit as effective as gazing into the embers of a campfire.

If you do intend to light a fire, follow the campfire regulations of the area where you are staying and follow all Leave No Trace principles relating to size and placement of open fires.

>> 6 HOW TO BE A GOOD SENIOR PATROL LEADER



How to Be a Good Senior Patrol Leader

Leadership Defined

- Styles of Leadership

- Basics of Leadership

- Some Additional Leadership Tips

Leading EDGE Leadership

Helping the Troop Develop As a Team

- Team Development

- Supporting the Troop

- Overcoming Disappointments

- Celebrating Success

Conflict Resolution

- EAR Method of Conflict Resolution

- Start, Stop, Continue Assessment Tool

Communication Skills

Dealing With Inappropriate Behavior

Leadership Situations

Think of some of the best leaders you have known. Perhaps you have had teachers who seem gifted with the ability to guide people toward their goals. Maybe you are on a sports team coached by someone who inspires you to achieve the most that you can. You might have noticed the skill with which the Scoutmaster and other adult leaders move the troop along.

Now that you have become senior patrol leader, you may be asking yourself how you can be most effective in your new role. What steps can you take to lead well?

LEADERSHIP DEFINED

What exactly is leadership? It is the process of things getting done by—and with—a group of people who are being led. When discussing leadership, we often call this group a *team*. What makes a team successful?

COMMON PURPOSE

A team is a group of interdependent people who cooperate to achieve exceptional results. They have a common purpose for which they are all accountable. The goal must be clear to all. Members feel a common purpose when their personal goals are linked to the team goals. It is a win-win situation.

INTERDEPENDENCE

The team members rely on each other to accomplish more than they could as individuals. A team cannot be successful unless all members of the team are truly successful in their roles.

APPROPRIATE ROLES, STRUCTURE, AND PROCESS

People need to know their roles and boundaries, and their value to the team. Decisions are agreed upon and supported. Feedback is timely and useful. Communication channels are open.

COMPETENCE AND LEADERSHIP

Members have the necessary technical and interpersonal skills to accomplish their tasks and work together. The team has the leadership and support it needs to be successful.

TEAM CLIMATE

The team environment is open and collaborative. People show respect and trust for one another. They value different opinions. There is a genuine interest in gaining agreement.

PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

The team sets high expectations for each member and monitors itself for continuous improvement. Team members critique their own performance and decisions against a high standard.

CLARITY AND UNDERSTANDING OF BOUNDARIES

The team has a clear understanding of its task and the limits and scope of accomplishing that task. The vision for accomplishing the goals of the team and the methods to be used are understood by all.

Styles of Leadership

INCLUSION

As a leader, learning to effectively include, engage, and use each member of your team is an important skill. Leaders should look at their team and see how best to involve and use the skills of every person, not just a few friends or the strongest individuals. Leaders must understand the needs and goals of each individual and how all the members of the team can help each other to achieve their individual goals.

As people, we have many similarities. These similarities can help us get things done in the troop. Yet, each person also has unique traits. These differences can be useful assets to the team and to the leader when you're trying to get things done. Leaders need to know and find out which of these individual strengths can benefit the team. If we always go to the same people, we are missing out on the talents of others and not giving them a chance to grow and contribute. Leaders should think about the value of each person on the team.

So how do you learn each person's strengths? You could observe them over time and make notes of their strengths, but this takes a while. You could ask each of them to tell you their likes and dislikes, which often correlate with their strengths. You could ask who wants to take on a task or lead a skill.

SERVANT LEADERSHIP

In Scouting, you will hear a lot about *servant leadership*. But what exactly is it? Let's start by describing what it is not.

When you ask, "What is the relationship between a leader and the team?" many people's first reaction is to say that the team performs tasks for the leader. Given the choice, most people would prefer to tell others what to do than to be told what to do. That's human nature. But when this happens, the person in charge is more like a "boss" or "owner" than a leader. Many people don't want to be part of a team that works this way, and they'll join the team only for a while, for the sake of external rewards.

Being a true team leader means serving the team. In a team led by a servant leader, the leader is one part of the team, and the leader's role isn't necessarily more important than the role of any other member. Being a servant leader means accepting responsibility for the team—its members, objectives, reputation, morale, and more. Servant leaders recognize they are responsible to the team, not the other way around, and they act accordingly. Servant leaders lead teams that people want to join.

Servant leaders understand what success looks like, not just for the team as a whole but also for each member. A servant leader enables the success of those the team member leads, removing barriers and creating an environment for the team to succeed. To be a servant leader to a high-performing team, you will need to listen carefully, be attuned to the people around you, and empathically understand what they're thinking. The servant leader knows the team's capabilities and desires.



At the same time, servant leadership is more than just doing what the others want. Leaders need to lead—to set direction and lead team members in that direction. Sometimes they need to hold team members accountable, to make tough decisions that not everyone will like, and to encourage (push) people to

excel. Sometimes, this is uncomfortable—for the leader and for team members. If leaders don't do this, however, teams may become too “cozy”; they may lose their edge and start to fail their members.

Effective servant leaders care about others, and about helping them succeed as individuals and as a group. Group members can see when a leader cares about their needs and is focused on their success. That service earns the leader the respect of the team members. When Scouts have that respect, they have earned the title and role of *leader*.

Servant Leadership Is

- Making the choice to lead
- Wanting to make a difference and provide a better experience for every individual
- Giving more than you receive
- Caring about others
- Doing unto others as you would have them do to you
- Helping others succeed
- Understanding what success for the group looks like
- Making the group successful

Now that we have covered inclusion and servant leadership, here are some styles that tend to be less successful:

DOING IT ALL YOURSELF

This isn't really leadership at all, because you aren't involving the rest of the group to reach the goal or accomplish the task.

CONTROLLING

Leaders can fail by never listening to suggestions or other opinions, and not letting others remind them of things that may have been overlooked. When this happens, something a leader hasn't considered may cause the plan to fall apart, or others in the group may stop listening and fail to do an important task. However, there are times when controlling can work for a short while, such as an emergency that calls for immediate action.

INTIMIDATION

This means yelling, threatening, calling names, and perhaps even cursing while issuing orders. Sure, the job might get done this time, if everyone doesn't just quit, but few will want to work with or even be around that “leader” anymore.

WANTING EVERYONE TO LIKE YOU

It's natural to want people to like you. But it is impossible to please everyone. Don't let your desire to please everyone paralyze you from taking any action just because some might not want to take a particular course.

Basics of Leadership

There are some basics of leadership that can give you a head start to being an effective senior patrol leader. Among the most important are these:

1. Have a good attitude.
2. Act with maturity.
3. Be organized.
4. Look the part.



HAVE A GOOD ATTITUDE

An optimistic outlook is infectious. Maintain a positive, can-do attitude, and those around you will find that they share your enthusiasm. You do not have to be noisy about it; simply be willing to do your best all the time. Instead of feeling defeated by the challenges facing the troop, set about the business of using the combined strengths of all troop members to find good solutions.

ACT WITH MATURITY

BE CONSISTENT. Earn the respect of those you are leading by being fair to

everyone and consistent in your actions.

BE FLEXIBLE. It is important to be flexible enough to change direction when that will be best for the troop.

BE REASONABLE. There is nothing more confusing than a leader who flipflops on his decisions without clear reason. Troop members will respond well to your leadership when they know what to expect from you.

BE FAIR. A senior patrol leader who treats some Scouts more favorably than others will soon lose the troop's trust.

Look Out for the Little Scouts

As senior patrol leader, be aware of the experience of younger Scouts. Encourage them to do their best. Make it your business to help them get the most out of Scouting. Speak up any time you become aware of older Scouts picking on younger Scouts. The maturity you show as senior patrol leader can make it clear that yours is a troop where harassment, bullying, and hazing will not be tolerated.

BE ORGANIZED

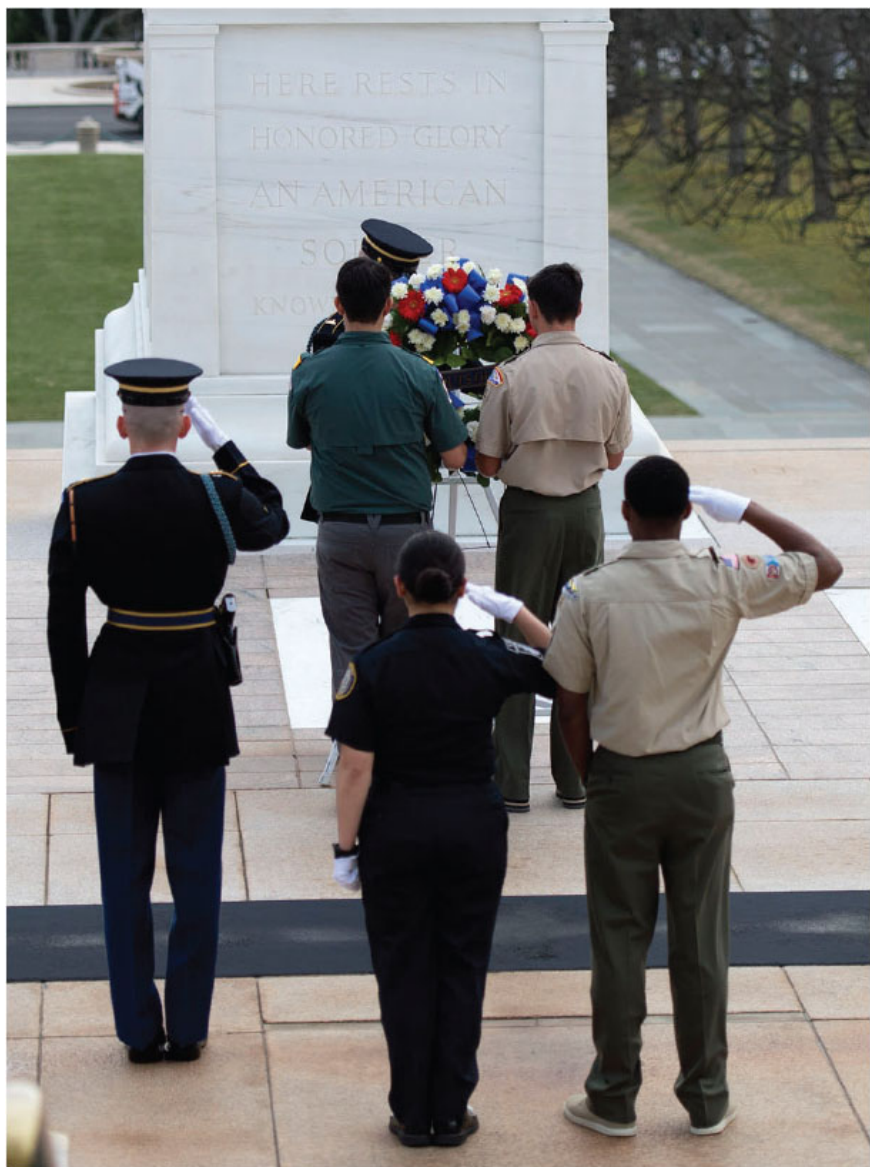
Careful preparations before meetings and troop events will pay off many times over in the success of those activities. Scouts will also receive the message that you care enough about them to put your energy into planning the best possible experiences for the entire troop.

LOOK THE PART

Leadership comes from within, not from the shirt on your back or the patch on your shoulder. On the other hand, the Scouts BSA uniform does command respect. It provides identity for troop members and can be a means of building troop spirit. Set a good example for the troop by wearing the full Scouts BSA uniform whenever it is appropriate.

- All Scouts proudly wear the full BSA uniform for ceremonial activities including boards of review, courts of honor, patriotic events, parades, and special occasions at troop meetings and summer camp.
- During physically active outdoor events and informal Scout meetings, troop members may wear the BSA activity uniform—troop or camp T-shirts with Scout pants or shorts.
- Scouts participating in patrol and troop conservation projects, other service work, or backcountry camping may wear work pants or jeans with their troop

or camp T-shirts.



WHAT YOU DO YOURSELVES, YOUR SCOUTS WILL DO ALSO.
—ROBERT BADEN-POWELL

Some Additional Leadership Tips

- Leadership is built on trust. Telling the other Scouts why you want them to do something, or why you want them to do it a certain way, will help build trust in you. Of course, this requires you to think through the “why” and have a better reason than “because I said so.”
- Rely on the Scout Oath and Scout Law as you make ethical choices in troop leadership. Shared values are a foundation of any team. The Scout Oath and Scout Law are expressions of the BSA’s values.
- Offer a vision of success. You don’t have to be correct 100 percent of the time, but be sure to explain how your vision fits within the overall troop plan.
- The troop’s annual program plan is a blueprint for exciting activities and outdoor adventures. Use it to focus Scouts’ energies and enthusiasm.
- Recognize that some Scouts are advancing faster than others. Give additional assistance to Scouts who are taking more time to learn skills and to gain Scouting experience. Offer advanced Scouts added responsibilities and leadership positions.
- Model the kind of behavior and achievement you expect from everyone in your troop. Be what you want them to be. Have high expectations for yourself, and expect the best in others.
- Acknowledge differences. Look for ways to draw on individual strengths of Scouts to the advantage of the entire troop. Develop trust by keeping the interests of troop members in mind.
- Make your troop meetings and patrol leaders’ council meetings count. Get outdoors and have adventures. Working through the patrol leaders’ council, develop an exciting program plan, then carry it out.
- Respect and value others. Help all Scouts feel they each have something important to contribute to the success of their patrol and troop.
- When appointing a Scout to a leadership position, make sure each one understands what’s expected. If the Scout has difficulties, provide coaching in private. Be prepared to replace a Scout with someone else if that Scout doesn’t have the time or ability to perform the role properly after repeated coaching.

LEADING EDGE LEADERSHIP

Sometimes you will hear people talk about *situational leadership*. It means having the ability and willingness to use more than one leadership method to match the needs of the situation. In Scouting, we call this the Leading EDGE. Using the Leading EDGE methods, servant leaders can change their leadership

based upon the needs of the team and its objectives.

The Leading EDGE, like the Teaching EDGE used in skills instruction, consists of four methods that can be used in different situations: Explaining, Demonstrating, Guiding, Enabling.

These four methods of leading can be used to address the different stages at which your troop is performing. The following table shows this relationship:

Team Stage	Development Phase	Leadership Behavior Best for That Stage
Forming	High enthusiasm, low skills	Explaining
Storming	Low enthusiasm, low skills	Demonstrating
Norming	Rising enthusiasm, growing skills	Guiding
Performing	High enthusiasm, high skills	Enabling

THE EXPLAINING METHOD

Explaining is a leadership method used when patrol members are just beginning in a task or skill. They are enthusiastic but really do not have the skill or knowledge to do what needs to be done. When a patrol or an individual is at this stage, the leaders need to carefully explain what must be done, how to do it, and what the result needs to be.

THE DEMONSTRATING METHOD

When the patrol or an individual is just learning a new skill, frustration can come quickly when the skill just isn't there yet. The leader at this point needs to use the demonstrating method of leadership, showing precisely how something is to be done. The leader also must model the behavior expected of patrol members.

THE GUIDING METHOD

As the patrol or members get better at a task or skill, they will exhibit a growing enthusiasm and motivation. The leader's response to this should be to step back and give them plenty of room to act on their own, but be ready to coach and guide when help is needed. An example might be the patrol leader performing personal responsibilities during meal preparation but remaining close by and ready to help others, if they need it. That will help guide them toward being successful.

THE ENABLING METHOD

Enabling is a leadership method that can be used when skills are high enough to create an environment of continued success. It means the leader can delegate responsibility for that task or skill to the individual or patrol. The leader recognizes that the group has reached proficiency, and the leader can and should express confidence in them.



HELPING THE TROOP DEVELOP AS A TEAM

Understanding how patrols in the troop develop can help you better match your leadership style to the needs of all troop members. In turn, that can encourage everyone to move toward building a troop that is able to achieve as much as it can.

Team Development

There are many theories explaining how teams like patrols and troops evolve. At the council-level National Youth Leadership Training, you will learn that teams go through a progression of stages, each requiring a different leadership approach. The Leading EDGE (Explain, Demonstrate, Guide, Enable) is the same term used to describe a process for teaching a skill, but here it describes the series of leadership behaviors you just learned.



Just as you can adjust your leadership style to match the needs of individuals, you also can address the needs of an entire team. The key is this: *Figure out what the group is missing and then provide it.*

Supporting the Troop

To discover what the troop requires from you, pay attention. Watch patrol members as they interact with one another. Listen to their comments and concerns. Notice the differences in patrols, and think about ways you can help each of them reach their full potential.

For example, members of a newly formed patrol usually are eager to be a part of the troop and will be anxious to fit in. They may be unsure about what is expected of them and will need lots of guidance. Take time to establish personal connections with each person and learn about their individual interests and talents. The *explaining method* and the *demonstrating method* of leadership you use with individuals can also be used with great effect when applied to newly formed groups.

A patrol that has been around for a while should have developed quite a bit of skill in resolving its difficulties and achieving many of its goals. Patrol members should be confident in their ability to perform tasks and to overcome obstacles. They have a sense of pride in belonging to a successful patrol, and they enjoy working together for the good of the troop. The trust and respect they have for one another is also high.

You can support experienced patrols by seeing to it that they have everything they require to continue succeeding. Those resources may be in the form of materials, camping gear, or knowledge, especially information you can share from

meetings of the patrol leaders' council. Recognize individuals for their accomplishments, and encourage open communication. You may find that the *guiding method* and *enabling method* of leadership are just right for bringing out the best in veteran patrols.

Overcoming Disappointments

Now and then a patrol or even the entire troop may become discouraged. Perhaps Scouts are discovering the reality of the challenges facing them. A campout or other planned activity that didn't go very well may cause some Scouts to become frustrated.

You will be tested as senior patrol leader when the spirits of troop members are down. When that happens, draw upon your abilities to communicate clearly, listen actively, and encourage open discussions. Recognize patrol accomplishments and offer encouragement and reassurance to those Scouts who are making efforts to achieve. Reflection (sometimes called "roses and thorns") can be an effective tool for you to discover what is at the root of troop members' discontent and for helping Scouts find their own solutions to the situation.

Scouting allows Scouts to fail in a safe manner so they can learn from their mistakes. When things don't go well, use it as a learning opportunity. Ask the Scouts to list what went wrong, and why, but don't let it turn into blaming or shaming anyone. Instead of saying that the Scout "messed up and left part of the food (or even an entire meal) at home," say "We didn't make sure all the food was brought to the campout." The Scout knows what happened, so there's no point rubbing it in. Then ask the Scouts what they would do to prevent it from happening again.

Celebrating Success

Patrols in the troop will achieve significant milestones, or even complete their time together, as a tight-knit group. Members of some patrols may be moving on to form a Venturing crew, for example, or members of a new-Scout patrol may have reached a level of experience and advancement to be ready to join the regular patrols of the troop.



Whatever the case, celebrate the many accomplishments that troop members have enjoyed during their time together. Documenting patrol and troop histories with a scrapbook or photo album can be an enjoyable way to create an overview of all that the Scouts have accomplished. Remembering a patrol's or the troop's successes at a court of honor where parents are present will allow the Scouts to relive that special moment and will also show their parents they are capable of doing well on their own.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Conflicts can occur when people disagreeing with each other seem unable to find a reasonable compromise. The roots of these disagreements can arise from many sources, including differences in personality, values, and perceptions.

As senior patrol leader, you must handle the differences that arise among members of the troop. Conflicts may be minor, or they may fester into something that can damage troop spirit and the ability of the Scouts to work together effectively.

Before stepping in to help, make sure that you are calm. Usually people who are in conflict with each other are excited or even angry. In order for them to resolve the conflict, they have to calm down. If you are upset, or get upset, chances are the resolution will take a lot longer.

Your response to a perceived conflict will probably take one of three forms:

- 1. Avoiding**
- 2. Compromising**
- 3. Problem solving**

AVOIDING

Avoiding a problem will seldom make it go away, but there are times when it is best to let others have some time to work out their differences on their own before you step in. By using the skills of effective listening, you may gain a good feel for the quality of the relationships among troop members. Then you can decide when it will be of value for you to do something to help resolve a disagreement.

An important time for you to step in is when the troop members seem to be shying away from steps that would lead to resolving a disagreement. They may have decided simply not to talk about it, but that often means that the disagreement will arise again. Without communication followed by action, there can be no progress.

COMPROMISING

In solving a conflict by compromise, both parties must be willing to give up something to gain something more. Reaching that point may require the assistance of a negotiator—often you, the senior patrol leader.

PROBLEM SOLVING

The most effective way to resolve conflicts is for all parties to explain their points of view and to become convinced that they should make a real effort to solve the problem. As in compromising, a negotiator may serve as a guide to help them resolve their differences.

The Senior Patrol Leader As Conflict Negotiator

When two members of the troop are in disagreement with one another, you can often find a workable solution by using many of the same skills that are effective when the actions of a single person are unacceptable. Stay calm. Use open-ended questions to get everyone to explain their understanding of the problem. Encourage each person to see the situation from other points of view, then enlist the aid of all parties working together to find a solution that is acceptable to everyone.

EAR Method of Conflict Resolution

The EAR method is an effective method of reaching an acceptable compromise and resolving the conflict. This method encourages the Scouts in conflict to reach a resolution themselves and to own the resolution. It involves three steps:

1. **Express:** Ask each side in the conflict, "What do you want and what are you doing to get it?" Let them *express* their pent-up emotions and concerns. Be sure to listen closely and without judgment. It is very likely that the Scouts will focus on the negative, complaining about what they don't like. That's fine. It is often the way people who are upset express themselves.
2. **Address:** Ask each side, "Why is that working or not working?" You are helping them to *address* the issue themselves. You are holding up a mirror for them so they can better address what they see happening. Encourage the Scouts in conflict to keep talking, but focus now on positive aspects of the situation rather than negative ones. You also are getting information about the problem and gaining time to think about other solutions you might offer up later.



3. **Resolve:** Ask each side, "What ways are there to solve the problem?" Help them move toward a solution that is fair and allows each party to come out ahead. You are holding them accountable for *resolving* the issue.

Start, Stop, Continue Assessment Tool

You will recall the use of the Start, Stop, Continue tool in the "after meeting" step of troop meeting planning. This tool also can be used anytime the troop experiences a disappointment or there is conflict. It is a series of questions

designed to help troop members assess an event or activity that has just occurred and explore some of the value that activity offers.

The troop can then take the outcome and focus on reapplication and future events. Troops that use Start, Stop, Continue assessments are less likely to end up with an emphasis on what went wrong and more likely to find a way to a better outcome in the future. In its simplest form, Start, Stop, Continue asks three questions:

1. What should we start doing that would help make us more successful?
2. What should we stop doing that is not working or is a barrier to our success?
3. What should we continue to do because it was a significant reason for our success?

For major events and when you are a more experienced leader, the group can explore the why of each question. The answers often will help to reinforce the values of the Scout Oath and Scout Law in the experience.

Some key points for using the Start, Stop, Continue assessment tool:

- Everyone has the right to express their thoughts.
- Each person has the choice of talking or remaining silent.
- No one may interrupt the person speaking.
- Gathering input here is key, but it is not always necessary to evaluate and reach consensus. The patrol leaders' council may be the right place to review the input and apply a solution.
- Do not allow the discussion to become negative or focus on individuals, and there is no room for put-downs or making fun of someone.

To end the discussion, summarize the most important points that were mentioned. When appropriate, the troop scribe should keep a record to be shared at the next patrol leaders' council meeting. Be positive throughout the session and as you bring it to a close.

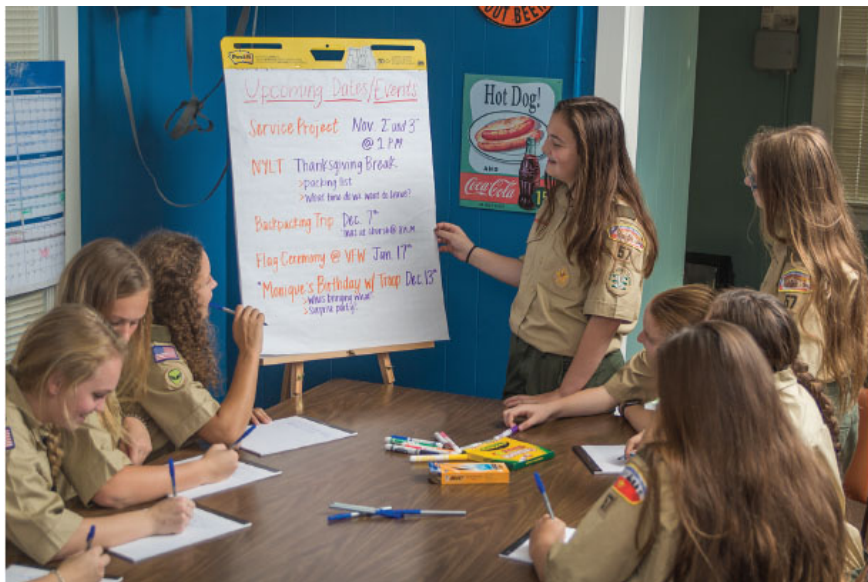
COMMUNICATION SKILLS

An important component of leadership is good communication. Communicating effectively involves both giving and receiving important information.

GIVING INFORMATION

At a troop meeting or during a troop activity, you will sometimes have the challenge of giving detailed information to Scouts in such a way that all of them clearly understand the message. Assume you have just met with the Scoutmaster to outline the agenda for the troop's planning conference. Now you need to share that information with members of the patrol leaders' council.

- Before you begin, take a moment to organize your thoughts. You may want to write a few notes to remind yourself of the points you want to cover.
- Have the council members gather in a place free of distractions. If you are outdoors on a bright day, turn so that you, rather than the listeners, are facing the sun.
- Do not begin until you have everyone's attention. You can use the Scout sign as a signal that it is time for everyone to stop other discussions and focus on the business at hand.
- Speak clearly. Make eye contact with your listeners. As you finish explaining each item, ask if there are any questions.
- If possible, write the most important points on a flip chart or chalkboard.
- Repeat facts such as dates, times, and places.
- Ask the troop scribe to make notes of the discussion.
- Ask them to repeat the important information to you.



RECEIVING INFORMATION

Communication is a two-way street. When you are in a position to receive information, give it your full attention. Create an atmosphere for communication to happen by doing the following:

- Give the speaker your full attention.
- Write down points of information—dates, times, locations, etc. Don't assume you will remember all the details you'll need later on.
- If you are unclear about anything, ask questions. Don't be afraid of asking the other person to repeat something so you can make sure you heard them correctly.

EFFECTIVE LISTENING

As you can see from the discussion of giving and receiving information, effective listening is essential to good communication. Effective listening is also a skill that each of us can learn and can constantly improve.

Most of us love to hear the sound of our own voices. In conversations, we may think more about what we are going to say next than about what is being said by others. When you are in conversations with members of the troop, though, practice good listening by paying close attention to what others are saying and also to what they are leaving unsaid. Notice their tone of voice and watch their body language. Try to listen without passing judgment.

Be aware, too, of how you are feeling while you listen. Are you hungry, sleepy, too hot, too cold, or late for another meeting? Is the speaker's message something you do not want to hear? Any of these factors can have an impact on your attention span. If you are upset, angry, or worried, that can affect your ability to listen well.

- 1. EFFECTIVE LISTENING IS VITAL FOR FORMING RELATIONSHIPS, FINDING SOLUTIONS, AND DEVELOPING TROOP SPIRIT.**
- 2. EFFECTIVE LISTENING CAN BE A TOOL FOR TURNING A NEGATIVE SITUATION INTO A POSITIVE ONE.**

Noticing how you feel can help you better grasp what others are saying. The adjustment you make might simply be a matter of focusing more on a speaker's message. Often, though, it may require calling a time-out so that you can put on a sweater, have a bite to eat, take care of distracting matters, or let your emotions cool down. When you get back together with the speaker, the conditions may be much more inviting to good listening.

Of course, you cannot tailor every listening situation to be ideal. Now and then you will find yourself in discussions with others when communication is difficult. Continually practice effective listening, though, and you will find that it can be a

powerful tool for solving problems, settling disputes, building troop spirit, and making you a more effective leader.

FOLLOW-UP

Communicating well is a constant goal of a senior patrol leader. Sometimes, though, a patrol leader is absent from a patrol leaders' council meeting. Sometimes plans you have discussed with the council must be changed at the last minute. The follow-up steps you take in these situations can ensure that effective communication continues.

- Make a list of the phone numbers and email addresses of the members of the patrol leaders' council. Use it to contact everyone if you need to provide them with information outside of a scheduled meeting.
- Give troop members as much advance notice as possible concerning upcoming activities. If you wait until the last minute, some Scouts may have scheduling conflicts.
- Keep the troop calendar updated with accurate information on troop events and activities.
- Discuss the troop's activities with your parents or guardian. They need to know your schedule, and they may be an important resource for ideas and support.
- Plan, plan, plan. Fill out a planning worksheet on every activity.

DEALING WITH INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR

The Scouting program offers young people opportunities to learn and grow in a setting where they can feel that they enjoy the acceptance and support of others. Hazing, harassment, name-calling, and bullying have no place in Scouting and will not be tolerated. Likewise, cheating, stealing, lying, cursing, vandalism, fighting, and other forms of inappropriate behavior must be firmly addressed by a Scout troop.

Scouting is built upon the youth-led troop and youth-led patrol. As senior patrol leader, you set an example for the behavior of everyone in the troop. When you see that a member of the troop is overstepping the boundaries of the code of conduct spelled out in the Scout Oath and Scout Law, it is your responsibility to step aside with that Scout and discuss why that behavior is not acceptable.

While appropriate behavior consistent with the Scout Oath and Scout Law is expected of every Scout, it is important to remember that Scouting seeks to

correct misbehavior, not punish a Scout who misbehaves. Scouts with behavior issues will in many cases benefit more from being in Scouting than they will if they are kicked out of the troop.

**SEE THE EXPLANATION
IN THE SCOUTS BSA
HANDBOOKS FOR WAYS
TO RESPOND TO A BULLY.**

Serious or recurring inappropriate behavior should be reported to the Scoutmaster. Disruptive behavior on the part of an individual Scout who does not stop the behavior after discussions with you and the patrol leader should be referred to the Scoutmaster, who will in turn involve the troop committee and the Scout's parents or guardians in a cooperative effort to resolve the issue.

Your Scoutmaster is trained in the proper procedures for suspending a Scout who does not correct disruptive behavior, as well as the procedures for welcoming the Scout back to the troop when the Scout has shown the ability to behave appropriately. Your Scoutmaster also is trained in the proper procedure for suspending Scouts whose behavior is a danger to themselves or other Scouts, and the procedures for welcoming Scouts back to the troop after they show the ability to behave appropriately. These are matters to be referred to, and handled by, the Scoutmaster.

LEADERSHIP SITUATIONS

Here are several situations you may encounter as senior patrol leader, each followed by one or more possible appropriate solutions. Read each situation and consider how you would handle the problem.



The thing is to cooperate happily in the process which develops discipline and obedience in the doing of small things while we are young. Then, when our turn comes to do big things, discipline will help to ensure accomplishment.

—James E. West, BSA's Chief Scout Executive, 1910–1943

1. ON A WEEKEND CAMPOUT

While visiting a patrol campsite, you notice on the patrol's duty roster that the two youngest Scouts are expected to wash dishes at every meal. What should you do?

One solution: Take the patrol leader aside and ask if the duty roster you saw is correct. If the answer is yes, find out why the same Scouts have been assigned dishwashing duty for the entire campout. Remind the patrol leader that a patrol is a team, and that all members of the patrol should be given equal responsibilities. Encourage the patrol leader to revise the duty roster.

You may also want to check the patrol's duty roster before the next campout to be certain the patrol leader has corrected the problem.

AS SENIOR PATROL LEADER, REMEMBER TO LOOK OUT FOR THE LITTLE SCOUTS IN THE TROOP.

2. AT A TROOP MEETING

Two patrols finish an interpatrol competition in a tie. You have only one award for first place. What do you do?

One solution: Acknowledge the tie and congratulate both patrols. Do not present the award to either patrol at this time. Make up another award and, at the next troop meeting, present an award to each patrol.

3. ON A WEEKEND CAMPOUT

You encounter two older Scouts having an argument. You urge them to find a way to talk through their differences, but they ignore you and begin to fight. They are bigger than you are, and you cannot stop the fight alone. What should you do?

One solution: Get help from other Scouts and adult leaders. Immediately report the incident to the Scoutmaster.

Another solution: Once peace has been restored, have the Scouts who were fighting conduct a project together to reinforce the Scout Law.

Another solution: Once peace has been restored, have the Scouts who were fighting sit down with each other and get to know each other. Have each of them report back to you and the Scoutmaster with two or three things they learned about each other that they didn't already know, and two or three things they have in common.

4. AT TROOP MEETINGS

As a new senior patrol leader, you have noticed that very few of the troop members wear their Scout uniforms to troop meetings. What should you do?

One solution: Set the example by wearing the full uniform yourself.

Another solution: Discuss uniforms with the patrol leaders' council and ask the troop's other youth leaders for ways the troop can better emphasize the importance of proper uniforming.



5. A TROOP FEAST

The troop is planning a feast, and each patrol is responsible for a part of the meal. The patrol preparing the main course has decided to fix meatloaf. You hate meatloaf. What should you do?

One solution: As senior patrol leader, you were elected to represent the whole troop. You are also eager to have patrols take the initiative to decide what they want to eat and then to follow through. Support the patrol's plans, then at the feast quietly pass on the meatloaf and enjoy a double helping of salad.

6. ON A WEEKEND CAMPOUT

You hear a Scout cursing. What should you do?

One solution: Remind the Scout that cursing is not consistent with the Scout Law and that doing so sets a bad example for the other Scouts. Explaining why a Scout should stop doing something—instead of simply ordering him to “stop that!”—is more likely to lead to the behavior you want.



7. AT A TROOP MEETING

A patrol leader is making a mess of telling the patrol what to do, and the patrol members aren't following the instructions. What should you do?

One solution: Take the patrol leader aside, provide coaching on better methods, and then ask the leader to start over. This gives the patrol leader the tools to be a better leader and reinforces who the patrol leader is. If you step in and take over, it diminishes the patrol leader's authority and encourages the Scouts to ignore the patrol leader. In other words, treat patrol leaders the same way you would want the Scoutmaster to treat you in a similar situation.

8. AT A TROOP MEETING

A Scout you ask to instruct others in a Scouting skill does a poor job. What

should you do?

One solution: Unless there is a safety issue, resist the temptation to take over. Let the Scout try, then privately suggest ways to do a better job next time.

Another solution: Before assigning a Scout to train others, take some time to observe which Scouts are good at particular skills. Compliment such a Scout for doing a good job, and ask that Scout to teach others how to do it. Usually this double praise will energize a Scout to do their best as an instructor. However, if the Scout is shy and says, “no, thanks,” don’t push the person into an uncomfortable situation.

Another solution: Observe which Scouts are effective communicators and which ones seem comfortable with the EDGE method. Ask them to be instructors.

9. AT A TROOP MEETING

You notice that some of your friends among the older Scouts are ignoring the younger ones. What should you do?

One solution: Remember that your duty is to everyone in the troop. Don’t tolerate cliques, and don’t tolerate the exclusion of any Scout by the others. Don’t look the other way when your friends are out of line. Don’t be part of a clique, because the other Scouts will imitate your behavior.

10. ON A WEEKEND CAMPOUT

You notice that one of the patrols doesn’t have enough food because they failed to plan properly or failed to make sure that all the patrol members were bringing what they were supposed to bring. What should you do?

One solution: Learning from mistakes is part of growing up. Do not jump in to rescue them by asking an adult to go to the store to buy the forgotten items. Sit back and let them ask their buddies in other patrols if they can share some food with them. Do not always bring extra food that the Scouts can depend on when they don’t bring enough, or they won’t learn from their mistakes.

Another solution: At the next troop meeting, have the patrol leader conduct an evaluation of what went wrong and how the patrol can plan better next time so it doesn’t happen again.

11. ON A WEEKEND CAMPOUT

You had a great idea for a weekend outing. You pushed hard to get the patrol leaders’ council to go along with your idea. Nobody said “no,” but they didn’t seem very excited with the idea. When the day of the event arrived, very few

Scouts showed up. What should you do?

One solution: Go ahead with the event if you have enough Scouts with the necessary skills, enough adult leaders, and enough food and equipment. Otherwise, cancel it.

Another solution: Remember that you owe a duty to everyone in the troop. Don't ramrod your ideas on the other Scouts. Make sure everyone knows they have a voice in the annual planning conference, and encourage the patrol leaders to say when they don't like an idea. If the patrol leaders decide on an event together and plan for it as a team, they are more likely to take ownership of the event and participate in it.

12. ON A WEEKEND CAMPOUT

The Scouts in a patrol are refusing to follow your instructions. What should you do?

One solution: Tell them why you want them to do it, so they understand. Then ask why they are refusing to cooperate. Explore whether there is another way to accomplish the same result, and be willing to compromise if there is. Try your best not to create a public confrontation in which someone has to lose.

13. ON A HIKE

Your plan is to arrive at the camping spot at a certain time. Along the way, the Scouts see an interesting site and want to stop to enjoy it. What should you do?

One solution: Unless it would be unsafe to stop (such as getting too dark to see tripping hazards), or you will miss an important connection, don't be a slave to the schedule; be flexible enough to take a short break. Planning some extra time into the hike schedule to allow some sightseeing is a wise idea.



14. AT A TROOP MEETING

One of the patrols has gone outside to play tag after you turned your back, instead of planning for the upcoming campout. You really want to play, too. What should you do?

One solution: Gently remind the patrol leader that you need the patrol to do the necessary planning. If they will do their planning where they are, don't create a power struggle by insisting that they come back inside. But don't join in because you can't allow yourself to get distracted from the task at hand.

15. AT THE PLANNING CONFERENCE

At the annual planning conference, a couple of adults keep pushing ideas that the patrol leaders don't like, or keep trying to veto the Scouts' ideas. What should you do?

One solution: Ask for a short break. Ask to speak to the Scoutmaster privately. Ask the Scoutmaster to remind the adults that the troop is youth-led and to ask them to stop trying to take over the meeting. A wise Scoutmaster will call a break before you do and will remind the adults that planning the schedule for the Scouts deprives them of a chance to grow by doing their own planning.

>>7 THE TROOP LEADERSHIP TEAM



The Troop Leadership Team

Patrol Leaders' Council

Other Troop Positions

Assistant Senior Patrol Leader

Troop Guide

Den Chief

Historian

Order of the Arrow Troop Representative

Librarian

Quartermaster

Bugler

Scribe

Instructor

Chaplain Aide

Webmaster

Outdoor Ethics Guide

Junior Assistant Scoutmaster

Additional Training Resources

Introduction to Leadership Skills for Troops

National Youth Leadership Training

Kodiak Challenge

National Advanced Youth Leadership Experience

Other Resources for Senior Patrol Leaders

In Conclusion

A Scouts BSA troop is a small democracy. With the Scoutmaster's guidance, Scouts form themselves into patrols, plan the troop's program, and bring it to life. For that to happen, a troop relies upon Scouts serving in positions of responsibility. The key youth leaders of the troop make up a patrol leaders' council.

PATROL LEADERS' COUNCIL

As noted in [Chapter 3](#), the patrol leaders' council consists of yourself, your assistant senior patrol leader(s), the patrol leader of each patrol, and the troop guide for each new-Scout patrol. Other Scouts may be invited to attend in order to take minutes of patrol leaders' council meetings or make reports, but they are not voting members of the patrol leaders' council. Meetings of the patrol leaders' council are not intended to be open to every Scout in the troop, because they are represented at the meetings by their patrol leaders.

The patrol leaders' council plans and runs the troop's program and activities and gives long-range direction with an annual planning meeting that lays out the troop's calendar for the year. The patrol leaders' council also meets each month to fine-tune upcoming troop meetings and activities. They get together for a few moments after each troop meeting to review the plans for the next troop meeting and make any adjustments to ensure its success.

The senior patrol leader conducts meetings of the patrol leaders' council. Patrol leaders present the ideas and concerns of their patrols, help develop the troop's overall program, then take the council's decisions to the rest of the troop members.

The Scoutmaster attends patrol leaders' council meetings as a coach and an informational resource. As much as possible, the Scoutmaster allows the Scouts to run the meetings and make the decisions, stepping in with suggestions and guidance when that will enhance the program for the troop, the patrols, and individuals. The Scoutmaster retains veto power over decisions of the council but should exercise it only on rare occasions when the plans of the patrol leaders' council would violate BSA policy or could lead to a situation that might jeopardize the safety and well-being of troop members.

OTHER TROOP POSITIONS

Depending on the size and needs of a troop, a number of other positions of responsibility may be filled. Except for the senior patrol leader, assistant senior patrol leader(s), and troop guide(s), Scouts serving in troop positions will continue

to be active members of their patrols. With the assistance of the Scoutmaster, you as senior patrol leader will select the Scout who will hold each position.

- Assistant senior patrol leader (large troops may have several)
- Troop guide (one for each new-Scout patrol)
- Den chief
- Historian
- Order of the Arrow troop representative
- Librarian
- Quartermaster
- Bugler
- Scribe
- Instructor
- Chaplain aide
- Webmaster
- Outdoor ethics guide
- Junior assistant Scoutmaster



Filling Positions of Responsibility

You are elected by the entire troop. Each patrol elects its patrol leader from among the members of the patrol.

None of the other youth leaders is elected to a position. It is up to you to fill the other troop leadership positions (with the exception of the junior assistant Scoutmaster, who is appointed by the Scoutmaster), by selecting and appointing the right people to serve in those positions. If you thoughtfully select and appoint the right people, the troop can have solid guidance and enthusiastic leadership for months to come.

As you begin thinking about the people you will appoint to play leadership roles in the troop, keep these pointers in mind.

- Take all the time you need to consider the responsibilities of each position and the qualifications of each Scout, then make the right match. These positions do not need to be filled immediately.

- Be fair to everyone. Consider each Scout's advancement record, Scout spirit, and commitment to the patrol and troop. Take into account strengths, weaknesses, experience, and service to Scouting.
- Do not allow friendships with some troop members to interfere with your efforts to select the best person for each position.
- Discuss your ideas with the Scoutmaster.

Before you actually appoint a Scout to a position of responsibility, review the position responsibilities with that Scout and get a commitment from the Scout to perform those duties as well as possible. If you select a Scout who doesn't seem able or interested in performing the duties of the role after taking the position, discuss your expectations with the Scout in private. If the Scout cannot perform the duties of the position, then for the benefit of the troop as a whole, you should appoint someone else to that position.

You can find the position responsibilities described in the Troop Leadership Training Cards, available at https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/training/pdf/510-046_PocketCards17.pdf.

Assistant Senior Patrol Leader



The assistant senior patrol leader should be a strong ally for you, someone who can be relied upon to help the troop move forward. When selecting your assistant senior patrol leader(s), you should consider someone with whom you work well, in addition to considering their ability to do the job. You will keep the assistant senior patrol leader(s) fully informed about what is going on with the troop and can use them as a sounding board when you must make tough decisions.

Among specific duties, the assistant senior patrol leader trains and provides direction to the troop quartermaster, scribe, historian, librarian, instructors, and

Order of the Arrow representative; and also takes charge of the troop whenever you are not available. The assistant senior patrol leader is not a member of a patrol while in that position but may participate in high-adventure activities of a Venturing crew. Large troops may have more than one assistant senior patrol leader, each appointed by you, as the senior patrol leader.

Troop Guide



The troop guide introduces new Scouts to troop operations and guides them through early Scouting activities. The troop guide serves as a coach to the patrol leader of the new-Scout patrol, and they work together at patrol leaders' council meetings. The troop guide helps new Scouts earn the First Class rank within their first 12 to 18 months. This person should be an older Scout who holds at least the First Class rank and can work well with younger Scouts. The troop guide is not a member of another patrol but may participate in the high-adventure activities of a Venturing crew.

Den Chief



The den chief serves as the activities assistant for a Cub Scout or Webelos Scout den and meets with the den leader to review den and pack meeting plans and helps out however possible. The den chief projects a positive image of Scouting and, if serving as a Webelos den chief, helps prepare youth to join Scouts BSA.

Historian



The historian gathers pictures and facts about past activities of the troop and keeps them in scrapbooks, wall displays, or information files. The historian also takes care of troop trophies and keepsakes, and maintains information about troop alumni. This is an excellent position in which to complete requirement 5 of the Scouting Heritage merit badge.

Order of the Arrow Troop Representative



The Order of the Arrow troop representative serves as a communication link between the local OA lodge or chapter and the troop by: promoting year round and

resident camping; participating in high-adventure programs and community service projects; encouraging Arrowmen in the troop to be active participants in lodge or chapter activities; and encouraging them to seal their membership in the Order by becoming Brotherhood members.

Librarian



The troop librarian establishes and maintains a troop library; keeps records of literature owned by the troop; adds new or replacement items as needed; and maintains a system to check literature in and out. The librarian should work with the troop's adult advancement coordinator to learn when rank and merit badge requirements change, so the troop can discuss the purchase of updated materials that include the new requirements.

Quartermaster



The quartermaster serves as the troop's supply boss by maintaining patrol and troop equipment, keeping it in good repair; ensuring the storage area is clean and neat; issuing equipment and ensuring that it is returned in good order; and

suggesting new or replacement items. In carrying out these responsibilities, the quartermaster may have the guidance of a member of the troop committee.

Bugler



The bugler plays the bugle (or a similar instrument) during the day on troop outings to mark key moments, such as reveille and lights out. If the patrol leaders' council decides, at the appropriate times, bugle calls like assembly and taps may also be included during troop meetings. The bugler must know the required bugle calls and should ideally have earned the Bugling merit badge or be working to earn it.

Scribe



The scribe is the troop's secretary. Though not a voting member, the scribe attends and keeps a log of patrol leaders' council meetings. The scribe also records attendance and dues payments at troop meetings; records advancement in troop records and on the troop advancement chart; and handles troop

correspondence. If the troop has a website, the scribe can help keep it up to date in cooperation with the troop webmaster. A member of the troop committee may assist him with these duties.

Instructor



The instructor teaches Scouting skills as needed within the troop or patrols, preparing well in advance for each teaching assignment in order to be effective. A troop can have more than one instructor. If the troop has more than one instructor, they may specialize in particular areas, such as first aid or knot tying.

Chaplain Aide



The chaplain aide assists the troop chaplain or religious coordinator in serving the religious needs of the troop by: leading worship services on campouts; encouraging saying grace at meals; telling troop members about the religious emblems program for their faith; and making other troop leaders aware of religious holidays when they are planning activities.

Webmaster



The troop webmaster establishes and maintains a safe and secure troop website. The webmaster ensures that the troop website is a positive reflection of Scouting to the public and works with the scribe to manage the troop's electronic communication tools. The website must comply with the BSA Social Media Guidelines at <https://scoutingwire.org/marketing-and-membership-hub/social-media/social-media-guidelines>. A troop committee member may assist the webmaster.

Outdoor Ethics Guide



The outdoor ethics guide should have a thorough understanding of and commitment to Leave No Trace principles and Tread Lightly! guidelines. The outdoor ethics guide helps the troop plan and conduct an outdoor program that effectively practices the principles of outdoor ethics. The guide works to help Scouts improve their outdoor ethics decision-making skills to minimize impacts as they participate in outdoor activities. The outdoor ethics guide supports Scouts

who are working to complete the relevant requirements for the Scout through First Class ranks.

Junior Assistant Scoutmaster



The junior assistant Scoutmaster functions just like an assistant Scoutmaster (except for leadership responsibilities for which the BSA requires someone 18 years or age or older). The JASM works as part of the Scoutmaster corps; is appointed by and handles duties assigned by the Scoutmaster; and should be 16 or older. Upon turning 18, a junior assistant Scoutmaster will be eligible to become an assistant Scoutmaster.

One satisfying aspect of leading a troop is sharing that leadership. Give troop leaders specific responsibilities, make sure they understand what is expected of them, and give them the guidance and resources they need. You will discover you don't have to do it all yourself.

ADDITIONAL TRAINING RESOURCES

Scouting takes pride in giving its youth leaders unique leadership training. As senior patrol leader, you may have the opportunity to participate in some or all of the following training sessions.

Introduction to Leadership Skills for Troops

Introduction to Leadership Skills for Troops presents the Scoutmaster and senior patrol leader with a flexible training program for troop leaders. Every troop is different, and the syllabus can be adapted by trainers to meet the needs of the individual troop. Introduction to Leadership Skills for Troops has three 60- to 90-minute modules. The optional games and challenges can be used to enhance the

leadership lessons of the course—and make it more fun.

National Youth Leadership Training



Many local councils throughout the country offer a weeklong National Youth Leadership Training (NYLT) course. Conducted in the outdoor settings of council camps, these courses supplement training done within a troop and introduce senior patrol leaders and patrol leaders to more advanced leadership skills.

Kodiak Challenge

Kodiak is designed to be an adventure trek lasting five or more days. This course will push your boundaries and encourage you to try new things that may take you out of your comfort zone. What you learn about leadership skills during your Kodiak experience will help you when you are ready for NYLT or NAYLE. Like so much of what you encounter in Scouting, Kodiak is an adventure with a purpose.

National Advanced Youth Leadership Experience



The BSA's National Council hosts National Advanced Youth Leadership Experience (NAYLE) during the summer at all four national high-adventure bases. NAYLE is a scenario course that allows participants to apply NYLT leadership skills in a wilderness environment. Participants must have completed the council National Youth Leadership Training and be nominated by the Scout executives of their local councils.

OTHER RESOURCES FOR SENIOR PATROL LEADERS

Scouting provides many resources you can use as you fulfill your senior patrol leader responsibilities. For guidance and support, you can count on the Scoutmaster, assistant Scoutmasters, and members of the troop committee. A wealth of BSA literature is available to help you become an effective leader and to make the most of your Scouting experience. The following publications are of special interest to senior patrol leaders.



Scouts BSA Handbook for Boys, No. 34622

Scouts BSA Handbook for Girls, No. 39006



Blank Program Planning Chart (Available online at https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/33112_Appendix.pdf.)

PROGRAM PLANNING CHART											
Month	Program Feature/Topic	Meeting Plan					Special Events/Holidays	Local/Chartered Organization Calendars	Council/District	PLC/VOL	Unit Committee Meeting
		Meeting 1	Meeting 2	Meeting 3	Meeting 4	Main Event					
September											
October											
November											
December											
January											
February											
March											
April											
May											
June											
July											
August											

Scout Life magazines



Scouts BSA Songbook, No. 33224

Troop and patrol rosters

Copies of troop rules and policies

Activity calendar (troop, district, council, chartered organization)

Campfire Program Planner, No. 430-696

BSA Supply catalog (Or visit www.scoutshop.org with your parent's permission.)

Participant notebooks for youth leader training courses

IN CONCLUSION

Eventually the time will come when you will have completed your term as senior patrol leader and will pass leadership of the troop to someone else. When that happens, you should be able to look back with pride at all that you and the troop have accomplished while you were wearing the senior patrol leader's patch.

No doubt the troop will have become stronger because you were there. Certainly you and the other troop members will have memories of lots of fine adventures and other Scouting activities. Together, you will have met many challenges along the way and will have worked as a team to find solutions to all sorts of situations.

Scouting will present you with other leadership opportunities, both as a youth and as a young adult. The troop will continue to grow and thrive, building on the strong foundation you will have left and bringing in the fresh ideas and energy of new senior patrol leaders and new members.

You will also find that the leadership skills you have learned as a senior patrol leader are going to serve you well in school, in the community, and in other settings beyond the BSA. By asking you to accept the responsibility for guiding a troop, Scouting gives you hands-on opportunities to learn and practice essential methods of leading people. Wherever you go in life and whatever you do, those skills will go with you. Time and again they are going to help you make a real difference, both in your life and in the lives of others.

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