SCOUTS BSA

TROOP LEADER GUIDEBOOK

VOLUME 1

BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA®

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INTRODUCTION: WELCOME TO SCOUTS BSA

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

Scouts BSA: A Program As Strong As Its Leaders

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

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

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

Support Resources

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

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

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

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

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

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

Thank you, and welcome to Scouts BSA!

Troop Leader Essentials

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

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

Overview of the *Troop Leader Guidebook*

Volume 1

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

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

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

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

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

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

Section 7: Health and Safety. A comprehensive overview of the BSA's safety and risk-management policies.

Appendix: Resources, Scouting websites, and glossary.

Volume 2

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

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

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

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

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

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

Appendix: Resources, Scouting websites, and glossary.

SCOUT BASICS

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

CHAPTER 1
Mission, Aims, Methods, Ideals

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

Scouts BSA can seem a lot like that elephant:

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

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

Scouts BSA Defined

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

The Aims of Scouts BSA

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

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

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

"Knowledge without character is mere pie-crust."
—Scouting founder Robert Baden-Powell

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Methods of Scouts BSA

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Ideals of Scouting

Scout Oath

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

Scout Law

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

Scout Motto

Be Prepared.

Scout Slogan

Do a Good Turn Daily.

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

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

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

The Scouts BSA Methods and Cub Scouting

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

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

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

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

Leadership Development. In Cub Scouting, denners and den chiefs are like extensions of the den leader, carrying out the den leader's plans. In Scouts BSA, youth leaders make and carry out their own plans as they lead the patrol and troop.

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

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

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

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

Maintaining Your Balance

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

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

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

Balancing the Methods: A Parable

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Scouting As a Safe Place

In section 7 of this guidebook, we talk about the policies and guidelines designed to keep our Scouts physically safe. But Scouting is safe in other ways. It is a secure environment where:

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

CHAPTER 2
Troop Structure

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

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

Form and Function

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

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

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

Troop Basics

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

The Chartered Organization

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

Each chartered organization agrees to:

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

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

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

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

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

The Troop Committee

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

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

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

Chairperson—organizes and leads the committee

Advancement coordinator—oversees advancement records and boards of review

Chaplain—provides spiritual support to Scouts and leaders

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

Equipment coordinator—manages the troop's camping equipment

Membership coordinator—coordinates recruiting and r etention efforts

Outdoor/activities coordinator—supports and promotes the outdoor program

Secretary—handles communication with troop families

Training coordinator—promotes leader training

Treasurer—handles troop funds and financial records

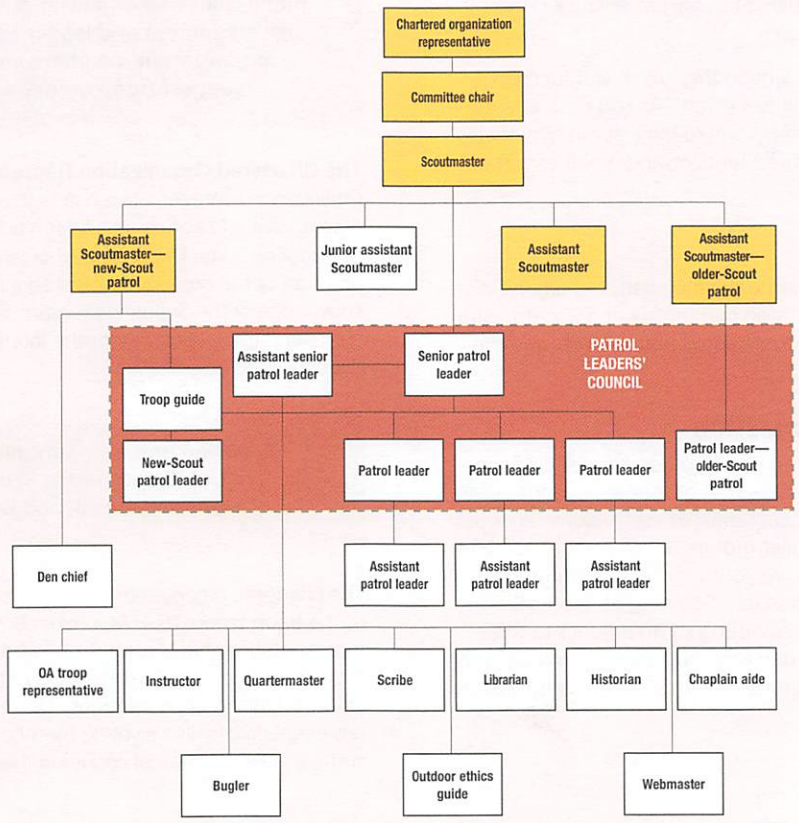
Parent coordinator—welcomes all new Scout parents and provides them with information about the troop

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

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

Sample Youth Leader Organizational Chart for a Large Troop

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



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

Here are some of the things the committee does:

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

The Scoutmaster and assistant Scoutmasters are typically not voting members of the troop committee, though they do provide valuable feedback to the committee. However, holding frequent formal votes is less desirable than engendering a spirit among committee members that leads to a consensus of opinion.

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

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

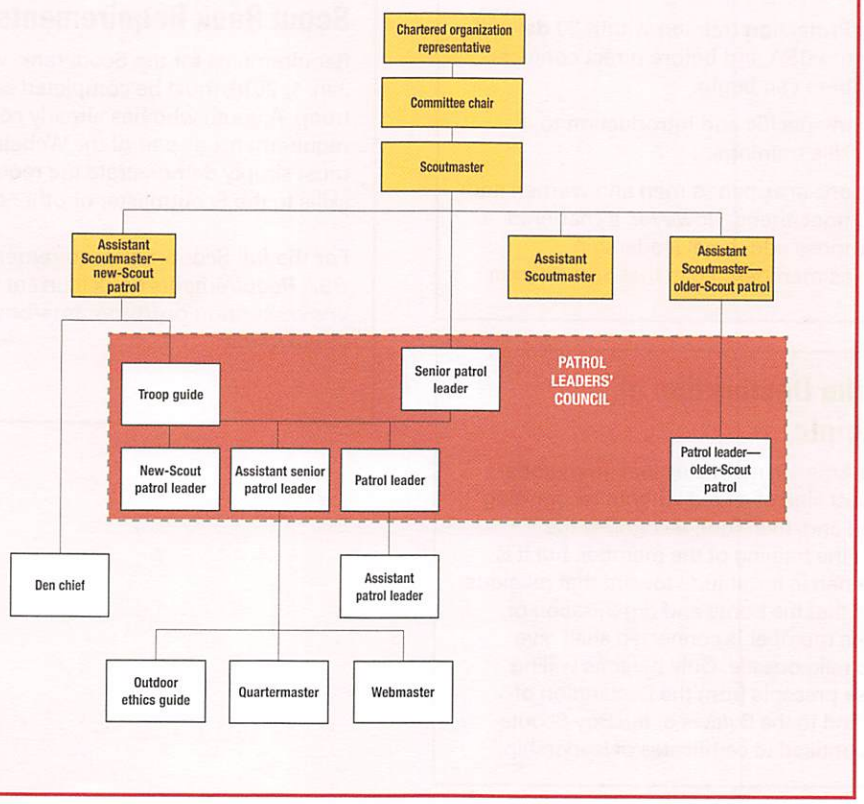
Having in-depth, one-on-one discussions at troop or troop committee meetings can be difficult. If you are the Scoutmaster, you might consider meeting your committee chairperson for coffee or lunch every couple of weeks to touch base.

The Scoutmaster Corps

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

Sample Youth Leader Organizational Chart for a Small Troop

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



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

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

Adult Leadership Requirements

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

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

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

Excerpt From the Declaration of Religious Principle

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

The Scouts

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

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

Youth Membership Requirements

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

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

Scout Rank Requirements

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

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

CHAPTER 3
Patrol Method

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

The Patrol Defined

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

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

Types of Patrols

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

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

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

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

New-Scout Patrols

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

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

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

Regular Patrols

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

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

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

Older-Scout Patrols

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

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

Scout Patrols vs. Cub Scout Dens

A PATROL . . .

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

A DEN . . .

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

Patrol Size

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

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

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

The Patrol Method in Small Troops

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

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

Building Patrol Spirit

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

National Honor Patrol Award

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

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

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

Patrol Leadership

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Patrol Meetings

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

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

Patrol Activities

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

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

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

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

CHAPTER 4
The Troop in Context

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

The Chartered Organization

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

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

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

The Local Council

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The District

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

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

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

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

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

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

District Committee

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Commissioner Staff

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Key Council and District Contacts

Council name _____ Phone No. _____

Website _____

Scout executive _____ Phone No. _____

Email Address _____

District name _____

Website _____

District chair _____ Phone No. _____

Email _____

District commissioner _____ Phone No. _____

Email _____

District executive _____ Phone No. _____

Email _____

Unit commissioner _____ Phone No. _____

Email _____

Roundtable commissioner _____ Phone No. _____

Email _____

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

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

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

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

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

District Executive

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

Getting the Most Out of District and Council Relationships

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

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

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

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

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

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

Other Units

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

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

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

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

CHAPTER 5
Uniforms and Insignia

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

The Uniform as a Method

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

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

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

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

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

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

Uniform Basics

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Encouraging Uniforming

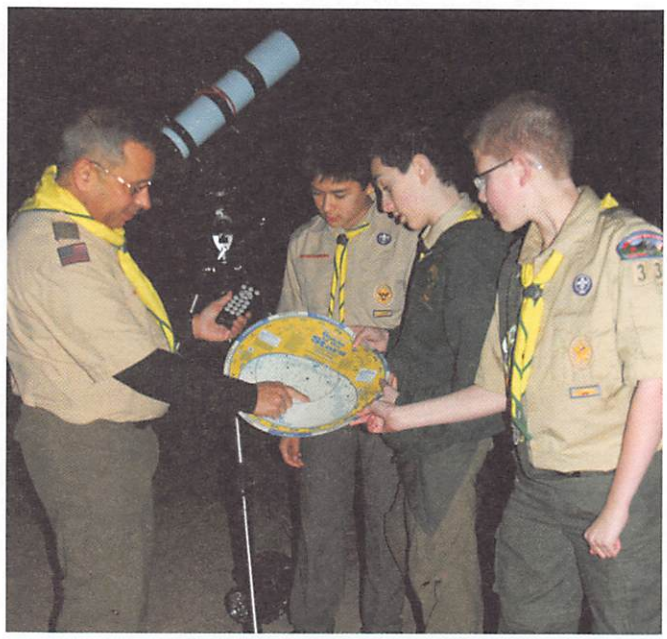
The best way to encourage proper uniforming is to make sure adult leaders in the troop set a good example. Beyond that, you can hold occasional uniform inspections and recognize the best-uniformed patrols. Take care, however, to ensure that your Scouts view inspections as positive reinforcement rather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

When Not to Wear the Uniform

Do not wear the uniform

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

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



Insignia

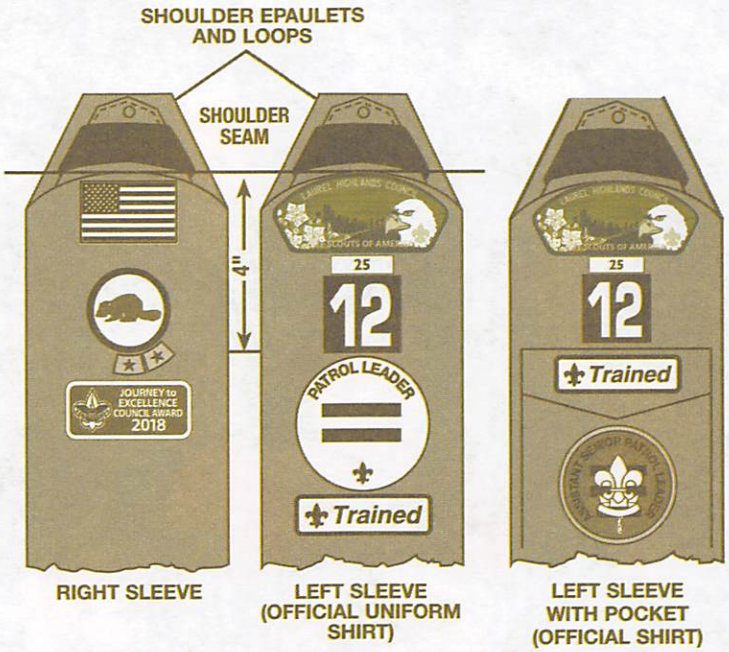
Somebody could write a book about how to wear Scout patches and other insignia. In fact, somebody has. The *Guide to Awards and Insignia* tells you everything you need to know about patch placement, when and where to wear medals, and more. The guide is also available online. Here are a few points about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

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

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

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

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



RIGHT SLEEVE

LEFT SLEEVE (OFFICIAL UNIFORM SHIRT)

LEFT SLEEVE WITH POCKET (OFFICIAL SHIRT)

RIGHT POCKET

LEFT POCKET

THE SCOUTS BSA PROGRAM

Youth don't join Scouting to develop their character.

They don't join Scouting to wear uniforms.

In fact, they don't join Scouting to do much

of anything we discussed in section 1.

Instead, they join Scouting to have fun,

and fun is what happens on hikes,

at summer camp, and in the backcountry.

CHAPTER 6
Program Overview

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

The Annual Program Cycle

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

The annual program cycle in Scouting looks much different.

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

Troops that take the summer off lose valuable momentum.

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

Typical Annual Program

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

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

As you review the calendar, note these features:

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

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

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

August 2018

30 ..... Troop meeting

September 2018

6..... Troop meeting
7–9..... Pioneering campout
9..... Troop committee meeting
13..... Troop meeting
20 ..... Troop meeting
27 ..... Troop meeting

October 2018

4..... Patrol leaders' council
7..... Troop committee meeting
11 ..... Troop meeting/popcorn sale begins
11 ..... Troop meeting
18..... Troop meeting/popcorn sale ends
19–21..... Fall camporee
25 ..... Troop meeting
30 ..... Patrol leaders' council

November 2018

1..... Troop meeting
3..... Scouting for Food
8..... Troop meeting
11 ..... Troop committee meeting
15..... Troop meeting
23–25..... Thanksgiving campout
29 ..... Troop meeting/troop elections

December 2018

3..... Patrol leaders' council
6..... Court of honor
9..... Troop committee meeting
13..... Holiday party/lock-in
15..... Introduction to Leadership Skills for Troops

January 2019

3..... Troop meeting
6..... Troop committee meeting
7..... Patrol leaders' council
10..... Troop meeting
11–13 ..... Jack Frost campout
17..... Troop meeting
24 ..... Troop meeting
31 ..... Troop meeting

February 2019

2..... Ski trip
3..... Scout Sunday
5..... Patrol leaders' council
7..... Troop meeting
9..... Day hike
10..... Troop committee meeting
14..... Troop meeting
21 ..... Troop meeting
28 ..... Troop meeting

March 2019

2..... Pancake breakfast fundraiser
4..... Patrol leaders' council
7..... Troop meeting
9–11 ..... Spring break backpacking trip
10..... Troop committee meeting
14..... Troop meeting
21 ..... Troop meeting
28 ..... Troop meeting

April 2019

1..... Patrol leaders' council
4..... Troop meeting
5–7..... Get-acquainted campout
7..... Troop committee meeting
11 ..... Court of honor/troop banquet
18..... Troop meeting
25 ..... Troop meeting
29 ..... Patrol leaders' council

May 2019

2..... Troop meeting
4..... State park service project
5..... Troop committee meeting
9..... Troop meeting
16..... Troop meeting
23 ..... Troop meeting
24–27..... Canoe trip
30 ..... Troop meeting/troop elections

June 2019

3..... Patrol leaders' council
6..... Troop meeting
7–8..... Annual planning conference/Introduction to Leadership Skills for Troops
9..... Troop committee meeting
13..... Troop meeting
16–22..... Summer camp
27 ..... Troop meeting

July 2019

3..... Troop meeting
5–15..... Florida Sea Base trip
7..... Troop committee meeting
11 ..... Troop meeting
13..... Theme park trip
18..... Troop meeting
25 ..... Troop meeting

August 2019

1..... Court of honor and program kickoff
5..... Patrol leaders' council
8..... Troop meeting
9–11 ..... Sports campout
11 ..... Troop committee meeting
15..... Troop meeting
22 ..... Troop meeting
29 ..... Troop meeting

A Program With a Purpose

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

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

The Monthly Program Cycle

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

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

According to the BSA's Safety Afloat guidelines, which we discuss in chapter 25, several things need to happen before the trip can take place.

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

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

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

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

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

Modifying the Monthly Cycle

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

CHAPTER 7
Troop Program Planning

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

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

Two Types of Planning

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

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

Long-Term Planning

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

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

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

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

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

Preparing for the Annual Planning Conference

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

Step 1—Gather necessary information:

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

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

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

Setting Goals

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Holding the Annual Planning Conference

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

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

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

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

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

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

Troop
Tropa _____

SCOUT LIFE TROOP PROGRAM PLANNING CHART
TABLA DE PLANIFICACIÓN PARA EL PROGRAMA DE TROPA *SCOUT LIFE*

Charter Expiration Date
Fecha de vencimiento del estatuto: _____

Month Mes	Program Features Características del programa		Troop/Program Planning Date(s) Fecha(s) de Planificación del Programa/Tropa	Troop Outdoor/ Camping Activity Actividad al aire libre/campamento de la tropa	District/Council Activity Actividad de Distrito/Concilio	Chartered Organization Dates/Charter Renewal/ Charter Presentation/ Service Project Fechas de la Organización Autorizada/ Renovación de estatutos/Presentación de estatutos/Proyecto de servicio	Special Events/ Holidays Eventos especiales/ Días festivos	(For Troop Use) (Para uso de la tropa)	Board of Review/ Court of Honor Consejo de Revisión / Corte de Honor	Leaders' Meeting Junta de líderes		
	New-Scout Patrol Patrulla de nuevos Scouts	Experienced Scouts Scouts con experiencia								Patrol Leaders' Council Concilio de guías de patrulla	Troop Committee Comité de Tropa	District/Council Roundtable/ Training Capacitación de Distrito/Concilio/ Mesas redondas
Sept. Sept. 2018												
Oct. Oct. 2018												
Nov. Nov. 2018												
Dec. Dic. 2018												
Jan. Ene. 2019												
Feb. Feb. 2019												
Mar. Mar. 2019												
Apr. Abr. 2019												
May Mayo 2019												
June Jun. 2019			Conduct annual troop program planning conference this month. Realizar este mes la conferencia de planificación del programa anual de la tropa.									
July Jul. 2019												
Aug. Ago. 2019												

SCOUT LIFE TROOP PROGRAM PLANNING CHART (a program package item)
TABLA DE PLANIFICACIÓN PARA EL PROGRAMA DE LA TROPA *BOYS' LIFE*
(Un artículo del paquete del programa)

BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA®

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Las suscripciones *Scout Life* caducan dos meses después del vencimiento del estatuto de la unidad.

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2018 Printing

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

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

The Annual Planning Conference, Step by Step

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Step 5—Add other important dates such as:

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

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

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

After the Planning Conference

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

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

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

Program Features for Troops and Crews

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

Each program feature includes general information about the topic, advancement and awards-related requirements, games, ideas for using the Scouting EDGE method (Explain, Demonstrate, Guide, Enable), four meeting plans, outlines of three main events (outings) that build in length and intensity (and that also can be tied to the tiers used in the revamped Venturing program), plus related print and online resources. Keep in mind that some of the activities have special leadership and safety requirements, as described in section 7 of this guidebook.

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

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

Short-Term Planning

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

Patrol Leaders' Council Meeting

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Patrol Leaders' Council Huddles

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

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

CHAPTER 8
Troop Meetings

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

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

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

Scheduling Troop Meetings

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

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

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

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

The Purposes of Troop Meetings

Troop meetings serve many purposes, including the following.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

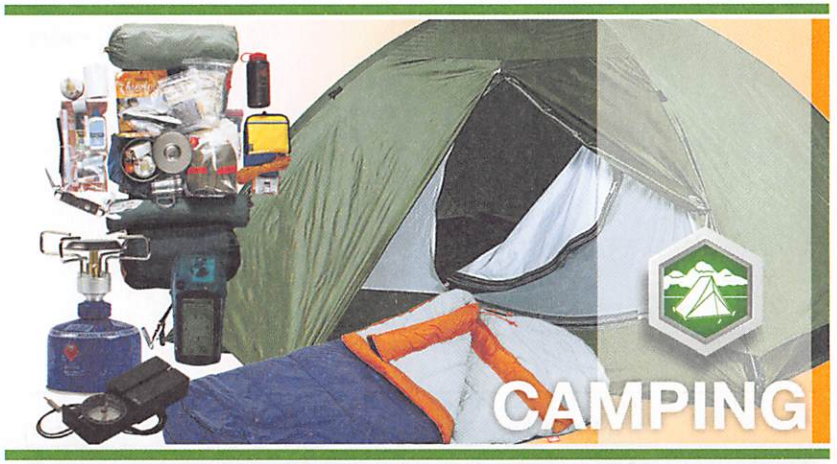
Beyond these big-picture purposes, every Scout should accomplish something specific at every meeting. Each troop member should go home feeling good because they learned a new skill, completed an advancement requirement, got prepared for an upcoming outing, enjoyed fellowship with other Scouts and leaders,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

The Parts of a Troop Meeting

Troop meetings include these eight parts:

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

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



Living Comfortably in the Outdoors

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

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

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

Objectives

This month's activities should:

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

RELATED ADVANCEMENT AND AWARDS

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

E.D.G.E. Ideas

***E**xplain* how it is done—Tell them.
***D**emonstrate* the steps—Show them.
***G**uide* learners as they practice—Watch them do it.
***E**nable* them to succeed on their own—Have them practice/teach it.

EXPLAIN

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

DEMONSTRATE

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

GUIDE

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

ENABLE

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

MAIN EVENT SUMMARIES

ESSENTIAL	CHALLENGING	ADVANCED
Overnight Activity	Overnight Activity	Five to Six Days
Overnight car camp—Find a campsite that you can drive to and that offers plenty of opportunities for outdoor adventures. Camp overnight and hone your camping skills.	Camping in the teens—Return to Scouting's early days by camping using techniques found in the earliest Scout manuals.	Kodiak Challenge—Complete the Kodiak Challenge, an opportunity for older Scouts to reinforce their leadership skills on an exciting trek adventure of five to six days.

CAMPING
Meeting Plan: Campsites

Week 1 Date_____

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	RUN BY	TIME*
Preopening 15 minutes before meeting	Prepare several decks of index cards listing various items of camping gear, one item per card. Have small groups sort the cards in order of importance, setting aside items that shouldn't be taken camping.		6:45 p.m.
Opening Ceremony 10 minutes	Flag presentation Oath and Law Uniform inspection		7 p.m.
Group Instruction 10 minutes	• Youth leaders lead a discussion using a diagram of model campsites as a point of reference. • Youth leaders show how to set up a dining fly.		7:10 p.m.
Skills Instruction 35 minutes	• Learn to tie two half-hitches and a taut-line hitch. • Learn how to tie a clove hitch over an open-ended vertical pole.		7:20 p.m.
	• Review the above skills. • Learn how to join two poles with two round lashings.		
	Using the above skills, erect a dining fly as quickly and efficiently as possible.		
Breakout Groups 15 minutes	• Discuss plans for the main event. • Review what personal and group equipment will be needed.		7:55 p.m.
Game 15 minutes	Play Sloppy Camp, Taut-line Hitch Race, or Dining Fly Race (described earlier).		8:10 p.m.
Closing 5 minutes	Announcements Leader's minute Closing		8:25 p.m.
Total 90 minutes of meeting			
After the Meeting 15 minutes	Leadership team reviews plans for the next meeting and for the main event.		

*All times are suggested.

CAMPING
Main Event: Overnight Car Camp

Date_____

Logistics

Location: _____

_____

Departure time: _____

Return time: _____

Duration of activity: Overnight

Budget: Completed _____ Approved _____

Camping: Duty roster_____ Menu _____

Transportation: Group _____ Self_____

Essential (Tier I)

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

Equipment List	• Camping gear (individual and group) • Backpacks, canoes, or bicycles to get the group to and from the campsite (optional) • Food • Water • Scout Basic Essentials (Review the list and take what you need.)
Activity	• Choose your campsite and event location. • Plan camping duty roster and meal plan. • Develop a schedule that allows plenty of time for setting up camp the right way, including establishing defined sleeping, social, and cooking areas. • Practice camping skills Scouts need to work on (fire building, cooking, knots, etc.). • Participate in other activities as desired (hiking, boating, mountain biking, etc.). • On departure, be sure you are leaving no trace of your presence.
Safety	• Normal camping safety guidelines apply. Use the buddy system; cellphones are a good idea as appropriate. Have a first-aid kit handy. • Two-deep adult leadership is required for all activities.

Notes

For an added challenge, plan for all Scouts to reach camp under their own power—by hiking, cycling, or canoeing. If possible, have them carry their own gear. All could travel by the same means, or different groups could choose different options.

1. Preopening (15 minutes)

Several things happen during the preopening:

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

2. Opening (10 minutes)

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

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

3. Group Instruction (10 minutes)

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

4. Skills Development (35 minutes)

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

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

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

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

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

5. Patrol Meetings (15 minutes)

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

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

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

6. Interpatrol Activity (15 minutes)

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

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

7. Closing (5 minutes)

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

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

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

Many troops use a traditional closing like this:

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

Scoutmaster: "Be prepared."

Scouts: "We are prepared!"

Scoutmaster: "Good night, Scouts."

8. After the Meeting (15 minutes)

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

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

Understanding Troop Meetings

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

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

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

Using Adult Leaders at Troop Meetings

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

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

Adults should never do these things:

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

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

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

Tips for Effective Troop Meetings

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

Evaluating Troop Meetings

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

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

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

CHAPTER 9
The Outdoor Program

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

"Camp is the boy's Elysium and the Scoutmaster's opportunity. And, moreover, it is Scouting."
—Robert Baden-Powell

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

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

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

Scouting's Continuum of Outdoor Activities

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

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

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

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

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

Planning Patrol Activities

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

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

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

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

Activities

Activity Planning and Risk Assessment

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

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

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

Program Hazard Analysis

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

Safety Checklists

These tools are used to inspect a vehicle or meeting place when you have small events or campouts. Checklists are a "body of knowledge" for running Scouting activities safely. Like an airline pilot who uses a checklist before takeoff, these tools help to make sure critical things are in place in order to conduct a safe Scouting activity. Many safety-related program materials include checklists; Sweet 16 of BSA Safety, Safe Swim Defense, Safety Afloat, and Climb on Safely are examples.

Safety PAUSE

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

Outdoor Ethics

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

The Outdoor Code

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

Leave No Trace

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

1. Plan Ahead and Prepare.

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

2. Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces.

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

3. Dispose of Waste Properly.

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

4. Leave What You Find.

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

5. Minimize Campfire Impacts.

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

6. Respect Wildlife.

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

7. Be Considerate of Other Visitors.

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

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

Tread Lightly!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Being Conservation-Minded

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

Types of Outings

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

What kinds of outings can troops take? It is easier to list those they can't take. The *Guide to Safe Scouting* includes a short list of activities that are unauthorized, including hunting, parasailing, boxing, bungee jumping, and paintball (except for target shooting). A longer list of activities requires special training and/or certification, as described in chapter 25.

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

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

- A simple day hike
- Simultaneous hikes of varying lengths at a state park; each patrol chooses its own challenge
- A 10- or 20-mile hike to complete Hiking merit badge requirements 5 and 6
- A nature hike to identify native animals and plants for Second Class requirement 6 and First Class requirement 6
- A night hike that ends at an observatory for star study
- A fitness hike with stations where Scouts complete fitness tests
- An orienteering hike, where Scouts navigate by map and compass
- A geocaching hike, where Scouts navigate from cache to cache in a large city park
- A service hike along the shoreline, where patrols compete to see which can pick up the most trash
- A shakedown hike, where Scouts practice carrying full backpacks and cook trail meals in preparation for a high-adventure trek
- A "duty to God" hike, where the troop visits various places of worship in the community to learn about the ways people worship
- A historic hike, such as one through a Civil War battlefield, in pursuit of the Historic Trails Award

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

Don't assume that everything you do on every outing must fulfill a larger purpose or lead to advancement. More than ever before, today's Scouts are overscheduled and under pressure to perform in sports and on standardized tests. Allowing them time on outings to unplug, relax, and have fun is a priceless gift.

Planning for the Camping Merit Badge

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

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

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

Duration and Frequency of Outings

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

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

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

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

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

Resources for Leadership and Teaching

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Planning Outings

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

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

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

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

Basic Planning Details

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

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

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

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

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

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

Choosing Campsites

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

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

Contact the owners or managers of any potential campsite well in advance of the Scouts' arrival. If this is the troop's first trip to a campground, try to make a personal visit to the person in charge of the area. This individual can be a great ally to you over the years and a tremendous source of information, support, and guidance. Get off on the right foot by doing all you can to build a good working relationship.

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

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

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

Program Activities and Schedules

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

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

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

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

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

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

Rainy-Day Activities

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

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

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

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

Note that there is a big difference between rainy days and hazardous weather. As we discuss in chapter 24, at least one adult who has completed Hazardous Weather training is required for all tours and trips.

Menus and Shopping

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Duty Rosters

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

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

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

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

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

Adult Leaders on Outings

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

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

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

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

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

Outdoor Equipment

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

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

Personal Gear

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

Scout Basic Essentials

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

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

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

Personal Overnight Camping Gear

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

Personal Extras (Optional)

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

Electronic Devices on Outings

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

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

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

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

Troop and Patrol Gear

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

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

Troop Overnight Camping Gear

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

Troop extras (optional):

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

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

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

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

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

Storing and Caring for Troop Equipment

Here are a few commonsense guidelines.

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

Tents and Tarps

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

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

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

Trailers

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

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

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

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

Scoutmaster's Campsite Quick Checklist

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

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

While Setting Up Camp

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

Tents

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

Personal Gear and Bedding

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

Kitchen Area

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

Latrine

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

During the Campout

Campsite

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

Tents

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

Kitchen Area

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

Scouts

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

While Breaking Camp

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

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Outing Planner

Description _____

Location _____

Departure date and time _____

Return date and time _____

Youth leader in charge of planning _____

Adult leader in charge of planning _____

Expected attendance (Scouts) _____

Expected attendance (adults) _____

Three Months Out

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

Two Months Out

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

One Month Out

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

Two Weeks Out

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

One Week Out

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

Day of Outing

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

Patrol Menu Planner

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

Friday Cracker Barrel (Late-Night Snack)

Menu Food Needed	Equipment Needed	On Hand	Need to Buy
		☐	☐
		☐	☐
		☐	☐
		☐	☐
		☐	☐
		☐	☐
		☐	☐

Saturday Breakfast

Menu Food Needed	Equipment Needed	On Hand	Need to Buy
		☐	☐
		☐	☐
		☐	☐
		☐	☐
		☐	☐
		☐	☐
		☐	☐

Saturday Lunch

Menu Food Needed	Equipment Needed	On Hand	Need to Buy
		☐	☐
		☐	☐
		☐	☐
		☐	☐
		☐	☐
		☐	☐
		☐	☐

Saturday Dinner

Menu Food Needed	Equipment Needed	On Hand	Need to Buy
		☐	☐
		☐	☐
		☐	☐
		☐	☐
		☐	☐
		☐	☐
		☐	☐

Saturday Cracker Barrel

Menu Food Needed	Equipment Needed	On Hand	Need to Buy
		☐	☐
		☐	☐
		☐	☐
		☐	☐
		☐	☐
		☐	☐
		☐	☐

Sunday Breakfast

Menu Food Needed	Equipment Needed	On Hand	Need to Buy
		☐	☐
		☐	☐
		☐	☐
		☐	☐
		☐	☐
		☐	☐
		☐	☐

Sunday Lunch

Menu Food Needed	Equipment Needed	On Hand	Need to Buy
		☐	☐
		☐	☐
		☐	☐
		☐	☐
		☐	☐
		☐	☐
		☐	☐

General Supplies and Miscellaneous Equipment Needed

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

CHAPTER 10
Service Projects

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

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

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

Frequency and Scheduling

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

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

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

Planning Effective Service Projects

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

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

Be Real and Significant

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

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

Be Democratic

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

Be Clearly Defined

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

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

Be Well Prepared

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

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

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

Be Followed by Reflection and Recognition

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

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

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

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

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

Planning Eagle Scout Service Projects

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

Suggested Projects

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

CHAPTER 11
Ceremonies

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

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

Keys to Good Ceremonies

Good ceremonies share these features:

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

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

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

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

Types of Ceremonies

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

Opening and Closing Ceremonies

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

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

Patriotic Ceremonies

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

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

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

Investiture and Graduation Ceremonies

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

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

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

Installation Ceremonies

As soon as possible after every round of troop elections, the Scoutmaster should lead a ceremony to formally install new youth leaders. Typically, the new leaders place their left hands on the pole of the troop flag, make the Scout sign with their right hands, and give a simple pledge like this: "I promise to do my best to be worthy of my office as _____, for the sake of my fellow Scouts, my patrol, my troop, and the world brotherhood of Scouting." The Scoutmaster or senior patrol leader then presents the new leaders with their badges of office (perhaps safety-pinning the badges onto their uniforms) and congratulates them.

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

Courts of Honor

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

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

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

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

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

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

Worship Services

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

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

Some definitions may be useful. The term interfaith spans all faith traditions, while the terms ecumenical and nondenominational are typically, although not exclusively, used with services that encompass the various branches of Christianity but not other faiths. If you are planning a service for an event such as a camporee, be sure to label it correctly so no one is caught off guard.

ALL ABOUT YOUTH

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

CHAPTER 12
Understanding and Working With Youth

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

Ages and Stages

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

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

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

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

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

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

Late Childhood (Age 10)

According to child development experts, young people at 10:

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

Early Adolescence (Ages 11 to 13)

Young people of 11 to 13:

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

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

Middle Adolescence (Ages 14 and 15)

Young people of 14 or 15:

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

Late Adolescence (Ages 16 to 18)

Older teenagers of 16 to 18:

- Are nearly full grown physically and look more like adults than adult-size children
- Are in the latter years of high school
- Are already thinking (and worrying) about life after high school
- Are painfully aware that the decisions they are making now—such as whether to attend college, join the military, or enter the workforce—will affect the rest of their lives
- Want to prove to their parents and themselves that they are ready to be independent
- May be employed and have access to a car, so that they have spending money, mobility, and a measure of independence
- Are spending more time than ever on homework, athletics, school activities, and dating
- Are more comfortable with their academic and social status (honor student, jock, band nerd, party animal, Scout) as peer pressure evolves
- May have a romantic attachment and a smaller but tighter group of same-gender friends than before
- Can reason abstractly and think analytically nearly as well as adults, although they lack the life experiences that guide adult decision-making
- Are beginning to think about politics, social issues, and global causes
- Have developed a relatively stable personal identity, which is consistent across different settings

Working With Scouts With Disabilities

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

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

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

Techniques for Working With Youth

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

Here are some proven techniques.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Teaching Values

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

Scoutmaster's Minutes

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Teachable Moments

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

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

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

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

Ethical Dilemmas

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

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

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

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

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

Reflection

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Thorns and Roses

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

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

CHAPTER 13
Working With Youth Leaders

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

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

> "The object of the patrol method is not so much saving the Scoutmaster trouble as to give responsibility to the boy."
> —Robert Baden-Powell

Meeting Youth Leaders Where They Are

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

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

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

Leadership is often a matter of providing what is missing.

The Youth Training Continuum

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

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

But training actually begins before the first course.

Personal Coaching

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

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

Ongoing Coaching

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

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

Introduction to Leadership Skills for Troops

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

ILST Keys for Success

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

- Be sure the training is added to the troop calendar at the annual planning conference and that it occurs soon after troop elections.
- Let Scouts who are running for office or seeking appointed positions know ahead of time that participation is expected.
- Find a special site for the training, such as a troop family's cabin or a retreat center affiliated with your chartered organization. Make the experience unique.
- Aim for patrol-sized participation of at least six Scouts, which will make discussions and group activities more effective.
- Use youth leaders who have been previously trained as trainers. The senior patrol leader should play an especially prominent role alongside the Scoutmaster.
- Plan breaks between modules so Scouts don't become overloaded or bored and so they have some time to think about, discuss, and even apply the skills they have just learned.
- Aim for variety. When you repeat the course, choose different activities from the syllabus.
- Have adult leaders cook, serve, and clean up after meals during the course. This will let the Scouts focus on the training and demonstrate their importance as youth leaders.
- Present position and Trained patches to participants at the end of the training, and also recognize the youth leaders in front of the troop at the next troop meeting.

National Youth Leadership Training

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

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

To attend National Youth Leadership Training, a Scout must:

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

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

A Toolbox of Leadership Skills

National Youth Leadership Training introduces the following skills.

Vision—Goals—Planning: Creating a Positive Future Success

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

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

Assessment Tool: SSC—Start, Stop, Continue

Teaching EDGE: Explain, Demonstrate, Guide, Enable

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

Leading EDGE: Explain, Demonstrate, Guide, Enable

Conflict Resolution Tool: EAR—Express, Address, Resolve

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

Communication: MaSeR—Message, Sender, Receiver

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

National Advanced Youth Leadership Experience

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

To attend NAYLE, a Scout must:

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

Kodiak Challenge

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

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

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

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

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

To participate in a Kodiak trek, a Scout must:

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

Den Chief Training

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

Powder Horn

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

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

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

Youth Leader Position Descriptions

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

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

Senior Patrol Leader

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

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

Assistant Senior Patrol Leader

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

Patrol Leader

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

Assistant Patrol Leader

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

Troop Guide

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

Den Chief

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

Historian

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

Order of the Arrow Troop Representative

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

Librarian

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

Quartermaster

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

Scribe

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

Instructor

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

Chaplain Aide

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

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

Webmaster

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

Outdoor Ethics Guide

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

Junior Assistant Scoutmaster

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

Setting Leadership Expectations

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

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

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

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

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

CHAPTER 14
Recruiting and Retention

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

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

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

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

Webelos-to-Scout Transition

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

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

Preparing for Scouts BSA

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

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

A. Repeat from memory the Scout Oath, Scout Law, Scout motto, and Scout slogan. In your own words, explain their meanings to your den leader, parent, or guardian.

B. Explain what Scout spirit is. Describe for your den leader, parent, or guardian some ways you have shown Scout spirit by practicing the Scout Oath, Scout Law, Scout motto, and Scout slogan.

C. Give the Scout sign, salute, and handshake. Explain when to use each.

D. Describe the First Class Scout badge, and tell what each part stands for. Explain the significance of the First Class Scout badge.

E. Repeat from memory the Pledge of Allegiance. In your own words, explain its meaning.

Requirement 2. Visit a troop meeting with your parent or guardian and, if possible, your den members and leaders. After the meeting, do the following:

A. Describe how the Scouts in the troop provide its leadership.

B. Describe the four steps of Scout advancement.

C. Describe ranks in Scouting and how they are earned.

D. Describe what merit badges are and how they are earned.

Requirement 3. Practice the patrol method in your den for one month by doing the following:

A. Explain the patrol method. Describe the types of patrols that might be part of a Scout troop.

B. Hold an election to choose the patrol leader.

C. Develop a patrol name and emblem (if your den does not already have one), as well as a patrol flag and yell. Explain how a patrol name, emblem, flag, and yell create patrol spirit.

D. As a patrol, make plans to participate in a troop's campout or other outdoor activity.

Requirement 4. With your Webelos den leader, parent, or guardian, participate in a troop's campout or other outdoor activity. Use the patrol method while on the outing.

Requirement 5. Do the following:

A. Show how to tie a square knot. …

Beyond advancement requirements, Webelos Scouts and their parents are familiar with the structure and language of Scouting. They understand about money-earning projects and charter renewal and medical forms, they know where the Scout shop is, and they have spent time at camp, so they have at least some basic camping gear. Finally, if their Webelos den opted for the tan and olive uniform, they already have the basic elements of the Scouts BSA uniform.

Your most important ally in recruiting Webelos Scouts is the Webelos den leader. The den leader may well have been with the Scouts since they were Lions or Tigers and thus has a vested interest in finding the right troop for them.

The Webelos-to-Scout Transition Process

The transition from Webelos Scouting to Scouts BSA takes at least a year. Here are some typical milestones along the way.

August

- The troop membership chair begins building relationships with local Webelos leaders. If you have a Cub Scout pack at the same chartered organization, that is the place to start, but don't stop there. Reach out to other packs in your community, especially those that don't have a troop at their chartered organization.
- The troop membership chair develops a spreadsheet of prospects, including Webelos Scouts' names, parents' names, and contact information.
- The Scoutmaster assigns den chiefs to each Webelos den.

With nearly 20 percent more packs than troops in America, there are plenty of packs with no clear destination for their Webelos Scouts.

September

- The Scoutmaster sends a welcome letter to each prospect.
- The troop membership chair adds all prospects to the troop mailing list. Don't rely exclusively on the Webelos den leader. If the den leader is burned out on Scouting or is not interested in your troop, information may not get relayed.

October

- The troop holds a joint campout with one or more Webelos dens. Be sure the location and theme are appropriate for novice campers; this is not a good time to backpack a section of the Pacific Crest Trail.

December and January

- Webelos dens visit troop meetings. Webelos Scouts should participate in the troop meeting, not merely observe, so the content should be age-appropriate. Between the opening and closing, parents should meet with the troop membership chair. This is a good time to distribute troop calendars and other materials and talk about what sets your troop apart.

Many Webelos leaders like their Webelos Scouts to visit more than one troop, even if they have a troop that seems to be the obvious destination. Their goal is to make sure each youth finds the troop that best meets their personal needs and situation.

February and March

- Webelos Scouts graduate from Cub Scouting and into Scouts BSA. The Scoutmaster and a few Scouts (especially the Webelos den chief) participate in the transition ceremony and welcome new Scouts with such items as Scout shoulder loops, a troop neckerchief, or a Scouts BSA handbook. (See "Webelos Crossover Ceremonies" at www.programresources.org/webelos-crossover.)

March

- The troop membership chair and assistant Scoutmaster for new Scouts work together to integrate new Scouts into the troop. Tasks include processing applications and medical forms, adding the Scouts to the troop database, and making sure they are on the road to earning the Scout badge. (See the section "Integrating New Scouts" later in this chapter.)
- A troop committee member orients the new Scouts' parents on how the troop works and encourages every parent to take a leadership role in the troop. It is important to tell parents at the outset that their involvement is expected. (See the section "The New Parent Conference" in chapter 16.)

April

- The troop holds a campout to welcome the new Scouts and begin teaching them Scout skills. As in October, the location and activities should accommodate novice campers.
- Summer camp promotion begins.

May

- The new Scouts work on Scout and Tenderfoot (and perhaps Second Class) requirements, especially those that can't be completed at summer camp. (Do not focus too much on advancement since many Scouts may be burned out on advancement after having hustled to finish the Arrow of Light rank requirements.)

A heavy focus on advancement may tend to divide the new Scouts from the rest of the troop.

June or July

- All new Scouts attend summer camp. The first summer camp is crucial. Scouts who attend can come home with the Tenderfoot badge, a merit badge or two, and strong relationships with troop leaders and other Scouts.

August

- Advancement and integration into the troop continue with the Scouts who joined in the spring.

One-on-One Recruiting

Most Scouts come straight from a Webelos den, but Cub Scouting is not a prerequisite for Scouts BSA membership. Many youth experience Scouting for the first time as 12-, 13-, or 14-year-olds when they lose interest in other activities or hear about a friend's trip to one of the BSA's high-adventure bases. Others return to Scouting a few years after quitting Cub Scouting when they discover the fun and excitement the troop program offers. Some even join in high school when peer pressure finally starts to release its hold.

A Scout can invite a friend to try Scouting at any time. In fact, every Scout must do so to fulfill First Class requirement 10:

Tell someone who is eligible to join Scouts BSA, or an inactive Scout, about your Scouting activities. Invite this person to an outing, activity, service project, or meeting. Provide information on how to join, or encourage the inactive Scout to become active. Share your efforts with your Scoutmaster or other adult leader.

While the friend does not have to join, or even show up, the Scout must extend the invitation. Here are several things you can do to encourage effective one-on-one recruiting:

- Designate occasional, visitor-friendly outings as "bring a friend" weekends.

- Allow prospective Scouts to attend their first outing at no cost.
- Exempt Scouts who bring prospects on outings from chores like washing dishes or offer other incentives.
- Reassure Scouts that friends they recruit can join the same patrol rather than being put in the new-Scout patrol. (This is really the best option for Scouts who join the troop one at a time.)
- Make a big deal of presenting Recruiter patches to all successful recruiters.
- Offer an incentive for the Scout or patrol that recruits the most new members during a specified time period. (These could be incentives you create or incentives offered by your local council during a fall or spring roundup.)

The BSA's council and unit accident insurance plans automatically cover non-Scouts, non-Scouters, and guests who are "attending scheduled activities for the purpose of being encouraged to become registered leaders or Scouts."

Troop Open Houses

A troop open house combines the recruiting efforts of individual Scouts, as described above, with promotion at the troop or district level. By focusing on a specific date, you create a deadline and generate excitement that can energize Scouts and prospects alike.

Identifying Prospects

Your best source of prospects is your current Scouts, so challenge each of them to invite at least one friend to the open house. Take time at a troop meeting to have Scouts identify prospects and write their names on a whiteboard or easel pad. To prompt their thinking, suggest categories like these: neighbors, friends from homeroom, friends from sports (especially where the season has just ended or is about to end), friends from a place of worship, friends who used to be in Scouting, and friends who are not involved in extracurricular activities.

Beyond friends of Scouts, these sources can be valuable:

- **Schools.** Check with your district membership chair about the possibility of doing presentations in area middle schools a week or so before the open house.
- **Your chartered organization.** Promote the open house in your chartered organization's newsletter. If your troop is operated by a school or religious institution, set up an information table in the weeks leading up to the open house.
- **"Charter-less" organizations.** Set up information tables or displays at places of worship and schools in your neighborhood that do not have their own troops.
- **Orphan packs and Scouts.** Check with your district membership chair or district executive to connect with packs that do not have troops at their chartered organization, Webelos Scouts who did not graduate from Cub Scouting, and Scouts who did not reregister or who have recently moved to the area.

Planning the Open House

The open house itself is a special troop meeting designed to showcase your troop's program to prospects and their parents. Held shortly before a visitor-friendly outing, it should inform and entertain prospects and entice them to give Scouting a try.

Timing is critical. Do not schedule your open house before an outing that prospects would not be able to attend or enjoy. It is much better to schedule it right after that big canoeing or backpacking trip.

Features include:

- A friendly greeting at the door by older Scouts and the Scoutmaster
- Nametags for all visitors and Scouts
- Pairing of each prospect with a current Scout (either the Scout who invited the prospect or a friendly older Scout)
- Displays related to the troop program: photo albums, posters, maps from backpacking treks, a model campsite, etc.
- A video or slide show of recent troop outings (perhaps available on DVDs that prospective Scouts can take home)
- A round-robin by patrols of fun, hands-on Scout activities and games
- A separate parent breakout with the troop's parent coordinator to explain the program, answer questions, and discuss leadership needs
- Distribution of applications, troop calendars, and handouts about the next campout and summer camp
- Food for all and prizes for those who turn in applications that night

Be sure to capture contact information for all visitors. Send an email to the parents, and have Scouts send postcards to the prospects with whom they were paired. Pursue prospects until they join the troop or decline to do so; do not just assume someone does not want to join.

Integrating New Scouts

When youth join your troop, 15 or more things need to happen in fairly rapid succession. The list might look something like this.

All new Scouts:

- Complete a membership application and pay the registration or transfer fee
- Turn in an Annual Health and Medical Record
- Encourage their parents to turn in troop resource surveys
- Join a patrol
- Receive a patrol emblem and sew it on the uniform shirt

The troop:

- Gives each new Scout such items as a troop neckerchief or troop T-shirt
- Adds the Scouts to its database
- Adds the Scouts to its newsletter mailing list and/or email distribution list
- Sets up a Scout account for each Scout (if these are used in the troop)
- Scoutmaster meets with each Scout
- Has its parent coordinator meet with the Scouts' parents to orient them and distribute troop calendars and other information
- The Scouts meet other key leaders, including the senior patrol leader and assistant Scoutmaster for new Scouts
- The assistant Scoutmaster for new Scouts explains to the Scouts and their parents what uniform parts and equipment are needed—and what they do not yet need
- The Scouts attend a troop meeting for the first time
- The Scouts complete the Scout rank requirements and receive their Scout badge
- The Scouts sign up for summer camp

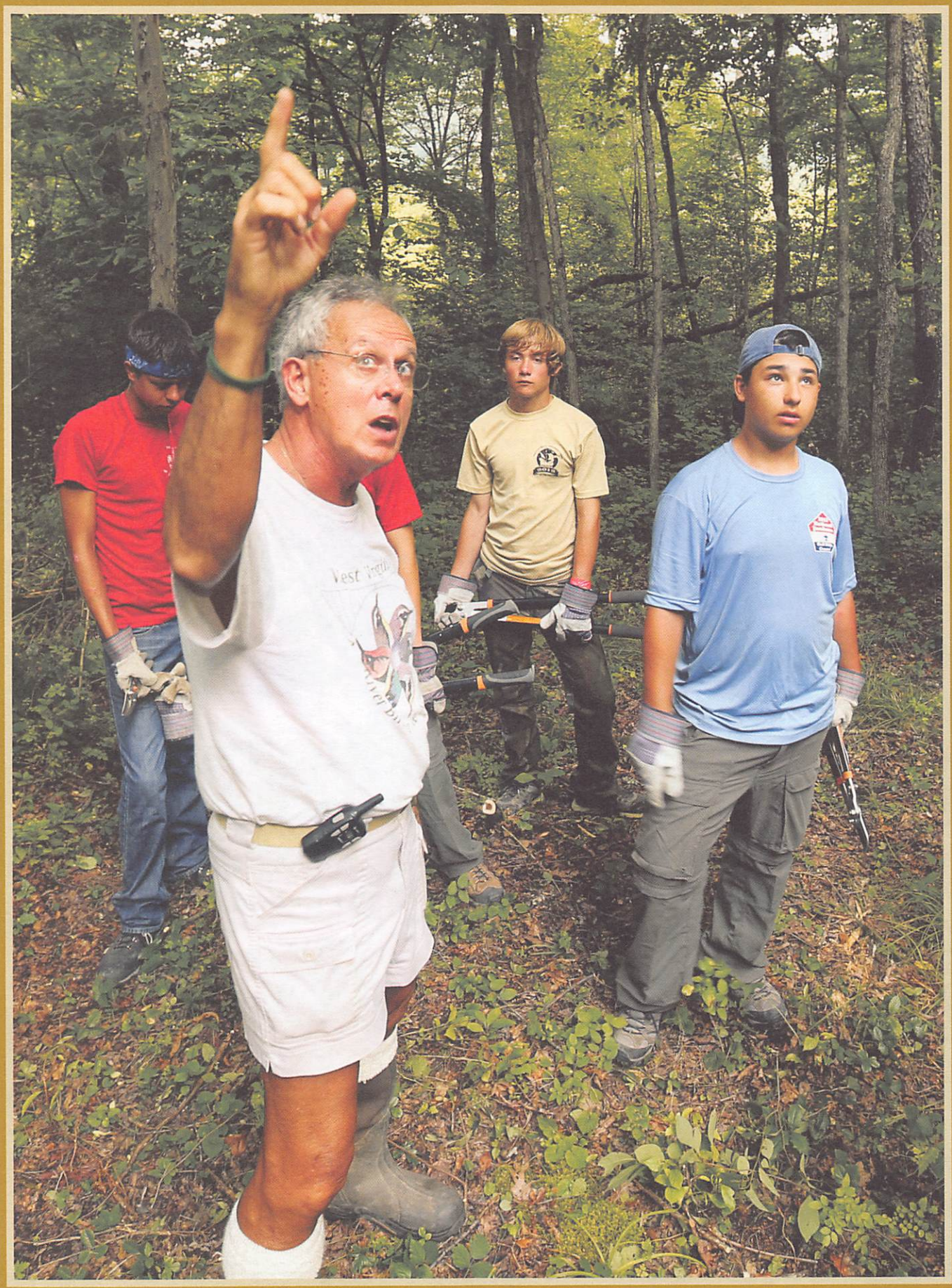
The troop membership chair should make sure all these things happen before assuming that the Scout has been fully integrated into the troop. The more things on the list that do not happen, the more likely a Scout is to disappear from the program.

If you have an entire Webelos den joining at one time, it can be hard to keep track of all these steps. One solution is to create a spreadsheet where you can check off each task for each Scout. Another solution is to put some of the responsibility on the Scouts themselves. Give each new Scout a "passport" listing the things they need to accomplish (such as turning in their membership application, meeting with the Scoutmaster, and completing the requirements for the Scout rank). As each Scout does these things, the appropriate troop leaders should sign the Scout's passport. Then, when all the signatures have been collected, give the Scout a troop T-shirt or other recognition item.

The passport method shifts the burden from adult leaders to the Scout. It also gives new Scouts specific responsibilities and something to do at their first few troop meetings, when they can often feel lost.

Retaining Troop Members

No matter how effective your troop is at recruiting, it will struggle if it can't retain members. While some attrition is inevitable as Scouts age out, move away, or decide to pursue other interests, strong troops hold on to most Scouts who reach First Class rank, well into their high school years. The secret to strong retention is understanding—and addressing—the reasons Scouts leave. Volume 2 of the *Troop Leader Guidebook* provides information on ways to retain older Scouts.



ALL ABOUT ADULTS

Some adults who are new to Scouts BSA see an apparent paradox. The program relies on strong adult leaders, and yet it asks those adult leaders to step back and let the Scouts lead themselves. Veteran Scouters even talk about the "rocking-chair Scoutmaster," as if the best leaders do nothing but relax in a corner and drink coffee or "bug juice."

The truth, of course, is much different. While adult leaders in Scouts BSA are rarely in the spotlight, they are always present and leading. Like successful coaches, they stay off the playing field, but they have a huge impact on how the game is played.

CHAPTER 15
Adult Leader Roles and Responsibilities

This chapter covers the roles of adult leaders and how they can play supporting roles in the troop.

Adult Leadership Requirements

As discussed in chapter 2, adult leaders must:

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

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

Essentials of Scout Leadership

The 1938 *Handbook for Scoutmasters* identified 10 essentials for what it called "Scoutmastership." Here is a slightly updated—and still quite relevant—version of the list:

- A belief in youth that will make you want to invest yourself and your time on their behalf
- A zeal focused on one point: the young person's happiness through the formative years (Translation: "A happy youth is a good youth; a good youth is a good citizen.")
- An immense faith in Scouting as ***the*** program that will best serve to mold our youth into fine adults
- A realization that to the youth Scouting is a game—and to you a game with a purpose: character building and citizenship training
- A knowledge that to the youth you serve, ***you*** are Scouting (Translation: "What you are speaks so loudly that I cannot hear what you say.")
- A steadfastness of purpose to carry out a planned program with energy, perseverance, patience, and good humor
- A willingness to submerge yourself and make youth leaders lead and grow through an effective application of the patrol method
- A desire to advance in Scout leadership by making use of training offered and material available on the subject
- A readiness to work hand in hand with the home, religious institution, chartered organization, school, local council, and National Council for the good of the individual youth and the community as a whole
- A love of the outdoors in all its phases and a vision of the hand that created it

Servant Leadership

More than anything, a Scout leader is a servant leader, someone who values persuasion over telling, listening over speaking, empathy over unrealistic expectations, community over isolation, and other people's growth over personal glory.

Although the term *servant leadership* was coined by Robert K. Greenleaf in 1970, the concept is thousands of years old. This passage from the *Tao Te Ching*, a Chinese text dating to the sixth century B.C., embodies the concept.

A leader is best when people barely know he exists,

Not so good when people obey and acclaim him,

Worse when they despise him.

Fail to honor people,

They fail to honor you.

But of a good leader who talks little,

When his work is done, his aim fulfilled,

The people will say, "We did this ourselves."

If your youth leaders proudly say, "We did this ourselves," you have been an effective servant leader. (And don't worry; they recognize the role you have played, even if they do not acknowledge it.)

"The Scoutmaster's job is like golfing, or scything, or fly-fishing. If you 'press' you don't get there, at least not with anything like the extent you do by a lighthearted effortless swing."
—Robert Baden-Powell

Defining Adult Leader Roles

The roles and responsibilities of youth leaders in a troop—senior patrol leader, patrol leader, and others—are clearly defined. Although the details may vary from troop to troop (or from one Scout to the next), the position descriptions remain basically the same, as described in chapter 13.

Adult leaders are different. Some troops have a Scoutmaster and one or two assistant Scoutmasters who work as a team without any formal assignments. Others have a dozen or more assistant Scoutmasters, each with a unique, detailed position description. Still others have formal succession plans that specify when a leader rotates out and how a successor is elected.

General Principles

In thinking about adult leadership roles, it is important to keep some general principles in mind:

- Youth leaders should lead the troop. The role of adult leaders is to train, coach, and support those youth leaders.
- The troop will function better if adult leaders have defined areas of responsibility. When everybody is in charge, nobody is in charge.
- The leadership roles you create should address the troop's needs. If you want to develop strong patrols, for example, assign an assistant Scoutmaster to each patrol.
- Everyone—including Scouts and their families—should know who is in charge in the Scoutmaster's absence. Many troops designate a first assistant Scoutmaster who fills that role, though a temporary designee might or might not be the Scoutmaster's designated successor.
- The troop can establish minimum expectations of assistant Scoutmasters, including completion of basic training. Adults who can attend only the occasional meeting or outing might serve more effectively as troop committee members. Note, however, that all adult leaders should be trained for the leadership positions they hold.

Adult Leader Position Descriptions

Below are position descriptions for the Scoutmaster and a basic complement of assistant Scoutmasters. If your troop has more adult leaders available, it could designate assistant Scoutmasters to work with advancement, Eagle Scout candidates, Webelos-to-Scout transition, and training. If your troop has fewer adult leaders available, individuals may need to take on more than one role, or the Scoutmaster may need to do less delegating.

This chapter deals only with the Scoutmaster corps. For troop committee position descriptions, see the *Troop Committee Guidebook*.

Scoutmaster Corps

Scoutmaster

- Complete position-specific training, including IOLS.
- Ensure that the troop program achieves the aims of Scouting by using the methods of Scouting.
- Train and guide youth leaders.
- Work closely with the senior patrol leader, and attend patrol leaders' council meetings.
- Coordinate the work of assistant Scoutmasters.
- Work closely with the troop committee, and make reports at troop committee meetings.
- Ensure that Scouts have the chance to participate in at least 10 days and nights of camping each year.
- Ensure that Scouts have the chance to advance to First Class rank in a year and one rank per year after that.
- Conduct or delegate Scoutmaster conferences.
- Ensure that BSA policies are followed.
- Set a good example.
- Wear the Scout uniform correctly.
- Live by the Scout Oath and Scout Law.
- Show and help develop Scout spirit.

Assistant Scoutmaster for Program

- Complete position-specific training, including IOLS.
- Work closely with the Scoutmaster and the senior patrol leader to ensure adequate planning of meetings and activities.
- Attend patrol leaders' council meetings (in a support role).
- Serve as a resource to the patrol leaders' council for program ideas.
- Monitor troop meetings to ensure that youth leaders are carrying out the planned program.
- Work with the outdoor/activities coordinator to ensure adequate support of planned programs (such as sufficient equipment, trained leaders in attendance, and drivers).
- Ensure that BSA policies related to activities are followed.
- Promote pursuit of the National Camping Award.
- Promote participation in high-adventure opportunities.
- Set a good example.
- Wear the Scout uniform correctly.
- Live by the Scout Oath and Scout Law.
- Show and help develop Scout spirit.

Assistant Scoutmaster for Advancement

- Complete position-specific training, including IOLS.
- Promote advancement and other awards.
- Identify merit badge counselors and coach instructors.
- Work with the patrol leaders' council to ensure that planned activities give Scouts the opportunity to advance.
- Coordinate scheduling of Scoutmaster conferences and boards of review.
- Work with the scribe to ensure that advancement records are up to date.

- Support Scouts who are planning courts of honor.
- Oversee Life-to-Eagle counseling efforts.
- Set a good example.
- Wear the Scout uniform correctly.
- Live by the Scout Oath and Scout Law.
- Show and help develop Scout spirit.

Assistant Scoutmaster for Administration

- Complete position-specific training, including IOLS.
- Work closely with the assistant senior patrol leader as this youth supervises troop-level youth leaders.
- Coordinate support of troop-level youth leaders by their troop-committee counterparts.
- Promote participation in youth leader training opportunities.
- Set a good example.
- Wear the Scout uniform correctly.
- Live by the Scout Oath and Scout Law.
- Show and help develop Scout spirit.

Assistant Scoutmaster for the New-Scout Patrol

- Complete position-specific training, including IOLS.
- Ensure that each new member is fully integrated into the troop, as discussed in chapter 14.
- Work with the instructor(s) and the patrol's troop guide to ensure patrol members learn basic Scouting skills.
- Coach the patrol leader on preparing for and leading patrol meetings.
- Monitor patrol members' attendance and advancement.
- Ensure that Scouts have the chance to advance to First Class rank in 12 to 18 months.
- Prepare new Scouts for Scoutmaster conferences and boards of review.
- Promote pursuit of the National Honor Patrol Award.
- Set a good example.
- Wear the Scout uniform correctly.
- Live by the Scout Oath and Scout Law.
- Show and help develop Scout spirit.

Assistant Scoutmaster for Traditional Patrols (one per patrol)

- Complete position-specific training, including IOLS.
- Coach the patrol leader on preparing for and leading patrol meetings.
- Support the patrol as it carries out duties in the troop.
- Support the patrol in planning patrol activities.
- Monitor patrol members' attendance and advancement.
- Promote participation in youth leader training and high-adventure opportunities.
- Promote pursuit of the National Honor Patrol Award.
- Set a good example.
- Wear the Scout uniform correctly.
- Live by the Scout Oath and Scout Law.
- Show and help develop Scout spirit.

Assistant Scoutmaster for the Older-Scout Patrol

- Complete position-specific training, including IOLS.
- Coach the patrol leader on preparing for and leading patrol meetings.
- Support the patrol as it carries out duties in the troop.
- Serve as a resource for planning high-adventure activities.
- Encourage the patrol to plan quarterly patrol activities.
- Monitor patrol members' attendance and advancement.
- Promote participation in youth leader training and high-adventure opportunities.
- Promote pursuit of the National Honor Patrol Award.
- Set a good example.
- Wear the Scout uniform correctly.
- Live by the Scout Oath and Scout Law.
- Show and help develop Scout spirit.

Young Assistant Scoutmasters and Junior Assistant Scoutmasters

While the Scoutmaster must be at least 21 years old, assistant Scoutmasters may be as young as 18. Moreover, a junior assistant Scoutmaster (a youth position described in chapter 13) can do most of the work of an assistant Scoutmaster.

As you develop roles for adults in your troop, do not overlook these young leaders. While they may lack the maturity and life experiences of older adults, they can offer a youthful perspective, mastery of Scout skills, rapport with troop members, and an abundance of energy and available time.

Developing *Esprit de Corps* in the Scoutmaster Corps

Unlike the patrol leaders' council and the troop committee, the Scoutmaster and assistant Scoutmasters do not have regularly scheduled meetings. As a result, it can be hard for them to gel as a group and easy for them to work at cross purposes.

Adding yet another meeting to a crowded troop calendar can be difficult, but there are simple ways to create "the spirit of the group" among these essential leaders. Here are some ideas.

- Camp and eat together on troop outings. Doing so also makes space for patrols to do the same thing and keeps adults out of the Scouts' way.
- Attend roundtables and training courses as a group. Travel together if these events are held far from home.
- Meet for half an hour before or after troop committee meetings.
- Huddle before or after troop meetings. For example, if the patrol leaders' council huddles before each meeting, the Scoutmaster corps could huddle after each meeting.
- Share a meal before troop meetings. Designate a time at a restaurant near your meeting place, and encourage adult leaders to stop by for food and fellowship.
- Plan occasional social events for adult leaders and their spouses or significant others.

CHAPTER 16
Working With Parents

Parents play an essential role in the life of the troop. They drive their children to meetings and pay most of their expenses. They bring refreshments to courts of honor and transport gear to camp. They participate in money-earning projects as volunteers and customers. And they are the pool from which most adult leaders will come.

At the same time, Scouts become increasingly independent of their parents as they progress through the program. When Scouts are old enough to drive themselves to meetings and pay their own way through money-earning projects, it can be easy to assume their parents are no longer important to the troop.

The truth, of course, is that parental support remains key, even as the nature of that support evolves. Savvy leaders realize that they will be most successful when they work with parents as partners. In this chapter, we look at parents in several roles: as parents, as helpers, and as potential leaders.

When we refer to parents in this chapter, we are including stepparents, grandparents, legal guardians, and adult siblings—whoever is helping to raise a Scout.

Parents As Parents

Early in your relationship with a new Scout's parents, it is important to let them know what you expect from them and from their Scout. These expectations could include:

- Scout attendance standards
- Troop uniform policy
- Scout and parent participation in money-earning projects
- Parent attendance at courts of honor and parent meetings
- Support of the Scout's advancement work
- Parent review of *How to Protect Your Children From Child Abuse: A Parent's Guide,* which is found in the front of the Scouts BSA handbooks
- Completion of a troop resource survey by each parent
- Completion of an Annual Health and Medical Record for the Scout
- Communication with the Scoutmaster about important health and behavior issues, medications, allergies, and limitations
- Communication with the Scoutmaster about issues that could affect participation (everything from baseball practices that conflict with spring troop meetings to the family's need for financial assistance to pay for summer camp)

While it is not mandatory for parents who are not volunteers to take BSA Youth Protection training, encourage all parents to take advantage of this free and valuable training.

At the same time, you should let parents know what you expect them *not* to do, including:

- Signing off on their child's advancement (unless they are registered as leaders or merit badge counselors)
- Doing things for their child that can be done without parental assistance, such as packing gear for a campout, carrying gear, or setting up a tent
- Buying camping gear without checking on what is needed and appropriate for troop activities

These expectations should be discussed at the new parent conference, as described below. Many troops also distribute family handbooks that include parental expectations or post the information on their websites.

Per the *Guide to Safe Scouting,* all aspects of the Scouting program are open to observation by parents and leaders.

Communicating With Parents

As we discuss in chapter 23, the primary means of communication within the troop should be from Scout to Scout. However, relying solely on Scouts to take information home is a risky strategy. It is important to communicate directly with parents in ways that supplement Scout-to-Scout communication.

Besides ongoing communication through newsletters and emails and general parent meetings, there are several times when Scout-specific parent meetings are warranted:

- When the Scout joins the troop, as described below
- When problems, such as behavior issues, arise that troop leaders can't handle without input and support from the Scout's family
- When the Scout first takes a leadership position (so that both the Scout and the parents understand the extra responsibility this will involve)
- When the Scout is ready to begin an Eagle Scout service project (so both the Scout and the parents understand the intricacies of planning and carrying out such a project)
- When it is time to plan their son's Eagle Scout court of honor (an event that typically relies on extensive parental involvement)

The New Parent Conference

A key element in the process of integrating new Scouts into the troop is the new parent conference. Shortly after joining, the parents of all new Scouts should meet with an adult leader in the troop, either individually or as part of a group of new parents. The conference, which ideally is held in a separate room during the troop meeting, has several purposes:

- To introduce parents to the Scouts BSA program (and explain how it differs from Cub Scouting if they came from that program)
- To show parents how Scouts BSA gives youth what they want and parents what they need from a program for their children
- To introduce parents to how your specific troop works
- To explain to parents what your troop expects of them and their children
- To show parents how their participation in the troop can help their children succeed and be personally rewarding for them as well
- To introduce parents to some of the troop leaders with whom they and their children will be involved

The meeting is also a good opportunity to distribute and explain youth and adult applications, medical forms, troop calendars and handbooks, information about summer camp, and troop resource surveys.

For more information, see the supplemental training module Orientation for New Scout Parents.

It is OK if some of the content of the new parent conference repeats what you discussed during a Webelos den visit or troop open house. Parents who visited several troops with their Webelos Scouts may not remember what they heard at your troop vs. the troop down the street.

The Annual Parent Meeting

Consider holding a parent meeting at the beginning of each program year. Topics could include a "state of the troop" report by the Scoutmaster, an overview of the upcoming year's calendar by the senior patrol leader, and a recruiting pitch by the troop committee chair or parent coordinator.

To maximize attendance, you could combine the meeting with a family cookout or the court of honor where you hand out badges from summer camp (typically the biggest court of honor of the year). Plan separate activities for the Scouts during the parent meeting, and recruit someone to babysit younger brothers and sisters.

Parents As Helpers

It is important for parents to act as parents, but it is equally important to move them quickly to the next stage: helpers. There are far more tasks to be done in the troop than you and the other members of the Scoutmaster corps can handle. Moreover, many of those tasks can distract you from your primary focus, working with the Scouts themselves—not to mention from career and family.

What sorts of tasks can parent helpers handle? They can pick up supplies from the Scout shop, collect fees and medical forms, make phone calls, make photocopies, assemble troop handbooks, handle the charter-renewal process, lead money-earning projects, coordinate service projects, provide tools for service projects, organize meeting-place cleanups, take their children to buy groceries, build props for ceremonies, organize courts of honor, bring refreshments to meetings, send birthday cards, welcome new families to the troop, renew the vehicle registration for the troop trailer, maintain the troop's office equipment, and much more.

Decide ahead of time how you will need help during the year and create signup sheets. Put these sheets on clipboards, and attach a pen and a pad of sticky notes to each clipboard (so parents can sign up and also keep a record of what they have agreed to do). Then, circulate the clipboards during the annual meeting. Few people will pass along a clipboard without signing up for at least one task.

If necessary, parents can also serve as adults on outings. In lieu of two registered adult leaders, you can meet the two-deep leadership requirement with one registered leader and a parent of a participating Scout or another adult (one of whom must be 21 years of age or older). Parents can also supervise approved patrol day hikes and service projects, which don't require registered leaders.

Be sure to coach untrained parents on their roles before they attend an activity. It can be difficult for untrained parents to let youth leaders do their jobs without unsolicited help. Also make sure these parents take Youth Protection training for their own protection and that of the Scouts.

Scout leaders are doers by nature, stepping up without a second thought when there is a task to be done. Unfortunately, that is also why many Scoutmasters struggle to let their youth leaders lead and find it difficult to delegate responsibilities. When faced with a new task, ask yourself these questions:

- Does this task require a trained leader?
- Am I the best person to handle this task?
- Is this the best use of my time right now?

If your answer to these questions is "no," then delegate the task to a parent. The first time around, you may spend more time than if you had just done the task yourself. Eventually, however, you will end up saving time. It really is true that many hands make light work.

When recruiting a parent helper, meet in person; ask for help with a specific, manageable task; and avoid scary words like "leader" and "in charge." Remember that four of the strongest words in the world are, "Can you help me?"

Some troops establish standards for parental involvement, perhaps expecting each parent (or one parent from each family) to take on one task each year. They communicate their expectations when prospective Scouts visit, at the new parent conference, and at annual parent meetings. Besides helping to spread the workload, such a standard emphasizes that Scouting is not a program to which you *take* your children, but instead is a program in which you participate *with* your children. This communicated expectation breaks down the wall between leaders and parents and shows that you are a group of adults working together to raise youth using the Scouts BSA program.

Parents As Potential Leaders

Using parents as helpers has another important benefit. When a parent helps out, you get the chance to evaluate his or her leadership potential. Did the task get done? Did the parent work well with Scouts or other adults (depending on the type of task)? At the same time, the parent gets to evaluate the possibility of volunteering more with the troop. Was the task enjoyable? Was the task a good use of the parent's time and talents?

This two-way tryout is a good first step toward turning a parent helper into a full-fledged adult leader. In fact, it is a much better approach than starting an untested volunteer in an important role like assistant Scoutmaster for program.

Do not expect every parent helper to become an adult leader. Many parents don't have the time or the temperament to work as Scoutmasters or assistant Scoutmasters.

From Webelos Leader to Assistant Scoutmaster

When a den of Webelos Scouts crosses over, it seems obvious to recruit their den leader as the assistant Scoutmaster for the new-Scout patrol. While that can work quite well, you should consider the potential pitfalls. The first is that someone who has been serving as a "hands-on" den leader may have a hard time shifting from that mindset to being a "hands-off" assistant Scoutmaster, resulting in a patrol that operates more like a den. The other is that a longtime Cub Scout leader may be ready for a break from volunteer service.

One solution might be to give the former Webelos leader a less demanding role—for example, assistant Scoutmaster with no defined tasks for the first six months to a year. Just don't allow the former Cub Scout leader to disengage completely; it can be much harder to get people to reengage later after they have been inactive for a while.

Get Scout Parents Involved

Scout parents may need some encouragement to get more involved with Scouting and their son's unit. Help them take that leap by giving them simple tasks at first. Until they warm up to taking on more responsibility, engage them in the following types of assignments:

- Perform an occasional task to assist the unit's program.
- Go to and observe Scout meetings.
- Assist with outings.
- Support the program financially.
- Coach their Scout's advancement and the earning of recognitions.
- Influence their Scout's continued participation.

Perhaps an assistant Scoutmaster can be assigned to

- Help parents find ways to participate in the Scouting program.
- Provide an orientation for all parents in understanding how the unit works and how it benefits their family.
- Keep parents updated on the unit's program and their child's involvement.

CHAPTER 17
Working With the Troop Committee

The 1966 Disney comedy *Follow Me, Boys!* tells the story of a longtime Scoutmaster named Lem Siddons. When health problems sideline Lem, he worries about a host of details related to a campsite his troop is building on the outskirts of town: Who will get the free lumber? Who will recruit the volunteers? Who will make sure everything is ready for dedication day?

Lem's doctor tries to reassure him that the troop committee will handle everything, but Lem isn't so sure. "The troop committee?" he says. "They will gum everything up."

That is one of the best laugh lines in the movie, but it also points out the disconnect that can occur between the Scoutmaster corps and the troop committee. In this chapter, we discuss ways you can work effectively with your troop-committee colleagues.

Understanding Roles and Responsibilities

As we discussed in chapter 2, the troop committee functions as the troop's board of directors and as a sort of parent support group, while the members of the Scoutmaster corps work directly with the Scouts. In school terms, the troop committee is like the school board and the PTA rolled into one, while the Scoutmaster corps is like the faculty. You can also think of the relationship this way: The troop committee sets policies, and the Scoutmaster corps carries them out, relying on the support of the troop committee to do so.

Dividing up responsibilities this way has many advantages. Here are a few:

- The Scoutmaster and assistant Scoutmasters are better able to focus on working with the Scouts because they don't have to worry about chores like maintaining the troop checking account or picking up badges at the Scout shop.
- Boards of review are more meaningful because they are made up of troop committee members, not the leaders whom Scouts see every week. (And those leaders don't get pulled away from other tasks to sit on boards.)
- Troop committee members may have a clearer perspective on problems that arise because they are not directly involved in the week-to-week troop program.
- While the Scoutmaster corps handles short- and medium-term planning, the troop committee is free to focus on long-term and strategic planning.
- Having more adults involved gives you a natural system of checks and balances. This perhaps is especially important in terms of financial management and making sure BSA policies are being followed.
- In challenging situations, such as conflict with a parent, the committee can provide support the Scoutmaster needs.
- When a Scout drops out, a committee member may be more comfortable than the Scoutmaster at following up (and, as a neutral third party, more successful at finding out why).
- New volunteers can easily see which setting better fits their skills, interests, and available time.
- No leader gets burned out by taking on too much responsibility—and the troop is not overly dependent on any one volunteer.

Working With Your Troop Committee Counterpart

In theory, the division between committee and Scoutmaster corps is clear. In practice, things are a little muddier. For example, the committee's outdoor/activities coordinator and the assistant Scoutmaster for program are both concerned with troop outings—but there is a difference. The assistant Scoutmaster works with the patrol leaders' council to plan outings, while the outdoor/activities coordinator provides the support needed to make those outings successful, such as securing transportation.

Clearly, it is important for leaders working in related areas to work together. This starts with the Scoutmaster and committee chair but extends to many other leaders. Adults with overlapping responsibilities should communicate early and often to make sure they are coordinating their efforts, not working at cross purposes.

Attending Meetings

The troop committee generally meets monthly, typically for an hour and a half. The Scoutmaster is expected to attend and participate (although not as a voting member). Assistant Scoutmasters generally do not need to attend, although they probably should when topics on the agenda involve their areas of responsibility. (See the suggested troop committee meeting agenda in the box.)

Suggested Troop Committee Meeting Agenda

1. Call to order—troop committee chair
2. Welcome and introduction of new members and guests—troop committee chair
3. Approval of previous meeting's minutes—secretary
4. Reports:
   - Scoutmaster (troop progress, actions of patrol leaders' council, disciplinary problems, attendance, monthly outing plans, other troop needs)
   - Secretary (newsletter or website, additional resource surveys)
   - Outdoor/activities coordinator (outdoor plans, special activities, district and council activities, summer camp update)
   - Treasurer (troop's current financial standing, money-earning projects, Friends of Scouting)
   - Advancement coordinator (troop advancement progress, boards of review, courts of honor)
   - Chaplain (chaplain support to troop members, religious emblems program, participation of Scouts in the religious emblems program)
   - Training coordinator (new training materials, youth leader and adult volunteer opportunities for training)
   - Equipment coordinator (status of new and existing troop equipment and of troop needs, new procedures for safe use and storage of equipment)
   - Membership coordinator (status of Webelos Scout graduation ceremonies, troop open houses, and youth-to-youth recruiting)
   - Parent coordinator (status of new Scout parents and their involvement in the troop)
5. Old business (reports on task assignments from previous meeting)
6. New business (including new task assignments as issues are discussed)
7. Announcements (including date of next month's troop committee meeting)
8. Adjournment

Troop committee meetings are the logical time to request help with an issue or clarification of a policy, so be sure to get such topics on the agenda. You can also avoid playing phone tag or scheduling a one-on-one meeting by connecting with your troop committee counterpart before or after a troop committee meeting.

If assistant Scoutmasters don't attend committee meetings, it is important for them to hear the results of those meetings. They (like troop parents) should receive copies of the meeting minutes. Also, the Scoutmaster should update assistant Scoutmasters on key decisions each month. If your troop's Scoutmaster corps holds regular meetings, be sure to include a brief troop committee update.

Just as assistant Scoutmasters can skip most troop committee meetings, most troop committee members are not expected to regularly attend troop meetings (or outings). It is helpful for them to occasionally attend to see the results of all their hard work. In practice, most committee members will attend troop meetings from time to time as the need arises or as they are called on to participate in boards of review. A few members, such as the advancement coordinator and treasurer, will attend regularly because their roles require them to work directly with specific Scouts.

Bridging the Gap With the Troop Committee

Most troops operate on a collegial basis with little daylight between the Scoutmaster corps and the troop committee. Occasionally, however, one group or the other starts to focus so much on its own area of responsibility that it loses sight of the bigger picture.

Several actions can help maintain this connection:

- Troop committee members occasionally should visit troop meetings and outings and should always be invited to courts of honor, troop banquets, and similar events.
- Troop committee members should be encouraged to attend Scoutmaster and Assistant Scoutmaster Leader Specific Training, while Scoutmasters and assistant Scoutmasters should be encouraged to complete the Troop Committee Challenge. (See chapter 18 for more information.)
- Leaders who have been on the troop committee for several years should consider serving as assistant Scoutmasters for a while (and vice versa).

CHAPTER 18
Adult Leader Training

Every Scout deserves a trained leader. In fact, every Scout deserves a troopful of them. While the Scouts BSA program is not rocket science, trial and error is not the best way to learn how to run it. After all, when you learn by trial and error, your Scouts end up being your research subjects!

In the early days of the Boy Scouts of America, someone asked Chief Scout Executive James E. West what were the three greatest needs of the new movement. He replied, "Training, training, and training." That is still true today.

Training is important for every leader, regardless of background. You will need (and want) to be trained if you are a parent who has never put on a Scout uniform, but you will also need to be trained if you are a recent Cub Scout leader or an Eagle Scout from 20 years ago. Without training, you can easily miss the differences between Cub Scouting and Scouts BSA or between the Scouting program today and two decades ago. What is more, training puts you in touch with fellow Scouters, both trainers and fellow participants, who can offer insights and ideas that go far beyond the course syllabus.

The BSA's adult and youth leader training courses are designed to complement one another. For example, Wood Badge teaches adults the same leadership skills that National Youth Leadership Training teaches Scouts. Troops benefit the most when both adult and youth leaders go to training because everyone can then speak a common language.

The Adult Training Continuum

Training is not a once-in-a-lifetime experience like getting an immunization. Instead, it should happen continually throughout your time as a Scout leader. Just as teachers and doctors complete regular continuing education, Scouters never stop learning.

To make sure the right training is available at the right time, the Boy Scouts of America has developed a five-level training continuum for adult leaders. The levels are joining, orientation, basic, supplemental, and advanced. The first level is required of all registered leaders, the next two are more role-based training, and the last two focus more on advanced skills and leadership.

Joining

The BSA requires Youth Protection training for all new leaders before their membership applications can be approved. This training, which covers prevention and recognition of child abuse, can be completed online or in a classroom setting. It must be taken before a volunteer can have direct contact with Scouts.

All leaders must retake Youth Protection training every two years. If your training is not current when your troop charter is renewed, you can't be reregistered.

Completing Training Online

Youth Protection training and several other courses can be completed through the BSA's E-Learning Course Management System. To get started, go to **www.my.scouting.org**, and establish an account using the member number you received when you registered. You can then take a variety of general and program-specific courses. If you take a course before getting a membership number, you can return to the site later to enter your number for training-record credit.

The site keeps track of the courses you have completed and allows you to print (or reprint) training certificates. You can also review courses you have taken to refresh your memory.

Basic

Every leader should complete basic training as soon as possible—ideally before beginning to work with Scouts. What this training looks like depends on the leader's position; hence the term "leader-specific training." For position-specific training requirements, see **www.scouting.org/training/adult/**. In addition, members of the Scoutmaster corps must complete these two courses:

- Scoutmaster and Assistant Scoutmaster Leader Specific Training
- Introduction to Outdoor Leader Skills

The first course covers the role of the adult leader, the outdoor and advancement programs, and program planning and administration. The second course introduces the practical outdoor skills adults need to lead Scouts in the out-of-doors. These courses are usually offered in the classroom and at camp, respectively.

Members of the troop committee, meanwhile, must complete the Troop Committee Challenge, an interactive course designed to help the troop committee work as a team. The Troop Committee Challenge is available both online and as an instructor-led course.

Once you have completed the basic training for your position, you are considered trained and can wear the Trained Leader emblem on your uniform. It goes on the left sleeve below the emblem of office for which it was earned.

Note that the Trained Leader emblem is specific to your current position. If you go from being an assistant Scoutmaster to a troop committee member, you need to complete the Troop Committee Challenge before again wearing a Trained Leader emblem.

Supplemental

Supplemental training includes a variety of courses given on a district, council, area, regional, or national basis. These courses offer additional information on targeted areas of the program through a combination of additional knowledge of Scouting in general, additional skills and roles knowledge, and/or beginning advanced leadership skills knowledge. Some supplemental training courses expand on what was covered in basic training; others break new ground. Some follow a set syllabus; others draw on the experience and expertise of the participants.

Here are some examples:

This Is Scouting. This online course, which is also available on DVD, presents an overview of the core elements of Scouting, including the organization's mission, aims, and methods. It also provides leaders with a look at BSA resources and a clear understanding of Scouting's expectations of its adult leadership. Completion is necessary to earn the Scouter's Training Award and the Scouter's Key.

Hazardous Weather. This online course, which is also available on CD, prepares Scouters to deal with lightning, extreme temperatures, flash floods, tornadoes, and other weather hazards. Every outing must include at least one leader who has completed this training.

Safe Swim Defense, Safety Afloat, Climb On Safely, and Trek Safely. These courses prepare leaders to safely lead aquatic, climbing, and backcountry activities. They can be completed online or in the classroom. Many summer camps offer them to in-camp leaders.

Roundtables. Led by a roundtable commissioner and roundtable team, roundtables are designed to help your troop succeed by providing a monthly time of training, program ideas, fellowship, and idea sharing with district volunteers and peers in other units.

University of Scouting. Many councils offer Scouting "universities," which are day- or weekend-long events that serve leaders at all levels of Scouting. You can typically take several courses during the event, including homegrown courses and standard courses like Safe Swim Defense.

National Conferences. The Philmont Training Center, part of the 137,000-acre Philmont Scout Ranch near Cimarron, New Mexico, offers a variety of weeklong summer and fall conferences for unit, district, and council Scouters. (Spouses and children can participate in simultaneous age-specific family programs.) Similar conferences are offered during the winter at the Florida High Adventure Sea Base in the Florida Keys. Some national conferences focus on a particular position like Scoutmaster; others cover broad-based topics like advancement or leader training.

Advanced

Leaders who are looking for a deeper understanding of Scouting or additional leadership development will find it in advanced training courses. Successful completion of basic training is usually a prerequisite for these courses, which build on the skills developed at other levels of training.

Advanced training courses include:

- **Wood Badge.** Designed for all adult Scouters, Wood Badge is the most well-known example of advanced leadership training. Over two three-day weekends (or one week), participants learn and practice an array of leadership skills—the same skills Scouts learn in National Youth Leadership Training. The first part of a Wood Badge course reflects unit meetings, while the second part uses a unit camping activity as its delivery model. Participants then complete a "ticket," a list of goals that will allow them to use their new leadership skills in ways that strengthen Scouting back home.
- **Kodiak Challenge.** The Kodiak Challenge is a three- or six-day, trek-based course for adult leaders, older Scouts, and Venturers. It is designed to be an adventure that pushes the boundaries of participants and encourages them to try new things that may be out of their comfort zone. It is an experience that has its underpinnings in the application of the leadership skills they learned in other courses. (See chapter 13 for more information.)
- **Powder Horn.** This exciting weeklong or two-weekend experience is a high-adventure resource management course for adult leaders, older Scouts, and Venturers. The course introduces participants to high-adventure skills through presentations by outside consultants and hands-on practice. Besides learning introductory skills, participants learn how and where to secure resources and how to integrate exciting, creative high-adventure activities into their unit-level programs.
- **Philmont Leadership Challenge.** Held at the Philmont Scout Ranch, this weeklong conference helps participants learn to internalize and practice leadership skills. The action-packed, backcountry experience hones the skills taught in Wood Badge in an outdoor experiential learning environment and underscores the values of teamwork and servant leadership.

At All Levels of Training

Training may begin in the classroom or online, but it does not end there. Across the training continuum, you can benefit from personal support, informal sharing, and self-development.

Personal Support

All leaders need someone to talk to about Scouting, to share their involvement, and to help them see their leadership positions in perspective. If you have not already, seek out an experienced leader who can mentor you and serve as a sounding board as you work through challenges. This could be your troop committee chairperson, a former Scoutmaster, or someone you have met at a training course.

Informal Sharing

Sharing experiences with other adults in similar leadership positions is a means of resolving problems together, giving deeper insight into one's own performance, and learning new ideas. Events such as roundtables are excellent opportunities to exchange ideas with district volunteers and your peers in other units. In fact, many Scouters find the "meeting after the meeting" to be especially valuable.

Self-Development

Don't overlook opportunities to educate yourself, especially in areas where you know you need help. Take time to study *Scouting* magazine, *Scout Life* magazine, and other Scouting literature. Keep up with Scouting blogs and the latest additions to **www.scouting.org**. Don't overlook training available outside Scouting that can apply to your leadership role, such as leadership training through your employer or safety training through groups such as the American Red Cross.

Recertification

Keeping Scouts safe, and keeping Scouting leaders up-to-date with current information and methods, means some training courses need to be retaken every two or three years. The following courses that troop leaders are likely to take must be retaken every two years:

- Youth Protection
- Safe Swim Defense
- Safety Afloat
- Chain Saw Safety
- Hazardous Weather
- Physical Wellness
- Climb On Safely
- Trek Safely

These certifications are good for three years:

- Paddle Craft Safety
- Aquatics Supervision/Swimming and Water Rescue
- Trainer's EDGE

Training Recognition

Training truly is its own reward. The satisfaction of being more successful and comfortable in your role as a leader is well worth the investment of time and money to attend training courses. That said, the BSA also offers more tangible recognition of training completion.

As described above, Scouters who complete basic training are eligible to wear the Trained Leader emblem on their uniforms. Those who complete advanced training courses like Wood Badge receive distinctive, course-specific recognition items. And Scout leaders can earn other training awards for achieving standards of training, tenure, and performance.

For more information about these and other awards, see chapter 20, and visit **www.scouting.org/awards/awards-central**.

DISCOV R 169

ADVANCEMENT AND AWARDS

The advancement and awards aspects of the Scouting program complement each other and are meant to enhance the Scout's experience and competitive edge.

CHAPTER 19
Advancement Overview

Few aspects of Scouts BSA are in the popular consciousness more than the advancement program. The idea of merit badges is so familiar that one social networking website has offered "merit badges" for doing things like checking in at the gym. And just about everybody knows that being an Eagle Scout is a high honor, though they do not know exactly what becoming an Eagle Scout entails.

But what many people—including some Scout leaders—don't realize is that earning badges is an outcome of Scouting, not its aim. Ultimately, it is more important that Scouts *learn* than that they *earn*. Moreover, advancement is just one of the eight methods of Scouting, as discussed in chapter 1. Don't focus so much on this method that you forget to use the other methods; that would be like going to the gym and only exercising one arm.

The Elements of the Advancement Program

The advancement program includes two primary elements: ranks and merit badges. Scouts can also earn various other awards, which we discuss in chapter 20.

The best source for information on advancement policies and procedures is the *Guide to Advancement*. The best source for rank and merit badge requirements is the *Scouts BSA Requirements* book (current year), which also includes a section on special awards and recognitions. The publication is revised annually, and the inside front cover details all changes in requirements since the previous year. Current requirements also appear on the BSA website at www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/advancement-and-awards.

Ranks

Scout Rank

New Scouts earn the Scout rank by completing the requirements for that rank. The Scout must complete requirements for the Scout rank as a member of a troop. Scout rank requirements include the most basic ones such as the square knot and reciting the Scout Oath, Scout Law, motto, and slogan. If any of the requirements have already been completed as part of the Webelos Scouting Adventure, a Scout must simply demonstrate the required knowledge or skills to the Scoutmaster or other designated leader after joining the troop. The Scout can then start working through the ranks of Tenderfoot, Second Class, First Class, Star, Life, and Eagle Scout.

Tenderfoot, Second Class, and First Class

The next three ranks have very specific requirements that cover all the basic skills Scouts should master in the areas of camping, cooking, first aid, physical fitness, nature, and citizenship. Many of these topics are spread across the three ranks, becoming progressively harder at each step. For example, a Scout helps cook a patrol meal for Tenderfoot rank, plans a meal and learns about nutrition for Second Class rank, and plans and cooks a whole weekend's worth of meals for First Class rank.

A Scout may work on the requirements for Scout through Tenderfoot ranks simultaneously, but the ranks must be earned in sequence. There are no tenure requirements for these ranks. However, completing First Class requirement 3 ("Since joining, have participated in 10 separate troop/patrol activities ...") will take many Scouts close to a year.

The BSA recommends that all Scouts strive to achieve First Class rank within the first 12 to 18 months. Research has shown that Scouts who reach that rank within that time are more likely to remain active in the program.

Star, Life, and Eagle Scout

For the upper ranks—Star, Life, and Eagle Scout—the requirements offer more flexibility than the specifically detailed requirements of the lower ranks. For each upper rank, a Scout must earn a certain number of merit badges, amass a certain number of service hours (plan and lead a service project for Eagle Scout rank), and serve a certain number of months in positions of responsibility within the troop. The specific choices, however, are left up to the individual Scout. Few Scouts will follow the same path to Eagle Scout rank, and few merit badge sashes will feature the same array of badges.

Scouts also advance at very different rates. While the members of a Cub Scout den typically advance more or less together, the members of a Scout patrol do not. Some Scouts will fly through the ranks, becoming Eagle Scouts at 13 or 14. Some Scouts will reach Scouting's highest rank just before their 18th birthdays. Some will end their Scouting careers as First Class Scouts or Life Scouts.

Eagle Palms

Scouts who have reached the Eagle Scout rank and are not yet 18 years old may work toward Eagle Palms, which are degrees of the Eagle Scout rank. To earn a Palm, a Scout must remain active in the troop and patrol for three months, earn five additional merit badges beyond those required for Eagle Scout rank (or for the previous Palm), and demonstrate leadership ability and Scout spirit. Scouts may earn multiple Palms. The Bronze Palm recognizes five merit badges beyond Eagle Scout, the Gold Palm represents 10 merit badges, and the Silver Palm represents 15 merit badges. Beyond that, Scouts wear a combination of Palms to denote the number of badges earned.

The *Scouts BSA Requirements* book has more details about Eagle Palms.

Baden-Powell on Badge Hounds

Some Scouts are more interested in collecting badges than in learning skills. As Robert Baden-Powell explained in *Aids to Scoutmastership*, the first handbook for Scoutmasters: "There is always the danger of badge-hunting supplanting badge-earning. Our aim is to make boys into smiling, sensible, self-effacing, hardworking citizens, instead of showy, self-indulgent boys. The Scoutmaster must be on the alert to check badge-hunting and to realize which is the badge-hunter and which is the keen and earnest worker."

Merit Badges

Scouts may choose from approximately 130 merit badges—the number varies from year to year as badges are introduced or discontinued—in subjects ranging from American Business to Woodwork. Many of these badges cover core Scouting skills like camping, first aid, and swimming. Others cover life skills like cooking, fitness, and money management. But most merit badges are designed to introduce Scouts to careers or hobbies as varied as truck transportation, robotics, and golf.

Scouts may begin earning merit badges as soon as they join a troop, and many will come home from their first summer camp with one or two—perhaps Swimming or Basketry. That said, Scouts do not have to earn merit badges to advance until they begin working on the Star rank.

Merit badges on the required list for the Eagle Scout rank have a silver border on the patch. All others have a green border.

There is no deadline for completing the requirements for a badge except the Scout's 18th birthday.

What Happens When Requirements Change?

Rank and merit badge requirements change from time to time, typically with an effective date of January 1. Unless otherwise stated in the *Scouts BSA Requirements* book, a Scout who has already begun work on a rank, merit badge, or Eagle Palm when a revision is introduced may switch to the new requirements or continue with the old ones until the badge is completed. However, if the Scout has not already begun fulfilling the requirements for a badge when the new requirements become effective, the new requirements must be used. Only if work has already begun on a merit badge when it is discontinued, and active work continues, may the Scout complete the badge requirements and count the badge toward advancement. In the case of a discontinued badge, presentation of the cloth badge itself depends on availability.

It is a misconception that discontinued merit badges may be earned as long as the patch and requirements can be found. See the *Guide to Advancement*, topic 7.0.4.4.

Advancement for Scouts With Disabilities

Scouts who have permanent physical or mental disabilities (or disabilities expected to last more than two years or beyond the 18th birthday) may request permission to complete alternate requirements for Scout, Tenderfoot, Second Class, or First Class ranks. They may also request permission to substitute alternative merit badges for those required for Eagle Scout rank. (They are not permitted, however, to change merit badge requirements.) For detailed information, see the *Guide to Advancement*, topic 10.2.2.0; the *Scouting for Youth With Disabilities Manual;* and the Application for Alternative Eagle Scout Rank Merit Badges.

The Four Steps to Advancement

Four basic steps lead to the ranks of Scout through Eagle Scout:

1. The Scout learns.
2. The Scout is tested.
3. The Scout is reviewed.
4. The Scout is recognized.

Step 1—The Scout Learns

Learning is a natural outcome of Scouting activities. A Scout begins learning the Scout Oath and Scout Law immediately upon joining a troop. Scouts going on their first campout might learn more about the outdoors than ever before—and might come home surprised to discover how many rank requirements were completed during the trip.

Nothing inspires advancement so much as a lively troop program. Take care of the program, and advancement will be an inevitable outcome. The monthly program features chosen during the annual planning conference are loaded with chances for Scouts to learn skills and complete tasks that lead to rank advancement. (For more information, see chapter 7, "Troop Program Planning.")

While advancement is a natural outcome of program, some requirements place demands on the troop to provide opportunities for Scouts to show their abilities. At its annual planning conference and monthly meetings, the patrol leaders' council should keep advancement opportunities in mind. Cooking by patrols on every campout allows Scouts to complete their cooking requirements, for example, while many first aid requirements can be covered during monthly program features that focus on preparing Scouts to meet emergencies.

In many cases, subtle tweaks allow activities to contribute to advancement. For example, to earn Second Class rank, a Scout must complete a five-mile hike using a map and compass. If you plan ahead and bring those tools, a simple hike can become an advancement opportunity.

Instruction in Scouting skills comes from a number of sources. Most important are the Scouts themselves, sharing what they know with one another and helping each other along the advancement trail. Scouts serving as troop instructors can provide guidance in their areas of specialization, as can other older Scouts. The troop guide and the assistant Scoutmaster for the new-Scout patrol play major roles in helping young Scouts get a solid foundation as they are starting out.

Older Scouts will find knowledgeable resources in registered merit badge counselors. Experts outside of Scouting who specialize in various outdoor skills and other subjects could be invited to troop meetings from time to time to help Scouts prepare for upcoming adventures. Powder Horn training, discussed in chapters 13 and 18, can put you and your older Scouts in contact with a variety of program consultants.

Step 2—The Scout Is Tested

A Scout who wants to complete an advancement requirement must demonstrate to a leader that the skill has been mastered at the level expected. In a new-Scout patrol, that leader might be the assistant Scoutmaster or the troop guide assigned to the patrol. A Scout in a traditional or older-Scout patrol might be tested by an adult troop leader or by the patrol leader, troop guide, or another junior leader, provided that the youth leader has already earned the rank for which the Scout is being tested.

Completing a requirement is often more a check-off process than a formal examination. It is easy to tell when a Scout has taken part in a required number of troop and patrol activities, when a Scout has successfully pitched a tent and spent a night camping out in it, and when a Scout has swum a certain distance. In other cases, such as knot tying, a Scout will need to demonstrate the skills involved.

When a Scout successfully demonstrates completion of a requirement, a leader acknowledges that fact and records the achievement in the youth's Scouts BSA handbook and with the troop scribe. The scribe keeps track of every Scout's advancement progress in the Troop Record Book or with a computer software program. Each Scout's requirement completions can also be recorded on a troop wall chart for all to see—a valuable incentive for Scouts to achieve higher ranks. Finally, a designated adult submits an advancement report to the local council.

Each Scout is expected to meet the requirements—no more and no less—and to do exactly what is stated. If a requirement specifies "show or demonstrate," that is what must be done; "telling" or "describing" is not enough. The same holds true for words and phrases such as "discuss with your counselor," "make," "list," "in the field," "collect," "identify," and "label."

The Scoutmaster Conference

For each rank, a Scout must participate in a Scoutmaster conference. This conference is a visit between the Scoutmaster and a Scout that can provide a forum for discussing the Scout's ambitions and life purpose and for establishing goals for future achievement. It is also a valuable opportunity for the Scoutmaster and the Scout to discuss activity in the troop and the Scout's understanding and practice of the ideals of Scouting. Together they can set objectives for the Scout not only in Scouting but also as a family member, student, and citizen in the community. In fact, it is a good idea to schedule Scoutmaster conferences with Scouts who *are not* advancing; otherwise, you miss out on these important discussions.

Remember to conduct all Scoutmaster conferences in accordance with the Youth Protection requirements.

The Scoutmaster can also encourage a Scout's advancement by reviewing with the Scout the requirements for the next rank. This is perhaps especially important during Scoutmaster conferences for First Class and Life ranks since the Star and Eagle Scout ranks add requirements Scouts have not encountered before.

A Scoutmaster conference can be held at any time during a Scout's pursuit of a given rank, not just after completion of all the other requirements.

Among other things, the Scoutmaster conference can accomplish the following goals:

- Establish trust and understanding between a Scout and Scoutmaster
- Reinforce the ideals of Scouting
- Allow the Scout and Scoutmaster to share ideas and ask questions of one another

If you and a Scout set goals during a Scoutmaster conference, be sure to review progress in a follow-up conference. It makes sense to keep notes of each conference and review those before meeting with a Scout again.

Conferences for the ranks of Scout through Life Scout should last 10 to 15 minutes. Those for Eagle Scout might last 30 minutes or somewhat longer. They can be conducted during troop meetings, during outdoor activities, or in the Scout's home (provided a parent is also present). Each conference should be a private discussion between the Scoutmaster and a Scout, but it must be held in full view of other people. Remember to conduct all Scoutmaster conferences in accordance with the Youth Protection requirements.

These pointers will help make every Scoutmaster conference a success:

- Make the conference special. Give the Scout your undivided attention throughout the meeting.
- Invite the Scout to share in the discussion.
- Keep the setting relaxed. Don't sit behind a desk or across a table from the Scout.
- Keep the tone positive. If there are areas of improvement to discuss, be sure to bring up behavior and achievements you can praise, too.
- Close the meeting with the Scout handshake as you remind the Scout that you always welcome the chance to visit and that you are available anytime to discuss a question, a problem, or a success that the Scout wants to share.

A Scout can't "pass" or "fail" a Scoutmaster conference. The Scout meets the requirement simply by participating.

Conference for Scout, Tenderfoot, Second Class, and First Class

If you are holding the conference after all the requirements for the rank have been met, congratulate the Scout on completing the advancement requirements, then explain what can be expected at the board of review. Look over the requirements for the next rank, and make sure the Scout understands them. The following are some subjects that might lead to further insights:

- School (favorite and least favorite subjects)
- Sports and hobbies
- What the Scout liked best about the last troop outing
- Changes the Scout would like to see in troop meetings
- Interactions with older Scouts in the troop
- The Scout's family activities
- How the Scout defines concepts such as Scout spirit, being morally straight, and duty to God
- How the Scout spends free time
- When appropriate, the Scout's interest in and ability to handle a patrol position such as scribe or quartermaster, or one of greater responsibility such as patrol leader

Conference for Star, Life, Eagle Scout, and Eagle Palms

Scoutmaster conferences with Scouts working toward Star, Life, and Eagle Scout ranks and Eagle Palms can be every bit as meaningful and important as those meetings conducted with younger Scouts. Consider asking experienced Scouts questions that explore some of these subjects:

- Thoughts about how the troop as a whole is doing and what the Scout can do to help improve it
- Troop leadership positions that the Scout seeks or desires
- Being a role model for younger Scouts
- How to deal with issues of drugs, alcohol, and tobacco
- How the Scout defines concepts such as Scout spirit, being morally straight, and duty to God
- Part-time jobs and extracurricular activities
- Required and elective merit badges that the Scout is interested in earning
- Special Scouting goals such as Order of the Arrow membership, attending a jamboree, or working on a camp staff

Eagle Scout Requirement Due Dates

All the requirements for the Eagle Scout rank must be completed before the Scout's 18th birthday. The only exception is the board of review, which can be conducted up to three months after the Scout's 18th birthday without special approval. Boards of review that occur three to six months after that date must be preapproved by the local council. Boards of review that occur beyond six months after the Scout's 18th birthday must be preapproved by the National Council.

For more detailed information about the Eagle Scout board of review beyond the Scout's 18th birthday, see the *Guide to Advancement,* topic 8.0.3.1.

Step 3—The Scout Is Reviewed

After a Scout has completed all the requirements for a rank, the Scout appears before a board of review. For Scout through Life ranks, the board consists of three to six members of the troop committee. For Eagle Scout rank, the membership is determined by local council policy. The board could be made up of members of the troop committee joined by a representative from the district or council; or a combination of unit, district, and council volunteers; or only district or council volunteers.

Specific information about the composition of boards of review can be found in the *Guide to Advancement,* topics 8.0.2.0 and 8.0.3.0.

The purpose of the board of review is not to retest the Scout, but rather to determine the quality of the Scout's experience, decide whether the requirements have been completed, and if so, encourage the Scout to continue the quest for for the next rank. Each review should also include a discussion of ways in which the Scout lives up to the Scout Oath and Scout Law in everyday life.

Won't Scouts forget the skills they have learned if they are not retested? Probably so. However, the best way to make sure Scouts retain their skills is not to retest them but to plan meetings and outings that encourage them to regularly use or teach those skills. "Use it or lose it" is a good watchword.

Boards of review for the ranks of Scout through Life should each last about 15 minutes. An Eagle Scout board of review generally lasts 30 minutes or somewhat longer. Every session should be set up so that members of the board can share a meaningful discussion with the Scout about important matters including personal goals, personal growth, and Scout spirit. The following guidelines will help foster an atmosphere of trust and support:

- Make every effort to put the Scout at ease.
- Smile and create a friendly, nonthreatening mood.
- Enliven the discussion by asking about the Scout's recent Scouting adventures.
- Ask open-ended questions; yes or no questions do not lead to meaningful discussion.
- Ask about family, school, and religious activities.
- Offer encouragement and praise.

At the end of the review, the Scout should leave the room while the board members discuss the Scout's qualifications. Then they should call the Scout back to say the new rank has been approved—or to outline very clearly what more the Scout must do to fulfill the requirements successfully. The board can close the session by congratulating the Scout on the progress already made and encouraging continued good efforts.

A troop should schedule its boards of review to occur regularly—perhaps during one troop meeting each month—so that Scouts and leaders can plan for them well in advance.

Besides reviewing Scouts who have completed requirements for advancement, boards that meet regularly might also choose to meet with Scouts who are not advancing. A board could give those Scouts support and perhaps help them discover ways to overcome obstacles hindering their progress.

Section 8 of the *Guide to Advancement* includes extensive information on conducting boards of review, including the appeals process.

Step 4—The Scout Is Recognized

Immediate recognition is a powerful incentive built into the BSA's advancement program. A Scout should receive the new rank badge as soon as possible after the achievement has been approved by a board of review. A simple ceremony at the conclusion of a troop meeting or during a campout is ideal, with the Scoutmaster making the presentation of the badge.

Every three or four months, the troop should hold a court of honor—a formal recognition with families, friends, chartered organization members, and the public in attendance. All Scouts who have advanced to any rank except Eagle Scout, or who have earned merit badges since the last court of honor, should be recognized.

Eagle Scout Court of Honor

A special Eagle Scout court of honor is held after an Eagle Scout board of review has verified that the candidate has completed all the requirements for that rank and the application has been approved by the National Council. The Scout and family should be involved in planning the ceremony and selecting those who will make the presentation of the award and credentials.

Courts of honor can be deeply meaningful experiences for Scouts. These ceremonies should be chaired by a youth leader and planned with the support of the Scoutmaster or the troop committee member responsible for advancement. To make the most of the opportunity, those planning a court of honor might consider these guidelines:

- Publish the dates for courts of honor in the troop calendar.
- Promote an upcoming court of honor throughout the troop.
- Involve troop families and the chartered organization.
- Invite local media.
- Have all awards on hand and certificates signed well in advance of the event.
- Ensure that the meeting place is appropriate and properly set up. Consider outdoor locations, weather permitting.
- Use decorations and props that befit the occasion.
- Make the ceremony dignified and meaningful, both for Scouts and for the audience.
- Consider serving refreshments afterward and providing adults and Scouts time to visit.
- Watch the time. Most courts of honor should last no longer than one hour.
- Having a Scout plan and lead a court of honor can fulfill requirement 8 of the Eagle-required Communication merit badge.

For more information about planning and conducting courts of honor, see chapter 11 and and Troop Program Resources (www.programresources.org).

The Merit Badge Program

While troop leaders teach and sign off on rank requirements, merit badge counselors sign off on merit badges. These counselors are registered volunteers who have skills and education in the field and have been approved by the local council. (A troop leader may serve as a merit badge counselor. However, registration and approval as a merit badge counselor is separate and in addition to the leader's primary registered position in the troop.)

Merit badge counselors are registered with the local council and must complete Youth Protection training before they begin working with Scouts.

When used effectively, the merit badge program does several things for Scouts:

- It provides them opportunities to learn valuable skills and introduces them to lifetime hobbies and career interests.
- It helps them build confidence by overcoming obstacles—even ones as simple as picking up the phone to call a stranger or making a presentation to a group of fellow Scouts.
- It lets them develop social skills by interacting with a variety of adults.
- It gives them avenues to further explore topics of interest. For example, a counselor might offer a workplace tour or suggest books to read. (Note, however, that counselors cannot add to or subtract from badge requirements.)

There is no limit to the number of merit badges a Scout may earn from one counselor, and counselors may work with and pass any Scouts, including their own children. That said, Scouts should be encouraged to reach out to counselors beyond their families and troops. Only by doing so will they get the most out of the merit badge program and achieve the aims of Scouting.

When a Scout has decided on a badge to be earned, the following steps must be followed:

1. The Scout obtains from the Scoutmaster a signed Application for Merit Badge (often called a "blue card") and the name of at least one registered and approved counselor for that merit badge.
2. The Scout sets up and—along with another Scout, a relative, or a friend—attends the first appointment with the merit badge counselor.
3. The counselor explains the requirements for the merit badge and helps the Scout plan ways to fulfill them.
4. The Scout works on the badge requirements until completion, meeting with the counselor whenever necessary.

Sessions with merit badge counselors must take place where others can view the interaction. A Scout must have another person present at each of these meetings. This person can be the Scout's parent or legal guardian or another registered adult. In addition, having another Scout along is a great way to help that friend advance in Scouting. However, each Scout must complete the badge requirements individually.

A Scout works with adult troop leaders to identify merit badge counselors. The council advancement committee is responsible for approval of all counselors before they begin service, although it can delegate this function to the districts. Troop leaders can help identify potential counselors by reviewing the troop resource surveys that parents fill out.

Another great source is the chartered organization. Many troops assemble a list of approved counselors in their areas who have indicated a willingness to work with Scouts; others identify contacts in categories like science, sports, communications, and public service and rely on those persons to recruit counselors as needed. In addition, each district advancement committee is responsible for developing a merit badge counselor list, keeping it current, and providing copies to every troop in the district.

Friendstorming On Tour, No. 510-003, outlines a volunteer-prospecting method that can identify large numbers of potential volunteers.

CHAPTER 20
Other Awards

Ranks and merit badges are far from the only awards that Scouts can earn. A host of other awards let Scouts gain recognition for special skills and accomplishments—everything from speaking a foreign language to saving a life. The awards and recognitions can be powerful motivators on the path to (or after) the Eagle Scout rank. They also give adult leaders additional tools to encourage participation and continued learning.

If you have a Scout who is more interested in scholarship or sports than camping and hiking, steer that Scout toward some of the awards described in this chapter. You may be able to sustain interest in Scouting as the youth realizes that the program celebrates all these accomplishments and pursuits.

Awards are not limited to Scouts. While adult leaders cannot participate in the advancement program, they can achieve many other awards and recognitions that offer tangible recognition of their contributions to Scouting both within the organization and in the community at large. This chapter discusses the most common recognitions Scouts and Scouters can earn.

Requirements for most awards described in this chapter can be found in the *Scouts BSA Requirements* book and in the Awards Central section of the BSA website (www.scouting.org/awards/awards-central). Detailed information explaining how, when, and where to wear various patches, badges, and medals can be found in the *Guide to Awards and Insignia*.

Awards for Scouts

Boardsailing BSA, Kayaking BSA, Scuba BSA, and Snorkeling BSA. These swimsuit emblems are earned by Scouts who learn the basics of the designated aquatic sports.

Cyber Chip. This award covers the principles of internet safety.

Den Chief Service Award. This award recognizes Scouts who attend Den Chief training, understand Cub Scouting, and serve as den chiefs for at least a year.

Firem'n Chit. This award emphasizes wise use of open fires.

Glenn A. and Melinda W. Adams National Eagle Scout Service Project of the Year Award. This award program recognizes top Eagle Scout service projects at the local, regional, and national levels.

Keep America Beautiful Hometown USA Award. This award recognizes Scouts who undertake outstanding efforts to promote citizenship and environmental improvement in their communities.

Mile Swim BSA. This swimsuit emblem recognizes Scouts who swim a mile and complete certain other requirements.

National Honor Patrol Award. Members of a patrol may earn this award for completing the requirements listed in chapter 3 and in the *Patrol Leader Handbook*.

National Outdoor Badges. These five badges, which are segments that go around a center emblem, recognize achievement in the areas of adventure, aquatics, camping, hiking, and riding. Gold and silver devices represent additional achievement in the subject area.

National Medal for Outdoor Achievement. This award is the highest recognition a Scout can receive for outdoor achievement. To earn it, a Scout must reach First Class rank, earn the National Outdoor Badge for Camping with the silver device and two other National Outdoor Badges with gold devices, earn specified merit badges, complete Wilderness First Aid training, plan and lead an outing, and either plan and lead an adventure activity or complete a season on summer-camp staff in an outdoor area.

Nova and Supernova Awards. These awards are part of the BSA's STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) initiative. The Nova awards are designed to whet Scouts' appetite for STEM, while the Supernova awards recognize more advanced achievement.

Paul Bunyan Woodsman. This award requires Scouts to build on and teach the skills covered by the Totin' Chip.

Recruiter Strip. This award goes to Scouts who recruit friends to join Scouting.

Totin' Chip. This award indicates that a Scout understands the appropriate handling of such woods tools as knives and saws.

World Conservation Award. Scouts may qualify for this award by earning these merit badges: Environmental Science, Citizenship in the World, and either Soil and Water Conservation or Fish and Wildlife Management.

Awards for Adults

Most adult awards are bestowed upon their recipients rather than being pursued. Here are a handful.

Asian American Spirit of Scouting Service Award. This award recognizes involvement in the development and implementation of Scouting opportunities for Asian American youth.

District Award of Merit. This is the highest award a district can present for volunteer service.

George Meany Award. This award recognizes union members who have made a significant contribution to the youth of their communities through Scouting.

¡Scouting Vale la Pena! Service Award. This award recognizes involvement in the development and implementation of Scouting opportunities for Hispanic and/or Latino youth.

Scouting Service Award. This award recognizes adult volunteers who have earned one of five different awards, each celebrating a leader's dedication to a special segment of Scouting:

- Asian American Spirit of Scouting Service Award
- ¡Scouting Vale la Pena! Service Award
- Whitney M. Young Jr. Service Award
- American Indian Scouting Association Grey Wolf Award
- Special Needs Scouting Service Award

Each of the first three awards listed above previously had its own square knot. But once supplies of those knots run out, the new Scouting Service Award knot will be used to recognize recipients.

Silver Antelope. This is the highest award a region can present for volunteer service.

Silver Beaver. This is the highest award a local council can present for volunteer service.

Silver Buffalo. The Silver Buffalo is the highest award the National Council can present for volunteer service.

Unit Leader Award of Merit. This award recognizes Cubmasters, Scoutmasters, Coaches, and Advisors for effective leadership of their units.

Whitney M. Young Jr. Service Award. This award recognizes involvement in the development and implementation of Scouting opportunities for rural or low-income urban youth.

Woods Service Award. This award recognizes individuals who provide outstanding service to Scouts with special needs.

Adult leaders can pursue several recognitions that promote training, service, and tenure while allowing them to set an example of achievement for their Scouts. Among these recognitions are the Scouter's Training Award and the Scoutmaster's Key.

Scouter's Training Award Requirements

Training

- Complete basic training for any Scout leader position.
- Complete This Is Scouting training.
- Attend a university of Scouting (or equivalent), or attend at least four roundtables (or equivalent) during each year of the tenure used for this award.

Tenure

Complete a total of two years as a registered adult leader in a Scout troop.

Performance

- Participate in an annual troop planning meeting in each year.
- Serve as an adult leader in a troop that achieves at least the Bronze level of Journey to Excellence in each year.
- Give primary leadership in meeting at least one troop Journey to Excellence objective in each year.
- Participate in at least one additional supplemental or advanced training event at the council, area, region, or national level during the two years.

Scoutmaster's Key Requirements

Training

- Complete basic training for Scoutmasters.
- Complete This Is Scouting training.
- Attend a university of Scouting (or equivalent), or attend at least four roundtables (or equivalent) during each year of the tenure used for this award.

Tenure

Complete at least three years of registered tenure as a Scoutmaster within a five-year period (can include the tenure used to earn the Scouter's Training Award).

Performance

- Achieve at least the Silver level of Journey to Excellence for at least two years.
- Earn the National Outdoor Challenge Award at least once.
- Conduct an annual troop planning session and have a published troop meeting and activity schedule for the troop's parents in each year.
- Participate in at least one additional supplemental or advanced training event at the council, area, region, or national level.

Awards for Scouts and Adults

BSA Lifeguard. Adult leaders and Scouts 15 years of age and older can earn this recognition by successfully completing the BSA Lifeguard course and demonstrating the ability to perform each of the skills taught in the course.

Conservation Good Turn Award. This award goes to Scouts and adult leaders who join with conservation or environmental organizations to carry out conservation projects in their home communities.

Emergency Preparedness Award. This award goes to Scouts and adults who take steps to be prepared for emergencies.

50-Miler Award. This award recognizes Scouts and adult leaders who complete a trek of at least 50 miles over five days by foot, boat, or bicycle and who do a minimum of 10 hours of conservation work on trails, waterways, campsites, or other natural areas.

Historic Trails Award. This award recognizes Scouts and adult leaders who study a historic trail or site, hike or camp along the trail or near the site, and work to restore and mark the trail or site.

International Spirit Award. This award recognizes Scouts and adult leaders who have gained a greater knowledge of international Scouting and a greater appreciation of different cultures and countries.

Interpreter Strip. This patch recognizes Scouts and adult leaders who are conversant in a foreign language, American Sign Language, or Morse code.

Lifesaving and Merit Awards. The National Court of Honor presents these awards to Scouts and Scouters for rare Scoutlike action:

- **Honor Medal.** The highest special award in Scouting, the Honor Medal is given to Scouts and Scouters who show heroism, resourcefulness, and skill by saving or trying to save a life at great risk of their own. In exceptional cases, it is awarded with crossed palms.
- **Medal of Merit.** This award is given to Scouts and Scouters who have performed an act of service that was rare or exceptional and that reflected an uncommon degree of concern for the well-being of others.
- **National Certificate of Merit.** This award is given to Scouts and Scouters who have performed a significant act of service deserving of special national recognition.
- **Local Certificate of Merit.** This award is given to Scouts and Scouters who have performed a significant act of service that is deserving of special local recognition.

Messengers of Peace. This award recognizes Scouts and adult leaders who participate in service projects that promote the cause of peace. Scouts around the world can earn this award.

Outdoor Ethics Awareness and Action Awards. Scouts and adult leaders can earn these awards for learning how to make ethical decisions regarding the outdoors by following the principles of the Outdoor Code, Leave No Trace, Tread Lightly!, and similar programs.

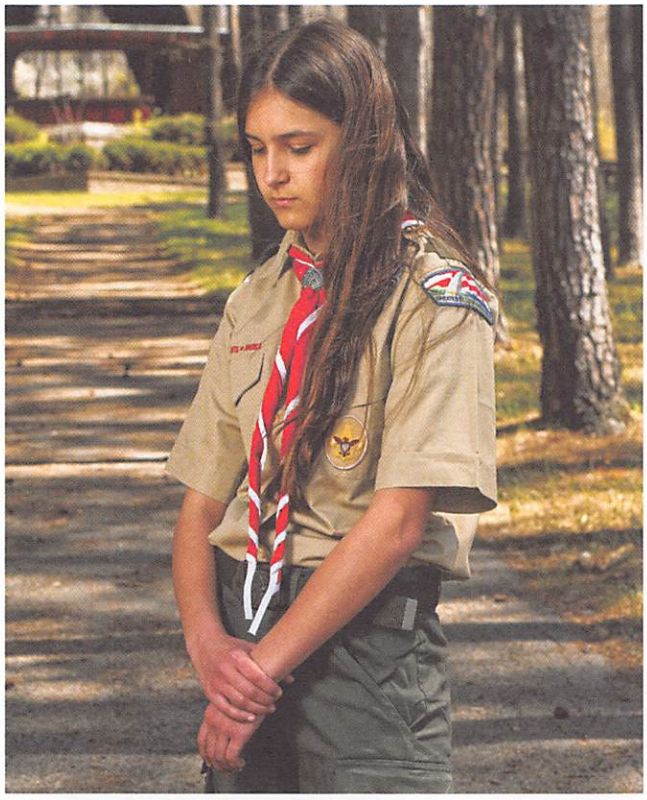
SCOUTStrong Presidential Active Lifestyle Award. This award recognizes Scouts and adult leaders who meet a daily activity goal for at least five days a week during six of eight weeks. The goal is 30 minutes a day for adults and 60 minutes a day for Scouts.

Service Stars, Attendance Pins, and Veteran Scouter Awards. These awards recognize length of tenure with the BSA.

Torch of Gold. This award recognizes Scouts and adult leaders who have provided outstanding service in the area of Scouts with special needs.

Trained Leader. This emblem recognizes adult leaders who have completed basic training for their current position and youth leaders who have completed Introduction to Leadership Skills for Troops (or den chiefs who have attended the Den Chief Training Conference).

William T. Hornaday Awards. These awards recognize Scouts and adult leaders who have done exceptional and distinguished service in conservation. Awards include a unit certificate, a badge for Scouts, bronze and silver medals for Scouts, a gold badge and gold medal for adult leaders, and a gold certificate for corporations and organizations.



Religious Emblems

Dozens of faith groups—from the African Methodist Episcopal Church to the Zoroastrian Association of Greater New York—offer religious emblems programs for Scouts who are members of the respective faith group. While these are not Scouting awards, they are approved for wear on the Scout uniform. Depending on the faith group, there may be several age-specific emblems that youth members can receive, along with an adult recognition that may be bestowed upon the recipient by the religious body.

More information is available in the *Duty to God* brochure, No. 512-879.

The Order of the Arrow

Scouts and adult leaders are eligible for induction into the Order of the Arrow, Scouting's national honor society. Youth members are elected by their peers. To be eligible for election, they must be at least First Class rank, must have camped 15 days and nights during the past two years (including one long-term camp), and must have the approval of their Scoutmaster. Adults are nominated by the troop committee and approved by the lodge adult selection committee; they must meet the same camping requirement and, if under 21, must have reached the First Class rank. The Order itself offers numerous recognitions for its members. (For more on the Order of the Arrow, see volume 2 of the *Troop Leader Guidebook*.)

EXIT
Cub Scout
BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA
FUND RAISING

TROOP ADMINISTRATION

Your ability to create an exciting, engaging troop program is limited only by your imagination, your leadership resources, sound administration, and the troop's financial resources.

CHAPTER 21
Financing the Troop

Troops that raise money effectively are able to buy good equipment, travel to high-adventure bases and even foreign countries, and ensure that youth and adult leaders are properly trained. Those that struggle to raise money—or that don't do so efficiently—often fail to deliver the promise of Scouting.

Money-earning projects and financial management are primarily the responsibility of the troop committee. However, everyone in the troop has a vested interest in making sure the troop has the resources it needs and is using its resources wisely.

Planning a Budget

In consultation with the Scoutmaster and patrol leaders' council, the troop committee should develop an annual budget and then track income and expenses throughout the year. Surprises will no doubt occur, but the budget is an important tool for planning and monitoring troop finances.

Building a responsible budget for a troop is a four-step process:

1. The troop treasurer, Scoutmaster, and scribe consider the troop's expenses and prepare a rough draft of a budget to cover them.
2. The patrol leaders' council reviews the proposed budget and puts it into final form.
3. The troop committee approves the budget.
4. The budget is presented to the Scouts and their families.

Typical expenses include:

- Registration fees
- Unit charter fee
- *Scout Life* subscription fees
- Unit accident and liability insurance
- Advancement and recognition
- Activities
- Summer camp
- Program materials
- Training expenses
- Uniforms
- Reserve fund
- Other expenses

Typical income sources include:

- Weekly or monthly dues
- Annual membership fees (covering registration, *Scout Life,* and insurance)
- Money-earning projects
- Chartered organization support

Part of budgeting is deciding who pays for what. For example, the troop might decide that Scouts pay their own registration fees while the troop covers adult registration fees. Or it might decide to pay all adults' fees for basic training but offer only partial reimbursement for Wood Badge.

The troop budget should take into account future plans. If you anticipate adding a new patrol next spring, build in the cost of patrol camping equipment. If you want to save up for a troop trailer, make that a line item in each year's budget over the course of three or four years.

While troops are not in business to make money, there is nothing wrong with carrying a cash balance from year to year if you are saving up for a major expense. It is also a good idea to maintain a cash reserve in case of emergencies.

Notice that outings are not included in the income and expense lists above. In many troops, outings are self-supporting, with the expenses divided evenly among the participants. If food, gas, and camping fees cost $25 per person, they ask each participant to pay $25. If summer camp costs $250 per Scout, they ask each Scout to pay $250—or perhaps a little more to cover gas and other incidentals.

Adult costs are a special case. On a weekend outing where food is the largest expense, you might not ask adults to pay since their expenses could easily be prorated among the Scouts (or adults could bring their own food). For outings with higher fixed costs, like summer camp or whitewater rafting, adults could pay their own way or the troop could cover at least some of those costs through the troop budget.

Some troops let adults who have completed basic training attend outings for free while other adults pay their own way. The first option offers adults a good incentive to attend training, as does having the troop cover training fees.

Making each outing self-supporting gives you the chance to teach youth leaders the basics of budgeting. As discussed in chapter 7, put the Scouts in charge of planning each outing, figure out what their expenses will be, and then set the outing cost based on those expenses. Ideally, any positive balances or cost overruns will average out over time. Then, if you come out ahead at the end of the program year, spend the extra money on something fun like a pizza party to reward the troop for staying within budget.

For more information on troop budgets, including a budget worksheet and other helpful resources, go to www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/program-planning-tools.

Money-Saving Tip

If you itemize deductions on your federal income tax return, you may be able to deduct many of the expenses you incur as a BSA volunteer; examples include leader uniforms, mileage, and training fees. To qualify, the expenses must be unreimbursed, directly connected with your volunteer service, and incurred only because of that service. Personal, living, or family expenses do not count, nor do expenses incurred for your children who are in Scouting. Reasonable and necessary standards apply. For more information, see IRS Publication 526 or consult your tax advisor.

Membership Fees and Dues

Most troops charge each Scout an annual membership fee at charter-renewal time that covers the cost of registration, *Scout Life,* and insurance (and perhaps a little more for operating expenses). Depending on the amount of any financial reserves, troops might waive or prorate this fee for new members who join during the charter year.

Note that currently registered Webelos Scouts who graduate into Scouts BSA can transfer their membership at no cost. Their *Scout Life* subscriptions continue at no additional charge, and they are covered under the unit's accident and sickness insurance policy (if the unit has purchased a policy) until you renew the charter.

Supporting Scouts With Financial Needs

Be sure the dues and fees the troop charges do not pose a financial burden to families who are struggling financially, especially new troop families who also need to buy equipment and uniforms and pay for summer camp. Give troop families a discreet way to request assistance or a deadline extension; for example, they could directly contact the Scoutmaster or troop committee chair. Many troops build financial assistance into their budgets. You may also find the chartered organization willing to help Scouts who need financial support. Needless to say, it is important to protect the privacy of families who request assistance.

Try to schedule a money-earning project during the spring so new Scouts have a chance to pay for at least part of their initial expenses. Your council may offer "campership" assistance for low-income Scouting families to cover part of the cost of attending council camps. You could even let second-year Webelos Scouts who are headed to your troop participate in winter fundraisers to get a head start on earning money.

Finally, note that payment of dues cannot be considered a prerequisite for advancement—that would amount to adding to the requirements, which is not permitted.

Many troops also charge weekly or monthly dues that help fund troop operations. Dues give Scouts a chance to pay their own way and also give the troop and patrol scribes a manageable task to handle on a regular basis.

Here is one way the system can work:

1. Before the first meeting of every month, the troop scribe prepares a patrol monthly dues envelope for each patrol.
2. Each patrol scribe collects dues from the members of the patrol, records the contributions on the envelope, and puts the money inside.
3. The troop scribe collects the patrol envelopes and records the amounts in the Troop Record Book, or in the troop's record-keeping software.
4. The troop scribe submits the dues to the troop treasurer (a member of the troop committee).
5. The troop treasurer deposits the dues into the troop's checking account.

Money-Earning Projects

The bulk of the troop's income will likely come from money-earning projects. Such projects allow Scouts to pay their own way while reducing the financial burden on families. Before starting a money-earning project, you should submit a Unit Money-Earning Application to the council service center. (Council-sponsored product sales, such as popcorn sales, are the exception since they have already been reviewed to make sure they follow BSA guidelines.)

Here are some project ideas that have proven successful:

- Collecting recyclable paper, cans, plastic bottles, toner cartridges, and Christmas trees
- Conducting rummage sales, yard sales, and auctions (auctions are permissible; raffles are not)
- Providing lawn-care services
- Washing cars
- Preparing pancake or spaghetti suppers, fish fries, and other community meals
- Selling Christmas trees, wreaths, mulch and fertilizer, bedding plants, fruit, and other seasonal items
- Caring for pets when their owners are away
- Selling "scrip" (vouchers) or prepaid gift cards
- Selling discount cards and coupon books
- Offering gift-wrapping (for donations) at stores during the holidays
- Hanging American flags in front of homes and businesses on major holidays
- Holding Scout nights at local restaurants, where a portion of the proceeds goes to the troop
- Offering a "parents' night out" to allow couples in the chartered organization to have date nights

Evaluating Potential Money-Earning Projects

Besides prompting you to have a neutral third party review the plan, the Unit Money-Earning Application provides important guidance on what constitutes an appropriate project. When evaluating a potential money-earning project, consider these questions, which are found on the back of the Unit Money-Earning Application.

Do you really need a fundraising project? There should be a real need for raising money based on the unit's program. In fact, the Unit Money-Earning Application asks how the funds will be spent. Do not engage in money-earning projects merely because someone has offered an attractive plan.

If any contracts are to be signed, will they be signed by an individual, without reference to the Boy Scouts of America and without binding the local council, the Boy Scouts of America, or the chartered organization? Before any person in the unit signs a contract, the signer must make sure the venture is legitimate and worthy. If a contract is signed, the signer is personally responsible. No individual can sign on behalf of the local council or the Boy Scouts of America or bind the chartered organization without its written authorization.

Will your fundraiser prevent promoters from trading on the name and goodwill of the Boy Scouts of America? Because of Scouting's good reputation, customers rarely question the quality or price of a product. The nationwide network of Scouting units must not become a beehive of commercial interest.

Will the fundraising activity uphold the good name of the BSA? Does it avoid games of chance and gambling? Selling raffle tickets, conducting lotteries, or engaging in other games of chance is a direct violation of the Rules and Regulations of the Boy Scouts of America, which do not permit gambling. The product must not detract from the ideals and principles of the BSA.

If a commercial product is to be sold, will it be sold on its own merits and without reference to the needs of Scouting? All commercial products must sell on their own merits, not the benefit received by the Scouts. The principle of value received is critical in choosing what to sell.

If a commercial product is to be sold, will the fundraising activity comply with BSA policy on wearing the uniform? The official uniform is intended to be worn primarily for use in connection with Scouting activities. However, council executive boards may approve use of the uniform for certain fundraising activities. (Typically, council popcorn sales or Scouting show ticket sales are approved fundraisers for uniform wear.)

Will the fundraising project avoid soliciting money or gifts? The Rules and Regulations of the Boy Scouts of America state, "Youth members shall not be permitted to serve as solicitors of money for their chartered organizations, for the local council, or in support of other organizations. Adult and youth members shall not be permitted to serve as solicitors of money in support of personal or unit participation in local, national, or international events."

Does the fundraising activity avoid competition with other units, the chartered organization, the local council, and United Way? Check with the chartered organization representative and the district executive to make certain the chartered organization and the council agree on the dates and type of fundraiser.

You should be able to answer "yes" to all of the above questions. That is just the beginning, however. Consider the following questions as well.

Does the fundraiser offer a reasonable return on your investment of time and effort? If you raise only a few dollars per Scout at an all-day carwash, for example, you might need to find a new money-earning project.

Does the fundraiser support, rather than detract from, the troop program? If a project consumes four straight Saturdays, it will be impossible to hold an outing that month. Decide whether the income is worth that impact on the program.

Does the fundraiser require little upfront risk? Be wary of product sales that require a large upfront investment unless you are confident that you can sell everything you have committed to buy.

Does the fundraiser primarily involve customers beyond troop families? If troop families are your only customers, they might prefer to pay an activity fee instead, which would likely be less than they would pay to support the fundraiser.

Does the fundraiser provide customers with a needed product or service? If you sell products or services that people actually need, they will be more likely to buy and to feel good about their purchase.

Is the fundraiser repeatable? When you sell a product or service that people need year after year, you can build up a base of repeat customers. For example, a pancake breakfast at the chartered organization on Scout Sunday could become a tradition that needs relatively little promotion after the first few years.

Encouraging Participation in Money-Earning Projects

Money-earning projects work best when Scouts (and their parents) have an incentive to participate. Incentives can include prizes for the top few salesmen or for all Scouts who reach a certain threshold. The prizes can be tangible—such as camping gear or waived outing fees—but they can also be more creative. For example, the Scoutmaster could serve as personal chef on the next outing for the patrol that sells the most popcorn.

Chartered Organization Support

Chartered organizations have no obligation to provide financial support to their troops. Many do, however, which can strengthen the bond between the troop and the organization.

Rather than putting money from the chartered organization in the troop's general fund, earmark it for special purposes, such as leader training, summer-camp scholarships, or Eagle Scout recognition items. Doing so lets you demonstrate Scouting's value in tangible ways. For example, you could encourage a Scout who received summer-camp assistance to send the organization a thank-you letter from camp, or you could invite the chartered organization representative to Eagle Scout courts of honor to present the recognition items paid for by that organization.

CHAPTER 22
Chartered Organization Relationships

As discussed in chapter 2, every Scout troop is owned and operated by a local religious institution, school, civic organization, or similar group. The group is called a chartered organization because it receives a charter—a sort of franchise—to use the Scouting program to serve its members and its community. Each year, the organization and the BSA local council sign a new charter agreement, renewing the commitments they originally made to each other and to the young people they serve.

The chartered organization can be an important source of support for the troop. In fact, you can picture the troop as a three-legged stool, with the Scoutmaster corps, the troop committee, and the chartered organization as its legs. When all three legs are strong, the troop stands tall and strong.

For more information on chartered organization relationships, visit www.scoutingwire.org/marketing-and-membership-hub/new-unit-development/chartered-organizations.

People and Purpose

Chartered organization relationships are strongest when people are connected and purposes are shared. Relationships are weakest when people in the troop and the organization do not know each other and when the troop and the organization work at cross purposes.

People

The primary liaison between the troop and the organization is the chartered organization representative, that member of the chartered organization who oversees its Scouting department. This individual should be on the troop's mailing list and should be invited to troop committee meetings, courts of honor, banquets, and other high-profile functions. This person should also be consulted when problems arise that require chartered-organization involvement.

In addition to the chartered organization representative, you will want to stay in touch with the organization's executive officer (such as its religious leader or president) and extend invitations to events like Eagle Scout courts of honor. Build a relationship with other staff members or volunteers, such as a religious institution's youth director or a civic club's youth committee chair. Staying connected with these people gives you additional allies within the organization and makes it easier to coordinate activities.

In some cases, the chartered organization may be a group within a group, such as a Knights of Columbus council within a Catholic parish. Even so, it is a good idea to maintain a relationship with the larger group.

From the troop side, it is usually helpful to have adult leaders (and troop families) who are members of the chartered organization. By their very presence, they emphasize that the troop belongs to the organization. What is more, they can be on the lookout for potential problems—a window that gets broken on Scout night, for example—and for potential opportunities—such as an organization-wide day of service in which the troop could participate.

Purpose

It is easy enough to figure out why the chartered organization exists. But why does it have a Scout troop? Once you understand that purpose, you can make sure you are helping the organization achieve it.

Assume for a moment that the troop belongs to a religious institution. If that institution sees Scouting as a way to serve existing member-families as part of its youth ministry, you would want to coordinate calendars with the youth director so activities do not conflict. On the other hand, if the institution sees Scouting as an outreach tool, you might offer the religious leader ways to connect with troop families from the greater community (through Scout Sunday and Scout Sabbath observances, for example). In either event, you will want to be aware of key religious holidays and events as you plan the troop calendar.

Working Together

Once you know the organization, its people, and its purpose for operating a Scout troop, you can find many opportunities to work together. Here are a few things you could do.

- Ensure that the troop has a presence on the organization's website, in its membership materials, and on its bulletin boards and literature racks.
- Include chartered organization information in troop membership materials and on the troop website.
- Participate in the organization's annual kickoff events and open houses.
- Provide Scout color guards or speakers for organization meetings—especially around Scouting Anniversary Week, the week that includes February 8 (Scouting's birthday).
- Participate in worship services during Scouting Anniversary Week.
- Hold a charter presentation and give a "state of the troop" report at an organization meeting.
- Set up recruiting tables at the organization to coordinate with School Night for Scouting or troop open houses.
- Set up tables at the organization to sell products during troop money-earning projects.

- Plan occasional service projects to benefit the chartered organization or to benefit other groups the chartered organization supports.
- Offer troop support of major chartered organization activities throughout the year.
- Look for opportunities for Scouts to do Eagle Scout service projects for the organization.

Scout Sunday and Scout Sabbath

In troops belonging to religious institutions, participation in Scout Sunday or Scout Sabbath services is an important way to celebrate and strengthen the chartered organization relationship. Scout Sunday is typically the Sunday that begins Scouting Anniversary Week, while Scout Sabbath is typically the Saturday that ends Scouting Anniversary Week. However, religious institutions can set their own dates, either locally or at the denominational level.

There is no one way to hold a Scout Sunday or Scout Sabbath service. Observances should be coordinated well in advance, perhaps through the chartered organization representative, with the religious leader. Activities could include:

- Attendance by troop families and leaders, whether or not they are members of the chartered organization
- Participation in the service by Scouts as ushers, readers, liturgists, speakers, or other roles
- Presentation of religious emblems to troop members and leaders of that faith
- Recognition of troop leaders
- A responsive reading that connect the points of the Scout Law with religious teachings
- A message by the religious leader based on Scouting values
- A Scouting information booth
- A model campsite on the front lawn
- A pancake breakfast or chili luncheon that serves as a troop fundraiser

BSA Adopt-a-School

The BSA Adopt-a-School program encourages Scouting units to connect with schools in their communities (whether chartered organizations or not). To participate, a unit pledges to complete one service project per quarter for the school over the course of a year. Scouts who participate in service projects receive Adopt-a-School patches. At the end of the year, the school receives a plaque. For information, visit https://adoptaschool.scouting.org.

National Chartered Organization Resources

Some chartered organizations that have a national presence and operate thousands of Scouting units have offices that are charged with supporting Scouting. The National Catholic Committee on Scouting, for example, seeks to sustain and strengthen the relationship between the BSA and the Catholic Church in the United States, while in the United Methodist Church, Scouting falls under the Office of Civic Youth-Serving Agencies/Scouting.

Many national chartered organizations also have official or quasi-official committees that coordinate Scouting programs and support Scouting units. You can find links to many of them at www.scoutingwire.org/marketing-and-membership-hub/new-unit-development/chartered-organizations/religious-chartered-organizations.

While every group is different, many oversee religious-emblem and adult-recognition programs, publish newsletters, hold conferences and training courses, and offer scholarships for Eagle Scouts. Most also offer publications and other resources that can help you strengthen the troop's relationship with its chartered organization. If the chartered organization does not understand how the troop supports its mission, seek out the relevant national group.

The district executive is charged with visiting the executive officer of each chartered organization once a year. The district executive can be a good ally if you need to strengthen your troop's relationship with its chartered organization.

CHAPTER 23
Troop Communications

Americans today are awash in information. Every season seems to bring a new way to read the news, find sports scores, check the weather, or see what your friends and family have been doing. In many cases, older technologies continue to exist alongside their newer counterparts, meaning people have more and more ways to get information—and to miss out on it.

In fact, you could argue that it is now *easier* than ever to send a message and *harder* than ever to make sure your message gets received. That is why it is not unheard of for a Hollywood studio to spend nearly as much money marketing a summer blockbuster as it does creating it.

Scout troops do not have marketing budgets—aside from the costs of photocopies, stamps, and website hosting—but they still must make sure Scouts, leaders, parents, and other audiences are getting the information they need. This chapter discusses ways to do just that.

What to Communicate

When you think about troop communication, the first things that probably come to mind are upcoming activities and deadlines: What time will the court of honor start? Where will the campout be held? When are registration fees due? How can you sign up for summer camp? Whom can you call if you have more questions?

This kind of information is usually shared through announcements and fliers at troop meetings or phone trees initiated by the senior patrol leader. However, as any experienced Scout leader (or parent, for that matter) knows, much of that information never gets to its intended destination. That is why many troops publish some sort of newsletter that goes both to Scouts and to their families. Printed, monthly newsletters were common in the past, but they have mostly given way to weekly or monthly email newsletters, which are often also posted on the troop's website or social-networking page.

As a rule, people need to hear a message seven times in seven different ways before they will take action.

You should not communicate solely about future events. It is also important to capture pictures and stories from past events. You could create photo galleries of outings on the troop website, for example, and include stories in the newsletter about those outings. Stories and pictures are great ways to sell the program to prospective members, to show the chartered organization what the troop is accomplishing, and to encourage current members who missed a fun outing to not miss the next one.

There is one more category of information you need to communicate: "evergreen" information about the troop that might appear in a brochure or troop handbook or on the troop website. New and prospective members need to know when and where the troop meets, what fees the troop charges, and how to contact key leaders. Current members need to know how to sign up for boards of review, what rank they must be to run for troop offices, what the troop's weather-cancellation policies are, where to buy uniforms and equipment, and how to access password-protected content on the troop website.

With Whom to Communicate

Besides having different kinds of information to communicate, a troop has different groups of people with whom to communicate. The key audience, of course, is current troop families and leaders. Other audiences include prospective members, the chartered organization, the schools where the troop recruits members, and the general public.

Different audiences obviously need to hear different messages. It is also important to safeguard certain information, as described below. A troop website, for example, might have a public section with general information about the troop and contact information for key adult leaders, and a password-protected, members-only section with photo galleries and rosters.

Communication Principles

The technologies you use to communicate will change over time, but basic principles stay the same. Here are a few.

Be complete. In your communications, try to answer the questions *who, what, when, where, why, and how.* Rather than send out a message with key information missing, such as the departure time for an outing, nail down that information first, if at all possible. (A deadline can be a useful tool for forcing decisions.)

Be clear. Avoid jargon and unfamiliar abbreviations, especially with audiences beyond the troop. If information has changed since a previous communication, highlight the changes. Include revision dates on documents like troop calendars.

Be consistent. Send out communications like newsletters or emails on a regular schedule. For example, if you send your email newsletter by 5 p.m. on the day before every troop meeting, people will quickly get used to looking for it at that time.

Don't overdo it. Rather than send out half a dozen emails in a single week, bundle all those messages into one. Send home every document related to an event like summer camp (medical forms, permission slips, activity sign-up forms, etc.) in one packet instead of handing out the documents separately.

Use diverse media. When you really need to get people's attention, send your message through multiple channels. For example, you could promote a high-adventure trip through the troop calendar, the troop newsletter, fliers, a special mailing, a page on the troop website, a Facebook event, Twitter announcements, text messages, a bulletin board or display, phone calls to Scouts and parents, and announcements at troop meetings and courts of honor.

Leverage the resources of the chartered organization. Promote events like troop open houses through the chartered organization's newsletter, website, social-networking sites, bulletins, electronic sign boards, and other media.

Understand people's communication preferences. Find out how people want to get information. For many Scouts, email feels old-fashioned. For some parents, social-media sites are foreign territory.

If Scouts and parents are not reading the troop newsletter, try this trick: Hide a secret word in the next issue, along with an announcement that the first three Scouts who tell the senior patrol leader the secret word will win a prize (perhaps a gift card to a local ice-cream shop). Repeat the contest every few issues on a random schedule.

Unit Website Guidelines

These days, people frequently visit websites to screen new restaurants, stores, hotels, places of worship, and tourist attractions. The same goes for Scout troops. An attractive website can be an effective tool for promoting the troop 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It can also be a good repository for information that current members and leaders need to access, from forms to photos.

That said, you must make sure the website does not put Scouts, leaders, or the troop at risk by, for example, including Scouts' full names in photo captions or making the troop roster publicly available. (To give site visitors contact information, consider setting up a separate, generic Scoutmaster or webmaster email address through a service like Gmail.) The BSA uses the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act as its standard for protecting children online. You can read the details on compliance at **www.coppa.org/comply.htm**.

A second concern is copyright infringement. Copyrighted photos, graphics, music, videos, and publications are commonly reused on the web without permission. This is illegal and violates the ethics of Scouting. Be sure to get permission for any media you use on the troop website, or use only materials you know are in the public domain.

A third concern is commercialism, including advertising. For example, "free" website services often contain advertisements, which might reflect poorly on Scouting. Any online fundraising activities must be approved by the local council; independent sales, solicitations, or collection of donations are prohibited.

Be sure the troop website adheres to these guidelines:

- The content of the site must be appropriate to Scouting.
- The site cannot link to any sites that contain material that is not appropriate to Scouting.
- The unit site should not contain any advertisements or commercial endorsements.
- The site cannot engage in the electronic sale of BSA Supply Group merchandise or competing products.
- The site cannot replicate any BSA publication currently for sale through the Supply Group.
- Unit sites must abide by all laws regarding copyrights, trademarks, and other intellectual property, and by those pertaining to the internet.
- Unit sites must consider the safety and privacy of members and participants by obtaining the necessary permissions to release information about or images of any individual.
- Unit sites cannot engage in fundraising except as directly approved by, and under the supervision of, the local council.

For more information, see the BSA's unit website guidelines at **filestore.scouting.org/filestore/marketing/pdf/Social_Media_Playbook.pdf**.

Be a Scout

You might not realize it, but every troop already has an online presence. The BSA created a web resource at **beascout.org** as an easy way for people to find Scouting units and local councils in their area. When a visitor chooses Scouts BSA and enters their zip code on the site, a list of nearby troops pops up, complete with a locator map. By default, the site uses the BSA local council as the point of contact for each troop. However, you can edit the troop's "pin" to include a brief description of its program, troop-level contact information, and a link to the troop website. Contact the local council for details on how to get started.

Social Media Guidelines

Social media such as Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter offer additional communication options and raise additional concerns. As with any Scouting activity, safety and BSA Youth Protection should be a key focus. It is critical that troops stay true to the commitment of the BSA to be an advocate for youth and to keep children and their privacy safe, both online and off.

To help ensure that all communication on social-media channels remains positive and safe, these channels must be public, and all communication on or through them must be public. This enables administrators to monitor all communication and help ensure there is no inappropriate communication between adult leaders and Scouts or between Scouts themselves. Therefore, no private channels (e.g., private Facebook groups or invitation-only YouTube channels) are acceptable. Private channels and private communication put both the Scout and the leader at risk. If you feel the information you seek to share via social-media channels should not be shared in public, do not share that information via social media.

Abiding by the two-deep leadership policy that governs all Scouting activities also applies to use of social media. As it relates to social media, two-deep leadership means there should be no private messages and no one-on-one direct contact through email, Facebook messages, Twitter direct messaging, chats, instant messaging (Google Messenger, AIM, etc.), or similar messaging features provided through social-media sites. All communication between adults and youth members should take place in a public forum (e.g., the Facebook wall) or, at a bare minimum, electronic communication between adults and youth members should always include one or more authorized adults openly "copied" (included) on the message or message thread.

If you set up a troop page on a site like Facebook or YouTube, you should designate at least two administrators who have access to the login, password, and page management or monitoring information. At least one of these page administrators should be a registered volunteer who has taken Youth Protection training.

For more information, see the BSA's social media guidelines at www.scoutingwire.org/marketing-and-membership-hub/social-media/social-media-guidelines.

Supporting Your Youth Leaders

Some Scouters feel that communication is such an important function that it can't be entrusted to youth leaders. While Scouts do need guidance in this area, as in every other area, there is no reason they can't be closely involved. In fact, several positions of responsibility—scribe, historian, and webmaster—are directly related to communication, and communication is a big part of what patrol leaders and senior patrol leaders do. Moreover, Scouts are often more adept than adults at building websites and using tools such as social media.

Here are a few suggestions for getting Scouts more involved in troop communication:

- Set a troop standard that adult-driven communications only supplement, not replace, Scout-driven communications.
- Have the senior patrol leader, not an adult, make all announcements at troop meetings.
- Do not overlook the old-fashioned phone tree, where the senior patrol leader calls all the patrol leaders each week and they, in turn, call all their members.
- Encourage the historian to provide outing stories and pictures to the newsletter editor.
- Have the youth leaders in charge of outings create fliers for those outings.
- Set reasonable expectations. For example, if the troop webmaster has never created a website before, set it up yourself using a template, and then put this youth leader in charge of managing the site.

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HEALTH AND SAFETY

This section addresses all aspects of health and safety to help keep all members—youth and adult—safe and healthy while they participate in Scouting activities.

CHAPTER 24
Global Health and Safety Guidelines

Although Scouts do some inherently risky things—perhaps the riskiest of which is traveling to and from Scouting activities—the Boy Scouts of America has compiled an enviable safety record among youth-serving organizations. More than 100 years of experience have taught BSA officials how to identify safety concerns, manage risk, and keep Scouts as safe as possible.

This chapter introduces health and safety policies and procedures that guide every Scouting activity; chapter 25 discusses guidelines that pertain to specific situations, such as canoe trips and service projects. Keep in mind that you must also follow state or local government regulations and the policies of your chartered organization if they are more restrictive.

In many cases, you will want to go beyond the policies described in this chapter. For example, while you could plan an outing with 20 Scouts and two adult leaders, having more adults along would make the outing safer and more enjoyable.

Age-Appropriate Guidelines for Scouting Activities

An important part of keeping activities both safe and satisfying is following age-based guidelines for participation in outdoor pursuits. As the chart below shows, some activities are appropriate for the whole range of ages in Scouts BSA, while other activities are best limited to older Scouts. See chapter 9 for more guidance.

The *Guide to Safe Scouting*

The best single source for health and safety policies, guidelines, and information is the *Guide to Safe Scouting*. The guide is available in a printed version, a downloadable version, and a version designed for reading online.

The publication provides an overview of the key policies that affect unit activities. Topics include Youth Protection and adult leadership; aquatics safety; camping; alcohol, tobacco, and drug use and abuse; medical information and first aid; chemical fuels and equipment; shooting sports; sports and activities; inspections; insurance; transportation; winter activities; and animal and insect hazards.

Scouting's Camping Program—Ever-Increasing Challenge Out-of-Doors

AGE-APPROPRIATE GUIDELINES FOR CAMPING	LIONS (With Caring Adult)	TIGERS (With Caring Adult)	WOLF/BEAR SCOUTS	WEBELOS SCOUTS	SCOUTS BSA	OLDER SCOUTS, SEA SCOUTS, VENTURERS ("Older Scouts" are age 13 and have completed eighth grade or 14 years old and up.)
National High Adventure						✔
Council High Adventure						✔
Wilderness and Backcountry						✔
Jamboree					12-year-olds	✔
Weekend Campouts					✔	✔
Camporees				Day Visit Only	✔	✔
Cold-Weather Camping	Council-Designated Locations Only (verify with local council)				✔	✔
Den Overnights				✔		
Council-Organized Family Camp	✔	✔	✔	✔		
Day Camp	Not Summer	✔	✔	✔		
Pack Overnighters	Council-Designated Locations Only					
Family Camping	Council-Designated Locations Only (verify with local council)			✔	✔	✔
Resident Camp	Not Summer	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
Lock-ins (museums, sports facilities, etc.)	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔

The policy statements discussed in this guidebook have been modified for space reasons. You should refer to the referenced resources for complete policies and additional information before conducting activities.

All supervisors of official Scouting activities should become familiar with the *Guide to Safe Scouting* and relevant state or local government regulations. In situations not specifically covered in the guide, activity planners should use the Sweet 16 of BSA Safety (discussed later in this chapter) to evaluate the appropriateness of the activity and the potential risks, and be able to respond to emergency situations based on common sense, community standards, the Scouts BSA motto, and health and safety policies. Keep in mind the practices commonly prescribed for the activity by experienced providers and practitioners.

Your troop may choose to designate a safety officer—either an assistant Scoutmaster or a troop committee member—to monitor compliance with health and safety policies and updates to those policies. However, all leaders should still be familiar with the *Guide to Safe Scouting* and BSA policies.

A key feature of the *Guide to Safe Scouting* is that it is a living document. The online version is updated quarterly, and each update includes a detailed list of changes. You can access the online version of the guide at **www.scouting.org/health-and-safety**.

Scouting Safely

The Scouting Safely website, **www.scouting.org/health-and-safety**, offers a wealth of health and safety information. Besides the latest version of the *Guide to Safe Scouting*, the site has essential forms, answers to frequently asked questions, and the BSA Health and Safety Team's newsletter. You can also sign up to receive health and safety updates through RSS syndication.

The Sweet 16 of BSA Safety

As discussed next in chapter 25, specific rules govern activities such as aquatics and climbing. To ensure that less high-profile activities are conducted in an equally safe manner, the BSA developed the Sweet 16 of BSA Safety. These 16 points, which embody good judgment and common sense, are applicable to all activities.

1. **Qualified Supervision.** Every BSA activity should be supervised by a conscientious adult who understands and knowingly accepts responsibility for the well-being and safety of the children and youth in his or her care. The supervisor should be sufficiently trained, experienced, and skilled in the activity to be confident of his or her ability to lead and teach the necessary skills and to respond effectively in the event of an emergency. Field knowledge of BSA programs and a commitment to implement and follow BSA policy and procedures are essential parts of the supervisor's qualifications.
2. **Physical Fitness**. For youth participants in any potentially strenuous activity, the supervisor should receive a complete health history from a health-care professional, parent, or guardian. Adult participants and youth involved in higher-risk activities (e.g., scuba diving) may have to undergo professional evaluation in addition to completing the health history. The supervisor should adjust all supervision, discipline, and protection to anticipate potential risks associated with individual health conditions. Neither youth nor adults should participate in activities for which they are unfit. To do so would place both the individual and others at risk.
3. **Buddy System**. The buddy system has a dual purpose: You ensure your buddy's safety during activities, and your buddy ensures your safety. You are never alone and vulnerable.
4. **Safe Area or Course**. A key part of the supervisor's responsibility is to know the area or course for the activity and to determine that it is well-suited and free of hazards.
5. **Equipment Selection and Maintenance**. Most activity requires some specialized equipment. The equipment should be selected to suit the participants and the activity and to include appropriate safety and program features. The supervisor should also check all equipment to ensure that it is in good condition for the activity and is properly maintained while in use.
6. **Personal Safety Equipment**. The supervisor must ensure that every participant has and uses the appropriate personal safety equipment. For example, activity afloat requires that each participant properly wear a life jacket; bikers, horseback riders, and whitewater kayakers need helmets for certain activities; skaters need protective gear; and all need to be dressed for warmth and utility as the circumstances require.
7. **Safety Procedures and Policies**. For most activities, following common-sense procedures and standards can greatly reduce the risk. These should be known and appreciated by all participants, and the supervisor must ensure compliance.
8. **Skill Level Limits**. There is a minimum skill level requirement for every activity, and the supervisor must identify and recognize this minimum skill level and be sure that no participants are put at risk by attempting an activity beyond their ability. A good example of skill levels in Scouting is the venerable swim test, which defines conditions for safe swimming based on individual ability.
9. **Weather Check**. The risk factors in many outdoor activities vary substantially with weather conditions. These variables and the appropriate response should be understood and anticipated.
10. **Planning**. Safe activity follows a plan that has been conscientiously developed by the experienced supervisor or other competent source. Good planning minimizes risks and also anticipates contingencies that may require emergency response or a change of plan.
11. **Communications**. The supervisor needs to be able to communicate effectively with participants as needed during the activity. Emergency communications also need to be considered in advance for any foreseeable contingencies.
12. **Plans and Notices**. Council office registration, government or landowner authorization, and any similar formalities are the supervisor's responsibility when such are required. Appropriate notification should be directed to parents, enforcement authorities, landowners, and others as needed, before and after the activity.

13. **First-aid Resources**. The supervisor should determine what first-aid supplies to include among the activity equipment. The level of first-aid training and skill appropriate for the activity should also be considered. An extended trek over remote terrain obviously may require more first-aid resources and capabilities than an afternoon activity in the local community. Whatever is determined to be needed should be available.
14. **Applicable Laws**. BSA safety policies generally parallel or go beyond legal mandates, but the supervisor should confirm and ensure compliance with all applicable regulations or statutes.
15. **CPR Resource**. Any strenuous activity or remote trek could present a cardiac emergency. Aquatics programs may involve cardiopulmonary emergencies. The BSA strongly recommends that a person (preferably an adult) trained in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) be part of the leadership for any BSA program. This person should be available for strenuous outdoor activity.
16. **Discipline**. No supervisor is effective if he or she cannot control the activity and the individual participants. Youth must respect their leaders and follow their directions.

Sports and Activities

Activity Planning and Risk Assessment

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

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

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

Program Hazard Analysis

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

Safety Checklists

These tools are used to inspect a vehicle or meeting place when you have small events or campouts. Checklists are a "body of knowledge" for running Scouting activities safely. Like an airline pilot who uses a checklist before takeoff, these tools help to make sure critical things are in place in order to conduct a safe Scouting activity. Many safety-related program materials include checklists; Sweet 16 of BSA Safety, Safe Swim Defense, Safety Afloat, and Climb on Safely are examples.

Safety PAUSE

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

The online tool is available to Scoutmasters, assistant Scoutmasters, committee chairs, committee members, and chartered organization representatives. A paper version is also available, although the online version is preferred.

Hazardous Weather Training

At least one adult on each outing must have completed Hazardous Weather training within the past two years. The training, which you can complete at **www.my.scouting.org**, presents safety precautions for eight different types of weather, as well as planning, preparation, and traditional weather signs. Although targeted at adult leaders, it is also beneficial for Scouts to take.

Avoiding the Risk Zone

Driving is one of the most dangerous forms of travel, and motor vehicle accidents are among the most serious and costly accidents in the BSA. Research has shown that the vast majority of accidents are caused by poor decisions or indecision—which means the vast majority of accidents could be prevented if drivers stayed out of the Risk Zone.

How do drivers enter the Risk Zone? One way is to drive when drowsy. The *Guide to Safe Scouting* limits driving to a maximum of 10 hours in every 24-hour period, and this driving time must be interrupted by frequent rest, food, and recreation stops. If there is only one driver in a vehicle, the driving time should be reduced and stops should be made more frequently. Drivers may also need shorter shifts and more frequent stops after a week at summer camp or a high-adventure trip.

Another way to enter the Risk Zone is to drive when distracted. There are three main forms of distractions:

- Visual—taking your eyes off the road
- Manual—taking your hands off the steering wheel
- Cognitive—taking your mind off what you are doing

Texting and using your mobile phone while driving combine all three forms of distractions. When you get behind the wheel, set your cell phone or smartphone to "silent" or "off" and stow it in your backpack or glove box. Check your phone messages only during rest stops or food breaks. If you must use the phone, stop at a safe location. Also, do not call or send messages to others you know are driving.

Great troops have great STAFF:

***S*top *T*exting. *A*void *F*atigue.**

***F*ollow the rules of the road.**

Incident Reporting

If an accident occurs during a Scouting activity, leaders should first treat the injured and ensure the well-being of others in the group. If the emergency requires steps beyond simple first aid, such as summoning emergency medical services or law enforcement, or if the subject loses consciousness or is taken to an emergency room, adult leaders are responsible for informing their council Scout executive or designee of the incident as soon as possible. The local council will implement a crisis communication plan and guide unit leaders through the process, including completion of a required Incident Information Report. For more information, see the *Guide to Safe Scouting*.

CHAPTER 25
Specific Health and Safety Programs

The general guidelines found in the Sweet 16 of BSA Safety, described in chapter 24, can help you ensure that every activity your troop conducts is as safe as possible. Some activities, however, require more specific policies. In this chapter, we look at BSA guidelines for aquatics, climbing and rappelling, and backcountry treks, guidelines that mirror the format of the Sweet 16. We will also look at guidelines for tool use, work at elevations or excavations, and service projects.

The information presented here is an abridged version of full BSA policies and guidelines regarding health, safety, and risk management. For comprehensive and unabridged information about specific policies, guidelines, and activities related to health, safety, and risk, visit Scouting Safely at **www.scouting.org/health-and-safety**, or consult the BSA's *Guide to Safe Scouting*, available online at **www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/gss**.

For the latest and most complete safety information, visit www.scouting.org/health-and-safety.

Safe Swim Defense

Troops must use Safe Swim Defense for all swimming activities, as well as for nonswimming activities whenever participants enter water over knee deep or when submersion is likely; for example, when fording a stream, seining for bait, or constructing a bridge as a pioneering project.

Safe Swim Defense standards apply at backyard, hotel, apartment, and public pools; at established waterfront swim areas such as beaches at state parks and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers lakes; and at all temporary swimming areas such as a lake, river, or ocean. These standards do not apply to boating or water activities such as waterskiing or swamped boat drills that are covered by Safety Afloat guidelines. Snorkeling in open water requires each participant to have demonstrated knowledge and skills equivalent to those for Snorkeling BSA in addition to following Safe Swim Defense. For scuba activities, follow the BSA Scuba policy found in the *Guide to Safe Scouting*.

1. **Qualified Supervision.** All swimming activity must be supervised by a mature and conscientious adult age 21 or older who understands and knowingly accepts responsibility for the well-being and safety of those in his or her care, and who is trained in and committed to compliance with the eight points of BSA Safe Swim Defense. It is strongly recommended that all units have at least one adult or older youth member currently trained in BSA Aquatics Supervision: Swimming and Water Rescue *or* BSA Lifeguard to assist in planning and conducting all swimming activities.

Because of concerns with hyperventilation, competitive underwater swimming events are not permitted in Scouting.

Adult leaders supervising a swimming activity must have completed Safe Swim Defense training within the previous two years. This training may be taken online at www.my.scouting.org, at council summer camps, and at other council and district training events. Additional information on various swimming venues is provided in the *BSA Aquatics Supervision* manual.

2. **Personal Health Review.** A complete health history is required of all participants as evidence of fitness for swimming activities. Forms for minors must be signed by a parent or legal guardian. Participants should be asked to relate any recent incidents of illness or injury just prior to the activity. Supervision and protection should be adjusted to anticipate any potential risks associated with individual health conditions. For significant health conditions, the adult supervisor should require an examination by a physician and consult with the parent, guardian, or caregiver for appropriate precautions.
3. **Safe Area.** All swimming areas must be carefully inspected and prepared for safety prior to each activity. Water depth, quality, temperature, movement, and clarity are important considerations. Hazards must be eliminated or isolated by conspicuous markings and discussed with participants.
   - *Controlled Access:* There must be safe areas for all participating ability groups to enter and leave the water. Swimming areas of appropriate depth must be defined for each ability group. The entire area must be within easy reach of designated rescue personnel. The area must be clear of boat traffic, surfing, or other nonswimming activities.
   - *Bottom Conditions and Depth:* The bottom must be clear of trees and debris. Abrupt changes in depth are not allowed in the nonswimmer area. Isolated underwater hazards should be marked with floats. Rescue personnel must be able to easily reach the bottom. Maximum recommended water depth in clear water is 12 feet. Maximum water depth in turbid water is 8 feet.
   - *Visibility:* Underwater swimming and diving are prohibited in turbid water. Turbid water exists when swimmers treading water cannot see their feet. Swimming at night is allowed only in areas with water clarity and lighting sufficient for good visibility both above and below the surface.
   - *Diving and Elevated Entry:* Diving is permitted only into clear, unobstructed water from heights no greater than 40 inches. Water depth must be at least 7 feet. Bottom depth contours below diving boards and elevated surfaces require greater water depths and must conform to state regulations. Persons should not jump into water from heights greater

than they are tall, and should jump only into water chest deep or greater with minimal risk from contact with the bottom. No elevated entry is permitted where the person must clear any obstacle, including land.

- *Water Temperature*: Comfortable water temperature for swimming is near 80 degrees. Activity in water at 70 degrees or less should be of limited duration and closely monitored for negative effects of chilling.
- *Water Quality*: Bodies of stagnant, foul water, areas with significant algae or foam, or areas polluted by livestock or waterfowl should be avoided. Comply with any signs posted by local health authorities. Swimming is not allowed in swimming pools with green, murky, or cloudy water.
- *Moving Water*: Participants should be able to easily regain and maintain their footing in currents or waves. Avoid areas with large waves, swiftly flowing currents, or moderate currents that flow toward the open sea or into areas of danger.
- *Weather*: Participants should move from the water to a position of safety whenever lightning or thunder threatens. Wait at least 30 minutes after the last lightning flash or thunder before leaving shelter. Take precautions to prevent sunburn, dehydration, and hypothermia.
- *Life Jacket Use:* Swimming in clear water over 12 feet deep, in turbid water over 8 feet deep, or in flowing water may be allowed if all participants wear properly fitted, Coast Guard–approved life jackets and the supervisor determines that swimming with life jackets is safe under the circumstances.

4. **Response Personnel (Lifeguards).** Every swimming activity must be closely and continuously monitored by a trained rescue team on the alert for and ready to respond during emergencies. Professionally trained lifeguards satisfy this need when provided by a regulated facility or tour operator. When lifeguards are not provided by others, the adult supervisor must assign at least two rescue personnel, with additional numbers to maintain a ratio of 1 rescuer to every 10 participants. The supervisor must provide instruction and rescue equipment and assign areas of responsibility as outlined in *Aquatics Supervision,* No. 34346. The qualified supervisor, the designated response personnel, and the lookout work together as a safety team. An emergency action plan should be formulated and shared with participants as appropriate.
5. **Lookout.** The lookout continuously monitors the conduct of the swim, identifies any departures from Safe Swim Defense guidelines, alerts rescue personnel as needed, and monitors the weather and environment. The lookout should have a clear view of the entire area but be close enough for easy verbal communication. The lookout must have a sound understanding of Safe Swim Defense but is not required to perform rescues. The adult supervisor may serve simultaneously as the lookout but must assign the task to someone else if engaged in activities that preclude focused observation.
6. **Ability Groups.** All youth and adult participants are designated as swimmers, beginners, or nonswimmers based on swimming ability confirmed by standardized BSA swim classification tests. Each group is assigned a specific swimming area with depths consistent with those abilities. The classification tests should be renewed annually, preferably at the beginning of the season even if the Scout has earned the Swimming merit badge.

   Swimmers pass this test: Jump feetfirst into water over the head in depth. Level off and swim 75 yards in a strong manner using one or more of the following strokes: sidestroke, breaststroke, trudgen, or crawl; then swim 25 yards using an easy resting backstroke. The 100 yards must be completed in one swim without stops and must include at least one sharp turn. After completing the swim, rest by floating.

   Beginners pass this test: Jump feetfirst into water over the head in depth, level off, and swim 25 feet on the surface. Stop, turn sharply, resume swimming, and return to the starting place.

   Anyone who has not completed either the beginner or the swimmer test is classified as a nonswimmer. The **nonswimmer area** should be no more than waist- to chest-deep and should be enclosed by physical boundaries such as the shore, a pier, or lines. The enclosed **beginner area** should contain water of standing depth and may extend to depths just over the head. The **swimmer area** may be up to 12 feet in depth in clear water and should be defined by floats or other markers.
7. **Buddy System.** Every participant is paired with another. Buddies stay together, monitor each other, and alert the safety team if either needs assistance or is missing. Buddies check into and out of the area together.

   Buddies are normally in the same ability group and remain in their assigned area. If they are not of the same ability group, then they swim in the area assigned to the buddy with the lesser ability.

   A buddy check reminds participants of their obligation to monitor their buddies and indicates how closely the buddies are keeping track of each other. Roughly every 10 minutes, or as needed to keep the buddies together, the lookout, or other person designated by the supervisor, gives an audible signal, such as a single whistle blast, and a call for "Buddies." Buddies are expected to raise each other's hand before completion of a slow, audible count to 10. Buddies who take longer to find each other should be reminded of their responsibility for the other's safety.

   Once everyone has a buddy, a count is made by area and compared with the total number known to be in the water. After the count is confirmed, a signal is given to resume swimming.
8. **Discipline.** Rules are effective only when followed. All participants should know, understand, and respect the rules and procedures for safe swimming provided by Safe Swim Defense guidelines. Applicable rules should be discussed prior to the outing and reviewed for all participants at the water's edge just before the swimming activity begins. People are more likely to follow directions when they know the reasons for rules and procedures. Consistent, impartially applied rules supported by skill and good judgment provide stepping-stones to a safe, enjoyable outing.

For unabridged versions of the BSA's Safe Swim Defense and Safety Afloat standards, please visit Scouting Safely at www.scouting.org/health-and-safety, or consult the *Guide to Safe Scouting* at www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/gss.

Safety Afloat

All BSA groups must follow Safety Afloat for all boating activities. Safety Afloat standards apply to the use of canoes, kayaks, rowboats, rafts, floating tubes, sailboats, motorboats (including waterskiing), and other small craft, but do not apply to transportation on large commercial vessels such as ferries and cruise ships. Parasailing (being towed airborne behind a boat using a parachute), kitesurfing (using a wakeboard towed by a kite), and recreational use of personal watercraft (small sit-on-top motorboats propelled by water jets) are not authorized BSA activities.

Personal watercraft are only allowed as part of approved council-level summer camp programs.

Adult leaders supervising activities afloat must have completed Safety Afloat training within the previous two years. This training may be taken online at www.my.scouting.org, at council summer camps, and at other council and district training events. Additional guidance on appropriate skill levels and training resources is provided in *Aquatics Supervision*.

1. **Qualified Supervision.** All activity afloat must be supervised by a mature and conscientious adult age 21 or older who understands and knowingly accepts responsibility for the well-being and safety of those in his or her care and who is trained in and committed to compliance with the nine points of BSA Safety Afloat. That supervisor must be skilled in the safe operation of the craft for the specific activity, knowledgeable in accident prevention, and prepared for emergency situations. If the adult with Safety Afloat training lacks the necessary boat operating and safety skills, then he or she may serve as the supervisor only if assisted by other adults, camp staff personnel, or professional tour guides who have the appropriate skills.

   Additional leadership is provided in ratios of 1 trained adult, staff member, or guide per 10 participants. For Cub Scouts, the leadership ratio is 1 trained adult, staff member, or guide per 5 participants. At least one leader must be trained in first aid including CPR. Any swimming done in conjunction with the activity afloat must be supervised in accordance with BSA Safe Swim Defense standards. It is strongly recommended that all units have at least one adult or older youth member currently trained in BSA Aquatics Supervision: Paddle Craft Safety to assist in the planning and conduct of all activities afloat.

2. **Personal Health Review.** A complete health history is required of all participants as evidence of fitness for boating activities. Forms for minors must be signed by a parent or legal guardian. Participants should be asked to relate any recent incidents of illness or injury just prior to the activity. Supervision and protection should be adjusted to anticipate any potential risks associated with individual health conditions. For significant health conditions, the adult supervisor should require an examination by a physician and consult with parent, guardian, or caregiver for appropriate precautions.

3. **Swimming Ability.** Operation of any boat on a float trip is limited to youth and adults who have completed the BSA swimmer classification test. Swimmers must complete the swimmer test, which must be administered annually. See "Safe Swim Defense" on page 122 for details about the swimmer test.

   For activity afloat, those not classified as swimmers are limited to multiperson craft during outings or float trips on calm water with little likelihood of capsizing or falling overboard. They may operate a fixed-seat rowboat or pedal boat accompanied by a buddy who is a swimmer. They may ride in a canoe or other paddle craft with an adult swimmer skilled in that craft. They may ride as part of a group on a motorboat or sailboat operated by a skilled adult.

4. **Life Jackets.** Properly fitted U.S. Coast Guard–approved life jackets must be worn by all persons engaged in boating activity (rowing, canoeing, sailing, boardsailing, motorboating, waterskiing, rafting, tubing, and kayaking). Type III life jackets are recommended for general recreational use.

   For vessels over 20 feet in length, life jackets need not be worn when participants are below deck or on deck when the qualified supervisor aboard the vessel determines that it is prudent to abide by less-restrictive state and federal regulations concerning the use and storage of life jackets—for example, when a cruising vessel with safety rails is at anchor. All participants not classified as swimmers must wear a life jacket when on deck underway.

   Life jackets need not be worn when an activity falls under Safe Swim Defense guidelines—for example, when an inflated raft is used in a pool or when snorkeling from an anchored craft.

5. **Buddy System.** All participants in an activity afloat are paired as buddies who are always aware of each other's situation and prepared to sound an alarm and lend assistance immediately when needed. When several craft are used on a float trip, each boat on the water should have a "buddy boat." All buddy pairs must be accounted for at regular intervals during the activity and checked off the water by the qualified supervisor at the conclusion of the activity. Buddies either ride in the same boat or stay near each other in single-person craft.

6. **Skill Proficiency.** Everyone in an activity afloat must have sufficient knowledge and skill to participate safely. Passengers should know how their movement affects boat stability and have a basic understanding of self-rescue. Boat operators must meet government requirements, be able to maintain control of their craft, know how changes in the environment influence that control, and undertake activities only that are within their personal and group capabilities.

   Training exercises should be appropriate for the age, size, and experience of the participants and should cover basic skills on calm water before proceeding to advanced skills involving current, waves, high winds, or extended distance. At a minimum, instructors for canoes and kayaks should be able to demonstrate the handling and rescue skills required for BSA Aquatics Supervision: Paddle Craft Safety. All instructors must have at least one assistant who can recognize and respond appropriately if the instructor's safety is compromised.

For full details about recreational sailing, motorboating, human-powered craft like canoes and kayaks, and whitewater activities, consult Scouting Safely online at **www.scouting.org/health-and-safety** or the *Guide to Safe Scouting* at **www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/gss**.

7. **Planning.** Proper planning is necessary to ensure a safe, enjoyable exercise afloat. All plans should include a scheduled itinerary, notification of appropriate parties, communication arrangements, contingencies in case of foul weather or equipment failure, and emergency response options.

   Preparation. Any boating activity requires access to the proper equipment and transportation of gear and participants to the site. Determine what state and local regulations are applicable. Get permission to use or cross private property. Determine whether personal resources will be used or whether outfitters will supply equipment, food, and shuttle services. Compile and check lists of group and personal equipment and supplies. Even short trips require selecting a route, checking water levels, and determining alternative pull-out locations. Obtain current charts and information about the waterway, and consult those who have traveled the route recently.

   Float Plan. Write a detailed itinerary, or float plan, noting put-in and pull-out locations and waypoints, along with the approximate time the group should arrive at each. Travel time should be estimated generously.

   Notification. File the float plan with parents, the local council office if traveling on running water, and local authorities if appropriate. Assign a member of the unit committee to alert authorities if prearranged check-ins are overdue. Make sure everyone is promptly notified when the trip is concluded.

   Weather. Check the weather forecast just before setting out, and keep an alert weather eye. Anticipate changes and bring all craft ashore when rough weather threatens. Wait at least 30 minutes before resuming activities after the last incidence of thunder or lightning.

   Contingencies. Planning must identify possible emergencies and other circumstances that could force a change of plans. Develop alternative plans for each situation. Identify local emergency resources such as EMS systems, sheriff's departments, or ranger stations. Check your primary communication system, and identify backups, such as the nearest residence to a campsite. Cell phones and radios may lose coverage, run out of power, or suffer water damage.

8. **Equipment.** All craft must be suitable for the activity, be seaworthy, and float if capsized. All craft and equipment must meet regulatory standards, be properly sized, and be in good repair. Spares, repair materials, and emergency gear must be carried as appropriate. Life jackets and paddles must be sized to the participants. All participants must wear properly designed and fitted helmets when running rapids rated above Class II. Emergency equipment such as throw bags, signal devices, flashlights, heat sources, first-aid kits, radios, and maps must be ready for use. Spare equipment, repair materials, extra food and water, and dry clothes should be appropriate for the activity. Stow all gear to prevent loss and water damage. For float trips with multiple craft, the number of craft should be sufficient to carry the party if a boat is disabled, and critical supplies should be divided among the craft.

9. **Discipline.** Rules and procedures are effective only when followed and when participants know why these exist. All participants should know, understand, and respect the rules and procedures for safe boating activities provided by Safety Afloat guidelines. Discuss all applicable rules prior to the outing, and review the rules for all participants near the boarding area just before the activity afloat begins. Consistent, impartially applied rules supported by skill and good judgment provide stepping-stones to a safe, enjoyable outing.

Climb On Safely

Climb On Safely is the Boy Scouts of America's procedure for organizing BSA climbing/rappelling activities at a natural site or a specifically designed facility such as a climbing wall or tower.

All unit-sponsored/planned climbing activities, regardless of where they are held, fall under Climb On Safely. This applies to a single unit or multiple units that may be participating in a joint unit climbing activity.

Unit leaders are responsible for making sure all points of Climb On Safely are followed. Unit committee chairs and local councils must ensure that an adult participating in the activity has taken Climb On Safely training.

Young people today seek greater challenges, and climbing and rappelling offer a worthy challenge. The satisfaction of safely climbing a rock face is hard to top. While introduction of the Climbing merit badge in spring 1997 spurred interest in these activities through the BSA, the proliferation of climbing gyms and facilities has also made climbing and rappelling readily available throughout the United States.

This increased interest has made climbing and rappelling a very popular unit activity. More accidents occur during unit rappelling than during council-managed climbing or rappelling, and more accidents have occurred during rappelling than climbing. Many climbing/rappelling accidents could be avoided by having qualified instruction from a conscientious adult who has the attention and respect of the youth entrusted to his or her care. Supervision by a caring adult who fully understands and appreciates the responsibility he or she assumes helps assure safety when youth engage in or prepare for climbing or rappelling.

The adult supervisor's relationship with youth participants should reinforce the importance of following instructions. The adult leader in charge and the climbing instructor share this responsibility. The instructor is responsible for all procedures and for safely conducting the climbing/rappelling activity. The adult supervisor works cooperatively with the climbing instructor and is responsible for all matters outside of the climbing/rappelling activity.

Belay On, No. 430-500, is a recommended reference.

Cub Scouts are encouraged to engage in climbing; Webelos Scouts are encouraged to engage in climbing and rappelling in a controlled environment with close supervision by instructors who are knowledgeable about instructing this age group. Normally, this means going to a climbing gym where the degree of difficulty is age-appropriate and the harnesses are size-appropriate for Cub Scouts. Age-appropriate guidelines can be found at **www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/age-appropriate-guidelines**.

For comprehensive information about the BSA's guidelines for climbing and rappelling activities and Climb On Safely, refer to *Belay On,* and go to Scouting Safely online at www.scouting.org/health-and-safety. You may also consult the *Guide to Safe Scouting* at www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/gss.

Each of the following points plays an important role in the overall Climb On Safely plan. Fun and safe climbing/rappelling activities require close compliance with Climb On Safely by the adult supervisor, the instructors, and all participants. These points also apply to bouldering—traversing a few feet above ground level.

1. **Qualified Supervision.** All climbing and rappelling must be supervised by a mature, conscientious adult at least 21 years of age who understands the risks inherent to these activities. This person knowingly accepts responsibility for the well-being and safety of the youth in his or her care. This adult supervisor is trained in and committed to compliance with the eight points of the Boy Scouts of America's Climb On Safely procedure and responsible for recruiting and verifying the qualifications of the qualified instructors. One adult supervisor is required for every 10 participants with a minimum of two adults for any one group.

   The adult supervisor is responsible for ensuring that someone in the group is currently trained in American Red Cross First Aid and CPR (a six-and-one-half-hour course). In addition, Wilderness First Aid (a 16-hour course) is recommended for units going to remote areas. A course of equivalent length and content from another nationally recognized organization can be substituted. A higher level of certification such as emergency medical technician (EMT), licensed practical nurse (LPN), registered nurse (RN), and licensed health-care practitioner is also acceptable if the person is trained in backcountry medical care. The ARC's Emergency Response, a 43½-hour course that includes CPR, is highly recommended.

2. **Qualified Instructors.** There must be a minimum of two instructors for all climbing and rappelling activities (up to 12 participants) and one additional instructor for each additional six participants, maintaining a 6-to-1 ratio.

   The qualified instructor managing the climbing/rappelling activity must be at least 21 years of age, and be current in his or her training from one or more of the sources listed below or equivalent:

   - BSA Level II climbing instructor or climbing director
   - BSA Level II COPE instructor or COPE director (artificial structures only)
   - Instructors trained by professional organizations or their accredited providers:
     - — American Mountain Guides Association (AMGA)
       - Rock instructor
       - Single pitch instructor
       - Climbing wall instructor (artificial structures only)
     - — Professional Climbing Instructors Association (PCIA)
       - Base-managed climbing instructor
       - Top-managed climbing instructor
       - Single pitch instructor
       - Climbing wall instructor (artificial structures only)
     - — Professional Climbing Guide Institute (PCGI)
       - Top rope guide
       - Single pitch guide
       - Lead guide
       - Multipitch guide
     - — Climbing Wall Association (CWA)
       - Climbing wall instructor (artificial structures only)
   - Professional climbing guide/instructors who are licensed by the state or accredited according to:
     - — AMGA, PCIA, or PCGI for natural rock climbing
     - — AMGA, PCIA, CWA, PRCA, or ACCT for artificial structures
   - University or college climbing/rappelling instructors who are current in their training (assessment within three years) as rock climbing instructors (or climbing wall instructors for artificial structures only)

   Additional **instructors** required to meet the 6-to-1 ratio requirement must be competent as determined by the **qualified instructor** and be at least 18 years of age.

   There are many institutions and/or businesses who offer training for climbing and rappelling. However, most do not prepare instructors to lead groups of people on climbing and rappelling outings. Your local council COPE and climbing committee, area COPE and climbing advocates, and region COPE and climbing chairs are good sources to determine if an alternative training experience is equivalent to one of the sources listed above. For guidance or additional information, contact the BSA's Outdoor Programs/Properties Department through your local council office.

3. **Physical Fitness.** Require evidence of fitness for the climbing/rappelling activity with a current BSA Annual Health and Medical Record. The adult supervisor should adapt all supervision, discipline, and precautions to anticipate any potential risks associated with individual health conditions. The adult supervisor should inform the climbing instructor about each participant's medical conditions.

4. **Safe Area.** All BSA climbing/rappelling activities must be conducted using an established climbing/rappelling site or facility. A qualified climbing instructor should survey the site in advance of the activity to identify and evaluate possible hazards and to determine whether the site is suitable for the age, maturity, and skill level of the participants. The instructor should also verify that the site is sufficient to safely and comfortably accommodate the number of participants in the activity within the available time. An emergency evacuation route must be identified in advance. A separate area should be established for onlookers.

   Each participant and staff member in the fall zone of a climbing/rappelling site must wear a UIAA- or CE-approved rock-climbing helmet. Everyone must be belayed or tethered when within 8 feet of an edge where a fall of more than 6 feet could occur.

5. **Equipment.** The climbing instructor should verify that the proper equipment is available for the size and ability level of participants. Helmets, harnesses, rope, and climbing hardware must meet appropriate requirements as outlined in *Belay On.* All equipment must be acquired new and/or furnished by the instructor and retired according to the manufacturer's recommendations.

   When using a climbing gym, the climbing facility's procedures apply.

6. **Planning.** When planning, remember the following:
   - Share the climbing/rappelling plan and an alternate with parents and the unit committee.
   - Secure the necessary permits or written permission for using private or public lands.
   - Enlist the help of a qualified climbing instructor.
   - Be sure the instructor has a topographic map for the area being used and obtains a current weather report for the area before the group's departure.

   It is suggested that at least one of the adult leaders has an electronic means of communication in case of an emergency. Before any activity, an adult leader should develop and share an emergency plan that includes the location of a nearby medical facility and the means of communicating with parents during the activity.
7. **Environmental Conditions.** The instructor, each adult leader, and each participant assume responsibility for monitoring potentially dangerous environmental conditions that may include loose, crumbly rock; poisonous plants; wildlife; and inclement weather. Use the buddy system to monitor concerns such as dehydration, hypothermia, and an unusually high degree of fear or apprehension. The adult supervisor is responsible for ensuring that the group leaves no trace of its presence at the site. See the principles of Leave No Trace in chapter 9, "The Outdoor Program."
8. **Discipline.** Each participant knows, understands, and respects the rules and procedures for safely climbing and rappelling and follows Climb On Safely and Leave No Trace. All participants should respect and follow all instructions and rules of the climbing instructor. The applicable rules should be presented and learned prior to the outing and should be reviewed for all participants just before the climbing or rappelling activity begins. When participants know the reasons for rules and procedures, they are more likely to follow them. The climbing instructor must be strict and fair, showing no favoritism.

Trek Safely

Backcountry and extended treks provide the excitement that many older Scouts and Venturers seek. With this added excitement comes the responsibility to pay close attention to every detail. Your planning must anticipate weather changes, the itinerary's difficulty, and crew dynamics.

Trek Safely is designed to help Scouting groups be fully prepared for a backcountry trek. It will help each youth member and adult leader recognize situations that could develop where the group will have to adjust its schedule or route, or even make camp for the night due to inclement weather or an injured or ill crew member. Crews that address possible scenarios in advance are less likely to be surprised on the trail. Contingency planning is critical to the success of every trip.

A strenuous backcountry trip will always be physically and mentally challenging. Rugged backcountry conditions will magnify emotions and create stress levels that may be new experiences for some members. Knowing the members of the crew is one of the most effective ways to avoid conflicts and other problems. Groups should expect occasional friction and not be surprised if some conflict occurs on a trek. Understanding that this is a normal occurrence enables the group to maintain unity and work through disputes.

For additional guidance, refer to current BSA training materials and literature on trekking. Among the many training sessions and resources that can help leaders plan and prepare for a trek are the following:

- Trek Leader section, National Camping School
- Aquatics section, National Camping School
- Climbing section, National Camping School
- *Fieldbook*
- Outdoor Ethics Awareness and Action Awards Program
- *Okpik: Cold-Weather Camping*
- *Belay On*
- *Guide to Safe Scouting*
- Relevant merit badge pamphlets
- Current information about high-adventure opportunities, **www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/adults/activities**
- High-adventure trek planning, Philmont Training Center

Each of the following elements plays an important role in the overall Trek Safely procedure. Fun and safe overnight trekking activities require compliance with Trek Safely by both adult and youth leaders.

1. **Qualified Supervision.** All backcountry treks must be supervised by a mature, conscientious adult at least 21 years of age who understands the potential risks associated with the trek. This person knowingly accepts responsibility for the well-being and safety of the youth in his or her care. This adult supervisor is trained in and committed to compliance with the seven points of the BSA's Trek Safely procedure. One additional adult who is at least 18 years of age must also accompany the unit.

   The lead adult is responsible for ensuring that someone in the group is currently trained in first aid appropriate to the type of trek and the environment. Training in basic wilderness first aid (typically a 16-hour course) and CPR is recommended. A signed parental informed consent form for each participant under 18 years of age may be used for adventurous activities such as whitewater, climbing, and horse-packing treks.

Trek Safely training may be taken online at www.my.scouting.org, at council summer camps, and at other council and district training events. It should be repeated every two years.

2. **Keep Fit.** Require evidence of fitness with a current Annual Health and Medical Record. A regular fitness regimen is recommended for trek participants. They are urged to start slowly, gradually increasing the duration and intensity of their exercise. The adult leader should adjust supervision, protection, and planning to anticipate potential risks associated with individual health conditions. Neither youth nor adults should participate in a trek or activity for which they are not physically prepared. See the *Fieldbook*.

3. **Plan Ahead.** The trek should match the maturity, skill level, and fitness of unit members. A youth or adult leader must secure land-use permits to use public land or written permission from the owner to cross or use private land. It is also crucial to learn about any requirements and recommendations from the local land manager. Find out about the terrain, elevation ranges, trails, wildlife, campsites, typical weather conditions, and environmental issues for the period of the trek.

   Training in Leave No Trace using the principles of Leave No Trace and the Leave No Trace Training Outline is crucial. Units should anticipate a range of weather conditions and temperatures and develop an alternate itinerary should adverse conditions develop.

4. **Gear Up.** Procure topographic maps, as well as current trail maps, for the area of the trek. Take equipment and clothing that is appropriate for the weather and unit skill level, is in good condition, and is properly sized for each participant. A qualified youth or adult leader ensures that participants are trained in the proper use of specialized equipment, particularly items with which they are not familiar, such as climbing ropes, ice axes, crampons, watercraft, bridles, saddles, and cross-country skis and poles. A shakedown must be conducted to be sure each person has the right equipment without taking too much.

   Crew equipment includes a first-aid kit stocked with current medications and supplies. The leader reminds youth and adults to bring and take prescribed medications. Every crew must have the means to treat water for drinking by boiling it, treating it with chemicals, or using an approved water filter. When ultraviolet light (sunlight) is prevalent, it is critical that participants have adequate sun protection, including broad-brimmed hats, sunglasses, and sunscreen.

5. **Communicate Clearly and Completely.** Communication is among the keys to a safe outdoor adventure, and staying in touch with home base is the first step. A youth or adult leader should complete a trip plan and share these details of the trek—including time of departure, overnight stops, the time of expected return, the trailhead (where vehicles will be parked), and the itinerary and alternate itinerary—with a contact person in the home area. At any time the itinerary changes, one of the leaders relays the changes to the contact person, who in turn relays them to the Scouts' parents. A plan for communicating with each parent is developed before the trek.

   A means of electronic communication—with backup power—may be helpful should an emergency occur. The leader should carry the telephone numbers or contact information of medical and emergency services in the area of the trek. Before calling for emergency assistance, the exact location and the nature of the patient's injury or illness should be determined.

   Youth and adult leaders are responsible for making sure that everyone knows what to expect and what is expected of them. Leaders should communicate with each other, as well as with the entire crew, to avoid unpleasant surprises.

6. **Monitor Conditions.** The leaders are responsible for making good decisions during the trek, conservatively estimating the capabilities and stamina of the group. If adverse conditions develop, the group is prepared to stop or turn back. The unit is responsible for monitoring weather conditions and forecasts before and during the trek—a small National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration radio is helpful for learning current weather forecasts. Leaders continually assess conditions, including weather, terrain, group morale, food and water supplies, group physical condition, and other factors to determine the difference between what is difficult and what is dangerous. Dangerous conditions are to be avoided.

7. **Discipline.** Each participant knows, understands, and respects the rules and procedures for safe trekking and has been oriented in Trek Safely. Applicable rules should be presented and learned prior to the outing and should be reviewed with participants before the trek begins. When participants know the reasons for rules and procedures, they are more likely to follow them. Adult and youth leaders must be strict and fair, showing no favoritism.

Guidelines for Service Projects, Tool Use, and Work at Elevations or Excavations

It is only natural to be safety conscious when your Scouts are scaling a rock face or shooting a set of rapids. But safety concerns can arise at other, perhaps unexpected, times such as during service projects. To keep such activities as safe as possible, the BSA has developed detailed guidelines for these situations.

Service Projects

Like all Scouting activities, service projects are safest when you plan ahead, have the proper equipment (and use it properly), consider weather conditions and health and sanitation needs, and continually monitor adherence to safety practices.

To facilitate project planning, the BSA has created *Service Project Planning Guidelines*, a document that combines safety guidelines with a worksheet for planning safe service projects. The worksheet can be used for all Scouting service projects, including Eagle Scout service projects. It covers these key topics:

- Service project safety planning process
- Hazard analysis and recognition
- Tools and equipment
- Weather considerations
- Health and sanitation considerations
- Assessment and monitoring

You can download the worksheet from the list of documents in the appendix at **www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/gss/toc**.

Age Guidelines for Tool Use and Work at Elevations or Excavations

Hand Tools

Type of Tool	Youth Up to Age 14	Youth 14 Years and Older	Youth 16 Years and Older
Leaf/grass rake	■	■	■
Hoe	■	■	■
Shovel	■	■	■
Hand clipper (small)	■	■	■
Screwdrivers	■	■	■
Nail hammer	■	■	■
Handsaw	■	■	■
Trowel	■	■	■
Hose spray washer	■	■	■
Wood sanding block (handheld)	■	■	■
Wood chisel (Scouts with Totin' Chip)	■	■	■
Pocketknife (Scouts with Whittling Chip or Totin' Chip)	■	■	■
Pickaxe		■	■
Mattock		■	■
Posthole digger		■	■
Wheel cart (1-, 2-, or 4-wheeled)		■	■
Paint roller with extension pole		■	■

Note: Shaded areas indicate age-appropriate use.

Power Tools

Type of Tool	Youth Up to Age 14	Youth 14 Years and Older	Youth 16 Years and Older
Screwdriver (electric)		■	■
Handheld sander (small)		■	■
Cutting tools (e.g., Dremel®, small)		■	■
Paint sprayer (small, less than 50 psi)		■	■
Residential lawn mower (self-propelled, riding)			■
Commercial lawn mower (push, self-propelled, riding)			■
Line trimmer (electric, gas-powered)			■
Edger (electric, gas-powered)			■
Leaf/grass blower (electric, gas-powered)			■
Hedge trimmer (electric, gas-powered)			■
Belt sander (electric, cordless)			■
Pressure washer (>50 but <100 PSI)			■
Circular, reciprocating, jig, or radial saw			Age 18 and older
Band and scroll saws			Age 18 and older
Router/planer			Age 18 and older
Chain saws			Age 18 and older
Log splitters			Age 18 and older
Wood chippers			Age 18 and older

Note: Shaded areas indicate age-appropriate use.

Training and Supervision for Tool Use

The use of tools requires training, qualified adult supervision, and discipline. Manufacturers' literature and age and skill restrictions shall supersede the recommendations on the charts on the following pages. If there is a conflict, leaders should follow the most restrictive guidelines. These tables are not comprehensive; if in doubt, adults should be recruited for all tool use or job functions that might be dangerous.

Note on Personal Protective Equipment

Appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) must be worn at all times when using hand or power tools. Types of personal protective equipment include the following:

- Work gloves
- Safety glasses
- Safety helmets
- Earplugs or muffs
- Steel-toed shoes
- Protective aprons
- Safety face shields
- Other personal safety equipment as defined by OSHA standards

Working at Heights and Elevations

Heights and elevations are measured from the bottom of the shoes or boots above the ground level or floor.

The following OSHA standards detail fall protection requirements: 29 CFR–Subpart M, 1926.500, 1926.501, 1926.502, and 1926.503.

Refer to safety practices from the BSA's COPE and climbing national standards.

Note: Pioneering projects that support people, such as monkey bridges, have a maximum walking or platform height of 6 feet. Close supervision is necessary when Scouts are building or using pioneering projects.

Excavations

Youth or adults are not permitted to work in any excavation areas greater than 4 feet in depth, such as trenches for plumbing, digging wells, or building foundation work. It is critical to locate all underground utilities (e.g., water, gas, electric) at the site *before* any work begins. Most states have "call before you dig" call centers to assist with this effort.

Youth can work on hiking and biking trails or other similar work where the depth of digging is not greater than 4 feet. Digging postholes for fences, gates, etc., is permissible if the depth is limited to 48 inches (4 feet) and the width is limited to 18 inches (1.5 feet).

Working at Heights and Elevations

Heights and elevations are measured from the bottom of the shoes or boots above the ground level or floor.

Elevation of Work	Youth Up to Age 14	Youth Age 14 or Older
Up to 4 feet	**Step stools***	
Above 4 feet	**Not permitted**	**A 6-foot ladder is permissible with the manufacturer's recommended practices.**
On scaffolds (above 4 feet)	**Not permitted**	**Age 18 or older**
Open platforms (above 4 feet) with proper fall protection**	**Not permitted**	**Age 18 or older**

Fall Protection Requirements According to OSHA Standards

29 CFR–Subpart M, 1926.500, 1926.501, 1926.502, and 1926.503

*Step stools, with one or two steps, are permissible for use by youth if the total height is 4 feet or less.

**Proper fall protection would require the use of full-body harnesses, helmets, and the ability to be anchored to a stable object. Refer to safety practices from the BSA's Project COPE and climbing national standards.

CHAPTER 26
Youth Protection in the Troop

Child abuse is a serious problem in our society, and unfortunately, it can occur anywhere—even in Scouting. Youth safety is Scouting's No. 1 concern, and the Boy Scouts of America's Youth Protection program and policies are based on strengthening the principles of Scouting and avoiding situations that could lead to abuse. Adherence to BSA Youth Protection policies strengthens the protection of our membership and helps preserve the basic values of Scouting.

Nearly 3 million cases of child abuse are reported each year in the United States, and many more go unreported. The Boy Scouts of America has developed comprehensive Youth Protection policies and training to help prepare leaders, prevent child abuse, and help children who have been, or are being, abused.

Leadership Selection

The Boy Scouts of America takes great pride in the quality of its adult leadership. Being a leader in the BSA is a privilege, not a right. The quality of the program and the safety of youth members call for top-notch adult leaders. We work closely with chartered organizations to help recruit the best possible leaders for their units.

Youth Protection Mission Statement

True youth protection can be achieved only through the focused commitment of everyone in Scouting. It is the mission of Youth Protection volunteers and professionals to work within the Boy Scouts of America to maintain a culture of Youth Protection awareness and safety at the national, regional, area, council, district, and unit levels.

The adult application requests background information that must be checked by the unit committee or the chartered organization before an applicant is accepted for unit leadership. This process is an important tool for helping to maintain BSA leadership standards. It includes the written application, interviews by the committee, personal reference checks, and approval by the head of the chartered organization. Also, all applicants for membership must pass a criminal background check and a Volunteer Screening Database check; must complete or be current on the BSA's Youth Protection training; and must follow BSA Youth Protection policies.

While no current screening techniques exist that can identify every potential child molester, we can reduce the risk of accepting a child molester by learning all we can about an applicant for a leadership position—his or her experience with children, why he or she wants to be a Scout leader, and what discipline techniques he or she would use. We can monitor the individual's interaction with youth members and help ensure observation of the policies for two-deep leadership and no one-on-one contact.

Youth Protection training is required for all BSA registered volunteers, regardless of their position. For more information about BSA Youth Protection policies, go to www.scouting.org/training/youth-protection.

Youth Protection Training

Youth Protection training is required for all BSA registered volunteers and must be renewed every two years. New leaders should take the Youth Protection training before submitting an application for registration. If a volunteer's Youth Protection training record is not current at the time of charter renewal, the volunteer will not be reregistered.

This training helps adults understand and guide youth through possible problems related to abuse and harassment, and also helps volunteers understand how to protect themselves. The course educates participants about the issues volunteers may face as they help provide a safer environment for youth members.

BSA Youth Protection training is available through your local council or as an e-learning course at www.my.scouting.org. A login is required for e-learning, and anyone may create a user account and view the courses. Registered members of the BSA may provide their member numbers to receive credit in their member record. If you have questions or problems with training, please contact Member Care at 972-580-2489 or email myscouting@scouting.org.

Youth Protection Mandatory Reporting Procedures for Volunteers

A leader's primary responsibility is to ensure the safety of the youth in Scouting. There are two types of Youth Protection–related reporting procedures all volunteers must follow. These are discussed below.

Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse

If you see or suspect a child is being abused, stop the abuse immediately and report. All persons involved in BSA programs must report any instance of child abuse to local law enforcement, and, in some states, also to the state's Child Protective Services, or CPS. This includes any good-faith suspicion or belief that a child is or has been physically or sexually abused, physically or emotionally neglected, exposed to any form of violence or threat, or exposed to any form of sexual exploitation including the possession, manufacture, or distribution of sexually exploitative images, online solicitation, enticement, or showing of obscene material.

This duty cannot be delegated to any other person. After reporting to law enforcement, the matter must also be reported to the Scout executive. If unable to reach the Scout executive, contact the Scouts First Helpline at 844-Scouts1 (844-726-8871).

Ensure notification has been made to the parents/guardian as soon as possible after notifying law enforcement.

Failing to report suspected child abuse may be a criminal law violation in your state. It is important to note that all states allow immunity from criminal and civil liability for good-faith reporting of suspected abuse, even if it is later determined to be unfounded.

State of Texas reporting. Additional reporting is required for State of Texas licensed camps. For information, visit **www.dshs.texas.gov/youthcamp/report-abuse.aspx**.

Scouts First Helpline

As part of its "Scouts First" approach to the protection and safety of youth, the BSA has established a dedicated 24-hour helpline to receive reports of known or suspected abuse or behavior that puts a youth at immediate risk. In an emergency, when you are unable to reach the Scout executive, call 1-844-SCOUTS1 (1-844-726-8821). The helpline is a resource for incidents involving child abuse or serious risk of harm to children only. It is not for general information or questions. For questions about training, policy interpretation, program, etc., please contact your Scout executive or Member Care at 972-580-2489.

When to use the helpline:

- Anytime you believe a youth has been harmed or their safety and well-being is at risk, and you cannot immediately reach your local council Scout executive or local council
- If a Scout is bullied because of race, color, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, or disability, and efforts by local help are unable to resolve the problem

Is someone is at immediate risk of harm, always call 911.

Reporting Agencies

- Law enforcement—responsible for investigating allegations of child abuse regardless of whether it involves family or non-family members
- Child protective agency—responsible for investigating allegations of child abuse by family members

If a family member is alleged to be responsible for abuse, consult law enforcement or the local child protective agency for guidance regarding parental notification of reported abuse.

If You Are Unsure...

A child's behavior may or may not be an indicator of abuse.

Keep in mind that what you observe is often only one piece of the puzzle. If unsure, it is always safest to report.

When you see concerning behaviors, trust your instincts and report to the program/activity leader (camp director, Scoutmaster, etc.).

Additional BSA Reporting

In addition to the BSA's policy of mandatory reporting of child abuse to law enforcement, the following incidents should also be reported to the Scouts First Helpline:

- Any threat or use of a weapon
- Any negative behavior associated with race, color, national origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability
- Any abuse of a child that meets state reporting mandates for bullying or harassment
- Any mention or threat of suicide

If someone is at immediate risk of harm, always call 911.

For information and resources on BSA incident reporting, visit **www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/incident-report**.

Scouting's Barriers to Abuse

The BSA has adopted policies for the safety and well-being of its members. These policies primarily protect youth members; however, they also serve to protect adult leaders. All parents and caregivers should understand that our leaders are to abide by these safeguards. Parents and youth are strongly encouraged to use these safeguards outside the Scouting program. Registered leaders must follow these guidelines with all Scouting youth in and outside of Scouting programs.

For the most up-to-date source of information on the BSA's Youth Protection, Health and Safety, and Safe Scouting policies, refer to the *Guide to Safe Scouting* at **www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/gss**.

Social media guidelines. The policy of two-deep leadership extends into cyberspace. Another adult leader should be copied on any electronic communication between adult and youth members.

Cyber Chip. To help families and volunteers keep youth safe while online, the BSA introduced the Cyber Chip. The Scouting portal showcasing Cyber Chip resources includes grade-specific videos for each level.

The Cyber Chip Program

Although most Scouts and leaders use digital devices responsibly, educating them about the appropriate use of cell phones and cameras would be a good safety and privacy measure. To address cyber-safety education, the BSA has introduced the age- and grade-specific Cyber Chip program, which addresses topics including cyber/gaming bullying, cell-phone use, texting, blogging, and identity theft. For more information, go to **www.scouting.org/training/youth-protection/cyber-chip**.

Key Resources

BSA Incident Reporting Resources—
www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/incident-report/

Youth Protection training—
www.scouting.org/training/youth-protection

Guide to Safe Scouting—
www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/gss

Scouter Code of Conduct—
https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/HealthSafety/pdf/Scouter_Code_of_Conduct.pdf

State-by-state mandatory reporting information—
www.childwelfare.gov

Safe Scouting Champions. To address the need for safe Scouting volunteers at all levels, the BSA has implemented the Safe Scouting Champions program. These volunteer champions will be the safe Scouting resource.

Prevention of Youth-on-Youth incidents: Training for Leaders—
https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/ppt/Youth_on_Youth.pptx

Bullying Prevention Guide

Bullying is incompatible with the principles of Scouting and should be taken seriously whenever and wherever it occurs. Unit leaders should understand how to prevent bullying and be prepared to deal with it proactively and thoughtfully.

What Is Bullying?

Bullying is harassment or aggressive behavior that is intended to intimidate, dominate, coerce, or hurt another person (the target) mentally, emotionally, or physically. It is *not* "just messing around," and it is *not* "part of growing up." Bullying is a form of victimization, not conflict. It is no more a "conflict" than is child abuse or domestic violence. *Bullying is prohibited in Scouting. All forms of bullying violate the Scout Oath and Scout Law.*

Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. This behavior is repeated or has the potential to be repeated over time. Anyone who is bullied or bullies others may have serious, lasting problems that need to be addressed.

Hazing is bullying that involves forcing someone to do something unpleasant, stupid, or dangerous, usually as a requirement for joining a group.

Bullying and hazing can lead to poor self-image, low self-esteem, physical problems, and worse in the person being targeted. People who are bullied often grow up to bully others, creating a continuing cycle of pain.

Forms of Bullying

Bullying takes many forms:

Verbal—Name-calling, belittling, taunting

Social—Spreading rumors; destroying or manipulating friendships; excluding or ostracizing the target

Physical—Hitting, shoving, kicking, using physical coercion, intimidation through gestures

Criminal—Assault; sexual aggression

Cyber/gaming bullying—Using digital technology such as social media, cell phones, etc., to engage in these kinds of behaviors

A bullied youth may develop a poor self-image, lose self-esteem, quit Scouting, or begin bullying other youth, thus perpetuating the bullying cycle. Studies indicate bullied youth tend to be future bullies. As a leader, either break the cycle or do not let it start.

How to Spot Bullying

Youth who are being bullied may:

- Be reluctant to join activities or unwilling to participate.
- Avoid activities, arrive late, or leave early (to avoid the bully).
- Avoid certain places or areas.
- Refuse to leave their tent at camp (out of fear).
- Experience nightmares, bedwetting, or insomnia (triggered by fear).
- Seem nervous around certain youth.
- Wait to use the restroom away from the group.
- Appear sad, moody, angry, anxious, or depressed.
- Seek, carry, or hide weapons (for protection).
- Lose money or personal items such as clothing or patches (taken by the bully).
- Feel sick, often with seemingly psychosomatic illnesses.
- Appear lonely, have difficulty making friends, or suddenly have fewer friends.
- Seem reluctant to defend themselves verbally or physically when teased or pushed.
- Have bruises, cuts, defensive wounds, or other physical marks.
- Mention or consider suicide.

A Special Note to All Leaders

You are the key to creating a safe, bullying-free environment for Scouting youth. Experts say that leaders can usually tell when a youth new to the unit may become a target and be bullied. Individual factors such as temperament, social competence, physical condition (e.g., overweight/underweight), speaking another language at home, special health-care needs, perceived differences (e.g., sexual identity/orientation, race/ethnicity, religion), or the presence of a disability may put a youth at greater risk of being bullied. Leaders should identify these youth and take measures to help ensure their smooth integration into the unit.

- Support and empower youth who are bullied or at risk to be bullied; ensure they are connected with other Scouts who have things in common.
- Keep an ongoing, open line of communication with parents; keep parents updated on their children's progress with the unit and provide support.
- Speak with Scouts known to be unreceptive to new Scouting youth; empower them to be good Scouts and welcoming to new youth.
- Set an example by how you integrate these youth into the program; model strong, positive behavior by your interaction with youth and adults.
- Take bullying seriously; reinforce the message, using key points of the Scout Law, that bullying is not acceptable behavior.
- Closely supervise youth in your care and interrupt bullying whenever it occurs; follow up to monitor the results.

Remember, Youth Protection Begins With YOU.

Warning Signs for Suicidal Behavior

Common signs include:

- Talking about suicide
- Getting the means to commit suicide, such as buying a gun or stockpiling pills
- Withdrawing from social contact and wanting to be left alone
- Having mood swings, such as being emotionally high one day and deeply discouraged the next
- Giving away or loaning out all of their possessions
- Being preoccupied with death, dying, or violence
- Feeling trapped or hopeless about a situation
- Changing normal routine, including eating or sleeping patterns
- Doing risky or self-destructive things, such as using drugs or driving recklessly
- Saying goodbye to people as if they won't be seen again
- Developing personality changes or being severely anxious or agitated, particularly when experiencing other warning signs listed above

Suicide Intervention and Response

If a youth mentions suicide, take it seriously.

- Immediately notify parents or guardians.
- Immediately notify the Scout executive.
- Utilize the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, available toll-free at 800-273-8255.
- If a youth is in danger of committing suicide or has made a suicide attempt, get emergency help.
- Don't leave the youth alone.
- Don't try to handle the situation without help.
- Call 911 or your local emergency number right away if you believe the youth is at immediate risk. Or, if you think you can do so safely, take the person to the nearest hospital emergency room yourself.
- Try to find out if the youth is under the influence of alcohol or drugs or may have taken an overdose.

How to Address Bullying

These tips can help Scout leaders respond effectively:

- Immediately stop the bullying. Stand between the bully and the target, preferably blocking their eye contact. Do not immediately ask the reason for the bullying or try to determine the facts.
- In a matter-of-fact tone of voice, state what behaviors you saw or heard. Tell Scouts that bullying is unacceptable and against the Scout Law; e.g., "Calling someone names is bullying. The Scout Law states that a Scout is friendly and kind."
- Provide support in a way that allows the bullied youth to regain self-control, to save face, and to feel safe from retaliation. Follow up with the youth later, but at the time of the incident do not ask what happened or be overly solicitous. Young people often find it uncomfortable to be questioned in front of peers, and a bullied youth may feel embarrassed to be shielded by an adult.
- Do not require Scouts to apologize or make amends during the heat of the moment. Everyone should have time to cool off.
- Speak to bystanders but do not put them on the spot to explain publicly what they observed. In a calm and supportive tone, praise them if they tried to help. If they did not act, or if they responded aggressively, guide them in how to appropriately intervene or get help when they witness bullying; e.g., "Maybe you weren't sure what to do. Next time, please tell the person to stop or get an adult's help if you feel you can't work together to handle the situation."
- Immediately notify parents or guardians of both the target and the youth who bullied of what occurred. Address the parents' or guardians' questions and concerns. Inform them of the next steps.
- Hold Scouts who bully others fully accountable for their actions. If appropriate, impose immediate consequences. As a first step, you might take away program opportunities.
- Increase supervision to ensure the bullying is not repeated and does not escalate. Let the Scout who bullies know you will be watching to be sure there is no repetition or retaliation. Notify other Scouters, and discuss the incident at the next unit meeting.
- Do not require Scouts to meet to "work things out." Forced apologies don't help, and a compulsory meeting could worsen the relationship between the parties. Instead, encourage the Scout who bullied to make amends (after follow-up with a parent or guardian) in a way that would be meaningful for the youth who was bullied.

Cyber/gaming Bullying

A rapidly growing form of bullying, cyber/gaming bullying uses the power of the internet, cellular networks, and social media to harass the target. Cyber/gaming bullying encompasses text or instant messages with hostile or degrading comments, embarrassing digital images, and fictitious online posts intended to humiliate, threaten, or coerce. Cyber/gaming bullying can devastate the target, whether a lone bully participates or others witness or join the attack. The target may obsess over what is posted, become depressed, avoid school or social activities, or have suicidal thoughts. In extreme circumstances, cyber/gaming bullying can lead to suicide.

Parents and adults should talk with youth about their online activities and stay alert to signs of cyber/gaming bullying such as sleeplessness, withdrawal, stress, avoidance, declining grades, or lowered self-esteem.

Ways to Address Cyber/gaming bullying

- Encourage children to speak up immediately if they are victims of cyber/gaming bullying. Assure that a young person has a trusted adult—whether parent, teacher, or Scout leader—in whom to confide.

- Block cyber/gaming bullying by using available privacy controls such as blocked-sender lists and call-blocking.
- Do not erase the messages or pictures. Take screen shots. Save them as evidence.
- If the cyber/gaming bullying is criminal or you suspect it may be, contact the police. Areas falling under the jurisdiction of law enforcement include threats of violence, extortion, obscene or harassing phone calls or messages, harassment via stalking or hate crimes, child pornography, sexual exploitation, and taking a photo or video image of someone in a place where privacy would normally be expected.
- Utilize tools offered by the BSA. To help families and volunteers keep youth safe while online, the BSA introduced the Cyber Chip, developed in cooperation with the content expert NetSmartz®, part of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. (See "Bullying Prevention Resources," below.)

Seeking Professional Help

Bullying is a form of abuse that can cause psychological, physical, and academic problems. Parents may want to talk with a counselor about a counseling or mental health referral. A professional can assess how much support and assistance a bullied youth needs. If a youth is sick, stressed, not sleeping, or having other problems because of bullying, a health professional should be contacted.

A young person who bullies others will also need the help of caring adults. Scouts who bully may need help recognizing their behavior, taking responsibility for their actions, developing empathy, and finding ways to make amends. Scout leaders can offer guidance in how to interact with others in socially appropriate ways. Assess possible reasons for the bullying behavior, such as lack of self-control, poor social skills, academic problems, or a troubled family life. Depending on the severity of the bullying behavior or the related circumstances, therapeutic intervention might be needed for the bully as well as the target.

Incidents Requiring an Immediate Report to the Scout Executive

The following must be reported to the council Scout executive for action immediately:

- Any threat or use of a weapon
- Any negative behavior associated with race, religion, sexual identity or orientation, or disability
- Any reports to authorities where the BSA's Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse policy or your state's mandatory reporting of child abuse laws apply
- Any abuse of a child that meets state reporting mandates for bullying or harassment
- Any mention or threats of suicide

Antibullying Action Plan

- Stop the abuse, bullying, or policy violation.
- Protect the targeted youth.
- Summon assistance from other leaders, authorities, etc.
- Gather factual information about the bullying incident, including details of who was involved, what happened, and when and where it happened.
- Notify parents or guardians of both the target and the youth who bullied.

If someone is at immediate risk of harm, call 911.

If a Scout is bullied because of race, ethnicity, color, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, or disability, and local help is not working to solve the problem, contact the local council Scout executive. If the Scout executive is unavailable, the BSA provides a 24-hour helpline: 1-844-SCOUTS1 (1-844-726-8821).

- Take corrective action.
- Notify the council Scout executive when warranted.
- Check back with the targeted youth to ensure the problem behavior has stopped.

Bullying Prevention Resources

Bullying Awareness

This series of fact sheets can be found online at www.scouting.org/training/youth-protection/bullying.

- A Scout Is Kind Newsletter
- Bullying—What is Bullying?
- The Bully
- Creating a Bullying-Free Culture in Scouting
- What to Do If Your Child Is Being Bullied (for parents)
- Prevention of Cyber/Gaming Bullying in Scouting
- Reporting Suspected or Observed Bullying
- Providing Support to Scouts Who Are Bullied
- Prevention of Bullying in Scouting—Unit Discussions

Antibullying and Anti-Cyber Intimidation Programs
Website: learning.learningforlife.org/digital-programs/abc

BSA Youth Protection
Website: www.scouting.org/training/youth-protection

Cyber Chip
Website: www.scouting.org/training/youth-protection/cyber-chip

Cyberbullying Research Center
Website: www.cyberbullying.us

NetSmartz Workshop
Website: www.netsmartz.org

StopBullying.gov
Website: www.stopbullying.gov

CHAPTER 27
Health, Fitness, and Nutrition

Keeping Scouts safe involves following the policies and procedures discussed in chapters 24, 25, and 26. Safety also requires that Scouts—and Scout leaders—be fit enough to participate in activities that can be physically challenging and far removed from medical help. This chapter discusses health-related BSA policies. It also introduces BSA programs that can help promote fitness.

The Annual Health and Medical Record

To provide better care for its members and to assist them in better understanding their own physical capabilities, the Boy Scouts of America recommends that everyone who participates in a Scouting event have an annual medical evaluation performed by a physician, nurse practitioner, or physician assistant. While such annual evaluations are recommended for all participants in all events, they are required for participants in activities that last longer than 72 hours or that are strenuous and demanding.

The Annual Health and Medical Record is the BSA's official form for recording health information and the results of medical evaluations. The form has four parts; the parts that must be completed depend on the nature of the activity.

Parts A and B are to be completed at least annually by participants in all Scouting events. Part A includes the participant's contact and insurance information and health history; Part B includes a parent or guardian informed consent and hold harmless and release agreement and a talent release statement. These parts are to be completed and signed by the participant and, for participants under age 18, the parents or guardians.

Part C is the physical exam required for participants in any event that exceeds 72 consecutive hours, for all high-adventure base participants, or when the nature of the activity is strenuous and demanding. (Note that service projects or work weekends may fit this description.) Part C is to be completed and signed by a certified and licensed health-care provider—either a physician (MD or DO), nurse practitioner, or a physician assistant.

Part D must be reviewed by all participants of a high-adventure program at one of the national high-adventure bases and shared with the examining health-care provider before completing Part C. It details the potential risks faced by high-adventure participants and detailed requirements of each high-adventure program.

For participants in scuba programs, the Annual Health and Medical Record also includes a separate recreational scuba diver's physical examination that must be completed in addition to Part C.

As the name indicates, the Annual Health and Medical Record is valid for 12 calendar months—technically to the end of the month one year from the date it was completed. While the forms can be completed or updated at any time, most troops ask that families complete and turn them in shortly before summer camp. Be sure also to get forms from Scouts and leaders who are not attending summer camp. Annual doctor visits can seem expensive, but there are several ways to reduce the cost:

- Some troops identify local doctors, perhaps in the chartered organization, who agree to offer exams for little or no cost.
- Scouts who must get medical exams for school or sports can typically have the BSA form completed at the same time for little or no additional cost.
- Immediate-care centers often offer special rates for school or sports physicals; those rates should also apply to BSA physicals.

You can't simply attach a sports physical to the Annual Health and Medical Record. In an effort to maintain standards of preparedness and fitness for participation, and to make sure that the medical professional conducting the examination knows the various outdoor adventures than can occur in Scouting, the BSA requires completion of Part C.

Risk Factors

Based on the experience of the medical community, the BSA has identified the following risk factors that may limit participation in various outdoor adventures:

- Excessive body weight
- Heart disease
- Hypertension (high blood pressure)
- Diabetes
- Seizures
- Lack of appropriate immunizations
- Asthma
- Allergies or anaphylaxis
- Muscular and/or skeletal injuries
- Psychiatric or psychological and emotional difficulties

For more information about these risk factors and how they can affect participation, visit **www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/risk-factors**.

Height/Weight Limits for Activities

To help ensure that Scouts and Scouters are fit enough to participate in high adventure activities, the BSA has developed height/weight limits. The limits shown in the accompanying chart must be adhered to for certain activities. The chart applies in the following settings:

- When travel takes you more than 30 minutes off an accessible roadway, fire lane, camp road, etc., or where you float, walk, hike, bike, or otherwise go into the backcountry
- When your Order of the Arrow lodge, unit, district, or council requires it as part of a program

The height/weight chart generally would not apply in the following situations (unless specific instructions are issued to the contrary):

- BSA resident camps that have drive-up campsites and do not require packing in or out
- Cub Scout programs
- Wood Badge courses in a typical resident-camp setting

Since muscle weighs more than fat, a few extremely fit individuals exceed the allowable weight for their height. Medical advisors for events and camps have the discretion to take into account body-fat measurements in these cases. A health-care provider must determine that an individual's body fat percentage is 20 percent or less for a female or 15 percent or less for a male. Contact the event leader or camp for specifics on whether this exemption applies and what testing method must be used.

Promoting Fitness

Promoting physical fitness is a core aim of the Scouts BSA program. In the Scout Oath, Scouts pledge to keep themselves physically strong. To become Tenderfoot Scouts, they must show improvement on a handful of simple fitness tests. To become Eagle Scouts, they must earn the Personal Fitness merit badge and at least one other fitness-related badge.

The need for fitness education is high. A third of Americans ages 2 to 19 are overweight or obese, and children as young as 10 are developing adult-onset diabetes. Youth of Scouts BSA age spend as much time in front of televisions, computers, and video games as they do in school, while the percentage of youngsters who play outside has dropped by half in a generation.

Height (inches)	Recommended Weight (pounds)	Allowable Exception	Maximum Acceptance
60	97–138	139–166	166
61	101–143	144–172	172
62	104–148	149–178	178
63	107–152	153–183	183
64	111–157	158–189	189
65	114–162	163–195	195
66	118–167	168–201	201
67	121–172	173–207	207
68	125–178	179–214	214
69	129–185	186–220	220
70	132–188	189–226	226
71	136–194	195–233	233
72	140–199	200–239	239
73	144–205	206–246	246
74	148–210	211–252	252
75	152–216	217–260	260
76	156–222	223–267	267
77	160–228	229–274	274
78	164–234	235–281	281
79 and over	170–240	241–295	295

Note: For participants who are shorter than 60 inches, subtract 6 pounds for every inch below 60.
For example, if a participant measured 58 inches, the maximum allowable weight would be 154 pounds.

As Scouters, we can do many things to promote fitness. Among them, we can:

- Encourage Scouts to plan strenuous activities that challenge them to become more fit—and that reward them for becoming more fit.
- Make sure counselors are available for fitness-related merit badges, and promote those badges among our Scouts.
- Monitor patrol menus, and encourage Scouts to plan nutritious meals.
- Set an example by becoming more fit ourselves, regardless of our current fitness level.

If you are trying to lose weight or reach another fitness goal, invite your Scouts to hold you accountable. You will set a good example and probably be more successful in reaching your goal.

SCOUTStrong PALA Challenge

A great tool for improving fitness is the SCOUTStrong PALA (Presidential Active Lifestyle Award) Challenge. Created in conjunction with the President's Council on Fitness, Sports, and Nutrition, this program is designed to help Scouting participants increase physical activity and improve eating habits.

Over an eight-week period, any Scout, Scouter, or Scouting family member can earn the SCOUTStrong PALA Challenge Award by doing the following:

- Meet a daily activity goal of 30 minutes a day for adults and 60 minutes a day for kids for at least five days a week during six of the eight weeks.
- Focus on a healthy eating goal each week (and continue on previous goals in subsequent weeks).

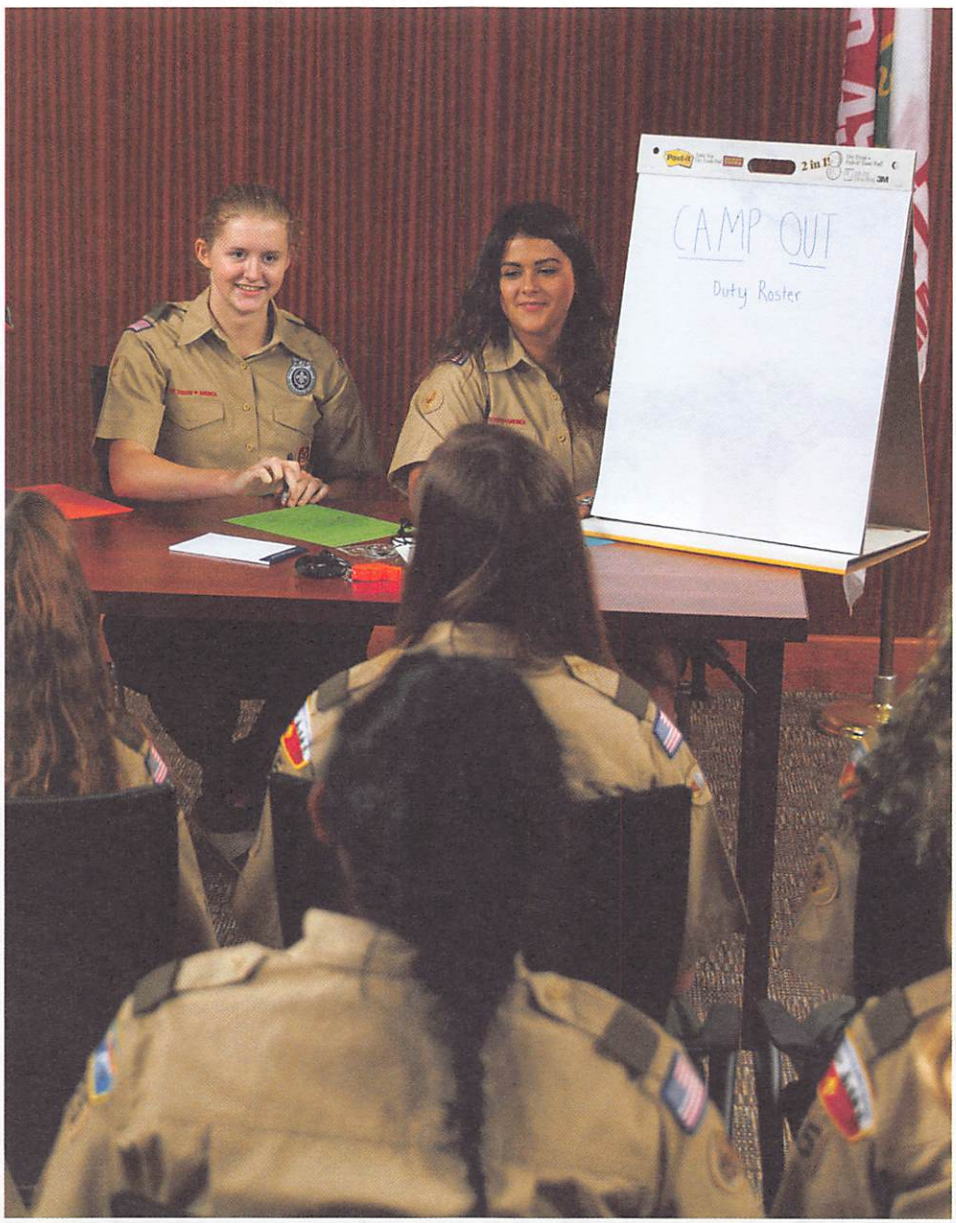
More than 100 indoor and outdoor activities count toward the activity requirement, including walking, running, aerobics, gardening, and canoeing. Healthy eating goals include consuming more whole grains and eating smaller portions. Participants can track their progress on activity logs or online. Those who complete the SCOUTStrong PALA Challenge can download a free certificate and can purchase a special patch. For more information, visit **www.scouting.org/resources/bsa-fit**.

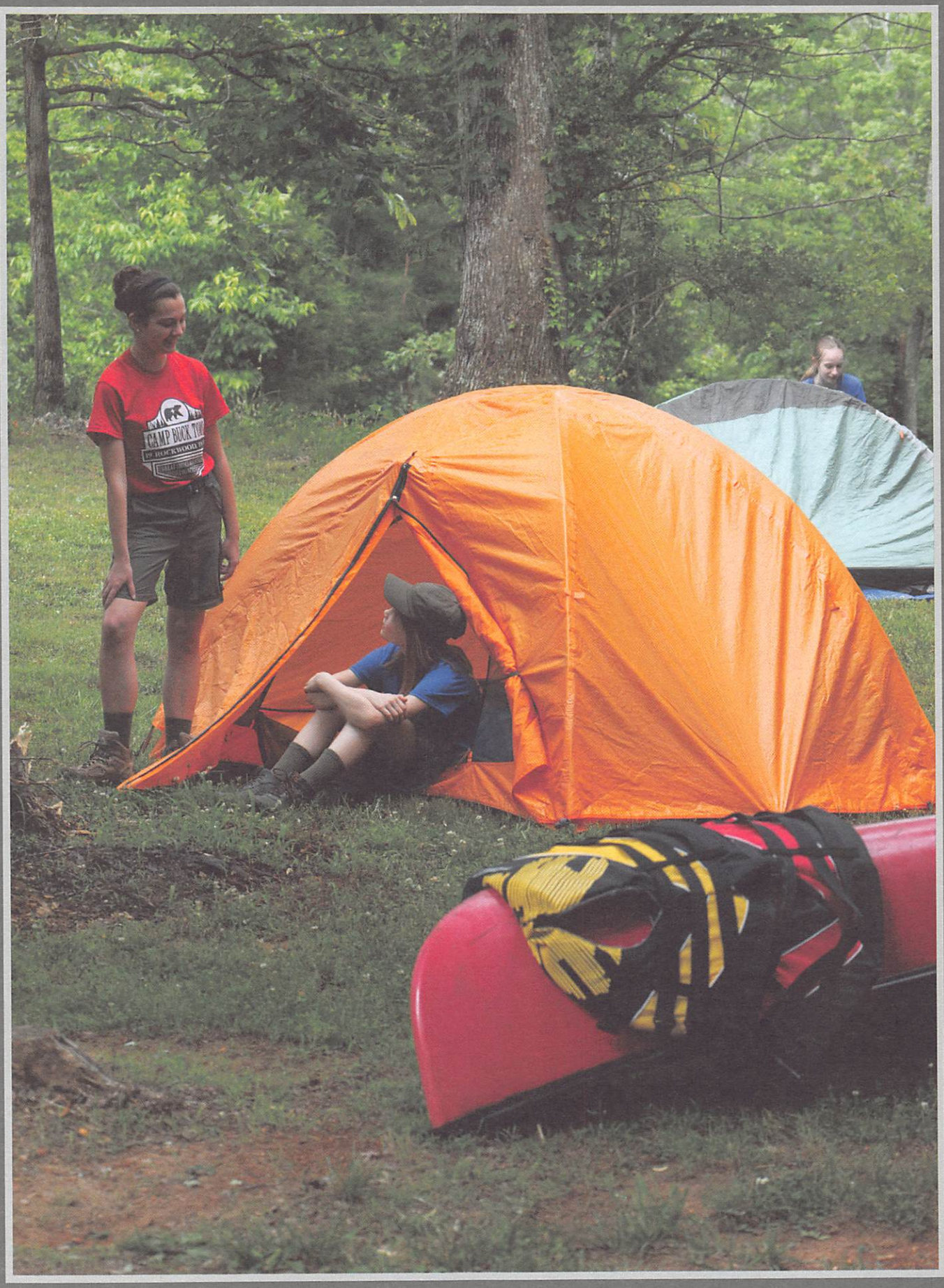
Alcohol, Tobacco, and Drugs

An important way adult leaders can model healthy living is by following the BSA's policies on alcohol, tobacco, and drugs. It is the policy of the BSA that the use of alcoholic beverages and controlled substances is not permitted at encampments or activities on property owned and/or operated by the BSA, or at any activity involving participation of youth members. Also, it is unacceptable for anyone to use or be under the influence of medical marijuana at or during any Scouting activity.

Adult leaders should support the attitude that they and their Scouts are better off without tobacco in any form and may not allow the use of tobacco products at any BSA activity involving youth participants. All Scouting functions, meetings, and activities should be conducted on a smoke-free basis, with smoking areas located away from all participants.

Prescription medication is the responsibility of the Scout taking the medication and/or the Scout's parent or guardian. A Scout leader, after obtaining all the necessary information, can agree to accept the responsibility of making sure a Scout takes the necessary medication at the appropriate time, but BSA policy does not mandate nor necessarily encourage the Scout leader to do so. Also, if your state laws are more limiting, they must be followed.





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Advancement Checklist

☐ What percentage of troop members advanced in the past year? _____

Journey to Excellence goals:

- Bronze—40 percent advance or have a 2 percent increase
- Silver—45 percent advance or 40 percent advance and have a 2 percent increase
- Gold—50 percent advance or 45 percent advance and have a 2 percent increase

☐ What percentage of Life Scouts achieved the Eagle Scout rank in the past year? _____

☐ What percentage of new Scouts achieved First Class within 18 months? _____

☐ How many courts of honor does the troop hold each year? _

Journey to Excellence goals:

- Bronze—two per year
- Silver—three per year
- Gold—four per year

☐ Do Scouts receive immediate recognition when they advance in rank? When they earn merit badges? _____

☐ Do meetings and outings offer advancement opportunities?

Tips for Success

☐ Include immediate recognition during the closing of each meeting.

☐ Make advancement visible by using the Troop Advancement chart or other method.

☐ Hold regular Scoutmaster conferences for all Scouts, whether advancing or not.

☐ Offer merit badge sessions before meetings or at other times.

☐ If you use recordkeeping software like TroopMaster, use the report function to identify Scouts who are not advancing or to identify advancement needs several Scouts share (e.g., five-mile hike for Second Class).

☐ Each month, highlight a different type of award (religious emblems, STEM awards, aquatic awards like Mile Swim BSA, etc.)

Sources for Guest Instructors

☐ Council or district merit badge counselor directory

☐ Venturing crews that specialize in outdoor adventure

☐ Neighboring troops with expertise in a particular topic

☐ Camp staff members in the offseason

☐ Employees of local outdoor outfitters, bike shops, etc.

☐ Members of organizations like the Audubon Society or Orienteering USA

☐ Instructors with organizations like the American Red Cross or the American Canoe Association

☐ High school teachers, college faculty members, and graduate students

☐ Members of the chartered organization

Preparing for the Annual Planning Conference

Participants

- ☐ Committee Chair
- ☐ Scoutmaster
- ☐ Senior patrol leader

Step 1: Gather key information.

- ☐ School dates (holidays, exams, etc.)
- ☐ Community event dates
- ☐ Chartered organization dates
- ☐ Personal dates
- ☐ District and council dates
- ☐ Troop Resource Survey data
- ☐ Last year's troop annual plan
- ☐ Troop priorities and goals
- ☐ Scouts' advancement records
- ☐ General outline of next year's program
- ☐ Dates already committed to (scheduled Philmont trek, national Scout jamboree, etc.)

Step 2: Involve the senior patrol leader.

- ☐ Explain importance of process and the senior patrol leader's role.
- ☐ Discuss program and activity options.
- ☐ Discuss troop goals.
- ☐ Share outline of next year's program.
- ☐ Ask for the senior patrol leader's input and thoughts.
- ☐ Be flexible.

Step 3: Gather input from Scouts.

- ☐ Senior patrol leader shares draft plan with patrol leaders.
- ☐ Patrol leaders share plan with Scouts.
- ☐ Patrol leaders schedule a meeting to get Scouts' feedback.
- ☐ Compare the current plan with the draft plan.
- ☐ What should we start doing that we are not doing?
- ☐ What should we stop doing that is not working?
- ☐ What should we continue doing that is working well?

Step 4: Invite people to attend the conference.

- ☐ Troop youth leaders
- ☐ Troop committee members
- ☐ Other adult leaders
- ☐ Chartered organization representative
- ☐ Your unit commissioner (optional)
- ☐ Anyone who might be helpful (e.g., parents)

Holding the Annual Planning Conference—Checklist

Part 1: Preparation

- ☐ Where should you hold the annual conference?

_____

- ☐ Who should play an active role in it?

_____

- ☐ What role should most adults play?

_____

- ☐ What supplies will you need in the way of planners and calendars?

_____

- ☐ Do you have a copy of the Troop Program Planning Chart?

_____

- ☐ What do you record month by month on your calendar? ____

_____

- ☐ What should the outcome of your conference be?

_____

- ☐ What program features do you want to include?

_____

- ☐ What timetable have you established for your troop goals?

_____

- ☐ How many traditional outings have you included on your calendar?

_____

- ☐ Do you have a mix of familiar and unfamiliar activities?

_____

- ☐ What are your conference ground rules?

_____

Part 2: The Conference, Step by Step

- ☐ **Step 1:** Lead a discussion on troop goals and arrive at an agreed list.

- ☐ **Step 2:** Share the draft calendar, review dates, and solicit additional input.

- ☐ **Step 3:** Discuss and then vote to approve dates and events.

- ☐ **Step 4:** Invite the senior patrol leader to share updates from patrol leaders about programs and themes.
  - ☐ Write the monthly feature and program themes on flipchart or board.
  - ☐ Vote on these items, and take good notes.

- ☐ **Step 5:** Add other important dates:
  - ☐ Troop and patrol leaders' council meetings
  - ☐ Boards of review
  - ☐ Courts of honor
  - ☐ Troop and patrol elections
  - ☐ Troop open house
  - ☐ Service projects
  - ☐ Webelos Scouts joint outings and transition ceremonies
  - ☐ Any other activities that can be scheduled in advance

- ☐ **Step 6:** Hold final discussion and vote on plan, calendar, and goals.
  - ☐ Go to the troop committee for final approval.
  - ☐ Work with your chartered organization to make reservations.
  - ☐ Begin making campsite reservations for selected dates and sites.

- ☐ **Step 7:** Share the plan with each troop family to make it a living, breathing document.

Patrol Leaders' Council Meeting—Checklist

☐ What is the purpose of the patrol leaders' council meeting? _____

_____

_____

☐ How many months' programming does the meeting cover? _____

_____

_____

☐ Why is delegating part of the planning so important for a successful PLC meeting? _____

_____

_____

☐ What are the advantages of automating some planning details? _____

_____

_____

☐ What are the rotating duty roster tasks that can be determined ahead of time? _____

_____

_____

☐ Describe the Scoutmaster's role before and during the PLC meeting. _____

_____

_____

☐ Coach the senior patrol leader on the agenda ahead of time.

☐ Be familiar with the troop's annual program plan.

☐ Provide resources.

☐ Be alert for plans the troop makes that call for special resources or support.

☐ Help the senior patrol leader keep the meeting on track.

☐ Share a Scoutmaster's Minute or training module.

☐ Why should the Scoutmaster keep the troop committee informed of committee decisions? _____

_____

☐ To whom should the Scoutmaster distribute the monthly plan after the meeting? _____

_____

_____

The Purposes of Troop Meetings—Checklist

- ☐ Prepare for outings.
- ☐ Learn and practice Scouting skills.
- ☐ Exercise leadership.
- ☐ Strengthen patrols.
- ☐ Promote advancement and personal growth.
- ☐ Inspire Scouts.
- ☐ Have fun.

You know the troop meeting is a success when each troop member...

- ☐ Learns a new skill
- ☐ Completes an advanced requirement
- ☐ Prepares for an upcoming outing without parental assistance
- ☐ Enjoys fellowship with other Scouts and leaders
- ☐ Accomplishes something as a leader

Using Adult Leaders at Scout Meetings—Checklist

Designated adult leaders can...

- ☐ Give the Scoutmaster's Minute.
- ☐ Recognize Scouts who have advanced.
- ☐ Keep track of the meeting, and quietly remind the senior patrol leader when it goes off schedule.
- ☐ Teach specific skills if no youth leaders are qualified.
- ☐ Touch base with youth leaders running part of the meeting to be sure they are prepared.
- ☐ Sit in on patrol meetings and skills instruction to provide quiet support to the youth leaders.
- ☐ Work with their youth leader counterparts.
- ☐ Conduct Scoutmaster conferences and boards of review.
- ☐ Serve as a merit badge counselor, and sign off on advancement requirements.
- ☐ Watch for Scouts who are not involved or who wander off.

Adult leaders should never...

- Take over the meeting (unless it is a true emergency).
- Criticize or call out Scouts.
- Yell "Sign's up!" (Controlling the group is the senior patrol leader's responsibility, and the Scout sign is a silent signal.)

Tips for Success

- ☐ Contact all individuals contributing to the event beforehand to ensure that they are prepared.
- ☐ Ensure that senior patrol leader and assistant senior patrol leader arrive early for a quick huddle.
- ☐ Plan your Scoutmaster's Minutes well.
- ☐ Include variety, action, and purpose.
- ☐ Vary the meeting routine with visitors, games, or food.
- ☐ Move the meeting outdoors when possible.
- ☐ Encourage youth leaders to use the Scout sign to get and hold attention.
- ☐ Do not wear out activities; alternate a favorite game occasionally with others.
- ☐ Mix up your games alternating between skill, speed, dexterity, and wits.
- ☐ Always leave the Scouts wanting more.
- ☐ Start and end on time.

Planning Patrol Activities—Frequently Asked Questions

Question: When can a patrol day hike or service project without adult supervision be allowed?

Answer: Never. Two-deep adult leadership is now required for all patrol activities.

Q: What should a Scoutmaster consider before allowing a patrol day hike or service project?

A: The Scoutmaster should be satisfied that the activity has been thoroughly planned and that it is well within each patrol member's level of training and responsibility. The patrol activity cannot interfere with any troop function.

Q: What should the Scoutmaster do if there are any doubts?

A: The Scoutmaster should encourage the patrol to reconsider its plans.

Q: What are the requirements for overnight patrol activities?

A: Overnight patrol activities require two registered adult leaders, or one registered leader and the parent of a participating Scout or other adult, one of whom must be 21 years of age or older.

Planning Outings—Checklist

Basic Planning Details

- ☐ Start planning as far back as the annual planning conference.
- ☐ Refer to key details like location, cost, and departure finalized at the previous month's PLC meeting.
- ☐ Have Scouts sign up a week or two in advance to allow time to shop for food and have drivers and adult leaders in place.
- ☐ Have youth leaders be responsible for the sign-up process.
- ☐ If expenses are involved, have the Scouts develop the basic budget, and collect just enough to cover the event.

Choosing Campsites

- ☐ To find a good campsite, use your contacts, experience, and resources.
- ☐ Look for campsites where each patrol can have its own clearly defined space.
- ☐ Have adults camp at a convenient distance to allow for youth leadership development.
- ☐ Contact the campsite owner or manager well in advance and foster that relationship.
- ☐ Explore the opportunities available to your troop or patrol.
- ☐ Pay attention to the landowner's or land manager's regulations and possible limitations.
- ☐ Ensure that Scouts and adults act responsibly and in keeping with Leave No Trace and Tread Lightly! guidelines, even in developed campsites.

Program Activities and Schedules

- ☐ Have the Scouts develop a schedule based on the outing's focus, whether it is hiking, special cooking, wilderness survival, etc.
- ☐ Have Scouts secure equipment as needed and recruit consultants as needed for planned activities.
- ☐ Create an expectation for starting and ending on time.
- ☐ Be sure to allow time in the schedule for unexpected opportunities that arise along the way.
- ☐ Don't be so rigid with the schedule that there is no time for unstructured play and free time.
- ☐ Be prepared with rainy-day activities.

Menus and Shopping

- ☐ Have each patrol plan its menu, estimate the cost, buy the food, and properly repackage the food for the outing.
- ☐ Have the patrol quartermaster or a Scout working on a cooking-related advancement requirement take care of the shopping.
- ☐ Create menus depending on the type of outing—limit backpacking patrols to lightweight foods, for example, or create more elaborate menus for sedentary trips.
- ☐ Refer to the *Scouts BSA Handbook* and ***Cooking*** merit badge pamphlet for menu planning tips, camp meal recipes, an overview of cooking methods, and a chart to help determine serving sizes.
- ☐ Refer to other resources like *Camp Cookery for Small Groups* for patrol-size recipes and the Cooking program feature, which includes a section on special cooking.
- ☐ Discourage parents, who typically help Scouts do the shopping, from going beyond the planned menu.

Tips for Success

- ☐ Keep in mind that as of Jan. 1, 2014, the Cooking merit badge is required for the Eagle Scout rank.
- ☐ Add variety to menus by using themes or creating cooking contests.
- ☐ For Scouts who are learning to create a menu, consider taking them to a grocery store.

Duty Rosters

- ☐ Address the fact that there are many chores involved in cooking a meal on a patrol outing that make it a collaborative effort.
- ☐ For younger Scouts, you may need to spell out clearly who does what and when by creating a duty roster.
- ☐ Create a chart that lists each meal vertically down the left side and each chore horizontally across the top. (Chores typically include stoves and fire, water, cooking, cleanup.)
- ☐ Rotate who performs each chore from meal to meal to create a sense of fairness.
- ☐ Remember, cleanup is everyone's responsibility; have each patrol leader lead the patrol in making a thorough sweep of the campsite and leaving it better than they found it.

Planning Outings—Checklist (continued)

Using Adult Leaders on Outings

- ☐ Keep to the principle of letting youth leaders lead and Scouts learn from their mistakes.
- ☐ Have adult leaders set up camp a short distance from the camp, but near enough to be approachable.
- ☐ Make the outings a place where mentoring relationships are strengthened, and Scouts can seek guidance from trusted adults.
- ☐ Conduct Scoutmaster conferences for advancement or for Scouts who should be advancing.
- ☐ Follow the BSA's Youth Protection guidelines, which require one-on-one conferences to be held in full view of others.
- ☐ Share with adults a list of specific things they can do to make outings more enjoyable. These include:
  - ☐ Make sure tents are pitched properly.
  - ☐ Make sure ground beds will keep Scouts comfortable, warm, and dry.
  - ☐ In cold weather, make sure each Scout's sleeping bag is sufficiently warm.
  - ☐ Encourage Scouts to change from sweat-soaked clothing to dry sleepwear.
  - ☐ In hot weather, make sure Scouts use sunscreen and drink plenty of water.
  - ☐ Encourage Scouts to monitor their urine output to avoid dehydration; it should be clear and copious.
  - ☐ Watch out for signs of homesickness, health problems, or other issues.
  - ☐ Help the patrol leader and patrol leaders enforce bedtimes so that everyone gets enough sleep.
  - ☐ Typically, adults go to bed last and get up first.

Outdoor Equipment—Checklist

- ☐ Know the requirements for the specific type of outing you are planning.
- ☐ Promote the use of lightweight camping gear to make it easier to camp anywhere.
- ☐ Suggest that each Scout carry the Scout Basic Essentials as listed in their Scouts BSA handbook.
- ☐ Refer to the *Scouts BSA Handbook for Boys* (No. 34622) or the *Scouts BSA Handbook for Girls* (No. 39006), as appropriate, for additional personal overnight camping gear a Scout might need for campouts or trips of greater duration.
- ☐ Have an adult or experienced older Scout advise new Scouts on what to buy, what features to look for, and where to shop.
- ☐ Bear in mind that while carrying cell phones and other electronic devices on outings can be a contentious issue, many such devices have useful features.
- ☐ With the input of the patrol leaders' council, guide your troop in developing its own policies about what to allow and when.

Scout Basic Essentials—Checklist

- ☐ Pocketknife
- ☐ First-aid kit
- ☐ Extra clothing
- ☐ Rain gear
- ☐ Water bottle (and method for treating water in the backcountry)
- ☐ Flashlight
- ☐ Trail food
- ☐ Matches and fire starters
- ☐ Sun protection
- ☐ Map and compass

Insect repellent, a whistle, and other items also might be considered essentials, depending on your destination, the length of your trip, and the season.

Personal Overnight Camping Gear—Checklist

- ☐ Scout Basic Essentials
- ☐ Clothing appropriate for the season
- ☐ Backpack with rain cover
- ☐ Sleeping bag, or two or three blankets
- ☐ Sleeping pad
- ☐ Ground cloth
- ☐ Eating kit
  - ☐ Spoon
  - ☐ Plate
  - ☐ Bowl
  - ☐ Cup
- ☐ Cleanup kit
  - ☐ Soap
  - ☐ Toothbrush
  - ☐ Dental Floss
  - ☐ Comb
  - ☐ Washcloth
  - ☐ Towel
  - ☐ Hand sanitizer
- ☐ Plastic garbage bags
- ☐ Nylon cord, 50 feet
- ☐ Optional personal extras and gear for specific activities
  - ☐ Watch
  - ☐ Camera
  - ☐ Small notebook
  - ☐ Pencil or pen
  - ☐ Sunglasses
  - ☐ Small musical instrument
  - ☐ Swimsuit
  - ☐ Gloves
  - ☐ Fishing pole and gear

Troop and Patrol Gear—Checklist

Be aware of the recommended Group Camping Gear Checklist (found in the Scouts BSA handbooks) and the many sources where items can be purchased, borrowed, or "inherited."

- ☐ Before purchasing a new piece of equipment, be sure that:
  - ☐ It fills a definite need.
  - ☐ It enhances the troop's program.
  - ☐ There is space to store it.
  - ☐ It is in good condition and safe.
  - ☐ There are no hidden costs.
  - ☐ You can afford it.

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

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

Storing and Caring for Troop Equipment—Checklist

Follow commonsense guidelines:

- ☐ Write, stencil, or engrave identifying information on equipment.
- ☐ Store equipment in a locked space that is temperature and dampness controlled.
- ☐ Have the troop quartermaster work with a member of the troop committee to organize the gear and set up an efficient check-out and check-in system.
- ☐ Check the condition of each item after use, and arrange for any cleaning or repair.
- ☐ Maintain a list of the gear on hand.

Tents and Tarps

- ☐ Two-person tents are ideal for most patrol and troop camping because they can be carried in backpacks, and their use fosters the buddy system.
- ☐ Use a tarp or dining fly to fend off the weather or to protect gear stored underneath.

Trailers

Keep these ideas in mind regarding trailers:

- ☐ Be aware of its towing requirements when purchasing a trailer.
- ☐ Unload the trailer completely after each outing to ensure that everything gets packed on the next outing.
- ☐ Don't be a slave to your trailer; some campsites can only be accessed on foot.
- ☐ Protect your trailer by buying and using a wheel lock.
- ☐ Add padlocks to all the doors.
- ☐ Park your trailer in a highly visible location in such a way that it can't be easily moved.

Scoutmaster's Campsite Quick Checklist

While Setting Up Camp

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

Tents

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

Personal Gear and Bedding

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

Kitchen Area

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

Latrine

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

During the Campout

Campsite

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

Tents

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

Kitchen Area

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

Scouts

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

While Breaking Camp

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

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Outing Planner

Description _____

Location _____

Departure date and time _____

Return date and time _____

Youth leader in charge of planning _____

Adult leader in charge of planning _____

Expected attendance (Scouts) _____

Expected attendance (adults) _____

Three Months Out

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

Two Months Out

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

One Month Out

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

Two Weeks Out

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

One Week Out

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

Day of Outing

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

Resources

Boy Scouts of America print and video resources change frequently. The following list of key resources for Scout leaders was current at press time.

A Note About Catalog Numbers

Free items (sometimes known as bin items) have five- or six-digit numbers with hyphens, while retail items have five- or six-digit numbers without hyphens. Note, however, that many retail items are also available as free downloads at **www.scouting.org**, as are most bin items. You can purchase retail items at your local Scout shop or at **www.scoutshop.org**.

Resources Found on www.Scouting.org

Here are some primary resources helpful to troop leaders, available from the Boy Scouts of America's official website. Many more can be found online.

Advancement and Awards for Scouts
Directories related to advancement and awards opportunities for Scouts

www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/advancement-and-awards

www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/youth/awards

Advancement Report
www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/advancement-and-awards/resources

Annual Health and Medical Record
www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/ahmr

Application for Alternative Eagle Scout Rank Merit Badges
www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/advancement-and-awards/resources

Belay On
www.scouting.org/outdoor-programs/cope

Bullying Awareness
https://www.scouting.org/training/youth-protection/bullying

Scout Troop Open House
www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/troop-open-house

Scout Uniform Inspection Sheet
www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/adults/publications

Campfire Program Planner
www.scouting.org/resources/info-center/forms

Climb On Safely
www.scouting.org/outdoor-programs/cope/climb-on-safely

Den Chief Training
www.scouting.org/training/youth/den-chief-training

Duty to God
www.scouting.org/awards/religious-awards

Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook
www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/advancement-and-awards/resources

A Guide for Merit Badge Counseling
https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/512-065.pdf

Guide to Advancement, No. 33088
The official source for administering advancement in all Boy Scouts of America program phases

www.scouting.org/resources/guide-to-advancement

Guide to Awards and Insignia
A comprehensive guide to wearing uniforms and badges correctly

www.scouting.org/resources/info-center/insignia-guide

Guide to Safe Scouting
The primary source for information on conducting Scouting activities in a safe and prudent manner

www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/gss

A Guide to Working With Scouts With Special Needs and DisABILITIES
www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/the-building-blocks-of-scouting/disabilities

Handbook for Chaplains and Chaplain Aides in Scout Troops and Venturing Crews
www.scoutingwire.org/marketing-and-membership-hub/new-unit-development/chartered-organizations/religious-chartered-organizations

Health and Safety Training Course Syllabus
www.scouting.org/training/adult/supplemental/planning-and-conducting-a-safe-scout-outing

Introduction to Leadership Skills for Troops
www.scouting.org/training/youth

Introduction to Outdoor Leader Skills
www.scouting.org/training/adult

Leave No Trace Training
www.scouting.org/outdoor-programs/leave-no-trace

Merit Badge Counselor Information
www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/mb-counselor-guide

Nationally Approved Historic Trails
http://bsatap.org/historic-trails/

Opportunities for Scouts
Listing of opportunities for Scouts such as training courses, scholarships, and special programs

www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/youth/opportunities

Orientation for New Scout Parents
www.scouting.org/training/adult/supplemental/orientation-for-new-boy-scout-parents

Outdoor Ethics Awareness and Action Awards Program
www.scouting.org/outdoor-programs/outdoor-ethics/awards/boy-scout

Resources

Planning Your Troop's Annual Program Budget
www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/program-planning-tools

Scoutmaster Position-Specific Training
www.scouting.org/training/adult

Selecting Quality Leaders
www.scouting.org/training/adult/supplemental/selecting-quality-leaders

Service Project Planning Guidelines
www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/guidelines-policies

Transfer Form (Youth Member)
www.scouting.org/resources/info-center/forms

Trek Safely
www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/gss/toc

Troop Budget Planning
www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/planning

Troop Meeting Plan
www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/planning

Troop Program Planning Chart (English/Spanish)
www.scouting.org/resources/magazines/boys-life-promo

Troop Program Resources
Games, ceremonies, Scoutmaster's Minutes, and more
www.programresources.org

Troop Resource Survey
www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/advancement-and-awards/resources

Unit Budgeting and Planning Resources
www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/program-planning-tools

Unit Money-Earning Application
www.scouting.org/resources/info-center/forms

Unit Public Relations
www.scoutingwire.org/marketing-and-membership-hub/new-unit-development/education-relationships/unit-pr

Webelos Transition
www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/adults

Worksheet for Building a Merit Badge Counselor List
www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/advancement-and-awards/resources

Year-Round Guide to Scout Recruiting
www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/year-round-guide

Scoutshop.org Resources

The following items can be obtained at the BSA's official retail website, **www.scoutshop.org**.

Aquatics Supervision, No. 34737

Scouts BSA Handbook for Boys (No. 34622) and *Scouts BSA Handbook for Girls* (No. 39006)—The primary resources for Scouts (and for Scout leaders who need to learn basic Scouting skills).

Scouts BSA Requirements (current year), No. 33216—Requirements for ranks, merit badges, and special awards; updated annually.

Camp Cookery for Small Groups, No. 33592

Conservation Handbook, No. 33570

Den Chief Handbook, No. 33211

Fieldbook, No. 34006—A companion volume to the Scouts BSA handbooks that covers advanced outdoor skills.

Guide to Advancement, No. 33088—The official source for administering advancement in all Boy Scouts of America program phases.

Guide to Awards and Insignia, No. 33066—A comprehensive guide to wearing uniforms and badges correctly.

Guide to Safe Scouting, No. 34416—The primary source for information on conducting Scouting activities in a safe and prudent manner.

Merit Badge Application (blue card), No. 34124 (100 pack) and No. 34130 (25 pack)

Okpik: Cold-Weather Camping, No. 34040

Order of the Arrow Handbook, No. 34996

Patrol Monthly Dues Envelope, No. 33816

Program Features for Troops and Crews (Volume 1, No. 33110; Volume 2, No. 33111; Volume 3, No. 33112) Complete monthly program features, 16 per volume, that include meeting plans, outing ideas, and resources.

A Scout Is Reverent, No. 34248

This Is Scouting (DVD), No. 610460

Patrol Leader Handbook, No. 32502—The official guide for patrol leaders.

Senior Patrol Leader Handbook, No. 32501—The official guide for senior patrol leaders and other troop-level youth leaders.

A Time to Tell (DVD), No. 605696

Resources

Troop Committee Guidebook, No. 34505—The primary resource for troop committee members.

Troop Leader Guidebook (Volume 1, No. 33009; Volume 2, No. 33010)—The primary resource for Scoutmasters and assistant Scoutmasters.

My.Scouting.org Resources

The following resources can be found at **My.Scouting.org**. (A login is required to take My.Scouting.org training courses.)

Fast Start Orientation Training

How to Protect Your Children From Child Abuse: A Parent's Guide—found in the *Scouts BSA Handbook for Boys* and the *Scouts BSA Handbook for Girls*

Physical Wellness

Safe Swim Defense

Safety Afloat

This Is Scouting

Trek Safely

Weather Hazards

Youth Protection Training

Website Listing for the BSA

Be a Scout, **www.BeAScout.org**

Boy Scouts of America, **www.Scouting.org**

Scout Life magazine, **www.boyslife.org**
—The BSA's official youth magazine; published monthly

BSA Training, **www.Scouting.org/training**

BSA Health and Safety, **www.scouting.org/health-and-safety**

BSA Supply Group, **www.Scoutshop.org**

MyScouting, **My.Scouting.org**

Scouting magazine, **www.Scoutingmagazine.org**
—The official magazine for Scout leaders; published five times a year

Glossary

Scouting has a language all its own. Here are some common terms you should be familiar with. For definitions of other terms, visit **www.scouting.org/Media/LOS.aspx**.

assistant Scoutmaster. A volunteer Scouter, 18 or older, appointed by the chartered organization to help the Scoutmaster by working with a patrol or carrying out other assigned tasks.

board of review. A review held to determine whether a Scout has satisfactorily completed rank requirements. A review may also be held to encourage Scouts who are not advancing.

campmaster. A volunteer Scouter trained to assist in short-term camping.

charter. In the BSA, charters authorize (1) an organization to operate BSA Scouting units; (2) a local council to incorporate as a BSA local council; (3) operation of an Order of the Arrow lodge; or (4) the Boy Scouts of America to incorporate.

charter presentation. A formal ceremony at which the charter, Scouter commissions, and membership certificates are presented to organization authorities and members of the unit.

charter renewal. An annual meeting attended by the chartered organization representative, head of the chartered organization, troop leaders, and unit commissioner for the purpose of completing the charter application and making plans for the charter presentation.

chartered organization. A religious, civic, fraternal, educational, or other community-based organization that has applied for and received a charter to operate a BSA Scouting unit.

chartered organization representative. A manager of Scouting in a chartered organization who also represents this organization in the local council and district.

commissioner. A commissioned Scouter who works with Cub Scout packs, Scout troops, and Venturing crews to help units succeed.

council service center. *See* local council service center.

council. An administrative body chartered to be responsible for Scouting in a designated geographic territory.

court of honor. A recognition ceremony for those who have met the requirements of any one of the Scouts BSA ranks, merit badges, or other awards.

Cub Scouting. That part of the program of the Boy Scouts of America for youth who are kindergarten age through fifth grade (or are 5 through 10 years old).

district. A geographical area of the council determined by the council executive board to help ensure the growth and success of Scouting units within the district's territory.

district executive. A professional Scouter who works under the direction of the local council Scout executive and acts as an advisor to the volunteer leaders in the district.

Friends of Scouting. An annual opportunity for Scouters and interested people in the community to be identified with the local council through their financial support and influence in the expansion of the council program.

Good Turn. A distinctive feature of Scouts BSA is its emphasis on service to others. The Good Turn habit is one that all Scouts endeavor to acquire.

jamboree. A national or international gathering of Scouts.

Journey to Excellence. A performance recognition program designed to encourage and reward success and measure the performance of units, districts, and councils.

junior assistant Scoutmaster. A 16- or 17-year-old youth appointed by the Scoutmaster, approved by the troop committee, and responsible to the Scoutmaster for tasks assigned.

Leave No Trace. A nationally recognized outdoor skills and ethics awareness organization that seeks to reduce impacts on the environment and other people; its mission informs the BSA's outdoor ethics principles.

local council. An administrative body chartered by the National Council to be responsible for Scouting in a designated geographic territory.

local council service center. The business center for the local administration of Scouting.

lodge. A local council Order of the Arrow group chartered annually by the National Council.

My.Scouting. An internet portal for our members that provides access to their account data, the E-Learning Course Management System, and more.

new-Scout patrol. Upon joining a Scout troop, a new youth member may become part of a patrol composed of new Scouts, where an assistant Scoutmaster and a troop guide help ensure a good start in Scouting.

older-Scout patrol. A patrol of Scouts ages 13 and older in a troop; the patrol participates in high-adventure activities.

Order of the Arrow. Scouting's national honor society. The aim of the OA is to promote the outdoor program and service to Scouting.

outdoor ethics. A set of principles that guide Scouts' ethical decision making in their relationship to the natural world.

patrol. A small group of Scouts (usually five to eight) who belong to a troop and work together in and out of troop meetings. Normally, there are several patrols in one troop.

patrol leaders' council. Each patrol leader, representing the patrol, meets with other patrol leaders and the senior patrol leader to plan their troop program. The Scoutmaster acts as an advisor.

Glossary

roundtable. An event conducted by a roundtable commissioner and roundtable staff to help the unit leaders of a district plan and carry out their own unit programs.

Scout benediction. "May the Great Scoutmaster of all Scouts be with us until we meet again."

Scout executive. The chief executive officer of the local council responsible for the administration, financing, marketing, motivation, recruitment, and staffing required for successful council operations.

Scout Life. The magazine for all Scouts, published by the Boy Scouts of America.

Scout Sabbath. The Saturday after February 8, Scouting Anniversary Day.

Scout shop. A BSA-owned store, operated by the Supply Group, that sells official Scouting merchandise.

Scout Sunday. The Sunday before February 8, Scouting Anniversary Day.

Scouter. An adult leader in the Boy Scouts of America.

Scouting Anniversary Week. The week, beginning on Sunday, that includes February 8, Scouting Anniversary Day. During the week, units are encouraged to conduct rededication ceremonies and to demonstrate Scouting's purposeful activities.

***Scouting* magazine.** The official magazine for all Scouters. It aims to interpret the program, stimulate action, and strengthen a desire to serve.

Scoutmaster. A volunteer Scouter, 21 or older, appointed by the chartered organization to lead a Scout troop.

Scoutmaster's Minute. A part of the closing ceremony of a troop meeting or campfire in which the Scoutmaster encourages Scoutlike conduct by telling a story.

Sea Scouting. A branch of Venturing that specializes in traditional nautical activities, e.g., sailing, motorboating, and maritime careers.

senior patrol leader. A Scout elected by the Scouts to help all the patrols succeed. Each troop has one senior patrol leader who may be assisted by one or more assistant senior patrol leaders.

service center. *See* local council service center.

square knot. Generally, embroidered square knots are representative of pin-on medals or around-the-neck awards and are designed for the greater convenience of the wearer.

Supply Group. The arm of the Boy Scouts of America that supplies official uniforms, equipment, literature, and other resources to the field. Includes administrative offices located in the national office, the National Distribution Center, and Scout shops located nationwide.

trading post. The camp or reservation store where campers may purchase equipment and supplies. A distributor's Scouting department is sometimes referred to as the trading post.

Tread Lightly! A national nonprofit organization with a mission to promote responsible outdoor recreation through ethics education and stewardship; its mission informs the BSA's outdoor ethics principles.

troop. The entity that conducts the Scouts BSA program for the chartered organization; it is typically composed of several patrols.

unit. The entity that conducts Scouting for the chartered organization; it consists of registered youth members and registered adult volunteer members. A unit may be a Cub Scout pack, Scout troop, Venturing crew, or Sea Scout ship. Its affairs are administered by the unit committee, which is appointed by the chartered organization.

Venturing. The young adult program of the Boy Scouts of America for men and women ages 14 through 20, or 13 with completion of the eighth grade.

Youth Protection. This BSA emphasis fights child abuse by teaching youth the "three R's" (recognize, resist, and report child abuse); by helping parents and Scouters learn to recognize indications of child abuse and situations that could lead to potential abuse; and by teaching them how to handle child abuse situations or reports.

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Scout Oath

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

Scout Law

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

Scout Motto

Be Prepared.

Scout Slogan

Do a Good Turn Daily.

Prepared. For Life.®

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SCOUTS BSA

TROOP LEADER GUIDEBOOK

VOLUME 2

BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA®

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The Ninth Method of Scouting

Back when you first attended Scout leader training, you learned that Scouting has eight methods: adult association, advancement, ideals, leadership development, outdoor program, patrol method, personal growth, and the uniform. Now that you're a seasoned leader, however, you realize that there's a ninth, unstated method: time.

The magic of Scouting doesn't happen in a moment. A weekend campout or a week at summer camp is not enough to transform a Scout into an adult. But when the weeks turn into months, and the months turn into years, incredible transformations happen.

As an experienced troop leader, you've watched those transformations firsthand. You've seen the perpetual-motion machines we call Webelos Scouts grow into responsible young adults. You've seen Scouts who couldn't get through a night of camping without a meltdown lead 12-day treks in the wilderness. You've been to your Scouts' high-school graduations, and you may have even danced at their weddings.

You've also discovered that your troop, like its members, always has room to grow. Perhaps the troop needs a unifying vision. Perhaps you're struggling to retain older Scouts or serve youth with special needs. Perhaps you want to do a better job with advancement or community service or high adventure.

This guidebook is for you. For the first time, the Boy Scouts of America has created a publication that focuses exclusively on the needs of leaders who've moved beyond the basics—who've been there, done that, and gotten the T-shirts and the patches. We trust you will find it valuable.

Support Resources

As an experienced troop leader, you know you have a wealth of resources at your fingertips, including roundtables and training courses; *Scouting* magazine; the BSA website, www.scouting.org; and this guidebook and its companion, volume 1, which offers an introduction to the Scouts BSA program and focuses on the needs of new or relatively inexperienced leaders.

The BSA also offers resources that are of particular interest to experienced leaders, including Wood Badge and Powder Horn training (described in chapter 18 of volume 1), conferences at Florida Sea Base and Northern Tier Training Center, and the conferences held each summer at the Philmont Training Center and the John D. Tickle National Training and Leadership Center (part of the Summit Bechtel Reserve). These conferences let you meet and share ideas with other seasoned leaders from across the country.

Of course, the longer you continue in Scouting, the more you become a resource yourself. Serving on roundtable staff or helping lead a training course is a great way to sharpen your skills and keep up with changes in the Scouting program. Your district executive, district commissioner, or district training chair can tell you more about these opportunities.

Thank you for your continuing service to Scouts BSA!

Troop Leader Essentials

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

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

Overview of the *Troop Leader Guidebook*

Volume 1

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

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

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

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

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

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

Section 7: Health and Safety. A comprehensive overview of the BSA's safety and risk-management policies.

Appendix: Resources, Scouting websites, and glossary.

Volume 2

Section 1: Assessment and Improvement. Developing a vision of success, setting goals to realize that vision, and laying out the steps to reach each goal.

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

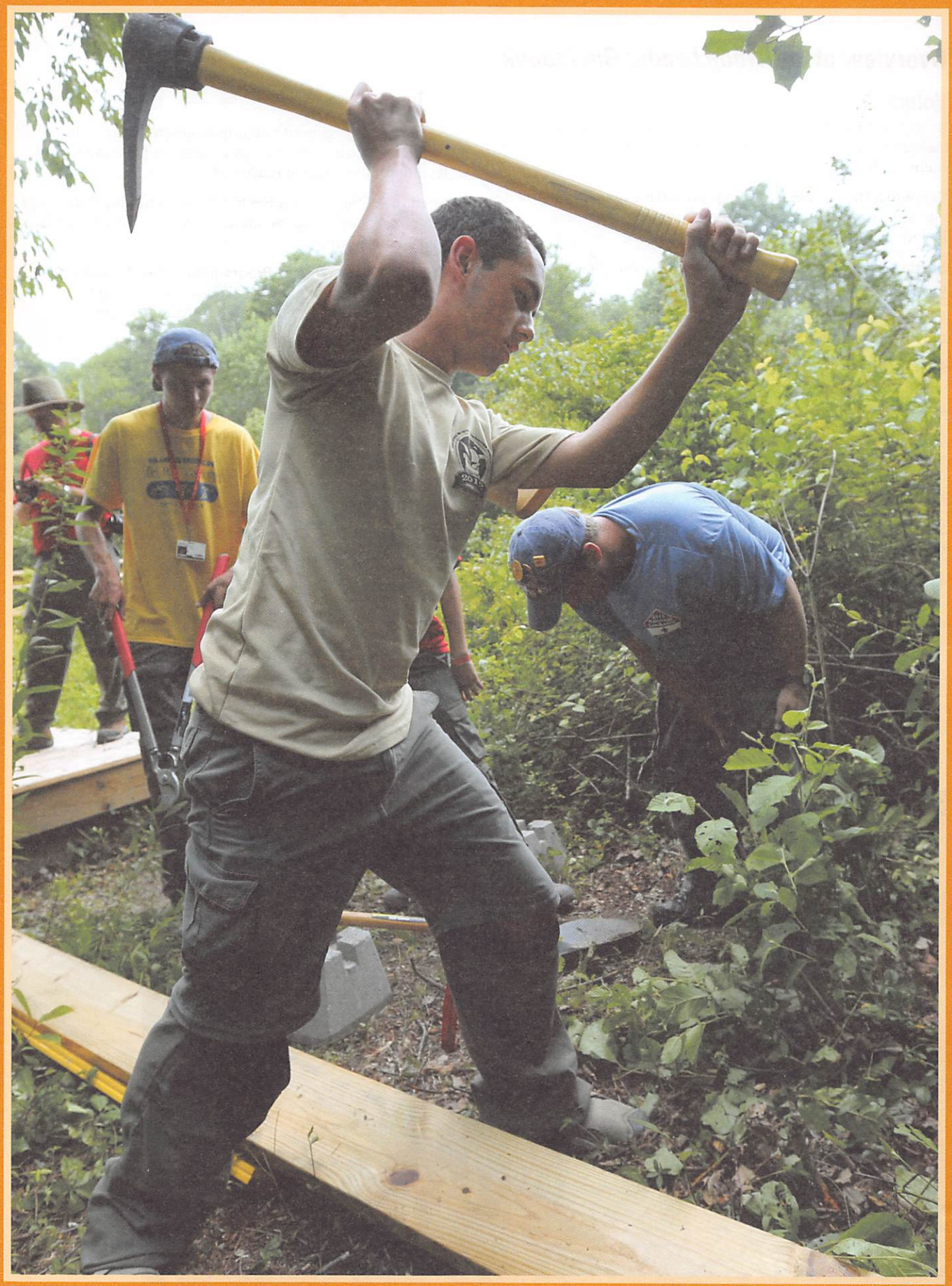
Section 3: The Power of Program and High Adventure. Adding excitement to every activity and making high adventure an integral part of your troop program.

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

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

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

Appendix: Resources, Scouting websites, and glossary.



ASSESSMENT AND IMPROVEMENT

When you are a new troop leader, everything can look fresh and exciting: Troop meetings abound with energy, troop outings take you to places you've never been, and veteran leaders seem to have all the answers. As you become more seasoned or move into positions of increased responsibility, you will probably discover that there's room for improvement.

Figuring out what should change—and how it should change—is the purpose of this section. If your troop is firing on all cylinders, don't skip over this part. In Scouting, as in life, the only constant is change. Today's great success may flop tomorrow. Keeping your troop humming means continually evaluating every aspect of troop operations.

CHAPTER 1
Troop Vision

Volume 1 of the *Troop Leader Guidebook* introduced the mission statement of the Boy Scouts of America (BSA):

The mission of the Boy Scouts of America is to prepare young people to make ethical and moral choices over their lifetimes by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Scout Law.

The BSA also has a vision statement:

The Boy Scouts of America will prepare every eligible youth in America to become a responsible, participating citizen and leader who is guided by the Scout Oath and Scout Law.

Like all vision statements, this one is a picture of future success, an optimal future state the organization is trying to reach.

Vision statements are important because they define the destinations toward which organizations are moving. When your vision is top of mind, it's easier to see where to go at a crossroads and easier to avoid dead ends and rabbit trails that could lead you away from your goals. After all, if you don't know where you're headed, you won't know whether you're on the right path.

Criteria for a Meaningful Vision

A vision engages the heart and spirit.

A vision leads toward a worthwhile goal.

A vision gives meaning to an effort.

A vision is simple.

A vision is attainable.

A vision can change over time.

Crafting a troop vision is a good first step in assessing and improving your troop. It can also help unify the Scoutmaster corps, troop committee, and patrol leaders' council around a common set of priorities.

Here are some examples:

- Troop X will turn ordinary youth into adults of extraordinary character. The troop welcomes Scouts at any stage of development and moves them systematically toward adulthood, providing along the way the training and support they and their families need.
- Troop X will build character, instill values, and prepare our Scouts for success with lifelong skills in leadership, teamwork, service to others, a love for the outdoors and our environment, and respect for themselves and others in the world.
- Troop X will develop tomorrow's leaders through a fun, exciting program with many opportunities for Scouts to learn life skills and excel in a team-based environment.
- Troop X will produce youth and adult leaders with strong personal character in family and community service by daily living the values of Scouting.
- Troop X will develop outstanding youth leaders who seek to serve and who will forever hold their Scouting experience as a significant part of their success in life. Fun and adventure will be the backdrop of this development, and the outcome will be Scouts who have become adults of extraordinary character. In turn, our future will be much brighter because of this development.
- Troop X will be a fun, active troop where Scouts explore new places and activities, advance in rank, and achieve the aims of the Boy Scouts of America through teamwork.
- Troop X will instill servant leadership and living by ethical values while offering fun and adventure.

As you can see, these examples share many things in common but also differ in what they emphasize. If all these troops were achieving their visions, you might well be able to visit their meetings and guess which statements apply to which troops.

Crafting a Troop Vision

So what is your troop's vision? If you don't have one, it may be time to craft one. Scouts who have been to National Youth Leadership Training (NYLT) and adults who have been to Wood Badge will be familiar with the concept, so enlist them to lead the visioning process. Here's a process you could follow at a PLC or troop committee meeting.

Step 1: Review basic concepts.

Some leaders may be unfamiliar with the concepts of mission, vision, and values. Others may have learned about these concepts in their professional lives but may not understand how they apply to Scouting. Take a few minutes to review the basic concepts from NYLT and Wood Badge and from volume 1 of the *Troop Leader Guidebook*. The *Patrol Leader Handbook* and *Senior Patrol Leader Handbook* also include discussions on vision that you should share with your youth leaders, to help them create personal visions that help achieve the troop's vision.

Also review the mission, vision, and values of the Boy Scouts of America, as well as the aims and methods of Scouts BSA. It would obviously be counterproductive to develop a troop vision that goes counter to what the BSA is trying to accomplish.

Step 2: Decide on the timeframe.

Talk as a group about exactly when the future you're envisioning should arrive. Although not all visions include a timeframe, establishing one gives you a deadline to work toward. If you also set checkpoints along the way—annual progress-update meetings, for example—you'll apply some valuable deadline pressure on yourselves.

Five years is a good timeframe to start with, but you could go shorter or longer. For example, you could look seven years out, when today's brand-new Scouts will be aging out of the troop.

Step 3: List your strengths.

Ask participants what makes the troop successful today. Do you have a strong high-adventure program? Do you generate a large number of Eagle Scouts? Do you have a core group of trained and experienced adult leaders? Is community service a hallmark of your program? Capture those strengths, because they are elements of your future success. What's more, discussing them will put participants in a positive frame of mind and encourage them to dream bigger.

Spend 10 minutes or so on this step. Record the responses on a flip chart or whiteboard.

Step 4: Define elements of future success.

Next, brainstorm what the troop might ideally look like in a few years, again recording responses on a flip chart or whiteboard. This step should take another 10 minutes or so.

Here the focus shifts a bit to changes or enhancements. What's missing from the troop program? How could you improve on things you already do well? Which age groups need more attention? Do you have adequate financial resources to reach your goals? And, perhaps most importantly, how will you know when you've been successful?

Step 5: Draft your vision.

Between the lists you created in steps 3 and 4, you should have the raw materials to draft a vision statement like those listed above. Spend 20 to 30 minutes discussing possible visions. Don't reject any ideas out of hand, but work toward a vision that falls somewhere between easily attainable and seemingly impossible.

"All our dreams can come true—if we have the courage to pursue them." —Walt Disney

At this point, you can conclude the visioning meeting. You don't have a final vision, however. Instead, you have a draft that needs to be reviewed and revised.

Step 6: Review and revise your vision.

Set the vision aside until the group comes back together. You'll be able to look at your draft with fresh eyes and change it as needed. Make sure it really outlines what you want the troop to become and is understandable, specific, and inspiring.

Next, share the revised draft with other leaders and parents who weren't part of the visioning process. You need their input to make sure the vision is strong, and you need their buy-in to make the vision a reality.

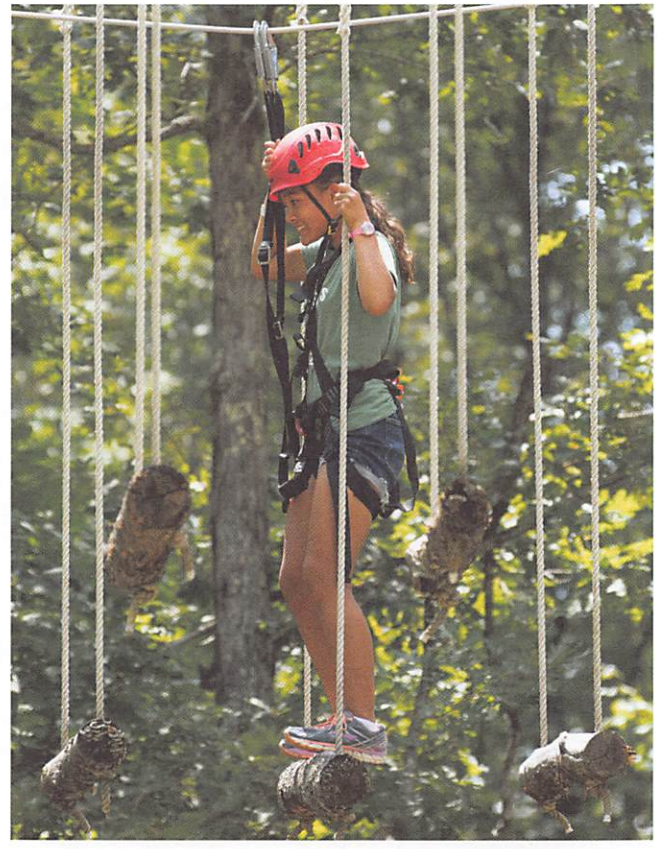
Step 7: Share your vision.

Once you've finalized your vision, share it far and wide. Put it on your website and letterhead, post it at your meeting place, and share it with your chartered organization and troop families.

"Vision without action is a daydream. Action without vision is a nightmare." —Japanese proverb

Most importantly, use it as a compass to guide future decisions. If "high adventure" is a big part of your vision, why does buying a troop trailer make sense? If "develop youth leaders" is important, are you budgeting funds to subsidize training costs? If "community service" is central to your vision, does your troop calendar include plenty of service opportunities?

Finally, review your vision regularly to make sure you're on track to achieve it.



CHAPTER 2
Evaluating Your Troop

Having a vision of future success is not enough, of course. Consider, for example, how many high school basketball players have a vision of playing professional basketball and yet end up in other careers. According to the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), only 3.0 percent of male players and 3.3 percent of female players in high school basketball end up playing in the NCAA. Of those who do play in college, just 1.0 percent of males and 1.2 percent of females make it to the pros. That means, at most, a tiny 0.03 percent of high school players will ever shoot a basket professionally.

Many factors separate the 0.03 percent from the 99.97 percent, including height, natural talent, and sheer luck. But perhaps the biggest factor is the willingness to do what it takes to become successful. Players make it to the pros by playing up their strengths but also identifying and overcoming their weaknesses. One player might work on jump shots; another might focus on free throws; a third might hit the weight room day after day after day.

Scouting is no different. To achieve your troop vision, you need to identify your weaknesses and develop a plan to overcome them. In this chapter, we'll discuss three important ways you can assess your troop: Journey to Excellence, troop self-assessment, and outside input.

Journey to Excellence

A great way to start evaluating and improving your troop's performance is by using the Journey to Excellence (JTE) program. The successor to tools such as the Quality Unit Award program, JTE uses a balanced-scorecard approach to assess the performance of units, districts, and councils. That's a fancy way of saying that JTE focuses on a small number of performance areas that are measurable and contribute to overall success. When used effectively, JTE can assess past performance and, more importantly, improve future results.

For troops, JTE tracks performance in these 11 areas:

- Planning and budget
- Increasing Youth Membership
- Retention
- Webelos-to-Scout transition
- Advancement
- Short-term camping
- Long-term camping
- Service projects
- Patrol method
- Leadership and family engagement
- Trained leadership

Each year, a group of volunteers and professionals from across the country meets to look at actual data from the past three years in each area. The group then sets benchmarks, such as this one for short-term camping: "Conduct short-term or weekend campouts throughout the year."

The group also sets three performance goals related to each benchmark. For example, here are the goals for short-term camping:

- Bronze: Conduct four short-term overnight campouts.
- Silver: Conduct seven short-term overnight campouts.
- Gold: Conduct nine short-term overnight campouts.

Based on your troop's performance across the 11 measures, you can achieve bronze-, silver-, or gold-level JTE status for the year by doing the following:

- Bronze: Earn at least 525 points by earning points in at least 7 objectives.
- Silver: Earn at least 750 points by earning points in at least 8 objectives.
- Gold: Earn at least 1,000 points by earning points in at least 8 objectives.

Bronze level indicates satisfactory Scouting, silver indicates excellent Scouting, and gold indicates outstanding Scouting. Not every troop can achieve gold status, but every troop should aspire to reach at least bronze status.

JTE benchmarks are subject to change each year. As achievement improves across the BSA, the benchmarks will become more challenging. You can find the current troop scorecard at www.scouting.org/awards/journey-to-excellence.

Using Journey to Excellence in Your Unit

If you look at Journey to Excellence as nothing but extra paperwork at charter renewal time, or an easy way to get a new ribbon for your troop flag, you're missing out on the program's potential to strengthen your troop. Yes, you should complete your JTE scorecard at charter renewal time, but you should do more. Here's what JTE can bring to your troop.

A Method for Evaluating Your Troop

Because JTE provides tangible measurements that are based on things you likely are tracking already, such as advancement, it offers a simple way to gauge your troop's

performance. You also end up with an objective score rather than a subjective opinion.

Actually, it might be more accurate to say that you end up with a set of objective *scores*. Because JTE tracks 11 benchmarks, you can quickly identify areas of strength that you should celebrate, as well as any areas of weakness that you should work to improve.

In some cases, JTE can provide early warning of trouble to come. The benchmarks for increasing youth membership and Webelos-to-Scout transition are a good example. Without new Scouts coming in each year, your troop will gradually wither, even though the current group of Scouts is active and engaged. But in the midst of a very active troop program, it can be easy to overlook such future problems.

In other cases, JTE can highlight weaknesses masquerading as strengths. Let's say, for example, that your troop regularly reaches gold level on the short-term camping and long-term camping measures yet fails to reach bronze level for advancement and retention. That could indicate that you're planning activities that don't interest members or that those activities don't provide opportunities to advance in rank. It could also mean that you need to enhance your efforts to help new Scouts reach First Class rank in the first 12 to 18 months or to help Life Scouts reach the Eagle Scout rank.

Exactly what your JTE results mean depends on your individual troop. Once you've completed your JTE scorecard each year, share the results with the patrol leaders' council, the troop committee, and the Scoutmaster corps. Within each group, discuss the results and their meaning. Then make plans to do better next year.

Getting Help With Shortcomings

If your JTE scorecard reveals weaknesses, it's important to find resources in those areas. Here are some starting points:

- Talk with your unit commissioner.
- Talk with the leaders of troops in your district or council that excel in the areas where you struggle.
- Seek out training specific to the problem area; for example, Powder Horn can help you strengthen your outdoor program, while the Philmont Training Center offers conferences on specific topics like advancement and membership.
- Research available online and supplemental training courses at www.scouting.org/training/adult.

A Framework for Planning the Year

Achieving success in JTE requires short-term camping, long-term camping, courts of honor, new Scout recruiting events other than Webelos transition, service projects, and other activities. It also requires activities that foster advancement and use the patrol method. If your troop calendar doesn't include these sorts of activities, you won't qualify for JTE recognition and, more importantly, won't make progress toward achieving your troop vision.

At the same time, success in JTE depends on achieving goals that don't directly relate to the calendar, such as advancement. Those goals should be part of your annual plan, too.

Here are some ways to use JTE as a framework for planning:

- Review the troop scorecard with your patrol leaders' council and troop committee. Decide as a troop what your goal for the next year will be, such as achieving silver status.
- At the annual planning conference, ensure that the PLC schedules the number of outings, courts of honor, and other events you need to achieve your goal. As part of its approval of the troop calendar, the troop committee should double-check that the calendar is aligned with the troop's JTE goal.
- Set numerical goals for benchmarks that aren't related to activities, such as advancement and trained leadership. If possible, break down the goals by month or season.
- Assign an adult leader to track progress on each benchmark throughout the year.

A Tool for Continuous Evaluation

It's meaningless to set goals and not revisit them until the following year. To gauge progress throughout the year, try these techniques:

- Make JTE an agenda item at PLC and troop committee meetings.
- Create posters for your meeting place that show progress toward your goals. For example, if your goal is to have 50 members at charter renewal time, create a "thermometer" poster showing that goal and your current membership status.
- Add a JTE page to your troop website and update your progress monthly.
- Celebrate the achievement of each goal, several of which can be reached long before the end of the year.

A movie night or miniature-golf outing for the patrol leaders' council might be a good way to celebrate achievement of a JTE goal.

A Cause for Celebration

When you reach bronze, silver, or gold status, celebrate! Here are some ideas:

- Make a big deal of adding the JTE ribbon to your troop flag.
- Distribute JTE patches to Scouts and leaders.
- Add the appropriate JTE logo to your website.
- Share your achievement with everyone from your chartered organization to visiting Webelos Scout dens.

Remember, however, that reaching bronze, silver, or gold JTE status is about more than achieving a score. It's about creating a troop program that truly accomplishes the aims of Scouting. And that's definitely cause for celebration.

Troop Self-Assessment

Journey to Excellence necessarily focuses on a handful of measurable aspects of troop operations. As a result, it doesn't directly address other important factors (or things that contribute to JTE results).

Take the short-term camping benchmark, for example. JTE measures the number of outings your troop takes, but not their quality, how well they're attended, whether they support the patrol method, and whether they meet the needs of Scouts of various ages and ranks.

To dig deeper, complete the form on the next few pages. Once it is completed, the commissioner will send the data to the unit Key 3 via My.Scouting.org. Then the unit commissioner will sit down and review the commissioner's observations (detailed assessment) about the troop. Once a consensus is reached, it will be time to concentrate on areas of improvement and develop a unit service plan in which the district committee can step in to assist.

What if your unit doesn't have an active unit commissioner? Ask your district commissioner to recruit one for you.

For each question, indicate whether you strongly disagree (0), strongly agree (2), or fall somewhere in the middle (1).		Strongly Disagree		Strongly Agree
Membership				
1.	The troop is growing in size.	0	1	2
2.	The troop retains at least 75 percent of its members each year, not counting those who age out or transfer.	0	1	2
3.	The troop has a membership growth plan that includes at least one annual recruiting event.	0	1	2
4.	The troop maintains a strong, year-round relationship with at least one Webelos Scout den.	0	1	2
5.	The troop has a designated, active Webelos-to-Scout coordinator.	0	1	2
6.	The troop has an established system for smoothly integrating new Scouts.	0	1	2
Category Score				
Troop Meetings				
7.	Each troop meeting is fun and has a purpose for Scouts of all ages.	0	1	2
8.	Meeting space is adequate for current and future needs.	0	1	2
9.	Troop meetings follow the plans laid out by the patrol leaders' council.	0	1	2
10.	Troop meetings build toward upcoming outings.	0	1	2
11.	Troop meetings include activities that encourage physical fitness.	0	1	2
12.	Youth leaders run troop meetings with minimal direct adult involvement.	0	1	2
13.	Attendance at troop meetings is good.	0	1	2
14.	Meetings start and end on time.	0	1	2
15.	The patrol leaders' council huddles before and after troop meetings.	0	1	2
Category Score				
Activities/Outings				
16.	The troop maintains a calendar of monthly outings, most of them overnight.	0	1	2
17.	The troop holds a variety of activities at a mix of familiar and new destinations.	0	1	2
18.	The troop attends a long-term summer camp each year.	0	1	2
19.	The troop plans high-adventure outings at least once every two years.	0	1	2
20.	Each outing offers something of interest to Scouts of all ages.	0	1	2
21.	Each outing provides opportunities for advancement, adult association, the patrol method, and youth leadership.	0	1	2
22.	Youth leaders play a key role in planning and leading all outings.	0	1	2
23.	The troop plans at least four service projects per year, including at least one that benefits the chartered organization.	0	1	2
Category Score				

Advancement				
24.	Most Scouts are advancing at least one rank per year.	0	1	2
25.	Scouts have opportunities to earn merit badges beyond troop meetings.	0	1	2
26.	Troop leaders make it easy for Scouts to find merit badge counselors.	0	1	2
27.	The troop regularly highlights both Eagle-required and elective merit badges.	0	1	2
28.	Scouts and their parents receive regular updates on their advancement status.	0	1	2
29.	Scoutmaster conferences and boards of review are scheduled promptly when requested.	0	1	2
30.	The troop schedules boards of review for Scouts who are not advancing.	0	1	2
31.	The troop tracks Scouts who are within a year of turning 18 and encourages them to work toward the Eagle Scout rank.	0	1	2
32.	Scouts receive immediate recognition of their achievements at troop meetings.	0	1	2
33.	Inspiring courts of honor are held regularly and are well attended by both Scouts and their families.	0	1	2
Category Score				

Patrols				
34.	The troop has functioning patrols with names, patrol patches, and other indicators of their identity.	0	1	2
35.	Patrols are large enough to function effectively even if one or two members are absent.	0	1	2
36.	Scouts have the opportunity to choose their own patrols.	0	1	2
37.	All Scouts know the patrol they are in and their patrol leader.	0	1	2
38.	Individual Scouts within each patrol have patrol-level positions of responsibility.	0	1	2
39.	Patrol leaders are in regular contact with their patrol members outside of troop activities.	0	1	2
Category Score				

Youth Leaders				
40.	The troop holds elections at least twice a year.	0	1	2
41.	The senior patrol leader appoints other youth leaders in consultation with the Scoutmaster.	0	1	2
42.	Newly elected or appointed leaders complete Introduction to Leadership Skills for Troops within a few weeks of taking office.	0	1	2
43.	Most troop-level youth leaders have attended National Youth Leadership Training.	0	1	2
44.	The troop holds monthly patrol leaders' council meetings.	0	1	2
45.	Patrol leaders' council meetings are run by the senior patrol leader with minimal direct adult involvement.			
46.	Attendance at patrol leaders' council meetings is good.			
47.	Patrol leaders' council meetings start and end on time.			
48.	Patrol leaders' council meetings include training components and opportunities to discuss issues facing the troop.			
49.	The troop scribe records and distributes minutes of patrol leaders' council meetings.			
Category Score				

Scoutmaster Corps				
50.	The troop regularly recruits new assistant Scoutmasters.	0	1	2
51.	Assistant Scoutmasters have assigned areas of responsibility.	0	1	2
52.	The Scoutmaster corps meets regularly to address issues and challenges.	0	1	2
53.	The Scoutmaster and all assistant Scoutmasters have completed basic training; some have completed Wood Badge.	0	1	2
54.	Enough leaders have completed specialized training (Safe Swim Defense, Climb On Safely, Powder Horn, etc.) so that the Scouts are not held back from pursuing high-adventure activities.	0	1	2
55.	The troop has sufficient leadership depth so that no adult leader is overextended or indispensable.	0	1	2
56.	The troop has enough adult leaders so that no troop activity is canceled due to a lack of sufficient adult leadership.	0	1	2
57.	The troop has a succession plan in place for the Scoutmaster and key assistant Scoutmasters.	0	1	2
Category Score				

Troop Committee				
58.	The troop committee provides the Scoutmaster with full support.	0	1	2
59.	The troop committee handles administrative details, freeing the Scoutmaster corps to focus on working directly with the Scouts.	0	1	2
60.	The troop committee meets monthly.	0	1	2
61.	Troop committee members have assigned areas of responsibility.	0	1	2
62.	Troop committee members have completed basic training; some have completed Wood Badge.	0	1	2
63.	The Scoutmaster attends monthly troop committee meetings and provides a report.	0	1	2
64.	The chartered organization representative attends troop committee meetings and serves as an active liaison with the chartered organization.	0	1	2
65.	The Scoutmaster meets with the committee chair weekly or monthly.	0	1	2
66.	The troop committee has sufficient leadership depth so that no member is overextended or indispensable.	0	1	2
67.	The troop committee has a succession plan in place for the committee chair, key committee members, and the Scoutmaster.	0	1	2
Category Score				

Miscellaneous				
68.	The troop has a written budget that is reviewed at troop committee meetings and that is sufficient for troop operations.	0	1	2
69.	The troop budget includes funds to provide financial support to needy Scouts and to defray leader training costs.	0	1	2
70.	The troop conducts at least one money-earning project per year to pay for activities, equipment, training, and other expenses.	0	1	2
71.	Money-earning projects are sufficiently brief as to not detract from troop programming.	0	1	2
72.	Both Scouts and adult leaders wear correct Scout uniforms to troop meetings, courts of honor, and other events as appropriate.			
73.	The troop has multiple points of contact with the chartered organization (participation in Scout Sunday or Scout Sabbath, overlap in members, joint service projects, etc.).			
74.	The troop completes the charter renewal process on time each year.			
75.	The troop regularly receives Journey to Excellence recognition.			
Category Score				
Total Score				

Scoring

Category	Possible Score	Your Score	Percentage Score
Membership	12		% (Your Score/Possible Score)
Troop Meetings	18		% (Your Score/Possible Score)
Activities/Outings	18		% (Your Score/Possible Score)
Advancement	20		% (Your Score/Possible Score)
Patrols	12		% (Your Score/Possible Score)
Youth Leaders	20		% (Your Score/Possible Score)
Scoutmaster Corps	14		% (Your Score/Possible Score)
Troop Committee	20		% (Your Score/Possible Score)
Miscellaneous	16		% (Your Score/Possible Score)
Total	150		% (Your Score/Possible Score)

Rank the categories, high to low, in order of your percentage scores:

Category	Percentage Score
1.	%
2.	%
3.	%
4.	%
5.	%
6.	%
7.	%
8.	%
9.	%

Outside Input

One challenge of the troop assessment is that it can be hard to evaluate your own troop honestly. Having multiple leaders complete the assessment helps, but what if everyone in the troop has a blind spot? As Robert Burns famously wrote, "And would some Power the small gift give us/To see ourselves as others see us!"

Your unit commissioner can give you the gift of unbiased feedback. The unit commissioner should be as willing to share feedback as you are willing to accept it. Remember that feedback is a gift.

Evaluating by Walking Around

The JTE scorecard, the troop self-assessment, and commissioner input are useful, but don't discount the value of evaluating by walking around. The Scoutmaster shouldn't be so busy that he or she can't spend some time observing troop meetings and activities to see how things are going. Similarly, Scoutmaster conferences and boards of review are great opportunities to get feedback from troop members.

Just be careful not to confuse anecdotes with evidence. The opinions of one or two Scouts or parents, whether positive or negative, don't necessarily reflect troop-wide reality.

The Troop Down the Street

Another useful, albeit indirect, way to evaluate your troop is to visit another troop in your district or council that you feel does a good job (especially in an area where you'd like to make improvements). There are quite a few Scouts BSA leaders who've never been to another troop's meetings except when they were Scouts themselves or were shopping for troops as Webelos Scout leaders.

By observing how another troop operates, you may pick up tips to improve your own troop operations. You may also discover that things aren't as bad as you think!

When in Doubt, STOP!

Perhaps you've had the experience of being momentarily lost during an outing. The landscape might have looked familiar, but you'd walked beyond where you'd been before and were no longer convinced of your location. That can happen with troop leadership, too. You look around and realize you're not quite sure where you should head next. As you conduct this exercise, use the troop vision as a guidepost.

The Scouts BSA handbooks encourage Scouts who are lost to STOP: Stop, think, observe, and plan. The same technique works for adults navigating their way through the challenges of being troop leaders.

S – Stop where you are.

T –Think. See if you can figure out how your travels have gotten you to the place where you are and what that can tell you about how to get to where you want to go.

O – Observe. Pay attention to what is all around you. Take advantage of the ideas of those who are with you; there can be strength in numbers.

P – Plan. Settle on a coherent plan of action to get you to the next place on your journey. Then, as you carry it out, stop again from time to time to think, observe, and adjust your plans according to new information and situations.

Even if you are certain you know where you are, there is great value in going through the STOP exercise. Figuring out where you are now is one of the keys to developing as a leader and improving your troop.

Between the JTE scorecard, the troop self-evaluation, and input from your unit commissioner or other Scouters, you should be able to gain a clear understanding of what your troop is doing well and exactly where it could improve. Of course, information is useless until it's put into action. We'll discuss action steps in chapter 5. First, however, we'll discuss ways to evaluate your troop's leadership team—including yourself.

Consider meeting with other local troop leaders, perhaps in conjunction with district roundtable meetings, to share best practices.

For best results, take along a small group of key youth and adult leaders, including your senior patrol leader. (As always, the BSA's Youth Protection policies apply.)

CHAPTER 3
Evaluating Your Leadership Team

By definition, leading a Scout troop is a team effort. You can't charter a troop without a Scoutmaster, a troop committee chair, two troop committee members, and a chartered organization representative, and only the smallest of troops can get by with so few leaders.

A good time to evaluate the troop's leadership team is over the summer, in advance of the new program year.

Once a year, the troop Key 3—the Scoutmaster, committee chair, and chartered organization representative—should conduct a confidential, forward-looking evaluation of the troop's leadership team. One effective way to do that is to do a SWOT analysis. Popular in business circles, SWOT stands for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. In terms of troop operations, you might make notes like these on various leaders:

- Strengths: Eagle Scout; Wood Badge–trained; excellent rapport with Scouts
- Weaknesses: swing-shift job makes regular attendance difficult; works better with adults than Scouts, yet is in an assistant Scoutmaster role; hasn't been trained
- Opportunities: plans to attend Powder Horn and could help build high-adventure program; would be a good candidate to move into Scoutmaster role; has a younger child in Cub Scouting so is likely in the troop for the long haul
- Threats: child is close to aging out, so may become less involved; health issues make participation on outings difficult; job situation is uncertain—may have to relocate

If you're not careful, your SWOT analysis can veer into personal considerations. Be discreet, stay positive, and focus on how each person can best contribute to the troop's success. And remember, every other leader (like you) is a volunteer with strengths, weaknesses, and responsibilities beyond Scouting.

Every troop is different, of course, but this evaluation is likely to reveal a few areas where you need to make changes—or where change is coming whether or not you like it. First, some adults may be in positions that don't match their interests, abilities, or current life situations. Second, you may be able to foresee changes you'll need to make in the near future, as leaders' children age out of the program. While some adults happily continue in troop roles long after their own Scouts have moved on to college and career, others prefer to reduce or change their involvement. Developing a plan now for replacing those leaders can prevent a crisis later. (We'll discuss succession planning in chapter 5.)

Terms of Service and Term Limits

When will your time in your current position end? In many troops, the only way to leave a position is to quit, die, or recruit your own replacement.

Other troops take a more thoughtful approach. Rather than assume that leaders will continue in their roles indefinitely, they recruit for one year at a time and reassess assignments annually. (Summer is a good time to do this.) While most leaders will continue in their current positions, this approach gives individuals—and the troop—an out.

Some troops go a step further and set term limits, at least on key positions like Scoutmaster, the logic being that someone can put all of his or her energy into the role for, say, three years, knowing that a less-demanding role awaits. If you go this route, consider naming a Scoutmaster-designate who can shadow the Scoutmaster and seamlessly move into that role when the current Scoutmaster moves to another position.

Leadership Team SWOT Analysis

Here are the leadership positions listed in volume 1 of the *Troop Leader Guidebook* and in the *Troop Committee Guidebook*. As a unit Key 3, complete the chart and discuss ways to use this information to improve troop operations. The chart shown here also appears in the appendix.

Leadership Team SWOT Analysis

Position	Incumbent	Training Status	Years in Position	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Scoutmaster							
Assistant Scoutmaster for Program							
Assistant Scoutmaster for Administration							
Assistant Scoutmaster for the New-Scout Patrol							
Assistant Scoutmaster for the _____ Patrol							
Assistant Scoutmaster for the _____ Patrol							
Assistant Scoutmaster for the _____ Patrol							
Assistant Scoutmaster for the _____ Patrol							
Assistant Scoutmaster for the Older-Scout Patrol							
Other Assistant Scoutmasters							
_____ (title)							
_____ (title)							
_____ (title)							
_____ (title)							

Position	Incumbent	Training Status	Years in Position	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Troop Committee Chair							
Secretary							
Treasurer							
Outdoor/Activities Coordinator							
Advancement Coordinator							
Chaplain							
Training Coordinator							
Equipment Coordinator							
Unit Religious Emblems Coordinator							
Other Troop Committee Members							
_____ (title)							
_____ (title)							
_____ (title)							
_____ (title)							
Chartered Organization Representative							

CHAPTER 4
Evaluating Yourself

As an adult leader, you play a critical role in the success of your troop. If you are the Scoutmaster or troop committee chair, virtually every aspect of troop operations depends on your leadership. If you oversee a specific area like advancement or the new-Scout patrol, your impact is more focused but still quite meaningful.

It's important, then, to evaluate yourself and how you are contributing to the troop's success. Self-evaluation is a process worth revisiting from time to time as your circumstances change.

A Self-Assessment Exercise

Here are five questions to think about. Take plenty of time and write down your thoughts. Sharing your answers with other adults inside and beyond your troop can help you understand the importance of your answers.

Five Questions About You

1. Why did you become a troop leader?
2. Why do you want to be a leader now?
3. What does the BSA expect of you?
4. What do you expect of Scouting?
5. What do you expect of yourself?

1. Why did you become a troop leader?

To begin understanding where you are now, think back to the reasons you became a troop leader in the first place, whether that was six months ago or many years before your current Scouts were born. Here are some possible reasons:

- Perhaps you have a child who wanted to be a Scout, and you signed up so you could spend time together or to help your child have the best possible experience.
- You might have been a Scout when you were that age and were eager to see today's young people get to enjoy the same kind of experience.
- You may have wanted to take part in the adventure of Scouting, and becoming involved in a troop offered chances for you again to share campouts, hikes, and other activities. (Have you ever considered how few people get to do the things Scouts do on a monthly basis?)

Some people take positions as troop leaders because they were assigned that responsibility or were asked by a group of parents to fill in when a troop lacked enough adult leadership. Some are willing; others are reluctant.

For other people, leading a Scout unit can be a form of service to one's community, to the future of young people, and to the nation.

Still others, much like entrepreneurs in the business community, embrace the challenge of starting something new or fixing something that's broken.

2. Why do you want to be a leader now?

Now, think about whether your motivation has changed. Which reasons are still relevant? What other reasons keep you involved?

Consider these questions:

- If you became a troop leader because your child joined the troop, what will you do when their time with the troop is completed and they move on?
- Has your interest in the adventure of Scouting increased or waned?
- Are you still enjoying Scouting as much as you did when you accepted your first role as a troop leader? If not, what's different now and what might you do to improve the situation?
- What role does public acknowledgment of your achievements play in your willingness to continue as a troop leader?
- Do your fellow Scouters constitute a large part of your friendship circle or do you feel that Scouting pulls you away from activities that are important to you?
- Is your current position a good fit for your interests, abilities, and schedule?

Because no one will stay in the same position forever—even those Scoutmasters with 30 years' tenure—also think about these questions:

- Has your troop developed pathways so you can move upward to a position of greater responsibility and challenge or downward to a less demanding position?
- Is there a succession plan for the time when you will move out of your current leadership position or perhaps leave the troop altogether?

Scouting should be fun and rewarding for Scouts and adults alike. If you aren't getting something out of the program, it's probably time to think about finding a different role to play.

3. What does the BSA expect of you?

The basic responsibilities for each position in the troop are outlined in volume 1 of the *Troop Leader Guidebook* and in the *Troop Committee Guidebook*. How well are you carrying out those responsibilities? How well do those responsibilities align with your interests and capabilities?

In addition to revisiting your specific responsibilities, consider these questions:

- What is your training status? What is the next training course you should take? Do you need a refresher for a course you took years ago?
- Are you staying abreast of changes to BSA programs through self-study, attending roundtables, and reading *Scouting* magazine?
- Are you helping guide your troop and its members in achieving goals that are challenging, worthwhile, and enjoyable?
- Are you serving as the face of Scouting in your troop and community by being a worthy role model?

4. What do you expect of Scouting?

The BSA asks a great deal of adult troop leaders. You volunteer tremendous amounts of time and energy for the sake of Scouting. It's OK to assess whether you are receiving adequate support from the BSA in return.

Consider these members of your support team:

- The parents of your Scouts
- Your troop's other adult leaders
- Your chartered organization representative (and your chartered organization as a whole)
- Your unit commissioner
- Your roundtable commissioner
- Your district executive
- Your district or council training team
- Your local council service center staff

In many ways, your effectiveness depends on the support you receive from these individuals and groups. What support do you need that you aren't getting? If you have shortfalls, make people aware of your concerns; you might be surprised by how responsive they can be.

As an adult troop leader, you are an integral part of the BSA. Your role in your troop's meetings and activities gives you a front-row seat to the ways that BSA policies, training, materials, and assistance succeed or fall short. Don't be shy about sharing your thoughts, both as a way to improve your own leadership and your troop's opportunities and as a way to improve district, council, and national efforts to offer the best Scouting program possible.

5. What do you expect of yourself?

This is an essential question that only you can answer. If you don't expect much of yourself as a troop leader, you probably won't have many expectations for your Scouts, either. If, however, you are committed to strengthening your abilities as a leader, adding to your skills, helping your troop members advance, and finding plenty of fun and satisfaction along the way, then resources within and beyond the BSA are there for you.

In chapter 1, we discussed the concept of developing a troop vision, a concept that will be familiar to you if you've attended Wood Badge or sent Scouts to NYLT.

Developing a personal vision is also important. Consider these examples:

- My vision as Scoutmaster is to create a robust adult-leadership structure that includes trained leaders at every position and a clear succession plan.
- My vision is to see all eight members of the Sidewinder Patrol—including my child—become Eagle Scouts.
- My vision is a troop in which the adult leaders do nothing but unlock the Scout hut on Thursday nights and drive on weekend outings.
- My vision as outdoor/activities coordinator is for our troop to have enough equipment, financial resources, and trained leaders that we never have to say "no" to our youth leaders when they dream big.
- My vision is to create a troop environment that is welcoming to Scouts of all ages, races, abilities, and economic backgrounds. I want our troop to be a true team that values and encourages every member.

A personal vision can bring meaning and focus to the time you devote to Scouting. It can also clarify what short-term goals you need to set and what you should be doing aside from your week-to-week routine.

"Shoot for the moon. Even if you miss it, you will land among the stars."
—Les Brown

The Highest Standards of Self-Assessment: The Scout Oath and Law

We ask Scouts to repeat the Scout Oath and Scout Law at every troop meeting and to pledge on their honor to use the Oath and the Scout Law as guidelines for life. A troop's adult leaders should be willing to do no less, both in their personal lives and in their interactions with others within Scouting. Be the Scout you want your Scouts to be. Show by your example that you fully subscribe to the meaning of the Scout Oath and Scout Law, and that your pledge guides your leadership of the troop and the way you conduct your life. That is, by far, the most effective form of leadership you can provide.

Getting Assessed by Others

Share your assessment of yourself with others who are familiar with your role and responsibilities in Scouting and ask them for feedback. Encourage them to discuss with you what they see as your strengths and areas where you can improve. Pay attention to what they are telling you, but don't become overwhelmed by what may seem to be criticism. Your goal should be to discover ways to make the troop's program as strong as it can be. Thinking through what others tell you is an important way to improve.

Be willing to serve in the same role when the troop's other adult leaders conduct their own self-assessments and ask for input. Each of you will have more credibility to suggest steps for improvement if you've already self-assessed and had those individuals assess you. Nothing creates openness to change more than saying, "We have some things to fix in the troop and some of the changes begin with me. Here's what I'm going to do to work on them."

Tips on Giving Feedback

1. Consider your motives. Feedback should always be helpful; otherwise, there is no reason to offer it.
2. Find out if the other people involved are open to receiving feedback. Listen carefully, then rephrase what they say to be sure you understand them.
3. Deal only with behavior that can be changed.
4. Deal with specifics, not generalities.
5. Describe the behavior; do not evaluate it.
6. Let the other person know the impact the behavior has on you.
7. Use an "I" statement to accept responsibility for your own perceptions and emotions.
8. To make sure the recipients of feedback have understood your message in the way you intended it, ask them to rephrase what they heard you say.

You can give caring feedback without a good technique, but the slickest technique in the world will not hide a lack of caring.

Tips on Receiving Feedback

1. Seek out feedback. It will nearly always provide you with information that, in some way, will help you improve your performance.
2. Listen carefully. Receiving feedback requires a heightened awareness of yourself and the person offering the feedback.
3. Listen actively. Restate the feedback in your own words so the speaker knows that the message you are receiving is the same as the one the speaker intended to send.
4. Listen empathetically. Put feedback in its proper context by observing the speaker's body language, tone of voice, and emotions. Consider the speaker's reasons for offering feedback.
5. Notice how you are feeling when someone offers you feedback. Becoming angry or defensive can cloud your ability to listen effectively.

Consider feedback to be a gift. It truly is.

360-Degree Assessment

Aside from informal evaluations, consider asking for a 360-degree assessment in which feedback comes from all directions. In a business setting, such feedback comes from peers, from those you work for, and from those who work for you. These are all "stakeholders"—people who have an interest in your success and who are in positions to offer productive opinions about your progress. In Scouting, your stakeholders may be fellow unit leaders, parents of Scouts, your district executive, unit and roundtable commissioners, representatives of your chartered organization, and other Scouters who have direct knowledge of your leadership.

Based on information gathered from the assessment, you can develop a course of action that will more effectively move you toward your goals.

Here are step-by-step instructions for developing and using a 360-degree assessment.

1. Determine the goals for which you wish to be assessed. Ideally, the goals need to be SMART—specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-based.
2. Join with a facilitator to help with the assessment process. This person should understand how a 360-degree assessment works.
3. Develop an assessment survey that will provide the kind of feedback that will help you more effectively move toward your goals.
4. Identify five to 10 of your stakeholders who can offer a wide range of perceptions about your progress. Provide each with a copy of the survey and a stamped envelope addressed to your facilitator. Assure each stakeholder that only the facilitator will see the surveys.
5. Upon receiving the completed surveys, your facilitator will compile the results, then meet with you to discuss the assessment and identify ways in which you can use the results to progress more effectively toward your goals.
6. Finally, make assessment an ongoing part of your Scouting responsibilities and, where appropriate, in other areas of your life. Self-assessment should not be a one-time event but, rather, a constant tool for gaining a clearer perception of your strengths and the areas where you can improve.

Pointers on Developing a 360-Degree Assessment Survey

1. Instructions to the stakeholders should be clear and unambiguous. Stakeholders should understand why they are taking part in the assessment, how it will be used, and that only the facilitator will see their answers.
2. Questions must be developed based on the goals you are striving to reach. Feedback resulting from the questions should lead to real changes that will bring you closer to your goals.
3. Feedback comes from what those completing the form actually have observed and can measure. There is nothing to be gained in asking them to assess what they've not seen or cannot quantify in some way.
4. Answers to the questions can be simple and straightforward. Offer stakeholders two or three options such as the following.

- Green Light (This is good. Keep going.); Yellow Light (This could be better.); Red Light (Some serious concerns here.)
- Way to Go; Ways to Grow
- Start; Stop; Continue

The survey should also encourage stakeholders to add any comments and suggestions they feel would be helpful. This kind of feedback can be extremely helpful.

Sample 360-Degree Assessment Survey

(Provide one copy to each participant.)

I am seeking productive feedback on my progress toward reaching these five goals that have to do with my leadership in Scouting:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

With those goals in mind, please provide an assessment of how I am doing. Of the following questions, answer those for which you have personal knowledge. Your answers may be either "Way to Go!" or "Ways to Grow." If an answer is "Ways to Grow," please feel free to suggest how I can do better in that area.

When you have finished the survey, please mail it in the enclosed envelope to my assessment facilitator. The facilitator will provide me with a summary of all the surveys. No one but the facilitator will see your answers.

	Way to Go!	Ways to Grow
1. Produces work on time		
2. Communicates well with others		
3. Encourages diversity in Scouting		
4. Develops creative solutions to problems		
5. Demonstrates a good knowledge of Scouting		
6. Treats Scouts and Scouters in a respectful, considerate manner		
7. Creates an environment that makes progress possible for everyone		
8. Serves as a good role model		
9. Shares knowledge with others		
10. Takes active steps to ensure lifelong learning		

CHAPTER 5
Charting a Course

Once you've evaluated your troop, your leadership team, and yourself, you may be able to identify dozens of things you'd like to change all at once. But trying to do too much too soon is a recipe for chaos, something like remodeling every room of your house while you're still living there.

Rather than disrupt your current program, select the five to 10 issues that are the most pressing or would have the most positive impact on troop operations. For example, filling a vacant Scoutmaster position would be a top priority, while planning a money-earning project so you could buy a troop trailer would fall farther down the list. Call this list your troop-improvement list.

Setting Priorities

If you're overwhelmed by the number of issues you need to address, try this technique:

Divide your list of issues into A, B, and C categories.

A priorities are things you must do.

B priorities are things you should do.

C priorities are things that would be nice to do.

Sort your A priorities by importance: A-1, A-2, A-3, etc.

Consider your A priorities to be your troop-improvement list.

Priorities	A	B	C
1	Fill vacant Scoutmaster position.	Plan money-earning project to fund trailer purchase.	
2			
3			

Keep in mind that priorities can change over time. If your Scoutmaster is stepping down in two years, replacing him or her might be a C priority at the moment. If you haven't identified a replacement by the time he or she leaves, you'll have an A priority on your hands. Ideally, a new Scoutmaster will be recruited long before the current Scoutmaster steps down, allowing for a smooth transition.

For each issue, identify a leader to oversee the improvement process and establish a timeline for addressing it. In some cases, you and your fellow leaders may be able to work on two or more issues at the same time; in other cases, you may need to handle issues one at a time. To use a house analogy, it would make little sense to paint your kitchen if you're planning to tear out walls soon for a major expansion.

Next, use the team-based project planning process described below to set and work toward goals in each area. The result should be improved troop operations, increased leader satisfaction, and, most importantly, an enhanced ability to achieve the aims of Scouting.

Five Stages of Team-Based Project Planning

Wood Badge is a great place to learn more about and practice project planning.

A good way to tackle your troop-improvement list is to have a team of leaders work each item as a discrete project using a five-stage approach. These stages are:

1. Prepare a project overview that summarizes the specific goals and objectives of the project.
2. Develop a work breakdown structure that identifies the tasks to be completed and the order in which they should be done.
3. Assign responsibilities for specific activities or tasks to each project team member.
4. Put the plan into action and track its progress.
5. Prepare a closeout report that compares the original goals and objectives to the final outcome.

If this process seems overwhelming, look among your leaders or troop parents for someone who works as a project manager or process engineer. Recruit that person—not to do the actual work but to oversee and track progress.

Stage One: Project Overview

The team's initial planning should be summarized on a one-page document called the project overview. The overview is just that—an overview of the project in broad, general terms. It should be clearly written—so much so that someone not involved in the team will understand what the project is all about. The team leader completes the project overview with the help of the project team.

The project overview should state the scope of the project. What is the team trying to accomplish? How big will the project be? It should also include one or two clearly stated goals and a limited number (three or four) of high-level objectives. These goals and objectives will drive the planning process.

In addition, the overview should state how the team will measure project success. If the team is successful, what will success look like? How can it be measured? The overview should include the method or approach the team will take in the project. Lastly, the overview should consider any risks or assumptions in place that might prevent the success of the project.

Project Overview

Problem, opportunity, or situation to be changed

Project goals

Objectives

Measure of success

Approach or method

Assumptions and risks

Project Goals and Objectives

Before focusing on the details of a project, it is important to establish straightforward goals and relatable objectives. These define the project and influence how you measure success. To be sure that the goals and objectives are clearly written and appropriate, it is important to subject them to the "SMART" test:

S—Specific: Is it specific in targeting an objective?

M—Measurable: What are the measurable indicators of progress or success?

A—Attainable: Is it attainable by someone on the team?

R—Relevant: Does the goal support the troop's project and overall vision? Is it an appropriate goal within the current context of the troop?

T—Time-based: When will the project be completed?

Measure of Success

The goals and objectives should be measured to help determine success. The team must choose some measurable criteria. It might be the number of participants, a change in the frequency of a given activity, or a change in behavior. Remember, it is difficult to measure intangibles like attitude or knowledge without some formal assessment or test. Goals that use qualifying words like "all" or "never" also are difficult to achieve.

Approach or Method

How will you tackle the project? It is important to consider the assumptions and risks to success before making this decision. Often, the approach or method chosen is a direct result of what the team thinks is the best way to overcome those roadblocks to success. In addition, the team needs to consider whether the usual way of doing this type of project is the most effective.

You may sometimes work on a project that has never been done before. This situation may cause the team to consider several approaches or methods. Use this opportunity to "think outside the box" and come up with novel approaches to the situation.

When people work on something they have done before, they tend to use the same methods that worked in the past. But there is an old saying: "If you keep on doing what you have always done, you will keep on getting what you've always got." Clearly "what we've always got" is not what you want if a project is on your troop-improvement list.

The selection of the best possible approach or method may well be the most important decision you make during the early stages of project planning. The approach or method influences everything that follows; therefore, special consideration should always be given to this decision.

Here are some guidelines to consider when choosing an approach or method:

- Focus on project goals and high-level objectives.
- Challenge assumptions regarding previously employed approaches and methods.
- Explore out-of-the-box solutions.
- Do not hesitate to invent new methods when appropriate.

Assumptions or Risks

The team should identify assumptions and risks associated with the objectives and the chosen approach or method of the project so members can understand the project's implications and facilitate planning and completion. Assumptions are attitudes that are widely held concerning the project. Some of them may be true and valid. Others may not be true, causing the team to select a wrong plan of action.

Risks are those things that could undermine the success of the project. To help the team identify assumptions or risks, answer the following questions for each objective.

1. What resources are required—realistically—to complete this objective?
2. What risks are associated with obtaining these resources in a timely manner?
3. What problems or delays are likely to occur in completing this objective?
4. What effect will delays have on the overall project plan and schedule?

A project overview is important for many reasons. Perhaps the most significant one is that it helps ensure success. In project planning, there are two big traps you seek to avoid by using a project overview. The first trap is the "activity trap." This is where the team jumps into action and assumes that it can figure out what it needs to do after the first task. Such activity often wastes time and resources, to say nothing of the frustration and disappointment team members feel. The second trap is called "scope creep." This is where the original scope of the project is not clearly defined and someone says, "Oh, while you're at it, do this, too." Such add-ons can escalate the investment of time and other resources or distract you from achieving your stated goals and objectives. A clearly defined project helps the team determine when add-ons are not a part of the project.

Stage Two: Work Breakdown Structure

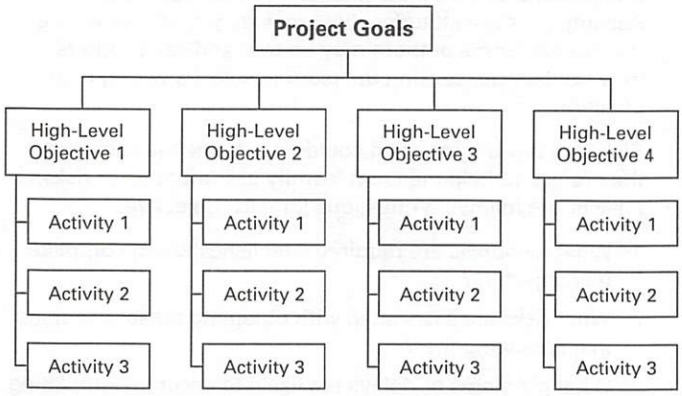
The work breakdown structure is just what it says it is. Teams use this tool to identify, define, and distribute the workload of the project. Break down each objective into separate activities that will be necessary to accomplish the objective. Then, put the activities in order—what must be done and when.

The activities should pass the "SMART" test. Each activity should have a definite start and stop time. The activities may be linked to one another, but they should not overlap. The time and cost of each activity should be easy to define. Every activity should be assignable to a team member and easily accomplished by that team member. If not, the activity probably should be broken down further.

Giving careful thought to the order of project activities can be critical to the success of the project. Putting all the activities in random order often makes the project last too long and doesn't utilize the power of the team. While some things cannot be started until another part of the project has been completed, it often is possible for several activities to be accomplished simultaneously. Ordering the activities helps facilitate linking.

Any project usually has one or more sets of linked activities. The longest one of these is sometimes called the "critical path." This is a set of linked activities the leader wants to watch closely since a holdup along the critical path most likely will result in delaying the overall project.

Network of High-Level Objectives



Stage Three: Activity Assignments

We are now on familiar territory—this is the old "You do this, and I'll do that." When assigning activities to team members, keep in mind the following guidelines:

- Each team member must have a clear understanding of the purpose of the project.
- Each member must understand exactly what his or her assignment is, the details of each assigned activity, and the availability of resources (including how much time the activity is expected to take).
- It is important to match each team member's skills and resources to the activities—be sure you have the right team member for the task.
- Establish milestones or specific activities to be accomplished, as well as regular reporting times, so that the team leader stays informed on the project's progress.

Stage Four: Putting the Plan Into Action

This is the project kickoff. Once the project is in the hands of the team members, it is vital for the team leader to perform his or her primary role: provide team leadership. There may be times when it is important for the team leader to share information about resources or further clarify the assignments or project. He or she may need to offer support and encouragement at one time or another, and it may be necessary to help with decision making or problem solving when asked.

Note the characteristics of a high-performance team as well as the stages of development (as described in chapter 6). With each new project, the team—even if it has been together before—may change its position on the development scale. To remain on schedule, the team leader should focus on those activities on the critical path and provide additional resources when needed to help ensure timely completion.

Stage Five: Project Closeout

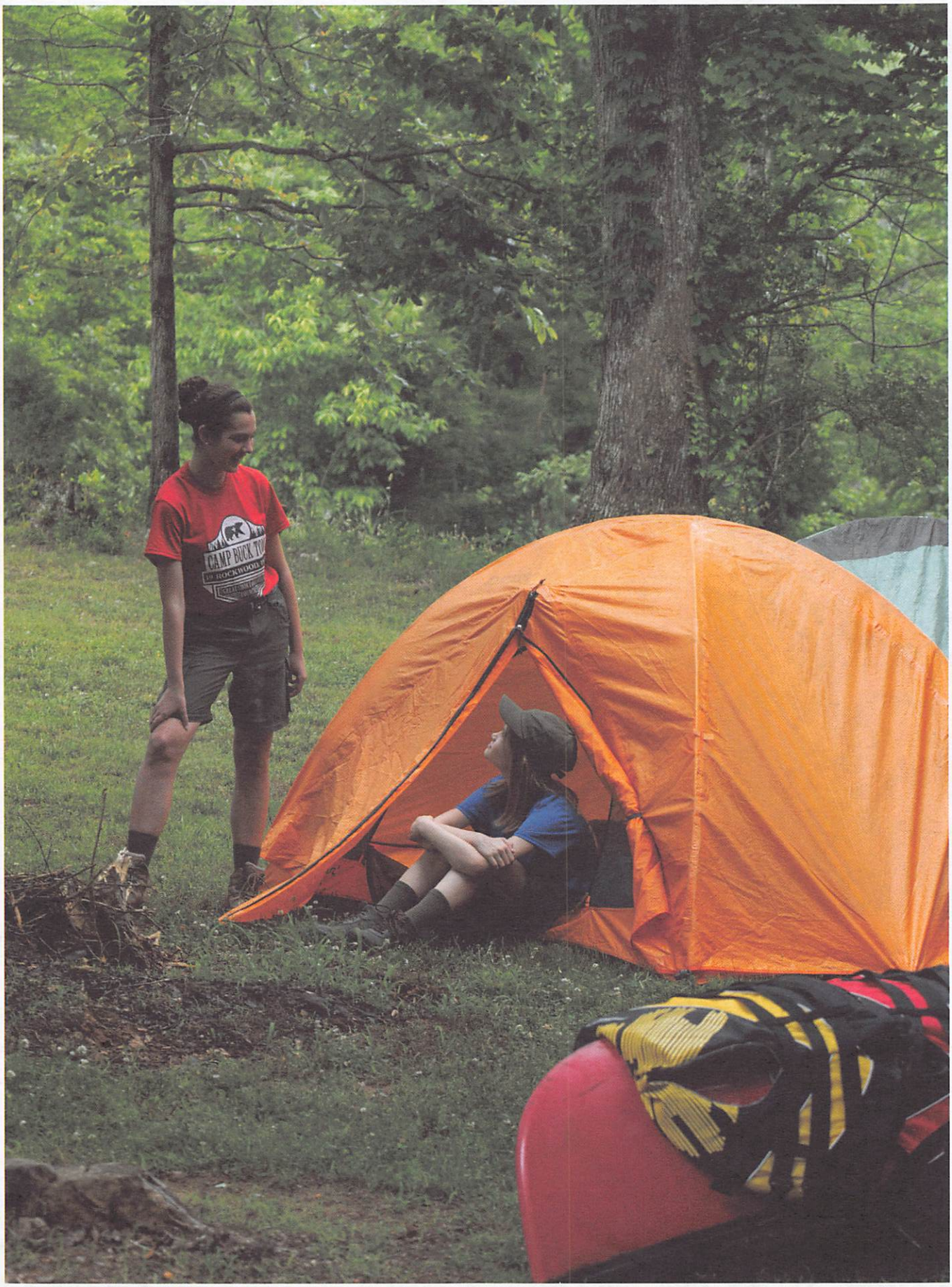
Once the project is complete, there still are two important things to do. One is to recognize your team members. Remember, celebration is an important part of a high-performance team. The second is to produce a postmortem report. This evaluation should be written and include an analysis of several things:

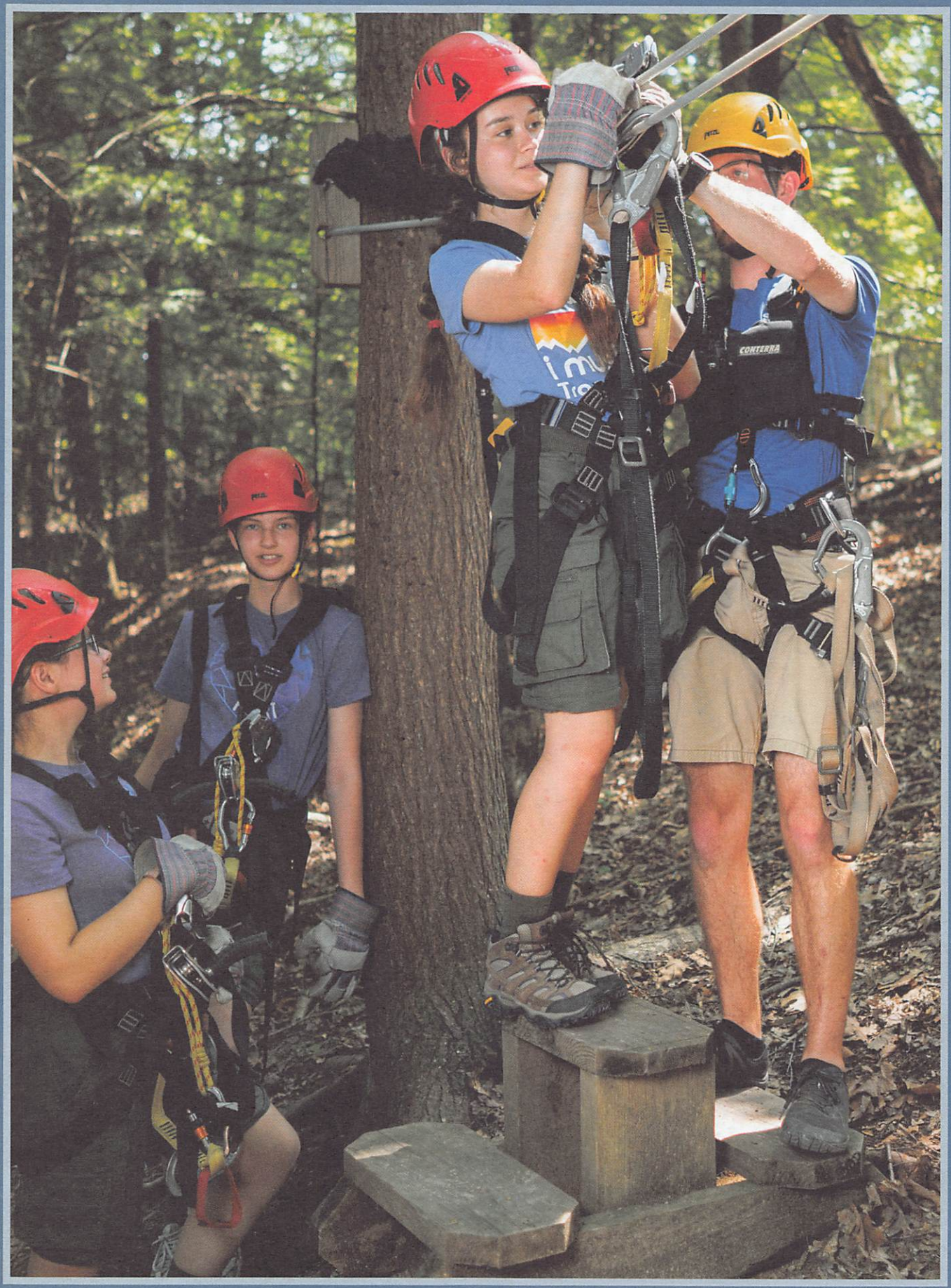
- Were the goals and objectives met?
- Was the project completed on time?
- How might we make things run better next time?

This written report will enable you or your successor to remember what happened and how to avoid some of the pitfalls you may have encountered.

A Better Future

If all this sounds like a lot of work, that's because it is. Even so, it's a proven, efficient process to address and resolve the serious issues you identified within the troop. Remember, the end result should be a better-organized, better-functioning troop that is better able to deliver on the promise of Scouting.


CAMP BUCK TO
ROCKWOOD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EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP TODAY

Adult leaders in Scouting teach skills, supervise activities, serve as role models, maintain equipment, and drive Scouts to campouts. Their most important contribution, however, is leadership. But, unlike the leaders in youth activities like sports, Scouters lead through their Scouts. When their work is done, their Scouts will say, "We did this ourselves."

And they'll be right.

Anyone can become an effective leader provided he or she masters basic leadership skills. In this section, we'll introduce some of those techniques. We'll also explore the youth leadership method and introduce advanced skills for making the patrol method work more effectively.

CHAPTER 6
Stages of Team Development

A Scout troop is a group of teams, including the patrols, the patrol leaders' council, the Scoutmaster corps, and the troop committee. Depending on your role as an adult leader, you're probably a member of or an advisor to at least a couple of these teams. That makes it important for you to understand the stages of team development and how you can help your teams move from one stage to the next.

How Teams Develop

Wood Badge and National Youth Leadership Training both introduce the stages of team development that were formulated by psychologist Bruce W. Tuckman in 1965. In his landmark article "Developmental Sequence in Small Groups," Tuckman concluded that every small group goes through four distinct phases: Forming, Storming, Norming, and Performing.

Before we look at the characteristics of each stage, a few general points are important:

- Different teams will move through the stages at different speeds.
- The stages are not linear. Much as kids can regress as they move toward adulthood, groups can backslide, especially when they face challenges.
- Significant changes to the group's membership can send it back to an earlier stage. This can happen, for example, when your Scoutmaster corps is performing well but then takes on several new members as former Webelos Scout leaders join.
- A group can be at different stages based on the task it faces. For example, a patrol might be at the Performing stage when cooking a gourmet Dutch-oven feast but then revert to the Storming stage when it tries to plan an ambitious service project.
- Progress is not automatic. Without intentional effort, a team can get stuck at one stage or even disband without making progress.

Now, let's look at the four stages and what they mean for the teams in your troop.

Forming

The first stage in a team's development is the Forming stage. On a newly formed team, members often exhibit a mix of enthusiasm and anxiety; they're eager to get to work but are unsure about their own role on the team.

This is the time for setting goals, establishing roles, and developing a formal or informal vision. At the Forming stage, team members are often strangers to each other, so they need to spend time getting to know one another. That means learning names, of course, but it also means learning strengths and weaknesses, likes and dislikes.

At the Forming stage, enthusiasm is high but group function is low. There's high dependence on the group leader for purpose and direction. In a new-Scout patrol, this might be the troop guide or the assigned assistant Scoutmaster; on an adult team, this might be the Scoutmaster or troop committee chair.

The major issues at this stage are personal well-being, acceptance, and trust.

The most common example of this stage in a troop is probably the new-Scout patrol. You'll also see this stage if you form an ad-hoc crew to attend one of the BSA's high-adventure bases or if you are starting a new troop.

Storming

The second stage, Storming, is perhaps the most difficult. Enthusiasm drops as the team begins the hard task of working toward a goal and as members experience a discrepancy between their initial expectations and reality. For example, the senior patrol leader's high hopes for effective patrol leaders' council meetings can be dashed when Scouts show up late or discussions get sidetracked.

At the Storming stage, conflict can develop as subgroups form with different goals or different approaches to the goals the team has set. The leader's authority sometimes becomes threatened as other team members assert their independence or pull the team in different directions. Confusion, frustration, dissatisfaction, and lowered trust all lead to dysfunction—and can even lead to team members leaving the group altogether.

The major issues at this stage are power, control, and conflict.

Many patrols stay at this stage indefinitely. At the adult level, the Storming stage is evident when different adults have different visions for the troop. (If some adults are all about advancement, others are all about high adventure, and still others are all about the Scout-led troop, you have a recipe for stormy weather.)

Norming

At the third stage, Norming, team members begin coming around and working together toward their common goals. With increased clarity about the group's vision and increased technical skills, they experience success, which creates positive feelings and makes future success easier. Group identity increases as well. Members start thinking in terms of

"we" rather than "I." (As sports coaches like to say, they start playing for the name on the front of their jerseys.)

Increased trust allows for better sharing of leadership and control. Members no longer rely on the single strong leader or the subgroup leaders who threatened the leader's authority. The team still has work to do, however. Recognizing that the positive climate is new and fragile, members tend to avoid conflict. This reluctance can slow progress and lead to less effective decisions.

The major issues at this stage are the sharing of control and avoidance of conflict.

In troops, teams often move into the Norming phase as youth and adult leaders attend NYLT or Wood Badge and as, over time, members get to know and trust each other. Success breeds success as well; a patrol that earns a blue ribbon at a camporee or a troop that earns Gold status in the Journey to Excellence program should be primed for higher performance in the future.

Performing

At the fourth stage, Performing, both enthusiasm and productivity are consistently high. The team can focus on performance since it has done the messy work of team-building in the past. The team's goals are clear, team members' roles are understood by all, and performance standards are high.

At this stage, the team functions as one. Members enjoy working together and focus on continuous improvement.

The major issues at this stage are continued refinements and growth.

A group of adults or older Scouts who have been working together for several years is probably at the Performing stage. You can often spot this stage at the end of a high-adventure trek. Early in the trip, breaking camp might have taken two hours and much grumbling; by the end of the trip, the Scouts get the job done with the speed and efficiency of a racetrack pit crew.

Stages of Team Development at a Glance

Stage	Description	Enthusiasm	Skills
Forming	Pickup Sticks	High	Low
Storming	At Odds	Low	Low
Norming	Coming Around	Rising	Growing
Performing	As One	High	High

Stage 5: Adjourning

A dozen years after introducing the four stages of team development, Bruce Tuckman (working with Mary Ann Jensen) added a fifth stage: Adjourning. Sometimes called Mourning or Deforming, this stage occurs when a team breaks up, either because of a crisis situation or because it was intended to be short-lived in the first place. (Think, for example, of a jamboree troop or a crew formed just for a high-adventure trip.)

Depending on the situation, members may feel a sense of loss at this stage; after all, they're going from being members of a high-functioning team to being individuals again. At the Adjourning stage, it's important to celebrate the team's accomplishments and to ensure that each member has a safe place to land after the team dissolves.

Team Development in the Troop

As mentioned at the outset, every troop is a group of teams, each of which is at a different stage. The Scoutmaster corps and troop committee might be at the Performing stage, most of the patrols might be at the Storming stage, and the new-Scout patrol is probably at the Forming stage. Each team's current stage determines how effective it will be and, in the case of the patrols and the patrol leaders' council, how adult leaders can provide support. In the case of the new-Scout patrol, for example, the assigned assistant Scoutmaster and troop guide would need to be more hands-on at the Forming stage, should provide strong support to the elected patrol leader at the Storming stage, and could be able to back off a bit at the Norming stage. By the Performing stage, the patrol should be self-sufficient.

With experience, you should be able to identify at a glance which stage a team is at and thus adjust your approach. The assessment exercise on the following page can also help.

Team Development Assessment

This assessment instrument will help you determine a team's development stage.
Score each statement using the following scale:

3=Definitely true 2=Sometimes true, sometimes false 1=Definitely false

1.	The team's effectiveness is increasing.	
2.	Enthusiasm is high.	
3.	Team members won't ask each other for help.	
4.	Conflict often happens within the team.	
5.	Every team member contributes to the team's success.	
6.	The team seems to be making little progress.	
7.	The team accepts the leader, and he or she accepts constructive criticism.	
8.	Team members seem to be pulling in many different directions.	
9.	Team members feel a shared sense of responsibility for success or failure.	
10.	The team's goals and vision are works in progress.	
11.	The team usually achieves its goals.	
12.	There's lots of talk but not much action.	
13.	The team challenges itself to succeed, often overachieving.	
14.	Members seem less excited than they used to be about the team's progress.	
15.	Members accept one another's faults and eccentricities.	
16.	There's little sharing of fears and concerns.	
17.	Members argue over who is responsible for what tasks.	
18.	The team works to resolve any conflicts that arise.	
19.	Team spirit is high; the team is clearly having fun.	
20.	Members always look to the leader for guidance.	
21.	Everyone's role on the team is understood and accepted.	
22.	The leader gets a lot of pushback from members.	
23.	Members are excited to be on the team but are unsure of their roles.	
24.	The team works by consensus and shared leadership.	

Scoring: Transfer the score for each question to the blanks below.
After you have entered all the scores, total each column.

3.		4.		1.		2.	
6.		8.		7.		5.	
10.		12.		11.		9.	
16.		14.		15.		13.	
20.		17.		18.		19.	
23.		22.		21.		24.	
Total Forming		Total Storming		Total Norming		Total Performing	

For each stage, you should end up with a total score of 6 to 18 points. The highest score should indicate which stage the team is in.

Adapted from the Team Development Survey by Donald Clark, hrweb.mit.edu/system/files/stage_survey.doc

Team Development Activities

Teams don't advance from one stage to the next automatically. Without intentional effort, they're likely to stagnate or even backslide. Here are some activities that can help at each stage.

Forming-stage Activities

Beach Ball 411

Using a permanent marker, write a series of get-to-know-you questions all over an inexpensive beach ball. These questions can be Scouting-related or more general in nature. Here are some examples:

- What is your favorite TV show?
- What do you like to eat for breakfast?
- Do you have brothers and sisters?
- Describe a holiday tradition in your family.
- What is your favorite Scouting activity?
- Where would you like to go on vacation?
- What merit badge would you most (or least) like to earn?
- What are three adjectives that describe you?
- What type of movies do you like (or dislike)?
- What extracurricular activities do you participate in?
- Pick your favorite: basketball or football. Explain your choice.
- What animal would you like to be? Why?
- What would you do if someone gave you $1,000?
- What is the hardest point of the Scout Law for you to obey? Why?
- What is one thing nobody in the group knows about you?

Have the group form a circle. Toss the ball to one person, who answers the question under their left or right thumb (the choice is up to the individual) and then tosses the ball to another person. Continue until everyone has answered at least one question or until time runs out.

Debrief by asking how knowing more about the other members of the group can improve group function.

Commonalities

Have group members pair up. Each pair's task is to come up with three things they have in common (aside from Scouting involvement). These things could be activities, experiences, or interests—anything from playing the same sport to enjoying the same movies.

Once each pair has a list of three commonalities, have it combine with another pair. The new group of four must identify two things all the members have in common—but the things the pairs listed before don't count.

Once each group of four has a list of two commonalities, bring the whole group together and have them identify one thing they all have in common. Again, the things listed in the previous rounds don't count.

Note: This activity is designed for a group of eight—a typical patrol. Adjust the numbers in each round if your group is larger.

Debrief by asking how the members' commonalities can contribute to the group's success.

Storming-stage Activities

All Aboard

Using a 10-foot length of rope, form a circle on the floor. Challenge the group to stand inside the circle so that no part of anyone's body is touching the floor outside. Once the group is successful, shrink the circle and have the group try again.

There are many variations to this game, including having the players communicate without talking or having two teams race to see which can succeed at the challenge first.

Debrief by discussing how the group solved the problem and who showed leadership. If there was conflict—such as different group members offering different solutions—discuss how that conflict was resolved.

Human Knot

Have the group members stand in a circle facing each other, shoulder to shoulder. Ask them to put one hand into the middle of the circle and grasp another person's hand. Then, ask them to put their other hand in and grasp the hand of a different person.

Once the group is suitably knotted, challenge members to unknot themselves into a circle (or interlocking circles) without anyone releasing their grip. (It's OK for two people to change their grip for comfort; they just can't undo the knot that way.) Depending on the time you have available, play the game a couple of times.

Debrief by discussing how well the group worked together and what could have been done differently. Ask how the group shared leadership and resolved conflict.

Norming-stage Activities

Yurt Circle

Ask everyone to stand in a circle facing the middle, join hands, and expand the circle outward until all participants feel some gentle pull on their arms from each side. (There must be an even number of players, so you may need to add someone from outside the group.) Ask the participants to spread their feet to shoulder width and in line with the circumference of the circle, then ask the group to count off by twos. Have all the "ones" slowly lean in toward the center of the circle, while all the "twos" slowly lean out (without bending at the waist or moving their feet).

If the group works together, each person can accomplish a remarkable forward or backward lean. Now ask the group to slowly reverse positions. With practice and cooperation, the reversal should be quite smooth.

Debrief by discussing the role trust played in the group's success. Also discuss how the group had to adjust for players of different sizes.

Willow in the Wind

Have everyone stand shoulder to shoulder in a circle with one person (the "faller") standing rigid (arms crossed, with elbows on chest and fingertips at shoulders) in the center. Remaining rigid, the faller falls slowly in any direction. Before the faller moves very far off-center, the people in the circle redirect the faller's body to another arc of the circle. This fall-catch-push sequence continues in a gentle fashion until the faller is relaxed (but remaining rigid) and the people in the circle have gained confidence in their ability to work together toward handling the occasional weight shift of the faller. Change positions so that everyone who chooses can be the faller.

Debrief by discussing what the group's success says about the level of trust group members have. Discuss what the group could do to further build trust.

Performing-stage Activities

Teams that have reached the Performing stage are ready for activities where they can simply enjoy being and working together. For example, the group could participate in a weekend of COPE activities, perhaps as part of a patrol outing or PLC retreat. Another option would be a collaborative activity such as researching a new type of cuisine and preparing a feast on a campout.

CHAPTER 7
Teaching EDGE and Leading EDGE

Among the most powerful tools in your leadership toolbox is EDGE, which stands for Explain, Demonstrate, Guide, and Enable. EDGE allows you to tailor your teaching and leadership styles—and those of your youth leaders—to the needs of your Scouts. When you meet your Scouts where they are, learning and growth happen.

For in-depth information on how to teach, consider taking the courses in the BSA's train-the-trainer series, called T3 or T-cubed. These courses are The Fundamentals of Training, The Trainer's EDGE, and the Master Trainer course.

The Teaching EDGE

EDGE

E Explain: Tell them what to do.

D Demonstrate: Show them what to do.

G Guide: Watch them do it.

E Enable: Have them practice and/or teach it.

To understand the Teaching EDGE, think about how you might teach a group of new Scouts to build a fire. You could, of course, simply hand them a box of matches and wish them luck, but that would undoubtedly lead to failure and frustration. You could also deliver a lecture on the art of fire-building, complete with an explanation of the chemistry involved, but the Scouts would be unlikely to turn that information into action (even if they remembered everything you said).

A better approach is to use the EDGE method, a step-by-step approach to teaching a skill.

Using the Teaching EDGE

Explain

Initially, the Scouts will be enthusiastic—what Scout doesn't like fire?—but their skill level will be low. Before they start wasting matches, you should explain the basics of fire-building, such as the ingredients of fire (fuel, heat, and oxygen) and the materials to use (tinder, kindling, and fuel wood). You don't need to tell your Scouts everything there is to know about the subject, just enough to prepare them for the next step.

Demonstrate

The second step is to demonstrate the skill. As Scouting founder Robert Baden-Powell wrote, "There is no teaching to compare with example." Gather the Scouts around a campfire ring and build a campfire for them, describing the process as you go. This allows the Scouts to see as well as hear how to build a fire. They can follow the process from beginning to end, and you can add information you left out of the Explain step (for example, how to create a teepee fire lay or why you should have water on hand to extinguish your fire).

Guide

Eventually, of course, the Scouts will need to build their own fires. It's one thing to watch someone do something and another thing entirely to try it yourself. (How many armchair quarterbacks could throw a perfect spiral, for example?) This is where the third step comes in. As Confucius said, "I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand." Once your Scouts have seen you build a fire, you can send them out to collect firewood and build their own fires while you observe.

Your continued involvement as the teacher is critical here because mistakes are likely. While giving the Scouts freedom to figure out things on their own, you still need to support them with encouragement. You may also need to redirect them (for example, if they start cutting live tree limbs to use as kindling).

Enable

Finally, you should enable the Scouts to build fires on their own without your involvement. Continue offering support as needed, but also offer them opportunities to use the skill, such as choosing campsites where fire-building is allowed or holding a fire-building competition on an outing. Skills people don't use are quickly forgotten. If you want your Scouts to retain the skills they learn along the trail to First Class, make sure your program encourages them to use those skills regularly.

Teaching is also part of the Enable step. When learners become teachers, they move closer to true mastery of the skill. That's a side benefit of having Scouts serve as den chiefs, troop guides, and instructors.

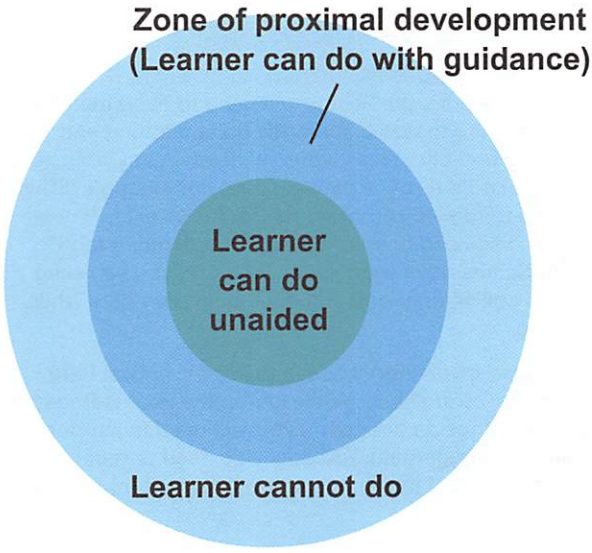
A key to effective leadership is to act with integrity, showing the way by your words and actions. Much of leadership is simply modeling the kind of behavior you want others to practice.

Learning Styles and Instructional Scaffolding

Why is the Teaching EDGE so effective? One reason is that the steps meet the needs of learners with different learning preferences. Auditory learners benefit from the Explain step, visual learners benefit from the Demonstrate step, and kinesthetic learners benefit from the Guide and Enable steps. (Kinesthetic, or tactile, learners learn by carrying out physical activities.)

The Teaching EDGE also relates to the concept of instructional scaffolding, which simply means providing tailored support to the learners to help them achieve their goals. According to experts in instructional design, scaffolding has three essential features: the process is collaborative, the learning takes place in the learner's zone of proximal development, and the teacher's support is gradually removed as the learner becomes more proficient.

What's the zone of proximal development? Introduced by psychologist Lev Vygotsky, it's the range of tasks a learner can perform with assistance but not yet independently. There are some tasks learners can do unaided and other tasks learners cannot do even with help; the zone of proximal development is the sweet spot in between.



When you stray outside the zone of proximal development, you can create frustration on the part of teachers and learners alike. Younger Scouts become frustrated when they try to learn skills they aren't physically strong enough for yet, such as the rescue dives for the Lifesaving merit badge. Older Scouts become frustrated when they're asked to revisit skills they've already mastered, as when learning basic knots becomes a default rainy-day activity in a troop. (In that case, the older Scouts, who are at the Enable stage, should be teaching the younger Scouts, who are at the Explain stage.)

Stepping Backward and Forward

In theory, you would move through the steps of EDGE in sequence. In practice, the process is more fluid. As we noted in the fire-building example above, you actually have opportunities throughout the process to explain important points about the skill. In fact, that's usually a better approach than front-loading your teaching with too much information. (If the skill is potentially dangerous—lighting a backpacking stove, for example—always cover the safety rules first.)

With complex skills, you may find yourself alternating between the Demonstrate and Guide steps. For example, if you're teaching Scouts to set and follow a compass heading, it probably makes sense to break down the skill into smaller steps. You may also need to allow extra practice time in the Guide step for them to put all those steps together.

Finally, there may be times when Scouts need to learn a skill the hard way—not in a way that causes them harm, of course, just in a way that helps them see the importance of the skill you're teaching. For example, if a patrol is trying to build a fire with wet wood, it might be worth letting them struggle a bit rather than just telling them to strip the bark to get to the dry wood inside.

When should you step in and help a struggling Scout? Aside from situations involving health and safety—when you should always step in—ask yourself whether the struggle is likely to lead to success or increased frustration.

Matching Your Teaching to Your Learners

Chapter 6 introduced the stages of team development: Forming, Storming, Norming, and Performing. People learning new skills go through the same stages:

Forming. Learners begin with low skill but high enthusiasm. They are excited about the possibilities but do not yet know how to perform the skill.

Storming. As learners work at the skill, they may become discouraged. The skill level is still low, but because they now know how difficult this will be, enthusiasm can fade.

Norming. With work, each person will make advances in learning how to do something. The skill level will rise and so will enthusiasm.

Performing. When learners have mastered a skill, their enthusiasm will be high. They will have made the skill their own and will know it so well that they can teach it to others.

The following chart shows how Teaching EDGE behaviors align with skill-development stages.

Skill-development Stage	Enthusiasm (Morale)	Skill Level (Productivity)	Teaching EDGE Behavior
Forming	High	Low	Explain
Storming	Low	Low	Demonstrate
Norming	Rising	Growing	Guide
Performing	High	High	Enable

The Importance of Discovery

The Teaching EDGE has four steps, but you ought to consider one more step: Discovery. Before you begin to teach, plan an activity that will let you assess your learners' knowledge and whet their appetites to actually learn the skill.

A great time to do that is during the preopening, the 15 minutes or so before the troop meeting begins. Let's say you're planning to teach knot-tying. As Scouts arrive, pair them up for a knot-tying shoot-out. Have two Scouts stand back to back, ropes in hand. When a leader calls out the name of a knot, they spin around, tie the knot, and hold it high. The first to tie the knot correctly earns a point. Keep playing (assign different knots each time) until one Scout earns three points.

An observant instructor will quickly know whether to start with the square knot or to teach more advanced knots. This may also identify Scouts who could serve as co-teachers.

Teaching Scouts to Teach

In a Scout-led troop (which every troop should be), youth leaders should be doing most of the teaching, at least for basic Scouting skills. But they aren't born knowing how to teach any more than they are born knowing how to tie knots or build fires. That's why teaching them how to teach is a key role for the Scoutmaster and other adult leaders.

Start by modeling the Teaching EDGE whenever you teach a skill. The Teaching EDGE is also part of Introduction to Leadership Skills for Troops, which your troop should conduct each time you install a new group of youth leaders. Personal coaching plays a role, too, especially as Scouts work on the rank requirements related to EDGE.

Beyond the troop setting, encourage your Scouts to attend National Youth Leadership Training when it is offered in your local council. The Teaching EDGE is fundamental to this course, which models the Teaching EDGE in every session, teaches it explicitly during one session, and has participants use it to teach others during another session.

The Teaching EDGE and Servant Leadership

The concept of servant leadership is important in Scouting. Every leader—youth or adult—should strive to put others first. Servant leadership extends to teaching, where the goal is meeting the needs of the learner, not making great presentations where the teacher is the star.

Remember these principles as you implement the Teaching EDGE in your troop:

- Effective teachers focus on the learner and not on their role as the person at the front of the room.
- The key outcome is to meet the needs of the learner.
- The teacher works in all ways possible to help the learner achieve success.
- The success of the presenter is based on the success of the learner.

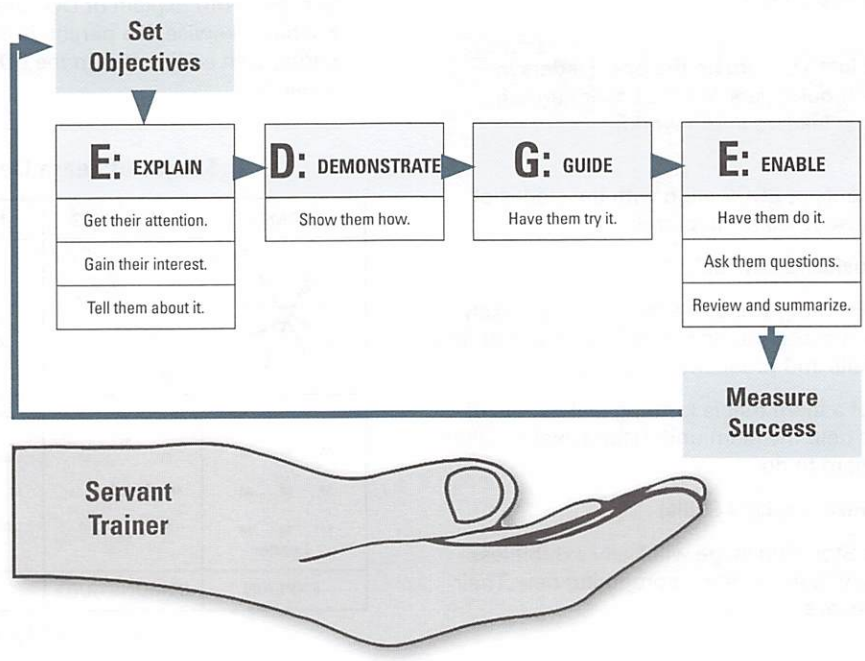
Putting the needs of the learner first is the hallmark of a truly effective teacher—and of an effective leader, too.

Getting Creative With EDGE

Concepts like explaining and demonstrating are straightforward, but that doesn't mean you have to do the same thing every time. Explaining, for example, doesn't just have to be talking. Here are ways to get creative:

Explain

- Display posters illustrating the key points.
- Have Scouts read information in the Scouts BSA handbooks.
- Set up laptops or tablets so Scouts can read information about the skill online.
- Draw out the Scouts' knowledge by asking what they know about the subject (the Socratic method).



Demonstrate

- Show a YouTube video of the skill. (Be sure to preview the video to make sure it's appropriate and demonstrates correct technique.)
- Have Scouts demonstrate the right and wrong way to do the skill.
- Have a show-and-tell of equipment related to the skill.
- Have a guest expert demonstrate the skill.

Guide

- Pair up experienced and inexperienced Scouts to practice the skill.
- Have Scouts practice the skill while you give verbal hints and tips.
- Let Scouts try the skill; then talk about what they experienced.
- Work through the skill together as a group.
- Have Scouts create songs or skits demonstrating the skill.

Enable

- Play a game that tests the skill.
- Plan an outing where Scouts use the skill.
- Provide resources Scouts can use to learn more about the skill on their own.
- Have Scouts create a training video about the skill.
- Have Scouts teach the skill to a Webelos den.

Each topic in *Program Features for Troops and Crews* includes a page of topic-specific EDGE suggestions.

The Leading EDGE

While we typically think of EDGE as a tool for teaching, it's just as important as a tool for leadership. Whenever you're leading a team, you should match your leadership style to the team's stage of development.

We shouldn't just strive to be the best leaders in Scouting. We should work toward becoming the best leaders in the world.

Here's how the elements of EDGE align with the stages of team development discussed in chapter 6:

Forming (High Enthusiasm, Low Skills)

If the team is in the Forming stage, the members will likely exhibit high enthusiasm and motivation for doing something new, though their skills and productivity are low.

An effective leader of a team that is forming will do lots of careful explaining to help the team understand exactly what the leader expects them to do.

Storming (Low Enthusiasm, Low Skills)

A team that is in the Storming stage will likely exhibit less enthusiasm and motivation for doing something new. Their skills and productivity are still low.

An effective leader will continue to make things clear by demonstrating to the team how to succeed and showing support as it makes even halting progress.

Norming (Rising Enthusiasm, Growing Skills)

If the team is in the Norming stage, the members will likely exhibit increasing enthusiasm and motivation for doing something new. Their skills and productivity are developing as well.

Leaders of teams in the Norming stage can find success by giving team members lots of freedom to act on their own, while being ready to provide guidance (coaching) when a little help is needed.

Performing (High Enthusiasm, High Skills)

If the team is in the Performing stage, the members will likely exhibit high enthusiasm and motivation for doing something new, and their skills and productivity will be high as well.

A leader enables team members to make decisions on their own and to keep progressing toward completion of the task.

The illustration on this page shows how the leader relates to the group at each stage of team development.

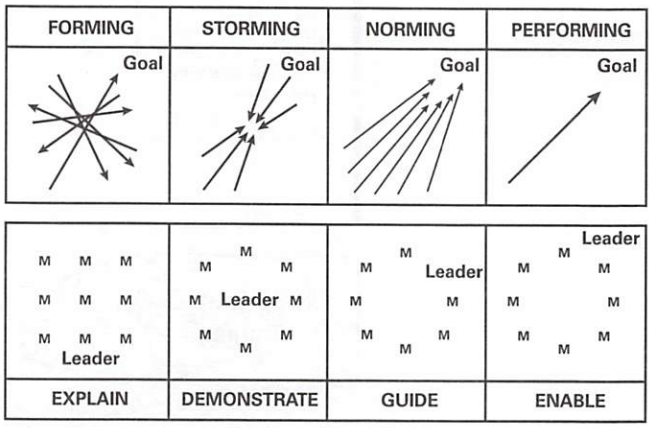
Many adult leaders get stuck at the Demonstrating stage. They make themselves the most visible leaders in the troop rather than guiding and enabling their senior patrol leaders.

The Leading EDGE in Action

To get a sense of how the Leading EDGE works in a troop setting, imagine that your troop has assembled a crew for a Philmont trek. The chart on the following page shows how the crew leader could use the EDGE method at different stages of the crew's first overnight shakedown trip.

With time, determining which step in the Leading EDGE is appropriate should become second nature. If you feel that you are holding someone back, you probably need to move from Explain or Demonstrate to Guide or Enable. Likewise, if a person is confused or unsure, perhaps an earlier step in the EDGE process is just what is needed.

Stages of Team Development



The Leading EDGE

Crew Situation	Team Stage	Leader Response
Arriving at the trailhead on Saturday morning, everyone is excited. Although the crew has been on day hikes before, this is the first overnight trip with full packs.	Forming	Before the crew hits the trail, the crew leader gathers everyone to review the weekend plan and **explain** the rules for hiking.
Midway through the morning, morale is breaking down. The fast hikers don't want to wait for the slow hikers, who are having to stop frequently to readjust their packs and boots.	Storming	At the lunch break, the crew leader has the crew sit in a circle and conduct a brief Thorns and Roses reflection on the morning's hike. (See volume 1, chapter 12.) The leader **demonstrates** how to rebalance the weight in their packs and the proper use of a hiking stick.
The crew arrives at its planned campsite and begins to set up camp. They are cooperating but don't seem to have things quite on track.	Norming	The crew leader monitors how setup is going and **guides** them by suggesting that most of the crew work on setup while a couple of Scouts start on dinner.
Sunday morning begins with an interfaith worship service led by the crew's chaplain aide. At one Scout's suggestion, the Scouts redistribute the crew gear and designate the slowest Scout as the pacesetter for the morning.	Performing	The crew leader continues to monitor the crew but stays more in the background than on the previous day, **enabling** the crew to achieve success.

Here's another example, this one focusing on how leaders would interact with four different patrols as they cook dinner on a campout.

Patrol Situation	Team Stage	Leader Response
The Frog Patrol (the troop's new-Scout patrol) is on its first campout. When the youth were Webelos Scouts, their leader always cooked for them, so they're excited to try their hand at camp cooking for the first time.	Forming	The troop guide **explains** the rules of stove safety and the steps the patrol needs to take to cook its dinner. The troop guide **demonstrates** each step and then **guides** the Scouts as they take over the task. **Enabling** them to succeed on their own will come at a later meal.
The Pioneer Patrol has been camping before but has rarely cooked more than hot dogs and mac-and-cheese. Now that several members are working on the Cooking merit badge, they've decided to get more ambitious by cooking a Dutch-oven stew; but cooperation has given way to frustration and arguments.	Storming	Before things get out of hand, the patrol leader asks the instructor to **demonstrate** the proper way to prepare and use a Dutch oven. The instructor also shows them how to test the beef they're cooking for doneness, and then steps aside. The patrol leader continues to **guide** the group by offering suggestions. Before long, they'll be **enabled** to succeed without help.
The Alligator Patrol is made up of older Scouts who've been working together for several years. They're pretty good cooks but struggle to get everything ready at the right time.	Norming	The patrol leader monitors how the cooks are doing and **guides** them with leading questions, such as "Which course will take longer to cook?" and "Could you put your cobbler on the coals while you enjoy dinner?" They'll soon be **enabled** to succeed.
The Owl Patrol includes the troop's oldest, most experienced Scouts, all of whom are Life or Eagle rank. They enjoy working together and can prepare a gourmet campout meal without assistance or even the need for a duty roster.	Performing	The senior patrol leader stops by occasionally to see how the patrol is doing—but mostly to make sure of getting an invitation to dinner. While sharing the meal with the patrol, the senior patrol leader praises the Scouts' accomplishment, **enabling** them to be even more successful in the future.

CHAPTER 8
Working With Youth Leaders

Volume 1 of the *Troop Leader Guidebook* introduced the concept of youth leadership and discussed the role of youth leaders in the troop. The focus there was primarily on position descriptions and the training continuum for youth leaders. But there's much more to the youth leadership method than tasks and training. Becoming a Scout-led troop is more art than science, and success relies at least as much on what adult leaders do as it does on what youth leaders do.

Becoming Scout-led takes time and patience. Being in charge doesn't feel natural to Scouts who rarely get the opportunity in other areas of their lives. And adults aren't accustomed to yielding authority to kids their own children's age—perhaps especially if those kids are their children.

Evaluating Where You Stand

The troop self-assessment in chapter 2 includes 10 questions related to youth leaders. Although those questions are a good start toward recognizing your troop's strengths and weaknesses, a more in-depth, two-part assessment might be warranted. The goal is not to grade your troop—what would it mean to say you're 75 percent Scout-led?—but to identify barriers to becoming more Scout-led.

This chapter introduces a two-phase assessment to get you started. First, complete the "Assessing Your Youth Leaders" worksheet, which will clarify who the players are and what training they've had. Second, complete the "Youth Leadership in Action" worksheet to gauge how the youth leadership method is working in troop meetings, patrol leaders' council meetings, and troop outings.

Assessing Your Youth Leaders

List your elected and appointed youth leaders below, along with the adults who are assigned to support them. (We've left some blanks at the end in case you have multiple youth leaders holding the same position or more than four patrols.) Write Yes or No in each of the other spaces.

Position	Scout in Position	Adult Advisor	Has Completed ILST	Has Helped Lead ILST	Has Completed NYLT	Has Served on NYLT Staff	Has Completed NAYLE	Has Served on NAYLE Staff
Senior Patrol Leader								
Assistant Senior Patrol Leader								
Patrol Leader								
Patrol Leader								
Patrol Leader								
Patrol Leader								
Troop Guide								
Den Chief								
Historian								
Order of the Arrow Troop Representative								
Librarian								
Quartermaster								
Instructor								
Chaplain Aide								
Outdoor Ethics Guide								
Junior Assistant Scoutmaster								
Scribe								
Troop Guide								
Webmaster								

Youth Leadership in Action

A good way to get a sense of how youth-led your troop is—and where adults may need to adjust their level of involvement—is to evaluate a troop meeting, a patrol leaders' council meeting, and a troop outing. If possible, have someone who is not directly involved in the meeting (perhaps your junior assistant Scoutmaster or your unit commissioner) complete the worksheet.

Troop Meeting

Date _____

Preopening

Grade this part of the meeting on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the best. _____

Why did you assign that grade? _____

Who led this part of the meeting? (This could be more than one person.) _____

If adults led, could Scouts have done the job instead? _____

If Scouts led, how did adults support them so they could be effective? _____

Opening

Grade this part of the meeting on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the best. _____

Why did you assign that grade? _____

Who led this part of the meeting? (This could be more than one person.) _____

If adults led, could Scouts have done the job instead? _____

If Scouts led, how did adults support them so they could be effective? _____

Group instruction

Grade this part of the meeting on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the best. _____

Why did you assign that grade? _____

Who led this part of the meeting? (This could be more than one person.) _____

If adults led, could Scouts have done the job instead? _____

If Scouts led, how did adults support them so they could be effective? _____

Skills instruction

Grade this part of the meeting on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the best. _____

Why did you assign that grade? _____

Who led this part of the meeting? (This could be more than one person.) _____

If adults led, could Scouts have done the job instead? _____

If Scouts led, how did adults support them so they could be effective? _____

Patrol meetings

Grade this part of the meeting on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the best. _____

Why did you assign that grade? _____

Who led this part of the meeting? (This could be more than one person.) _____

If adults led, could Scouts have done the job instead? _____

If Scouts led, how did adults support them so they could be effective? _____

Interpatrol game

Grade this part of the meeting on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the best. _____

Why did you assign that grade? _____

Who led this part of the meeting? (This could be more than one person.) _____

If adults led, could Scouts have done the job instead? _____

If Scouts led, how did adults support them so they could be effective? _____

Closing

Grade this part of the meeting on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the best. _____

Why did you assign that grade? _____

Who led this part of the meeting? (This could be more than one person.) _____

If adults led, could Scouts have done the job instead? _____

If Scouts led, how did adults support them so they could be effective? _____

Patrol Leaders' Council Meeting

Date _____

Grade the meeting on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the best. _____

Why did you assign that grade? _____

Was there a written agenda for the meeting? _____

If so, who prepared it? _____

Did the Scoutmaster and senior patrol leader collaborate ahead of the meeting? _____

How many Scouts were in attendance? _____

How many adults were in attendance? _____

Would the meeting have been as effective if all the adults had been in another room? _____

Who called the meeting to order (or decided when to begin)? _____

Who led the meeting? _____

Who kept the meeting on track? _____

Whom did participants turn to when they had questions? _____

Who took minutes of the meeting? _____

How prepared was the senior patrol leader to lead the meeting? _____

Troop Outing

Date _____

Grade the outing on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the best. _____

Why did you assign that grade? _____

Who selected the activity? _____

Who selected the location? _____

Who made any required reservations? _____

Who assigned campsites to patrols? _____

Who planned the menu? _____

Who shopped for the food? _____

Who cooked the food? _____

At departure, who took roll and decided it was time to set out? _____

Who led activities during the outing? _____

Who kept the outing on schedule? _____

Who decided on any changes to the original plan? _____

Who coordinated campsite cleanup? _____

At the end of the outing, who took roll and decided it was time to return home? _____

Were there areas where adults led too much? Explain. _____

Were there areas where adults provided too little support? Explain. _____

Reading the Results

What does all this information tell you? Let's start with the "Assessing Your Youth Leaders" worksheet. The most important thing it does is highlight gaps in training. You'll quickly see whether you need to schedule ILST or make a special effort to get Scouts to NYLT. You may also discover that you have several Scouts who are ready to move to the next level of training by serving on NYLT staff or attending NAYLE. (Either of those experiences would benefit the troop because those Scouts would return with an even better understanding of leadership concepts.)

If your Scouts can't take NYLT in your own council because of scheduling conflicts or lack of space, check with neighboring councils.

Nearly as important in the chart is the Adult Advisor column. If you end up with a lot of blanks in that column, it's safe to assume your youth leaders are struggling to get by with sporadic support. In fact, they may not have even had someone explain their roles—the first step in the EDGE process.

Without assigned adult advisors, youth leaders can receive conflicting guidance from multiple adults. If you've ever held a job where you answered to more than one person, you know how frustrating that can be.

While the first worksheet will give you hard numbers, the second is more subjective. You won't end up with a simple score for each event. Instead, you will begin to get a sense of where the youth leadership method is working well and where it's not—perhaps because adults are doing too much out-front leading or not enough behind-the-scenes coaching.

Because the "Youth Leadership in Action" worksheet is subjective, consider having several people, both Scouts and adults, complete it independently for the same meetings or outings. You may discover that your youth and adult leaders have starkly different perspectives.

From this evaluation process, you should be able to identify three to five areas of emphasis around which you can develop a plan for improvement. For each area, develop a SMART goal, a goal that is:

S—Specific: Is it specific in targeting an objective?

M—Measurable: What are the measurable indicators of progress or success?

A—Attainable: Is it attainable by someone on the team?

R—Relevant: Does the goal support the troop's project and overall vision? Is it an appropriate goal within the current context of the troop?

T—Time-based: When will the project be completed?

Also for each goal, answer these questions: who, what, when, where, why, and how. (See the example on this page.)

SMART Goal Example

Goal: We will ensure that our senior patrol leader and at least two other youth leaders attend National Youth Leadership Training next summer.

Who: Achieving this goal involves the Scoutmaster, troop committee chair, senior patrol leader, and other youth leaders.

What: Adult leaders will work with youth leaders to ensure that they attend NYLT.

When: Work will occur in the winter and spring so Scouts can attend NYLT over the summer.

Where: Planning will occur at troop and troop committee meetings. NYLT will occur at the local council camp (or at a neighboring council's camp, depending on scheduling constraints and space availability).

Why: NYLT will give the youth leaders the tools they need to be effective in their positions of responsibility.

How: The Scoutmaster will find out when NYLT will be offered locally and will secure commitment of youth leaders to attend. The troop committee chair will work with the troop committee and chartered organization to secure financial support, if needed.

Using EDGE With a Youth Leader

When Scouts accept positions of responsibility, they are agreeing to try something new. They are moving into unknown territory and taking a risk. It falls to the Scoutmaster and other adult leaders to show them the way and then support each of them as they learn what they are supposed to do and gain confidence by doing it.

The EDGE method can help. Here's how a Scoutmaster could use it to work with a new senior patrol leader. Of course, the same principles would apply to any other position.

Explain

Before senior patrol leaders can carry out duties of the role, those duties must be explained. While they have doubtless seen others in that role in action, they probably haven't seen what senior patrol leaders have done behind the scenes to make the troop run effectively.

As described in volume 1 of the *Troop Leader Guidebook,* as soon as a Scout becomes senior patrol leader, they should receive from the Scoutmaster a brief orientation to the position. This process is outlined in more detail in the syllabus for Introduction to Leadership Skills for Troops. Read through this section of the syllabus, and you'll see several paragraphs that begin this way:

"Tell the senior patrol leader ..."

"Express to the Scout that ..."

"Give the senior patrol leader ..."

"Explain the role of ..."

Clearly, this is a time when the Scoutmaster does much of the talking. The goal is to help the senior patrol leader

understand what is expected and how to fulfill those expectations.

Demonstrate

The senior patrol leader has seen the role demonstrated by previous senior patrol leaders—and hopefully by the senior patrol leader at the National Youth Leadership Training course. They could discuss with the Scoutmaster what has been learned from these other Scouts and how those lessons could be applied during their term.

There will also be times that the Scoutmaster can demonstrate leadership techniques. For example, when teaching a skill or presenting a Scoutmaster's Minute, he or she can demonstrate how to control the group. Making the Scout sign and waiting patiently (instead of yelling "Sign's up" or talking over the Scouts) models the right behavior for the senior patrol leader.

Guide

Guiding is an essential element of the Scoutmaster-senior patrol leader relationship. Before each patrol leaders' council meeting, the Scoutmaster should work with the senior patrol leader to craft an agenda. They should also touch base before each troop meeting to make sure the senior patrol leader has the resources needed to be successful. During meetings and activities, the Scoutmaster should observe the senior patrol leader in action and provide whatever support is needed. After meetings and activities, the Scoutmaster should help the senior patrol leader to evaluate the leadership experience while also providing guidance to increase effectiveness.

Enable

As the senior patrol leader's skills and confidence increase, the Scoutmaster's guidance should gradually decrease. To outside observers, in fact, the Scoutmaster's role might seem superfluous.

The Scoutmaster still has important work to do, however. Behind the scenes, he or she can provide the human and physical resources the senior patrol leader needs to be successful. He or she can also protect the senior patrol leader from well-meaning but counterproductive input from other adult leaders and parents. The senior patrol leader should know they have the Scoutmaster's support when having to make unpopular decisions.

Encouragement is a big part of enabling the senior patrol leader to be successful. The Scoutmaster should praise the senior patrol leader's successes, provide support and guidance when things don't go so well, and remind them of the progress made up to that point.

How Adults Can Support Youth Leadership

Every meeting and every outing gives adult leaders the chance to support youth leaders—or to undermine their authority. By following these time-tested principles, you can ensure that you're building up your youth leaders, not inadvertently tearing them down.

- **It's the Scouts' troop.** Instead of thinking of authority as a privilege you give your youth leaders, think of it as a right you can't take away. When you do that, you'll be less likely to pull rank or countermand a decision of the patrol leaders' council. (Situations involving health and safety are an obvious exception.)
- **The buck stops with the Scoutmaster.** The Scoutmaster retains responsibility for the troop, including making sure that BSA policies are followed. Part of that responsibility includes shielding youth leaders from criticism of their decisions.
- **The Scouts' success is your responsibility.** As an adult leader, you should do whatever it takes to make your youth leaders successful. That includes coaching them before meetings and outings and guiding them as they work. For example, there's nothing wrong with quietly reminding the senior patrol leader that the troop meeting should have started five minutes ago or with helping craft an agenda for a patrol leaders' council meeting.
- **The mark of a good leader is the question mark.** Rather than tell your youth leaders what to do, ask them questions that will lead them to a sound decision. If the patrol leaders' council wants to go bungee jumping, ask them if they've checked the *Guide to Safe Scouting* (which prohibits bungee jumping). If they want the troop's first backpacking trip to be an ascent of Denali, ask them what training hikes and money-earning projects they think they would need to plan.
- **Don't sandbag your youth leaders.** Once the patrol leaders' council has made a decision—even if it's to climb Denali—do everything you can to support that decision. Don't sandbag them by failing to pull together the necessary resources.
- **Don't undermine your youth leaders' authority.** When Scouts or parents look to you for decisions, gently redirect them to the appropriate youth leader. For example, if a Scout asks where to pitch a tent, you might ask, "What did your patrol leader say?"
- **Never send an adult to do a Scout's job.** The list of things youth leaders can't do in a troop is pretty short—including such tasks as driving, conducting Scoutmaster conferences and boards of review, and signing applications and other forms. Youth leaders are perfectly capable of greeting visiting Webelos Scout dens, assigning new Scouts to patrols, formulating uniform and electronics policies, and deciding whether to cancel an outing due to bad weather.
- **Model the behavior you expect.** If you want rank-and-file Scouts to respect their youth leader, don't interrupt the senior patrol leader during a troop meeting. Instead, raise your hand and ask permission to speak.
- **Keep your distance.** If adult tents are at the far end of the campsite, Scouts will be more likely to turn to a youth leader when they need help. If few adults are visible in the troop meeting room, youth leaders will be more likely to solve their own problems. (This does not mean that adults should be inaccessible; after all, adult association is a method of Scouting, too.)
- **Praise in public; criticize in private.** This principle should apply in every situation, but it's especially important in the relationship between adult and youth leaders. Public praise demonstrates that the adult leaders support the youth leaders and that both youth and adult leaders are of one mind. Providing criticism in private avoids undermining a Scout's leadership in front of the other Scouts.

Freedom to Fail

Given their inexperience and immaturity, youth leaders are all but certain to fail at tasks both large and small. One of the best gifts adult leaders can give them is the freedom to fail—assuming that that failure is productive and doesn't endanger anyone's health and safety.

Failure is a critical part of learning how to lead. Budding leaders discover what works and what doesn't by making plans and then putting them in motion. The plans will succeed or fail on their own merits and on the adjustments the leaders make along the way. Moving forward despite the risk of failure brings focus and intensity to leadership situations. It instills resilience, flexibility, and responsibility, and brings with it teachable moments when real leadership education can occur.

Unfortunately, adult leaders often refuse to let youth leaders fail. Perhaps they feel overly protective and want to shield their youth leaders from disappointment and criticism. Perhaps they think youth leaders' failure will reflect negatively on themselves. Perhaps they think following a meticulous schedule is more important than imparting critical life lessons. For whatever reason, they either don't let youth leaders lead or they bail them out before things go awry.

A better approach is to do whatever you can to help your youth leaders succeed—and then to help those youth leaders bounce back and learn from their mistakes if they do fail.

Strategies for Keeping Adult Leaders at Bay

One challenge youth-led troops face is adult leaders who can't (or won't) step back and let the Scouts lead. Men and women who are used to being in charge at home or on the job can easily slip into boss mode at a troop meeting.

Even if your adult leaders are all on the same page, mistakes can happen. Here are some strategies that can prevent mistakes—or at least call attention to them so they don't happen again.

Encourage Hands in Pockets

Body language can reveal a person's attitude, but it can also shape his or her attitude. Adult leaders who keep their hands in their pockets when approaching Scouts are less likely to "help" a youth leader by taking over skills instruction or "help" new Scouts by folding their tent for them. The best way for adults to reinforce youth leadership is to answer a Scout's question with, "Ask your patrol leader (or senior patrol leader)."

Create a Code Word

In some troops, adult leaders use a code word to alert each other when they are overstepping. Simply mentioning the phrase in passing can make a leader think about whether or not his or her intervention was appropriate. A good example is CFD, which stands for Confusion, Frustration, and Danger—three situations when increased adult involvement is warranted. You could also simply ask, "Good chaos?" as a reminder that it's sometimes OK to let a chaotic situation continue—assuming there is no danger and youth leaders are learning from the situation.

Youth leaders should know the code as well. And they should feel empowered to use it when needed. Every youth leader should be comfortable saying to an adult, "It's OK; I've got this."

Create an Oops Jar

An oops jar is a fun way for adults to penalize themselves—and reward the Scouts—when they mess up. Put a large jar in a prominent spot in your meeting place and challenge adults who overstep their bounds to deposit a quarter (or a dollar—whatever the market will bear) for each infraction. When the money collected meets a certain threshold, throw a pizza party for the patrol leaders' council.

Parents and Youth Leadership

In terms of making youth leadership work, parents can be your biggest stumbling block—or your biggest advocates. It's critical that they understand the youth leadership method and its impact on troop operations.

Volume 1 of the *Troop Leader Guidebook* discussed the new parent conference. This important meeting introduces parents to the Scouts BSA program and explains how running a troop is different from Cub Scouting. Parents should leave this meeting understanding why the troop is youth-led and how they can support the youth leadership method. (A good way to demonstrate youth leadership is to have the senior patrol leader, junior assistant Scoutmaster, or another youth leader serve as a presenter or even chair the meeting.)

For more information, see the supplemental training module Orientation for New Scout Parents.

But orienting parents when they join the troop is only the start. You also need their buy-in when their children become youth leaders and especially when they take on key roles such as senior patrol leader. If a parent is unwilling to drive his or her Scout to patrol leaders' council meetings or to help pay for National Youth Leadership Training, the Scout will be less successful. A few suggestions:

- Share position descriptions with parents when their children take on leadership roles.
- Invite parents to sit in when you orient new youth leaders to their roles.
- Copy parents on all communications you have with youth leaders. (Per the BSA's social media guidelines, private, one-on-one contact between adults and Scouts is prohibited.)

BSA
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CHAPTER 9
Making the Patrol Method Work

The patrol method is fundamental to Scouting. It's also rare among youth programs. As Robert Baden-Powell wrote in *Aids to Scoutmastership,* "The patrol system is the one essential feature in which Scout training differs from that of all other organizations."

Patrols give Scouts a home base within the larger—sometimes very much larger—troop. They're a setting in which Scouts can build friendships, learn Scouting skills, practice leadership on a small scale, and discover what it means to put the needs of the group ahead of their own interests. Strong patrols are the foundation of strong troops; the larger the troop grows, the more important its patrols become.

Strong patrols don't just happen. It takes a lot of work on the part of adult leaders and Scouts alike to make them successful. We'll offer some guidance in this chapter.

Making the Patrol Method Fail

Before we discuss how to make the patrol method work, it's probably useful to think about how troops inadvertently make it fail. Here are three common mistakes troops make.

Frequently Reorganizing Patrols

In many troops, the default solution to poorly functioning patrols is to do a top-to-bottom reorganization. Some troops even reorganize patrols every year whether or not they're working well. Often, the reorganizations come in such rapid succession that half the members of the troop end up wearing the wrong patrol emblem or can't remember which patrol they're supposed to be in.

While there are times that patrol membership does need to be adjusted, frequent reorganizations are counterproductive for several reasons:

- They destroy whatever level of patrol spirit exists and add uncertainty. (If you've been through a corporate restructuring, you can relate.)
- They send the subtle message that patrols are little more than administrative conveniences, that it really doesn't matter whether a Scout is a Bear or a Frog.
- They trade natural friendships for imposed alliances. (If Scouts aren't spending their free time with their patrol mates, they're probably in the wrong patrols.)
- Most importantly, they ignore the reason the patrols haven't been functioning well in the first place, whether that's inadequate training, the lack of patrol advisors, or some other reason. (This situation is a lot like when people try fad diet after fad diet without reducing their caloric intake or increasing their level of physical activity.)

What's more, these reorganizations are often led by adults, which weakens the authority of the youth leaders. In one breath, the Scoutmaster tells the Scouts that the troop is theirs to run; in the next, he or she decides by fiat who will be in which patrol.

Training courses like National Youth Leadership Training and events like national jamborees do assign Scouts to carefully balanced patrols. (Criteria at NYLT include age similarities, range of Scouting skills and rank, and geographic and cultural diversity.) Keep in mind that these are patrols formed for specific purposes and limited time periods. There's no need to adopt this approach back home.

Circumventing the Patrol Structure

Another common problem is frequently circumventing the patrol structure for reasons of convenience. This is perhaps most evident in campout cooking. In the interest of time, the patrol leaders' council—or the adult leaders—might decide that the whole troop will cook and eat together instead of by patrols. Or, several patrols that are below strength on a campout might be combined for cooking purposes.

Does it take more time for four patrols to cook breakfast than for a couple of adults to do it? Yes. Is it hard for a patrol of three Scouts to handle a complex menu? Of course. But remember that ease and efficiency are not among the aims of Scouting. Will forcing a patrol of older Scouts to cook the same simple menu as the younger Scouts enhance the older Scouts' skills? No.

It's also easy—but inadvisable—to mix up Scouts when it's time to play a game during a troop meeting. A smaller patrol may struggle (or its members might have to go twice during a relay race), but they'll have an incentive to get their missing patrol mates to the next meeting.

Going Around the Patrol Leader

Patrol leaders are often in a tenuous position. They're leading their peers (which is always a challenge), they probably have little leadership experience, and they may not have even completed training yet. When those above or below them in the troop structure go around them, their authority is further weakened.

This problem can take many forms. An adult can take over a patrol meeting and lead it like a Cub Scout den meeting. A Scout can go directly to the senior patrol leader or an adult with questions their patrol leader should be able to answer. The troop can have Scouts sign up individually for outings rather than have patrol leaders report attendance. While

there's no need in Scouting for strict chains of command, there is a need to avoid end runs around the patrol leader.

The Patrol Advisor

A great way to make the patrol method work is to assign a patrol advisor to each patrol. This is an assistant Scoutmaster (or perhaps a parent) whose primary role is to advise and support the patrol leader. For position descriptions, see volume 1, chapter 15; look for the assistant Scoutmaster for the new-Scout patrol, the assistant Scoutmaster for traditional patrols, and the assistant Scoutmaster for the older-Scout patrol.

Here are some specific things the patrol advisor can do to support the patrol:

- Attend all patrol meetings (both those held during troop meetings and those held separately) and all patrol outings. His or her presence alone can help with crowd control.
- Meet with the patrol leader before each patrol meeting—keeping in mind Youth Protection policies—to help develop an agenda.
- Meet with the patrol leader after each patrol meeting to help evaluate how the meeting went.
- Help the patrol leader prepare for patrol leaders' council meetings.
- In between troop meetings, remind the patrol leader of any assignments the patrol has received at patrol leaders' council meetings.
- Periodically help the patrol leader evaluate their own performance. Depending on the troop, the patrol advisor may be responsible for signing off on the patrol leader's leadership requirements for Star, Life, and Eagle.
- Encourage the patrol leader to assign leadership roles to patrol members (as described in volume 1, chapter 3) and to monitor Scouts' performance of their duties.
- Encourage the patrol to schedule patrol outings beyond troop outings and help secure needed resources.
- Promote participation in Introduction to Leadership Skills for Troops and National Youth Leadership Training.
- Encourage the patrol to pursue the National Honor Patrol Award.
- Encourage the patrol to set goals, such as reaching a certain membership level, having all members advance within six months, or building a new patrol box.
- Report back to the Scoutmaster or other adult leaders about additional support the patrol needs.

The patrol advisor can also support individual patrol members. The patrol advisor should:

- Monitor Scouts' attendance and encourage the patrol leader to follow up if a Scout misses several meetings in a row.
- Monitor Scouts' advancement and encourage the patrol leader to provide support (or to ask a youth instructor to provide support) if a Scout is stuck.
- Be aware of situations in Scouts' families (financial difficulties, for example) where the troop could provide support.

As your troop grows, the role of the patrol advisor becomes increasingly important. In a large troop, it can be easy for an individual Scout to fall through the cracks. Moreover, patrols in large troops often function independently, making the patrol advisor effectively the Scoutmaster of the patrol.

Honor Patrol Programs

Volume 1, chapter 3 introduced the National Honor Patrol Award, which any patrol can earn over a three-month period. This award is represented by an embroidered gold star that members wear beneath their patrol emblems.

Many troops also create their own homegrown honor patrol programs to recognize the patrol of the month. Such programs don't replace the National Honor Patrol Award; instead, they complement it by adding competition and allowing the troop to focus on areas of emphasis that the National Honor Patrol Award might not address.

The concept is fairly simple: The patrol leaders' council sets point totals for measurable achievements, such as advancement and attendance. Points are tallied after each troop meeting and outing during the month, and the winning patrol is recognized at the beginning of the next month. The prize could be a ribbon the patrol gets to display on its patrol flag or a star that is ironed onto its flag. Every six months, you could throw a pizza party for the patrol that has won the most times.

Here's a sample set of criteria:

- 10 points for each rank advancement
- 10 points for each new Eagle Palm
- 5 points for each merit badge
- 2 points for each member at a troop meeting; 5 points if in full uniform
- 3 points for each official representative at a patrol leaders' council meeting
- 5 points for each member at a troop campout, service project, or other activity
- 10 points for conducting a special patrol activity (hike, campout, service project, etc.)
- 2 points for winning the game at a meeting
- 5 points for winning a major patrol competition (cook-off, etc.)
- 5 points for each prospective Scout who attends a meeting or outing
- 15 points for each new Scout who is recruited and registered

As you can imagine, adjusting the point totals would help you emphasize areas where the troop needs to improve.

A good variation on the honor patrol idea is to run a shorter-term contest using these or other criteria. Give a prize to the first patrol to reach a given number of points.

Patrol Meetings

Like any organization, the patrol must meet regularly if it is to function well. Patrol meetings are a time for Scouts to learn new skills, plan future activities, and have fun with friends. Business items include taking attendance, collecting dues, planning the patrol's involvement in upcoming troop activities, selecting menus for hikes and campouts, assigning patrol members to specific tasks, and working out any other details for the smooth operation of the patrol. Depending on how much business the patrols must handle, typical patrol meetings can vary in length from five to 20 minutes or more.

Patrol meetings may be held at any time and any place. Here are some options:

- A portion of most troop meetings can be set aside for patrols to meet separately, often in the same room as the troop meeting. (This is sometimes called patrol corners.)
- Patrols with members who are less experienced may want to meet more frequently when preparing for upcoming events than patrols with lots of experience in a particular activity.
- A patrol may meet at the home of a patrol member on an evening other than that devoted to the troop meeting.
- Patrols can hold meetings during troop campouts and other outings, especially if there are unexpected developments to address.

In many troops, patrol meetings that occur during troop meetings are a waste of time. Scouts are sent to their patrol areas with only vague instructions and spend the time accomplishing little. To avoid this, the patrol advisor should work with the patrol leader to develop an agenda, as shown below. In addition, the troop meeting agenda should include action items for patrol meetings, such as planning menus or practicing skills for the interpatrol game.

The Patrol Meeting Agenda

1. Opening—This can be a call to order or a simple ceremony.
   - Scribe takes roll.
   - Scribe reads the log of the last meeting.
   - Patrol leader announces the purpose of the current meeting.
   - Assistant patrol leader reviews advancement by patrol members.
2. Business—Items of business may include one or more of the following:
   - Plan for upcoming activities and make assignments.
   - Address new business.
   - Present the patrol leader's report on the patrol leaders' council meeting.
   - Check and repair camping equipment.
   - Vote on issues that need to be decided.
   - Build patrol spirit (yell, song, flag, logo).
3. Skill activity—Practice a Scouting skill that will be needed in the future.
4. Game—Play a Scouting game. It may be selected from the troop's program resources.
5. Closing—Use a brief closing thought by the patrol leader or another member of the patrol to end the meeting and remind Scouts of the importance of what they are doing.

To really give your patrols room to operate, consider designating one troop meeting night per month for patrol meetings. Or, if a month includes five Mondays (or whichever night your troop meets), set aside the fifth Monday for patrol meetings.

Patrol Activities

As described in volume 1, chapter 3, patrols can undertake their own activities if they follow these guidelines:

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

Patrol activities are a great way to do things that only interest the members of one patrol or that aren't feasible for a larger group. A new-Scout patrol might plan a campout that focuses on basic skills, for example, while an older-Scout patrol might undertake an ambitious backpacking trip.

Service projects and advancement activities can also work well on the patrol level. For example, a Scout working on an Eagle project might recruit patrol mates to participate, or a patrol could work on a merit badge together. (Although each Scout must complete all requirements individually, many merit badges lend themselves well to group learning.)

To encourage patrol activities, the troop could designate certain weekends for them during the annual planning conference. Patrols could be challenged to conduct a certain number of activities during the year, and doing so could help them earn the troop's honor patrol award.

Building Patrol Spirit

The most successful patrols have a strong sense of identity and view other patrols as friendly rivals. They wear their patrol emblems proudly, carry their patrol flags everywhere, and emblazon their logos on T-shirts, patrol boxes, and other patrol gear. They create a patrol cheer like your Wood Badge patrol did.

If your troop has never had strong patrols, you may need to help Scouts understand what patrol spirit looks like. They see teams all the time—sports teams, "tribes" on reality-TV shows, the houses in the *Harry Potter* movies, etc.—so it should be easy to solicit ideas of how those teams identify themselves and differentiate themselves from other teams.

To earn the Scout rank, a Scout must be familiar with their patrol's name, emblem, flag, and yell. Those elements are the starting point for building patrol spirit.

Patrol Name

Patrol spirit starts with a name that the members select for themselves and that fits their personalities or the image they'd like to project. Unless the name is offensive, it

shouldn't be vetoed—and certainly not by the Scoutmaster. (You may prefer Foxes and Bears over Aliens and Zombies, but your Scouts probably don't.)

The patrol names for which you can buy stock patrol emblems are mostly one word: Fox, Ninja, Scorpion, Bulldog, etc. But patrols don't have to limit themselves to those names. Instead of being the plain-vanilla Fox Patrol, a patrol might choose to be the Red Foxes or the Wily Foxes. Instead of being the Bulldog Patrol, a patrol choosing that patch might become the Junkyard Dogs or the Big Dawgs.

Patrol Emblem

Patrols will typically choose a stock patrol emblem—the simplest option—although some purchase blank patrol emblems and create their own. In the latter case, be sure the patrol makes extra emblems to allow for future growth and lost uniforms, and be sure the design complies with the teachings of the Scout Law.

Each member of the patrol should wear a patrol emblem, of course, but the emblem can appear other places as well, such as on patrol equipment. A patrol can also enhance its identity by creating a logo that incorporates the patrol emblem and other elements, such as the troop number and city. A good way to generate logo ideas is to do an internet search using a phrase like "wolf logo image." While the logos you'll find are protected by trademark and can't be used, they can suggest ideas a patrol could incorporate in its own logo. If you have Scouts or parents who are artists, they could turn a patrol's rough ideas into a polished design. Some T-shirt companies have in-house artists who can do the same thing when you order T-shirts.

Patrol Flag

A flag gives a patrol something to rally around and a place to show off the ribbons it has won at camporees and other events. Scouts should make flags that are durable and easy to carry on outings. Patrols sometimes enhance their flags with the Scouts' names. (If there's not a lot of space, the Scouts' names could be written on leather strips that hang from the flagpole.)

Patrol flags can be incorporated into campsite gateways and used at troop ceremonies. Consider building simple flag stands that can be placed where patrols line up at troop meetings. Such stands will encourage patrols to bring their flags along since they'll have a place to put them.

Patrol flags come in all shapes, sizes, and designs. Only three rules should govern their design and creation. First, all the members of the patrol should be involved in the process; the patrol leader's mom might be able to make a better flag, but that's not the point of the exercise. Second, the flag's design and construction should be practical. Third, the design must comply with the Scout Law. Flags that are too heavy or bulky to carry or that are made with materials that can't stand up to bad weather are unlikely to be used.

Patrol Yell

A patrol yell could be as simple as a single word or as complex as a call-and-response cadence chant. The spontaneous cheers sports fans begin when their teams are winning are a good example of what a patrol yell could sound like.

Like the patrol flag, the patrol yell should be used regularly, not created and forgotten. For example, the senior patrol leader could ask the patrol that wins the interpatrol game at a troop meeting to share its yell.

Other Elements of Patrol Spirit

Patrols should be encouraged to think of other ways to build patrol spirit. Here are a few ideas:

- Patrols could be encouraged to purchase their own gear, supplementing the basic gear the troop provides.
- Each patrol could have its own page on the troop website to post pictures and information about patrol activities.
- If you have exclusive use of your meeting place, each patrol could decorate its room or corner.
- Patrols could establish traditions, such as a special meal they prepare on every campout.
- Patrols could design their own T-shirts to wear as part of the activity uniform or on patrol outings.

Activities like these build patrol spirit because they encourage patrol members to work together, to use their resources, and to wrestle with what's important to them. They help your patrols go from being mere administrative conveniences to strong groups of friends who will stay together long after their time in Scouting ends.

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THE POWER OF PROGRAM AND HIGH ADVENTURE

No 11-year-old joins Scouting for character development. And few of them join to attend troop meetings, wear the Scout uniform, or sit before boards of review. Instead, they sign up for fun and adventure. As Scouting founder Robert Baden-Powell wrote, "Camp is the boy's Elysium and the Scoutmaster's opportunity."

Elysium—paradise—is a high standard, but it's one all Scouters should strive for. In this section, we'll discuss ways to make meetings and outings as appealing as possible while providing an effective setting in which we can teach the values and skills of Scouting.

CHAPTER 10
Extraordinary Everyday Programs

Every year, more than 50,000 Scouts and leaders visit one of the BSA's four national high-adventure bases. Every four years, more than 30,000 Scouts and leaders gather for the National Scout Jamboree. Those are impressive numbers—until you remember that there are more than 800,000 11- to 17-year-old Scouts in the BSA. In other words, nine out of 10 Scouts won't enjoy one of those signature events this year.

That doesn't mean that 90 percent of Scouts must have ordinary experiences, however. With careful planning and a dash of creative thinking, you can create extraordinary everyday programs in your troop. And it's those great everyday programs that will engage and excite your Scouts and encourage them to remain active until they turn 18 and have acquired all the skills and values Scouting promises. That's what this chapter is all about.

A troop program doesn't have to be exotic or expensive to be effective. Give Scouts a chance to decide what they want to do; then allow them to assume leadership for preparing for adventures and then carrying them out, and much of the rest of Scouting will fall into place.

Troop Meetings

College basketball coaches often worry about trap games—those contests their teams should win without breaking a sweat but sometimes lose because they put forth no effort. It's easy to get players excited about a championship game, a matchup against an in-state rival, or an appearance on national television; it's much harder to get them excited about a midweek game against a no-name opponent on a cold Tuesday night in January.

Troop meetings are Scouting's trap games. Because they happen every week and usually lack the excitement of outings, troop leaders (youth and adult alike) don't necessarily bring their A game to every meeting. They should, however, because boring, poorly planned meetings turn away Scouts and lead to less-effective outings. In fact, a single meeting might convince a wavering Scout to remain in your troop or to move on to some other activity.

Maintaining Balance: Meeting Parts

As described in volume 1 of the *Troop Leader Guidebook* and in *Program Features for Troops and Crews*, most troop meetings should include eight parts:

- Preopening
- Opening
- Group instruction
- Skills instruction
- Patrol meetings
- Game
- Closing
- After the meeting

Including all eight parts can bring a host of benefits.

- Every Scout should find something of interest during the meeting, whether it is enjoying physical activity, learning new skills, hanging out with other patrol members, or participating in inspiring ceremonies.
- Each part is short enough that no one should get bored—and manageable enough that the youth leader in charge won't feel overwhelmed.
- Scouts have plenty of opportunities to get up and move around. They don't feel trapped in a classroom like they may in school.
- If one part of the meeting bombs, it's easy to move on to something more interesting or better planned.
- There are more opportunities for youth leaders to run parts of the meeting.

Maintaining Balance: Age Groups

Another way to think about balance is to consider how effectively a meeting addresses the needs and interests of new Scouts, experienced Scouts, and older Scouts. A meeting that skews too much toward new Scouts will be boring to older Scouts who have learned to tie the basic Scout knots seemingly dozens of times. A meeting that skews too much toward older Scouts won't teach the basic skills new Scouts need to know.

Every Scout is different, of course, but consider these simple profiles of the three age groups.

For more detailed information on the stages of adolescent development, see chapter 12 of the *Troop Leader Guidebook,* volume 1.

New Scouts

New Scouts are still mastering basic Scouting skills and working toward the First Class rank. (The BSA recommends that Scouts reach First Class within the first 12 to 18 months.) While they may have been camping before, they still need help knowing what and how to pack, and their patrols need lots of help developing menus, shopping lists, and duty rosters.

For new Scouts, everything is a new experience. That can be good, in that even the stalest activity can seem fresh. It can

also be bad, in that they don't understand things older Scouts take for granted, such as sign-up deadlines for outings.

New Scouts have more energy than attention span. They need to be moving and doing, not sitting and listening.

New Scouts spend much of their time in the new-Scout patrol under the supervision of an assigned troop guide and the assistant Scoutmaster. They probably haven't yet made friends with many members of other patrols. They need opportunities to interact with other Scouts so that the new-Scout patrol doesn't become a troop within a troop.

Experienced Scouts

Experienced Scouts are the sandwich generation; they are no longer new Scouts, but they haven't earned the status enjoyed by older Scouts. They have probably been in the troop for a year or two and have probably reached First Class rank. They've mastered basic Scouting skills and understand how the troop operates.

Because they're now pursuing higher ranks, advancement work at troop meetings is less important to them unless it relates to merit badges. A session before a troop meeting on a specific merit badge might be attractive, but you'll need to give them a reason to remain engaged if you teach bandage-making yet again. (The reason could be that they're teaching the skill or that they'll need the skill in a patrol competition or disaster simulation.)

To keep basic skills fresh, add a twist. Teach Scouts a different way to apply a bandage, challenge them to tie knots blindfolded, or turn skills practice into a competition.

Having been camping several times, these Scouts know how to camp. They also know how to take shortcuts. They can plan a whole campout's menu in the time it takes the new-Scout patrol to plan one meal. However, what they plan may be less ambitious than what the new Scouts plan. It is important to challenge experienced Scouts to try new things. Learning how to think outside the box is a valuable skill for them to learn.

Many experienced Scouts will be serving in positions of responsibility. At troop meetings, they may need to split their time between working on advancement, teaching skills, and huddling with their adult counterparts. A quartermaster who is busy checking out camping equipment may miss big chunks of the troop meeting.

Older Scouts

Older Scouts are the veterans of the troop. After four or more years in Scouts BSA, they've done pretty much everything the troop has to offer—sometimes several times. They need new challenges to keep them motivated, whether that's high adventure, opportunities for real leadership, or pursuit of the Eagle Scout rank or awards like the 50-Miler. Of course, when older Scouts are already Eagle Scouts or have advanced as far as they plan to, you'll need to use tools other than badges—like introducing them to advanced skills, for example—to motivate them.

Section 5 offers more information on keeping older Scouts involved.

Like the new Scouts at the other end of the age spectrum, older Scouts have more in common with each other than they do with the rest of the troop. Many see the age gulf between themselves and the "little kids" as insurmountable and are content to hang out in a patrol room with friends they only get to see at Scout meetings.

While older Scouts have mastered basic skills that they can use in instructing others, they will soon lose interest if all they do is teach younger Scouts. They need activities that challenge them. Using outside consultants is a great tool to keep their interest and help them learn advanced skills.

Many older Scouts have part-time jobs or are involved in sports, band, and various social activities. They're less able to attend outings, so time spent preparing for outings during the troop meeting may not interest them. Similarly, the advancement help they need at this stage is more personalized; even group merit badge work will be of relatively little interest. Their advancement needs may take on a sense of urgency as well, as in the case of the 17-year-old Life Scout who is making a last-ditch effort to complete the Eagle Scout requirements.

The key to actively involving older Scouts is to focus on their interests. Though it might sound simple, there is no better way to find out what those interests are than asking them. When a meeting or outing involves something they want to do, they will be more likely to attend.

It can be tempting to compel Scouts who aren't going on an outing to help pack gear or plan menus. Keep in mind, however, that they won't be around to suffer the consequences if key equipment or ingredients get left behind.

With the needs and interests of the three age groups in mind, you can easily see how effective any given troop meeting is likely to be. Working with your senior patrol leader and PLC, review each part of the meeting plan and think about how it meets the needs and interests of each group. The worksheet on the following page will get you started. If your troop uses the *Program Features for Troops and Crews,* each program feature has ideas to make each outing or activity achievable and interesting for each of the three types of patrols we have been discussing.

Troop Meeting Evaluation

How Well Does This Part Meet the Needs of . . .

Meeting Part	Planned Activity or Activities	. . . New Scouts?	. . . Experienced Scouts?	. . . Older Scouts?
Preopening				
Opening				
Group Instruction				
Skills Instruction				
Patrol Meetings				
Game				
Closing				
After the Meeting				

What if you see a gap? You have several options:

- The senior patrol leader could talk with the youth leader in charge of that part of the meeting to discuss ways of broadening the scope of what is planned.
- The patrol leaders' council could plan a separate activity for that part of the meeting to meet the needs of neglected age groups.
- Adult leaders could plan to work with their youth counterparts during that part of the meeting.
- The Scoutmaster could schedule Scoutmaster conferences during that part of the meeting.
- The troop guide and the assistant Scoutmaster for the new-Scout patrol could work separately with their Scouts during that part of the meeting.

It's easy to evaluate troop meetings based on how well they follow the PLC's plan. It's harder—and far more important—to evaluate them based on how well they achieve the aims of Scouting.

This may sound like a laborious process, and perhaps it is. The good news is that by going through the process a few times, you will teach the PLC to plan meetings that meet the needs of every Scout in the troop every week. You may also discover your troop's tendency to unconsciously cater to the needs of some Scouts to the exclusion of others.

Maintaining Balance: The Methods of Scouting

A third way to think about balance is to consider how many methods of Scouting a meeting uses. If the meeting is skewed too much toward one or two methods or ignores several methods altogether, it probably isn't as effective as it could be.

For an even more focused evaluation, think about an individual Scout—perhaps the Life Scout who only shows up once a month or the First Class Scout who is serving for the first time in a troop-level position of responsibility. How will the meeting you're evaluating meet the needs of this Scout?

Here are some ways a troop meeting could use each method:

- **Adult Association:** Scoutmaster conferences, youth leaders working with their adult advisors, PLC huddles, informal interaction during downtime
- **Advancement:** Opportunities to complete advancement requirements during the meeting, recognition during the closing of Scouts who have advanced, merit badge sessions before the meeting, promotion of specific merit badges by visiting merit badge counselors, Scoutmaster conferences, boards of review
- **Ideals:** Reciting the Scout Oath and Scout Law during the opening, Scoutmaster's Minute during the closing
- **Leadership Development:** Youth leaders running the meeting with minimal adult involvement, adult leaders

coaching their youth counterparts, youth leaders such as the quartermaster working in their functional areas

- **Outdoors:** Activities that take the meeting outside, preparation for outings, teaching and practicing outdoor skills, making or repairing camping equipment
- **Patrol Method:** Patrol meetings/patrol corners, patrol responsibility for ceremonies or meeting room setup/cleanup, interpatrol competitions
- **Personal Growth:** Scoutmaster conferences, service opportunities, promotion of the religious emblems program
- **Uniform:** Scouts and leaders attending the meeting in uniform, occasional uniform inspections, distribution of patrol patches and badges of office

Adding Life to Your Troop Meetings

If your troop meetings begin to feel dull and repetitive, it's time to shake them up a bit. That doesn't necessarily mean a radical departure from the meeting structure that has worked successfully for decades. It does mean finding ways to ramp up the interest and excitement.

Take the opening ceremony, for example. If your troop does the same ceremony every week—say a flag presentation followed by the Scout Oath and Scout Law—your Scouts (and adult leaders) are probably just going through the motions. Here are some ways to enliven that basic ceremony:

- **Go outside.** Raise the flag outside your meeting place, either on a permanent flagpole in front of your meeting place or on a flagpole your Scouts lash together.
- **Involve the experts.** Invite students in Junior ROTC or representatives from a local veterans group to handle the presentation of the colors.
- **Include a dramatic reading.** After the Pledge of Allegiance, have a Scout read a patriotic poem.
- **Add music.** Sing the national anthem or "God Bless America," accompanied by an ad hoc band made up of Scout musicians, or have an ensemble of Scouts who are good singers perform. Play patriotic music, such as a march by John Philip Sousa, as Scouts assemble.
- **Develop an honor guard.** Form a specially trained group of Scouts to handle flag presentations.
- **Go international.** In addition to reciting the Scout Oath and Scout Law, have a Scout share the Scout Oath and Scout Law from another country—in both English and the original language if possible. (An internet search will turn up plenty of examples.)
- **Add meaning.** After repeating the Scout Oath and Scout Law, have Scouts explain, in their own words, the meaning of both. Light candles for each part of the Scout Oath (duty to God and country, duty to others, and duty to self) and for each point of the Scout Law.

Honor-guard members may wear the Honor Guard patch, No. 621029, on their right uniform sleeves, below the patrol patch or Journey to Excellence patch. Note that honor-guard service doesn't count as a position of responsibility for advancement purposes.

Doing things like these won't make the opening much longer, but they can make it much more meaningful. Even when you go back to your standard opening ceremony, Scouts are likely to pay a little more attention.

You can make similar tweaks to every other part of the troop meeting. Here are some ideas to get you started:

- **Meet outside.** Whenever possible, hold your meetings outside, either on your chartered organization's lawn or at a nearby park. The meetings will feel less like school, and it will be easier to teach outdoor skills.
- **Use consultants.** Venturing uses consultants to teach many skills, but you can do the same in your troop. Check with local outdoor retailers, schoolteachers, merit badge counselors, and leaders from other troops who have special expertise. Besides offering expertise, consultants free the troop's leaders to work in other areas.
- **Use technology.** Today's Scouts are digital natives. Show internet videos to introduce skills or get Scouts excited about an upcoming outing destination. Encourage Scouts to use their smartphones to look up new camping recipes. Have Scouts track their advancement status online during patrol meetings.
- **Tweak the schedule.** Adjust the meeting schedule as needed. There may be times when you'll want to play a longer game—or even two games—or skip skills instruction. On the other hand, a guest presenter might need more than 15 or 20 minutes. Make meeting plans work for the troop, not the other way around.
- **Add food.** Every Scout likes to eat. Have samples of new camping recipes available as Scouts arrive, or start the meeting with a potluck Dutch-oven dinner.
- **Provide resources.** Elements like games can get repetitive when PLC members don't know where to go for new ideas. Assemble a resource library of helpful internet bookmarks. Encourage the PLC to visit www.programresources.org for ideas for games, ceremonies, and more.

Phone Calls, Emails, Huddles, and Evaluations

The best-laid plans of your patrol leaders' council can easily fall apart between the monthly PLC meeting and the next troop meeting. Adult leaders can play a key role in ensuring that good plans lead to great troop meetings.

You'll probably develop your own methods for keeping planning on track, but three activities can help.

- **Phone calls and emails.** A few days before each troop meeting, the senior patrol leader and Scoutmaster (or assistant Scoutmaster for program) should touch base by phone or email to review the meeting plan. The senior patrol leader should also touch base with the patrol leaders and other youth leaders who are in charge of each part of the meeting. If any adult leader is providing guidance to a youth leader, he or she should also follow up to review plans. These conversations give you a little extra time to head off any problems, such as when a youth leader forgets to recruit a guest instructor or when the weather forecast threatens to make an outdoor cooking demonstration difficult. (Be sure to follow BSA Youth Protection policies that apply to communications.)

- **PLC huddles.** Before each troop meeting, the PLC should hold a brief huddle to review the meeting plan. If the Scout in charge of the game is home with the flu, it's better to learn that before the meeting starts than when it's time for the game.
- **Evaluations.** The PLC or the Scoutmaster and senior patrol leader should meet briefly right after the troop meeting to evaluate the meeting using the Start-Stop-Continue model. This is also a good time to review assignments for the next meeting.

How involved should adult leaders be in leading troop meetings? Ideally, most of their work should occur behind the scenes. Keep in mind, however, that youth leadership is just one of the eight methods of Scouting. Your troop meetings should be run by the Scouts—not run into the ground by them!

Meetings in a Box

Unless your PLC functions at a very high level, at least the occasional troop meeting will go off the rails. When that happens, your default reaction might be to spend the evening cleaning out patrol boxes or to have a game night. While games are fun and your patrol boxes probably do need some serious scrubbing, you could make a wasted night more productive by planning ahead. Work with your senior patrol leader to develop a few meeting plans that could be carried out at a moment's notice. Depending on the plans, you could even assemble any needed supplies in a box that you could pull out if the need arises.

Here are bare-bones examples of seven such emergency meeting plans.

Emergency Meeting #1: Supermarket Smorgasbord

Take the Scouts to a nearby grocery store. Give each patrol $15 in cash—adjust the amount based on patrol size and local store prices—to plan as complete a camp dinner as possible. (For an added challenge, specify the type of cuisine, such as Mexican or Italian.) Back at your meeting location, fire up your camp stoves and have the patrols cook the meals they planned. While the cooks monitor the stoves, other Scouts play a simple pickup game like Four Square. Have the senior patrol leader and assistant senior patrol leader judge what the patrols have cooked and award a prize to the best patrol; this could be a cake or other treat picked up during the shopping trip. End the meeting by having the patrols share the food they've prepared with each other.

Emergency Meeting #2: Neighborhood Observation Test

Observation skills have long been an important part of Scouting. Robert Baden-Powell introduced Kim's Game, where Scouts had to remember a series of two dozen or so common items after observing them for a minute. This meeting plan turns Kim's Game into a hike.

Take the troop on a 45-minute hike in the neighborhood around your meeting place. (To make sure you get back in time, hike for 20 minutes, stop for a break, then retrace your steps back to your meeting place.) A youth leader on the hike carries a notebook and writes down 20 or so questions that the Scouts should be able to answer when they return. For example:

- What brand of gas is sold at the convenience store on the corner?
- Do addresses on the west side of Main Street have odd numbers or even numbers?
- Was the American flag flying at the middle school?
- What direction does Elm Street run?
- What are the five closest streets to the meeting place in order?
- What is the full name of the elementary school at the top of the hill?
- What are the three restaurants in the strip mall anchored by the grocery store?
- Were the garage doors at the fire station open or closed?
- What color was the Corvette that passed as we returned to the meeting place?

Back at your meeting place, hold a quiz-show–style competition to see which patrol was most observant.

Emergency Meeting #3: Advancement Checkup

This meeting requires a little prior planning to be as effective as possible, although it could be run on the spur of the moment if necessary. Equip adult leaders with paper, pens, and copies of the *Scouts BSA Requirements* book. (They could also use their smartphones or tablets to access advancement requirements on the BSA website.) After the opening, have Scouts meet with adults individually or as patrols, depending on your ratio of Scouts to adults, to review their advancement status. Each Scout should write a list of steps needed to complete the next rank and/or to complete any merit badges they have begun. Challenge each Scout to set a date for accomplishing their plan.

Work with Scouts to identify merit badge counselors or other resource people. Share notes with the PLC on how upcoming meetings and outings could help Scouts achieve their goals, such as planning a five-mile hike during the next campout.

During the second half of the meeting, play a wide game like Capture the Flag.

Emergency Meeting #4: Troop Olympics

Using older youth leaders supported by adult leaders, set up stations around your meeting place where Scouts can test their fitness. Include the exercises required for Tenderfoot (push-ups, sit-ups or curl-ups, modified stretch-and-sit, and 1-mile walk/run), as well as others listed in the *Personal Fitness* merit badge pamphlet. Have the leader at each station record the Scouts' results; announce the best result for each exercise during the closing.

For variety, include two-person fitness games like arm wrestling. *Troop Program Resources* includes several such games. You could even do simple single-elimination tournaments for some of these games.

See chapter 12 for more ways to incorporate fitness into your troop meetings and outings.

Emergency Meeting #5: Indoor Campfire Program

Plan and hold a troop campfire program at your meeting place. (A roaring fire is optional.) Give each patrol 15 minutes to plan and practice a skit, a song, and a cheer. They should report each element as their planning progresses so that the senior patrol leader can put together the order of acts. After the planning is done, get the troop together and enjoy 45 minutes or so of fun.

You could also include improvisational sketches: When a patrol comes on stage, assign it a location, several characters (real or fictional), and a couple of props that must be used and have it improvise a skit.

While the program is progressing, send a couple of adults to the grocery store to pick up some treats. If you have access to a microwave oven, you could even make microwave s'mores.

Emergency Meeting #6: Photo Scavenger Hunt

Make sure each patrol has a smartphone or digital camera. Give each patrol a list of 15 to 20 items to photograph at your meeting place or in your neighborhood before a given deadline. The items on the list can be concrete—an out-of-state license plate, an American flag, a pine tree, a house with a blue door, a stop sign, etc.—or conceptual—patriotism, pattern, cold, solitude, tall, age, etc.

When the patrols return, have the senior patrol leader judge the pictures to determine a winner in each category. Or, if you have the technological capability, project the photos on a screen and let the whole troop vote. (If all the cameras use SD memory cards, you could easily transfer them to a laptop computer.)

Emergency Meeting #7: Meeting Place Scavenger Hunt

Before the meeting, develop a list of items Scouts should learn about your meeting place by using observation and Scout skills. Here are some examples:

- How tall is the flagpole in front of the building?
- How wide is the front of the building?
- What is the square footage of the building?
- How many exterior doors does the building have?
- What species of trees grow on the front lawn?
- What is the compass heading from the traffic light at the corner to the front door?
- What year was the building constructed? (This question assumes there's a cornerstone.)
- Who is the senior pastor (or other chartered organization leader, depending on where you meet)?
- Where are the building's first-aid kits and automated external defibrillators located?
- What needed service projects do you see around the building?

Have Scouts guess the answers first; then send them out in pairs to determine the correct answers.

For more ideas of things to look for, see the BSA's Meeting Place Inspection Checklist and the home safety checklist in the *Safety* merit badge pamphlet.

If the meeting generates ideas for service projects, be sure to schedule them. With some advanced planning, you could even incorporate simple service projects into the meeting.

Troop Outings

Troop outings feature the same cast of characters as troop meetings and use the same methods to achieve the same aims. But outings are different from meetings in ways that go far beyond length and location. For example, downtime at meetings can lead to boredom and mischief, but downtime on outings can give Scouts the chance to hang out with their friends, explore nature, and simply enjoy a break from busyness. Such breaks are important since many youth today are constantly being coached, tested, or hurried to their next activity.

While some outings may require strict schedules, consider planning some outings that are more laid-back. Ask yourself if it really matters whether your Scouts get breakfast cooked before noon on Saturday.

That said, outings can still begin to feel ordinary. Too many trips to the same campground, too many hikes down the same trail, and too many weekends with the same menus can send Scouts elsewhere in search of novelty.

Meeting Needs and Using Scouting Methods

The first step in making your outings extraordinary is to ensure that they, like troop meetings, meet the needs of a range of Scouts. New Scouts, experienced Scouts, and older Scouts should all have the opportunity to learn, to grow, and to experience something new during the course of each outing. (See "Maintaining Balance: Age Groups" earlier in this chapter for more information.)

How that looks from one month to the next will vary greatly. If you're doing a float trip or working on a skill that's new to everyone, there may be little difference in what different age groups do. If you're working on skills you've covered before,

each group may do somewhat different activities. For example, new Scouts could learn basic lashings, experienced Scouts could build trestles and test them in chariot races, and older Scouts could build a monkey bridge the whole troop could enjoy later in the weekend. There may also be months when patrols do their own activities on different weekends or at different locations.

Meeting the needs of all your Scouts also requires taking into account the whole of your Scouts' lives. For example, fall outings can be a problem for older Scouts who play high school sports or are in the band. If you want them to participate, you may need to make arrangements for them to arrive in camp on Saturday morning.

Also, as with troop meetings, outings should use the methods of Scouting. Here are some ways a troop outing could use each method:

- **Adult Association:** Camp is a great place for the sort of in-depth conversations with adults that many young people long to have. Relaxed camp schedules also allow for Scoutmaster conferences and coaching youth leaders. There's also room to spread out and have one-on-one conversations in full view of other people, as required by the BSA's Youth Protection policies.
- **Advancement:** Most Scouts should come out of most outings with at least a few advancement requirements completed; if nothing else, each campout should contribute to the number of nights required for the Camping merit badge. Camp is a great place to conduct boards of review—and those boards of review give you a great excuse to invite troop committee members along.
- **Ideals:** You could start and end each day with a flag ceremony, reflect on Scouting values during a Scoutmaster's Minute at a campfire program, and explore the meaning of duty to God during an interfaith worship service.
- **Leadership Development:** Camp is where youth leaders really get to shine. Adult leaders can take a back seat—in part by camping somewhat apart from the Scouts—giving the senior patrol leader and other youth leaders more latitude.
- **Outdoors:** Scouts get to put into practice what they've learned in troop meetings, from camping techniques to outdoor ethics.
- **Patrol Method:** Each patrol should have a distinct campsite, cook its own meals, and function as a group during many campout activities.
- **Personal Growth:** Camp is where Scouts learn to be independent, to overcome fears, and to face challenges. Character is revealed—and formed—when Scouts are tested by bad weather, burned breakfast, and bruised feelings.
- **Uniform:** While the field uniform might not be practical for most campouts, you could travel in uniform or dress up for a fancy dinner your last night in camp. Troop or patrol T-shirts can also offer a sense of uniformity.

As in other areas of Scouting, you should be careful not to emphasize some methods so much that you neglect others. For example, when adult leaders cook apart from the Scouts, they encourage leadership development and the patrol method at the exclusion of adult association—although Scouts can obviously hang around adults at other times during the weekend. One solution would be to invite the troop-level youth leaders to eat with the adults. (They're probably too busy working to cook anyway.) Another solution would be to shut down the adult kitchen and have a couple of adults eat with each patrol, rotating from one meal to the next. On the other hand, if the adults cook for the whole troop, you could have plenty of adult association but fall short on advancement, ideals, leadership development, patrol method, or personal growth—not a good trade-off.

Outings and Advancement

The patrol leaders' council might not understand how advancement opportunities should dovetail into the annual planning calendar. Adult leaders can help guide PLC discussions by laying out the advancement needs of all the Scouts in the troop and asking questions like these: When will Scouts have the chance to cook over an open flame? How can we accommodate a Scout's need to complete a certain number of nights in camp? Where could we add service projects to the calendar?

Adding Spice to Outings

Even outings that address the needs of all Scouts and incorporate all eight methods can fall flat. Given the huge array of other things Scouts could choose to do on any given weekend, it's important to make every outing as attractive as possible.

Great outings start at your annual planning conference, where the PLC should determine the date, the focus, and perhaps the location of each outing for the next year. While these decisions are the Scouts' to make, adult leaders can and should push them to think a little more creatively. Here's a simple way to do this: Before the planning conference, print out internet photos of activities the Scouts could do or places they could go. Post these pictures around your meeting room and encourage the Scouts to review them before they brainstorm ideas for the next year. Chances are they'll come up with a more creative plan than they would have otherwise.

If certain activities are getting stale, encourage the PLC to place a moratorium on them for a year.

At the same time, don't assume that every outing has to be a once-in-a-lifetime, mountaintop experience to be attractive and enjoyable. Often, simple tweaks to familiar outings are sufficient. If your PLC comes up with an outing idea you know could be strengthened, suggest one of these tweaks:

- **Do the same activity but at an unusual location.** An urban hike would give your Scouts a new perspective on hiking and on their community.
- **Go to a familiar location but do an unusual activity there.** If you always go canoeing at a nearby state park, plan a backpacking weekend there instead.
- **Do a familiar activity but at an unfamiliar time.** Wilderness survival is a much different experience in the winter than in the summer; hiking at night or in the early morning is different from hiking in the middle of the day.

- **Modify the menus.** Cook recipes from a different country at each meal or do utensil-less cooking all weekend.
- **Team up with another troop.** Do a joint outing with another troop (or Venturing crew). Each unit can share its strengths and learn from the other unit. And a huge game of Capture the Flag could be a great way to end a day of fun.
- **Do a mash-up activity.** Combine two types of activities in a surprising and fun way. Canoe to a field where you can build pioneering projects. Create a troop triathlon that includes canoeing, cycling, and orienteering. Develop a treasure hunt with clues placed along a hiking trail. Hike to places of worship in your community where religious leaders (or, better yet, troop members) share the fundamentals of their faiths.
- **Create a theme.** Come up with a fun theme to tie the weekend's activities together. For example, you could have an alien theme complete with costumes, a wide game between competing armies of aliens (the patrols), and a battle royal of meteors (water balloons launched from lashed-together catapults).

Consider the example of a minor-league baseball team. Nearly every game includes some sort of promotion—from bobblehead dolls to dollar hot dogs—to encourage fans to attend. What difference would it make if you gave that kind of attention to your outings?

Program Features for Troops and Crews

Outings can focus on activities far beyond the skills needed for Tenderfoot, Second Class, and First Class. The three-volume *Program Features for Troops and Crews* offers ideas for outings that focus on a host of topics, including science, citizenship, living history, music, duty to God, special needs awareness, and even spectator sports. Modules are grouped into the categories of outdoors, sports, health and safety, citizenship and personal development, STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math), and arts and hobbies, allowing your PLC to develop a well-rounded program that meets the interests of all your Scouts.

The modules address the needs of new, experienced, and older Scouts by including ideas for skill instruction that focus on essential, challenging, and advanced skills, respectively. Each module includes ideas for three outings—or main events, as they're called—one each at the essential, challenging, and advanced levels.

Volume 1	Volume 2	Volume 3
Camping	*Archery*	*Caving*
Climbing and Rappelling	*Backpacking*	*Cooking*
Communication	*Citizenship*	*COPE*
Cycling	*Engineering*	*Duty to God*
First Aid	*Fishing*	*Emergency Preparedness*
Games	*Fitness and Nutrition*	*Ethics*
Geocaching	*Living History*	*Financial Management*
Hiking	*Mathematics*	*Multimedia*
Outdoor Ethics	*Mentoring*	*Nature and Environment*
Paddle Sports	*Music*	*Project Planning*
Pioneering	*Orienteering*	*Shotgun Shooting*
Rifle Shooting	*Scuba Diving*	*Skateboarding*
Safety	*Soccer*	*Sustainability*
Science	*Special Needs Awareness*	*Swimming*
Snowboarding and Skiing	*Wilderness Survival*	*Technology*
Spectator Sports	*Wildlife Management*	*Winter Camping*

Moving Toward High Adventure

The next chapter covers high adventure in depth, but you should consider adding elements of high adventure to regular outings as well. That could mean planning a three-day backpacking trip over a holiday weekend, building up to a 20-mile hike, or participating in a 100-mile weekend cycling tour. Doing activities like these makes regular outings more appealing and gives Scouts a taste of what they can expect on full-fledged high-adventure trips.

Summer Camp

For many Scouts, a week at summer camp is the highlight of the Scouting year. They can take part in activities that are rarely available on weekend outings, such as shooting sports and COPE, while enjoying such luxuries as sleeping on a cot and eating in an air-conditioned dining hall. And they can do all this while spending a week hanging out with their best friends.

But just like weekend outings, summer camp isn't automatically an extraordinary experience. To make it a week your Scouts will remember forever, your youth and leaders must invest some extra effort before and during the week.

The first step is choosing the right summer camp, one that meets the needs of all your Scouts. That means choosing a camp with a strong new-Scout program, an array of fun merit badge classes (especially for outdoor-related badges), and challenging high-adventure opportunities for older Scouts. While that camp may be located right down the road, it could be a couple of states away. Occasionally going out of council for summer camp adds novelty to the experience and gives you touring opportunities along the way. You'll probably also find the bonds among your Scouts strengthened since the only people they will know, at least at first, will be each other.

Consider asking the camp director to sit down with select older Scouts to talk about staff opportunities. Working on camp staff can keep older Scouts involved in the program after they turn 18. And having your older Scouts on staff gives your younger Scouts something to aspire to.

Here are some other ideas for creating an extraordinary summer camp experience.

- **Supplement the summer camp program.** Bring along fishing gear, materials for carving neckerchief slides, or card games. Encourage adult leaders who are merit badge counselors to help Scouts with those badges during free time.
- **Extend the experience.** Look for tour opportunities on the way to camp. Leave home a day early and visit a historic site or enjoy a day of whitewater rafting.
- **Fill the holes in the schedule.** If there's a free night in camp, plan ahead to fill it with an activity like cooking your own dinner or making homemade ice cream.
- **Don't waste your check-in day.** The first day of camp is often given over to swim tests and medical rechecks. Plan activities you can do that day, such as merit badge activities or a hike around the camp.
- **Create a home away from home.** Build an attractive gateway at your campsite, make name plaques for your tents, or take other steps to give your campsite a homey touch.
- **Connect with other troops.** Bring along troop T-shirts or souvenirs from your hometown to trade or give away. Invite another troop to your campsite for a cracker barrel one evening.
- **Take advantage of everything the camp offers.** Compete in wide games, work to earn the honor-troop award, attend the Wednesday night interfaith service as a troop, and get up early on Friday for the polar-bear plunge.
- **Put your adults to work.** While it can be nice to nap, read a book, or take advantage of the free Wi-Fi in the leaders' lounge, the week will ultimately be more satisfying for adults if they volunteer around camp. Note that some camps also offer adult training during summer camp, making it easy for adults to complete supplemental training on topics such as CPR and Safe Swim Defense.

CHAPTER 11
High Adventure

In some troops, high adventure is business as usual. In others, Scouts are lucky to participate in one or two high-adventure trips in their Scouting careers, whether to a national or council high-adventure base or some other destination. Not surprisingly, the former troops are often more effective at retaining older Scouts and keeping the interest of adult leaders.

This chapter provides a brief overview of what high adventure is and how you can plan high-adventure outings. By necessity, it only scratches the surface. To learn more about specific high-adventure skills, see the *Fieldbook*. High-adventure planning is the focus of Powder Horn training, a hands-on resource management course for registered adults and older Scouts who want to conduct troop-based high-adventure activities. Between those resources, you should be able to launch a high-adventure program even if your troop has never camped out of sight of your troop trailer.

Defining High Adventure

According to the *Guide to Safe Scouting*, a high-adventure experience includes at least five nights and six days of trekking in wilderness and other rugged, remote locations—which could include backpacking, canoeing, mountain biking, horse packing, mountain climbing, ski touring, rafting, kayaking, or a host of other outdoor adventures. It also limits such activities to more experienced Scouts, typically those who are at least 13 years old. (Some high-adventure bases have higher age limits.)

But numbers don't tell the whole story. In reality, any activity that's longer, more remote, and more physically and mentally challenging than the typical outing probably qualifies. As the chart on this page shows, high adventure is at the far end of a continuum that starts with Cub Scout day camp. While the dividing line may not be clear, you'll recognize high adventure when you see it—and so will your Scouts.

A 12-day trek at Philmont Scout Ranch is definitely high adventure. So is a week spent mountain biking, climbing, and shooting at the Paul R. Christen National High Adventure Base (part of the Summit Bechtel Family National Scout Reserve). Florida Sea Base and the Northern Tier High Adventure Program offer an array of high-adventure experiences on, in, and under the water—as well as other activities, like Florida Sea Base's Out Island Adventure and Northern Tier's dogsled trips.

Scouting's Camping Program—Ever-Increasing Challenge Out-of-Doors

AGE-APPROPRIATE GUIDELINES FOR CAMPING	LIONS (With Caring Adult)	TIGERS (With Caring Adult)	WOLF/BEAR SCOUTS	WEBELOS SCOUTS	SCOUTS BSA	OLDER SCOUTS, SEA SCOUTS, VENTURERS ("Older Scouts" are age 13 and have completed eighth grade or 14 years old and up.)
National High Adventure						✔
Council High Adventure						✔
Wilderness and Backcountry						✔
Jamboree					12-year-olds	✔
Weekend Campouts					✔	✔
Camporees				Day Visit Only	✔	✔
Cold-Weather Camping	Council-Designated Locations Only (verify with local council)				✔	✔
Den Overnights				✔		
Council-Organized Family Camp	✔	✔	✔	✔		
Day Camp	Not Summer	✔	✔	✔		
Pack Overnighters	Council-Designated Locations Only					
Family Camping	Council-Designated Locations Only (verify with local council)			✔	✔	✔
Resident Camp	Not Summer	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
Lock-ins (museums, sports facilities, etc.)	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔

Sample High-Adventure Activities

Backpacking
Bicycle touring
Canoeing
Canopy tours
Caving
Horse packing
Kayaking
Living history
Mountain biking
Mountain climbing
Rappelling
Sailing
Scuba diving
Ski touring
Snow camping
Whitewater rafting
Wilderness survival

You don't have to travel to a national high-adventure base to enjoy high adventure, however. Many council summer camp programs include a high-adventure element for older Scouts. (In some cases, those Scouts stay in camp and participate in special daily activities like COPE courses; in other cases, they leave camp at the beginning of the week and don't return until it's nearly time to go home.) Many councils also operate their own high-adventure bases and programs that are separate from summer camp.

COPE stands for Challenging Outdoor Personal Experience. COPE courses use various activities on the ground and high overhead to foster personal growth and team development.

High adventure can also be a big part of your troop program, which is what this chapter is all about. Whether you plan annual trips to a national or council high-adventure base or incorporate high-adventure elements into monthly outings, you will find that high adventure can strengthen every element of your troop program.

Why High Adventure?

In *Walden: Or, Life in the Woods,* Henry David Thoreau wrote, "I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived." The same rationale could apply to high adventure, which offers a host of benefits both to those who participate and to the troop as a whole. Why do high adventure? Here are a few reasons.

Challenge

Teenagers today seek ever greater challenges to their physical and mental abilities. Some try to outdo their friends at weightlifting. Some enjoy staying up all night at lock-ins or video game tournaments. Some relish eating the hottest hot sauce they can find. Some engage in risky behaviors that can permanently damage their minds and bodies.

High adventure offers a safe, wholesome alternative to riskier challenges and inspires young people to undertake worthy challenges. The exhilaration of being in the backcountry is hard to top. While some high-adventure activities (like rock climbing) can seem dangerous, they are remarkably safe when conducted in accordance with procedures like the Sweet 16 of BSA Safety. (For more information, see section 7 in volume 1 of the *Troop Leader Guidebook.)*

Fitness

Fitness, one of the three aims of Scouting, is increasingly important in an era when childhood obesity is epidemic. High adventure promotes fitness by giving Scouts a meaningful reward for becoming more fit. For most young people, being able to climb a mountain is a better incentive for fitness than forestalling diabetes and heart disease, which they can't imagine ever developing. What's more, hiking and canoeing are far more interesting to most people than lifting weights and walking on treadmills.

To enjoy a backcountry trek, Scouts and leaders must be fit. Part of preparing for rugged outdoor experiences means undertaking a physical conditioning program to enhance aerobic capacity and tone muscles. Participants must also complete Part C of the Annual Health and Medical Record and see a doctor or other medical professional, which can further spur them to improve their fitness level.

High adventure also fosters improved mental fitness as Scouts face and overcome challenges of terrain and weather. Most high-adventure participants—Scout and adult alike—return home with an added measure of mental toughness.

Leadership and Teamwork

A high-adventure trip is a great opportunity for Scouts to practice leadership and teamwork. In most cases, crews are patrol-sized and have limited contact with other groups in the backcountry. They must rely on themselves more than in other Scouting environments.

Moreover, the process of forming a crew (perhaps including Scouts from different patrols or troops) and preparing for a trip is a good exercise in team-building. In fact, there are few better places to observe the stages of team development than on a high-adventure trip. A group that initially takes two hours and much grumbling to wake up, break camp, and hit the trail will soon be doing the same tasks in 30 or 45 minutes with ease.

Planning

Scouts must plan for every outing, of course, but poor planning has relatively minor consequences on short outings where Scouts can find extra gear in the troop trailer or an adult leader can run into town for something that was forgotten. Those things can't happen when you're a four-hour hike away from the trailhead.

The consequences of poor planning are more serious in high-adventure settings. If you ruin your dinner on an overnight campout, you'll be hungry until morning. If you ruin your dinner on a backpacking trip, you may not have the energy to get through the next day's hike.

Program Focus

Troops that don't have ambitious outdoor programs often struggle to come up with meaningful activities for troop meetings. After all, you can practice knot-tying and first aid only so many times before Scouts get bored.

Boredom at troop meetings shouldn't be a problem when you're preparing for a high-adventure outing—especially if it involves an activity you've never done before. Just consider these topics related to backpacking: hydration, using camp stoves, lightweight gear, packing a backpack, Leave No Trace and Tread Lightly!, map reading, bear precautions, physical conditioning, hiking techniques, first aid for blisters, and weather awareness. All could be incorporated into troop meeting plans.

Long-term Goals

At some point during the middle-school years, many Scouts hit a rough patch when they're ready to give up on Scouting—call it the three-year itch. Peer pressure, increased homework loads, and boring programs can all contribute to this problem. One way to solve it is to help Scouts set long-term goals that can pull them through short-term difficulties.

Earning the Eagle Scout Award is a great long-term goal that many Scouts set. High adventure can be another. When a Scout signs up for a high-adventure trip that will occur a year or even two years from now, that Scout has an incentive to stick around longer. The Scout now has the trip to look forward to and is participating in increasingly challenging shakedown trips in the intervening months. High adventure can also be an appropriate long-term goal for those who earn the Eagle Scout Award at a young age and are looking for their next challenge.

Strengthening the Troop

High-adventure trips can also strengthen the troop as a whole. The crew gear you purchase for the trip can be used on future outings. The leadership skills Scouts learn in the backcountry will come home with them. The sense of anticipation for upcoming adventures will filter down to those Scouts who aren't old enough for the current trip but will be ready when the next trip comes around.

High Adventure in the Troop Setting

For all the advantages high adventure offers, there are potential drawbacks. Given cost, age limits, time constraints, and restrictions on group size, many, perhaps most, troop members won't be able to participate in major outings. Balancing the needs of the many with the interests of the few is important. Here are a few suggestions:

- Set the annual troop calendar first and then fill in high-adventure dates.
- When possible, have outings serve double duty. For example, a weekend float trip could double as a shakedown for a Northern Tier trip.
- Hold participant and parent meetings before or after troop meetings, not during them.
- Create an older-Scout patrol that focuses on high adventure. When high-adventure trips are patrol outings, you can use patrol-meeting time to work on skills and planning.
- Name an assistant Scoutmaster for high adventure, someone who doesn't have other key responsibilities.
- Make each high-adventure trip financially self-sustaining. Participants pay just what the trip costs and receive refunds if you come in under budget.
- Ensure that trip-specific money-earning projects don't conflict with those that support the general troop budget. That could mean doing different types of projects or scheduling them at different times of the year.

High-Adventure Fundraising

Fundraising for high adventure can be a challenge, especially if the troop has other money-earning projects going. One option is to find a fundraiser that complements what the troop is already doing; for example, if the troop sells mulch, high-adventure participants could offer to spread it for an additional fee. When most participants are old enough to have part-time jobs, it may be more effective to let them pay their own way rather than plan additional fundraisers.

Participant Qualifications

Every participant—youth and adult—must be in good health as verified by a current (within one year) physical examination, signed by a licensed medical practitioner. In addition, every Scout who desires to participate must have sufficient emotional and mental maturity to withstand the stresses and pressures of an extended high-adventure experience. A basic level of skill in the chosen activity is also essential for a safe, enjoyable trip. Parents and Scout leaders should determine who is ready for a high-adventure experience based on those qualifications.

Given sufficient time, consider planning a discovery experience as a troop outing before Scouts sign up for the high-adventure trip. This will let them try out the activity—backpacking, canoeing, etc.—before they commit to participate.

A youth or adult leader who desires to participate but who is not emotionally, mentally, or physically ready for a high-adventure trip must be so informed. In the case of an unqualified youth, decide whether to counsel the youth directly or to inform the parents and let them speak with their child. Telling a Scout that they are not qualified for an adventure can be an extremely difficult task. However, it is far better to take such action than to have the Scout face a challenge in which failure could result in significant harm to the Scout or other participants. It is in the youth's best interest to wait a year or two in order to benefit fully from the experience.

When coaching a Scout, make sure it is understood that there will be an opportunity for a future high-adventure experience. Young people are more motivated when they are given encouragement and can work toward a specific objective.

Being emotionally, mentally, and physically capable is just the beginning. Participants must also commit to the trip's payment schedule, training program, and equipment requirements.

Suggested Program of Conditioning and Training

Before your first high-adventure trip (or your first time doing a new type of activity), you'll want to plan a series of shakedown activities leading up to it. If your focus is backpacking, for example, you might do a few day hikes, then an overnight trip where you practice backpacking techniques, then a three- or four-day trek in the most rugged terrain you can find using the actual gear you'll take on your adventure. If you'll be going canoeing, you might start with a paddling clinic at a local lake and gradually build up to a long weekend on a nearby river.

Shakedown activities are great for developing your crew and practicing outdoor skills. They aren't so great for physical conditioning, however, simply because you can't schedule enough of them to make a difference. High-adventure participants should commit to their own schedules of physical development.

Here's a suggested schedule for a summer trip.

Month	Activity
January	Complete health history on individual medical forms and get parent's approval (signature). Be examined by a physician or osteopath. Call the medical professional's attention to the rigors of a high-adventure trip, which are outlined on the Annual Health and Medical Record. Discuss any special medical needs or areas of concern. If overweight, get physician's recommendation for how to lose weight through dieting and exercise.
February	Walk, jog in place, swim, or pedal an exercise bike indoors for 20 minutes or more at least three to five times a week. Gradually increase the length and the intensity of exercises.
March	When weather permits, jog, run, or walk outdoors. If you will be paddling or climbing, do some weight lifting. Start with 20-minute sessions and gradually increase the length and the intensity.
April	Continue exercising. Schedule a couple of 5- to 10-mile day hikes. Carry a full backpack on the second hike. Or paddle a canoe or raft and do a portage on the second trip.
May	Continue exercising. Schedule at least two overnight backpacking treks of 10 to 20 miles or two canoeing trips of 20 to 40 miles. Plan the second trek to cover more rugged terrain or increase the mileage. Depending on the high-adventure program selected, consider meeting the requirements for the appropriate merit badge. The Backpacking merit badge, for example, requires three three-day backpacking treks of at least 15 miles each, and one five-day trek covering at least 30 miles.
June–July	Continue exercising until the day you depart for your high adventure. Come to the trek in top physical and mental condition, ready for vigorous physical activity.

Be clear from the outset about what gear participants need to purchase. Families should know up front if they'll need to buy boots, backpacks, tents, or other gear that's not included in the cost of the trip. Those expenses could easily double the amount families need to spend. You also don't want families to buy gear that is unneeded or unsuitable for the activity in question.

Staying current with payments is especially important when you will be attending a national or council high-adventure base (or using a commercial outfitter) and must make deposits months ahead of the trip. With any trip, regular payments also show that Scouts are still committed to the trip. (Someone who falls behind—and is not experiencing financial difficulties—may well drop out of the trip unexpectedly.)

Participation in first-aid training, shakedown trips, and pre-trip meetings is also critical. Given the busy lives many Scouts lead, you may not be able to expect 100-percent participation, but you should set a minimum standard.

High-adventure trips require the written approval of a parent or guardian for each crew member. Many troops go a step further by having participants and their parents sign a covenant agreeing to abide by the payment plan, training schedule, and equipment requirements.

Who Gets to Go?

If you anticipate that a trip will be overbooked, decide at the outset who gets priority. Does a deposit check guarantee a slot? Do Life Scouts get in ahead of Star Scouts? Does active participation in the troop or service as a youth leader make a difference?

Whatever you decide, announce the criteria before signups begin. And keep a waiting list in case someone has to drop out along the way.

Planning Group Adventures

Most adventures are more fun when friends travel together, and they are safer, too. At the minimum, be sure to have at least four people in your crew, including two adults, so that if one person is injured, a companion can stay with the victim while two others go for help.

On the other hand, you won't want a group that is too large. A crew of five to eight people can travel lightly and quickly.

You won't require large campsites, you'll see more wildlife, and you'll find it easier to camp without leaving a trace. Crew size must be within the limit specified by land management officials. Find out what restrictions apply and plan accordingly. Under no circumstances should your crew have more than 12 members.

What Are the Crew's Capabilities?

Before planning a high-adventure trip or any outdoor adventure, it is crucial to consider the capabilities of the crew. Ask these questions:

- Who will go on the trip?
- What are the ages of the crew members?
- What are the medical restrictions of those who want to go on the trip?
- How much camping experience does the crew have?
- How much experience does the crew have in the activities anticipated on the trip?
- Do the crew members cooperate with one another, and does everyone pitch in to help with crew tasks?
- Does each person accept responsibility to help other members of the crew who may have difficulty?
- Does the crew accept the crew leader's leadership?
- Does the crew leader discuss options with the crew before making decisions?
- Does the crew leader consistently use good judgment in making decisions?
- How well does the crew deal with tough problems?
- Is everyone committed to the Leave No Trace and Tread Lightly! principles?
- Is everyone committed to safety?

The answers to these questions will make a significant difference in how ambitious a trip the crew is prepared to undertake. Matching the high-adventure experience to the capabilities of the crew is the most important initial step in planning a trip. It can make the difference between a successful, enjoyable experience and a disastrous misadventure.

Matching the Adventure to the Group

There are two ways to match a group with an outing. Older Scouts can decide on the adventure and then find companions who have the necessary abilities and interests. Or, they can decide with whom they would like to share an adventure and then tailor activities to fit the strengths and weaknesses of everyone involved.

Each member of the crew will have certain strengths that will help make the trip successful. Also consider limitations when selecting an adventure just right for the group. Take into account the following important qualities.

Experience and knowledge. The amount of experience a person has is often, but not always, an indicator of how well that person will do on a trip. Crew members should have a mastery of the skills of any activity planned. It's also valuable for them to have related experience such as first-aid training, backcountry navigational expertise, swimming and lifesaving abilities, and an understanding of weather, wildlife, and botany. Still, abundant experience does not necessarily create abundant wisdom. People in the habit of using poor camping practices are not better campers if they repeat the same mistakes many times. Experience must be tempered with good judgment, a concern for the environment and the members of the group, and a willingness to learn from anyone who can teach better outdoor skills and ethics.

Leadership. Every group that ventures into the backcountry should have a youth leader and an alternate, along with adults backing them up. The leader is responsible for monitoring the needs and desires of the group and for making decisions to ensure safety and enjoyment. A good outdoor leader learns the abilities and limitations of each individual in the group and delegates tasks accordingly.

Maturity. The more mature the members of the crew, the more demanding the adventures they can enjoy. Mature backcountry travelers can take care of themselves in the backcountry and help others when the need arises. They use good judgment and, rather than waiting for someone to tell them what to do, keep their eyes open and pitch in wherever they can to make an outing run smoothly.

Attitude. When difficulties arise while a group is away from home, the attitudes of crew members will determine the success of an adventure. Anger and withdrawal can spoil a trip, but even the worst weather and the silliest mistakes can be overcome if the group takes adversity in stride and endures. Cheerfulness is infectious. Keep spirits high; trips with the most miserable conditions may create the fondest memories.

Interests. Each member of the crew will have definite likes and dislikes. One member might love kayaking but dislike mountain climbing. Another might enjoy camp stew and hate freeze-dried chili. Still another might like to spend time alone while another person might thrive on the company of others. As the group discusses what it would like to do on an adventure, each person probably will make personal interests known. All will want to do the things they like best. Are crew members willing to try something new? Does a crew member have a skill to teach the rest of the group once in the field? Can several different interests be satisfied with one trip, or should the group focus on a single activity on this trip and do something different next time?

Physical capabilities. Different adventures require different degrees of exertion. Therefore, be certain the activities you are considering are not beyond the physical capabilities of your group. An exhausted hiker is not only miserable but also more likely to become injured, lost, or ill. A clue to the fitness of your crew is the amount of exercise they get during a typical week. If they regularly engage in sports, walk a lot, bicycle, or go camping on weekends, they probably are in good shape.

Planning the Duration of a Trip

Determine how much time you have for a trip. A preparatory trip could be an afternoon excursion or a weekend campout, while the high adventure itself could be a wilderness trip lasting several weeks. Include in your plans sufficient time to travel to and from the points where your adventure will begin and end. If necessary, also include time to acclimate to significant changes in elevation.

To get maximum participation, the time frame for the trip should fit the schedule of a majority of the crew members. Available time is a factor—along with the physical condition of

your crew and the amount of energy you wish to expend—that helps determine the shape of an adventure. Plan your trip so you will arrive refreshed.

How Far Do You Want to Travel?

The distance a crew can cover while backpacking depends on the terrain, the crew members' physical condition, the nature of your gear, and your reasons for taking a trip.

Is the country rugged? A mile of flat trail is far different from a mile that gains a thousand feet in elevation. Are crew members fit and strong, or a little out of shape? As a group, do you walk with a fast, steady stride, or at a leisurely pace with frequent pauses to study flowers, watch wildlife, and take photographs? In planning a trip, estimate the amount of time required to travel from place to place. As a general rule, an average hiker can walk about 2 miles every hour in level country. Backpacking with a heavy pack over rugged terrain will take an hour per mile, if conditions are good. To that, add one hour for each thousand-foot climb. For each thousand feet of elevation loss, add a half-hour. Estimate time generously to allow for unexpected problems.

Novice backpackers often don't realize that they'll travel half as fast with heavy packs in rugged terrain as they do on simpler day hikes. Before your Scouts commit to back-to-back 10-mile days, be sure they calculate how long that will take.

Be conservative when planning the distances of your first trips. With a group of backpackers, it is important to establish a moderate pace. It is better to have too much time to reach a destination than too little. By not rushing, you'll enjoy yourself a great deal more, be less apt to make mistakes, and have time for other activities such as taking photos, observing nature, and discussing plans for the next day.

Distances for float trips, meanwhile, will vary greatly based on current, water conditions, and the number of portages you'll need to make. A good rule of thumb from Northern Tier is that the average crew will travel approximately 2 to 3 miles per hour, including portages. Easy days at Northern Tier encompass 8 to 12 miles, while difficult days exceed 20 miles.

For road cycling trips, a good starting point is to assume a speed of 8 to 10 miles per hour including stops. (To earn the Cycling merit badge, a Scout must be able to ride 50 miles in 8 hours, which equates to 6.25 miles per hour, on a road bike; or 22 miles in 6 hours, which equates to 3.8 miles per hour, on a mountain bike.) Of course, terrain will be a major factor, as will physical conditioning and whether Scouts have decent road bikes.

Trip Pacing

Before you leave home, decide how strenuous a trip will be so that once you're underway, no one will be caught by surprise. Some crew members may want to travel long and hard, while others would rather spend time studying the surroundings and photographing wildlife, or making camp early so they can fix gourmet backcountry meals. Take the desires of everyone into consideration and see if you can work out compromises. Perhaps you will plan to hike hard one day and take it easy the next, or plan a leisurely preliminary outing followed by a more ambitious trip.

Any trip ought to begin gradually and, if desired, increase in difficulty after the first few days. This allows crew members to get accustomed to carrying a pack, riding a bike, paddling a canoe, etc. It also allows the crew to get organized for performing tasks more efficiently, such as pitching and breaking camp, preparing meals, and packing packs.

Preparing for a trip in the forests of the East, the plains of the Midwest, or the rolling terrain of the South can be relatively simple. Trekking at high elevations in the West, however, is quite different. Additional preparation often is needed to acclimate to areas where the air is thin. The first several days of trekking at high elevation need to be tailored to allow crew members' bodies to adjust gradually to the change. (Even arriving in the area early and enjoying a day of sightseeing helps with acclimatization.) When trekking at high elevations, it is wise to plan to ascend no more than a thousand feet per day to avoid acute mountain sickness, which usually necessitates getting a crew member to a lower elevation to alleviate the symptoms.

Even the best-prepared crew should plan some leeway into a trip for unforeseen events. Give yourselves anywhere from a few hours' to several days' leeway in case the weather is bad or the terrain is more rugged than expected. A layover during a trip allows crew members to do laundry, rest and relax, take a side trip or hike to a nearby point of interest, or prepare a lavish meal. Layover days boost the spirits of everyone in the crew and allow flexibility in the overall itinerary. If inclement weather or a minor accident precludes trekking on a particular day, a layover day permits the crew to get back on its original schedule. For long trips, it may be wise to include several layover days in the itinerary. The group might elect to spend three days, for instance, in one location where good fishing or numerous opportunities for side hikes exist.

Planning Where to Go

Once you have considered the capabilities and interests of the crew and how long the crew wants to spend on the trip, the next step is to make decisions: where to go and when. A majority-rules vote is a good way to arrive at decisions.

Where does the group want to go? The possibilities are endless. In addition to the BSA's four national high-adventure bases and council bases found in every corner of the country, consider the alternatives: National parks, national forests, Bureau of Land Management areas, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service refuges, state recreation areas, or privately administered lands are just a few. If your trip will be on public land, contact the land-managing agency well in advance to inquire about reservations, group-size limits, and permit requirements.

Your costs may be higher if you go to a high-adventure base (or use a commercial outfitter) than if you strike out on your own in a national park. However, you will also enjoy more support and will need to supply less crew gear.

When using commercial outfitters, keep in mind that the policies in the *Guide to Safe Scouting* still apply.

Crew Size

Experience has proved that the best size for a high-adventure crew is four to 12 persons, including adult advisors. A crew of five to eight is ideal. Some public land agencies may require fewer than 12 participants per crew. Their regulations must be met. When planning a trip, ask the administering agency or landowner for the applicable regulations.

If you have a larger group, organize two or more crews according to level of skill. Each crew can choose an itinerary that corresponds to its ability, and travel at its own pace. With careful planning, the crews could rendezvous at the midpoint of the trip to share stories.

Crew Leader

Each crew should elect a Scout as crew leader several months before the trip. The crew leader is a key person in a successful expedition, and the adult advisor must support the leader. The crew leader is responsible for organizing the crew, assigning duties, making decisions, and recognizing the capabilities and limitations of each member. The crew leader leads by example and discusses ideas and alternatives with the entire crew to hear everyone's opinion and arrive at a consensus before taking action. This responsibility requires someone with leadership ability who is respected by everyone.

The crew leader provides leadership in the following areas:

- Planning the itinerary based upon the desires of the crew
- Choosing routes during the trip based upon the capabilities of the crew
- Securing regulations from the administering agency or landowner, and getting a use permit if required
- Setting up and breaking camp
- Establishing a duty roster
- Seeing that all crew and personal equipment and supplies are properly stored and that proper precautions are followed to avoid encounters with bears and other wildlife
- Making sure the BSA Wilderness Use Policy (described on page 72) is upheld and that all crew members observe Leave No Trace and Tread Lightly! principles at all times

A crew leader who is busy with school and extracurricular activities may need to delegate some responsibilities. Each crew member could take the lead on planning a shakedown event, for example, and you could name a crew quartermaster for gear and a crew scribe for recordkeeping. Also, keep in mind that the crew leader's pre-trip work will be less intense if you are working with an outfitter or a high-adventure base.

Adult Advisor

The role of the adult advisor is to counsel and advise the crew leader and crew. If necessary, the advisor should be prepared to discipline, without verbal or physical abuse, a crew member. Insofar as it is possible, the advisor lets the crew leader lead the crew. The more capable the crew leader, the more the advisor should remain in the background, giving support only when needed.

The advisor should

- Arrange transportation, overnight stops, and meals en route to and from the high-adventure activity (or advise older Scouts as they make these arrangements)
- Assist Scouts in earning their way through fundraising efforts
- Help ensure the safety and well-being of everyone in the crew
- Address crew conflicts that may require discipline
- Serve as a counselor and coach, and give appropriate guidance to the crew leader and crew members

A highly effective crew leader will rely on the adult advisor for little more than car keys and credit cards.

First-Aid and CPR Training

Evacuating an injured crew member from a remote backcountry location or getting medical professionals into a remote area may take several hours. Training in first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) is essential to allow proper and prompt attention to injuries or illnesses. In every crew, at least two people, and preferably three or more—either adults or youths—should be currently trained in Wilderness First Aid–Basic (or equivalent) and CPR, having completed a minimum eight-hour course from any recognized community agency, such as the American Red Cross or National Safety Council. It's a good idea to train the entire crew as part of planning and preparation. Equivalent training in wilderness first aid and CPR can be obtained from the following nationally recognized organizations:

- American Red Cross: www.redcross.org
- Emergency Care and Safety Institute: www.ECSInstitute.org
- Health and Safety Institute: www.hsi.com
- National Outdoor Leadership School: www.nols.edu
- National Safety Council: www.nsc.org
- Stonehearth Open Learning Opportunities: www.soloschools.com
- Wilderness Medical Associates: www.wildmed.com
- Wilderness Medical Society: www.wms.org
- Wilderness Medicine Training Center: www.wildmedcenter.com
- Wilderness Safety Council: www.wfa.net

Planning an Award-Winning Trip

The Boy Scouts of America through local councils makes available two interesting and valuable awards: the Historic Trails Award and the 50-Miler Award.

The Historic Trails Award may be earned by members of a troop or Venturing crew for hiking a trail on the Nationally Approved Historic Trails list and completing a project related to the trail.

The 50-Miler Award is a recognition given to members in a troop or Venturing crew who take a backcountry trip of no less than 50 consecutive miles (on foot or by boat, canoe, or bicycle) in at least five consecutive days and fulfill requirements for group service projects on the trail.

See where you can find applications for these awards in the appendix.

Itinerary Planning

An itinerary is a blueprint of your trip. Once you have the plan on paper, you'll discover that it's easy to see what meals you'll need to prepare and what equipment you'll want to take. You won't be likely to forget essential details like arranging transportation to and from the area. The more extensive the trip being proposed, the more thorough your itinerary planning should be. Sir Edmund Hillary, the first person to climb Mount Everest, once said, "Good planning means living the experience in advance."

Being able to anticipate trails and trail conditions, changes in elevation, the expected range of temperatures, the availability of water, and the availability of campsites will help your crew plan an itinerary that is appropriate for the circumstances you expect to encounter.

For any trip, it is crucial to match the itinerary to the capabilities of the crew. The trip should be sufficiently challenging for the older, more experienced Scouts in the crew, yet not so difficult that anyone in the crew faces a situation where success is uncertain or where the challenge exceeds the participant's skill. In a crew with members of varying skill levels, the trip must accommodate the least skillful individual and offer more difficult experiences to those who have the ability. For instance, at a Class III or IV rapids, half the crew might portage while the remaining crew scouts the rapids and then applies its knowledge and skills in running it.

"Challenge by choice" is a good watchword for activities like shooting rapids, climbing a rock face, or participating in a COPE course. Foster an environment where every participant—youth and adult—can feel comfortable in saying "no."

The crew's objective should be for everyone to meet the challenge and ensure that each crew member is committed to that goal. This may mean shouldering part of the load for another crew member who may be having difficulty for whatever reason. The crew succeeds when every member is successful.

Also crucial to the planning of any backcountry itinerary is the amount of food and equipment that must be carried. The more food and gear that must be taken, the more often you'll need to be resupplied. Most groups find that taking four or five days of food is the maximum weight they can carry and the maximum bulk that will fit in packs or in panniers carried on bicycle or horse treks.

If specialized climbing gear, cold-weather clothing, or other extra gear is required, the crew will likely need to be resupplied even more often.

An alternate plan should be devised for every itinerary in case plans are disrupted by unforeseen events. When the entire group is involved in this process, unpleasant surprises are reduced by considering what might cause a change in plans and then developing an alternate itinerary.

Trip Plan

When your crew arrives at a consensus of what your itinerary and alternate plans will be, write them down. Include a full description of your intended route, where you plan to camp, and what time you will return.

A trip plan lets people know where you're going and when you intend to be back. Be sure everyone understands your itinerary, and then stick to it. Good organization requires that everyone concerned with the group have accurate information on the whereabouts of the group at all times. Give copies of the trip plan and alternate plans to parents, the troop committee, the local council service center, and any park officials, forest rangers, or law enforcement agencies whose jurisdictions include the areas in which you'll be traveling.

Also give each member of the party a copy of the trip plan, a list of license plate numbers of the party's vehicles, and telephone numbers and addresses of scheduled stops. Make sure each person understands what to do if separated from the group. This is vitally important and should include such instructions as:

- Contact the group by phone at the next scheduled stop and stay at the point of departure.
- Contact a designated person in your home community.
- Look in the telephone book or online to see whether there is a BSA local council in the vicinity; call the local Scout executive for help.
- Call the police or sheriff's office for help in locating your group.
- Notify the Scout executive of your local council by telephone.

Where Will You Get Help?

Although your travels may take you far from roads, a large network of people remains ready to assist you during an emergency if you can alert them to your needs. As you plan a trip, take time to identify and learn how to contact search-and-rescue teams and medical personnel. Use the internet to research information, and think through a course of action you would take to get help. Determine the following:

- The location of the nearest medical facility in the area of your trip
- How to evacuate an injured crew member who is unable to walk
- How to contact the nearest public land management agency in case of emergency
- Where to deliver an emergency message while you are on the trip if someone in your crew becomes seriously injured
- Who the home contact person is in case an emergency occurs
- Who will pay for the cost of an evacuation if one is necessary

The nearest community of any size will probably have a medical facility, but telephone the chamber of commerce or other community service agency as part of the trek planning to be sure.

Operate within your training and abilities. If your crew does not have the knowledge or experience to carry an injured person out of a remote backcountry area on a litter, you probably will want the administering agency, a search-and-rescue group, or an emergency medical technician unit to handle such a rescue. They have professionally trained members who have experience and know how to manage such an operation effectively. Before your trip, find out how to contact them. Public land management agencies must be contacted to get approval for an evacuation requiring the use of motorized vehicles.

Emergency Communications

For every location on your trip, you'll need to know the location of the nearest telephone or two-way radio, so that if you have an emergency, you will know where messages can be delivered. Check to be sure that communications are available 24 hours a day. You might want to carry a mobile phone. Be aware, however, that coverage in remote areas may be lacking or spotty, or you may need to climb to the crest of a ridge or to the summit of a mountain to make contact.

In extremely remote areas, satellite phones are a viable, although expensive, alternative to mobile phones. Some backcountry users also carry personal locator beacons (PLBs), which allow rescue personal to home in on their location after a distress signal is sent. PLBs with GPS integration can be accurate to within 100 meters, or about the length of a football field.

Leaders must be prepared to deal with emergencies that may develop at home, requiring the immediate return of a member, as well as emergencies on the road requiring treatment and hospitalization or the return home of a member. Keep parents informed and, in emergencies, use the telephone according to prearranged plans.

If an emergency involves the entire group, it probably will be impossible for you to inform all of the parents, as well as the local council service center. An emergency contact person from your troop committee or one individual parent should be designated. You can send a message to that person and let him or her inform the others. Be sure to designate alternates in case the first person cannot be reached. As discussed earlier, you should plan a day-by-day itinerary that shows where the crew will be staying each night and gives a telephone number if a phone is available. Distribute this itinerary to all parents. Leave the emergency contact person a highway map and backcountry map showing your intended route. Also give that individual the name and phone number of the contact person at the land-managing agency. Let your emergency contact know the time of your departure and your expected time of return. If you must deviate from your planned itinerary, inform your emergency contact, if possible, so parents can be notified.

If you are late in returning, people will assume you have encountered difficulties. If you don't return at your appointed time, the emergency contact person should activate a preplanned emergency response. Therefore, if you are delayed for a nonemergency reason, make every effort to notify your emergency contact so that an emergency response is not activated. And when you return, be sure to notify everyone with whom you have left a trip plan so they know you're back and don't report you missing or worry unnecessarily.

Emergency Action Plan

Perhaps the most critical test of your preparedness will be in time of emergency. Having developed and rehearsed an emergency action plan will be invaluable if a crisis arises. This is true on a day hike, an overnight or longer troop campout, and all other activities including high-adventure trips.

A plan should include the following:

- The person in charge
- Action to be taken
- Alternatives
- People and agencies to notify
- Location of nearest telephone or other means of communication throughout your trip
- Location of law enforcement
- Names and locations of fire and health facilities
- Evacuation procedures

Prepare an emergency phone number list, like the one shown on the following page, for out-of-town trips. Keep the list with your first-aid kit.

Emergency Phone Number List

Location of trip or expedition: _____

Location of nearest town(s) or phone(s):

_____

Name and phone number of nearest doctor, hospital, or medical facility: _____

Name and phone number of nearest state or federal agency station: _____

Name and phone number of nearest county sheriff's department: _____

Phone number of _____ Highway Patrol:

_____

Phone number of BSA local council service center:

_____

Plan for the Unexpected

- Determine whom to notify first in case of an injury to a member of the party.
- Determine who will take charge in case of an injury to a leader.
- Maintain a well-stocked first-aid kit to be used by trained persons.
- Make provision for the care of an injured or sick member.
- Determine responsibility for hospital and doctor bills.
- Plan what to do in case of accidental separation of the party or individual members.
- Plan how to make up the schedule and meet appointments in case of breakdown or other delay.
- Leave a forwarding address for mail expected, but not received, en route.
- Make arrangements for cashing traveler's checks, bank drafts, or money orders to prevent loss or theft of money.

Wilderness Use Policy of the Boy Scouts of America

All privately or publicly owned backcountry land and designated wildernesses are included in the term "wilderness areas" in this policy. The BSA's Outdoor Code and the principles of Leave No Trace and Tread Lightly! apply to outdoor behavior generally, but for treks into wilderness areas, minimum-impact camping methods must be used. Within the outdoor program of the Boy Scouts of America, there are many different camping-skill levels. Camping practices that are appropriate for day outings, long-term Scout camp, or short-term troop camping might not apply to wilderness areas. Wherever they go, Scouts need to adopt attitudes and patterns of behavior that respect the rights of others, including future generations, to enjoy the outdoors.

In wilderness areas, it is crucial to minimize human impact, particularly on fragile ecosystems such as mountains, lakes and streams, deserts, and seashores. Because our impact varies from one season of the year to the next, it becomes important for us to adjust to these changing conditions to avoid damaging the environment. The Boy Scouts of America emphasizes these practices for all troops and Venturing crews planning to use wilderness areas:

- Contact the landowner or land-managing agency (U.S. Forest Service, National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, state and private agencies, etc.) well before an outing to learn the regulations for that area, including group-size limits, to obtain required permits and current maps, and to discuss ways Scouts can fulfill the expectations of property owners or land managers.
- Review the appropriate BSA safety literature relating to planned activities. (See Safe Swim Defense, Safety Afloat, Climb On Safely, and Trek Safely.) Also see the *Guide to Safe Scouting* and the *Fieldbook*.
- Match the ruggedness of high-adventure experiences to the skills, physical ability, and maturity of those taking part. Save rugged trips for older troop members who are more proficient and experienced in outdoor skills.
- Conduct pre-trip training for your group that stresses proper wilderness behavior, rules, and skills for all of the conditions that may be encountered, including lightning, missing person, wildfire, high winds, flooding, and emergency medical situations.
- Participate in training in how to apply the principles of Leave No Trace and Tread Lightly!, and be proficient and experienced in the leadership and skills required for trips into wilderness areas.
- Adhere to the Leave No Trace and Tread Lightly! principles.

Outdoor Code

As an American, I will do my best to—

- **Be clean in my outdoor manners.** I will treat the outdoors as a heritage. I will take care of it for myself and others. I will keep my trash and garbage out of lakes, streams, fields, woods, and roadways.
- **Be careful with fire.** I will prevent wildfire. I will build my fires only when and where they are appropriate. When I have finished using a fire, I will make sure it is cold out. I will leave a clean fire ring or remove all evidence of my fire.
- **Be considerate in the outdoors.** I will treat public and private property with respect. I will follow the principles of Leave No Trace and Tread Lightly! for all outdoor activities.
- **Be conservation-minded.** I will learn about and practice good conservation of soil, waters, forests, minerals, grasslands, wildlife, and energy. I will urge others to do the same.

CHAPTER 12
Going Beyond Camping

Many people outside the BSA—and even some within the organization—think Scouting is all about camping. While it's true that camping and other outdoor pursuits are central to the Scouting program, they are only means to an end, the setting in which we seek to achieve our aims. As Scouting founder Robert Baden-Powell wrote, our method of training is "to offer games and activities which, while being attractive to the boy, will seriously educate him morally, mentally, and physically." That's why the BSA's mission and vision statements—as well as the Scout Oath and Scout Law—don't say anything about the outdoors.

At the same time, Scouting does teach practical skills that Scouts can carry into adulthood. Countless Scouts have put their first-aid and survival training to good use or have found careers and lifelong hobbies through the merit badge program. Adults who've won Academy Awards, Olympic medals, and Pulitzer and Nobel prizes have all credited Scouting with starting them on the road to success.

To ensure that today's Scouts can enjoy future success, the BSA has recently increased its emphasis on two areas of great concern in contemporary society: STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) education and fitness training. The BSA's STEM initiative began in 2012, while the SCOUTStrong initiative began in 2011. In this chapter, we'll discuss how you can incorporate STEM and fitness activities into your troop program.

The BSA has also been pilot testing a standalone program, STEM Scouts® (www.stemscouts.org). This chapter focuses on using STEM in the context of traditional Scouting, not on STEM Scouts®.

Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math

At first glance, STEM seems far removed from Scouting; white lab coats and pocket calculators don't appear on packing lists alongside ponchos and compasses. But STEM and Scouting are more closely related than you might think. Consider these examples:

- When you teach Scouts to identify native plants and animals, you're talking about science.
- When you explain why synthetic fabrics perform better than cotton, you're talking about technology.
- When you show Scouts how triangular structures strengthen pioneering projects, you're talking about engineering.
- When you help Scouts calculate their pace and measure distances in orienteering, you're talking about math.

Incorporating STEM into your program, then, can be as easy as finding STEM lessons in what you're already doing. And that's before you even start talking about the Nova and Supernova Awards, as well as the dozens of STEM-related merit badges.

The Importance of STEM

Many professionals in STEM fields believe the United States should do more to encourage students to enter these fields. It's our best opportunity as a country to boost the spirit of innovation, and it's what we need to do to help make sure America continues on a prosperous and secure path.

In recent years, a number of studies have shown U.S. students are growing increasingly weaker in STEM-related topics*. We can all work to reverse this trend.

- In 2009, just 34 percent of U.S. eighth-graders were rated proficient or higher in a national math assessment, and more than 25 percent scored below the basic level.
- In an international exam given in 2006, U.S. high school students ranked 21st out of 30 industrialized nations in science and 25th in math.
- In 2010, only 43 percent of U.S. high school graduates were ready for college work in math and only 29 percent were ready in science.

**** Sources: National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine; ACT Inc.; National Center for Education Statistics***

To remain competitive in the world economy, the United States must cultivate the next generation of critical thinkers and innovators. Experts say that our young people need STEM-related skills to compete in the world of tomorrow, where most jobs will require at least a basic understanding of math and science. Even today, factory workers, delivery drivers, auto mechanics, and other blue-collar workers use computers on the job every day.

Data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics support a projection that STEM-related occupations will add nearly 1 million jobs between 2012 and 2022.

The Nova and Supernova Awards

To encourage and reward STEM learning, the BSA has created the Nova and Supernova Awards. These special awards are designed to enhance interest in STEM fields while making it fun for Scouts to learn about STEM. The goal is to entice Scouts to begin exploring STEM topics and to build on their interest with progressively more challenging activities. Here's an introduction to the two levels of awards.

While not part of the advancement program, the Nova and Supernova Awards promote advancement by requiring Scouts to earn merit badges along the way.

Nova Awards. The Nova Awards allow Scouts to discover some of the basic principles of STEM and to experience science, technology, engineering, and math in fun and interesting ways. These awards focus on encouraging future exploration in STEM fields. The goal is to build confidence and demonstrate that career opportunities in STEM fields are attainable, fulfilling, and interesting. As such, Nova activities are fairly basic and designed to spark interest in one or all of the categories of awards. They are straightforward to complete and offer a quick reward in the form of the Nova patch for the first award earned and a pi (π) pin to attach to the Nova patch for each additional award earned. Scouts may complete any Nova Award with a parent's or unit leader's guidance. Each Nova Award can be accomplished fairly easily in a few weeks.

As the STEM program expands, more Nova Awards will be offered. In fact, proposing such awards is a requirement for the Dr. Albert Einstein Supernova Award, the top STEM award for Venturers.

Supernova Awards. The Supernova Awards require a deeper level of understanding and effort. They challenge Scouts who have a greater interest in the STEM fields to experiment, understand the outcomes of these experiments, and present their findings to their Supernova mentor. The focus is to build on the basic STEM topics with activities that will result in greater learning and an increasing complexity in the Scouts' knowledge. Completing the requirements takes more work and includes some research. Most Supernova activities will take several weeks or months to complete.

In Scouting, the Supernova has two levels, and each Scout may earn both Supernova Awards. The Supernova Awards are the following:

- Dr. Bernard Harris Supernova Award (level 1)
- Thomas Edison Supernova Award (level 2)

Level 1 requires the Scout to have earned any three of the four Scouts BSA Nova Awards; level 2 requires completion of the fourth Scouts BSA Nova Award in addition to the Harris Supernova Award. The Supernova Awards are available to all Scouts who have achieved the rank of First Class. Completion of a Supernova Award earns the Scout the right to wear the Supernova Award medal.

For all Supernova Awards, a mentor, who serves much like a merit badge counselor, is required. Just like merit badge counselors, mentors must be registered with the BSA as an adult volunteer and be approved by the local council.

Complete award requirements, additional aids for Supernova counselors, and information on support for councils, districts, and units is available online at www.scouting.org/stem-nova-awards/award.

Nova and Supernova Award Comparison

Award	Description	Eligibility	Time to Complete	Approval	Recognition Item
Nova Awards Shoot! (science) Start Your Engines! (technology) Whoosh! (engineering) Designed to Crunch (math)	Introduces one STEM field per award	Any Scout aged 11–17	A few weeks	Parent or unit leader	Nova patch (first award); pi pin (each additional award)
Supernova Awards Dr. Bernard Harris Supernova Award (level 1) Thomas Edison Supernova Award (level 2)	Recognizes Scouts who earn Nova Awards, do Supernova activities, and complete certain other requirements; the level 1 award is a prerequisite for the level 2 award	Any Scout who has achieved First Class rank	Several weeks or months	Registered Supernova mentor	Medal

Age-appropriate Nova and Supernova Awards are also available for Cub Scouts and Venturers. They are structured like the Nova awards for Scouts, although they have different names and requirements.

Adult Roles: Nova Counselor and Supernova Mentor

The Nova Awards program is fairly uncomplicated and more along the lines of completing a merit badge or a special award like the BSA Stand Up Paddleboarding award. The BSA uses the term "counselor" for the adult age 21 or older working with Nova candidates. Parents and unit leaders may serve as Nova counselors even if they have little or no background in STEM—although of course they do need to understand the material well enough to help the youth with questions. Those who serve in this role must register as Nova counselors using position code 58 (even if they are already registered in another position). This is a non-unit position, and no fee is required.

Because the Supernova program is more complex, it requires a deeper and longer-term association between the adult and youth. The BSA designates the adult role as "mentor" to signify the relationship between adult and youth. A mentor is ideally someone who has successfully negotiated a STEM career path or has other subject matter expertise (such as hobbies or other special training), and is willing to share accumulated wisdom and experience. The adult will work closely with the youth for a number of weeks or months and will likely provide significant input and guidance. Supernova mentors must be 21 or older and be registered using position code 52; this is a non-unit position, and no fee is required. They must also complete the Supernova Awards Mentor Information form.

All Nova counselors and Supernova mentors must have current BSA Youth Protection training and certification appropriate for the program they're involved in (Cub Scouting, Scouts BSA, or Venturing).

Extensive training and self-study information for mentors and counselors is available at www.scouting.org/training/adult.

Adult Role: Unit STEM Coordinator

To ensure that STEM plays a prominent role in your troop program, consider recruiting a unit STEM coordinator. This person works with the troop's youth and adult leadership to integrate STEM and Nova activities into the program. Here are some possibilities:

- Promote STEM at the annual planning conference.
- Offer ways to integrate Nova Award activities into the troop program.
- Identify resources from local organizations such as schools, museums, government agencies, professional societies, and business groups.
- Learn about and promote STEM activities offered in the district and council, either at camporees, summer camp, or special events.
- Learn about and promote STEM programs offered at the national level, such as STEM treks at the national high-adventure bases and STEM conferences for adult leaders at the Philmont Training Center and Florida Sea Base.

The unit STEM coordinator should be registered as a member of the unit committee and must be current in Youth Protection training. The coordinator need not be a STEM expert, although comfort with STEM material would be helpful.

The unit STEM coordinator position could be perfect for a parent who works in a STEM-related field and doesn't have the time or interest to serve the troop in a more traditional role.

The unit STEM coordinator's responsibilities can vary depending on troop needs, but they would typically involve the following:

- Be knowledgeable of the Nova Awards program.
- Promote the Nova Awards program at troop meetings to Scouts, parents, and leaders.
- Help Scouts with ideas of ways to earn the Nova and Supernova Awards.
- Work with leaders (youth and adult) to add fun STEM activities to meetings and outings.
- Be aware of STEM and Nova activities offered by local, regional, and national Scouting organizations.
- Be aware of STEM programs offered by local non-Scouting partner organizations.
- Connect Scouts with Nova counselors or Supernova mentors as needed (which may involve recruiting adults to serve in those roles).
- Identify counselors for STEM-related merit badges.
- Serve as the unit contact person for all things STEM related.

Adding STEM to Your Troop Program

Depending on your interest and resources, you can incorporate STEM into your program in small or large ways. Often, it's simply a matter of highlighting the STEM aspects of things you're already doing. Consider these examples:

- When Scouts are learning fire-building, you could talk about the chemistry of fire.
- When Scouts are learning to use GPS units, you could talk about satellite technology.
- When Scouts are learning to find evidence of native animals, you could talk about why certain animals are found in certain habitats.
- When Scouts are sitting around a campfire, you could pull out a star chart and help them identify constellations.

It's also easy to turn Scouting activities into scientific experiments or investigations. Here are three examples:

- On a day hike, Scouts could wear different types of socks on each foot to determine which fabric keeps their feet dryer. They could also use smartphone apps to calculate elevation gain, hiking speed, and caloric output.
- During a pioneering campout, Scouts could build water-balloon catapults and experiment with ways to achieve the maximum throw distance. They could also experiment with different tower designs to determine which is the strongest.

- When cooking, Scouts could experiment with ingredient amounts (such as the amount of baking powder in a biscuit recipe) or with cooking temperatures. They could also develop a Dutch-oven temperature chart showing how many charcoal briquettes are required for certain baking temperatures.

As mentioned earlier, many merit badges relate directly or indirectly to STEM. Incorporating these merit badges into your program—or simply inviting counselors to introduce the badges at troop meetings—is a great way to promote STEM learning. (Most Scouts would enjoy merit badges like Robotics or Signs, Signals, and Codes, but they won't necessarily go out of their way to find a counselor.)

The three volumes of *Program Features for Troops and Crews* also include numerous STEM topics. There are specific features on science, technology, engineering, and math, as well as related topics like sustainability.

Nova Awards in the Troop

The Nova Awards can easily be adapted for use in the troop setting. Depending on how much work Scouts do independently, a single award might take four to five weeks to cover if it's your program feature or 10 to 12 weeks if you offer half-hour Nova sessions before troop meetings.

Take the Shoot! Nova Award as an example. Here's a summary of the requirements:

1. Watch and discuss about three hours of science-related shows or documentaries that involve projectiles, aviation, weather, astronomy, or space technology (option A).
2. Complete one of these merit badges: Archery, Astronomy, Athletics, Aviation, Rifle Shooting, Robotics, Shotgun Shooting, Space Exploration, or Weather.
3. Use a projectile simulation applet on the internet and design and complete a hands-on experiment to demonstrate projectile motion (option A).
4. Discover the latitude and longitude of your current position; find and track a satellite (option B).
5. Design and build a catapult that will launch a marshmallow a distance of a least 4 feet (option A).
6. Discuss with your counselor how science affects your everyday life.

Assuming you make requirement 2 a prerequisite or offer a merit badge class before troop meetings, here's what a month's worth of activities might look like:

Meeting 1

- Hold optional Weather merit badge class before troop meeting (requirement 2).
- Watch and discuss a 30-minute science documentary or a TV show like "MythBusters" (requirement 1).
- Work with online projectile simulators (requirement 3).

Meeting 2

- Hold optional Weather merit badge class before troop meeting (requirement 2).
- Watch and discuss a 30-minute science documentary or a TV show like "MythBusters" (requirement 1).
- Conduct an experiment to demonstrate projectile motion (requirement 3).

Meeting 3

- Hold optional Weather merit badge class before troop meeting (requirement 2).
- Watch and discuss a 30-minute science documentary or a TV show like "MythBusters" (requirement 1).
- Determine your latitude and longitude; find and track a satellite (requirement 4).

Meeting 4

- Hold optional Weather merit badge class before troop meeting (requirement 2).
- Watch and discuss a 30-minute science documentary or a TV show like "MythBusters" (requirement 1).
- Build and experiment with marshmallow catapults (requirement 5).

Main Event—Visit to a Science Museum

- Watch a live 60-minute science show (requirement 1).
- Discuss the impact of science on everyday life (requirement 6).

Note that the science museum visit could just take up an afternoon during a campout. Or, you could stay all day and do other STEM-related activities there.

For more ideas on STEM and Scouting, visit www.scouting.org/stem-nova-awards/stem-faq.

Fitness

While STEM education is a relatively new focus for the BSA, fitness training has been around since the very beginning. In the Scout Oath, Scouts pledge to be physically strong and mentally awake, and most outdoor activities require some measure of fitness. Strenuous outdoor activities also encourage Scouts to become more fit. In fact, many Scouts (and not a few adult leaders) undertake their first serious fitness regimens when they begin training for a high-adventure trip.

How well your troop program promotes fitness depends in large part on what that program looks like. If your calendar includes backpacking, canoeing, rock-climbing, and other rugged activities, Scouts will have both incentives and opportunities to get fit. If the most strenuous thing Scouts do on outings is lug patrol boxes a few dozen yards from the parking lot to their campsite, they may end up being the outdoor equivalent of couch potatoes.

Fitness Awards

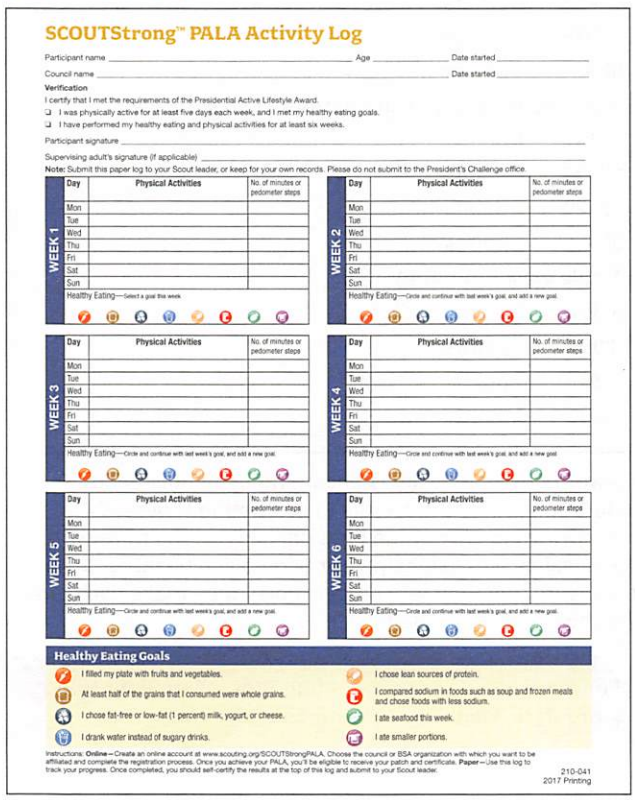
Fitness has always been built into the Scout advancement program. As of January 1, 2016, Scouts must complete these fitness requirements along the trail to Eagle Scout:

- For Tenderfoot, they must record their best results in four fitness tests, develop and follow a fitness plan, and show improvement after 30 days.
- For Second Class and First Class, they must be physically active for at least 30 minutes each day for five days a week for four weeks while at the previous rank. They must also set goals for including physical activity in their daily lives.
- For Eagle Scout, they must have earned the Personal Fitness merit badge, as well as the Swimming, Hiking, or Cycling merit badge.

Other requirements along the way address nutrition and the dangers of using drugs, alcohol, and tobacco. And merit badges such as Athletics and Sports provide Scouts further opportunities to explore aspects of fitness.

The BSA has also developed two special awards that relate directly to fitness: the SCOUTStrong PALA Challenge Award for individuals and the SCOUTStrong Healthy Unit Award for packs and troops.

SCOUTStrong PALA Challenge Award. A Scouting-specific version of the Presidential Active Lifestyle Award, this award can be earned by Scouts, adult leaders, parents, friends of Scouting, and BSA alumni. To earn the award, participants must meet a daily activity goal of 30 minutes a day for adults and 60 minutes a day for kids under 18 for at least five days a week, for six out of eight weeks. These activities can range from walking and gardening to canoeing and water aerobics; the key is to engage major muscle groups at a moderate to vigorous activity level. Also, each week participants must focus on a healthy eating goal. There are eight to choose from, and each week participants add a new goal while continuing with their previous goals. Recognition items include the SCOUTStrong PALA Challenge patch, No. 614207, and a downloadable certificate (www.scouting.org/resources/bsa-fit).



SCOUTStrong™ PALA Activity Log

Participant name _____ Age _____ Date started _____

Council name _____ Date started _____

Verification

I certify that I met the requirements of the Presidential Active Lifestyle Award.

- ❑ I was physically active for at least five days each week, and I met my healthy eating goals.
- ❑ I have performed my healthy eating and physical activities for at least six weeks.

Participant signature _____

Supervising adult's signature (if applicable) _____

Note: Submit this paper log to your Scout leader, or keep for your own records. Please do not submit to the President's Challenge office.

	Day	Physical Activities	No. of minutes or pedometer steps
WEEK 1	Mon		
	Tue		
	Wed		
	Thu		
	Fri		
	Sat		
	Sun		
	Healthy Eating—Select a goal this week.		
WEEK 2	Mon		
	Tue		
	Wed		
	Thu		
	Fri		
	Sat		
	Sun		
	Healthy Eating—Circle and continue with last week's goal, and add a new goal.		
WEEK 3	Mon		
	Tue		
	Wed		
	Thu		
	Fri		
	Sat		
	Sun		
	Healthy Eating—Circle and continue with last week's goal, and add a new goal.		
WEEK 4	Mon		
	Tue		
	Wed		
	Thu		
	Fri		
	Sat		
	Sun		
	Healthy Eating—Circle and continue with last week's goal, and add a new goal.		
WEEK 5	Mon		
	Tue		
	Wed		
	Thu		
	Fri		
	Sat		
	Sun		
	Healthy Eating—Circle and continue with last week's goal, and add a new goal.		
WEEK 6	Mon		
	Tue		
	Wed		
	Thu		
	Fri		
	Sat		
	Sun		
	Healthy Eating—Circle and continue with last week's goal, and add a new goal.		

Healthy Eating Goals

- I filled my plate with fruits and vegetables.
- At least half of the grains that I consumed were whole grains.
- I chose fat-free or low-fat (1 percent) milk, yogurt, or cheese.
- I drank water instead of sugary drinks.
- I chose lean sources of protein.
- I compared sodium in foods such as soup and frozen meals and chose foods with less sodium.
- I ate seafood this week.
- I ate smaller portions.

Instructions: **Online**—Create an online account at www.scouting.org/SCOUTStrongPALA. Choose the council or BSA organization with which you want to be affiliated and complete the registration process. Once you achieve your PALA, you'll be eligible to receive your patch and certificate. **Paper**—Use this log to track your progress. Once completed, you should self-certify the results at the top of this log and submit to your Scout leader.

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SCOUTStrong Healthy Unit Award. This award is earned by the entire troop (or by a Cub Scout den or pack). It rewards the troop for following three healthy eating practices at meetings, events, and outings: snacking smart, drinking right, and moving more. To earn the award, your troop must serve fruits and vegetables when you have snacks (three meetings), make water the main beverage (six meetings), and include 15 minutes of fun physical activity (nine meetings). Recognition items include the SCOUTStrong Healthy Unit Award patch, No. 620583, and a downloadable certificate (www.scouting.org/resources/bsa-fit).

Both the individual and unit awards rely on self-reporting, and how you implement them is up to you. With the unit award, for example, you might not want to count troop meetings toward the first two goals if you don't serve snacks.

The American College of Sports Medicine recommends seeing a doctor before starting a program of vigorous exercise if you have a heart condition or high blood pressure; experience chest pain, dizziness, or loss of consciousness while exercising; or have bone or joint problems.

SCOUTStrong FIT • FUEL • FUN

SCOUTStrong Healthy Unit Award Tracker SCOUTS

Track your progress toward becoming a SCOUTStrong Healthy Unit

Healthy Unit Activities	Record the Meeting / Event / Outing Dates:
3 Serve fruit or vegetable at 3 meetings.	1 2 3
6 Serve water as the primary beverage at 6 meetings.	1 2 3 4 5 6
9 Do 15 minutes of physical activity at 9 meetings.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Extra activity: Sugar Detectives. Find this activity at www.scouting.org/scoutstronghealthyunit

Has your unit completed the 3-6-9 requirements? Congratulations, you are a SCOUTStrong Healthy Unit!

Help Scouts learn healthy habits by continuing these practices at meetings throughout the year. You can lead a SCOUTStrong unit every year - find trackers for each rank at www.scouting.org/scoutstronghealthyunit.

Healthy Eating Goals

The SCOUTStrong PALA Challenge Award promotes these healthy eating goals.

- I filled half my plate with fruits and vegetables.
- At least half of the grains I consumed were whole grains.
- I chose fat-free or low-fat (1 percent) milk, yogurt, or cheese.
- I drank water instead of sugary drinks.
- I chose lean sources of protein.
- I compared sodium in foods such as soup and frozen meals and chose foods with less sodium.
- I ate seafood this week.
- I paid attention to portion size.

Taking the SCOUTStrong PALA Challenge as a Troop

While Scouts and leaders can earn the individual award at any time, they'll probably be more successful if the whole troop works on the award together. Consider this approach:

- Designate two months during the year to concentrate on the award (perhaps in the winter, when people are less likely to be physically active).
- Increase the amount of physical activity at meetings and outings to make earning the award easier.
- Select one healthy eating goal that the whole troop will work on each week.
- Be sure the healthy eating goals are considered during meal planning for outings.
- Have Scouts and leaders report their progress each week.
- Hold a drawing for fitness-related prizes at the end of eight weeks; everyone who met the challenge gets entered in the drawing. Or give out smaller prizes each week and a grand prize at the end.
- Distribute patches and certificates at your next court of honor, and list the names in your troop newsletter or other communications.

Patrols could also challenge each other to have 100 percent of their members meet the challenge.

Adding Fitness to Your Troop Program

As discussed above, the best way to incorporate fitness into your troop program is to plan activities that build and promote fitness. It makes little sense to emphasize fitness and nutrition one month and then go back to your regular program of sedentary camping and high-fat, high-calorie camp menus.

When your PLC is developing its annual program plan, challenge the Scouts to schedule outings that promote fitness, such as day hikes and canoe trips, or to incorporate physical activity into more sedentary outings (for example, a game of Capture the Flag during a weekend devoted to fishing). At monthly PLC meetings, challenge the Scouts to include active games in troop meetings and to plan nutritious menus. (The *Cooking* merit badge pamphlet includes plenty of recipes to get them started.)

At the same time, an occasional fitness-related theme can teach fitness concepts and motivate Scouts (and adults) to make lifestyle changes. The three volumes of *Program Features for Troops and Crews* include a Fitness and Nutrition feature, for example, and there are additional features on a number of sports and outdoor activities.

Here are some other ways to add fitness to your troop program:

- Develop troop-specific awards to complement the SCOUTStrong PALA Challenge and SCOUTStrong Healthy Unit awards. For example, you could create a 100 Mile Club for Scouts and adults who have hiked 100 miles.
- Sign up as a troop for a local 10K run, bike tour, or other fitness event.
- Encourage Scouts to come to troop meetings early to play pickup basketball, ultimate, or another active game that players can easily join in progress.
- Devote the troop meeting after each outing to fitness-related activities.
- Create a troop fitness challenge, building on the exercises required for Tenderfoot. See the box on this page.

Troop Fitness Challenge

Have each Scout complete the Tenderfoot fitness tests, and assign points as shown here. Average the results to get a troop score (or separate patrol scores). Repeat every six months, and look for improvement.

It's not a good idea to compare individual Scouts' results because those results will vary greatly, in part because of age differences. (For example, a 17-year-old in the 50th percentile should be able to run a mile in 7:25, while an 11-year-old in the 50th percentile should take 9:06—a difference of more than a minute and a half.) Moreover, comparing the results of an athlete with an average Scout will discourage the average Scout without challenging the athlete to improve their performance.

Push-ups (number in 30 seconds)

1–29	1 point
30–39	2 points
40–49	3 points
50+	4 points

Sit-ups or curl-ups (number in 60 seconds)

1–29	1 point
30–39	2 points
40–49	3 points
50+	4 points

Modified stretch and sit (number in 60 seconds)

1–19	1 point
20–24	2 points
25–29	3 points
30+	4 points

1-mile walk/run (time)

8:30+	1 point
8:00+	2 points
7:30+	3 points
7:00+	4 points

In a world where obesity is becoming epidemic, Scout leaders can play a critical role in promoting fitness. By finding ways to encourage physical activity and to reward fitness gains, you can help your Scouts live healthier lives and ensure that they fulfill the promise they make each time they recite the Scout Oath.

For more ideas on incorporating fitness into your troop program, visit www.scouting.org/resources/bsa-fit.

SERVICE AND STEWARDSHIP

Service to others and stewardship of natural resources are basic building blocks of the Scouting experience. They are also powerful tools you can use to ensure that your troop's program offers Scouts plenty of opportunities to practice leadership and planning, to strengthen habits of responsibility, and to be recognized for their achievements. Most of all, service to others and to the environment can help fulfill Scouting's commitment to guiding Scouts as they become adults who live according to the values of the BSA.

"To help other people at all times." In reciting the Scout Oath, Scouts promise to look beyond themselves for ways to assist their family, community, and nation.

CHAPTER 13
Troop Service Projects

For adult leaders, service projects are ready-made tools for teaching leadership and Scouting skills, instilling values, and adding exciting and satisfying activities to the troop's program. Most of all, service can enrich the lives of Scouts today and throughout their lifetimes.

Put a Scout in charge of each service project. That will give the Scout valuable leadership experience and preparation for eventually leading their own Eagle Scout service project.

Yet community service projects sometimes get less attention, and make less impact, than they deserve. Sometimes service projects are tacked onto the troop program, almost as afterthoughts. Sometimes they are poorly attended. Sometimes it's hard to tell whether a project has really impacted the community or the Scouts doing the work. In this chapter, we'll discuss some ways to harness the power of service in your troop.

Service and Advancement

Community service is required for each Scouts BSA rank except Scout:

Tenderfoot: one hour or more of service

Second Class: two hours or more of service

First Class: three hours or more of service

Star: six hours or more of service

Life: six hours or more of service, half of which must be conservation-related

Eagle: Eagle Scout service project

For Tenderfoot, Second Class, and First Class, Scouts must also explain how their service relates to the ideals of Scouting.

Reviewing Your Track Record

A good first step is to review your troop's record of service over the last few years. First, complete the Troop Service Record worksheet on this page.

Troop Service Record

	This Year	Last Year	Two Years Ago
Number of troop service projects	_____	_____	_____
Number of patrol projects	_____	_____	_____
Number of Eagle Scout projects	_____	_____	_____

Next, pick the most effective and least effective projects from recent years and ask yourself these questions about each:

- Was the project well attended? How did attendance compare with the average troop campout?
- Who chose the project? Scouts or adults?
- Did the project draw a mix of younger and older Scouts?
- Did the project have a positive impact on the community?
- Did you finish all the work you planned to do?
- Did Scouts understand how the project helped the community?
- Did Scouts have the chance to plan and lead?
- Did Scouts work hard and have fun?
- Did Scouts want to quit before the project ended, or did they want to keep working when it was time to leave?

This simple evaluation should give you a good idea of how prominent and effective service is in your troop program. Share this information with your patrol leaders' council at its annual planning conference and with the troop committee as it reviews the calendar the PLC develops. Look for ways to do a better job in the future.

Adult Leaders and Service Projects

In a Scout-led troop, service projects offer Scouts just as much possibility for developing leadership skills as other activities. However, adults must find the right role for themselves, one that gives Scouts the greatest opportunities to accept responsibility for planning and leadership. As much as possible, adult leaders should stay in the background and allow projects to be Scout-led. They should stand ready to coach youth leaders by offering guidance and support and by providing resources that Scouts need in order to be successful.

When appropriate, you can take part as a participant under the guidance of the Scouts who have organized and are leading a project. This allows you to enjoy the experience while modeling what it means to be a good follower. By staying close to the action where you can observe how the Scouts' plans are unfolding and leadership is being practiced, you will be better able to mentor Scouts who are developing their leadership capabilities.

Transformational Service Projects

In volume 1 of the *Troop Leader Guidebook*, we discussed five attributes of effective service projects and explained how each project should:

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

You can go beyond effective, however, by doing projects that are truly transformational, both for your community and for your Scouts.

To transform your community, seek out a partner organization that has a clear vision and is moving in the right direction but still needs plenty of volunteer help. If you work with a rudderless organization, you'll end up wasting your time. If you work with an organization that doesn't really need your help (and thus comes up with make-work projects), you'll end up wasting both your time and that of the organization.

Before settling on a project, visit the organization to learn more about its needs and how the troop can help. Talk with the volunteer coordinator to make sure your capabilities align with the organization's needs. Tour the facility to get a better understanding of how, and how well, the organization functions and whether the troop's service will make a real difference. (Taking your senior patrol leader and assistant senior patrol leader along on these visits can teach them a lot about how nonprofit organizations work.)

To transform your Scouts, try to work directly with the people you are serving and/or alongside the partner organization's dedicated volunteers instead of working in isolation. The relationships you and your Scouts build will add a human element that will make service far more than just another activity to do or another box to check off on the way to advancement.

Devising Transformational Projects

What does transformational service look like in the real world? Consider a food drive. The simplest approach is to collect food in your neighborhood, box it up at your meeting place, and have an adult drop it off at the local food bank. This project would meet a need—assuming the food bank needs the sort of food you collect—but it would do little to transform your Scouts.

Now, consider how much more meaningful the project would be if Scouts visited the food bank and talked with its director. What if they got to help distribute the food to needy families or spent some time sorting and inspecting donations? Imagine what they would learn if a few Scouts were able to sit in while a new client met with the food bank's intake coordinator. Or consider how impactful it would be if, instead of collecting food for a food bank, the troop adopted several families that the chartered organization had identified. Tweaks like these can make an ordinary project extraordinary and move Scouts to do greater service in the future.

Many cities, local United Way organizations, and religious institutions hold annual "day of service" events, sometimes in conjunction with national observances like the Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service in January or the September 11th National Day of Service and Remembrance. National Trails Day (the first Saturday in June) is a time when volunteers across the country come together to build and maintain backcountry trails. Plugging into these efforts can help your Scouts see that they are part of an army of dedicated volunteers in your community.

Messengers of Peace

When Scouts and Scouters do service projects that contribute to world peace (broadly defined), they become Messengers of Peace and are eligible to wear a special ring patch that goes around the World Crest. That patch symbolizes their participation in an ever-widening circle of Scouts around the globe who are not just visualizing world peace but are helping to make it a reality. For more information, visit www.scouting.org/international/messengers-of-peace.

Helping Scouts Find Great Projects

Many Scouts have a relatively limited worldview. Ask them to come up with service-project ideas, and they probably won't think of much beyond what they've already done or have heard about in school or in their faith communities. While there's nothing wrong with building birdhouses, doing trail work, or cleaning up abandoned lots, Scouts may be more willing to sacrifice a Saturday for a different type of project or for a project they come up with themselves.

A good way to jump-start their thinking is to show them lists of project ideas. The list on the following page will get you started; see chapter 14 for a list of environmental stewardship projects. You can find many other lists through internet

searches. In some cases, Scouts will find just the project they want to do; in other cases, something on a list will spark an idea for a different project. Either outcome is fine.

Another good resource is the National Eagle Scout Association website (www.nesa.org), where you can find the winners of the Glenn A. and Melinda W. Adams National Eagle Scout Service Project of the Year Award. Your local council service center may have ideas as well; nonprofit organizations often contact Scout councils looking for Scouts to work on their projects.

You could also have the Scouts brainstorm the types of organizations they want to be involved with. Some Scouts may have a passion for working with animals or children; others may have connected with specific organizations through their schools or faith communities. Once you decide what organization to work with, you can find out what's on its wish list and how the troop could help.

A Sampling of Service Projects

Conduct a book drive for an under-resourced school.

Build raised, wheelchair-accessible planter boxes for a nursing home.

Conduct a video inventory of property at your chartered organization.

Create personal care kits to distribute to homeless people.

Collect toys and books for a local Ronald McDonald House.

Set up collection boxes for donated eyeglasses.

Paint park benches and picnic tables at a local park.

Collect baby clothing and supplies for a women's and children's shelter.

Sort donations at a thrift store.

Plan an Earth Day fair on the town square.

Organize a blood drive and recruit donors.

Run a campaign to encourage people to sign up as organ donors.

Conduct a "don't text and drive" campaign at a local high school.

Help struggling elementary-school students with homework.

Run a bike-safety rodeo.

Work with the fire department to encourage people to replace the batteries in their smoke detectors.

Set up fitness stations at a local park.

Create hygiene kits or flood buckets for victims of natural disasters.

Collect gently used toys to be distributed by police officers to children affected by crime.

Build wheelchair ramps for homebound neighbors.

Plan a holiday party for a local nursing home.

Plan a sports field day for a local children's home.

Provide landscaping for a new home built by Habitat for Humanity.

Build dog-training equipment for a charity that trains companion animals.

Hold a campout for children with disabilities.

Recycle glass, paper, aluminum, or plastic.

Build a recycling station for your chartered organization.

Conduct flag ceremonies for a school.

Shovel snow or rake leaves for homebound neighbors.

Distribute voting reminders or emergency-procedure brochures.

Help set up for a community event like an Independence Day observance.

Paint rooms at your chartered organization.

Hold a child-identification fair where parents can have their children fingerprinted.

Build a community dog park.

Paint large street numbers in front of houses for easy identification by first responders.

Provide computer training to senior citizens.

Create a large map of the United States on a school playground.

Provide assistance and refreshments at a polling place on Election Day.

Hold a flag retirement ceremony.

Produce a documentary about your town's history.

Because most chartered organizations have a strong focus on community service, looking there for project ideas makes sense. Whether you do a project at your chartered organization's location or work with it on a community project it supports, you will strengthen your ties with a key troop partner.

You can also find good service project ideas by talking with the volunteer coordinators at organizations where your Scouts would like to serve or with representatives of your chartered organization. Ask questions like these to get beyond busywork projects:

- What is your organization's vision for the future?
- What projects are on your wish list?
- What would you do if you had unlimited volunteers and financial resources?
- What is the greatest unmet need among the people you serve?

Finally, if your Scouts are still struggling for ideas, ask these questions to help them focus:

- Are you more interested in an outdoor project or an indoor project?
- Do you want to plan an activity or do a construction project?
- Do you want to do a one-time project or get involved in a long-term effort?
- Do you want your project to help children, senior citizens, people with disabilities, military personnel or veterans, pets, the environment, or your community as a whole?
- Do you want to help your local community, people in another state, or people in another country?

Be sure to plan a variety of service projects throughout the year so that every Scout will find something interesting in which to participate.

Making Service Projects Enjoyable

The best way to get Scouts excited about service is to make service projects, especially the first projects they undertake, enjoyable. Though the work may be hard, it should also be satisfying. That starts with choosing projects that are interesting, but there are other things you can do as well. Here are a few.

Choose Reasonable Projects

First projects should be limited in scope and last no more than a few hours or an afternoon. As Scouts gain experience and prove their worth to themselves and others, projects can become more lengthy and complex. However, it's still important to keep in mind the participants' ages and maturity levels.

Some service efforts can be finished in a few hours, an afternoon, or a day. Longer-term projects can be broken into intermediate goals achievable in shorter amounts of time—planting a certain number of trees, for example, or repairing the equipment in just one area of a city park.

Be sure to schedule breaks, perhaps following the backpacking model of taking a 10-minute break every hour.

Consider Skill Levels

A good project should be within the skill levels of the Scouts doing it. Efforts that are too demanding set up Scouts to fail and to lose interest in future projects. On the other hand, there is great value in challenges that push Scouts a little beyond their current abilities and allow them to master new skills. Determining the difficulty of a project is an art that will develop as you move from one project to the next.

Add Variety

A good project has variety. Doing different tasks during the day keeps the work fresh. Even repetitious projects can often be broken down into an interesting series of steps—for example, digging plants to be moved for use in revegetation, transporting the plants to a new site, preparing the soil, doing the planting, and hauling water. Scouts who spend time performing each of these steps will get a taste of a full project, learn about the effectiveness of the entire effort, and come away satisfied at having been involved in all phases of the work.

Plan More Than Just Work

Whenever possible, combine service projects with a fun activity. If you're working in town, that may be as simple as playing a game of ultimate during the lunch break. If you're working in a natural area, try to combine the project with another Scout activity such as a hike, a campout, a swim, or a nature walk with someone who can discuss the ecology of an area. That will enrich the experience for everyone and also reinforce the idea that caring for the environment is a fundamental part of the entire Scouting program.

Combining an outing with a service project lets you save a weekend on the troop calendar.

Ensure Safety

Don't let your guard down just because you're working in your chartered organization's basement or down the street at the local park. Follow the BSA's *Service Project Planning Guidelines* and *Age Guidelines for Tool Use and Work at Elevations or Excavations,* as discussed in volume 1 of the *Troop Leader Guidebook.* The former document covers planning, hazard analysis and recognition, tools and equipment, weather considerations, health/sanitation considerations, and assessment and monitoring, while the latter document details age requirements for using various types of hand and power tools.

Celebrate Success

With some projects, it's easy to gauge progress. If you're painting a room, for example, your progress will be readily apparent. In other cases, look for milestones that you can celebrate: 100 trees planted, 1/4 mile of trail repaired, etc. When the going gets tough, take a break and reflect on how far you've come.

Project Planning Questions

What is the scope of the project?

What are the participants' skill levels?

How much supervision do we need?

What tools, equipment, and training do we need?

How will we access the site?

What hazards should we plan for?

What health/sanitation considerations should we plan for?

How could weather affect the project?

What BSA policies or local codes or ordinances apply?

What will the work schedule look like?

How will we gauge our success?

Documentation

Many troops keep logbooks or create online photo albums to document their service and stewardship efforts. A logbook doesn't have to be fancy. In a notebook, Scouts can write down how many hours they worked and what they accomplished—feet of hiking trail repaired, number of bird boxes installed, volume of food-bank contributions collected, species and locations of trees planted, etc.—and some notes about the long-term responsibilities to maintain those projects or to repeat them in the future.

Your Scouts can take before-and-after photographs of their work sites to include in their logbooks, as well as pictures of the work underway. They might use a video camera to film some of the fun and satisfaction that is often a part of projects that help others. Logbooks, photographs, and videos are ideal for use at courts of honor, troop parents' nights, and other gatherings that can showcase the value and excitement of this aspect of the Scouting experience.

Scouts can share a troop's project logbooks with agency resource managers, the chartered organization, and community leaders who have hosted projects. Documentation of completed work is often valuable for them as they assess volunteer involvement and look to the future for more partnerships with Scouts. Photographs and project reports can also help Scouts as they approach other community leaders to explore possibilities for cooperating on projects with them, too.

Recording Service Hours

Each time your troop completes a service project, you should report it on the Journey to Excellence website. This allows the BSA to tally and celebrate the total number of service hours recorded across the country each year—an important indicator of Scouting's positive impact. To report your service hours, you will need your unit ID and unit number; your local council service center can provide this information if you don't have it.

At the website, select the type of project that best describes what you did, then input the data requested:

- Date of the project
- Number of registered Scouts participating
- Number of non-Scouts (brothers, sisters, friends)
- Number of adult leaders participating
- Number of other adults participating
- Total hours worked (number of people times the length of time they worked)
- Organizations that joined you on the project
- Who or what organization benefited from the project
- Number of items collected (if applicable)

For Eagle Scout projects, the preferred method is to let the council registrar enter the project date and number of service hours as part of the Eagle Scout application verification process. This is done when the Life Scout has completed all requirements and the application is submitted to the service center for verification before the Eagle board of review.

Recognition

Most people enjoy being recognized for what they have done. Scouting provides a variety of ways to acknowledge the accomplishments of Scouts involved in service. Patches, awards, and opportunities to complete requirements for merit badges and ranks can all be rewards for work well done and encouragement to continue to act on behalf of others and the environment. At the same time, keep in mind the Scout slogan—Do a Good Turn Daily. Service should be something Scouts do because they are Scouts, not because they expect a reward.

Organization leaders who help Scouts undertake projects also deserve acknowledgment. A sincere thank you and a handshake from Scouts at the conclusion of a project can be very much appreciated. Letters from Scouts to agency supervisors or organization heads thanking those who provided support during projects are always welcomed.

Publicity

Many service projects, including Eagle Scout projects, lend themselves to coverage in the media. Publicizing Scouts' volunteer efforts helps communities understand the role that Scouting plays and can encourage youth to continue to look for ways to be of service. They can also make your troop more attractive to potential members who want to make a positive impact on their communities and show parents that Scouting can teach their children far more than camping skills.

It's great to get media coverage of service projects after the fact, but there may also be occasions when promotion ahead of time makes sense. For example, you could invite members of the public to attend a flag retirement ceremony or ask area residents to donate items to a food drive or other collection effort.

One way to increase awareness is to invite local elected officials or media personalities to work alongside your Scouts.

CHAPTER 14
Environmental Stewardship Projects

The outdoors is Scouting's playground. On hikes, campouts, and other adventures, Scouts are immersed in the environment. The adventure of the outdoors is the reason that many join Scouting, and adult leaders can channel that enthusiasm. Programs can help Scouts become familiar with natural surroundings, develop confidence in their abilities to live comfortably in outdoor settings, and continue to learn about and appreciate the environment. A troop that also weaves stewardship into all its outdoor activities adds immeasurably to the satisfaction, richness, and value of its program.

Simply put, stewardship is an awareness of the environment and a willingness to do one's best to care for it. For Scouts on a hike or campout, it can start with always following the Leave No Trace and Tread Lightly! principles. Doing so encourages Scouts to be aware of the impact they have on the land and to make good decisions that will lessen any negative effects their outdoor activities might create. It can become a mark of pride for your troop to master and always practice Leave No Trace and Tread Lightly!

Scouts can go a step further by planning and carrying out projects to repair environmental damage and to protect landscapes from further degradation. That's good for the land and great for Scouts. Active stewardship allows them to plan, organize, and work with others, and to use many Scouting skills to complete efforts in the field. Rightly managed, more extensive stewardship efforts can be a great boon to America's public and private lands.

The William T. Hornaday Awards

Scouts, Scouters, and units with a real passion for conservation may want to pursue a William T. Hornaday Award. This program offers a badge and two medals to Scouts who earn conservation-related merit badges and complete significant conservation projects, and it offers a unit award your troop can receive for completing a unique, substantial conservation project. Other awards recognize adults and organizations.

Hornaday Award	Administered by	Awarded to	Type of Award	How to Qualify	Maximum Awards per Year	Requirements
Unit Award	Council	Pack, troop, or crew	Certificate	Be nominated or apply	Unlimited	Complete one project; 60% of unit contributes
Badge	Council	Scout or Venturer	Badge and certificate	Apply	Unlimited	Complete advancement requirements; complete one substantial project
Bronze medal	National	Scout or Venturer	Medal, certificate, and square knot	Apply	Unlimited	Complete advancement requirements; complete at least three substantial projects, each from a different project category
Silver medal	National	Scout or Venturer	Medal, certificate, and square knot	Apply	Unlimited	Complete advancement requirements; complete at least four substantial projects, each from a different project category
Gold badge	Council	Adult Scouter	Badge	Be nominated	Unlimited	Adult Scouter; leadership to conservation at council or district level for at least three years
Gold medal	National	Adult Scouter	Medal, certificate, and square knot	Be nominated	Six	Adult Scouter; leadership to conservation at national or regional level over a lifetime (at least 20 years)
Gold certificate	National	Organization or individual	Certificate	Be nominated	Six	Outstanding contribution to youth conservation education for at least three years

For details, visit www.scouting.org/awards/hornaday-awards.

Many outdoor activities can be tailored to include environmental work. Hiking, camping, and canoeing trips, for example, may take group members to locations in need of erosion control and revegetation. Conservation projects can also offer the social pleasure of planning and doing something worthwhile with friends, as well as the enjoyment of meeting resource managers and other land users. Hands-on conservation projects encourage Scouts to take ownership of public areas they enjoy and use. The list on this page offers some ideas to get you started.

A Sampling of Environmental Stewardship Projects

Build bird feeders.

Plant shrubs to provide food and cover for wildlife.

Build and set out nesting boxes for birds and wildlife.

Conduct stream-improvement projects.

Plant trees and grasses as part of a restoration plan.

Help thin and prune woodlands in a managed forest.

Remove invasive plant species.

Assist in educational efforts encouraging homeowners in areas prone to wildfires to create no-burn buffers around buildings.

Create conservation exhibits and presentations for schools, fairs, and other public events.

Help develop and maintain a nature trail in a public park or Scout camp.

Help construct or maintain trails for hikers, horseback riders, mountain bikers, and other users.

Assist a local agency with trout-stream enhancement.

Improve fish and wildlife habitat, riparian areas, streams, and shorelines.

Build structures in arid regions to hold water for wild animals.

Conduct measurements of snow depth at backcountry monitoring locations and forward the information to meteorological stations.

Revegetate damaged meadows and hillsides.

Return unwanted and abandoned campsites and trails to their natural conditions.

Plant trees, shrubs, and grasses to control erosion, produce shade, and provide wildlife with sources of food and shelter.

Monitor the quality of streams.

Conduct an ongoing census of selected wild animals.

Maintain picnic pavilions, lifeguard towers, boat docks, playground equipment, and other outdoor recreational facilities.

Prepare and install educational signs along nature trails.

Build fences to prevent the overgrazing of riparian areas.

Establish and care for urban greenbelts, neighborhood parks, or other open spaces.

Clean up urban waterways and paint "Dump No Waste/ Drains to Stream" messages on storm drains.

Distribute informational fliers that outline appropriate ways of disposing of oil, chemicals, and other toxic wastes.

Help fisheries officials stock lakes and streams.

Collect discarded Christmas trees, and install them as revetments to protect stream banks or submerge them to provide shelter for fish.

Construct observation decks and blinds in wildlife refuges.

Develop and maintain outdoor classroom sites.

Increase accessibility of resource-area facilities for disabled visitors.

Teach environmental awareness skills to young people visiting resource areas.

Prepare informational brochures to be distributed at agency visitor centers.

Train others in appropriate conservation work skills.

Help distribute seedlings on Arbor Day.

Finding Places to Serve

Almost a third of the United States is in the public domain. City and county parks, state forests, wetlands, national recreation areas, historical sites, wilderness regions, and seashores are treasures—and every American shares in their ownership. Add to those the many unspoiled landscapes in private ownership, including hundreds of council Scout camps across America, and you don't need to travel very far from home to reach open country where your Scouts can also play an important role in caring for these resources.

Does your troop enjoy spending time in parks or forests, at lakeshores, or on ocean beaches? Are you near a public arboretum, fish hatchery, wildlife refuge, or bird sanctuary? Are there greenbelts and waterways in your neighborhood? When you are visiting any of those areas, encourage your Scouts to find out whom they can talk to about involving volunteers in worthwhile projects. Some agencies and conservation organizations have coordinators of volunteer activities or work with "friends of the park" groups that coordinate volunteer efforts on their behalf. If not, Scouts can discover who is in charge of the area and how that person can be contacted.

They may also discover that the need is great. Conservation professionals entrusted to manage America's public and private lands and waterways often struggle under the burdens of too little funding and too much work. Even the most dedicated staffs overseeing city, state, and national resources can seldom protect the environment as completely as they would like.

As a result, many projects involving stream cleanup, meadow revegetation, erosion control, and improvement of wildlife habitat must be left undone. Monitoring of resource areas used by humans and wildlife is too often delayed or never begun. Without occasional attention, forests, marshes, and lakeshores can suffer from erosion and abuse. Neglected campgrounds, beaches, monuments, recreational facilities, historic buildings, and trails fall into disrepair. Every land manager you contact probably has a list of projects he or she would love to complete if more resources were available.

Your local BSA council can be another source for stewardship projects. A camp ranger or Scouting professional can suggest conservation work troops can do at council camps, especially during the off-season when camp is not in session. Doing projects at your council camp lets you mix service with camp activities.

Stewardship Partnerships

Troops that enjoy using a park or forest regularly for outdoor activities can sometimes develop a long-term conservation partnership with the area's land managers. When those entrusted with natural resources know that a troop's Scouts are committed to being good stewards of the lands they use for camping and hiking, opportunities increase for regular projects that can fulfill the needs of land managers and of the Scouts themselves. That's a terrific way for Scouting to show that its members are involved in caring for parks and forests and other natural resources, not just using them.

Developing a long-term relationship with a land manager can sometimes earn your troop special access, such as the ability to use a campground out of season or to enter a natural area without paying a fee.

An enduring partnership between a volunteer group and a land management agency or service organization will not happen overnight. As each side becomes acquainted with the other and builds a foundation of trust and understanding, the partnership should become increasingly strong. In this ideal setting, volunteers can explore the environmental stewardship opportunities available to them, and resource managers can learn the most effective ways to involve volunteers in conservation work.

Encourage your Scouts to invite conservation professionals to visit a regular meeting of your troop or a troop outing. Seeing Scouts in their own setting can help agency personnel better understand the nature of the troop and the people who are involved with it. Resource managers can also share information about their agency or organization and discuss possibilities for involving the group in conservation projects.

Consider these points when pursuing an ongoing relationship with a service organization or land management agency:

- Ensure that the Scouts are committed to an ongoing partnership before contacting the agency, and agree on the duration of the partnership.
- Emphasize that you are interested in developing a long-lasting volunteer relationship rather than undertaking a one-time project.
- Explain that you are willing to start with small, easily managed projects that will allow resource managers and Scouts to get to know one another, to learn one another's expectations, and to develop a productive partnership. Initial work that has a high likelihood of success and satisfaction will encourage Scouts and resource managers to cooperate on future environmental projects.
- Express the range of projects your Scouts can tackle. Some resource managers may feel they have no projects that will be of interest to Scouts or that fall within the skill levels of Scouts. While this is sometimes true, it is more often the case that management staff is not aware of the broad range of projects that volunteers are capable of doing. Encourage resource professionals to consider all possibilities.

To be successful, everyone involved in troop stewardship projects must give something of themselves:

- Scouts and their leaders must be willing to seek out the training and experience required to direct conservation work effectively. They will need to devote time to planning projects and evaluating completed work.
- Resource managers might need to contribute some staff time to help Scouts and their leaders learn the skills they need to do good work. Managers should also help plan projects that take advantage of the Scouts' skills.
- Scouts must have a willingness to learn, to work hard, and to make a commitment to enhancing the environment.
- The troop must keep its commitment. Consider a time frame for the commitment such as two or three years (which can always be extended). Be sure to give the resource manager as much notice as possible if the troop is no longer able to honor the commitment.

Managers, Scouts, and troop leaders should meet to plan projects and to provide standards and guidance for the satisfactory completion of the work. Resource managers might also be responsible for providing tools and construction materials and for creating a final evaluation to help groups effectively take on future projects.

Good for Scouts, good for a troop's adult leaders, and good for resource managers—long-term stewardship projects hold great promise for everyone involved. By addressing environmental problems with the many hands and minds of enthusiastic Scouts and adult leaders, they are also good for the planet.

In spite of your best efforts, a troop might still find it is simply unable to make headway with particular resource managers. When that is the case, turn your attentions elsewhere. Seek out other agencies and organizations. Groups sincerely interested in providing volunteer help to care for the environment will eventually find conservation professionals pleased to work with them. When you connect with people who appreciate what you and your group have to offer, your volunteers and those resource managers will have the beginnings of a long, productive, and positive relationship.

Stewardship-Partnership Benefits

For Resource Managers

Many resource managers have conservation work they are unable to accomplish due to shortages in funding and personnel. Partnerships with BSA volunteers allow conservation professionals to accomplish much more in the field, especially on projects that require more time and/or people than resource managers normally have at their disposal.

Scouts providing stewardship service on public and private lands can learn about the people who manage those areas—their responsibilities, the difficulties they face, and the pleasures of their duties. That awareness can increase the public appreciation of professional conservation staffs and the work they do.

For Scouts and Adult Leaders

With the ongoing projects of long-term partnerships, Scouts and adult leaders can gain the experience to plan and direct conservation activities on their own. They can also add to their storehouse of work-skills knowledge, which will increase each time they go into the field.

Conservation projects provide adult leaders and older Scouts with many opportunities to make environmental education come alive for the rest of a troop. Through their actions and enthusiasm, Scouts and adult leaders experienced in environmental stewardship can act as role models, demonstrating a wise, hands-on approach to caring for the environment.

For Scouts

Scouts who assist in the protection and enhancement of the environment are learning to accept responsibility. Rather than assuming they have no power to solve the problems they see around themselves, Scouts can become active stewards of the land. The effects of that awareness could be every bit as valuable to the environment in the long term as the projects that the volunteers are completing at the moment. By returning to a site several times, Scouts can see firsthand the positive impact of their work. This will give them an incentive to continue the project as they develop a true connection with the site.

CHAPTER 15
Eagle Scout Service Projects

Perhaps the most prominent and confusing aspect of the Scout advancement program is the Eagle Scout service project. Even veteran leaders sometimes misunderstand what this requirement means and what it doesn't, as well as how they can best support Scouts who are working on it.

The single best resource for information on the Eagle Scout service project is the *Guide to Advancement*. In this chapter, we'll look at key aspects of the Eagle project and discuss its connections with the troop program.

What the Eagle Scout Service Project Is—and Isn't

Although the Eagle project doesn't have to be the last requirement an Eagle Scout candidate completes, it is in some ways a capstone project. After participating in service projects at lower ranks and after serving in various positions of responsibility, a Scout now has the chance to plan, develop, and give leadership to others in a significant project.

Aside from the planning and leadership aspects—which are obviously critical—an Eagle project could look much like any other troop service project. There are a few differences, however:

- **An Eagle Scout project must benefit an organization other than Scouting.** Building a trail at the local Scout camp wouldn't count, for example, while building a trail at a nearby state park could.
- **An Eagle Scout project can't benefit an individual.** For example, building a wheelchair ramp for a homebound senior citizen wouldn't count. An exception can be made when helping an individual benefits the larger community, as described in the *Guide to Advancement*.
- **An Eagle Scout project can't consist of routine labor.** Work the Scout already provides as a job or service doesn't count, nor does work that the beneficiary organization would normally do. See the *Guide to Advancement* for potential exceptions.

Some troops and districts inadvertently add to the project requirement by reading more into the requirement than is there. Here are some common misconceptions:

- **Location:** While the requirement specifies that the project must benefit "any religious institution, any school, or your community," that doesn't limit the Scout to just the local community. As the *Guide to Advancement* explains, a Scout can choose a project that benefits the "community of the world."
- **Number of hours:** There is no minimum number of hours for an Eagle project. As long as a Scout shows leadership in conducting an approved project, the requirement has been met.
- **Lasting value:** An Eagle project doesn't have to have lasting value. Planning a holiday party for residents of a nursing home is just as valid as building a nature trail.
- **Volunteer makeup:** The *Guide to Advancement* says an Eagle candidate must give leadership to at least two other people. There's no minimum requirement beyond that, and it doesn't matter whether the project helpers are other Scouts from the troop, friends from school, the Scout's parents, other adults, or some combination of the above.
- **Originality:** The Eagle candidate doesn't have to come up with a totally new idea. That said, the project must show evidence of planning and development; the Scout can't simply pull an older sibling's project workbook off the shelf and redo it.

Memorializing an Eagle Project

While Eagle projects don't have to have lasting value, it's a good idea to mark those projects that are permanent, such as nature trails or outdoor chapels. BSA Supply Group offers two plaques, including one that can be personalized with the Scout's name, troop number and city, project date, and project description.

The Eagle Scout Project Workbook

One of the most important resources for an Eagle candidate is the *Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook*, which covers every step from writing the proposal to documenting the completed project. More than just a tool for documentation, it walks the Scout through the necessary work and asks questions the Scout (and parents and Scout leaders) might never think about. Because few Scouts have planned and led big projects of any kind before starting their Eagle projects, the workbook offers essential guidance and can help prevent unnecessary mistakes.

Each Eagle Scout candidate is required to use the *Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook* to plan and document their project. That doesn't mean the Scout must fill out every blank and box, although doing so would probably be helpful to them. Some Scout leaders mistakenly think the workbook must be completed in its entirety.

The workbook consists of three major sections:

- Project proposal
- Project final plan
- Project report

Also included is information on fundraising or securing in-kind donations to support the project. While the project itself cannot be a fundraiser, the Scout may solicit donations to pay for supplies and materials and may request in-kind donations. The workbook outlines the fundraising rules that must be followed and includes a fundraising application.

Eagle candidates should use the Eagle Scout Service Project Fundraising Application, not the Unit Money-Earning Application.

Finally, the workbook includes a standalone document, Navigating the Eagle Scout Service Project, that explains the project process to beneficiaries. This document can help beneficiaries understand why the Scout can't just jump in and start working, why planning and leadership are important elements of the project, and what the organization can do to help the Scout achieve success.

The *Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook* is available as a fillable PDF document that is compatible with Adobe Reader and other free software. If using Adobe 9 or later, the Scout can fill in and save the document on a computer, add lines to text fields, and include photos, drawings, and other attachments. Opening the workbook in a web browser or other programs doesn't give Scouts access to these features.

Like other BSA documents, the *Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook* changes from time to time. Always use the current version from the BSA website.

The Eagle Scout Service Project Coach

An Eagle candidate's other key resource is the project coach. This is a registered Scouter who guides the Scout through the project process. In some cases, the council or district appoints project coaches; in other cases, it delegates the responsibility to unit volunteers. While an Eagle candidate doesn't have to use a project coach, doing so will make sense almost all the time.

The project coach should be very familiar with the *Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook* and the *Guide to Safe Scouting*. The coach should also understand that each Scout is probably planning their first project of this size, even if the coach has worked with dozens of projects.

The project coach doesn't have the authority to approve or reject a project. Instead, he or she provides guidance and uses logic and common sense to help the Scout make wise decisions.

Here are some ways a coach could help an Eagle candidate:

- Meet with a Scout after the project has been approved but before work begins on the final plan.
- Ask the Scout to describe the project will be planned; then offer advice accordingly.
- Emphasize those elements of a plan that, if ignored, could stop work or create health and safety issues.
- Remind the Scout to share the plan with the project beneficiary; the beneficiary should be fully aware of what will be done. (Note that a final plan for an Eagle Scout service project is between the Scout and the beneficiary. Coaches do not approve final plans.)
- Be available to the Scout as a consultant should questions arise about the planning process.
- Meet with the Scout to review the final plan; discuss its strengths, weaknesses, and risks; and suggest critical improvements.
- Discuss the project report with the Scout and offer advice on how to make a strong presentation at the board of review.

Remember that any contact with the Scout must be conducted according to Youth Protection procedures.

Project Approvals

The following people or groups must approve the Eagle project at various stages:

- Project proposal: unit leader, unit committee, beneficiary, council or district
- Fundraising application: beneficiary, unit leader, council or district
- Project report: beneficiary, unit leader

Note that no approval is required for the final plan.

Getting Project Approval

Before work can start on an Eagle project, the Eagle candidate must have their proposal approved by the Scoutmaster (or the Scoutmaster's designee), the troop committee, the project beneficiary, and the district or council. Years ago, the proposal was a full-blown project plan, and Scouts were sometimes disappointed when their plans didn't pass muster or when they'd chosen an unacceptable type of project (a charity fundraiser, for example).

Today, Scouts follow a different process, one that makes better use of their time and teaches them how projects are typically approved in the adult world. Rather than write a full-blown project plan, a Scout writes a proposal that represents the beginning of planning.

How detailed does this proposal have to be? It must be detailed enough to meet these five tests:

1. It provides sufficient opportunity to meet the Eagle Scout service project requirement. The Scout must show that planning, development, and leadership will take place. The Scout must also show how the project will benefit a religious institution, a school, or a community.
2. The project appears to be feasible. It must be shown that the project is realistic for the Scout to complete.
3. Safety issues will be addressed. The Scout must demonstrate an understanding of what must be done to

guard against injury and explain what will be done if someone gets hurt.

4. Action steps for further detailed planning are included. The Scout must make a list of the key steps needed to make sure the final plan will have enough details so it can be carried out successfully.
5. The Scout is on the right track with a reasonable chance for a positive experience.

The Scout's completed proposal only needs to provide enough detail to show a reviewer that the Scout can meet these tests.

Once the proposal has been approved, the Scout is ready to develop the final plan. It's here that the Scout thinks through the phases of the project; the necessary permits, permissions, supplies, and materials; the project budget; the number of workers needed and any special skills they should have; safety concerns; and contingency plans.

Some Scouters tell Eagle candidates that the final plan should be detailed enough that another Scout could successfully complete the project based solely on the written plan. That is *not* a requirement—remember that Scouts don't have to fill out the entire workbook—but offering such a suggestion can spur Scouts to think more deeply about their plans.

Evaluating the Project After Completion

Once the project is completed, the Scout writes a final report, as outlined in the *Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook.* Here the Scout documents what was done, what changes were made, what challenges were faced (and how those challenges were overcome), and what the Scout learned from the process. (That last topic is perhaps the most important in terms of the Scout's personal development. Although a Scout will do only one official Eagle Scout project, chances are good that they will conduct similar projects later in life.)

The Scout should take the project report to their Eagle Scout board of review. The report will help board members understand what the Scout accomplished.

Like the projects adults lead, Eagle Scout service projects don't always turn out exactly as planned. Surprises crop up, the weather causes delay, or the Scout needs to make changes in midstream. As a result, it can seem difficult to evaluate completed projects.

Eagle Scout service projects must be evaluated primarily on impact—the extent of benefit to the religious institution, school, or community—and on the leadership provided by the candidate. There must also be evidence of planning and development, but those elements must not overshadow the project itself. The beneficiary, the unit leader, or the board of review can't reject a project because it didn't turn out exactly as planned. For more information, see the *Guide to Advancement* for guidance on when projects can be rejected.

Eagle Projects and the Troop Program

In many ways, Eagle Scout service projects represent the best Scouting offers. They combine service and leadership, they unite Scouts and leaders around a common goal, and they raise Scouting's profile in the community.

At the same time, they can become distractions. Coaching sessions can monopolize the Scoutmaster's time during troop meetings, and project workdays can pull Scouts and adults away from troop outings. Especially when you have several Scouts planning or working on projects at the same time, it's important to keep projects in perspective.

Perhaps the best way to do that is to name a Life-to-Eagle coordinator, an assistant Scoutmaster or committee member whose primary function is to mentor Eagle candidates. If this adult doesn't have other significant duties, he or she can take as much time as needed at troop meetings to work with Scouts on project proposals. (Of course, coaching sessions can take place away from troop meetings as long as you follow Youth Protection policies.) He or she can also work to minimize conflicts between troop activities and Eagle project workdays, as well as between competing Eagle projects.

Keep in mind that an Eagle candidate doesn't have to use Scouts and leaders as volunteers. Friends, classmates, family members, and people associated with the beneficiary organization are legitimate resources as well. If you have several Scouts working on projects at the same time, using non-Scout volunteers may be the only way they can get enough help to complete their projects.

Risk Management and Eagle Scout Service Projects

All Eagle Scout service projects constitute official Scouting activity and thus are subject to Boy Scouts of America policies and procedures. Projects are considered part of a unit's program and are treated as such with regard to policies, procedures, and requirements regarding Youth Protection, two-deep leadership, etc.

Provision for the health and safety of those working on Eagle projects must be integrated into project planning and execution. Because an Eagle Scout service project is a unit activity, unit leadership has the same responsibility to assure safety in conducting a project as with any other unit activity. By ensuring that the candidate is taking health and safety into account during planning, you reduce the risk of problems during workdays. As with any Scouting activity, the *Guide to Safe Scouting* applies. You should also refer to the Sweet 16 of BSA Safety and the BSA's *Service Project Planning Guidelines* and *Age Guidelines for Tool Use and Work at Elevations or Excavations.* These documents appear as appendices in the *Guide to Safe Scouting,* which you can find online at at www.scouting.org/health-and-safety.

Unit leadership should be aware of project plans and schedules.

12
COAST GUARD
12

KEEPING SCOUTS INVOLVED AND INTERESTED

The longer youth stay in Scouting, the more they will benefit—and the stronger your troop will become. Keeping Scouts involved and interested means offering them a program that's more attractive than the countless other ways they could choose to spend their time. It also means finding tangible ways to mark and celebrate their progress—from merit badges to special ceremonies. Finally, it means recognizing and meeting the special challenges that come with working with older Scouts. Those topics are the focus of this section.

CHAPTER 16
Advanced Advancement Advice

Scouting is awash in patches. Many veteran Scouts and Scouters have shoeboxes and drawers full of them: camporee patches, Order of the Arrow lodge flaps, badges of office, and more. Patches can prompt Scouts to sign up early for summer camp, recruit a friend into Scouting, camp in freezing weather, show up for a service project, or complete the tough final requirements for a coveted award.

Of course, the most important patches in Scouting are those related to the advancement program—and close behind them are those representing the many special awards and honors Scouts can earn. In this chapter, we'll explore how you can use these patches (and the associated medals and pins) to achieve the aims of Scouting.

The policies described in this chapter come from the *Guide to Advancement*. Always consult the current edition of the guide for any policy changes.

The Purpose of Advancement

As chapter 19 in volume 1 explained, advancement is just one method of Scouting, not an end in itself. We use advancement badges and other awards as tools to spur each Scout toward developing character, citizenship, and fitness. It's what's in the head and heart—not on the shirt—that ultimately matters.

Scouting skills—things a young person learns to do—are important, but not as important as the primary goal of personal growth achieved through participating in the troop program. The concern is for total, well-rounded development. Age-appropriate surmountable hurdles are placed before members, and as they face these challenges they learn about themselves and gain confidence.

Learning Scout skills and concepts through active participation is a vehicle for personal growth, but it is not the primary goal. For example, learning how to tie a knot, plan a menu, swim, or administer first aid may turn out to be critical in one's life; but those skills are secondary to the goal of personal growth that comes with learning. As Scouts learn skills and then are tested on them, reviewed, and recognized, they develop confidence. They come to realize they can learn and do other similar things.

The retention of Scouting skills and knowledge is important, of course; but for retention to take place, those skills and that knowledge must be used regularly in the troop program.

Success is achieved when we fulfill the BSA mission statement and when we accomplish the aims of Scouting: character development, citizenship training, and mental and physical fitness. We know we are on the right track when we see youth accepting responsibility, demonstrating self-reliance, and caring for themselves and others; when they learn to weave Scouting ideals into their lives; and when we can see they will be positive contributors to society.

Teaching Life Lessons

Here are three life lessons the advancement program can teach.

- **Meeting a standard.** Every Scout must meet the same standard. Merit badges aren't graded on a curve, and we don't make exceptions in most cases for individual Scouts based on age, height, physical prowess, or intellectual ability. At times, that means Scouts will have to stretch to their limits and beyond. A classic example is when an undersized Scout must "rescue" a hulking waterfront staff member for Lifesaving merit badge. While that Scout may never perform a real water rescue, the Scout's life skills will undoubtedly be put to use every day. In fact, Scouting alumni often remember incidents like that waterfront test as defining moments in their growth.

See chapter 24 for information on advancement options for Scouts with special needs.

- **Working with adults.** To earn merit badges and special awards like the Supernova and William T. Hornaday awards, Scouts are expected to work with adults they may have never met—men and women who have special expertise in particular fields. Along the way, they must pick up the phone, make appointments, navigate to unfamiliar locations, and meet with people who may be decades older than themselves—all skills they will use as they apply for college, interview for jobs, schedule doctor appointments, negotiate loans, and otherwise handle the business of being an adult without a helping hand from Mom or Dad. (Of course, Mom or Dad will probably need to drive them to merit badge sessions, and the BSA's Youth Protection policies are in place to keep them safe.) Merit badge fairs and merit badge classes at summer camp can make advancement easier, but they sometimes rob Scouts of much of the learning the advancement program is designed to foster. (For more information, see "Merit Badge Classes, Fairs, Colleges, and Similar Events" later in this chapter.)

- **Becoming organized and self-motivated.** Cub Scouts advance primarily as a group within their den. The den leader decides which adventure the den will work on and walks the Cub Scouts through the requirements; when they receive their adventure loop or pin, they may not even be aware of all the requirements they have completed. By contrast, advancement in Scouts BSA is an individual endeavor, especially after Scouts leave the new-Scout patrol. Scouts must take initiative to advance, whether that means running for a troop office, requesting a Scoutmaster conference, or asking a youth or adult leader to sign off a completed advancement requirement. That's why some Scouts reach the Eagle Scout rank at age 13, while others run out of time when they turn 18. Scouts must also learn to be organized, something that doesn't come easily to most youth (or many adults). For example, keeping track of spending for three months for Personal Management merit badge can be a major test of a Scout's organizational skills. Some troops short-circuit this aspect of advancement by providing fill-in-the-blank merit badge worksheets, again robbing Scouts of life lessons that will last long after the badge content is forgotten. (For more information, see "Merit Badge Worksheets" later in this chapter.)

How Advancement Benefits the Troop

The primary purpose of the advancement program is to help Scouts grow, but advancement also helps the troop. In fact, it's a tool you can use to keep Scouts of all ages motivated and involved.

First, the advancement program offers an "ultimate" goal, the Eagle Scout rank, to which each Scout can aspire. While becoming an Eagle Scout is *not* the aim of Scouting, this long-range target is important, especially because Scouts are accustomed to working toward some distant goal in most other areas of their lives, whether that goal is a high school diploma or an athletic or academic scholarship. By highlighting the value of the Eagle Scout Award—and emphasizing that every Scout can achieve it—you give Scouts a reason to think further than the next campout.

For Scouts who achieve the Eagle rank well before their 18th birthdays, Eagle Palms offer additional goals beyond the "ultimate" goal.

Second, the advancement program offers a clear pathway toward the Eagle Scout rank. It would be unrealistic to ask an 11-year-old to work toward a goal that's probably five or six years away—that's roughly half the Scout's life so far—so the ranks of Scout through Life serve as milestones along the path. These milestones are important because Scouting, unlike many other youth activities, doesn't have seasonal milestones built in. There are no final exams, postseason tournaments, year-end concerts, or similar events to work toward, so Scouts need other ways to mark their progress from year to year. By helping Scouts move from milestone to milestone, you help them see how far they've come (much as you might point back toward the trailhead after a long and difficult climb on a hike).

Although every Scout has the potential to earn the Eagle Scout rank, not every Scout will. That doesn't mean the Scout who stops at Star—or even Second Class—has not had a valuable experience in Scouting. Be careful not to send the message that a Scout who does not earn the Eagle rank is a failure.

Third, the advancement program offers rewards to go along with the incentives described above, much like sports programs offer trophies and martial-arts programs offer colored belts. A rank patch is the most obvious award, but Scouts also crave the approval of their parents, the applause of their peers, and the chance to move their names up a level on the advancement board in the troop meeting room. When you provide prompt and appropriate recognition to Scouts who earn ranks, merit badges, and other awards, you validate their hard work and spur them on to further progress. That's why the BSA recommends presenting badges as soon as possible after they are earned, and encourages troops hold three or four courts of honor per year.

Scouts who advance in rank should be recognized three times. They should receive verbal acknowledgment as soon as they pass their boards of review, receive their rank patches at the next troop meeting, and receive public recognition at the next court of honor.

Fourth, the advancement program—coupled with the BSA's other awards—offers Scouts optional pathways they can follow, either on the way to the Eagle Scout rank or as an alternative. A Scout who's interested in conservation could work toward a William T. Hornaday Award, as described in chapter 14. A Scout who's into STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) could pursue a Supernova Award, as described in chapter 12. A Scout's qualifications could be enhanced by earning a variety of merit badges and special awards while working on a camp's aquatics staff. From this perspective, Scouting is something like a role-playing game where players can chart their own courses and where their play can continue indefinitely; the game—and the growth—never ends. By highlighting the vast array of awards Scouts can pursue, you give them additional reasons to remain involved in Scouting, which benefits both them and the troop.

Gauging Advancement Speed

There's no standard for how quickly advancement should happen; different Scouts will advance at different rates. However, the BSA recommends Scouts achieve First Class within their first 12 to 18 months in the troop. If a Scout hasn't reached First Class by then, it's probably worth scheduling a Scoutmaster conference to discuss the Scout's progress.

A similar discussion might be warranted if an older Scout is taking more than a year to move from one rank to the next. You may discover a problem you can help solve—such as the Scout's need for a position of responsibility. You may also discover that the Scout is perfectly happy to stay at the current rank a little longer or forever, which is each Scout's right.

Understanding Advancement Requirements

The advancement program is relatively complex—although not as complex as some Scouters make it out to be. By having a good working knowledge of the advancement program, you can better support your Scouts and reduce the number of roadblocks they encounter on the trail to Eagle.

Section 5 of volume 1 provides a detailed overview of the advancement program and the many special awards Scouts (and Scouters) can earn. For additional, in-depth information, the best source is the *Guide to Advancement*. This chapter highlights common advancement-related issues of which you should be aware.

***Advancement News* is a great source for advancement-related information. Published several times a year by the BSA's National Advancement Committee, it explores common issues in detail. For information and back issues, see www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/advancement-and-awards/advancement-news.**

Advancement Fallacies

To the uninitiated, the Scouts BSA advancement program can seem complex. Unfortunately, some Scouters make it even more complex by reading into the requirements things that aren't there. Here are some common fallacies:

- **A parent can't serve as a merit badge counselor for his or her child.** False. If the parent is approved to counsel the badge in question, he or she can work with any Scout. That said, Scouts can be encouraged to work with other counselors, and parents who serve as counselors should probably work with other Scouts along with their own children to prevent appearances of impropriety.
- **The Scoutmaster can sign off any merit badge.** False. The Scoutmaster and other troop leaders can only sign off badges for which they are approved counselors.
- **The Scoutmaster can decide which merit badge counselor a Scout can use.** False. A Scout may work with any approved counselor; the Scoutmaster simply has a discussion with the Scout and provides contact information for one or more counselors.
- **There is a maximum number of badges an adult can counsel.** Generally false. The BSA places no limit on the number of badges an individual can counsel (assuming he or she is qualified and approved); however, local councils can set a reasonable limit. Also, the troop can set a maximum number of badges a Scout can earn from a single counselor so long as that limit applies to all Scouts.
- **The work a Scout does on a merit badge before getting a signed merit badge application ("blue card") doesn't count.** Generally false, although it is the counselor's decision whether to accept work or activities completed prior to the issuing of the signed blue card. In some cases, such as the Camping merit badge requirement of spending 20 nights camping, the Scout may have been working on the requirement since first joining the troop.
- **Some merit badges have prerequisites.** Generally false. Earning the First Aid merit badge is the first requirement for the Emergency Preparedness merit badge, but the requirements (for this and other badges) don't have to be completed in order. On the other hand, the requirements for Scuba Diving clearly state that a Scout must earn Swimming before completing most of the requirements.
- **The Scoutmaster conference must be the last requirement completed before the board of review.** False. While it can make sense for the Scoutmaster conference to be the last requirement completed, the conference can actually be held at any time while the Scout is at the current rank (for Tenderfoot, Second Class, and First Class, it may be held after the Scout has completed the Scoutmaster conference for the previous rank). Spreading conferences out can prevent a flurry of rushed conferences and boards of review right before a troop court of honor.
- **A Scout must attend a board of review in full uniform.** False. It is preferred that a Scout be in full field uniform for any board of review. The Scout should wear as much of it they own, and it should be as correct as possible, with the badges worn properly. If wearing all or part of the uniform is impractical for whatever reason, the candidate should be clean and neat in appearance and dressed appropriately, according to their means, for the milestone marked by the occasion. Regardless of unit, district, or council expectations or rules, boards of review shall not reject candidates solely for reasons related to uniforming or attire, as long as they are dressed to the above description. Candidates shall not be required to purchase uniform items or clothing such as coats and ties to participate in a board of review.

Active Participation and Leadership

Few aspects of the advancement program cause more consternation than the Star, Life, and Eagle requirements that say a Scout must be active in the troop for a certain number of months and must serve actively in a position of responsibility for the same number of months. (For Star and Life, Scouts can also complete a Scoutmaster-approved leadership project instead of serving in a position of responsibility.) Troops have historically struggled to define what "active" means, and that struggle has only gotten more challenging as Scouts' and parents' schedules have become ever more crowded.

Before we look at the specifics of these requirements, it's important to understand that the months in question don't have to be consecutive. A Scout may piece together any times they have been active and still qualify; for example, a Scout who plays high school soccer might count three summer months and three spring months for the six months needed for Life.

Defining Active Participation

The purpose of the active-participation requirements involves impact. Because we prepare young people to go forth and, essentially, make a positive difference in society, we judge that youth are "active" when their level of activity in Scouting, whether high or minimal, has had a sufficiently positive influence toward this end.

Use the following three sequential tests to determine whether the requirement has been met. The first and second are required, along with either the third or its alternative.

1. **The Scout is registered.** This applies to Scouts who have been registered in a troop for at least the time period indicated in the requirement, and have indicated in some way, through word or action, that they consider themselves members of the troop. If a Scout was supposed to have been registered, but for whatever reason was not, discuss with the local council registrar the possibility of back-registering. A Scout should not be penalized because an adult leader forgot to turn in the application.
2. **The Scout is in good standing.** A youth is considered in "good standing" with the troop as long as the youth has not been dismissed for disciplinary reasons. The youth must also be in good standing with the local council and the Boy Scouts of America. (In the rare instance that is not the case, communications will have been delivered.)
3. **The Scout meets the troop's reasonable expectations, or, if not, a lesser level of activity is explained.** If, for the time period required, a Scout meets those aspects of the troop's pre-established expectations that refer to a level of activity, then the Scout is considered active and the requirement is met. If a Scout does not meet the unit's reasonable expectations, that Scout is still considered "active" if a board of review can agree that Scouting's values have already taken hold and have been exhibited. This might be evidenced, for example, in how the Scout relates to others in the community, at school, in religious life, or in Scouting. It is also acceptable to consider and "count" positive activities outside Scouting when they, too, contribute to the Scout's growth in character, citizenship, personal fitness, and leadership.

Note that the troop's pre-established expectations must be reasonable. Scouts must not be held to standards that are so demanding as to be impractical for today's youth (and families) to achieve. Ultimately, a board of review shall decide what is reasonable and what is not. In doing so, the board members must use common sense and must take into account that Scouts should be allowed to balance their lives with positive activities outside of Scouting.

Units are free to establish additional expectations on uniforming, supplies for outings, payment of dues, parental involvement, etc., but these and any other standards extraneous to a level of activity shall not be considered in evaluating the active-participation requirement.

Rating Service in a Position of Responsibility

When a Scout assumes a position of responsibility, something related to the desired results must happen. It is a disservice to the Scout and to the troop to reward work that has not been done. Holding a position and doing nothing, producing no results, is unacceptable. Some degree of responsibility must be practiced, taken, or accepted.

Just as the troop can establish expectations for participation, it can also establish expectations for positions of responsibility. Again, these expectations must be reasonable based on Scouts' training, experience, and skill level. If, within reason based on the Scout's personal skill set, these expectations have been met for the specified number of months, then the Scout has fulfilled the requirement.

It is best when a Scout's leaders provide a position description and then direction, coaching, and support. Where this occurs, and is done well, the Scout will likely succeed. When this support, for whatever reason, is unavailable or otherwise not provided—or when there are no clearly established expectations—then an adult leader or the Scout, or both, should work out the responsibilities to be fulfilled. In doing so, neither the position's purpose nor degree of difficulty may be altered significantly or diminished.

If it is left to the Scout to determine what should be done, and a reasonable effort has been made to perform accordingly for the time specified, then the requirement is fulfilled. Even if the results are not necessarily what the unit leader, members of a board of review, or others involved may want to see, the Scout must not be held to unestablished expectations.

On the other hand, if the troop has clearly established expectations for a position, then—within reason—a Scout must meet them through the prescribed time. If the Scout is not meeting expectations, then this must be communicated early. Unit leadership may work toward a constructive result by asking what the youth thinks should be accomplished in the position. What is the Scout's own concept of this role? What does the Scout think the troop leaders—youth and adult—expect? What has the Scout done well? What needs improvement? Often this questioning approach can lead a Scout to the decision to measure up, and the Scout will tell the leaders how much of the service time should be counted toward the requirement.

If it becomes clear that nothing will improve a Scout's performance, then it is acceptable to remove the Scout from the position. It is the unit leader's responsibility to address these situations promptly. Every effort should have been made while the Scout was in the position to ensure the Scout understood expectations and was regularly supported toward reasonably acceptable performance. It is unfair and inappropriate—after six months, for example—to surprise a Scout who thinks they have been doing fine with news that their performance is now considered unsatisfactory. In this case, the Scout must be given credit for the time spent in the position.

Just as a Scout can piece together months of participation for the active-participation requirement, service in different positions can be pieced together for the position-of-responsibility requirement, even if there are gaps between them. However, months when the Scout held two positions can't be double-counted.

If your troop has a large number of Scouts who need a position of responsibility for rank advancement, the Scoutmaster and the patrol leaders' council could decide to assign the same position to more than one Scout. For example, the troop could have one instructor who specializes in first aid, nature, and cooking and another who specializes in pioneering, orienteering, and woods tools. The key is to make sure each youth leader has specific responsibilities.

Scoutmaster-Assigned Leadership Projects

For the Star and Life ranks (but not for Eagle Scout), the Scoutmaster may assign, as a substitute for the position of responsibility, a leadership project that helps the troop. If this is done, he or she should consult the troop committee and unit advancement coordinator to arrive at suitable standards. The experience should provide lessons similar to those of the listed positions, but it must not be confused with, or compared to, the scope of an Eagle Scout service project. It may be productive in many cases for the Scout to propose a leadership project that is discussed with the unit leader and then assigned.

One way to approach this option is to think of things adults in the troop have been doing that Scouts could do. For example, consider the preparation involved in a high-adventure trip. A Scout could set up a training program to teach the skills participants will need (orienteering, Leave No Trace and Tread Lightly!, paddling technique, etc.). Or the Scout could handle the logistics for the trip, such as researching airfares and hotel rooms and coordinating the troop's selection of an itinerary for its Philmont trek. Or the Scout could plan and lead a series of shakedown activities leading up to the trip. Doing any of these things would allow the Scout to show leadership—and provide a benefit to the troop—without taking away responsibilities from other youth leaders.

Service Projects

For every Scout rank, the youth must demonstrate Scout spirit by living the Scout Oath and Scout Law in and out of Scouting. This includes helping others. A Scout's duty to others often takes the form of service projects or service hours, and these are integrated into the advancement program beginning with the Tenderfoot rank.

Service Requirements by Rank

Tenderfoot	1 hour
Second Class	2 hours
First Class	3 hours
Star	6 hours
Life	6 hours (at least half conservation-related)
Eagle	"While a Life Scout, plan, develop, and give leadership to others in a service project helpful to any religious institution, school, or community."

For Tenderfoot through Life, a Scout must participate in one or more service projects totaling the required number of hours. A troop project could be counted, such as a highway cleanup or an event helping the chartered organization. Work that the Scout has done on a project undertaken by the patrol may also be counted. With the Scoutmaster's approval, it could even be something a Scout does alone. Often, the service requirement for a rank will be fulfilled by assisting with an Eagle Scout candidate's project. The only limitation on the type of project is that at least three of the service hours for Life must be related to conservation.

Note that at Tenderfoot, Second Class, and First Class, the Scout must also explain how their service relates to the ideals of Scouting. That reflection can be as valuable as the service itself.

The requirements do not say that the service time or the projects must be approved beforehand, but a discussion with the Scoutmaster may prevent any issues at a board of review. Note that no council, district, unit, or individual has the authority to add a planning requirement to the Tenderfoot through Life service project requirements. It's perfectly fine for the Scout to be a worker, not a leader, on these projects.

See chapters 13 and 14 for service project ideas.

The Eagle Scout project is a different story. Here, the Eagle Scout candidate must plan, develop, and give leadership to a service project benefiting any religious institution, school, or community. There's no minimum number of hours required, because the key to evaluating this requirement comes in looking at its impact. That said, many Eagle projects far exceed the number of service hours Scouts have previously amassed.

Chapter 15 discusses the Eagle project in more detail, as does the *Guide to Advancement*.

One of the most common questions Scouts ask is whether they can count service hours they've earned outside Scouting or double-count the service hours required for Citizenship in the Community merit badge. Project approval is up to the

Scoutmaster, but it's worth encouraging the Scout to ask: "Do I really want to get double credit for helping others this one time, or do I want to undertake a second effort and make a greater difference in the lives of even more people? " To reach an ethical decision, each Scout should follow familiar guideposts found in some of those words and phrases we live by, such as "helpful," "kind," "Do a Good Turn Daily," and "help other people at all times."

As Scout leaders, we should ask ourselves an even more pointed question: "Is it our goal to produce Scouts who check a task off a list or Scouts who will become the leaders in our communities?" To answer our own question, we should consult the same criteria that guide Scouts.

It's also worth pointing out that Scouts in many active troops easily exceed the service-hour requirements. If you regularly include service projects in your troop program and produce even one or two Eagle Scouts per year, Scouts will have no trouble finding the number of hours they need.

Service projects don't have to be long to be meaningful. For example, you could spend an hour during a campout returning an abused campsite to its natural state or devote a troop meeting to assembling flood buckets or personal-care kits for a disaster response agency. Such micro-projects demonstrate that community service should be a way of life—not necessarily something we stop our normal lives to do.

Scout Spirit

The ideals of the Boy Scouts of America are spelled out in the Scout Oath, Scout Law, Scout motto, and Scout slogan. Members incorporating these ideals into their daily lives at home, at school, in their religious life, and in their neighborhoods, for example, are said to have Scout spirit. In evaluating whether a Scout has fulfilled this requirement, it may be best to begin by asking what Scout spirit and living the Scout Oath and Scout Law mean to the Scout. Young people know when they are being kind or helpful or are being a good friend to others. They know when they are cheerful, or trustworthy, or reverent. All of us, young and old, know how we act when no one else is around.

Scout spirit refers to ideals and values; it is not the Scouting equivalent to school spirit. Troop and patrol spirit are good things to develop; they just aren't tied to the advancement program.

A leader typically asks for examples of how a Scout has lived the Scout Oath and Scout Law. It might also be useful to invite examples of when the Scout has not. This is not something to push, but it can help with the realization that sometimes we fail to live by our ideals and that we all can do better. This also sends a message that Scouts can admit they have done wrong, yet still advance. In a serious situation—such as alcohol or illegal drug use—it can help the Scout understand why advancement might not be appropriate at that time. This is a sensitive issue and must be treated carefully. Most Scout leaders do their best to live by the Scout Oath and Scout Law, but any one of us may look back on years past and wish that, at times, we had acted differently. We learn from these experiences and improve and grow. We can look for the same in our youth.

For each rank from Tenderfoot through First Class, the Scout must discuss how they have lived out four points of the Scout Law, which they record in their Scouts BSA handbook. By the time a Scout has reached First Class, all 12 points will have been discussed. Keep in mind that a Scout's understanding of—and ability to live out—the points of the Law may differ or change based on age and maturity. (For an 11-year-old, bravery might be taking a swim test; for a 15-year-old, it might be standing up to a friend who is making a poor moral or ethical choice.)

For each rank from Tenderfoot through Eagle, the Scout must also discuss how they have lived out their duty to God. Remember that the focus is on the Scout's understanding of duty to God, not the leader's. If a Scout comes from a faith tradition different from yours, consider first asking how the Scout, their family, or their faith group defines duty to God and then asking the Scout to describe how they are living up to that definition or their own developing understanding. Even if you and a Scout come from the same faith tradition, your role is not to impose your view of duty to God on the Scout but to help the Scout live out their own and their family's view of duty to God.

Evaluating Scout spirit will always be a judgment call, but we can get a feel for it by getting to know a Scout and by asking probing questions. It's safe to say, however, that we do not measure Scout spirit by counting meetings and outings attended. It is indicated, instead, by the way Scouts live their lives.

Merit Badges

One of the most visible parts of advancement in Scouts BSA, the merit badge program introduces Scouts to more than 130 different topics, from citizenship and fitness to careers and hobbies. Countless Americans today pursue vocations and avocations they first encountered when they earned a related merit badge.

Merit badges combine the best elements of a textbook, an introductory class on a topic, and an apprenticeship with an expert in the field. In this section, we'll discuss some common issues related to the merit badge program.

***Advancement News,* a free bimonthly newsletter, includes a section of on merit badge counseling, new merit badges, and counselor resources. To subscribe, send a message to advancement.team@scouting.org with "SUBSCRIBE" in the subject line. Indicate your name, email address, and council in the message text. For archived issues of *Advancement News,* visit www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/advancement-and-awards/advancement-news. For archived issues of a previous newsletter, *Counselor's Compass,* visit www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/advancement-and-awards/counselor-compass-news.**

Merit Badge Counselor Qualifications

There are generally no specific requirements as to the training or certification merit badge counselors must have in their fields. However, a merit badge counselor should have a special expertise in the merit badge area, as well as the ability to work with youth to develop a genuine interest in the merit badge topic. Additionally, special qualifications or certifications are required for these badges: Archery, Canoeing, Climbing, Kayaking, Lifesaving, Rifle Shooting, Rowing, Scuba Diving, Shotgun Shooting, Snow Sports, Swimming, and Whitewater. See the *Guide to Advancement* for details. Local council advancement committees can also establish higher minimum standards for counselors of a given badge.

Merit Badge Worksheets

Do a quick internet search on any merit badge, and you'll find fill-in-the-blank worksheets a Scout can use while working on that badge. You won't find these on the BSA website, however, because the BSA strongly discourages their use.

Why? When merit badge requirements are developed, they are meant to challenge a Scout's thought process, to cause the Scout to learn and practice skills; explore areas of interest; dispel misconceptions; and bring about interaction with others—especially positive adult role models. Worksheets are a shortcut. They present on paper what should be arrived at through thought and interaction—through asking questions and trial and error. They often create or support an atmosphere where Scouts are encouraged to get the merit badge finished as efficiently and quickly as possible, when the objective should be a significant learning experience that builds character, citizenship, and physical or mental fitness.

Worksheets can prevent struggling with requirements, but it is the struggle that can lead to retention of lessons learned. It would be far better for Scouts to start each badge with an old notebook from school or a three-ring binder full of blank paper than with a readymade worksheet.

That said, worksheets are permitted for fulfilling requirements where something is to be done in writing. However, merit badge counselors are not allowed to require their use—which would be adding to the requirements—and may refuse to accept them.

Merit Badge Classes, Fairs, Colleges, and Similar Events

There was a time when most Scouts earned most merit badges directly with merit badge counselors—the main exceptions being badges earned at summer camp. Today, some troops offer merit badge classes regularly as part of their program, and some districts and councils offer merit badge fairs or colleges, often in conjunction with universities or other partners. Done well, these classes and other programs spur advancement and introduce Scouts to badges they might not have otherwise pursued. Done poorly, they shortcut the advancement process and rob Scouts of the chance to learn valuable life skills and even the skills specific to the badges offered.

The Merit Badge Group Instruction Guide, a new resource with detailed guidelines on this subject, can be found at https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/512-066_WEB.pdf. A careful reading of section 7 of the *Guide to Advancement,* No. 33088, will provide further information and support compliance with BSA merit badge policies and safety guidelines. Additional resources, such as information on how to be an effective merit badge counselor, are available online at www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/mb-counselor-guide, and through local district and council advancement committees.

Merit Badge Work in the Troop Setting

If you want to offer a merit badge within your troop, consider these guidelines:

- **Pick a badge that works well in a group setting.** For example, Chess and Game Design require multiple players for certain requirements, while Cycling and Hiking require daylong activities that are more enjoyable and easier to plan with groups of Scouts. Family Life and Personal Management, on the other hand, require a lot of individual work over several months, which makes them a poor fit for a group setting.
- **Limit badge work during troop meetings.** Some progress on skill-related badges such as First Aid, Camping, and Pioneering will naturally flow out of troop meetings, but it would be more appropriate to offer other badges as optional preopening activities (or special weekend sessions) for just those Scouts who are interested. (Unless you are working with a small troop of Scouts who are close together in rank, you will find few badges that interest every Scout or that some Scouts haven't already earned.) You could also have a counselor introduce a badge during one troop meeting—maybe doing enough that Scouts complete a requirement or two—and then offer a class before the next few meetings.
- **Look for field-trip options.** Some badges require Scouts to go places, whether that's attending a city council meeting for Citizenship in the Community or visiting a physician's office for Medicine. Taking such a field trip can add variety to your program, especially when there's a long gap between outings, and give Scouts a head start on a new badge.
- **Be happy with "partials."** Remember that earning merit badges is the Scout's responsibility, not the troop's. It's OK—in fact, it's preferable—if the Scout completes half the requirements in a group setting and must work with a counselor outside the troop setting to finish the badge.

  There is no limit on the number of "partials" a Scout may have at any point in time. For example, the Scout may have decided that some merit badges aren't that interesting after all, and has no intention of completing them (at least at that time).

Partial Merit Badges

Once a Scout has begun a merit badge, they may take as much time as needed to complete it. Partials have no expiration date except the Scout's 18th birthday, and troops, districts, and councils are not permitted to establish other deadlines. If the badge requirements change after the Scout begins work, the Scout has the option to continue using the old merit badge requirements and the old pamphlet or to switch to using the new requirements and the new pamphlet. If a badge a Scout has begun is discontinued, the Scout may complete it and count it for advancement. (Presentation of the cloth badge will be dependent on availability.)

A Scout may also complete a merit badge with a different counselor than they started with. The Application for Merit Badge has a place to record what has been finished: in the center section on the reverse of the blue card, the counselor initials for each requirement passed. A subsequent counselor may choose not to accept partial work, but this should be a rare occurrence.

Merit Badge Fairs and Colleges

As a troop leader, you'll encounter plenty of group merit badge opportunities, from classes at summer camp to university-sponsored merit badge fairs to merit badge days at museums. In instances where group instruction is necessary or attractive as part of the learning process, care must be taken to ensure that each Scout still receives personal counseling to support their individual efforts. To help your Scouts evaluate which programs are worth the time and money, consider these questions.

- **Is this the best setting for the badges in question?** Summer camp is a great place to earn badges like Rifle Shooting and Lifesaving that require facilities, equipment, and expertise most local troops don't have. It's not such a great place for more academic badges like Citizenship in the World that require a lot of reading, research, and writing—activities most Scouts don't want to do at camp.
- **Is significant badge work feasible in this setting?** Review the requirements organizers say Scouts can complete to make sure they aren't taking shortcuts, such as showing a video of a city council meeting for Citizenship in the Community merit badge instead of taking Scouts to an actual meeting.
- **Are the merit badge counselors and instructors qualified?** Connecting Scouts with experts in various fields is a real advantage of many merit badge events. Taking the Chemistry or Digital Technology merit badges in a computer lab with a college professor or graduate student could make an already interesting badge even more interesting.

Instructors vs. Counselors

It is permissible for guest speakers, guest experts, or others who are not merit badge counselors to assist in the counseling process. Those providing such assistance must be under the direction of a registered and approved counselor who is readily available on-site and provides personal supervision to assure all applicable BSA policies and procedures—including those related to Youth Protection—are in place and followed.

- **Does the setting add value to the badge?** If your local zoo offers classes in Mammal Study or Reptile and Amphibian Study, Scouts might be able to go behind the scenes and learn more than the badge sets out to teach. While counselors aren't permitted to add requirements, few Scouts would turn down the chance to feed the camels or take an after-hours tour of the reptile house.
- **Is there a cost involved?** Charging fees for merit badge events is not prohibited. However, any fees charged should be limited to recovering the costs related to presenting the opportunity. Such costs could include supplies and the wages an organization or business pays to employees who present classes. The BSA does not endorse merit badge opportunities where fees are paid directly to individuals or to groups of individuals. Merit badge events should not be presented as fundraisers.

Advancement Reporting

In order to purchase badges your Scouts have earned, you must, of course, report their advancement to your local council. Reporting after every board of review is highly recommended so the recognition items can be picked up and presented as soon as possible after Scouts have earned their awards.

Beyond that, the BSA recommends that troops report advancement monthly, but at least quarterly. Because advancement should be a natural outcome of a well-rounded unit program, the BSA uses advancement as a measure of the successful delivery of the Scouting program to youth. It is important, therefore, to keep advancement records up to date with your local council.

The more frequently you report advancement, the easier the process is. Moreover, when your records at the council are up to date, you don't have to worry about your PC crashing or your advancement chair moving out of town unexpectedly.

Accurate advancement reporting makes membership transfers and reinstatements easier. It also facilitates the process of completing the Eagle Scout application. (The day before an Eagle board of review is not the best time to discover that the council has no record of one of the Scout's merit badges.)

Like most processes in the world today, advancement reporting has gone digital. Reporting advancement electronically is more accurate and efficient than submitting paper records and ensures that records are updated more quickly.

With Internet Advancement, units select an advancement processor who is granted access with a council-provided unit ID. Internet Advancement is accessed through the local council's website or from My.Scouting.org. Units may choose to enter information manually or upload advancement files generated from Scoutbook, which the BSA acquired in 2015, or a third-party troop-management program.

Because of documentation requirements, the Eagle Scout rank and nominated recognitions (such as meritorious action awards) are not entered electronically.

Most councils have also established "help desk"-style assistance. Staff members there can answer questions, provide unit access IDs, monitor activity, change passwords, reset profiles and data, and create reports requested by council management for staff and volunteer use.

Board of Review Signatures

As part of the board of review process, some councils recommend that you print, complete, and sign a copy of the blank Unit Advancement Report (UAR) form and then provide the form to the unit advancement coordinator for entering into Internet Advancement. The signed UAR is then attached to the Internet Advancement-generated Unit Advancement Report and submitted to your council service center. In this way, there is no need to chase signatures after the fact.

Scout Transfers

A Scout's BSA identification number (BSA ID) is unique only to each council, so a Scout's advancement information cannot be transferred to their new council without the originating council's "release." This is why it is important to obtain the Scout's name and current BSA ID on the youth application, as it is registered in the previous council, so that the transfer can take place properly. Nicknames and other differences will only delay the transfer. Attaching a copy of the member summary (one of the reports) from the old unit to the youth application helps with the transfer process.

Dual Registration

You may find that some Scouts have multiple registrations with units in different councils—for example, when divorced parents live in different states and share custody. In a situation such as this, the Scout's advancement records should be maintained in only one of the units. As the Scout passes requirements in any other unit, the information should be relayed to their primary unit so only one advancement record is maintained. It is not possible to electronically consolidate data across different units in different councils.

Scoutmaster Conferences

At some point before each board of review, a Scout must participate in a Scoutmaster conference. As described in volume 1, this is not a meeting the Scout must "pass," nor is it an opportunity for the Scoutmaster to test the Scout on what has been learned. Instead, it is simply a conversation between the Scoutmaster and the Scout. During the conference, the two can discuss the Scout's ambitions and life purpose, set goals for future achievement (both in Scouting and beyond), review the Scout's participation in the troop, and explore the Scout's understanding and practice of the ideals of Scouting. The conference also gives the Scoutmaster an opportunity to solicit feedback on the troop program and any challenges the Scout is facing. In some cases, work left to be completed—and perhaps why it has not been completed—may be discussed just as easily as that which is finished.

The Scoutmaster conference is a good time to sign off the Scout spirit requirement for each rank, although that requirement can be completed at a different time.

Ultimately, conference timing is up to the troop. Some leaders hold more than one along the way, and the Scout must be allowed to count any of them toward the requirement.

While it makes sense to hold a Scoutmaster conference after other requirements for a rank are met, the conference is not required to be the last step before the board of review. This is an important consideration for Scouts on a tight schedule to meet requirements before age 18. Last-minute work can sometimes make it impossible to fit the conference in before then, so scheduling it earlier can avoid unnecessary extension requests.

Scoutmaster conferences are meant to be face-to-face, personal experiences. For this reason, the conferences should not be held in an online setting. They relate not only to the Scouting method of advancement, but also to the adult-association method. Scoutmaster conferences should be held with a level of privacy acceptable under the BSA's policies regarding Youth Protection. Parents and other Scouts within hearing range of the conversation may influence the Scout's participation.

Adult leaders do not have the authority to deny a Scout a conference that is necessary to meet the requirements for rank advancement. If a Scoutmaster conference is denied, a Scout who believes all the remaining requirements have been fulfilled may still request a board of review. If an Eagle Scout candidate is denied a conference, it may become grounds for a board of review under disputed circumstances.

As the name implies, Scoutmaster conferences should be handled by the Scoutmaster, not an assistant Scoutmaster. However, if the troop is so large that the Scoutmaster can't handle them all, he or she might delegate some of them to a knowledgeable assistant Scoutmaster. Delegation would also make sense if the Scoutmaster is absent for a long period, such as during a military deployment. Keep in mind, however, that if a Scout meets with different leaders along the trail to Eagle, the Scout won't have the chance to develop a relationship with the Scoutmaster, and the conferences can't build on what has been discussed previously.

Boards of Review

After a Scout has completed the requirements for any rank (starting with Tenderfoot), the Scout appears before a board of review. Its purpose is to determine the quality of their Scouting experience and to decide whether they have fulfilled the requirements for the rank. If so, the board not only approves the advancement but also encourages the Scout to continue the quest for the next rank. (This encouragement could include a tally of requirements the Scout has already completed for that next rank, such as merit badges already earned that haven't been counted for rank advancement yet.)

The specific process for Eagle Scout boards of review is determined by the local council.

Board of Review Scheduling and Composition

Because the board of review date becomes the effective advancement date, boards should be scheduled promptly as Scouts are ready, or set up on a regular basis that assures Scouts are not delayed in beginning time-oriented requirements for the next rank. It's a good idea to develop a list of identified troop committee members and other adults who are willing to serve on boards.

A Scout shall not be denied the opportunity for a board of review. When a Scout believes all the requirements for a rank have been completed, including a Scoutmaster conference, a board of review must be granted. Scoutmasters—or councils or districts in the case of the Eagle Scout rank—for example, do not have authority to expect a Scout to request or organize one, or to "defer" the Scout, or to demand performance beyond the stated requirements in order to be granted one. In a case where there is concern the Scout has not fulfilled the requirements for a rank as written, it is appropriate to advise the Scout that they might not pass the board and to make suggestions about what they might do to improve the chances for success. It is, however, the Scout's decision whether or not to go ahead with a board of review.

Scoutmaster conferences and boards of review may also be held for Scouts who are not advancing. These can be valuable for identifying any stumbling blocks Scouts are experiencing. Consider setting up a schedule to ensure that every Scout has at least one conference and one board each year.

A board of review must consist of no fewer than three members and no more than six, all of whom must be at least 21 years of age. Scoutmasters and assistant Scoutmasters shall not serve on a board of review for a Scout in their own troop. Parents, guardians, or relatives shall not serve on a board for their own children. Neither the candidate nor the candidate's parents or guardians shall have any part in selecting any board members.

Boards of review for any rank are meant to be face-to-face, personal experiences. From time to time, however, as Scouts go off to college or the military, or live in very remote locations, for example, it may be virtually impossible to hold in-person boards of review. In those rare situations where it is unreasonable to expect a Scout to travel long distances, or to wait several months, it is permissible to use videoconferencing.

What Happens at a Board of Review

Most adults would admit to nervousness if told they were to appear before a "board of review." Imagine how a Scout must feel. A certain level of formality and meaningful questioning should exist, but it is important that the atmosphere be relaxed and that the review be conducted with the Scout Law in mind. It may help if the unit leader introduces the candidate and if a few minutes are spent getting acquainted.

The unit leader may remain in the room, but only to observe, not to participate unless called upon. The number of "observers" at a board of review should otherwise be minimized. The members of the board of review, however, have the authority to exclude the unit leader or any other observers if they believe their presence will inhibit open and forthright discussion. Youth observers are not permitted in boards of review for another Scout's advancement.

It is strongly recommended that the Scout's parents, relatives, or guardians should not be in attendance in any capacity—not as members of the board, as observers, or even as the unit leader. Their presence can change the discussion dynamics. In

cases where parents or guardians insist on attending a board of review, they should be counseled that their presence can change how their child addresses questions and that the opportunity to further self-reliance and courage may be lessened. However, if parents or guardians still insist on being present, they must be permitted to attend as observers.

In situations where—before a board is held—one or more members are of an opinion the Scout should be rejected, they should discuss their reasoning with the Scoutmaster or others who know the Scout. Generally, a unit leader is closer to the youth; he or she may be able to present a different perspective and prevent an uncomfortable or unfair scenario.

The BSA discourages mock or practice boards of review. "Practice" reviews may imply that board members will ask predetermined questions or that the board of review is not anticipated to be a positive experience. The best boards of review are conversations, not inquisitions.

Though one reason for a board of review is to help ensure the Scout has met the requirements as written, it shall become neither a retest or "examination," nor a challenge of the Scout's knowledge. In most cases it should, instead, be a celebration of accomplishment. Remember, it is more about the journey. A badge recognizes what a Scout has done toward achieving the primary goal of personal growth. It is thus more about the learning experience than it is about the specific skills learned.

A Scout must not be rejected at a board of review for reasons unrelated to advancement requirements. For example, a Scout must not be rejected just because the Scout did not bring their Scouts BSA handbook to the board of review, or because the Scout was tardy for a board of review—although the reason for the tardiness may certainly be a topic for discussion.

Board of Review Discussion Topics

During the review, board members may refer to the Scouts BSA handbook, *Scouts BSA Requirements,* volume 1 of the *Troop Leader Guidebook,* and other such references. The *Troop Committee Guidebook* has examples of appropriate questions. Board members may ask where the Scout learned the required skills, who taught them, and what the Scout gained from fulfilling selected requirements. The answers will reveal what the Scout did for the rank. It can be determined, then, if this was what the Scout was supposed to do. Discussion of how the Scout has lived the Scout Oath and Scout Law at home, in the troop, the school, and the community should be included. Remember, however, that though we have high expectations for our members, as for ourselves, we do not insist on perfection. It is most important that a young adult has a positive attitude, accepts Scouting's ideals, and sets and meets good standards in life.

A board is not required to keep minutes, but that is a good idea. Any such notes must remain confidential to the members of the board or to administrators with a need to know. They may be used in preparing a follow-up letter, should a Scout be turned down, and they can be helpful in an appeal process. In any case, once a review or appeal is completed, all notes must be destroyed.

After the board of review, the Scout is asked to wait outside the room or out of hearing range while the board deliberates. To approve awarding a rank, the board must agree unanimously. Every effort should be made to deliberate with careful consideration of each member's perspective, and in sufficient detail as to avoid factual misunderstanding. It is appropriate to call the candidate back if additional questions may provide clarification. Still, if any member dissents, the decision cannot be for approval. In the case of such disagreement, the Scout shall not be informed about the specifics of the conversations or any arguments taking place. As indicated below, the Scout is told only how improvement can be achieved.

After the Review

If the members agree a Scout is ready to advance, the Scout is called in and congratulated. The board of review date—not that of a subsequent court of honor—becomes the rank's effective date.

If a board does not approve, the candidate must be so informed and told what they can do to improve. Most Scouts accept responsibility for their behavior or for not completing requirements properly.

How Boards Can Lead to Program Improvement

Boards of review are about the Scout—but they are also about the Scout's experience in the troop. Board members are likely to hear about areas where the troop could improve, whether that means giving youth leaders more latitude or redoubling efforts to pursue high adventure. While Scouts should feel comfortable sharing their concerns with the Scoutmaster and his or her assistant Scoutmasters, some are more willing to open up to board members. The Scoutmaster and committee chair should encourage board members to offer suggestions based on what they've heard from Scouts.

Promoting Advancement and Awards

While much advancement work is a natural outgrowth of an active troop program, it also makes sense to promote specific badges and to encourage Scouts to pursue other awards, such as religious emblems, the World Conservation Award, and the Nova Awards (which are described in chapter 12). As section 5 in volume 1 demonstrates, there are dozens of badges a Scout may earn. Each badge earned teaches a Scout new skills, offers tangible goals to pursue, and helps the Scout grow in ways that will be beneficial in adulthood.

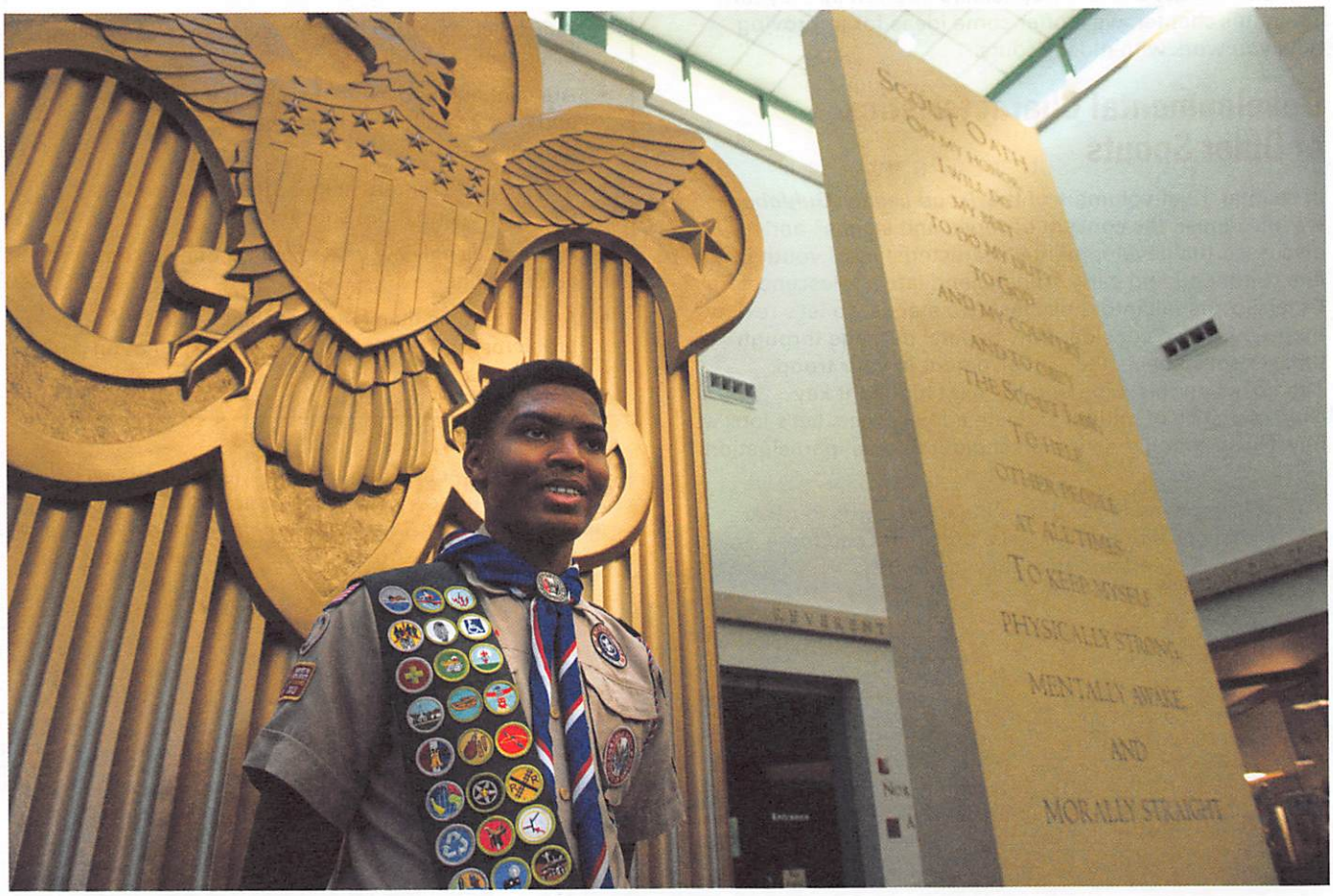
Here are some ways to promote advancement and awards in your troop.

- Develop a troop library that includes merit badge pamphlets, copies of the *Scouts BSA Requirements* book, and the applications for special awards.
- In Scoutmaster's Minutes and troop communications, highlight badges related to each month's theme or unrelated "badges of the month."
- Regularly schedule optional merit badge classes before troop meetings. You could alternate between elective and

Eagle-required badges or choose badges that correspond with monthly themes.

- Occasionally invite merit badge counselors to give 10-minute previews of their badges during troop meetings.
- At courts of honor have Scouts who've earned unusual badges tell the troop what they learned.
- Encourage the patrol leaders' council to include carefully selected merit badge events in the annual troop program.
- Hold regular courts of honor (three or four per year) to recognize Scouts.
- Work with your district or council to develop an up-to-date list of merit badge counselors.
- Survey troop parents, leaders, and members of the chartered organization to find out what badges they could counsel. Keep in mind that the Merit Badge Counselor Information form lets prospective counselors specify whether they want to work with all Scouts or just those from your troop or district. (This can be reassuring to someone who fears being overwhelmed with badge candidates.)
- Check with nearby Venturing crews for names of consultants they have used for their activities. Consultants, who are usually recruited on a one-time basis, would probably be qualified to counsel merit badges related to their expertise, although they must still register and be approved by the council advancement committee.
- Make it easy for Scouts to request Scoutmaster conferences. Remember that the conference doesn't have to be the last requirement done before the board of review.
- Make it easy for Scouts to receive boards of review. Some troops regularly convene boards of review—during the first troop meeting each month, for example. Scouts or adults should also be able to request a board at other times with minimal delay.

It might be tempting to recognize Scouts who earn the most badges in a given period. Doing so, however, takes the focus off the learning advancement is designed to foster. It's better for a Scout to earn one badge that introduces them to a lifelong hobby or career than to rush through five badges just to fill their merit badge sash. Look for ways to promote advancement that emphasize quality over quantity.



CHAPTER 17
Working With Older Scouts

A youth who spends the maximum possible time as a Scout joins the program as a child and departs as an adult. The Scout enters a troop during elementary school and leaves it (or becomes an adult leader) about the time of graduating from high school and beginning the next phase of life, whether that's higher education, military service, or a full-time job. In other words, the young adult who leaves the program at 18 years of age is vastly different from the child who joined it as a 10- or 11-year-old.

Yet, too often, troop leaders treat Scouts who are in high school similarly to those who are in middle school. They think the same activities will interest them, the same badges will motivate them, and the same leadership styles will inspire them. As a result, many older Scouts leave Scouting altogether and pursue activities that they think are more age-appropriate.

Adult leaders shouldn't write off older Scouts, however. In fact, troops across the country retain high percentages of Scouts well into their high school years and convert many of them into assistant Scoutmasters as soon as they turn 18. In this chapter, we'll offer some ideas for improving how you work with older Scouts.

Developmental Characteristics of Older Scouts

In chapter 12 of volume 1 of the *Troop Leader Guidebook,* we introduced the concept of "ages and stages" and discussed the developmental characteristics of youth in late childhood and early, middle, and late adolescence. Older Scouts fall into those last two stages, so let's review them—and also consider how Scouts' passage through those stages affects their involvement in your troop. The boxes on this page and the next highlight key characteristics of middle and late adolescence. Let's look at how those characteristics affect older Scouts' participation.

A key to working with Scouts of any age is to treat them as if they were just a little older and more mature than they really are.

Middle Adolescence (ages 14 and 15)

Teenagers of 14 or 15:

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

If you've never spent much time around teenagers—perhaps your own kids are just now reaching early adolescence—consider shadowing a Venturing or Order of the Arrow adviser or someone who works with high schoolers at your place of worship.

Late Adolescence (ages 16 to 18)

Young adults of 16 to 18:

- Are nearly full-grown physically and look more like adults than adult-size children
- Are in the latter years of high school
- Are already thinking (and worrying) about life after high school
- Are painfully aware that the decisions they're making now—such as whether to attend college, join the military, or enter the workforce—will affect the rest of their lives
- Want to prove to their parents and themselves that they're ready to be independent
- May have a job and access to a car, which gives them spending money, mobility, and a measure of independence
- Are spending more time than ever on homework, athletics, school activities, and dating
- Are more comfortable with their academic and social status (honor student, jock, band nerd, party animal, Scout) as peer pressure evolves
- May have a steady romantic interest and a smaller but tighter group of friends than before
- Can reason abstractly and think analytically nearly as well as adults, although they lack the life experiences that guide adult decision-making
- Are beginning to think about politics, social issues, and global causes
- Have a relatively stable identity, which is consistent across different settings

Working With Scouts in Middle Adolescence

Middle adolescence is an appropriate term because young people at this stage (typically ages 14 and 15) are stuck in the middle. They're no longer children, but they're still a long way from adulthood. Depending on outside influences, they can be easily pushed in either direction, much like a person walking on a balance beam.

Scouts of all ages will rise or fall to meet your level of expectation.

When you treat middle adolescents as being more mature than they actually are, they tend to respond well; when you treat them as children, they tend to act as children. What does that look like in a troop context? Here are some suggestions:

- Eliminate the words *boy, girl,* and *kid* from your vocabulary. Use *youth, young man, young women, young adult,* or *older Scout* instead. (Note that the BSA describes Venturing as a program for young men and young women, not teenagers and certainly not boys and girls or kids.)
- Set high—but achievable—expectations for their behavior.
- Remind Scouts of their status. If an older Scout does something that's inappropriate for their age, call them on it and ask if it's something a high schooler should be doing.
- Acknowledge Scouts' identity with their high school. Know which schools your Scouts attend. Keep up with how their sports teams are faring. Accommodate scheduling conflicts by, for example, not planning a campout on the weekend of the state basketball tournament.
- Help Scouts build strong peer groups in the troop. Youth in middle adolescence view their peer groups as a second family and often begin forming new peer groups as middle school friends are left behind. Building a strong older-Scout patrol is a good way to help Scouts foster positive peer relationships.
- Encourage them to use their brains. Give older Scouts a chance to use their newfound abilities to think abstractly, solve problems, and plan ahead. Pose an ethical dilemma for them to discuss. Introduce the sort of problem-solving games common in COPE. Put them in charge of planning outings and service projects.
- Understand that each Scout is different. While Scouts share many interests and activities with their peers, they don't conform in every area. In fact, as they establish their own identities, many wear nonconformity as a badge of honor. Be sure to let each Scout contribute thoughts regarding activities.
- Encourage their participation in the wider world of Scouting by taking advanced training, working on day camp staff, or joining a Venturing crew.

Working With Scouts in Late Adolescence

Young people in late adolescence are living in two time zones: the now and the next. They are intent on experiencing all that the high school years have to offer—including Friday-night football games, proms, after-school jobs, driving, dating, relaxed curfews, and spending money—but they're also focused on what's next. Those who are bound for college may be especially intent on building résumés that will attract the attention of college admissions counselors or varsity coaches (continuing a process that began in middle school or even before for many of them). Here are some suggestions for setting your Scouting watch to the time zones of the now and the next.

- Treat older Scouts as the 20-somethings they're becoming. Strive for a collegial relationship—not a leader/follower relationship—with 16- and 17-year-old Scouts, especially the senior patrol leader and junior assistant Scoutmaster. (Of course, all Youth Protection policies apply, even if your junior assistant Scoutmaster is 17 years, 11 months, and 29 days old.)
- As with middle adolescents, acknowledge and accommodate your Scouts' high school identity. Planning a campout on homecoming weekend or the night of the senior prom virtually guarantees that older Scouts will skip the campout. That has at least two negative consequences: It deprives the troop of experienced youth leaders on the campout, and it subtly communicates that Scouting is a childhood pursuit, one they should be leaving behind.

- Acknowledge special efforts Scouts make to participate. If a Scout comes to a troop meeting straight from soccer practice, don't criticize the Scout for being out of uniform; thank them for skipping dinner so they can fulfill their responsibilities as a youth leader.
- Celebrate your Scouts' scholastic and athletic achievements. Post the honor-roll list in your meeting place. Announce at a troop court of honor that a Scout earned all-district honors in football. Like adults, Scouts want to be around people who celebrate their accomplishments.
- Teach skills that are relevant to their stage in life. Many older Scouts have driver's licenses, for example, and would be more interested in earning the Automotive Maintenance and Traffic Safety merit badges than in reviewing knots and lashings for the umpteenth time.
- Harness teens' interest to tackle big topics and global issues. Many teens want to save the planet, fight injustice, or tackle nagging social problems. Challenge them to plan service projects that focus on the root causes of these issues.
- Show them connections between the merit badge program and what they're doing in school. A Scout who's in the band is well on the way to earning the Music merit badge; playing team sports makes the Athletics and Sports merit badges pretty easy; more academic badges like Citizenship in the Nation and Reading have obvious analogs in the high school curriculum. When Scouts advance in Scouting because of things they're doing in school, they see Scouting as a worthy pursuit at their age.
- Show them connections between Scouting and the next stage in life. Remind older Scouts that the Eagle Scout Award can help them earn college scholarships and lets them enter the military at a higher pay grade. Talk to them about how their Scouting experiences could provide the basis for effective college-entrance essays. Introduce them to adults in your community who can talk about how Scouting prepared them for success in later life.
- Figure out what their needs are and help to meet those. Invite college counselors and military recruiters to visit troop meetings. Incorporate college visits into troop road trips. Offer to write recommendation letters for college applications.
- While older Scouts are an incredible resource for teaching younger Scouts, avoid the trap of always using them as instructors to teach basic skills without also giving them opportunities to set themselves apart. Older Scouts will quickly lose interest if they spend all their time around younger Scouts.
- Take their skills to a higher level. If they have been around for a while, they probably already have the skills you can teach them. To help them grow, it's essential that you engage consultants who can teach advanced skills. (As an added benefit, you will likely learn something as well.)
- The most important action a leader can take with older youth is to listen to them. This age is all about discovering who they are. They are seeking feedback, but in order to help them, you have to hear where they are coming from. This is a good time to remember that you have two ears and only one mouth.
- Show them how they can remain active in your troop while also participating in Venturing, Sea Scouts, camp staff, and other activities. Connect them with advanced training opportunities such as the National Advanced Youth Leadership Experience (NAYLE) and Powder Horn, or help them lead a Kodiak Challenge.

"What's in it for me?" is a question every Scout asks. For younger Scouts, the answer is often fun, camping, and outdoor skills. For older Scouts, the answer is often adventure, adult association, and life skills.

Rites of Passage

Rites of passage are ceremonies or rituals that mark the transition from one stage of life to the next, often after a period of intense preparation. Once you've completed a rite of passage, there's no going back to the previous stage. The most common rites of passage occur as young people come of age during adolescence. Formal examples include bar mitzvahs and bat mitzvahs, confirmation or first communion services, debutante balls, "sweet sixteen" parties, and high school graduations; informal examples include things like getting a driver's license, taking a parent-teen road trip, or even staying home alone overnight.

Young people need rites of passage—so much so that they will invent them where they don't exist. They might create hazing rituals in their groups or engage in sexual activity or underage drinking to "prove" that they're all grown up.

Scouting, of course, has its share of rites of passage: the crossover ceremony for Webelos Scouts; the Ordeal and other ceremonies in the Order of the Arrow (discussed in the next chapter); Scoutmaster conferences; and the courts of honor where Scouts receive recognition for the ranks and badges they have earned, are recognized for other achievements, and are publicly installed as new troop officers. When an Eagle Scout court of honor occurs around the Scout's 18th birthday, it effectively doubles as a ritual marking transition into adulthood.

Physical hazing and initiations are prohibited and may not be included as part of any Scouting activity.

One way to meet the needs and retain the interest of older Scouts is to develop additional rites of passage in your troop. These shouldn't be elaborate activities—and they can't in any way resemble hazing. Instead, they should be simple ways to mark a Scout's growth and maturation. Here are a few examples:

- Create a special troop neckerchief that is only worn by the current senior patrol leader and predecessors. Make a big deal of presenting each new senior patrol leader with this neckerchief. (Given that neckerchiefs may be worn with nonuniform clothing during Scouting activities, the SPL neckerchief can take on extra significance.)
- Find a special location, such as a troop family's lakefront cabin, and hold patrol leaders' council retreats (and

nothing else) there. Emphasize that PLC members have earned the privilege of being there and of leading the troop through the next six months.

- Give each Scoutmaster conference from First Class through Eagle a specific focus. For example, the focus at First Class could be duty to self, the focus at Star could be duty to others, and the focus at Life could be duty to God and country. That leaves the focus at Eagle about honor and how an honorable young adult lives out duties to God and country, others, and self.
- Develop a special ceremony for inducting Scouts into the older-Scout patrol.
- Establish a servant-leader society within the troop and induct Scouts who excel as servant leaders. Have adults select inductees initially but quickly switch to having past inductees, including those who have moved on to college and careers, vote on each new class.
- On outings where you're camping by patrol—which should be most outings—give the older-Scout patrol that choice campsite next to the lake. Or let them camp next to the adults and share the adults' meals.
- Create a tradition of an annual "super activity" that only older Scouts may attend. This should be something they look forward to all year and that requires a certain level of proficiency; possibilities include a special rafting trip, a shooting event, or even something like a 20-mile hike or a cycling tour. Be sure younger Scouts know about the event so that they can begin anticipating the time they can participate.
- When a Scout turns 18 and becomes an assistant Scoutmaster, hold a brief ceremony where you present the assistant Scoutmaster patch, a camp coffee mug, or other tokens of the Scout's new status.

Other Suggestions for Working With Older Scouts

Here are a few more suggestions for working with older Scouts:

- Make your troop a place older Scouts feel at home. Instead of criticizing them for less-than-regular attendance, celebrate them when they do attend. If they play sports, let them know that you'll still be there once the season ends. (That said, you may counsel a football player not to run for a troop office during the fall semester, or you may discourage a student who's taking five Advanced Placement classes from coordinating a big troop fundraiser.)
- Find ways that older Scouts can flourish. Don't fall into the trap of thinking that older Scouts are just there to serve as youth leaders or to finish up their Eagle Scout requirements. Help them find their next challenge, whether that's serving on summer camp or National Youth Leadership Training (NYLT) staff, attending NAYLE, doing an individual high-adventure program at a national high-adventure base, or attending a national or world jamboree. Much like teachers take continuing-education courses and sabbaticals to renew and refresh, older Scouts who are serving as youth leaders need opportunities to learn and grow.
- Depending on their personal interests, your older Scouts' needs may be better met in a Venturing crew, Sea Scout ship, or Explorer post. Even though they aren't in your troop, they will still be progressing toward BSA's mission of preparing young people to make ethical and moral choices over their lifetimes by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Scout Law.

Remember this: You are going to lose your older Scouts sooner or later, either because they turn 18 or because they decide to pursue other interests. The only questions are when they will leave and where they will go.

CHAPTER 18
Working With the Order of the Arrow, Venturing, and Sea Scouts

"I'm bored" has been a constant refrain for generations of kids. Today, however, it's hard to see how any young person could really be bored. Between Scouting, year-round sports, martial arts, robotics clubs, religious youth groups, school activities, and staggering homework loads—not to mention television, digital devices, and social media—kids have plenty of activities to keep them occupied every waking hour. And the busyness only increases as kids grow older, gain more independence from their parents, and, in many cases, start building résumés they hope will help them get into their dream colleges.

As a troop leader, you probably feel like you're constantly competing for your Scouts' time and attention, and you may view the soccer coach and band director as adversaries intent on stealing Scouts away from your troop. You may even feel the same way about other parts of Scouting, specifically the Order of the Arrow, Venturing, and Sea Scouts. Often, OA, Venturing, and Sea Scout activities can seem more attractive to older Scouts, pulling them away from troops. But when understood and used correctly, the OA and Scouting's programs for older youth can actually benefit your troop in powerful ways while encouraging older Scouts to remain engaged. We'll explain how in this chapter.

The challenge of retaining older Scouts is as old as Scouting itself. At its very first meeting, the National Executive Board discussed the problem.

The Order of the Arrow

Before we can discuss how the Order of the Arrow can benefit your troop, we need to discuss what the Order is and is not.

To begin, it's not a separate program like Venturing and Sea Scouting. Instead, it is Scouting's national honor society. Its purpose is to:

- Recognize those Scouts and Scouters who best exemplify the Scout Oath and Scout Law in their daily lives and, through that recognition, cause others to conduct themselves in a way that warrants similar recognition.
- Promote camping, responsible outdoor adventure, and environmental stewardship as essential components of every Scout's experience, in the unit, year-round, and in summer camp.
- Develop leaders with the willingness, character, spirit, and ability to advance the activities of their units, the OA, Scouting, and ultimately our nation.
- Crystallize the Scout habit of helpfulness into a life purpose of leadership in cheerful service to others.

Established in 1915, the OA emphasizes service to the unit. In this way, Arrowmen (as members, whether male or female, are called), give back to their troops with the leadership skills and values of service learned through the Order. The Order's program complements the troop's, providing valuable leadership training programs, world-class high adventure opportunities, and exciting national conferences.

> "Let it be remembered that the Order of the Arrow was created to help the unit—to help it present its membership a better ideal of the inner qualities of the good Scout camper. Qualities of character, such as cheerfulness and service, are hard for a boy or a man to understand in the abstract. They come easier when seen in human life.
>
> "Let us realize the significance of the Order in the unit—for the unit is our best hope in Scouting."
>
> **—Dr. E. Urner Goodman, founder of the Order of the Arrow**

The Mission of the Order of the Arrow

The mission of the Order of the Arrow is to fulfill its purpose as an integral part of the Boy Scouts of America through positive youth leadership under the guidance of selected capable adults.

The History of the Order of the Arrow

The Order of the Arrow was founded in 1915 by Dr. E. Urner Goodman and Carroll A. Edson at Treasure Island, the Philadelphia Council Scout camp, located on a 50-acre wooded island in the Delaware River between New Jersey and Pennsylvania. Goodman, then 24 years old, was the camp director, and Edson, also 24, was an assistant camp director. They determined to start a camp society to provide recognition for those Scouts in their camp who best exemplified the spirit of the Scout Oath and Scout Law in their daily lives. Because the Delaware Valley was rich in American Indian tradition, and the island had been used in early times as an Indian camping ground, it seemed only natural to base this honor society on the legends and traditions of the Delaware Indians. From the beginning, a unique custom was established in that members were to be elected by nonmembers. That tradition continues today.

By 1917, news of the organization had spread to other Scout camps, and inquiries began. Goodman spoke to many interested Scouts and Scouters, and as a result, lodges were established in New Jersey, Maryland, New York, and Illinois. In 1922, the Order of the Arrow became an official program experiment of the BSA. In 1934, the Order of the Arrow program was approved by the National Council, and in 1948, the Order, recognized as the BSA's national brotherhood of honor campers, became an official part of the Boy Scouts of America. In 1998, the Order was officially recognized as Scouting's national honor society when it expanded its reach beyond camping to include a greater focus on leadership development, membership extension, adventurous programming, and broader service to Scouting and the community.

Today, the Order of the Arrow's service, activities, adventures, and training for youth and adults are models of quality leadership development and programming that enrich, support, and help extend Scouting to America's youth. An estimated 3 million Boy Scouts and Scouters have been inducted into the Order since 1915. There are now more than 150,000 active members in lodges affiliated with nearly 270 local BSA councils.

Order of the Arrow Structure

The Order of the Arrow has three distinct organizational levels: lodges, sections, and regions. Lodges carry out the Order of the Arrow program at the local level and are closely tied with BSA councils; in most cases, a lodge covers the same territory as a council. Sections consist of several lodges within a geographic area, and regions in turn consist of a group of sections. Lodges, sections, and regions each have a distinct set of responsibilities which ensure that the OA program runs smoothly.

At each level, the Order relies on youth leaders who are guided and supported by adult advisers who are in turn supported by staff advisers (professional Scouters). The Order considers a youth to be someone under the age of 21, so many youth leaders, especially above the local level, are 18, 19, or 20 years old.

At the local level, lodges exist to serve BSA councils and individual units. The key leaders in a lodge are the youth

OA members age 18 through 20 must register as adults, complete Youth Protection training, undergo criminal background checks, and follow the same Youth Protection policies as older adults.

lodge chief, a volunteer adult lodge adviser appointed by the council Scout executive, and a staff adviser. The lodge chief presides over the Lodge Executive Committee, which is responsible for executing the annual program of the lodge. While each lodge is different, many lodges have one or more vice chiefs, a secretary, and a treasurer, as well as committee chairs responsible for various aspects of the lodge's program, such as service, ceremonies, and camping promotion. Many lodges, especially large ones where additional structure is necessary, have chapters. If a lodge has chapters, there is generally one chapter for each district of the council. Each chapter has its own officers and advisers, the officers being elected by the youth OA members within the chapter, and the advisers being appointed by the Scout executive, often with the consultation of the lodge adviser and the district executive.

An Order of the Arrow section consists of the lodges within a geographic area of a BSA region. Each section is led by a chief, a vice chief, and a secretary, who play a crucial part in organizing the annual section conclave (a weekend event that includes training, service, competitions, and fellowship). The section may lead training seminars, promote national programs of emphasis, and provide resources to local lodges. The section chief presides over the Council of Chiefs, which is attended by delegates of each member lodge.

The Order of the Arrow, like the Boy Scouts of America, is organized into four geographical regions: Central, Northeast, Southern, and Western. Each region is led by a youth region chief, a volunteer region chair, and a region staff adviser. The region leadership helps execute the national program on a more local level, implements the National Leadership Seminar and National Lodge Adviser Training Seminar (described below), provides its member sections with resources, and facilitates communication between local organizations and the National Order of the Arrow Committee.

At the national level, the Order of the Arrow is governed by the National Order of the Arrow Committee. This committee sets policy, directs the national program of the Order, and broadly manages the organization above the local lodge level. The committee is composed of the national chief and national vice chief (and their immediate predecessors), who are elected annually at the national planning meeting; the chair, who is appointed annually by the chair of the National Outdoor Adventures Committee; other volunteer members, appointed by the chair; and two staff members, the director and associate director of the Order of the Arrow.

Order of the Arrow Membership Levels

There are three levels of membership in the Order of the Arrow.

Ordeal Membership. Once a Scout has been elected to the Order of the Arrow by unit members (or a Scouter has been selected by the lodge adult selection committee), the Scout or Scouter is formally recognized as a candidate for induction into the Order. This is done at a call-out ceremony, usually conducted by the lodge ceremonies team in an outdoor setting at an event like a camporee or summer camp. The candidate then takes part in a brief pre-Ordeal ceremony, and later an actual weekend-long Ordeal (series of tests) to prove sincere dedication to the principles of the Order of the Arrow. Finally, if qualified, the candidate is accepted as a member in an Ordeal ceremony. The new Arrowman is expected to strengthen their involvement with the troop and encourage Scout camping.

Brotherhood Membership. From the beginning of the Order in 1915, all members have been equal. There are no ranks. An Ordeal member is entitled to all the rights and privileges of membership in the Order. Brotherhood membership is sought by Arrowmen seeking to reaffirm their belief in the high purposes of the Order, and it marks

the completion of induction into the Order of the Arrow. Before becoming a Brotherhood member, each Arrowman makes a special effort to serve their troop. After at least 10 months of active service to the unit, an Ordeal member will be eligible to seal membership by completing additional requirements and participating in the Brotherhood ceremony. Each Brotherhood member commits to even more service to Scouting through the Order.

Vigil Honor. The Vigil Honor is a high mark of distinction and recognition reserved for those Arrowmen who, by reason of exceptional service, personal effort, and unselfish interest, have made distinguished contributions beyond the immediate responsibilities of their position or office to one or more of the following: their lodge, the Order of the Arrow, Scouting, or their Scout camp. Any member of the Order of the Arrow registered in Scouting and in good standing in a lodge is eligible for recommendation to the National Order of the Arrow Committee for elevation to the Vigil Honor, provided that, at the time of the recommendation, the Arrowman has been a Brotherhood member for a minimum of two years. Because the Order of the Arrow is primarily an organization for youth, preference in selection is typically given to those who became members of the Order as Scouts rather than to those who were inducted into the Order as adult volunteers or professional Scouters.

How OA Members Are Identified

Arrowmen wear white sashes with a red arrow to signify their membership in the Order of the Arrow. Sashes indicate an Arrowman's membership level in the OA: Ordeal, Brotherhood, or Vigil. The Ordeal sash shows an unadorned arrow; the Brotherhood sash adds bars above and below the arrow; the Vigil sash includes the Brotherhood bars and a triangle superimposed over the center of the arrow.

It is appropriate for an Arrowman to wear the sash when he is doing official OA business or attending an OA ceremony. It is not appropriate to wear the sash at non-OA functions, such as troop meetings, campouts, courts of honor, or Friends of Scouting presentations; or at training programs such as Introduction to Leadership Skills for Troops (ILST), National Youth Leadership Training (NYLT), or Wood Badge. However, a sash should be worn at such functions if the Arrowman is representing the Order of the Arrow in an official capacity, such as when leading a unit election. The OA sash should always be worn over the right shoulder (under the shoulder loop); it is not appropriate to wear the sash draped or folded over the belt or at the same time as a merit badge sash.

Arrowmen also wear a patch (a "pocket flap") on the flap of the right front pocket on the official Scout uniform; this patch signifies their membership in the Order and distinguishes the lodge to which they belong. Arrowmen should wear the pocket flap of their current lodge—the lodge of the council in which they are registered in Scouting and to which their OA dues are paid.

Unit Elections

To become a member of the Order of the Arrow, a Scout is chosen by vote of the youth members in the Scout's unit. This is a unique feature of the Order, given that the majority of those who select their candidates for this honor are not members of the lodge. (Note that lodge members in the unit have a vote as well as nonmembers.) In this way membership is controlled by the youth in their own units and not by those who are already Arrowmen. Because the Order of the Arrow is for Scouts ages 11–20, elections are not held in Cub Scout packs.

The Order of the Arrow lodge is responsible for conducting unit elections in every troop in the council every year. In advance of the election period, the lodge provides information to all Scoutmasters regarding membership in the OA and the election procedures. Typically, the lodge will send an email or letter announcing unit elections to the troop adult leader with a copy to the unit's OA troop representative and adviser. (These roles are described later in this chapter.) The email or letter sets out the time of the year when elections will be held, describes the purpose of the elections, provides the election rules and procedures, outlines the membership requirements for youth and adults, and advises unit leaders how they can schedule an election. All elections must be conducted by the OA lodge of the council in which the troop is chartered. No unit that visits outside its council may hold an OA unit election under the auspices of the OA lodge of another council.

Unit elections are held at a troop meeting, and every effort should be made to have 100 percent attendance of both youths and adults at this meeting. At least 50 percent of the registered active unit membership must be present. The Order should be represented by a two- or three-member team from the lodge or chapter unit elections committee. Units may not conduct their own elections (although the OA troop representative should certainly be involved). Every registered active member of the unit under age 21 at the time of election is eligible to vote in an Order of the Arrow unit election; this includes assistant Scoutmasters who are 18, 19, or 20 years old. A Scout who carries a current national membership card and participates in at least some unit activities during the year is considered to be a registered active member of the unit. For example, an assistant Scoutmaster away at college who participates in some unit activities when home, such as campouts, camporees, or occasional unit meetings, should be considered a registered active member. A youth who moves away or drops out of the unit because of other interests would not be counted in the registered active membership figure.

Immediately prior to the election, the unit leader provides a list of registered active youth members of the unit who have his or her approval for nomination. The unit leader has no authority to change the requirements for election to

the Order of the Arrow, just as he or she has no authority to change the Eagle Scout or other rank requirements. The unit leader must certify Scout spirit (i.e., adherence to the Scout Oath and Scout Law and active participation in unit activities). The unit leader must also certify that each nominee meets all of these qualifications at the time of this annual election:

1. A Scout who holds the First Class rank or higher, is under the age of 21, and is registered as an active member of the troop may, with the approval of the unit leader, be nominated for election. Prior to the annual election, the unit leader must certify the nominee's Scout spirit and youth membership qualifications.
2. The youth must have experienced 15 nights of Scout camping while registered with a troop within the two years immediately prior to the election. The 15 nights must include one, but no more than one, long-term camp consisting of at least five consecutive nights of overnight camping, approved and under the auspices and standards of the Boy Scouts of America. Only five nights of the long-term camp may be credited toward the 15-night camping requirement. The balance of the camping (10 nights) must be overnight, weekend, or other short-term camps of, at most, three nights each.

If you withhold a Scout's name due to Scout spirit, you should tell the Scout so ahead of the election. Scouts should also have the option not to put their names up for election if they are not interested in joining the Order.

Voting for youth candidates will be based on their spirit of brotherhood, cheerfulness (no matter how tiresome their duties), and a willingness to give unselfish and wholehearted service to others at all times. All youth members of the troop present at the meeting may vote for any or all of the candidates, and all eligible youths who receive votes from at least 50 percent of those who turn in ballots are elected as candidates for membership in the Order of the Arrow. If no one is elected, a second vote may be held immediately, and the result of the second vote will be final for that year's unit election.

Developing an Informed Electorate

Younger Scouts, especially in large troops, may not know all the candidates and may be hesitant to cast votes, making it harder for worthy candidates to be elected. Campaigning is not allowed in OA elections, but it is permissible for the unit leader to provide additional information about the candidates, such as their rank, merit badges earned, number of nights camping, service hours completed, and leadership positions held. This information could be announced prior to the vote or included on printed ballots.

Adult Candidate Nominations

Each year, upon holding a troop election for youth candidates that results in at least one youth candidate being elected, the unit committee may nominate registered unit adults, 21 years of age or older, to the lodge adult selection committee. The number of adults nominated can be no more than one-third of the number of youth candidates elected, rounded up where the number of youth candidates is not a multiple of three. In addition to the one-third limit, the unit committee may nominate the currently serving unit leader (but not assistant leaders), as long as he or she has served as unit leader for at least the previous 12 months. Recommendations of the lodge adult selection committee, with the approval of the Scout executive, will be candidates for induction, provided the following conditions are fulfilled:

1. Selection of the adult is based on the ability to perform the necessary functions to help the Order fulfill its purpose and is not for recognition of service, including current and prior achievements and positions.
2. The individual will be an asset to the Order because of demonstrated abilities that fulfill the purpose of the Order.
3. The camping requirement set forth for youth members is fulfilled (although it may be waived for district/council Scouters as explained in the *Guide for Officers and Advisers).*
4. The adult leader's membership will provide a positive example for the growth and development of the youth members of the lodge.

A Scout who had gone through the Ordeal is a member of the Order of the Arrow for life. That means an adult who was an Arrowman as a youth can restart active membership at the same level (Ordeal, Brotherhood, or Vigil) upon registration as an adult leader. This could be a good avenue for getting an uninvolved former Scout more active in your troop.

Order of the Arrow Membership Requirements

Youth	Adult
Under the age of 21	Age 21 or older
First Class rank or higher	Able to help the Order fulfill its purpose
Active member of a troop	Would provide a positive example to youth members of the lodge
Experienced 15 nights of Scout camping within past two years, including one long-term camp	Experienced 15 nights of Scout camping within past two years, including one long-term camp
Elected by other youth members	Nominated by the unit committee and selected by the lodge adult selection committee
Must complete the Ordeal	Must complete the Ordeal

As soon as the unit election is completed, the unit leader may or may not choose to announce to the entire unit the names of youth members who have been elected. Newly elected youth candidates and adult candidates selected by the lodge adult selection committee will be called out in a public call-out ceremony at a resident camp, a camporee, or a special ceremony. Candidates for induction have one year to complete the Ordeal.

Additional information concerning OA unit elections, including answers to frequently asked questions, can be found in the *Order of the Arrow Guide to Unit Elections,* which can be obtained from the local lodge, the unit's OA troop representative, or the Order of the Arrow website at https://oa-bsa.org/uploads/publications/GuideToUnitElections2017.pdf.

OA Troop Representative

Perhaps the biggest challenge in working with the Order of the Arrow is keeping up with what's going on in the lodge, especially if your troop doesn't have adult leaders who are active Arrowmen. Meeting this challenge is the role of the Order of the Arrow troop representative.

The Order of the Arrow troop representative is a youth serving a troop as the primary liaison to the lodge or chapter. This youth leader serves as a formal communication and programmatic link to both Arrowmen and nonmembers in the troop, making sure they are aware of chapter and lodge news and activities and helping to avoid scheduling conflicts with troop activities. The OA troop representative also teaches Scout skills, promotes Scout camping and spirit, sets the example, and encourages Arrowmen in the troop to be active in the lodge and to seal their membership in the Order by becoming Brotherhood members. These efforts are meant to assist the troop and its members in achieving the mission of the Boy Scouts of America, and at the same time fulfilling the lodge's role of being an integral part of the council.

Any Scout who is under the age of 18 can serve as the troop OA representative, provided that Scout is a dues-paid member of the Order of the Arrow. The OA troop representative is appointed by the senior patrol leader with Scoutmaster approval, serves as a nonvoting member of the patrol leaders' council, and attends OA lodge and chapter meetings. Like other youth leadership positions in the troop, the OA troop representative is eligible to wear the appropriate badge of office. The OA troop representative is an official youth leadership position that can be used for rank advancement. (Note that other OA positions, such as chapter chief and lodge chief, do not count toward rank advancement.)

Order of the Arrow Troop Representative Position Description

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

Position Patches and OA Youth Officers

The OA troop representative is the only youth member who wears an OA-related position patch. The OA doesn't provide or authorize position patches for positions like chapter chief, lodge chief, or even national chief, a subtle way to emphasize that OA officers must be members of troops and that their first duty is to their home units.

OA Troop Representative Adviser

As with all positions in the Order (and in the troop), the OA troop representative should have an adult adviser. This adult must be over the age of 21, must be a dues-paid member of the Order of the Arrow, and must be appointed by the Scoutmaster. The adviser assists the youth representative to be successful as the communication and programmatic link between the troop and the lodge or chapter. The adviser helps to include Order of the Arrow ideals and activities in the program of the troop. By setting a good example, the adviser enhances the image of the Order as a service arm to the troop. The OA troop representative adviser may wear an OA assistant Scoutmaster position patch.

A good candidate to serve as the adviser to the Order of the Arrow troop representative could be a troop parent who was an Arrowman as a Scout but who isn't currently active as a leader.

Adviser to the Order of the Arrow Troop Representative Position Description

- Support the youth he or she advises, helping the youth to fully understand the needs of the troop and the elements of the lodge and chapter structure that are responsible for support to the unit.
- Promote the incorporation of OA ideals into the advancement program of the troop, in Scoutmaster conferences, boards of review, and courts of honor. Promote recognition of troop members who have completed their Ordeal, achieved Brotherhood, or been inducted into Vigil Honor membership.
- Attend lodge and chapter meetings with the youth he or she advises. (Be sure to follow the BSA's two-deep leadership policy.)
- Ensure that the OA troop representative has the necessary transportation.
- Help the lodge or chapter in ensuring that messages and documents regarding the achievement of Brotherhood reach Ordeal members in the troop, and work with the OA troop representative to assess their impact.
- Assist the OA troop representative in providing feedback to the lodge or chapter on OA programs that affect the troop, including Ordeals, troop elections, call-outs, camp promotion visits, meetings, and service projects.
- Set a good example.
- Wear the Scout uniform correctly.
- Live by the Scout Oath, Scout Law, and Order of the Arrow Obligation.
- Show Scout spirit.

Additional resources for OA troop representatives and advisers, including an *Order of the Arrow Troop Representative Support Pak,* can be found on the Order of the Arrow website at https://oa-bsa.org.

OA Unit of Excellence Award

The Order of the Arrow Unit of Excellence Award identifies those troops, and the leaders within them, who excel at incorporating the OA into their annual planning. This award is intended to provide a tool for OA lodges to recognize and encourage unit-level participation in Order of the Arrow programs. The OA Unit of Excellence Award criteria recognize units that invite the lodge to conduct quality unit elections, participate in lodge events and meetings, and operate a complete OA troop representative program. Units that complete all of the requirements each year for recognition as an Order of the Arrow Unit of Excellence receive a ribbon for their troop flag.

The award criteria for troops are as follows:

1. **Leadership:** Implement the OA troop representative and OA troop representative adviser programs in your unit.
   - Every six months, ensure that the senior patrol leader appoints or reappoints one Scout to serve as OA troop representative and that the Scoutmaster appoints one adult to serve as OA troop representative adviser.
   - Feature an annual presentation at a court of honor by the OA troop representative on the Order of the Arrow, with a focus on the accomplishments of troop members.
2. **Participation:** Promote lodge events and provide transportation to all Arrowmen wishing to participate.
   - Have at least 50 percent of the troop's OA members attend at least one lodge event in addition to their Ordeal.
3. **Elections:** Schedule a unit election with the lodge or chapter election team annually.
   - Hold an election and have 100 percent of the unit's elected Scouts complete their Ordeal.
4. **Planning:** Maintain an active planning process that prevents overlap between lodge or chapter events and troop events.
   - Review the local OA calendar with the patrol leaders' council during annual program planning, and schedule troop events so that 100 percent of troop programs do not overlap with any full-lodge events.
5. **Conversion:** Demonstrate the depth of your unit's OA program through Brotherhood conversion.
   - Have at least 30 percent of eligible troop members who are Arrowmen seal their membership in the Order by converting to Brotherhood membership.

In addition to the ribbon, the award system includes recognition for the key players responsible for creating a strong Order of the Arrow culture in the unit. These awards are available for the Scoutmaster, the OA troop representative, and the OA troop representative adviser. The Scoutmaster receives a certificate, while the OA troop representative and OA troop representative adviser receive recognition patches. (These are temporary patches designed to be worn on the right pocket of the uniform; a separate patch, the OA assistant Scoutmaster position patch, may be worn by the adviser whether or not they have earned the Adviser of Excellence award.)

The award criteria for troop leaders are as follows:

Order of the Arrow Scoutmaster of Excellence. Lead your troop in earning the OA Unit of Excellence Award three times during your tenure as Scoutmaster.

Order of the Arrow Troop Representative of Excellence. Lead your troop in earning the OA Unit of Excellence Award during your tenure as OA troop representative (six months of service minimum).

Order of the Arrow Troop Representative Adviser of Excellence. Advise at least two OA troop representatives toward earning the OA Unit of Excellence Award during your tenure as OA troop representative adviser.

Order of the Arrow Leadership Training

Perhaps the strongest benefit the OA offers your troop is the array of leadership training programs youth and adult Arrowmen can take. These programs teach important skills that Arrowmen can bring back to the troop. Here's an overview.

Jumpstart. The OA offers introductory training to new members through its Jumpstart website, which provides additional orientation at home after the Ordeal. There, new members find helpful information as they continue the path to Brotherhood membership. New Arrowmen are encouraged to visit the Jumpstart website to learn more about the Order of the Arrow.

Lodge Leadership Development. LLD is a local training program presented by the lodge to train lodge and chapter leaders. LLD keeps members' knowledge of OA policies, procedures, and traditions fresh, and provides an avenue through which lodges can strategically focus on preparing their leaders for success in achieving lodge Journey to Excellence objectives. Arrowmen also learn leadership skills and program ideas that they can put to use in their units.

Section Training. The OA offers a variety of training opportunities at the section level. Training is an important part of the annual section conclave. Among the training offerings at a section conclave is a nationally developed Conclave Training Initiative (CTI). CTI provides annual opportunities for Arrowmen to engage in learning about specific training topics outlined in syllabi from the National Order of the Arrow Committee. The process allows every section in the nation to deliver consistent messages and is designed to augment sections' own conclave training programs.

National Leadership Seminar. NLS is the Order's premier leadership training program. The weekend seminar, held about four times per year in each region, provides an in-depth look at how leadership traits are developed and used in everyday life. The weekend format complements the more detailed Wood Badge and National Youth Leader Training programs, focusing on service within the OA toward Scouting.

National Lodge Adviser Training Seminar. NLATS enhances an adult adviser's knowledge of and connectivity with the OA's strategic plan, program, and resources. Advisers also develop personal skills that are essential to the development of effective youth leadership and ultimately the OA's service to the council. The seminar fosters openness to new ideas and sharing among advisers in attendance, while delving into the details of numerous areas of OA operations.

National Order of the Arrow Conference. NOAC is a six-day adventure designed to get Arrowmen excited about their servant-leadership roles within the Order. Scouting's second-largest national program event (after the National Jamboree), NOAC is held every two or three years at a major university and brings together thousands of Arrowmen to enjoy training, fun, and fellowship.

The OA provides additional training and substantial information concerning its programs, events, and awards through its website at https://oa-bsa.org.

OA High-Adventure Programs

The Order of the Arrow provides unique opportunities for Arrowmen to experience Scouting's four high-adventure bases at a substantially reduced cost compared to regular troop or council treks. Here's an overview.

Order of the Arrow Trail Crew at the Philmont Scout Ranch in New Mexico was the OA's first high-adventure program. OA Trail Crew participants build trails that other Scouts will use at Philmont for years to come. The crew then designs its own unique Philmont trek and spends a week in the backcountry. The OA Trail Crew program has become an important and admired part of Philmont's traditions.

Order of the Arrow Wilderness Voyage and Canadian Odyssey take place at the Northern Tier High Adventure Bases. In cooperation with the U.S. Forest Service and the Canadian government, crews repair centuries-old portage trails first used by American Indians and European explorers and trappers. They then chart their own course for a canoe adventure in the boundary waters along the Minnesota-Canada border.

Order of the Arrow Ocean Adventure is based at the Florida Sea Base. Participants perform service projects that benefit Big Munson Island and the delicate ecosystem of the Florida Keys. Their service is followed by a sailing adventure with fishing, snorkeling, paddle boarding, and other activities.

Order of the Arrow Summit Experience, the OA's newest high-adventure program, takes place in and around the Summit Bechtel Family National Scout Reserve in West Virginia. Crews build trails for the New River Gorge National River and then enjoy the many exciting activities that the Summit has to offer.

These programs combine challenging service with leadership training and special high-adventure opportunities for the Arrowmen who attend. Participants in these programs live the principles of servant leadership, experience some of Scouting's greatest adventures, and return home with lifelong friends and a renewed dedication to Scouting and the Order. Most of the programs are for Arrowmen ages 16 to 20, except for the OA Summit Experience, which is for Arrowmen ages 14 to 18. Programs fill up early in the year. Applications and additional information are available on the OA High Adventure website at https://oa-bsa.org/high-adventure.

Harnessing the Power of the OA for Your Troop

You can harness the power of the OA to benefit your troop, but only if you take concrete action. If you treat the OA as just another activity competing for your Scouts' time, you'll miss some great opportunities. Here are a few suggestions.

Your OA lodge has a vested interest in supporting your troop. Among the items on the Journey to Excellence scorecard for lodges are unit elections, unit visits, the Unit of Excellence Award, and camping promotion.

Fill positions of responsibility. As you might expect, the best first step is to ensure that your troop has an active OA troop representative and OA troop representative adviser. These individuals can help the troop avoid calendar conflicts with the lodge, ensure that the troop has annual elections, and identify lodge resources that can benefit the troop.

Hold annual elections. Regular elections are critical for a couple of reasons. First, they can help you develop a critical mass of Arrowmen in your troop, which will make their participation in lodge activities more likely (and carpooling to those activities easier). Second, you create more opportunities for adult leaders to be selected for OA membership, since the number of adults who can be nominated is based on the number of Scouts who are elected. The more Scouts and Scouters in the troop who are active Arrowmen, the better the relationship between troop and lodge is likely to be. Having adults involved in the lodge can make transportation to lodge events easier for your Scouts and can also help ensure better communication between the troop and the lodge.

Coordinate with the older-Scout patrol. While youth Arrowmen can be any age (assuming they've reached First Class rank), active Arrowmen are often much older, especially if they are serving as lodge or chapter officers. For that reason, your OA troop representative and adviser should work closely with the patrol leader of the older-Scout patrol. These groups—Arrowmen and the older-Scout patrol—will typically have overlapping membership and similar interests, so coordination is important. For example, it might not make sense to promote the OA Trail Crew program if the troop is planning a Philmont trip.

Recognition works in both directions. At the OA's Unit, Chapter, and Lodge Support Web page (https://oa-bsa.org/resources/ucl-support/eagle-scout-congratulatory-letter), you can find downloadable Eagle Scout congratulatory letters from the national chief and the national chair.

Recognize OA accomplishments. At troop courts of honor and in troop communications, make it a point to recognize new Arrowmen and those Scouts and adults who have become Brotherhood or Vigil Honor members. These are significant accomplishments and are worthy of recognition.

Discover what they've learned. After troop members attend OA training sessions such as NLS, sit down with them and talk with them about what they've learned, just as you would after Scouts attend NYLT or NAYLE. While some training topics are specific to the OA, many apply to the troop as well, such as understanding people or building a social media platform. Find ways for them to share what they've learned with their peers (and with adult leaders), perhaps by taking a few minutes at a PLC meeting to share a new leadership technique.

Promote OA high-adventure programs. If your troop struggles to put together crews for high-adventure trips, these programs can be a great way to give your older Scouts a mountaintop experience with little effort on the troop's part. What's more, participants are likely to come home as passionate advocates of high adventure.

Learn about lodge resources. Many lodges have camping promotion committees that develop extensive "where to go camping" directories and websites. Others have ceremony teams that can assist with Webelos Scout crossover ceremonies. Some provide leadership in planning district camporees and other events. Those with strong service committees could help you find places to do meaningful service projects. Your OA troop representative and adviser should be able to identify the resources your lodge has to offer.

Venturing and Sea Scouts

Unlike the Order of the Arrow, Venturing and Sea Scouts are distinct, standalone programs of the BSA. Someone can join Venturing or Sea Scouts without having had any previous Scouting experience and in fact may be only dimly aware that there's a connection to the Scouts BSA.

As programs of the BSA, Venturing and Sea Scouts share the BSA's mission: "to prepare young people to make ethical and moral choices over their lifetimes by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Scout Law." How they achieve that mission varies from Scouts BSA in ways both large and small.

Perhaps the most obvious difference is that Venturing and Sea Scouts serve young adults—both male and female youth ages 14 through 20. (Youth who are 13 may join if they have completed the 8th grade.) Recognition in Venturing and Sea Scouting, and the aims and methods of these programs, are different from those in Scouts BSA, although they share key similarities.

Scouts BSA, Venturing, and Sea Scout Terms

Program	Unit	Top Youth Leader	Assistant Youth Leader	Adult Leader	Assistant Adult Leader
Scouts BSA	troop	senior patrol leader	assistant senior patrol leader	Scoutmaster	assistant Scoutmaster
Venturing	crew	president	vice president	Advisor	associate Advisor
Sea Scouts	ship	boatswain (pronounced "BO-sun")	boatswain's mate	Skipper	mate

A Scout can register with a crew or ship (or both) while retaining membership in a troop. The Scout only needs to pay the BSA registration fee in their primary unit.

Venturers and Sea Scouts who are 18, 19, or 20 years old are considered adult participants. They may hold youth offices and pursue youth awards, but they must register as adult leaders, complete Youth Protection training, and follow the same Youth Protection policies as older adults. That means, for example, that an 18-year-old could not share a tent with a 17-year-old even if both individuals are youth officers.

The History of Venturing and Sea Scouts

Venturing and Sea Scouts share an intertwined history. Together, they are among the oldest and newest programs of Scouting.

In 1912, just two years after the founding of the BSA, Sea Scouts was launched. That year, Arthur A. Carey of Waltham, Massachusetts, created a Sea Scout program using the schooner *Pioneer,* while Charles T. Longstreth organized a Sea Scout patrol on his yacht in Philadelphia.

In 1913, Secretary of the Navy G.V.L. Meyer encouraged the development of Sea Scouts and extended the Navy's cooperation. Two years later, the first Sea Scout manual, *Handbook on Nautical Scouting,* appeared. By the time of the 1937 National Scout Jamboree, thanks to the work of James Austin ("Kimo") Wilder and Thomas J. Keane (Sea Scouts' first full-time director), Sea Scout ships were active across the country; in fact, a separate subcamp at the jamboree consisted of contingent ships from all 12 BSA regions.

With a membership of more than 27,000, Sea Scouts served the country well in World War II. At the outset of the war, Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox issued an appeal for all Sea Scout leaders to join the service as commissioned officers. Thousands did, so many that entire ships ceased to exist for the duration of the war. Sea Scouts made a tremendous impression on Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, who believed that Sea Scouts were better trained and better equipped than other sailors to help the Navy beat the enemy and the elements.

Sea Scouts was joined by a land-based alternative, Explorer Scouts, in 1935 and by the aviation-focused Air Scouts in 1942. Seven years later, the BSA made sweeping changes to its older-boy programs, designating all Scouts who were 14 years of age or older as Explorers, including what became known as Sea Explorers and Air Explorers. (A boy could be an Explorer in his troop or join a standalone unit called an Explorer post.)

Although many Sea Explorers went into the Navy, Coast Guard, and Merchant Marine, Exploring didn't focus on career preparation in its early decades. That changed in 1959, when the BSA created a new Exploring program that focused explicitly on vocational exploration. Similar changes came to Sea Exploring in 1966.

By the 1960s, Exploring was addressing six experience areas: citizenship, service, social, vocational, outdoor, and personal fitness. The program gradually developed a split personality, with some posts emphasizing high-adventure activities and others emphasizing career exploration. As a result, the BSA divided Exploring in two in 1998. Career-oriented posts kept the Exploring name and became part of Learning for Life (an affiliated organization launched in 1991 to oversee the BSA's in-school programs). Everything else became known as Venturing. Initially, Sea Scouting was a specialized segment of the Venturing program, but the programs have been administered separately since 2008.

Today, Exploring is a career education program for young men and women who are 14 (and have completed the eighth grade) or 15 through 20 years old. Exploring's purpose is to provide experiences to help young people mature and to prepare them to become responsible and caring adults. Explorer posts can specialize in a variety of career skills, and all focus on five areas of emphasis: career opportunities, life skills, citizenship, character education, and leadership experience. For more information, visit www.exploring.org.

Venturing's Aims

Venturing has four aims that carry over from Scouts BSA: character development; citizenship; mental and physical fitness; and developing leadership skills. In addition to these defined aims, Venturing has two desired outcomes: developing leadership skills and adventurous programming.

Character Development. The first aim of Venturing is character development. Character can be defined as the collection of core values by an individual that leads to

moral commitment and action, and encompasses a young adult's personal qualities, values, and outlook. The Scout Oath and the Scout Law summarize the Venturing vision of character.

Citizenship. Venturing also seeks to encourage active citizenship among Venturers. In Venturing, citizenship addresses the young person's relationship with others. Crew members come to learn of their obligations to other people, to society, and to the government that presides over that society—and develop skills that will help them be effective participants in the process.

Physical, Mental, Emotional, and Spiritual Fitness. The third aim of Venturing is to develop physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual fitness among Venturers. Fitness includes the body (well-tuned and healthy), the mind (able to think and solve problems), emotions (self-control, courage, and self-respect), and spirit (faith in God and respect for beliefs of others).

Developing Leadership Skills. Developing skills of leadership is critical in helping young adults move from being spectators in life to being individuals who make a difference. Scouting provides opportunities for young adults to develop leadership skills and to guide others as servant leaders.

Adventurous Programming. For Cub Scouts and Scouts, the outdoor program is a learning laboratory where the other aims of Scouting find their expression. In Venturing, adventurous programming is not limited to the outdoor program. The adventure may be indoors or outdoors, but in all cases, it safely helps young adults to move beyond their known comfort zone to confirm for themselves that they can accomplish more than they once believed possible. Through this process, Venturers develop not only life skills and relationships of trust with other crew members and their adult Advisors but also courage and self-confidence, which are vital to success in life.

Venturing's Methods

The Venturing methods provide the process through which the Venturing aims and the mission of the Boy Scouts of America are accomplished. The methods are presented in no particular order, as there is no hierarchy among them. Consistent application of each of these methods is at the core of delivering the Venturing program.

Leadership and Mentoring. All Venturers are given opportunities to learn and apply leadership skills. A Venturing crew is led by elected crew officers. Venturing's program model provides explicit training experiences to help youth lead and mentor as well as opportunities to test and refine their skills during youth-led and youth-mentored adventures.

Group Activities and Adventure. Venturing's emphasis on adventure helps provide team-building opportunities, new meaningful experiences, practical leadership application, and lifelong memories to young adults. Venturing activities are interdependent group experiences in which success is dependent on the cooperation of all. Learning by doing in a group setting provides opportunities for developing new skills.

Recognition. Personal growth comes through the Venturing recognition program and through the acknowledgment of a youth's competence and ability by peers and adults. The recognition program is more than just earning awards. As a Venturer progresses through the four levels of the Venturing recognition program, he or she will learn valuable skills and competencies that have been identified as vital to achieving success in education, in a work environment, and in life.

Adult Association. The youth officers lead the crew. The officers and activity chairs work closely with Advisors and other adults in a spirit of partnership. The adults serve in a "shadow" leader capacity. The Advisor is there to support and challenge youth officers to make the best decisions as they learn to lead their colleagues on adventures of ever-increasing challenge and sophistication.

Ideals. Venturers are expected to know and live by the Scout Oath and Scout Law and commit to serving God and country, other people, and themselves. A Venturer measures himself or herself against these ideals and continually tries to improve. The goals are high, and Venturers reach for them, meet the challenge, and answer the question of how these statements of personal value guide their life path.

Group Identity. Peer groups are essential for the growth and development of young adults. Group identity is the shared sense of belonging to a group with common values, and it serves as a means to build positive group interactions and self-confidence. Some crews use outward signs of group identity, such as a uniform or jacket, but a crew may decide to form an identity that is more focused on shared commitments.

Service. Service encourages young people to identify a community need and to take action to address that need. Service helps Venturers make a difference in the world beyond themselves and in the process develop the disposition to put the needs of others first.

Venturing's Areas of Emphasis

Most Scout troops follow a familiar pattern of weekly meetings, monthly outings built around camping skills, and longer-term activities like summer camp and high-adventure trips. The advancement program and the uniform are important tools for measuring Scouts' growth.

Venturing, on the other hand, is often described to participants as "anything you want it to be." While some crews offer activities similar to a Scout troop, others focus on STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math), community service, or faith development. Some crews never go camping; others focus on high-adventure activities so strenuous that few troops would undertake them. A crew may or may not emphasize recognition, and the uniform could be anything from a crew T-shirt and jeans to the traditional spruce-green uniform shirt with charcoal-gray pants.

Despite this diversity in approach, all crews use adventure, leadership, personal growth, and service as explicit ways of exploring the interests of the crew members. Venturing's program combines these four areas of emphasis with the levels of programming to form a program matrix. The areas of program emphasis provide a framework for youth-led adventure and fun, as well as benchmarks of progress for the Venturing recognition program.

Venturing's Areas of Emphasis

Award Level	Adventures and Activities	Leadership	Personal Growth	Service
Venturing	Initial participation, orientation to the crew, Personal Safety Awareness training, induction into the crew			
Discovery	Participation	Preparing to lead	Goal-setting and personal growth	Participating in service
Pathfinder	Leading and participating	Leading others	Goal-setting and personal growth	Participating in service
Summit	Mentoring and participation	Ongoing leadership development	Goal-setting and personal growth	Leading others in service

Venturing Recognition Program

The Venturing recognition program is a tool to help give structure to a Venturer's experiences and learning. While recognition is one of the methods of Venturing, this method is best approached as an outcome of a balanced annual program plan developed by the members of the crew. Details and guidance on developing and implementing an annual crew program plan are presented in the *Handbook for Venturers.*

The four Venturing awards (or "Trail to the Summit") constitute a pathway that guides a Venturer from participant to leader to mentor for others. The requirements for each award fall into each of the areas of program emphasis. The requirements can be found in the *Handbook for Venturers,* the *Venturing Advisor Guidebook,* and *Venturing Awards and Requirements.*

Venturing Award. The Venturing Award is designed to be earned within a month of a Venturer joining a crew. (The rough equivalent in Scouts BSA is the Scout rank.) Its requirements focus on learning about Venturing and its values, learning about personal safety, and forming a commitment to further participate. A crew's leadership should seek to make this a natural process for all new members.

Discovery Award. The Discovery Award is designed to help a new Venturer benefit from full and active participation in crew activities. He or she will learn skills and basic competencies in preparation for assuming leadership roles in the crew while on the Trail to the Summit. The purpose of the Discovery Award is to move past the orientation provided by the Venturing Award and shift the Venturer into action. Earning the award culminates in an Advisor conference and crew board of review, much like in the Scout advancement program.

Pathfinder Award. The Pathfinder Award is designed to solidify basic and intermediate leadership skills by providing the Venturer with opportunities to lead crew activities, adventures, and service projects and to focus on personal leadership development. The four areas of program emphasis continue to form the foundation of the program, with the Venturer now taking a more active part in the leadership of the crew and the crew's activities. Earning the award culminates in an Advisor conference and crew board of review, much like in the Scout advancement program.

Summit Award. The Summit Award, the highest Venturing award, is designed to provide advanced leadership skills and experience and to help focus the Venturer on working diligently to make a difference in the lives of others, including those in the crew and in the community, through a significant service project and advanced leadership opportunities. You can think of it as the Venturing counterpart to the Eagle Scout Award. The Summit Award moves the experience of Venturing to become more "others-directed." The experiences grounded in the four areas of program emphasis focus more on the Venturer's impact on other people. Earning the award culminates in an Advisor conference and crew board of review, much like in the Scout advancement program.

You may occasionally see references to Venturing's Bronze, Gold, and Silver awards. These awards were discontinued with the introduction in 2014 of the Trail to the Summit.

Venturing Skills-Based Recognition: TRUST, Ranger, and Quest Awards

For Venturers seeking additional challenges in outdoor adventure, sports and physical fitness, or spiritual life, three optional awards are available. The Ranger Award (outdoor adventures) has eight core requirements and a wide variety of electives from which a Venturer chooses four to excel in to help him or her become a master of the outdoors. The Quest Award (sports and physical fitness) requires 12 projects, four core requirements, and an elective that all promote excellence in sporting and physical fitness. The TRUST Award (religious experiences) has five categories of requirements that involve learning more about one's own faith tradition and those of others.

TRUST is an acronym that stands for Tending your beliefs/faith, Respecting the beliefs of others, Understanding other cultures, Serving your community, and Transforming our society.

These optional awards serve as tools to help a crew develop a dynamic and exciting program that leads to adventures, leadership, personal growth, and service, but some crews may find that these specialty awards also

provide a pathway to adventure that can be incorporated into the larger, core awards trail. For example, a crew based around outdoor adventures may find that the Ranger Award provides a structure for a one- to two-year sequence of adventures that, as a byproduct, lead to crew members earning the Discovery or Pathfinder awards. Crews focused on sports could similarly use the Quest Award, and crews focused on religious life could use the TRUST Award.

Venturing Beyond the Crew

Each council has a Venturing Officers Association that brings together crew officers, council-level Venturing officers, and adult advisors to support individual crews, plan council-wide Venturing activities and training courses, and give Venturers a voice in the council. Similar groups function at the area, regional, and national levels (where top Venturers form the National Cabinet). The mission of all VOAs is to promote and support the Venturing program, utilizing a standard organizational structure that enables growth by advancing leadership opportunities through communication, program, and administration. If you are looking for ways to connect with Venturing, your council VOA is a great place to start.

Venturing has developed an array of training courses that are tailored to the needs of Venturers, including Personal Safety Awareness, Goal Setting and Time Management, Project Management, and Mentoring for Venturers. Venturers can also participate in NYLT, NAYLE, and Powder Horn, which are described in chapter 13 of volume 1.

The Purpose and Program of Sea Scouts

Sea Scout ships focus on sailing, cruising either sailboats or power vessels, and participating in paddle sports and other aquatic activities. During the boating season, Sea Scouts learn to maintain and operate a vessel, with a focus on learning the safe and proper methods of handling boats. Sea Scouts also learn the meaning of buoys and lights, how to take advantage of wind and tide, and how to drop anchor or approach a dock. Through partner organizations, they take training in first aid, lifesaving, sailing and seamanship, and other topics.

Many ships participate in rendezvous and regattas with other units. The most prestigious is the biannual William I. Koch International Sea Scout Cup, which brings together two-person teams from around the world for a week of sailing competition.

Although Sea Scouting has a maritime focus, many strong and active ships are located far from any coastline. Some focus on activities like scuba diving or paddle sports instead of boating. As in Scouts BSA, the activities are simply a mechanism through which young people learn lifetime values.

Sea Scouts Aims, Methods, and Traditions

The aims and methods of Sea Scouts mirror those of Scouts BSA, which is no surprise given that the programs were founded just two years apart. The biggest difference, of course, is that Sea Scout activities focus on aquatic activities while Scout activities focus on camping and hiking. (Sea Scout leaders like to say that their bait is boats.)

That doesn't mean you can just add water to Scouts BSA to get Sea Scouts. Many factors make Sea Scouts unique, not the least of which is the program's embrace of maritime traditions. For example, Sea Scouts use a boatswain's call (whistle) during assemblies and flag ceremonies, and a double salute is required when boarding or leaving a vessel or landship (a land-based simulated ship where ceremonies are held). And, of course, Sea Scouts use nautical terms through the program: *Skipper* instead of *Scoutmaster, boatswain* instead of *senior patrol leader, bridge of honor* instead of *court of honor,* etc.

Sea Scout Advancement

Sea Scouts has its own advancement track. The four ranks in Sea Scouts are described below.

Apprentice. Striving for the Apprentice rank, Sea Scouts learn ideals, courtesies, procedures, and responsibilities, and how members of a ship are organized and uniformed. Basic swimming and beginning seamanship skills are required, as is knowledge of safety, emergency procedures, and Safe Swim Defense. Sixteen hours of service in ship projects, activities, or equipment maintenance fill out the requirements.

Ordinary. Sea Scouts attain the Ordinary rank through additional service, knowledge of the Sea Scout emblem, U.S. flag etiquette, and land and sea protocols. Successful candidates will participate in strengthening ship membership, serve as an event chair, complete quarterdeck training, pass the Swimming merit badge requirements, and qualify on various safety and emergency procedures, drills, communication methods, and Safety Afloat. They learn about the galley, build on seamanship and boat-handling skills, and learn about anchoring, piloting and navigation, and related regulations. Overnight cruise planning and participation provides for skills application, and completing three electives broadens horizons.

Quarterdeck training is conducted after ship elections for youth officers and their adult counterparts. The quarterdeck meeting is a ship's monthly business meeting, roughly equivalent to a patrol leaders' council meeting.

Able. To achieve the Able rank, Sea Scouts master ceremony presentation and demonstrate knowledge of maritime history. They also teach others—perhaps Scouts or Venturers—about the program and fulfill leadership responsibilities. They must pass the Lifesaving merit badge requirements and develop further expertise in safety and first aid. There is a continued progression in seamanship, boat-handling skills, anchoring, and piloting and navigation, as well as a deeper understanding of maritime environmental issues. The Sea Scout Long Cruise badge, earned by making a two-week cruise (or shorter cruises totaling 14 days), is required for Able, as is completion of three electives.

Since 2015, paddle sports activities have been integrated into the Sea Scout advancement program.

Scout Advancement in Venturing and Sea Scouting

Venturers and Sea Scouts who earned First Class rank as registered Scouts are qualified until their 18th birthdays to continue with Scout advancement. If desired, they may maintain multiple (dual) registration in a troop and in a crew or ship and work on ranks in either unit. Wherever the member is registered, the Scoutmaster works with the Advisor or Skipper and the Scout to decide who will oversee the advancement.

With the exception of the Eagle, Quartermaster, and Summit Award service projects, any work done while a Venturer or Sea Scout can count toward both Scout and Venturing or Sea Scout advancement at the same time. The Eagle, Quartermaster, and Summit Award projects must be separate and distinct from each other.

Quartermaster. The highest award for Sea Scouts presents a challenge that, when met, will affect a young person through their life. It's the Sea Scout counterpart to the Eagle Scout Award. The Quartermaster candidate must think analytically about how the program is delivered and supported, while developing a deeper understanding of Scouting ideals. Most requirements represent intensification of what was learned for previous ranks, but with significant additions in the Quartermaster service project, cruise, and study of weather and forecasting. The cruise involves taking long-term command of a vessel and crew and conducting critical drills.

Harnessing the Power of Venturing and Sea Scouts for Your Troop

Much like the Order of the Arrow, Venturing and Sea Scouts can benefit your troop—if you ensure that they do. Here are some ways to harness the value of these programs to benefit your troop.

Build a relationship with a companion crew and/or ship. When you have a crew or a ship associated with your troop—especially as part of the same chartered organization—you establish natural paths for Scouts to follow when they get older (and for younger Scouts to anticipate). Rather than lose your older Scouts to another program, as you might with sports, you gain the involvement of their Venturing and Sea Scout friends, who can help out your troop from time to time.

You might think of Venturing and Sea Scouts as somewhat akin to the Scoutmasters' lounge at summer camp: a place to renew and refresh before diving back into the work of leading a troop.

Use Venturing and Sea Scouts to combat the idea that Scouting has nothing to offer once a Scout earns the Eagle Scout Award. If the members of your troop mistakenly think that earning the Eagle Scout Award is equivalent to graduating from Scouting, Venturing and Sea Scouts can show them there is life after Eagle. Moreover, involvement in Venturing or Sea Scouts tends to slow Scouts' advancement so that they earn Eagle closer to age 18. And if they do earn Eagle at 13, there are plenty of additional awards they can pursue in Venturing and Sea Scouts.

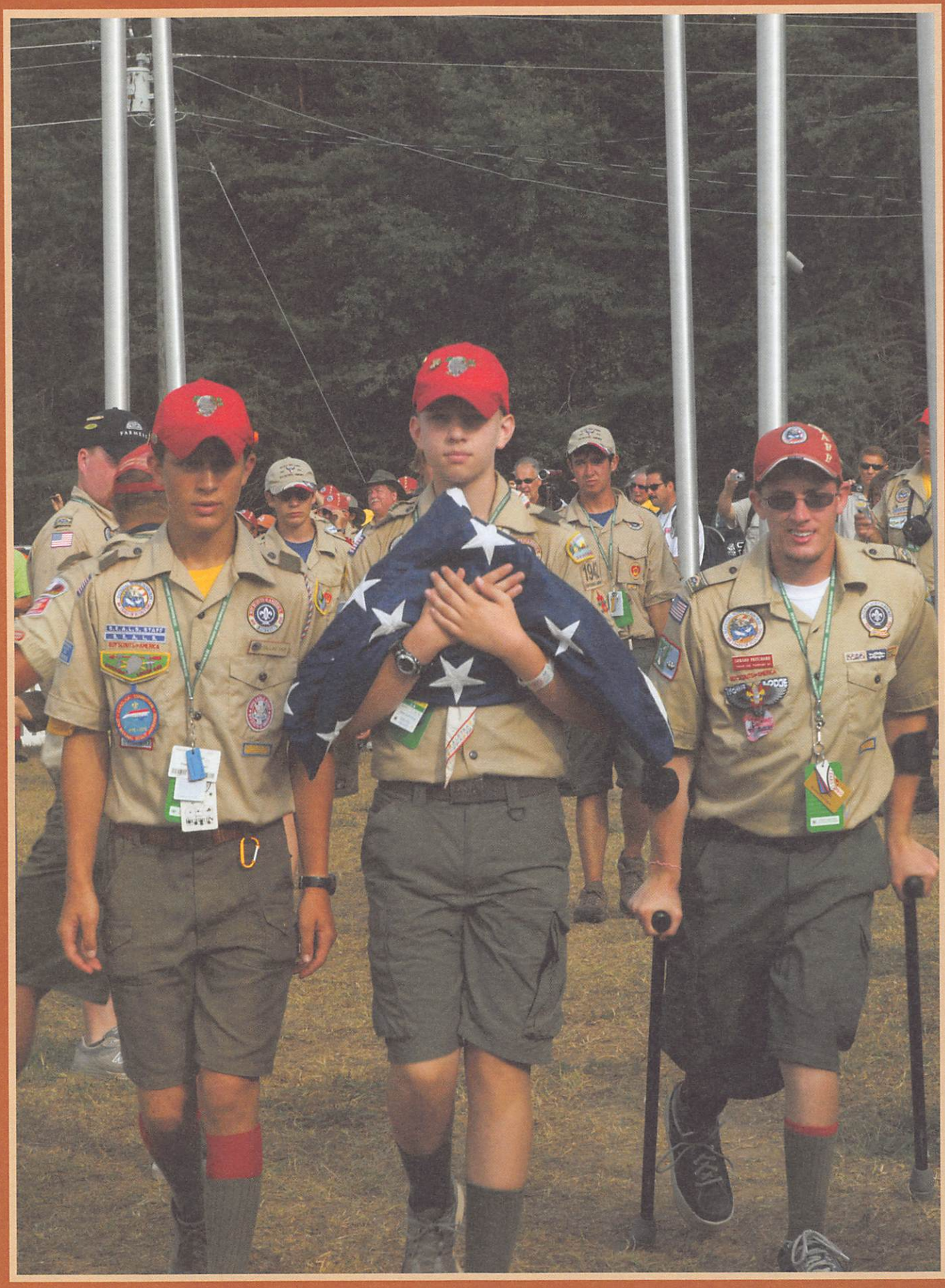
Capitalize on common requirements. Review the requirements for Venturing and Sea Scout awards, and you'll find plenty of instances where skills overlap with Scouts BSA. To earn the Ordinary rank, a Sea Scout must pass all the requirements for the Swimming merit badge. To earn the Discovery Award, a Venturer must complete first-aid and CPR training, which helps with First Aid and Lifesaving merit badges. In many cases, activities can count toward both Scout and Venturing advancement; for example, the work a dual-registered Scout does to earn the Backpacking merit badge would also count toward the Ranger Award's Backpacking elective. By helping your Scouts identify these overlaps, you can encourage their advancement progress.

Use Venturers and Sea Scouts to teach advanced skills. Sprinkled throughout the Venturing and Sea Scouts requirements are opportunities for participants in those programs to share what they've learned with Scouts. For example, six of the eight Ranger Award requirements (and most of the electives) have the Venturer make a tabletop display or presentation about what he or she has learned. A typical requirement (from the Emergency Preparedness requirement) reads: "Make a tabletop display or presentation on what you have learned for your crew, another crew, a Cub Scout or Scouts BSA unit, or another youth group." Sea Scouts, meanwhile, become far more adept at aquatic activities than the typical troop leader. If you have a good relationship with a crew or ship, you can rely on trained Venturers and Sea Scouts to handle much of the instruction in your troop rather than using overburdened adults or instructors who may not have mastered advanced skills.

Share resources for outings. Many troops would like to get into high adventure but lack the equipment they need; your companion crew or ship may have gear you can borrow for your first trip. You could even plan a joint outing, allowing you to share leadership and planning responsibility. Like troops, many crews and ships struggle with teenagers' busy schedules; the addition of a few Scouts from your troop could help a crew or ship fill its contingent for one of the BSA's high-adventure bases, thus letting your troop offer a high-adventure option with little investment on your part.

Convert Venturers and Sea Scouts into assistant Scoutmasters. As discussed earlier, Venturing and Sea Scouts consider a youth to be anyone through age 20. Because the cutoff age for Scouts BSA membership is 18, Venturers and Sea Scouts who are 18, 19, or 20 can be great candidates to serve as assistant Scoutmasters in your troop. If they want to be treated as adults (albeit with some limitations), Scouts BSA offers them that chance.

Leverage Venturing and Sea Scout training to benefit your troop. Venturers and Sea Scouts follow the same training sequence as Scouts, including NYLT and NAYLE. However, they have access to additional training courses, including Kodiak Challenge, an adventure-based leadership development course; SEAL (Sea Scout Experience Advanced Leadership), which uses the sea as a medium for teaching leadership; and proficiency-development courses on topics like goal setting, time management, project management, and mentoring. As with the OA training described earlier, these courses teach skills that can be valuable in the troop setting.



RESPONDING TO SPECIAL CHALLENGES

Somewhere there may be a troop that looks like a Norman Rockwell painting come to life, with photogenic and perfectly uniformed Scouts flawlessly carrying out the Scouting program as Robert Baden-Powell envisioned. Chances are it's not your troop.

Your troop probably has Scouts who break the rules and get into arguments with each other. It may have members with special needs or disabilities or whose circumstances create barriers to full participation. The troop itself may face challenges due to its size, its age, or the populations it serves. We'll explore these and other challenges in this section and discuss how every troop, regardless of circumstances, can deliver the promise of Scouting.

CHAPTER 19
Discipline

A Scout is trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean, and reverent—except when the Scout isn't. As every experienced Scout leader knows, the words of the Scout Oath and Scout Law perhaps better describe what Scouts are becoming than what they are today. From time to time, most Scouts will misbehave in ways both small and large. You probably won't go many months before you hear a Scout using profanity or talking back to a youth leader; you probably won't go many years before you catch a Scout doing something more serious, such as stealing another Scout's belongings.

Because misbehavior is a given, your troop needs to be prepared to discipline Scouts. That's the focus of this chapter.

Defining Discipline

In thinking about discipline, it's important to remember the word's literal meaning: to teach. Discipline teaches someone to do the right thing rather than penalizing them for doing the wrong thing. Consider these attributes of constructive discipline:

- Instead of focusing on past misdeeds, it focuses on future good behavior.
- Instead of inflicting an arbitrary penalty, it imposes natural consequences.
- Instead of creating an adversarial relationship, it strengthens a caring relationship.
- Instead of teaching pain avoidance, it teaches self-control.
- Instead of growing out of the authority figure's anger, it grows out of the authority figure's care and concern.

Will the consequences a misbehaving Scout faces be unpleasant? Perhaps. But those consequences should be limited, appropriate, and a clear result of the misbehavior. As the *Guide to Safe Scouting* mandates, "Discipline used in Scouting should be constructive and reflect Scouting's values. Corporal punishment is never permitted."

Like everything else we do in Scouting, our goal in disciplining Scouts should be to strengthen character, which grows from within rather than being imposed from without. In the words of the BSA mission statement, we want to prepare Scouts "to make ethical and moral choices over their lifetimes by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Scout Law." That's a far loftier goal than teaching them how to avoid punishment.

Positive reinforcement is usually more powerful than punishment. As Robert Baden-Powell wrote, "Discipline is not gained by punishing a child for a bad habit, but by substituting a better occupation that will absorb his attention and gradually lead him to forget and abandon the old one."

To see the power of constructive discipline, consider the old summer-camp tradition—now forbidden—of having Scouts sing at a meal in return for a lost item. Here are some lessons this tradition might teach a Scout who must sing for a lost Scout cap:

- "My friends don't have my back." (The other troop members are probably laughing as loudly as complete strangers.)
- "Camp is not a safe place." (It's not unheard of for campers to steal items and turn them in so other campers have to sing for them.)
- "Rather than claim my cap and be embarrassed, I will just tell my parents I lost it and let them buy me a new one." (In other words, the Scout would rather lie than sing "I'm a Little Teapot" in front of a hundred other Scouts.)

Now, imagine that the lost cap is returned to the Scoutmaster—no singing involved—who in turn gives it back to the careless Scout and starts a talk about strategies for keeping up with one's belongings. The Scoutmaster might even tell a personal story about struggles with losing things. (Perhaps the Scoutmaster, as a young Scout, lost a pocketknife on a campout and had to be driven back to the campsite by a parent the next weekend to look for it. Or perhaps the Scoutmaster, remembering that experience, has learned to use the packing list in the Scouts BSA handbook when leaving camp as a way of making sure nothing has been left behind.)

Clearly, the latter approach would be more effective at teaching a Scout to keep up with belongings. What's more, it would show the Scout that Scouting is a safe environment and that the Scoutmaster is supportive.

A good watchword is, "Praise in public; correct in private." Keep in mind, however, that any private meetings in Scouting must be conducted with the knowledge of and in view of other adults and/or youths.

The *Guide to Safe Scouting* and Discipline

These excerpts from the *Guide to Safe Scouting* offer important context related to behavior and discipline.

Youth Member Behavior Guidelines

The Boy Scouts of America is a values-based youth development organization that helps young people learn positive attributes of character, citizenship, and personal fitness. The BSA has the expectation that all participants in the Scouting program will relate to each other in accord with the principles embodied in the Scout Oath and Scout Law.

One of the developmental tasks of childhood is to learn appropriate behavior. Children are not born with an innate sense of propriety and they need guidance and direction. The example set by positive adult role models is a powerful tool for shaping behavior and a tool that is stressed in Scouting.

Misbehavior by a single youth member in a Scouting unit may constitute a threat to the safety of the individual who misbehaves as well as to the safety of other unit members. Such misbehavior constitutes an unreasonable burden on a Scout unit and cannot be ignored.

Member Responsibilities

All members of the Boy Scouts of America are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the principles set forth in the Scout Oath and Scout Law. Physical violence, hazing, bullying, theft, verbal insults, and drugs and alcohol have no place in the Scouting program and may result in the revocation of a Scout's membership in the unit.

If confronted by threats of violence or other forms of bullying from other youth members, Scouts should seek help from their unit leaders or parents.

Unit Responsibilities

Adult leaders of Scouting units are responsible for monitoring the behavior of youth members and interceding when necessary. Parents of youth members who misbehave should be informed and asked for assistance.

The BSA does not permit the use of corporal punishment by unit leaders when disciplining youth members.

The unit committee should review repetitive or serious incidents of misbehavior in consultation with the parents of the child to determine a course of corrective action including possible revocation of the youth's membership in the unit.

If problem behavior persists, units may revoke a Scout's membership in that unit. When a unit revokes a Scout's membership, it should promptly notify the council of the action.

The unit should inform the Scout executive of any violations of the BSA's Youth Protection policies.

For extensive information on bullying, see the "Bullying Prevention Guide" in the appendix.

Troop Codes of Conduct

If your troop is going to discipline Scouts who misbehave, it stands to reason that you need to define misbehavior—to have a troop code of conduct, in other words. In some troops, the code of conduct consists of nothing more than the Scout Oath, the Scout Law, and perhaps the Outdoor Code. Other troops create codes of conduct that run dozens of pages and codify every imaginable offense, along with the consequences for each action down to the third or fourth repeat offense.

"The Scout Law is our binding disciplinary force, and with ninety-nine out of a hundred it pays. The boy is not governed by DON'T, but is led on by DO. The Scout Law is devised as a guide to his actions rather than as repressive of his faults. It merely states what is good form and expected of a Scout." —Robert Baden-Powell

The best approach lies somewhere in the middle. It's a good idea to make clear, for example, that Scouts can't bring alcohol, tobacco, illegal drugs, firearms, and fireworks on outings and that hazing is prohibited. But if you have an extremely rigid code of conduct, you may find yourself taking actions you never intended, such as expelling a good senior patrol leader from the troop because of a "three strikes and you're out" clause. What's more, detailed codes of conduct tend to focus on things that happened in the past, not things that are likely to happen in the future. (The same situation exists in the legal system, where laws must constantly evolve to address actions like computer hacking, sexting, and cyberstalking that weren't issues in past generations.)

Assuming you choose to develop a troop code of conduct, be sure to include the patrol leaders' council in the process or, even better, delegate the task to them. As Cub Scouts, they may have helped write a den code of conduct, so this is a natural progression. Scouts instinctively know the difference between right and wrong, and they are generally capable of policing themselves. Moreover, they're probably more likely than adults to lean toward simplicity in crafting a code of conduct.

Some troops have all Scouts—and their parents—sign their code of conduct each year, perhaps at the time of charter renewal. Doing so ensures that everyone in the troop knows the rules. You should also consider having adult leaders agree to the same code of conduct; most, if not all, of the rules should apply to them as well as to the Scouts. But don't just look at the code of conduct once a year; publish it on your website and display it prominently in your meeting place.

It's also a good idea to review and perhaps revise your code of conduct annually, much like the *Guide to Safe Scouting* gets regular updates. For example, as the list of possible uses and misuses of technology on outings continues to grow, it's important to document how and when electronic devices may be used and who is responsible for loss or theft.

2017 Jamboree Code of Conduct

Participants in national Scout jamborees agree to obey the following code of conduct, which can serve as a good model as your troop develops its own rules. While some of the items are specific to a national-level event, reviewing this code of conduct will help you think about what topics your rules should cover.

1. The units' adult leaders are responsible for the supervision of its membership in respect to maintaining discipline, security, and the Jamboree Code of Conduct.
2. Leaders will be guided by the Scout Oath and Scout Law and will obey all U.S., local, and state laws.
3. Participants will set a good example by being neatly dressed and presentable. (The official BSA uniform and/or Jamboree identifying items are the only acceptable apparel as deemed appropriate for the activity.)
4. Participants will attend all scheduled programs and participate as required in cooperation with other unit members and leaders.
5. In consideration of other unit participants, participants agree to follow the bedtime and sleep schedule of the unit, unless otherwise directed by the Jamboree program.
6. Participants will be responsible for keeping their tent and personal gear clean and neat. All personal gear will be labeled with appropriate name and unit information. Participants will adhere to all Jamboree recycling policies and regulations. All participants will do their best to prevent littering of the Jamboree grounds.
7. Participants understand that the purchase, possession, or consumption of alcoholic beverages or illegal drugs is prohibited on BSA/Summit property.
8. Serious and or repetitive behavior violations including cheating, stealing, dishonesty, swearing, fighting, and cursing may result in expulsion from the Jamboree or serious disciplinary action and loss of privileges. The Jamboree headquarters must be contacted for the expulsion procedure to be invoked. There are no exceptions.
9. Participants understand that gambling of any kind is prohibited.
10. Participants understand that possession of lasers of any type, and possession or detonation of fireworks, is prohibited unless otherwise specifically authorized by the Boys Scouts of America.
11. Participants will demonstrate respect for unit, Jamboree, and Summit property and be personally responsible for any loss, breakage, or vandalism of property as a result of their actions.
12. Neither the unit leaders nor the Boy Scouts of America will be responsible for loss, breakage, or theft of personal items. Theft will be grounds for expulsion.
13. Participants will obey the safety rules and instructions of all supervisors and staff members.
14. In accordance with U.S., local, and state laws, firearms and weapons are prohibited in the possession of all Jamboree participants unless otherwise specifically authorized by the Boy Scouts of America.
15. All leaders must complete Youth Protection training prior to the pre-Jamboree training and follow the guidelines therein.
16. Hazing has no place in Scouting; nor do running the gauntlet, belt lines, or similar physical punishment.
17. Patch and souvenir trading should occur only between your peers except when otherwise permitted.
18. Participants and staff members may only bring items specified on the equipment list provided by the Jamboree Department and National Council.
19. Violation of this Code of Conduct, or any conduct deemed to be inconsistent with the values of Scouting, may result in expulsion from the Jamboree at the participant's own expense; and could result in revocation of BSA membership.
20. All participants (with the exception of minor children accompanied by a parent or guardian) will have a current photo ID in their possession.

Crafting Consequences

Whether you enshrine consequences in a troop code of conduct or craft them on a case-by-case basis, it's important to come up with consequences that are proportional to the misbehavior involved. You shouldn't expel a Scout from the troop for telling a dirty joke, nor should you simply assign extra dishwashing duties to a Scout who pulls a knife on a leader.

It may be helpful to think of a scale of consequences that starts with a verbal apology and ends with expulsion from the troop. Strive to choose the least severe consequence that still can be effective at changing the Scout's behavior.

In many cases, the best way to craft a response may well be to ask the offending Scout what consequence might be appropriate. The Scout may surprise you by suggesting a harsher consequence than you had in mind.

As you craft consequences, remember that the BSA strictly prohibits corporal punishment and hazing. Disciplinary activities involving isolation, humiliation, or ridicule are also prohibited, and any enforced physical action such as doing push-ups should be avoided.

Finally, once a Scout has been disciplined, both the Scout and the troop should move on. If you bring up the past misbehavior at a future Scoutmaster conference or board of review, it should only be so you can compliment the Scout on making progress since that time.

According to the *Guide to Advancement,* misbehavior is not a sufficient reason to deny a Scout a Scoutmaster conference or a board of review (assuming the Scout has met the requirements for the next rank). See sections 4.2.3.5 and 8.0.0.2.

So what consequences can you impose? Here are some possibilities, roughly in order of severity:

- An apology to the offended person
- A conference with the Scoutmaster
- A written statement explaining how the actions in question violated the Scout Oath or Scout Law
- Restitution (such as paying for damaged troop or personal gear)
- A conference with the Scout's parents
- Removal from the current activity (either by taking a temporary time-out or being sent home)
- Not being allowed to participate in a future activity or activities
- Removal of special privileges
- Assignment of additional tasks
- Required parental participation in activities
- Removal from a position of responsibility
- Suspension or expulsion from the troop

Be careful not to craft consequences that make positive actions seem like punishment. For example, requiring a Scout to complete a certain number of service hours as a consequence for misbehavior can give the impression that community service is a chore, not something Scouts should enjoy doing or that, as the Scout slogan says, they should be doing every day.

Your unit commissioner can be a good resource for crafting consequences for misbehavior. His or her experience and arm's-length relationship to the troop can lend valuable perspective to the situation. He or she may also be able to suggest additional resources for dealing with problematic behavior.

Ideally, your youth leaders will be trained and trustworthy enough to handle minor infractions with adult oversight. Just as consequences should escalate as misbehavior gets more serious, so too should the people involved. Strive to let the patrol leader and then senior patrol leader handle a situation before escalating it to the Scoutmaster and ultimately the troop committee. This is a great opportunity to support the youth-leadership method.

"Responsibility is largely given through the patrol system by holding the leader responsible for what goes on amongst his boys."

—Robert Baden-Powell

Say, for example, that a Scout is acting up at a troop meeting and the senior patrol leader asks the Scout to sit out the game. That simple disciplinary action will (we hope) solve the problem while strengthening the SPL's status as a leader—which may forestall future issues with that Scout. If, on the other hand, an adult intervenes and imposes the same consequence, two things happen. First, a bit of the SPL's authority will be lost, making it harder for this youth to lead in the future. Second, you lose the ability to escalate discipline to the adult level if the behavior continues or worsens.

Involving Parents and the Local Council

Ideally, discipline should be handled within the troop. In the case of minor transgressions, there's little reason to involve people beyond the PLC, Scoutmaster corps, and troop committee.

That situation changes, however, when transgressions are serious or repeated. In those cases, the parent of the Scout must be informed of the situation. The parent of the Scout should also be involved in crafting a solution.

While informing a Scout's parents of their child's misbehavior may lead to additional consequences at home, it can also clear the way for you and the parents to work together to help the Scout. For example, you may discover that a Scout's behavior improves significantly if you require a parent to attend a few campouts. Or you may discover that the behavior you're seeing in Scouting is the result of problems at home that require professional intervention.

There are also times when the council Scout executive should be informed. The following must be reported to him or her for action immediately:

- Any threat or use of a weapon
- Any negative behavior associated with race, religion, sexual identity or orientation, or disability
- Any reports to authorities where the BSA's Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse policy or your state's mandatory reporting of child abuse laws apply
- Any abuse of a child that meets state reporting mandates for bullying or harassment
- Any mention or threats of suicide

You should also involve the Scout executive if you plan to expel a Scout from the troop. Ideally, that will be a rare occurrence, especially if you have provided positive discipline throughout the Scout's time in your troop.

CHAPTER 20
Counseling

As a Scout leader, you may conduct Scoutmaster conferences or sit on boards of review where Scouts discuss difficult issues—or where you feel compelled to raise such issues. For many Scouts, you will become a trusted adult, sometimes taking on the role of a lifelong mentor. From time to time, you will watch as your Scouts struggle with homesickness, disappointment, strained relationships, and problems at school. As fatigue sets in and tempers fray on outings, you may see Scouts arguing over issues both real and imagined. You may even be called on to mediate arguments between two adults.

Because of situations like these, you should develop some basic counseling skills. This chapter won't prepare you to take on the role of a professional counselor. It will, however, give you the skills to help Scouts and Scouters with minor issues—and to know when it's appropriate to suggest guidance from a professional.

Defining Counseling

Some people think that counseling is the same thing as giving advice. It's not; that's the job of advice columnists (who are safely removed from the consequences of people following their often-bad advice). Counseling is simply the art of helping others arrive at the right answer by their own analysis of the situation and the facts. It requires an ability to listen and react in a way that helps others solve their own problems and involves far more questions than statements. When it's done skillfully, those being counseled may not even know they have been guided.

Good counseling is like a person listening to a friend's problem and helping the friend figure out what to do.

Counseling can occur in a sit-down session like a Scoutmaster conference, but it can also occur in a more casual setting, such as when a patrol cook has just dumped a pot of soup in the fire or when a Tenderfoot Scout simply refuses to hike up one more hill. You should counsel whenever someone needs encouragement with a difficult task or help in solving a problem, interpreting facts, or resolving indecision or confusion.

In Scouting, we offer what might be called first-aid counseling. If the wound is minor, we treat it and move on. If it is serious or has the potential to become serious, we leave the job to the professionals. You'll probably know instinctively when to suggest to a Scout and family that they seek help from a school counselor, religious leader, or community-based counselor. There are a few cases when professional intervention is required, including:

- When a Scout is at risk of inflicting self-harm
- When a Scout is at risk of hurting someone else
- When you suspect child abuse
- When you suspect drug or alcohol abuse
- When you see signs of depression, withdrawal, or hallucination
- When a Scout's problem relates to sexuality or sexual or gender identity

For detailed information on reporting suspected child abuse, see chapter 26 in volume 1 of the *Troop Leader Guidebook*.

Elements of Good Counseling

Effective counseling can't happen in a crowded place or a noisy environment. Carefully select a time and place where there will be few interruptions. When counseling a Scout, observe Youth Projection policies by meeting with the knowledge of and within the sight of other adults or Scouts. At summer camp, for example, you might sit at a picnic table near the dining hall or in camp chairs in front of the Scoutmaster's tent.

- *Provide a relaxed atmosphere.* The middle of a hectic troop meeting is obviously not such a time.
- *Listen more than you speak.* You may need to check out your understanding with the Scout. Say things like, "Sally, are you saying that ...?" and "Miguel, is that how you really feel about ...?" (This not only helps you understand what the person is saying but helps both of you frame the issue more clearly.)
- *Try to understand* what the Scout is telling you. Listen for hidden meanings and watch body language.
- *Acknowledge* what the Scout is saying and that you *really hear* the message.
- *Do not minimize or contradict what the Scout is saying.* When you say things like "You don't really mean that," you discourage the Scout from further confiding in you.
- *Do not give quick, easy advice.* People need to be guided as they find ways to solve their own problems.
- *Summarize* the problem and help the Scout organize their thoughts about it.
- *Support the Scout's thinking with further information and data.* You may suggest several possibilities, but let the Scout select the one they think might work. Provide facts. Know the difference between information and advice.

- *Encourage* the Scout to review verbally several possible solutions to the problem.
- *Reflect feelings.* Restating feelings indicated by the Scout helps you clarify the meaning or intent of what the Scout has said and show sympathy for their point of view.
- *Use positive body language.* Leaning forward, good eye contact, and hand gestures indicate interest. (How would you feel if the listener's eyes were closed or if they were checking their phone while you were talking?)
- *Be aware of your biases.* You are likely to have conversations that test your own prejudices. Try to remain open in a conversation where prejudice might make you a poor counselor.
- *Avoid making judgments.* A warm, sympathetic listener creates a spirit of openness, especially for emotions. If you criticize each statement and each feeling expressed, the person you're counseling will likely clam up.
- *Avoid anger.* Some Scouts (and Scouters) can be very trying. They may accuse or criticize you or even use ethnic or sexual insults. Anger is the worst defense. Remain cool and professional.

Often it's better to offer a suggestion in the form of a question. Sometimes suggestions are more acceptable when they come as open-ended questions. Good questions relate directly to what the speaker is saying. (An abrupt diversion in the direction of conversation may be a turnoff to the other person.)

The SOLER Approach to Listening

The acronym SOLER can help you remember the attributes of active listening.

- Sit **squarely** facing the other person.
- Maintain an **open** posture, instead of crossing your arms or legs.
- **Lean** slightly forward.
- Maintain **eye** contact.
- **Relax.**

Steps in Decision Making

As you help someone move from problem to solution, offer these steps as a suggestion:

1. Determine the real problem.
2. Examine the facts.
3. Consider possible solutions.
4. Reach a decision on the best solution.
5. Move toward action.

Additional Counseling Tips

These additional tips may help you do a better job of counseling.

- Allow at least 30 to 40 minutes to discuss a major issue.
- Try to spend two-thirds of your time in supportive behavior and one-third of your time in solving the problem.
- Don't try to cover more than two key issues in a single session.
- Rehearse the session in your mind before the visit.
- State things in a gentle, nonaggressive, and nonthreatening way.
- Convey a "let's resolve this together" attitude.
- Don't get frustrated; change often takes time.

Confidentiality

One issue every counselor deals with is confidentiality, especially when working with minors. On the one hand, minors can expect reasonable discretion from counselors; on the other hand, they are minors whose parents are ultimately responsible for their health and wellbeing. Overlapping, and perhaps contradictory, federal and state laws, ethical guidelines, and agency policies can sometimes complicate the matter for professional counselors (and others who work with youth) who are dealing with life-and-death issues.

As a Scout leader, you should be leery of promising confidentiality and should make clear that you must consult with a Scout's parents, other trusted adults, or legal authorities in cases such as suspected child abuse or potential self-harm. In general, you should err on the side of informing and involving the parents.

Never say yes if a Scout asks, "Can I tell you something if you promise not to tell?" Instead, explain that you promise to act in their best interest—which could mean involving the Scout's parents.

That doesn't mean you need to announce a Scout's problems to the world. Imagine, for example, that a Scout complains to you that they have no friends in the troop. Beyond working through the problem with the Scout, you might share the Scout's concerns with key adult leaders and perhaps suggest to the senior patrol leader to make sure the Scout is not the odd one out when buddy pairs are formed—all without revealing how the Scout broke into tears while talking with you.

While you as a counselor should offer a reasonable measure of confidentiality, the Scout has no responsibility to maintain confidentiality. The Scout is perfectly free to tell a parent or anyone else they choose what you've talked about.

Seeking Professional Help

If a Scout needs more than first-aid counseling, the Scout's family should seek professional help. Your only role would be to suggest resources in the community, if appropriate, and then continue to offer support to the family in accordance with BSA policies. Ideally, they would work with a licensed marriage and family counselor, a psychologist, a social worker, or a medical doctor.

A good starting point could be your chartered organization. If it is a school or religious institution, it undoubtedly has counselors on staff or has connections in the community. The family could also consult its pediatrician or school counselor for other resources.

CHAPTER 21
Conflict Resolution

When Benjamin Franklin said, "In this world nothing can be said to be certain, except death and taxes," he was forgetting a few other inevitabilities, including conflict. That's perhaps surprising given that the American Revolution had ended just a few years earlier!

Anyone over the age of 3 or 4 knows that conflict is bound to happen when people get together. Siblings fight, spouses bicker, lawmakers debate, and nations go to war. And you don't have to be a 50-year Scouting veteran to know that conflict happens in Scouting as well. Patrol members might argue over who forgot to clean the Dutch oven. A parent might argue with the Scoutmaster over why their Scout didn't make First Class. The Scoutmaster might argue with the troop committee over the need to buy new backpacking stoves. There could even be conflict about conflict resolution, as when adults disagree over whether and how to mediate disagreement within the patrol leaders' council.

We'll talk about ways to deal with conflict in this chapter. Before diving in, however, it's perhaps worth reflecting on another quote attributed to Benjamin Franklin: "If we don't hang together, by Heavens we shall hang separately." While the stakes aren't as high in your troop as they were during the American Revolution, unresolved conflict can chase families and leaders away and even, in extreme cases, tear a troop apart.

Types of Conflict

In Scouting, conflict can occur among Scouts, among adults, between Scouts and adults, and between different groups of people (different patrols, different troops, the Scoutmaster corps and the troop committee, the troop and the district, etc.). The root causes can be personalities, priorities, power, and a host of factors that don't begin with the letter P.

In simplest terms, however, there are only two types of conflict: self-resolving conflict and conflict that requires some sort of mediation or intervention.

As you might expect, a self-resolving conflict is a situation that, if given time, will work itself out without confrontation or argument. A good example might be when it's long past time for lights out but a group of Scouts won't settle down in their tents. If that means the adult leaders also can't get to sleep, you have a recipe for conflict. Often, however, this conflict will resolve itself before an adult has to intervene because the senior patrol leader or a fellow Scout convinces the noisy Scouts to settle down. Another example is when the members of a patrol can't seem to motivate themselves to get dinner cooked on time. If the senior patrol leader is expecting to eat with them, the SPL might be inclined to yell at them. A better strategy might be for the SPL to eat with the adults, allowing the Scouts to work out their own problem. (What happens if they don't get dinner done before bedtime? They could always borrow granola bars or fruit from a later meal to tide them over. Remember that no Scout ever died of starvation on a weekend campout.)

Of course, the situations described above could potentially escalate. If you're in close quarters at a camporee, for example, those chatty Scouts after lights out may disturb neighboring troops. If you're camping in bear country, it's important to finish dinner and get bear bags hung before dark. Generally speaking, however, you can stand back and watch when self-resolving conflict occurs.

Most conflict that won't resolve itself can be resolved cooperatively through mediation, as we'll discuss in the next section. Sometimes, however, you must take a more a directive approach. If a fistfight occurs, the only correct response is to break it up immediately. Once the fighters have retreated to their corners, you can explore the issues that led to the conflict.

Mediating Conflict

A good way to resolve conflict is to bring the parties together to work through their issue. Listening to people and paying attention to them is an essential step for establishing a relationship in which cooperation can occur.

While you can probably think of plenty of questions to ask—such as "What were you thinking?" and "What's the matter with you?"—some questions are more effective at moving situations toward resolution.

Questions for Conflict Resolution

1. What do you want?
2. What are you doing to get it?
3. Is it working?
4. Do you want to figure out another way?

The most important question to ask is, "What do you want?" At its heart, most conflict is about not getting what we want, so start by figuring out what the parties to the conflict are looking for. (Note that this doesn't mean they will actually get it!)

Asking this question is empowering because it's not a question we often hear. It focuses people's attention on what their real needs are and helps you and the parties see more clearly other people's points of view. Moreover, asking it demonstrates that you have each party's best interests at heart.

Discernment is important here. What people say they want may be masking what they really want.

Once you have determined what the parties want, ask two follow-up questions: "What are you doing to get it?" and "Is what you are doing working?" These questions put responsibility on others to examine where they stand. Give the parties the time and encouragement to figure out the answers and to understand their own paths.

Finally, ask, "Do you want to figure out another way?" This question gives the parties the responsibility and power to find pathways to reach where they want to be. It gives them a way to invite you to help them explore other approaches to a problem. It encourages a cooperative effort—working together to help everyone get what they want.

Too often as leaders we skip questions 2 and 3. We ask, "What do you want?" and then jump immediately to a variation of question 4, telling someone what we think they should do. Effective mediation, like effective counseling, is about helping other people solve their own problems, not imposing solutions on them.

Work on issues in the present and the future, not in the past. Rather than let the parties wallow in blame and recrimination, steer the conversation toward seeking solutions. Any time you feel that you aren't making progress or that you don't know what to do next, return to the basic four questions.

When you must take a more directive approach, as in the case of breaking up a fistfight, the four questions above become four statements:

1. This is what I want.
2. This is what I understand you are doing.
3. This is why that isn't working for me.
4. Here's what I need for you to do.

While the end result is an immediate change in behavior, this approach gives you tools to explain yourself and provide a basis for a decision. It allows you and the group members to interact on a healthy level, and it provides the opportunity for direct decisions to evolve into arrangements developed through a more cooperative approach.

If the source of conflict between two or more troop leaders is a disagreement on the troop's mission, it's worth revisiting chapter 1, "Troop Vision." A clear troop vision can help unify leaders around a common set of priorities.

Deciding Who Should Mediate Conflict

Who's the best person to resolve conflict? Generally speaking, it's someone who's close enough to the situation to understand what's going on but far enough removed from the situation to be (and to be perceived to be) impartial.

Like most other situations, conflict resolution is a good opportunity for youth leaders to practice their leadership skills. If two patrol members are arguing, their patrol leader may be the best mediator, for example. Next in line would be the senior patrol leader or the patrol advisor. Try to avoid making the Scoutmaster or other adults the default mediators.

When the conflict involves adults—a disagreement between the Scoutmaster and the troop committee chair, for example—you may need to look to your chartered organization representative or your unit commissioner for help. These volunteers should be able to serve as honest brokers to help you resolve the situation.

Whoever is working to resolve the situation will be most effective if he or she is trusted by the parties involved. People are much more likely to cooperate when:

- They trust you.
- They have experience with you and have found you to be a reliable leader and ally.
- They understand that you are making decisions for the good of the group.
- They sense that you care about them.

Effective Communication in Conflict Situations

As with any sort of leadership, being able to step in, if necessary, and set certain boundaries is easier to do if leaders have already established a relationship of trust and understanding with those they are leading. Leaders who have taken the time to listen and learn and care for people in their groups will have a much easier time negotiating with group members and individuals to establish the needs and solutions of everyone, leaders included.

You can be open with your Scouts about your understanding of your responsibilities and what you expect from them. At its most basic, the contract between leaders and those who are led is as follows.

My responsibility is:	Your responsibility is:
• To do all I can to ensure your safety	• To tell me when you don't feel safe
• To help you get the most out of this experience	• To help me ensure your safety
• To be honest with you and treat you with respect	• To be honest with me and treat me with respect

Listening is the most important skill in resolving any conflict, whether the conflict involves you as a participant or as a mediator. Remember that you have two ears but only one mouth. Unless you make a conscious effort to listen, you will miss vital facts and beliefs that could lead to a satisfactory resolution.

But communication is about more than just speaking and hearing. Body language sends powerful messages, as does tone of voice.

Professional conflict mediators are trained to manage their emotions so that they can be as objective as possible. That allows them to view a situation for what it is rather than to allow their anger or excitement or some other emotion to dictate their reactions.

Most Scouters haven't had that kind of in-depth training. However, simply being aware of the need to step away from our emotional responses can help us react more effectively when a situation involves conflict.

One trick is to pay attention to your breathing for a few moments. When we are under stress, we often take rapid, shallow breaths. A few slow, deep breaths can refresh your brain with oxygen and help you focus more clearly.

If anger or frustration or some other emotion is clouding your ability to see an issue as objectively as possible, it's probably wise to step back for a minute or an hour—or even a day or more. Allow time to collect yourself before going forward. You may also need to defer to another mediator who can approach the situation with more objectivity.

Conflict can be distressing and discouraging, especially in a program like Scouting where everyone should be working toward a common goal. But that common goal can actually offer a way out of conflict. After all, when the parties in conflict realize they all want the same thing, they should be able to figure out a way to get there.

CHAPTER 22
Special Troop Situations

How big should a Scout troop be? In *Aids to Scouting,* the first handbook for Scoutmasters, Robert Baden-Powell suggested that troops should not exceed 32 members. That number represented twice the 16 Scouts he felt he could handle, because, he joked, "I allow for other people being twice as capable as myself." Most contemporary Scouters would probably acknowledge that the ideal troop size falls somewhere between what B-P said he could handle and what supposedly more-capable people can handle. In fact, the average troop size today—about 22 Scouts—falls near the middle of that range.

But many troops don't fall within the 16-to-32-Scout range. A good number of troops are very small (patrol-sized) or very large (with 100 or more members). Troops of every size can be effective, provided you take into account the special opportunities and challenges of being very small or very large. We'll look at some of those opportunities and challenges in this chapter and also discuss another special situation: the new troop.

Very Small Troops

Being a small troop has its advantages, perhaps the most important of which is nimbleness. But there are disadvantages as well, particularly in relation to the availability of youth and adult leaders. Let's look at the key advantages and disadvantages and how to manage them to deliver an effective program.

Nimbleness. In a small troop, program planning becomes more flexible. If your 20-mile hike gets rained out, for example, you can easily reschedule it. In fact, the senior patrol leader could probably poll the entire membership in 15 minutes to set a new date. That said, you shouldn't use your nimbleness as an excuse for not doing good long-range planning. Events that don't get planned generally don't happen, and your Scouts won't learn planning skills without practice. Do all the long-term and short-term planning larger troops do; just realize that you have some flexibility if plans need to change.

Ease of Travel. With four Scouts and a couple of adults, you can probably travel to outings in a single vehicle, especially if you have a luggage rack or can pull a small trailer. You also won't have to worry about exceeding size constraints for backcountry groups or finding space in crowded campgrounds. You may also discover opportunities that aren't available to larger troops. For example, a wildlife management agency might let your troop participate in a bird-banding activity or camp next to its headquarters building—things a larger troop wouldn't get to do.

Speed. One thing you'll notice about small troops is that things tend to happen faster than in larger troops. It takes less time to assemble the Scouts for opening ceremonies, skills instruction goes faster, and group discussions may peter out fairly quickly. Take the speed factor into account as you plan activities so you avoid running out of things to do.

Focus on the Individual. When you only have a few Scouts, it's easier to tailor a program to meet individual needs and interests. For example, everyone could choose a merit badge to work on together, or the whole troop can vote on where to go camping next. It's also much harder for a Scout to fall through the cracks because any absence will be very noticeable. That positive can also become a negative, however. If one Scout out of 50 misses any outing, you won't notice much effect; if one Scout out of five misses an outing, the other four will find themselves having to work much harder to handle tasks on the duty roster. Be sure to emphasize that every Scout's participation in meetings, outings, fundraisers, and service projects is critical to the troop's success.

Focusing on the individual extends beyond troop activities. In a small troop, it's easier for the Scoutmaster—or the whole troop—to attend a member's soccer game or band concert as a show of support.

Programs for All Ages. It can be hard in a small troop to meet the needs of new, experienced, and older Scouts; the program tends to cater to the needs of the predominant age group. Outside resources are useful here. For example, you could seek out a summer camp with a strong new-Scout program and strong high-adventure opportunities for older Scouts. You could also encourage older Scouts to participate in the individual programs offered by the BSA's high-adventure bases or find slots for them in high-adventure trips organized by your council or nearby troops.

Equipment. The smaller the troop, the less gear you need. A single patrol box or tote, a single backpacking stove, and a single set of pots and pans will usually suffice. You may even be able to get by with a leader's personal group-camping gear. Just be aware that if and when your membership grows, so too will your equipment needs.

Youth Leadership. One thing adults in small troops worry about is not having enough Scouts to cover all the standard leadership positions. But there's no rule that says you have to use every position. In fact, it probably doesn't make sense to name a senior patrol leader, a patrol leader, and a troop guide when you only have one patrol's worth of Scouts. You could also combine roles—scribe and historian, for example—and give every Scout a job (even those Scouts who don't need leadership time for advancement).

Adult Leadership. When it comes to adult leaders, small troops face several challenges. The most obvious is finding enough trained adults. If you only have a Scoutmaster and one assistant Scoutmaster, for example, they can get stretched pretty thin. It's a good idea to establish an expectation that every parent of every Scout take on some role with the Scoutmaster corps or troop committee and to encourage parents to serve as extra adults on outings. Another issue with adults is that you're less likely to have volunteers who are experienced in specialized skills like backpacking, pioneering, or cycling, so you may need to reach outside the troop for consultants who can teach those skills. (These could be leaders from other troops or Venturing crews, people from local outdoor clubs, or employees of camping retailers.) Paradoxically, you can also find yourself with too high a ratio of adults to Scouts on outings if every Scout's parent goes along, so it may be necessary to ask parents to occasionally skip outings.

In a very small troop, you may need to look to the chartered organization and troop alumni for additional adult leadership. Through your unit commissioner or district executive, you may also be able to identify adult Eagle Scouts or other Scouting alumni who live in your community or experienced Scouters who've transitioned out of other roles and might be willing to lend a hand.

Patrol Method. Perhaps the biggest challenge small troops face is implementing the patrol method. While you could form two patrols of three or four Scouts, patrols that size are really too small to function effectively. A better strategy is to function as a single patrol and form a partner-troop relationship with one or more other small troops; these same troops could meet or camp together occasionally for interpatrol competitions or could take turns teaching each other skills they've mastered. Events like district camporees that feature patrol-based competitions also give your troop the chance to practice the patrol method.

District and Council Support. With small troops, district and council support can be crucial. Take advantage of district and council events, district roundtables, and the support offered by your unit commissioner. By networking with other adults in your district and council, you will discover a wealth of resources you can use to strengthen your troop.

Planning for the Future. It's perfectly fine to stay small forever, either because you live in a sparsely populated area or because your chartered organization is small. However, if you want to get bigger, plan your growth carefully. Operating a 20-Scout troop like a six-Scout troop is a recipe for failure. To grow successfully, you'll need to recruit additional adults, overcome any limitations imposed by your meeting space or your troop gear, and probably make troop processes a little more formal. Review section 1 of this book for ideas on evaluating your troop's current condition and charting a course for the future.

If you want to grow, don't establish policies or traditions that make growth difficult. For example, it would be relatively easy to provide troop tents when you only have six Scouts but quite expensive to do the same thing for a 25-Scout troop.

Very Large Troops

A very small troop is something like a sailboat. It's small, nimble, and easily steered by a skeleton crew, but it's also reliant on external forces for much of its propulsion. A very large troop, on the other hand, is more like a battleship. It's formidable and self-sufficient and requires a large, well-organized crew to accomplish its mission. Although it's less dependent on external forces, it can be hard to steer in new directions. What special opportunities and challenges do large troops experience? Here are a few.

Patrol Method. Nowhere is the genius of the patrol method more evident than in a very large troop. Having strong patrols lets you divide and conquer and break tasks into manageable sizes. You can see that strong patrols are important when you consider the difference between planning a menu for eight Scouts versus 80 Scouts or getting the attention of 10 Scouts versus 100 Scouts during a meeting. In many large troops, patrols function almost as mini-troops with patrol advisors (assistant Scoutmasters) who serve as quasi-Scoutmasters and keep up with what their Scouts are doing both within Scouting and beyond. Large-troop patrols are more likely than those in smaller troops to plan their own outings or to choose whether to attend troop outings as a group.

Adult Leadership. Large troops tend to build up large cadres of adult leaders with many years—or even decades—of Scouting experience. It's not unheard of to have assistant Scoutmasters or committee members who are former Scoutmasters of the troop, former Wood Badge course directors, or both. Having such a deep bench can be both a positive and a negative. On the upside, veteran leaders bring expertise in a wide variety of areas and may even hold certifications (for example, BSA Level II climbing instructor) that can let the troop undertake activities most troops can only do at summer camp. On the downside, they can crowd the troop's youth leaders and give the false impression that there's no room for new parents to get involved. It's important that adult leaders have clearly defined roles, that only key adults attend patrol leaders' council meetings, and that the troop regularly cultivates new leaders.

The Role of the Scoutmaster. Serving as Scoutmaster of a very large troop can begin to seem like a full-time job. Typically, large-troop Scoutmasters serve more as CEOs than hands-on leaders; they manage the vision for the troop but rely on key assistant Scoutmasters and troop committee members to handle day-to-day operations. When the role is structured properly, the Scoutmaster has time to get to know all the members of the troop and even handle all Scoutmaster conferences.

Succession Planning. In large troops (and in smaller troops, for that matter), it's helpful to think about long-term leadership needs. You could designate a primary assistant Scoutmaster who is being groomed to take over as Scoutmaster someday and even assign leaders-in-training to shadow other key positions. It can also make sense to set up staggered terms of service so key leaders—the Scoutmaster and committee chair, for example—don't rotate out at the same time.

Multiplying Leadership Roles. On both the youth and adult sides, you can divide leadership responsibilities by multiplying leadership roles. You might have two or three quartermasters, for example, or an adult whose only role is to keep up with health forms. Doing so keeps people from becoming overwhelmed and creates additional entry points. Just make sure everyone understands who is responsible for which tasks.

A good rule of thumb is that no leader should have to coordinate the efforts of more than five other leaders. If you have 10 patrols, for example, you might name two assistant senior patrol leaders, each of whom works with five patrol leaders.

Focus on Administration. As your troop size approaches or exceeds triple digits, administrative tasks can become overwhelming; just imagine making a trip to the council service center to pick up badges for a court of honor or collecting medical forms for 90 summer-camp participants. Large troops function best with large administrative staffs that handle details like these so the Scoutmaster corps can concentrate on program.

Program. When a troop has dozens of Scouts at each level (new, experienced, and older), it's important to provide activities that meet the needs and interests of all three age groups. That could mean holding single outings that include a variety of activities or scheduling multiple outings during the month. Some very large troops offer outings nearly every weekend—and sometimes multiple activities at the same time—allowing patrols or individual Scouts to choose which they will participate in. (This is also important because the backcountry and many frontcountry campgrounds simply can't accommodate groups of 50 or 100 people.)

Communication. Effective communication becomes especially important in very large troops. It's essential to have multiple communication channels, including email newsletters, social media, group texting, and a robust website. A troop handbook that outlines troop policies and procedures is also a good idea. At the same time, it's important not to bypass the senior patrol leader and the patrol leaders, who should be the primary communicators to rank-and-file Scouts.

Independence. If your troop is very large, you may feel that you don't need the support of your district and council. While that's true to some extent, you should still participate in activities beyond the troop; your Scouts will benefit from interacting with other Scouts and you will discover opportunities to share your resources with other troops. You could even offer to lead a district camporee or to partner with a new or struggling troop that needs more resources. Imagine the good you could do if you loaned a few "extra" adult leaders to a startup troop in an urban neighborhood for six months.

Focus on the Individual. In a very large troop, it's easy for individual Scouts to fall through the cracks. Patrol leaders and patrol advisors have an added responsibility for keeping up with the Scouts in their care, which could include attending band concerts and sporting events, sending birthday cards, and following up on repeated absences. At the same time, size gives large troops the ability to better cater to the needs of individuals. They often have in-house counselors for every common merit badge and can offer a broader array of activities than smaller troops.

Integrating New Members. Very large troops tend to bring in several dens of Webelos Scouts at the same time. Successfully and quickly integrating these new Scouts into the troop is essential if they are to continue in Scouting. Chapter 14 of volume 1 offers some suggestions.

Deciding When Enough Is Enough. Success tends to breed success, so a highly effective large troop is likely to continue growing. Eventually, you could run out of space in your meeting place or simply decide that you can't serve any more Scouts effectively. Before you reach a crisis point, think about options such as splitting the troop, spinning off a new troop, or scaling back your recruiting efforts. Your district executive can be a good resource for exploring these options.

Esprit de Corps. Building a sense of unity can be difficult with a large and diverse membership. You can build esprit de corps by coming up with a troop slogan and a troop logo and developing unique troop traditions. Also, be sure there are plenty of opportunities throughout the year for all troop families to gather; these could include a court of honor after summer camp, a fall-kickoff picnic, or a family feast on Thanksgiving weekend.

New Troops

As America's first president, George Washington was acutely aware that every action he took would set a precedent. From delivering his State of the Union report in person to insisting on being called "Mr. President" instead of "Your Excellency," Washington created traditions that have been followed by every subsequent chief executive. In fact, the example he set when he declined to seek a third term in 1796 was so strong that it took an extraordinary man at an extraordinary time—Franklin Roosevelt in the midst of World War II—to break it.

In the months after his first election, Washington often said, "I walk on untrodden ground." The same could be said by the leaders of a new Scout troop. If you have the privilege of working with a brand-new troop, you have the opportunity—and the responsibility—to make sure the trails you blaze run straight and true.

For extensive information on starting new troops, see the *Unit Performance Guide,* No. 522-025.

Focus on the Essentials. According to BSA research, new troops have the best chance for success when they start with at least 10 Scouts, five adults, a functioning unit Key 3 (Scoutmaster, committee chair, and chartered organization representative), a unit commissioner with new-unit expertise, and an engaged chartered organization. If one of these elements is lacking, focus on shoring it up.

Develop a Vision. As chapter 1 describes, a troop vision explains what your troop is and what it's not. Work with your initial group of Scouts and adults to develop a vision that can guide the troop for years to come.

Develop a Long-Range Plan. The Scoutmaster corps and troop committee should work together to develop a long-range plan, detailing where the troop should be in one, five, and 10 years. How big do you want to get? When do you want to take your first high-adventure trip? Do you envision a major purchase like a troop trailer? You'll get discouraged if you try to do too much too soon; you'll be encouraged if you can start checking off items on your to-do list. And when you experience success, share it with the entire troop.

Develop a Short-Range Plan. As a new troop, your only real selling point is the future. When you're meeting with prospective Scouts and their parents, you can't talk about all the great trips you've taken in the past; you can only talk about what you plan to do in the future. Having a solid plan for the first year lets you demonstrate what the troop will accomplish. What's more, as with all other troops, you're more likely to do things you've put on the calendar rather than just dreamed about.

Plan Key Transition Points. At first, your troop may only be big enough to have one patrol; decide ahead of time how big it should be when you divide it into two patrols. At first, you may rely heavily on adults to teach skills; decide ahead of time when adults will step back from deep involvement in planning and running activities. At first, your key adults may sign on for unlimited terms; decide ahead of time when and how they will rotate to new positions. And when you get to these transition points, celebrate; they demonstrate key steps in becoming a strong, sustainable troop.

Borrow Expertise. If none of your adult leaders has Scouting experience and all of your Scouts are 11 years old, try to borrow expertise from another troop. It would be better to start off with a "loaner" senior patrol leader than to get in the habit of being adult-led.

Find a Partner Troop. As described in the section above about very small troops, building a relationship with another troop gives you an easy way to implement the patrol method when you have only a handful of Scouts. Your partner troop may also have gear you can borrow, which can greatly reduce the upfront cost of starting a new troop.

Insist on Training. Create an expectation that every registered leader will complete training in his or her position before beginning service. Any shortcuts you take now will result in a poorer-quality program and will send the message for years to come that training is optional. One way to promote training is to have the troop or chartered organization pay for it; another is to cover registration fees and outing expenses for trained leaders but not for untrained volunteers.

Build Up Your Bank Account. Even if you don't want to buy a trailer or lots of high-end backpacking gear, startup costs can mount up quickly. As soon as possible, hold a strong, short-duration money-earning project and/or seek financial support from your chartered organization.

Connect With Your Chartered Organization. Make sure the organization understands that your troop is part of its youth ministry or community outreach. Invite organization representatives to courts of honor, recruit organization members as merit badge counselors, include troop information in the organization's newsletter or on its website, and participate in Scout Sunday or Scout Sabbath observances (for religious chartered organizations) or plan annual state-of-the-troop reports (for other chartered organizations).

Emphasize Uniforming. Uniforms are important in every troop, but they are perhaps most important in a new troop because they create cohesiveness among members and leaders. What's more, people who put on uniforms tend to act in a more Scout-like manner.

Buy a Troop Flag. Perhaps nothing symbolizes more that your troop is real than a troop flag. Display it proudly and work hard to festoon it with Journey to Excellence ribbons and camporee streamers.

Develop Traditions. Create simple or elaborate traditions that build a sense of troop identity. For example, you could hold a logo-design contest among the Scouts and emblazon your new logo on troop neckerchiefs. Or you could create a polar-bear club for Scouts who camp in zero-degree weather. Or you could carve a hiking stick or neckerchief slide for your first senior patrol leader and create the tradition of passing it along to the next SPL when each begins their term of office. Simple traditions like these create the sense that the troop is a vigorous community, not a fledgling organization.

Think About Scalability. When you only have five Scouts, it's easy to store all your troop gear in the Scoutmaster's garage or to meet in the chartered organization's smallest classroom. But if you quadruple in size, those spaces can become confining and can limit growth. Be sure whatever decisions you make give you the elbow room you need.

Track Your History. Charge your historian and the adult who advises the historian with keeping good records from the outset. A quarter-century from now, troop members will appreciate being able to access a list of all the troop's Scoutmasters and Eagle Scouts, a log of the outings the troop has held, and photos from the troop's very first campout. You might even consider creating a time capsule commemorating the troop's first year of operation.

Scouts and leaders are eligible to wear the Founder emblem, No. 610129, under the unit numerals on their uniforms if their names are on a troop's original charter or if they join a troop before it renews its charter for the first time.

CHAPTER 23
Working With Underserved Populations

Like many youth activities, Scouting thrives in the suburbs. Parents with disposable income and the time to devote to volunteer activities find Scouting to be an attractive program for their children. If they have an emotional tie to Scouting, perhaps because of their own youth involvement, they naturally gravitate to the program.

But Scouting can also thrive in urban neighborhoods packed with recent immigrants and in minority enclaves without a heritage of Scouting involvement, as well as sparsely populated rural areas. Regardless of race, socioeconomic status, or country of origin, parents of all backgrounds want their children to learn the values and skills Scouting offers.

That's not to say that you can work with families who are strangers to Scouting the same way you'd approach families with several generations of Scouting involvement. As we'll discuss in this chapter, it helps to tweak both your message and your program to reach and serve underserved populations.

"Our desire is to help the boy—and mainly the poorer boy—to get the fair chance, which in the past has too often been denied him, of becoming a self-respecting, happy, and successful citizen, imbued with an ideal of service for others."

—Robert Baden-Powell

For extensive resources on working with diverse populations, visit www.scoutingwire.org/marketing-and-membership-hub.

Changes in Youth Demographics

As you know, the ethnic makeup of kids in the United States is shifting dramatically. Here are projected percentages through 2050 from the Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics (www.childstats.gov).

Race	2000	2010	2020	2030	2040	2050
White	76.8	73.8	71.8	69.9	67.9	65.8
Black	15.6	15.2	14.9	14.8	14.8	14.8
Asian	3.6	4.6	5.5	6.3	7.0	7.7
American Indian or Alaska Native (AIAN)	1.3	1.6	1.6	1.5	1.5	1.4
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander (NHPI)	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3
Two or more races	2.5	4.5	5.9	7.2	8.5	10.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Hispanic Origin	**2000**	**2010**	**2020**	**2030**	**2040**	**2050**
Hispanic	17.2	23.2	25.7	27.2	29.8	31.9
Non-Hispanic White	61.2	53.7	49.9	46.6	42.5	38.8
Non-Hispanic Black	14.8	14.1	13.5	13.4	13.2	13.1
Non-Hispanic Asian	3.5	4.4	5.2	6.0	6.8	7.4
Non-Hispanic AIAN	1.0	0.9	0.8	0.8	0.7	0.7
Non-Hispanic NHPI	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
Non-Hispanic, two or more races	2.2	3.7	4.7	5.8	6.8	7.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Note: Someone is considered Hispanic if he or she is of Spanish or Latin American descent. The term refers to ethnicity rather than race. Hence, someone can be white and Hispanic, black and Hispanic, etc.

Multicultural Marketing Techniques

Marketers know that to reach multicultural communities they must show diversity in their advertising and, in many cases, create translated or bilingual materials. That's just a starting point, however. There's more that you can and should do if you want to reach underserved populations.

Here are some proven techniques for reaching low-income households, minority groups, and other hard-to-reach groups:

1. **Identify the target market.** Concentrate your efforts and resources where they are most needed, and personalize your communications for the target audience or neighborhood.
2. **Use a community-based approach.** Actively involve existing community organizations and volunteers in outreach efforts. Include community leaders in program planning and implementation so that they consider Scouting their program, too. Show a willingness to listen to them and to share leadership.
3. **Learn more about the target community.** Don't assume you know anything about the target audience. Throw out any preconceptions that are not based on extensive personal contact. Instead, learn by listening. Conduct formal or informal market research. Talk with people who have roots in the community. Identify key community organizations and activists who know the community well, and then talk to them. Ask where people go for information, which people or organizations the community already trusts, and who would make an effective spokesperson or messenger for your program.

To learn more about diverse cultures, watch TV documentaries, listen to radio stations, read magazines, attend workshops and cultural events, contact organizations, and get firsthand experience.

4. **Remember: The messenger can be as important as the message.** People are more likely to pay attention to and heed advice from people and organizations they already know and trust. A word from a minister at a worship service can be worth more than a spot on the 6 o'clock news. A flier delivered by a trusted neighbor or through a community center has instant credibility that one delivered by a stranger might not have.
5. **Understand that emergency-management officials may not always be the best emissaries.** People in some low-income neighborhoods face many day-to-day problems and may feel alienated economically, socially, ethnically, religiously, or racially. Local government, mass media, and city leaders may be perceived as unresponsive or uncaring. As a result, the fire department or emergency-management personnel might not be trusted, even if they enjoy an excellent relationship with the community as a whole. You also should consider the role and reputation of Scouting in the home countries of immigrants you are trying to reach. (In some countries, for example, Scouting is organized along religious lines, so people may be surprised to learn that Scouting in the United States encompasses many faith traditions.) Talk with people from the target community to find out whom residents trust.
6. **Build relationships with community leaders and organizations.** Identify nonprofit organizations, places of worship, clubs, tenant groups, community health centers, social service agencies, neighborhood groups, and other community-based organizations that already serve the target population. Look beyond city agencies. Ask for "focus group" meetings to identify community needs and concerns. (Focus groups allow concerned citizens to share information in an informal setting.) Be careful not to imply blame or single out the community as having a particular problem. Instead, appeal to community pride, and position the Scouting program as one that promotes community empowerment. Ask the organizations for advice, and listen. Ask these groups to take an active part in promoting your troop and its activities.

Community Organizations

To make inroads in ethnic communities, connect with groups like these.

African American Community. Black business and professional associations, fraternities and sororities, the NAACP, community churches, and other black organizations

Hispanic Community. American G.I. Forum, League of United Latin-American Citizens (LULAC), and your state governor's council on Hispanic affairs

Native American Community. Tribal or intertribal council, tribal chairman or president, and reservation or agency superintendent

Asian American Community. Japanese-American Citizens League, the Chinese-American Civic Council, and local groups of more recently arrived Southeast Asian population groups

7. **Make a long-term commitment.** Plan to keep the program going over a long time, and repeat this intention often. Understand that you may have to build credibility first, which can take time. You may have to make several contacts—and demonstrate results—before many community organizations will get on board.
8. **Encourage volunteer participation.** While it might be easier to staff an urban troop entirely with outside volunteers, be sure to also utilize volunteers from the community. Not only can these volunteers provide valuable service, but they can also develop a personal stake in the program that can be shared with family, friends, and neighbors. Remember that involvement always precedes commitment.

Are Local Leaders the Best?

Sometimes Scouters get into a debate over the relative merits of recruiting local, inexperienced unit leaders or more experienced unit leaders from "outside" to work with kids. Some will say that "imported" leaders are better because they:

- Are more confident
- Have more Scouting experience
- Can give Scouting a higher priority
- Have more time
- Reflect traditional Scouting

Others will point out that insiders are best because they:

- Feel more comfortable in the area
- Better understand the young people and families served
- Are more personally motivated
- Can more easily get additional help
- Know the real opinion leaders and influence groups

Try to avoid the debate. Recognize that you need both—you need all the help you can get. Learn to use both types of leaders, building on the strengths and compensating for the weaknesses of each. And deal with individuals, not labels. An outsider could be just as personally motivated as an insider; an insider could make Scouting just as high a high priority.

9. **Be culturally sensitive.** Make sure people can identify with images used in publications and media. For example, depict African American people if your target audience is primarily African American. Avoid stereotypes and ensure that text and other materials are acceptable by testing them before you distribute them.
10. **Test all materials with people from the target audience.** Before using any printed or broadcast materials, be sure you are communicating the right message. Have people representative of the target audience evaluate graphics and text for appeal, message communicated, readability, and overall effectiveness. Even educators or other experts and community leaders might not be good substitutes for those for whom the materials are intended. However, it might be wise to have community leaders also evaluate materials if you are asking them to help disseminate the materials for you.

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

11. **Make people feel that you are talking to "people like me."** Use appropriate images for your materials. For example, Spanish-speaking spokespeople will be listened to in Hispanic communities. Community-oriented people, such as Red Cross volunteers, from the target community might be suitable to serve as spokespeople or to accompany program leaders. Most importantly, show that you understand the lives of the people in your target audience.
12. **Enlist help from community organizations for making translations.** If there is a significant language-minority population in your area, there are almost certainly community-based organizations serving them. Contact these organizations, and ask for help with translating and reviewing draft materials.
13. **Use bilingual materials rather than separate single-language versions.** In many households, some members may be comfortable speaking English, while others are more comfortable speaking in their native language. Also remember to use only two languages on your materials—English and the language of your target audience.
14. **Use community-based and neighborhood media outlets.** Local community media, including neighborhood newspapers, can be more effective in reaching a particular target audience than the city daily or even television. Don't overlook radio, particularly foreign-language stations or programs.
15. **Increase reach by using a variety of dissemination methods.** Do not rely on a single organization, media outlet, or dissemination method for publicizing your message. Send the message using several methods. A door-to-door canvass can focus attention on your message, reach every household, and involve volunteers. Religious institutions can make effective and credible messengers.
16. **Show goodwill by supporting small businesses in the target area.** Advertise your troop in a neighborhood newspaper and ask the paper to contribute additional space for a public service announcement. Try to purchase groceries and equipment from vendors within the target area. Small gestures can show your commitment to the community and can help you gain credibility for your efforts.

Increasing Visibility

- Have Scouts wear Scout T-shirts during service projects and money-earning projects.
- Post "Scouts at Work" signs at service projects.
- Participate in local festivals and community activities (e.g., handle the flag ceremony at a community festival, distribute water at a local 5K run/walk, set up a booth at a cultural fair).
- Provide in-language advertising.

Barriers to Participation

Even when kids from underserved populations want to participate in Scouting, there can be significant barriers to participation. Here's how to address the major challenges.

Cost

Some Scouting units in low-income urban neighborhoods have big problems in paying for the program. Districts can help in a variety of ways. Talk with your district leaders about unit funding methods used in your district.

Some low-income families are turned off by what they have heard about Scouting costs. Some parents with limited financial means do not let their children join at all, rather than eventually having to tell them they can't go to camp or can't have a uniform. They feel their child's lack of such things as uniform or equipment will be a bad reflection on themselves or their family.

Some strategies that can work:

- Keep fees and requests for money to a bare minimum.
- Give plenty of notice in advance when fees are due, especially for big events like summer camp. Don't assume that every family can pay $25 or $50 on the spur of the moment.
- Avoid the image that Scouting costs a lot of money.
- Protect people's pride. Provide help quietly and confidentially.
- Be careful when paying deposits and reservation fees to avoid losing money unnecessarily. While an early-bird discount for summer camp can be nice, you should weigh the possibility of losing deposits if you pay for Scouts who aren't fully committed to attend.
- Plan money-earning projects to defray the cost of activities. Few people would be unwilling to help send a Scout to camp. Seek support from the council's campership program.
- Be aware that door-to-door selling of items may be viewed as begging in certain cultures, and won't be successful as a unit fundraiser. Check with trusted community leaders to determine socially acceptable money-earning methods.
- Enlist the support of the chartered organization. While chartered organizations are not required to help fund troop operations, those that serve disadvantaged Scouts would doubtless be happy to do so if they are able.
- Create camp savings cards for summer camp. Encourage Scouts to bring $1 or $2 to each troop meeting to help pay for summer camp. Keep a tally of what each Scout has paid, and highlight the progress made.

Some councils have a special urban assistance fund to help provide:

- Essential program literature
- Training course scholarships, transportation, and equipment
- Camperships (scholarship for camp)
- Loaned equipment

Uniforms

A Scout does not have to have a uniform to be a good Scout. Most will want one, however, and uniforms can erase the difference between the haves and have-nots in a troop. If your Scouts need help with uniforming, try these ideas:

- Have troop members start with only a Scout T-shirt or neckerchief.
- Ask your council if it has a used uniform closet that can donate shirts to your Scouts or resell shirts at a low cost. If not, then consider the following ideas: Start a uniform closet by collecting uniform parts from used clothing stores, former Scouts, and used uniform drives. Recruit people to clean and repair uniforms collected. Ask a laundry and dry cleaning association to help.
- Have an individual or organization adopt the troop to match funds earned by troop members through troop work projects.

Equipment

Like uniforms, buying equipment can be a challenge for low-income Scouts. Fortunately, there's no need for them to rush out and buy the latest high-tech gear, especially for the kinds of outings they're likely to participate in as new Scouts. Here are some strategies for dealing with equipment challenges:

- Borrow gear from a partner troop. (The loans may end up being permanent if the other troop is awash in old but serviceable gear it no longer uses.)
- Encourage Scouts to make do with school backpacks and other items they already have. In warm weather, for example, a blanket works just as well as a sleeping bag.
- Enlist the chartered organization's help.
- Plan a money-earning project to pay for troop gear.
- Ask a local veterans' organization to supply an American flag.

Understanding Diverse Populations

If you're going to work with families from different cultures than your own, it's important to understand those families' motivations and concerns. In recent years, the BSA, like many organizations, has done extensive research to understand the populations it seeks to serve.

Before we look at characteristics of specific cultural groups, it's important to point out some general truths:

- Parents in all cultures want the best for their children. If you can show them how Scouting can help them meet their goals, they will be happy to partner with you.
- Parents in all cultures want a safe place for their children, and they seek out programs that reinforce their values and build self-esteem—things Scouting has been doing for more than a century.
- Cultures are not monolithic. Although Asian Americans (for example) may share some cultural characteristics, there's a world of difference between second-generation Chinese Americans in Silicon Valley and refugee families from Myanmar in Salt Lake City.

Within most ethnic groups in the U.S., people may be at any point along a continuum on which one end represents total absorption in their ethnic culture and the other represents complete adoption of mainstream U.S. culture. Recognize that different people may be—and may want to be—at different places along that continuum.

General Parent Characteristics

Research has shown that parents in minority cultures have a positive image of Scouting but an incomplete understanding of the program. They're less likely than white suburban parents to have a Scouting history or an emotional connection to Scouting.

Many view Scouting as a program for white or Anglo families. They don't see Scouts in their communities and don't realize that Scouting welcomes people from diverse backgrounds.

Like all parents, parents in minority communities are looking for programs that are proven to build leadership, character, and values. They want programs to enhance their children's academic skills. They trust faith-based organizations, which can often be a good entry point into new neighborhoods for Scouting.

General Youth Characteristics

Today's young people are growing up in diverse communities. They want and expect diversity to be a part of the organizations they join.

Unfortunately, ethnic youth may not see others like themselves in Scouting and may not have friends who are Scouts. Scout leaders have to work extra hard to demonstrate that Scouting is for everyone.

The table on this page lists specific results from BSA focus groups within key minority communities.

Desires of Parents and Youths in Key Ethnic Groups

	Parents Want Programs That	Youths Want to
African Americans	• Develop character • Improve academic success • Build discipline and independence • Teach leadership skills, teamwork, and physical fitness • Help their children serve the community • Emphasize values reinforced through Scouting and faith-based partnerships	• Gain recognition for their contributions • Compete with others as part of a team • Learn leadership skills • Serve the community
Asian Americans	• Help their children succeed academically • Emphasize educational benefits • Build independence • Improve physical fitness • Build leadership skills • Help their children serve the community • Preserve their cultural heritage	• Meet new people • Try new things • Learn leadership skills • Prepare for academic success
Hispanic/Latino Americans	• Preserve their cultural heritage • Teach responsibility • Emphasize values and building family bonds • Include the entire family (especially with families that have Mexican, Central American, and South American roots versus Caribbean roots)	• Try a variety of activities • Try something new

Scouting in Rural Communities

Scouting has long flourished in small towns and rural communities. The BSA created a rural department at the national office in 1916, and many early merit badges focused on agricultural topics. (Even as late as the 1970s, Scouts could earn badges in Farm Arrangement, Forage Crops, Fruit and Nut Growing, and Hog Production.) Today, Scouting continues to thrive in many rural areas—if those areas are thriving. In isolated areas with an underdeveloped or depressed economy, marginal sources of income, and a pattern of out-migration, Scout troops face many of the same challenges as they do in urban areas.

The federal government defines rural as all places of less than 2,500 population. The U.S. Census Bureau counted nearly 17 percent of the U.S. population as rural in 2007.

Isolated areas are farthest from metropolitan areas. Most have very low population density. They may be isolated because of geography or climate. People there may have less contact with the rest of the world than residents of other rural areas. Resources for adequate community services may be limited because of the distances involved. Providing Scouting for the young people in isolated areas may be difficult for the same reason and may require a great deal of creativity.

Youth Needs

Young people in low-income rural communities are much like youth everywhere, except for some needs and problems that many of us may not have experienced. The following are a few examples of too-often unmet needs of these young people that you may encounter.

Meaningful activity. Because their parents must spend so much time earning a living, low-income children may lack the opportunity for meaningful activity under adult guidance. Scouting offers a series of activities with adult guidance built around physical and outdoor adventures.

Economic opportunity. Because low-income rural communities may offer little economic opportunity, young people there may need special help in the areas of education and preparation for employment. Scouting can help with training in the personal qualities needed to survive in the job market and with providing support services for young people who have jobs.

Positive self-image. Some low-income youth have a poor self-image and lack of confidence in their future. Scouting helps young people see themselves as persons of worth. Children can take pride in their own achievement.

Status. Rural youth may have fewer opportunities to achieve and may perceive themselves as lacking status. Scouting offers a planned system of recognition for mastering useful and often lifelong skills. The uniform offers instant status. All children need to be involved in decisions affecting their lives, and Scouting offers leadership responsibilities to children through elected and appointed offices.

Communication. Scouting can help with opportunities to practice written and oral communication. Scouting helps develop positive links to a wider world of people and resources, thus helping to overcome feelings of isolation.

Understanding. Paradoxically, by fulfilling one of the greatest needs that rural youth may have—a need for understanding—Scouting also can fill a need of volunteers living outside rural areas. Their involvement helps them know and understand the importance of a healthy rural America. Scouting can help them learn to respond to people they knew little about before, and so that "other America" becomes their America also.

Keys to Success in Rural Areas

During the 20th century there was a steady shift of the United States from a rural to an urban majority. Those who stayed probably did so because they wanted to. Others, such as migrant workers, moved in the opposite direction in search of jobs and a lower cost of living.

Life in rural areas is different from life in cities and suburbs. Someone raised in a city may view a rural area's slower pace of life or smaller number of cultural choices as limiting, while to residents of that area, those same factors are seen as positive for a number of reasons. Further, an outward appearance of simplicity may be deceiving, particularly with the increased cultural choices offered by the internet and other modern communication media.

Life in rural areas is different from life in cities and suburbs, and it is also different in one rural community as compared to another. In any community, urban or rural, nothing can create more skepticism than an outsider who knows little about the people of the community but who tries to tell people there what to do and how to do it. More of your success than you may realize stems from how well you come to know this particular rural community and how well you can tailor Scouting methods for it.

If people in a rural community seem suspicious of or resistant to your efforts to introduce Scouting, it could be because of the community's history with "outsiders" coming in and trying to change things without regard for the residents' wishes. Don't make the same mistake.

Resistance to Scouting could come from a perception of Scouting as an organization primarily for urban or metropolitan youth, and a desire to protect their community from the negative aspects of urban and metropolitan life. Be sure you present Scouting as their program, tailored to meet their needs.

If the community is fairly homogenous in ethnicity and/or religion, there may be resistance due to a perception that Scouting is tied to a particular group or religion that is not their own. Emphasize the ways in which Scouting shares their goals, and the fact that it is used by many kinds of groups to further their own goals for their youth.

You are more likely to gain communitywide acceptance if you take care to deal with people individually and on a personal basis. Get to know them and let them learn about you—not by being pushy, but by being caring and interested in them. You don't have to meet every single person in the community, but only meeting and dealing with a few community leaders could hurt your cause.

In some rural communities, organizations may operate fairly informally and with a straightforward approach. Other rural communities may value formal organization. You will do well to find out and suit your style to the style that predominates in the community.

Many rural communities have a history of people helping each other in time of need or crisis and a well-developed way of organizing volunteer work, whether or not they call it that. If you encounter this type of support, count yourself lucky! By plugging into existing networks, you can earn the involvement of experienced volunteers.

In some cultures, people value the goodwill and acceptance of their group so much that they will reject any advancement or formal post of leadership that could distinguish them from others in the group. Informal leadership may exist, but one does not give appearances of being "above" one's neighbors and peers. In this case, it would be wise to emphasize the service role and de-emphasize rank in adult volunteer leader positions.

Rural Challenges

Troops serving low-income Scouts in rural communities face many of the same challenges as those serving in inner-city neighborhoods. There are also a couple of extra challenges: driving distances and lack of support from chartered organizations.

Driving Distances

In some rural areas, great distances, lower population densities, and community rivalries may require modification of conventional meeting patterns. It may make more sense to have biweekly or even monthly troop meetings rather than weekly meetings. Probably held on a weekend day, the monthly troop meeting would start with a conventional troop meeting followed by a cookout or other meal activity and an afternoon outdoor activity such as a troop hike, wide game, or service project. Later in the afternoon, parents would return for a brief parents' meeting and/or court of honor.

Under this scenario, geographically organized patrols could meet more frequently. You could even organize patrols by school-bus route. The group spirit that develops while riding the bus makes it easy to talk about Scouting, practice advancement skills, and make plans. Some school-bus patrols get off the bus to meet at the home of one of the patrol members.

Other suggestions:

- In sparsely populated areas, it may be more realistic to organize additional patrols attached to an existing troop rather than to start new units.
- In some rare instances a group of youth and leaders are simultaneously a Scouting unit and a 4-H group, carrying out both programs in their group.

Chartered Organization Support

If a rural area lacks sufficient community organizations with the resources, stability, and acceptability to have their own units, or lacks a sufficient number of available adults to complete the normal unit structure, you might consider some alternative methods of unit operation.

Multiple Units. A community organization operates several units, even in different locations, but with a single committee for all units. A person may be multiple-registered on more than one unit committee. A church might have mission outposts in more than one location. They could, if necessary, have unit leaders in each outpost but with a single committee supporting all their units. A large consolidated rural school might use this approach in operating units in several far-flung parts of its school district.

Multiple Organizations. Two or more organizations pool their resources to jointly operate one or more units. Bring the heads of the organizations together to agree on who will be the chartered organization representative and to approve the other adult leaders. Local councils can issue duplicate charters listing the multiple organizations so each may receive and display a charter.

Group of Citizens. The Scouting program is made available to a previously unorganized group of citizens. District Scouters organize a group of citizens into an organization that, in turn, provides adult leadership, a meeting place, and responsibility for units. The group of citizens acts in lieu of an already established organization.

Consider these options if the chartered organization does not have sufficient meeting space:

- Consider using the family rooms or basements of Scouts or leaders, a town hall, the fire department or police station, garages, trailers, empty store buildings, National Guard armories, barns, community rooms, council camp dining halls, store attics, and self-storage units.
- In warmer climates, some successful troops conduct all of their meetings outdoors. Some units erect a dining fly for each patrol in the event of inclement weather. Other troops use two-wheeled trailers to carry all of the troop's meeting equipment, with each patrol having a patrol box on the trailer. For the troop meeting, the unit merely brings the trailer to the meeting place.

Lone Scouts

Lone Scouting is an excellent outreach for youth who can be Scouts no other way. Traced to origins in England in 1913, Lone Scouting is just as timely in reaching isolated youth today as it was then. In 1915, William D. Boyce incorporated the Lone Scouts of America, which merged with the BSA nine years later. Today, the Lone Scout plan provides a Scouting opportunity for youth who cannot readily join a unit or attend meetings. The plan provides opportunities for:

- Youth in rural communities who live far from a Scouting unit
- Children of migratory farm workers
- Youth who attend special schools, night schools, or boarding schools that don't have Scouting
- Youth who have jobs that conflict with unit meetings
- Youth whose families frequently travel, such as circus families, families who live on boats, and so on
- Youth with disabilities that prevent them from attending regular meetings of packs and troops
- Youth who alternate living arrangements with parents who live in different communities
- Children of American citizens who live abroad in an area that doesn't have BSA units
- Exchange students away from the United States for a year or more

Every youth registering as a Lone Cub Scout or Lone Scout must have an adult, 21 years or older, who agrees to be the Scout's "friend and counselor." The Lone Scout friend and counselor should

- Guide the Scout in planning Scouting activities.
- Encourage the Scout to grow and develop from Scouting experiences.
- Instruct, examine, and guide the Lone Scout on all the steps in Scout advancement.
- Help the Scout use the resources of the BSA local council and district in which the Scout and counselor reside.
- Help the Scout get to the local council resident camp.
- Serve as a role model of Scouting ideals.

The *Lone Scout Friend and Counselor Guidebook,* No. 511-420, has complete details on Lone Scouting.

Awards for Working With Disadvantaged Scouts

While nobody works with disadvantaged populations solely to win awards, the BSA offers several awards that recognize such service. When these awards are presented in public settings and garner media attention, they also emphasize that Scouting is already at work in the community, perhaps encouraging others to get on board.

Whitney M. Young Jr. Service Award. This award recognizes individuals and organizations that have made an outstanding contribution in providing Scouting for low-income rural or urban youth.

The Asian American Spirit of Scouting Service Award. The purpose of the Asian American Spirit of Scouting Service Award is to recognize outstanding service by individuals and organizations for demonstrated involvement in the development and implementation of Scouting opportunities for Asian American youth.

The ¡Scouting ... Vale la Pena! Service Award. This award recognizes outstanding service by individuals and organizations for demonstrated involvement in the development and implementation of Scouting opportunities for Hispanic/Latino youth.

The Francis X. Guardipee Grey Wolf Award. This award recognizes American Indian or non-Indian adults for distinguished service to American Indian youth in Scouting. Guardipee, the first American Indian to become a ranger within the National Park Service, founded a Boy Scout troop in 1916 and worked with youth until his death in 1970.

CHAPTER 24
Working With Scouts With Special Needs and Disabilities

Since its founding in 1910, the Boy Scouts of America has had fully participating members with physical, mental, and emotional disabilities. In fact, the first Chief Scout Executive, James E. West, had a disability (a mobility impairment that resulted from tuberculosis).

While there are troops composed exclusively of Scouts with disabilities, experience has shown that Scouting works best when youth with disabilities are mainstreamed—placed in a regular patrol in a regular troop. That's the focus of this chapter. We'll begin by discussing how you can work with Scouts with special needs and then discuss how Scouting's advancement program takes into account disabilities.

***Abilities Digest* is a free electronic newsletter that focuses on serving Scouts with disabilities. For more information or to sign up, visit** www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/the-building-blocks-of-scouting/abilities-digest-archives.

Council Advisory Committee

Most local councils, and many districts, have an advisory committee on youth with disabilities whose function is to better serve youth with physical and mental disabilities. This committee works with institutions that desire to have special units and with traditional units that may have a single Scout with a disability. It can be an important resource for you as you begin to mainstream special-needs Scouts into your troop.

The committee also works to make camping areas and troop facilities accessible and barrier-free. It provides resources such as sign-language interpreters for Scouts who are deaf or hard-of-hearing, tapes and Braille literature for Scouts who are vision-impaired, and adults with special skills to serve as advisors and tutors as needed. The committee should also act as the advocate that speaks on behalf of Scouts with disabilities at every opportunity. The committee will often work closely with the advancement committee to develop alternate requirements for Scouts and with the camping committee to ensure barrier-free camp facilities.

Other duties of this committee could include presenting awards and recognitions for Scouters who have performed extraordinary service in working with youth with disabilities, the organization of new units, and promoting awareness of disabilities through activities and events.

Defining Disability

A disability is a real and long-term condition that impairs functioning in one or more of the following areas:

- Physical
- Learning
- Cognitive
- Emotional
- Social

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, one in 10 children in the United States has a disability. That number may be even higher in Scouting, where youth with disabilities can often find success that eludes them in other programs.

While physical disabilities are often obvious—no one can miss the presence of a wheelchair or thick glasses—many other disabilities are hidden. If you see a Scout who struggles with a social or life skill, look for ways to support the Scout, even if no diagnosis has been made or no one has shared a diagnosis with you.

The following list describes some disabilities that are common. This list is by no means a complete one, and the descriptions are by no means comprehensive. Keep in mind that individual Scouts will vary greatly in terms of how severe their disabilities are and what accommodations they require.

For more information about specific disabilities, contact the Center for Parent Information and Resources (www.parentcenterhub.org). This organization provides fact sheets to aid parents and Scout leaders who work with children with disabilities.

Asperger syndrome. An autism spectrum disorder that falls on the "high functioning" end of the spectrum. What distinguishes Asperger syndrome is the severity of the symptoms and the absence of language delays. Children with Asperger syndrome may be only mildly affected and frequently have good language and cognitive skills. To the untrained observer, a child with Asperger syndrome may just seem like a normal child behaving differently.

attention deficit disorder (ADD). A syndrome of learning and behavioral problems that affects concentration, impulse control, and attention. Overactive behavior is often called hyperactivity (ADHD).

autism spectrum disorder. A neurological disorder of brain function whose signs usually appear very early in childhood. The spectrum represents the range of function from low to high that an individual may manifest. Autism is highly variable and is often distinguished by multiple symptoms. The most common characteristics are difficulty with communication or social behavior, repetitive behaviors or interests, and sensory challenges. Children on the spectrum often do not understand common dangers, such as busy streets, yet may show above-normal skill in isolated areas such as mathematics or music.

cerebral palsy. A group of disorders resulting from brain damage. *Cerebral* refers to the brain and *palsy* refers to a lack of control over muscles. Any combination of physical and mental status is possible. Symptoms range from slight awkwardness of gait to more uncontrolled movements and an inability to see, speak, or learn as people without disabilities do. Cerebral palsy should not be associated with cognitive disabilities.

cognitive disabilities. People with cognitive disabilities are limited in their ability to learn and are generally socially immature. Having cognitive disabilities is a condition, not a disease, manifested before age 21. It is important to realize that people with cognitive disabilities have the same hopes and emotions as people without them. They learn, but at a slow pace.

a. mild cognitive disabilities. About 90 percent of people with cognitive disabilities have mild cognitive disabilities. They are capable of being educated and, as adults, given proper training, can work in competitive jobs, live independently, and be a part of daily community life.

b. moderate cognitive disabilities. People with moderate cognitive disabilities are less likely to be able to live independently. They can learn to care for their personal needs and perform many useful tasks in the home or, as adults, in a sheltered-workshop situation.

c. profound cognitive disabilities. People with physical disabilities and severe impairment in coordination and sensory development that make constant care necessary have profound cognitive disabilities. With special techniques, some can be taught useful simple tasks and can participate in some limited social activities.

developmental disabilities. A severe, chronic set of functional limitations that result from any physical and/or mental impairment that manifests itself before age 22.

Down syndrome. Physical and intellectual development is slow in people who have Down syndrome. They will frequently have health-related disorders such as heart defects and respiratory, vision, hearing, and speech problems.

emotional disturbance. An inability to adjust to the problems and stresses of daily life. Such disabilities can cause people to react aggressively to, or withdraw from, situations rather than attempt to adjust to them.

learning disability. A disorder in one or more of the basic physiological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written. The disorder can manifest itself in, for example, the ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, do mathematical calculations, etc. Even though their progress in these skills might be limited, people with learning disabilities may have average to above-average intelligence.

multiple sclerosis. This chronic, progressive disease of the neurologic system affects important functions of daily living such as walking, talking, seeing, eating, tying a shoe, opening a door, etc. There is no known cure, and the cause has yet to be found.

muscular dystrophies. A general designation for a group of chronic diseases; the most prominent characteristic is the progressive degeneration of the muscles.

physical disability. An impairment that hampers physical, vocational, and community activities.

postlingual deafness. A loss of hearing after having developed speech (usually after reaching 6 years of age). People with these disabilities have some understandable speech or at least can make speechlike sounds, might "sign," have a hearing aid, etc.

prelingual deafness. An impairment caused by being born deaf or losing hearing before acquiring speech or syntax. People with these disabilities make up 95 percent of the school-age deaf population.

seizure disorders. Not a disease, but a malfunction of the manner in which the cells of the brain release energy, characterized by sudden seizures involving muscle convulsions and partial or total loss of consciousness. Seizure disorders can sometimes be controlled through use of medication.

speech/language disorders. A communication disorder, such as stuttering, that adversely affects a child's educational performance.

spinal cord injury. Paralysis of parts of the body, usually the result of an accident.

traumatic brain injury. An injury to the brain by an external physical force, resulting in the impairment of one or more of the following areas: speech, memory, attention, reasoning, judgment, problem solving, motor abilities, and psychosocial behavior. Impairments may be temporary or permanent.

visual impairment. An inability to see. An individual who is legally blind can see no more at a distance of 20 feet than a person without visual impairments can see at a distance of 200 feet. Functional blindness is generally defined as the inability to read newspaper type even with the best possible corrective lenses, or to perform ordinary tasks necessary to daily living.

The Benefits of Serving Scouts With Disabilities

We all know that Scouting is good for kids. But kids with disabilities often get more out of the program than other kids do. Here are some ways they benefit:

- Youth with special needs are often more driven to achieve, and they probably have fewer outlets to satisfy this natural desire. Scouting gives them the same chance to achieve as any other Scout.
- Youth with special needs often lack chances for socialization; even when they're mainstreamed in school, they may not be fully integrated into the school community. Scouting puts them in the middle of natural peer groups: the patrol and troop.
- Youth with special needs are often sheltered from things that may be difficult or frustrating to them. They often have parents or medical personnel around to make them content and comfortable. Scouting, however, can help them develop coping skills that may be helpful later in life. Our programs offer youth with disabilities an opportunity to tackle kid-sized challenges and to work with others of their age.

But the benefits don't end there. Scouts (and Scouters) without disabilities benefit when Scouts with disabilities are fully integrated into the troop program. They begin to see the individuals behind the labels, they learn how to work with people who are different from themselves, and they develop a more realistic view of their own abilities—or lack thereof.

Other troop members often become the strongest supporters of Scouts with special needs—and that support can extend far beyond the troop setting.

Volume 2 of *Program Features for Troops and Crews* includes a module on special-needs awareness that gives Scouts a chance to experience a variety of disabilities.

One of the most important lessons all Scouts and Scouters can learn is that disability is not a black-and-white issue. Most of us have some level of disability—whether that's nearsightedness, hearing loss, or stiff joints from old sports injuries—and some studies even suggest that 1 in 10 of us has some sort of learning disability that we may not even know about. Integrating Scouts with disabilities into Scouting gives us a better perspective on our challenges and abilities and valuable insight into the challenges and abilities of other people.

Working With Scouts With Disabilities

The best guide to working with Scouts who have disabilities is to use good common sense. It's obvious that a Scout in a wheelchair may have problems fulfilling a hiking requirement, but it might not be so obvious when it comes to the difficulties of a Scout with a learning disability. Use the resources around you, along with this chapter. Begin with the Scout and the Scout's parent(s); seek guidance from them on how best to work with the Scout. Seek help from the Scout's teacher, doctor, or physical therapist. Each Scout will be different, so no single plan will work for every Scout. If the troop is short on personnel, ask the Scout's parents to help, or assign one or more skilled older Scouts to be of assistance. It will take patience, but the rewards will be great, for the Scout, for you, and for the members of your troop.

The basic premise of Scouting for youth with disabilities is that every Scout wants to participate fully and be treated and respected like every other member of the troop. While there are, by necessity, troops composed exclusively of Scouts with similar disabilities, experience has shown that Scouting usually succeeds best when every Scout is a member of a patrol in a regular troop.

To the fullest extent possible, Scouts with disabilities should be given opportunities to camp, hike, and take part in other patrol and troop activities. Most Scout camps and public campgrounds have accessible campsites to accommodate individuals with disabilities. Most camp operations will work with the troop leadership to design a program for Scouts with disabilities if given adequate advance notice.

Many Scouts with disabilities can accomplish the basic skills of Scouting but may require extra time to learn them. Working with these youth will require patience and understanding on the part of troop leaders and other Scouts. A clear and open understanding should exist between the troop leadership and the parents or guardians of the Scout with a disability. Both will be required to give extra effort, but in both cases, the effort will be well worth it. See the section titled "Parents' Prejoining Conference" for details of items to discuss.

Troop leaders should know the limitations and strengths of the Scout and, in some cases, may need to discuss the extent of physical activity with the health-care provider in addition to the parents or guardians. Permission of the parent is required to contact the health-care provider.

Before a Scout with a disability joins a troop, the Scoutmaster (with parental permission) should explain to the members of the troop what they should expect. Explain the disability, the treatment, and any likely reactions that might occur. Stress that the new Scout should be treated like any other new Scout but that troop members should be sensitive to the Scout's needs. Experience has shown that a Scout with a disability can have a positive impact on a Scout troop, and the others in the troop take great pride in that Scout's accomplishments.

Parents' Prejoining Conference

Prior to joining a troop, parents and the Scout should meet with the Scout leader to explain the prospective Scout's special needs. The Scout should be present at the prejoining conference so that expectations for the Scout, the parents, and the troop are clearly understood by everyone. Allow the Scout to speak for himself or herself as much as possible. The following are some of the issues that should be discussed.

General Characteristics

The Scout leader should attempt to obtain a general picture of the Scout's strengths and weaknesses. The leader should be aware of special needs that might arise at meetings, campouts, field trips, etc. Because most Scout troops do not

have assistant leaders who have expertise in working with Scouts with disabilities, a parent may be required to attend troop activities, especially those activities that might require strenuous physical effort or that occur over an extended period of time.

Physical Disabilities

Physical limitations should be discussed with the parents and Scout. The Annual Health and Medical Record form should be filled out and kept on file with the unit. If you anticipate that this Scout may need exceptions made in the advancement process, then you should obtain a medical statement concerning the Scout's disabilities from a licensed health-care provider and an evaluation statement certified by an educational administrator. Using these statements, you should then consult the council advancement committee about the process for requesting alternative advancement requirements.

Mental Capabilities

The Scout leader should be advised by the parents of their child's capabilities. The Scout leader should know the Scout's present grade level and reading, listening, and mathematical abilities. The Scout leader can then determine how best to help the Scout get the fullest program possible.

Medication

While it is the responsibility of the Scout and/or parent or guardian to ensure that the Scout takes all prescribed medication correctly, the Scout leader should be aware of what medication the Scout takes regularly. A Scout leader, after obtaining written permission and instructions for administering any medications, can agree to accept the responsibility of making sure a Scout takes the necessary medication at the appropriate time, but BSA policy does not mandate or encourage the Scout leader to do so. Also, if state laws are more limiting, they must be followed.

Discipline

Parents should be asked about any behavioral issues. Troop rules should be discussed with the parents and the Scout. The Scout leader should determine the discipline used to maintain appropriate behavior. The Scout leader should explain disciplinary procedures (sitting out games, suspension from a troop meeting or campout, etc.) to the parents. Have rules in writing for parents and Scouts.

Diet and Eating Problems

Any special diets or restrictions and any chewing or swallowing problems should be explained to the Scout leader. If a special diet is necessary, keep that in mind for menu planning, but in some cases specialty food for campouts should be provided by the parents.

Living Skills

The Scout's ability to attend to personal needs and any special help the Scout might require in this area should be discussed with parents.

Transportation

Transportation to and from troop meetings is the parents' responsibility. Carpooling with other parents is suggested but should be arranged among parents.

Unit Operation

The Scout leader should explain the Scouting program and emphasize why advancement (at whatever rate possible) is important to the Scout. Parents should be encouraged to reinforce their child's activities.

Emergency Procedures

Parents must inform the Scout leader of the name and phone number of their child's doctor. The Scout's medical history should be discussed in full. Appropriate medical permissions should be obtained.

General Guidelines for Working With Scouts With Special Needs and Types of Disabilities

How you work with a Scout with a spinal cord injury will obviously vary from how you work with a Scout who has an autism spectrum disorder. That said, there are some general guidelines that will help you to be more effective. Not surprisingly, many of these guidelines apply equally well to Scouts without discernible disabilities.

1. Leadership Techniques

- Wise leaders expect problems but do not consider them overwhelming. Keep a confidential record of each youth for background information. Though you may view the Scout with a disability as an individual with significant differences, that isn't really the case. All youth have different needs. The wise leader will recognize this and be prepared to help.
- Leaders should make a personal visit to the parents and the new Scout with a disability to learn about the Scout, any physical limitations, abilities, and preferences, and whether the Scout knows any of the other Scouts in the troop. Some young people with disabilities will try to do more than they are capable of doing, just to fit in with others, which could result in unnecessary frustration.
- Many youth with disabilities have special physical or health needs. Parents, visiting nurses, special-education teachers, physical therapists, doctors, and other agencies can help make you more familiar with the nature of the disability. Get parent permission before contacting health-care professionals.
- Accept the Scout as a person and give the Scout the same respect that you expect to receive in return. This will be much easier to do if you know the Scout and the Scout's parents, background, and likes and dislikes. Remember, any behavior that presents difficulties is a force that can be redirected into more acceptable pathways—rather than erased and rebuilt.
- Example is a wonderful tool. Demonstrate personal discipline with respect, punctuality, accuracy, conscientiousness, dignity, and dependability.
- Become involved with the Scout's life. Let the Scout know that you care for them as a whole person. A small word of praise or a pat on the back for a job well done can mean a lot to someone who receives little elsewhere. Judge accomplishment by what the Scout can do, not by what someone says they must do or by what you think they cannot do.

- Rewarding achievement will likely cause that behavior to be repeated. Reward can be in the form of a thank-you, a recognition made by the group for helping the group perform at a higher level, a badge, a prize, or a chance to go on a trip. Focus rewards on proper behavior and achievement.
- Do not let the Scout or parents use a disability as an excuse for not trying. Expect the Scout to give their best effort.

2. Providing Encouragement

- Reward more than you criticize, in order to build self-esteem.
- Praise immediately any and all good behavior and performance, but be sincere.
- Change rewards if they are not effective in motivating behavioral improvement.
- Find ways to encourage the Scout.
- Teach the Scout about rewarding oneself for accomplishments. This encourages the Scout to think positively.

3. Giving Instruction to Youth With Disabilities

- Maintain eye contact during verbal instruction (except when the Scout's culture finds this inappropriate).
- Make directions clear and concise. Be consistent with instructions.
- Simplify complex directions. Give one or two steps at a time.
- Make sure the Scout comprehends the instructions before beginning the task.
- Repeat instructions in a calm, positive manner, if needed.
- Help the Scout feel comfortable with seeking assistance.

4. Providing Supervision and Discipline

- As a leader, you must be a number of things to each Scout: a friend, authority figure, reviewer, disciplinarian, resource, and teacher.
- Listening is an important technique that means giving the Scout an opportunity for self-expression. Whether as a part of the group or in private conversation, be patient, be understanding, and take seriously what the Scout has to say. Keep yourself attuned to what the Scout is saying; use phrases like, "You really feel that way?" or "If I understand you right ... "
- Avoid ridicule and criticism. Remember, all young people have difficulty staying in control at times.
- Remain calm, state the infraction of the rule, and avoid debating or arguing with the Scout.
- Have pre-established consequences for misbehavior for all Scouts.
- Avoid saying "don't do this" and instead say "do this." We want the positive behavior to be remembered.
- When a Scout is behaving in an unacceptable manner, try the "time out" strategy or redirect the Scout's behavior.
- Administer consequences immediately, and affirm proper behavior frequently.
- Make sure the discipline fits the offense and is not unduly harsh.
- Enforce troop rules consistently.
- Do not reward inappropriate behavior. Praise when the Scout exerts real effort, even if unsuccessful, and/or when the Scout shows improvement over a previous performance.
- Never praise falsely.
- Do not accept blaming others as an excuse for poor performance. Make it clear that you expect the Scout to answer for their own behavior.
- Behavior is a form of communication. Look for what the behavior is saying (i.e., does the Scout want attention?).

See chapter 19 for more information on discipline.

Guidelines for Specific Types of Special Needs and Disabilities

If a Scout or Scouter has any of the following disabilities, these ideas might be helpful. Always ask if he or she needs, or wants, help. Don't make assumptions.

Mobility Impairments

- Remember that people who use adaptive equipment (wheelchairs, crutches, etc.) often consider their equipment an extension of their bodies.
- Never move equipment out of the person's reach.
- Before you go somewhere with a person who has a mobility impairment, make sure facilities at the destination are accessible.
- Never pat a person in a wheelchair on the head. This is a sign of disrespect for adults.
- When helping, ask how equipment works if you are unfamiliar with it.
- Prevent strained necks by standing a few feet away when talking to someone in a wheelchair.
- Find a place to sit down for long talks.

Hearing Loss

- Make sure the person is looking at you before you begin to talk.
- Speak slowly and enunciate clearly.
- Use gestures to help make your points.
- Ask for directions to be repeated, or watch to make sure directions were understood correctly.
- Use visual demonstration to assist verbal direction.
- In a large group, remember that it's important for only one person to speak at a time.
- Speakers should never stand with their backs to the sun or light when addressing people who read lips.
- Shouting at a person who is deaf very seldom helps. It distorts your speech and makes lip-reading difficult.

Vision Impairments

- Identify yourself to people with vision impairments by speaking up.
- Offer your arm, but don't try to lead the person.
- Volunteer information by reading aloud signs, and pointing out changing street lights and construction zones.
- When you stop helping, announce your departure.
- If you meet someone who has a guide dog, never distract the dog by petting or feeding it; keep other animals away.
- If you meet someone who is using a white cane, don't touch the cane. If the cane should touch you, step out of the way and allow the person to pass.

Speech/Language Disorders

- Stay calm. The person with the speech disorder has been in this situation before.
- Don't shout. People with speech disorders often have perfect hearing.
- Be patient. People with speech disorders want to be understood as badly as you want to understand.
- Don't interrupt by finishing sentences or supplying words.
- Give your full attention.
- Ask short questions that can be answered by a simple yes or no.
- Ask people with speech disorders to repeat themselves if you don't understand.
- Avoid noisy situations. Background noise makes communication hard for everyone.
- Model slow speech with short phrases.

Cognitive Disabilities

- People whose mental performance is affected may learn slowly and may have a hard time using their knowledge.
- Be clear and concise.
- Don't use complex sentences or difficult words.
- Don't talk down to the person. "Baby talk" won't make you easier to understand.
- Don't take advantage. Never ask the person to do anything you wouldn't do yourself.
- Be understanding. People with below-average mental performance are often aware of their limitations, but they have the same needs and desires as those without a disability.

Social/Emotional Impairments

- People with social/emotional impairments have disorders of the mind that can make daily life difficult. If someone is obviously upset, stay calm. People with mental illness are rarely violent.
- Offer to get help. Offer to contact a family member, friend, or counselor.

Autism Spectrum Disorder

- Provide consistent, predictable structure. Be patient. Allow extra time for activities.
- Provide a visual schedule using words and pictures. All Scouts will find this useful. Don't put times in the schedule because a Scout with autism may expect you to follow it to the minute.
- Let the Scout know about transitions early by saying, "In five minutes we'll be ending this activity and starting another."
- Give the Scout information about new activities ahead of time.
- Break up tasks into smaller steps.
- Alert the Scout's parents if there is going to be an activity that may cause sensory difficulties for their child. Consider moving noisy activities outside where the noise can dissipate. If the Scout has issues with food taste and texture, carefully plan the menus around these issues so the Scout can eat the same things as other members of the unit as much as possible.

Attention Deficit Disorder

- Structure Scout meeting time, activities, and rules so that the Scout with ADD knows what to expect. Post a calendar of events.
- Be positive. Praise appropriate behavior and completion of tasks to help build the Scout's self-esteem.
- Be realistic about behavior and assignments. Many children with ADD simply can't sit for long periods or follow detailed instructions. Make learning interesting with plenty of hands-on activities.
- Monitor behavior through charts that explain expectations for behavior and rewards for reaching goals. This system of positive reinforcement can help the Scout stay focused.
- Test the Scout's knowledge and not just the ability to take tests. Testing orally or in several short testing sessions might help.
- Begin a formal achievement program. Weekly reports to parents could increase their involvement.
- Work closely with parents and members of the education team. People working together can make a big difference.
- Be sensitive to the Scout about taking prescribed medication. Avoid statements such as, "Go take a pill."
- Simplify complex directions. Give one or two steps at a time.

Learning Disabilities

- Listen and observe carefully to find clues as to how this Scout approaches problems and what difficulties exist.
- Remember that praise and encouragement can help build self-esteem.
- Let other troop members use their friendship and support to make it clear the Scout belongs.
- Use short, direct instructions that help the Scout know what is expected of them.
- As much as possible, stay with a regular troop schedule, allowing the Scout to help with assigned duties.
- Give the Scout extra time when needed. Don't rush the Scout. Reword instructions or questions if necessary.

Advancement for Scouts With Disabilities

While advancement might seem beyond the reach of some Scouts with disabilities, most are able to advance with support. Many reach the rank of Eagle Scout and/or earn dozens of merit badges. Two forms of accommodation are available: registration beyond the age of eligibility and alternative requirements.

As always, the current edition of the *Guide to Advancement* is the authoritative source for advancement information.

Registration Beyond the Age of Eligibility

Under normal circumstances, a young person's time as a Scout ends at age 18; after that time, they may no longer work on Scout advancement. However, if a Scout has a permanent and severe disability, the council executive board may approve registration beyond age 18. This is a permanent arrangement, not an extension of time to earn a rank.

In rare cases, a Scout with a temporary disability may be granted a time extension for completing the Eagle Scout requirements. For example, a 17½-year-old Scout might qualify if the Scout is on track to complete the requirements in time but suffers an injury that requires a long hospitalization.

To register a Scout beyond the age of eligibility, the following documents must be assembled and submitted to the local council. The Request for Registration Beyond the Age of Eligibility, No. 512-935, should be used in this process.

1. A letter from a parent or guardian describing the disability and its severity and permanence, and petitioning the council for approval of registration beyond the age of eligibility.
2. A completed youth membership application or proof of current membership.
3. A completed and signed Annual Health and Medical Record form (parts A and C).
4. A signed statement from a qualified health professional attesting to the nature of the disability, its severity, and permanent limitations connected with it. For physical disabilities, this must be a licensed physician; for developmental or cognitive issues, a licensed psychologist or psychiatrist, or as appropriate, a neurologist or other medical professional in a specialty related to the disability would suffice.
5. A letter from the unit leader advocating and supporting the registration.
6. Other supporting documentation, such as an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), treatment summaries, etc.; these are optional, but can make a difference in the decision.

The request for registration beyond the age of eligibility must be approved by the council executive board, but the board may delegate the process to a council operating committee or other group of responsible volunteers at the council level.

Modified Advancement Requirements

Many Scouts with disabilities may have difficulty completing the requirements to advance in Scouting. However, it is important that these Scouts feel as much like others as possible; completing the requirements as stated in official Scouting literature should be a primary objective. If a Scout's disability hinders them in completing a particular requirement or merit badge, then the Scout may wish to apply for alternative requirements for Tenderfoot through First Class ranks or for an alternative merit badge.

This is a separate process from registration beyond the age of eligibility. Some Scouts could complete the standard advancement requirements if they had more time; others could reach the rank of Eagle by their 18th birthdays if they could pursue alternative requirements; some might need both forms of accommodation.

Alternative requirements are primarily designed to benefit Scouts with permanent disabilities. However, Scouts with longer-term temporary disabilities—such as those related to a serious injury—may also be eligible.

Alternative Requirements for Tenderfoot, Second Class, and First Class Ranks

A Scout who has a permanent physical or mental disability and is unable to complete all of the requirements for Tenderfoot, Second Class, or First Class rank may submit a request to the council advancement committee to complete alternative requirements.

To keep Scouts with disabilities as much in the advancement mainstream as possible, some advancement accommodation may be required. Thus, a Scout in a wheelchair can meet the requirements for hiking by making a trip to a place of interest in the local community. Giving more time and permitting the use of special aids are other ways leaders can help Scouts with disabilities in their efforts to advance. The substitute should provide a similar learning experience to the original requirement. Bear in mind that the outcome of the Scouting experience should be one of fun and learning, not completing the requirements for rank advancements, which might place unrealistic expectations on the Scout with a disability.

Simple modifications very close to existing requirements need not be approved. A Scout who uses a wheelchair, for example, may meet the Second Class requirement for hiking by "wheeling" to a place of interest. Modifications, however, must provide a very similar challenge and learning experience.

Below are the procedures for applying for alternative requirements.

Step 1—Do as many standard requirements as possible.

Before applying for alternative requirements, the Scout must complete as many of the standard requirements as ability permits. The Scout must do their very best to the limit of their abilities and resources.

Step 2—Gather supporting letters and statements.

In addition to supporting letters from the unit leader, a parent or guardian, and the Scout, the request must include a written statement from a qualified health professional. A clear and concise medical statement concerning the Scout's disabilities must be submitted by a licensed health-care provider. It must state that the disability is permanent (or a long-term temporary disability) and outline what physical activities the Scout may not be capable of completing. In the case of a cognitive disability, an evaluation statement should be submitted by a certified educational administrator relating the ability level of the Scout.

Step 3—Prepare a request for alternative requirements.

A written request must be submitted to the council advancement committee for the Scout to work on alternative requirements for Tenderfoot, Second Class, and First Class ranks. The request should include the standard requirements the Scout has completed and the suggested alternative requirements for those requirements the Scout cannot complete. This request should be detailed enough to give the advancement committee sufficient information to make a decision. The request should be prepared by the Scout, the parents, and the Scoutmaster. A copy of the medical statement in step 2 should be included.

The Individual Scout Advancement Plan, No. 512-936, can be used to document proposed alternative requirements. The form's location online can be found in the appendix.

Step 4—The advancement committee reviews the request.

The council advancement committee should review the request, utilizing the expertise of professional persons involved in Scouting for people with disabilities. The advancement committee may want to interview the Scout, the parents, and the leader to fully understand the request and to make a fair determination. The decision of the advancement committee should be recorded and delivered to the Scout and the Scoutmaster.

Alternative requirements for Star, Life, and Eagle are not available. However, Scouts may request permission to pursue alternative merit badges, as described in the next section.

Alternative Merit Badges for the Eagle Scout Rank

Though individual requirements for merit badges may not be modified or substituted, Scouts with special needs may request approval for alternative badges they can complete. This is allowable on the basis of one entire badge for another. Merit badges are awarded only when all requirements are met as stated. Any alternatives must present the same challenge and learning level as those they replace.

Follow this procedure to request alternative merit badges.

1. A clear and concise medical statement concerning the Scout's disabilities must be made by a licensed health-care provider, or an evaluation statement must be certified by an educational administrator.
2. The candidate must earn as many of the required merit badges as ability permits.
3. The candidate must complete as many of the Eagle-required merit badges as ability permits. Where a permanent disability clearly precludes completing specific merit badges, a Scout who has earned at least First Class may apply for an alternative merit badge without waiting until all other Eagle-required merit badges are complete.
4. The Application for Alternative Eagle Scout Rank Merit Badges, No. 512-730, must be completed prior to applying for alternative merit badges.
5. The alternative merit badges chosen must demand as much effort as the required merit badges.
6. When alternatives chosen involve physical activity, the activities must be approved by the Scout's licensed health-care provider.
7. The application must be approved by the council advancement committee, utilizing the expertise of professional persons involved in Scouting for people with disabilities.
8. The candidate's application for Eagle Scout rank must be made on the Eagle Scout Rank Application, with the Application for Alternative Eagle Scout Rank Merit Badges attached.

Challenges You May Face

Ideally, youth with disabilities get more out of being in a typical Scout unit. This exposes them to a wider variety of people, and other youth can become a support system. On the other hand, youth with severe disabilities and those significantly older, chronologically, may fit better and receive a more helpful program in a special unit of individuals in similar circumstances. For help in organizing such a unit, you should work with your district executive or Scout executive.

Parental assistance is very important, but there are some who don't want to acknowledge a disability or simply choose not to help. Parents usually understand behavioral patterns, they know about medications, and they're often needed to help with communication and reminders. Their support and involvement is essential. If you encounter an unhelpful parent, diplomacy is critical and you may want to request help from the council disabilities awareness committee.

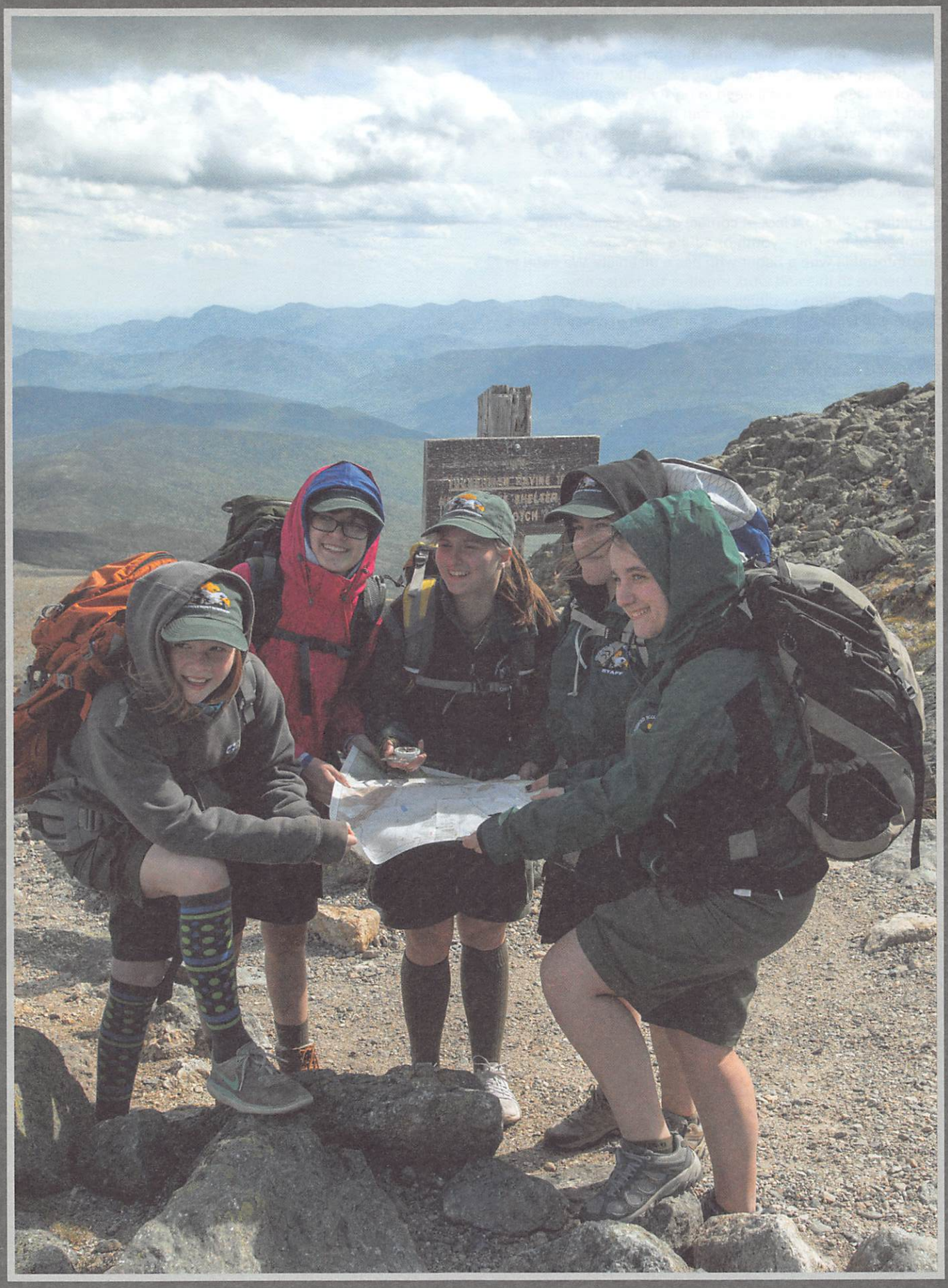
Many parents of children who have special needs may have been protecting and over-compensating for them throughout their lives—helping to overcome the obstacles they face. If they hesitate to disclose their child's disability, it may be for fear of consequences. We need to be sensitive to this. Leaders must listen to parents, gain trust, and work with them to provide the best possible experience. In many cases, this will mean helping parents to let go somewhat and increase their child's level of independence. As you can imagine, this can be a delicate issue.

Sometimes, due to a lack of contact or experience, other members of the unit—youth or adults—may be uncomfortable with a Scout who has a disability. We need to be sensitive to this and work together to defuse any misunderstandings or difficult situations. We need to help Scouts and leaders learn the best approach in cases where special needs must be met.

The goal is to include Scouts who have special needs in as many activities as possible. There may be, however, activities that are beyond their capabilities or beyond the unit's ability to safely support. This situation is not unique to Scouts with disabilities, and most will understand. Just use common sense, and do your best to include everyone as often as possible.

Many Scouts must take medication to control behaviors or other symptoms of a disability. If the medication is prescribed to help the individual live a more normal life, it is not advisable to take a "medication vacation" while participating in Scouting.

Integrating Scouts with disabilities into your troop can create challenges and require extra effort on your part. The benefits are worth it, however, for everyone involved, especially the Scouts themselves.



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Bullying Prevention Guide

Bullying is incompatible with the principles of Scouting and should be taken seriously whenever and wherever it occurs. Unit leaders should understand how to prevent bullying and be prepared to deal with it proactively and thoughtfully.

What Is Bullying?

Bullying is harassment or aggressive behavior that is intended to intimidate, dominate, coerce, or hurt another person (the target) mentally, emotionally, or physically. It is *not* "just messing around," and it is *not* "part of growing up." Bullying is a form of victimization, not conflict. It is no more a "conflict" than is child abuse or domestic violence. *Bullying is prohibited in Scouting. All forms of bullying violate the Scout Oath and Scout Law.*

Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. This behavior is repeated or has the potential to be repeated over time. Anyone who is bullied or bullies others may have serious, lasting problems that need to be addressed.

Hazing is bullying that involves forcing someone to do something unpleasant, stupid, or dangerous, usually as a requirement for joining a group.

Bullying and hazing can lead to poor self-image, low self-esteem, physical problems, and worse in the person being targeted. People who are bullied often grow up to bully others, creating a continuing cycle of pain.

Forms of Bullying

Bullying takes many forms:

Verbal—Name-calling, belittling, taunting

Social—Spreading rumors; destroying or manipulating friendships; excluding or ostracizing the target

Physical—Hitting, shoving, kicking, using physical coercion, intimidation through gestures

Criminal—Assault; sexual aggression

Cyber/gaming bullying—Using digital technology such as social media, cell phones, etc., to engage in these kinds of behaviors

How to Spot Bullying

Youth who are being bullied may:

- Be reluctant to join activities or unwilling to participate.
- Avoid activities, arrive late, or leave early (to avoid the bully).
- Avoid certain places or areas.
- Refuse to leave their tent at camp (out of fear).
- Experience nightmares, bedwetting, or insomnia (triggered by fear).
- Seem nervous around certain youth.
- Wait to use the restroom away from the group.
- Appear sad, moody, angry, anxious, or depressed.
- Seek, carry, or hide weapons (for protection).
- Lose money or personal items such as clothing or patches (taken by the bully).
- Feel sick, often with seemingly psychosomatic illnesses.
- Appear lonely, have difficulty making friends, or suddenly have fewer friends.
- Seem reluctant to defend themselves verbally or physically when teased or pushed.
- Have bruises, cuts, defensive wounds, or other physical marks.
- Mention or consider suicide.

A bullied youth may develop a poor self-image, lose self-esteem, quit Scouting, or begin bullying other youth, thus perpetuating the bullying cycle. Studies indicate bullied youth tend to be future bullies. As a leader, either break the cycle or do not let it start.

A Special Note to All Leaders

You are the key to creating a safe, bullying-free environment for Scouting youth. Experts say that leaders can usually tell when a youth new to the unit may become a target and be bullied. Individual factors such as temperament, social competence, physical condition (e.g., overweight/underweight), speaking another language at home, special health-care needs, perceived differences (e.g., sexual identity/orientation, race/ethnicity, religion), or the presence of a disability may put a youth at greater risk of being bullied. Leaders should identify these youth and take measures to help ensure their smooth integration into the unit.

- Support and empower youth who are bullied or at risk to be bullied; ensure they are connected with other Scouts who have things in common.
- Keep an ongoing, open line of communication with parents; keep parents updated on their children's progress with the unit and provide support.
- Speak with Scouts known to be unreceptive to new Scouting youth; empower them to be good Scouts and welcoming to new youth.
- Set an example by how you integrate these youth into the program; model strong, positive behavior by your interaction with youth and adults.
- Take bullying seriously; reinforce the message, using key points of the Scout Law, that bullying is not acceptable behavior.
- Closely supervise youth in your care and interrupt bullying whenever it occurs; follow up to monitor the results.

Remember, Youth Protection Begins With YOU.

Warning Signs for Suicidal Behavior

Common signs include:

- Talking about suicide
- Getting the means to commit suicide, such as buying a gun or stockpiling pills
- Withdrawing from social contact and wanting to be left alone
- Having mood swings, such as being emotionally high one day and deeply discouraged the next
- Giving away or loaning out all of their possessions
- Being preoccupied with death, dying, or violence
- Feeling trapped or hopeless about a situation
- Changing normal routine, including eating or sleeping patterns
- Doing risky or self-destructive things, such as using drugs or driving recklessly
- Saying goodbye to people as if they won't be seen again
- Developing personality changes or being severely anxious or agitated, particularly when experiencing other warning signs listed above

Suicide Intervention and Response

If a youth mentions suicide, take it seriously.

- Immediately notify parents or guardians.
- Immediately notify the Scout executive.
- Utilize the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, available toll-free at 800-273-8255.
- If a youth is in danger of committing suicide or has made a suicide attempt, get emergency help.
- Don't leave the youth alone.
- Don't try to handle the situation without help.
- Call 911 or your local emergency number right away if you believe the youth is at immediate risk. Or, if you think you can do so safely, take the person to the nearest hospital emergency room yourself.
- Try to find out if the youth is under the influence of alcohol or drugs or may have taken an overdose.

How to Address Bullying

These tips can help Scout leaders respond effectively:

- Immediately stop the bullying. Stand between the bully and the target, preferably blocking their eye contact. Do not immediately ask the reason for the bullying or try to determine the facts.
- In a matter-of-fact tone of voice, state what behaviors you saw or heard. Tell Scouts that bullying is unacceptable and against the Scout Law; e.g., "Calling someone names is bullying. The Scout Law states that a Scout is friendly and kind."
- Provide support in a way that allows the bullied youth to regain self-control, to save face, and to feel safe from retaliation. Follow up with the youth later, but at the time of the incident do not ask what happened or be overly solicitous. Young people often find it uncomfortable to be questioned in front of peers, and a bullied youth may feel embarrassed to be shielded by an adult.
- Do not require Scouts to apologize or make amends during the heat of the moment. Everyone should have time to cool off.
- Speak to bystanders but do not put them on the spot to explain publicly what they observed. In a calm and supportive tone, praise them if they tried to help. If they did not act, or if they responded aggressively, guide them in how to appropriately intervene or get help when they witness bullying; e.g., "Maybe you weren't sure what to do. Next time, please tell the person to stop or get an adult's help if you feel you can't work together to handle the situation."
- Immediately notify parents or guardians of both the target and the youth who bullied of what occurred. Address the parents' or guardians' questions and concerns. Inform them of the next steps.
- Hold Scouts who bully others fully accountable for their actions. If appropriate, impose immediate consequences. As a first step, you might take away program opportunities.
- Increase supervision to ensure the bullying is not repeated and does not escalate. Let the Scout who bullies know you will be watching to be sure there is no repetition or retaliation. Notify other Scouters, and discuss the incident at the next unit meeting.
- Do not require Scouts to meet to "work things out." Forced apologies don't help, and a compulsory meeting could worsen the relationship between the parties. Instead, encourage the Scout who bullied to make amends (after follow-up with a parent or guardian) in a way that would be meaningful for the youth who was bullied.

Cyber/gaming Bullying

A rapidly growing form of bullying, cyber/gaming bullying uses the power of the internet, cellular networks, and social media to harass the target. Cyber/gaming bullying encompasses text or instant messages with hostile or degrading comments, embarrassing digital images, and fictitious online posts intended to humiliate, threaten, or coerce. Cyber/gaming bullying can devastate the target, whether a lone bully participates or others witness or join the attack. The target may obsess over what is posted, become depressed, avoid school or social activities, or have suicidal thoughts. In extreme circumstances, cyber/gaming bullying can lead to suicide.

Parents and adults should talk with youth about their online activities and stay alert to signs of cyber/gaming bullying such as sleeplessness, withdrawal, stress, avoidance, declining grades, or lowered self-esteem.

Ways to Address Cyber/gaming Bullying

- Encourage children to speak up immediately if they are victims of cyber/gaming bullying. Assure that a young person has a trusted adult—whether parent, teacher, or Scout leader—in whom to confide.
- Block cyber/gaming bullies by using available privacy controls such as blocked-sender lists and call-blocking.
- Do not erase the messages or pictures. Take screen shots. Save them as evidence.
- If the cyber/gaming bullying is criminal or you suspect it may be, contact the police. Areas falling under the jurisdiction of law enforcement include threats of violence, extortion, obscene or harassing phone calls or messages, harassment via stalking or hate crimes, child pornography, sexual exploitation, and taking a photo or video image of someone in a place where privacy would normally be expected.
- Utilize tools offered by the BSA. To help families and volunteers keep youth safe while online, the BSA introduced the Cyber Chip, developed in cooperation with the content expert NetSmartz®, part of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. (See "Bullying Prevention Resources," below.)

Seeking Professional Help

Bullying is a form of abuse that can cause psychological, physical, and academic problems. Parents may want to talk with a counselor about a counseling or mental health referral. A professional can assess how much support and assistance a bullied youth needs. If a youth is sick, stressed, not sleeping, or having other problems because of bullying, a health professional should be contacted.

A young person who bullies others will also need the help of caring adults. Scouts who bully may need help recognizing their behavior, taking responsibility for their actions, developing empathy, and finding ways to make amends. Scout leaders can offer guidance in how to interact with others in socially appropriate ways. Assess possible reasons for the bullying behavior, such as lack of self-control, poor social skills, academic problems, or a troubled family life. Depending on the severity of the bullying behavior or the related circumstances, therapeutic intervention might be needed for the bully as well as the target.

Incidents Requiring an Immediate Report to the Scout Executive

The following must be reported to the council Scout executive for action immediately:

- Any threat or use of a weapon
- Any negative behavior associated with race, religion, sexual identity or orientation, or disability
- Any reports to authorities where the BSA's Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse policy or your state's mandatory reporting of child abuse laws apply
- Any abuse of a child that meets state reporting mandates for bullying or harassment
- Any mention or threats of suicide

If someone is at immediate risk of harm, call 911.

If a Scout is bullied because of race, ethnicity, or disability, and local help is not working to solve the problem, contact the local council Scout executive. If the Scout executive is unavailable, the BSA provides a 24-hour helpline: 1-844-SCOUTS1 (1-844-726-8821).

Antibullying Action Plan

- Stop the abuse, bullying, or policy violation.
- Protect the targeted youth.
- Summon assistance from other leaders, authorities, etc.
- Gather factual information about the bullying incident, including details of who was involved, what happened, and when and where it happened.
- Notify parents or guardians of both the target and the youth who bullied.
- Take corrective action.
- Notify the council Scout executive when warranted.
- Check back with the targeted youth to ensure the problem behavior has stopped.

Bullying Prevention Resources

Bullying Awareness

This series of fact sheets can be found online at www.scouting.org/training/youth-protection/bullying.

- A Scout Is Kind Newsletter
- Bullying—What is Bullying?
- The Bully
- Creating a Bullying-Free Culture in Scouting
- What to Do If Your Child Is Being Bullied (for parents)
- Prevention of Cyber/Gaming Bullying in Scouting
- Reporting Suspected or Observed Bullying
- Providing Support to Scouts Who Are Bullied
- Prevention of Bullying in Scouting—Unit Discussions

Antibullying and Anti-Cyber Intimidation Programs

Website: learning.learningforlife.org/digital-programs/abc

BSA Youth Protection

Website: www.scouting.org/training/youth-protection

Cyber Chip

Website: www.scouting.org/training/youth-protection/cyber-chip

Cyberbullying Research Center

Website: https://cyberbullying.org

NetSmartz Workshop

Website: www.netsmartz.org

StopBullying.gov

Website: www.stopbullying.gov

Crafting a Troop Vision

Use this checklist with troop youth members to help create the troop vision.

Step 1: Review basic concepts.

- ☐ Review the basic concepts from National Youth Leadership Training and Wood Badge and from volume 1 of the *Troop Leader Guidebook.*
- ☐ Review the mission, vision, and values of the Boy Scouts of America, as well as the aims and methods of Scouts BSA.

Step 2: Decide on the timeframe.

- ☐ Talk as a group about exactly when the future you are envisioning should arrive.
- ☐ Set checkpoints along the way.

Step 3: List your strengths.

- ☐ Ask participants what makes the troop successful today. Capture those strengths, because they are elements of your future success. Spend 10 minutes or so on this step.
- ☐ Record the responses on a flip chart or whiteboard.

Step 4: Define elements of future success.

- ☐ Brainstorm what the troop might ideally look like in a few years, again recording responses on a flip chart or whiteboard. This step should take another 10 minutes or so.

Step 5: Draft your vision.

- ☐ Spend 20 to 30 minutes discussing possible visions using the lists you created in steps 3 and 4. Don't reject any ideas out of hand, but work toward a vision that falls somewhere between easily attainable and seemingly impossible.
- ☐ At this point, you can conclude the visioning meeting. You don't have a final vision, however. Instead, you have a draft that needs to be reviewed and revised.

Step 6: Review and revise your vision.

- ☐ Set the vision aside until the group comes back together. Look at your draft with fresh eyes and change it as needed. Make sure it outlines what you want the troop to become and is understandable, specific, and inspiring.
- ☐ Next, share the revised draft with other leaders and parents who weren't part of the visioning process. You need their input to make sure the vision is strong, and you need their buy-in to help make the vision a reality.

Step 7: Share your vision.

- ☐ Once you have finalized your vision, share it far and wide. Put it on your website and letterhead, post it at your meeting place, and share it with your chartered organization and troop families.

Leadership Team SWOT Analysis

Position	Incumbent	Training Status	Years in Position	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Scoutmaster							
Assistant Scoutmaster for Program							
Assistant Scoutmaster for Administration							
Assistant Scoutmaster for the New-Scout Patrol							
Assistant Scoutmaster for the _____ Patrol							
Assistant Scoutmaster for the _____ Patrol							
Assistant Scoutmaster for the _____ Patrol							
Assistant Scoutmaster for the _____ Patrol							
Assistant Scoutmaster for the Older-Scout Patrol							
Other Assistant Scoutmasters							
_____ (title)							
_____ (title)							
_____ (title)							
_____ (title)							

Leadership Team SWOT Analysis

Position	Incumbent	Training Status	Years in Position	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
Troop Committee Chair							
Secretary							
Treasurer							
Outdoor/Activities Coordinator							
Advancement Coordinator							
Chaplain							
Training Coordinator							
Equipment Coordinator							
Unit Religious Emblems Coordinator							
Other Troop Committee Members							
_____ (title)							
_____ (title)							
_____ (title)							
_____ (title)							
Chartered Organization Representative							

Team Development Assessment

Team Development Assessment

This assessment instrument will help you determine a team's development stage.
Score each statement using the following scale:

3=Definitely true 2=Sometimes true, sometimes false 1=Definitely false

1.	The team's effectiveness is increasing.	
2.	Enthusiasm is high.	
3.	Team members won't ask each other for help.	
4.	Conflict often happens within the team.	
5.	Every team member contributes to the team's success.	
6.	The team seems to be making little progress.	
7.	The team accepts the leader, and he or she accepts constructive criticism.	
8.	Team members seem to be pulling in many different directions.	
9.	Team members feel a shared sense of responsibility for success or failure.	
10.	The team's goals and vision are works in progress.	
11.	The team usually achieves its goals.	
12.	There's lots of talk but not much action.	
13.	The team challenges itself to succeed, often overachieving.	
14.	Members seem less excited than they used to be about the team's progress.	
15.	Members accept one another's faults and eccentricities.	
16.	There's little sharing of fears and concerns.	
17.	Members argue over who is responsible for what tasks.	
18.	The team works to resolve any conflicts that arise.	
19.	Team spirit is high; the team is clearly having fun.	
20.	Members always look to the leader for guidance.	
21.	Everyone's role on the team is understood and accepted.	
22.	The leader gets a lot of pushback from members.	
23.	Members are excited to be on the team but are unsure of their roles.	
24.	The team works by consensus and shared leadership	

Scoring: Transfer the score for each question to the blanks below.
After you have entered all the scores, total each column.

3.		4.		1.		2.	
6.		8.		7.		5.	
10.		12.		11.		9.	
16.		14.		15.		13.	
20.		17.		18.		19.	
23.		22.		21.		24.	
Total Forming		Total Storming		Total Norming		Total Performing	

For each stage, you should end up with a total score of 6 to 18 points. The highest score should indicate which stage the team is in.

Adapted from the Team Development Survey by Donald Clark, hrweb.mit.edu/system/files/stage_survey.doc

List your elected and appointed youth leaders below, along with the adults who are assigned to support them. (We've left some blanks at the end in case you have multiple youth leaders holding the same position or more than four patrols.) Write Yes or No in each of the other spaces.

Position	Scout in Position	Adult Advisor	Has Completed ILST	Has Helped Lead ILST	Has Completed NYLT	Has Served on NYLT Staff	Has Completed NAYLE	Has Served on NAYLE Staff
Senior Patrol Leader								
Assistant Senior Patrol Leader								
Patrol Leader								
Patrol Leader								
Patrol Leader								
Patrol Leader								
Troop Guide								
Den Chief								
Historian								
Order of the Arrow Troop Representative								
Librarian								
Quartermaster								
Instructor								
Chaplain Aide								
Outdoor Ethics Guide								
Junior Assistant Scoutmaster								
Scribe								
Troop Guide								
Webmaster								

Youth Leadership in Action

A good way to get a sense of how youth-led your troop is—and where adults may need to adjust their level of involvement—is to evaluate a troop meeting, a patrol leaders' council meeting, and a troop outing. If possible, have someone who is not directly involved in the meeting (perhaps your junior assistant Scoutmaster or your unit commissioner) complete the worksheet.

Troop Meeting

Date _____

Preopening

Grade this part of the meeting on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the best. _____

Why did you assign that grade? _____

Who led this part of the meeting? (This could be more than one person.) _____

If adults led, could Scouts have done the job instead? _____

If Scouts led, how did adults support them so they could be effective? _____

Opening

Grade this part of the meeting on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the best. _____

Why did you assign that grade? _____

Who led this part of the meeting? (This could be more than one person.) _____

If adults led, could Scouts have done the job instead? _____

If Scouts led, how did adults support them so they could be effective? _____

Group instruction

Grade this part of the meeting on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the best. _____

Why did you assign that grade? _____

Who led this part of the meeting? (This could be more than one person.) _____

If adults led, could Scouts have done the job instead? _____

If Scouts led, how did adults support them so they could be effective? _____

Skills instruction

Grade this part of the meeting on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the best. _____

Why did you assign that grade? _____

Who led this part of the meeting? (This could be more than one person.) _____

If adults led, could Scouts have done the job instead? _____

If Scouts led, how did adults support them so they could be effective? _____

Patrol meetings

Grade this part of the meeting on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the best. _____

Why did you assign that grade? _____

Who led this part of the meeting? (This could be more than one person.) _____

If adults led, could Scouts have done the job instead? _____

If Scouts led, how did adults support them so they could be effective? _____

Interpatrol game

Grade this part of the meeting on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the best. _____

Why did you assign that grade? _____

Who led this part of the meeting? (This could be more than one person.) _____

If adults led, could Scouts have done the job instead? _____

If Scouts led, how did adults support them so they could be effective? _____

Closing

Grade this part of the meeting on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the best. _____

Why did you assign that grade? _____

Who led this part of the meeting? (This could be more than one person.) _____

If adults led, could Scouts have done the job instead? _____

If Scouts led, how did adults support them so they could be effective? _____

Patrol Leaders' Council Meeting

Date _____

Grade the meeting on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the best. _____

Why did you assign that grade? _____

Was there a written agenda for the meeting? _____

If so, who prepared it? _____

Did the Scoutmaster and senior patrol leader collaborate ahead of the meeting? _____

How many Scouts were in attendance? _____

How many adults were in attendance? _____

Would the meeting have been as effective if all the adults had been in another room? _____

Who called the meeting to order (or decided when to begin)? _____

Who led the meeting? _____

Who kept the meeting on track? _____

Whom did participants turn to when they had questions? _____

Who took minutes of the meeting? _____

How prepared was the senior patrol leader to lead the meeting? _____

Troop Outing

Date _____

Grade the outing on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the best. _____

Why did you assign that grade? _____

Who selected the activity? _____

Who selected the location? _____

Who made any required reservations? _____

Who assigned campsites to patrols? _____

Who planned the menu? _____

Who shopped for the food? _____

Who cooked the food? _____

At departure, who took roll and decided it was time to set out? _____

Who led activities during the outing? _____

Who kept the outing on schedule? _____

Who decided on any changes to the original plan? _____

Who coordinated campsite cleanup? _____

At the end of the outing, who took roll and decided it was time to return home? _____

Were there areas where adults led too much? Explain. _____

Were there areas where adults provided too little support? Explain. _____

SMART Goals Worksheet

Name _____ Unit No. _____

My Scouting Position _____

SMART Goal (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Timely): _____

_____

_____

Who: _____

_____

What: _____

_____

When: _____

_____

Where: _____

_____

Why: _____

_____

_____

How: _____

_____

_____

_____

How you will determine the task is complete: _____

_____

Patrol Meeting Planner

Date_____ Week _____

Activity	Description	Run By	Time
Opening _____ minutes			
Business _____ minutes			
Skill activity _____ minutes			
Game _____ minutes			
Closing _____ minutes			
After the Meeting			

Troop Meeting Evaluation

Meeting Part	Planned Activity or Activities	... New Scouts?	... Experienced Scouts?	... Older Scouts?
Preopening				
Opening				
Group Instruction				
Skills Instruction				
Patrol Meetings				
Game				
Closing				
After the Meeting				

Applications, Guidelines, and Forms

50-Miler Award Application

www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/advancement-and-awards/merit-badges/fifty

Age Guidelines for Tool Use and Work at Elevations or Excavations

https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/healthsafety/pdf/680-028.pdf

Application for Alternative Eagle Scout Rank Merit Badges

www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/512-730.pdf

BSA National Honor Patrol Award Application

www.scouting.org/filestore/boyscouts/pdf/512-021_WB.pdf

Historic Trails Award Application

www.scouting.org/awards/awards-central/historic-trails

Individual Scout Advancement Plan

www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/512-936_WB.pdf

Request for Registration Beyond the Age of Eligibility

www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/512-935_WB.pdf

ScoutSTRONG™ PALA Activity Log

www.scouting.org/filestore/ScoutStrong/pdf/210-041_log.pdf

Service Project Planning Guidelines

www.scouting.org/filestore/healthsafety/pdf/680-027.pdf

Resources

Boy Scouts of America print and video resources change frequently. The following list of key resources for Boy Scout leaders was current at press time.

A Note About Catalog Numbers

Free items (sometimes known as bin items) have five- or six-digit numbers with hyphens, while retail items have five- or six-digit numbers without hyphens. Note, however, that many retail items are also available as free downloads at www.scouting.org, as are most bin items. You can purchase retail items at your local Scout shop or at www.scoutshop.org.

Resources Found on www.Scouting.org

Here are some primary resources helpful to troop leaders, available from the Boy Scouts of America's official website. Many more can be found online.

Advancement and Awards for Scouts

Directories related to advancement and awards opportunities for Scouts

www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/advancement-and-awards

www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/youth/awards

Advancement Report

www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/advancement-and-awards/resources

Annual Health and Medical Record

www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/ahmr

Application for Alternative Eagle Scout Rank Merit Badges

https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/512-730.pdf

Belay On

www.scouting.org/outdoor-programs/cope

Scouts BSA Troop Open House

www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/troop-open-house

Campfire Program Planner

www.scouting.org/resources/info-center/forms

Climb On Safely

www.scouting.org/outdoor-programs/cope/climb-on-safely

Den Chief Training

www.scouting.org/training/youth/den-chief-training

Disabilities Awareness—Serving Scouts With Disabilities

www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/the-building-blocks-of-scouting/disabilities

Duty to God

www.scouting.org/awards/religious-awards

Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook

www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/advancement-and-awards/eagle-scout-workbook

Guide to Advancement, No. 33088

The official source for administering advancement in all Boy Scouts of America program phases

www.scouting.org/resources/guide-to-advancement

Guide to Awards and Insignia

A comprehensive guide to wearing uniforms and badges correctly

www.scouting.org/resources/info-center/insignia-guide

Guide to Safe Scouting

The primary source for information on conducting Scouting activities in a safe and prudent manner

www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/gss

Manual for Chaplains and Chaplain Aides in

www.scouting.org/resources/info-center/manual-for-chaplains-and-chaplain-aides

Health and Safety Training Course Syllabus

www.scouting.org/training/adult/supplemental/planning-and-conducting-a-safe-scout-outing

Introduction to Leadership Skills for Troops

www.scouting.org/training/youth

Introduction to Outdoor Leader Skills

www.scouting.org/training/adult

Leave No Trace Training

www.scouting.org/outdoor-programs/leave-no-trace

Merit Badge Counselor Information

www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/mb-counselor-guide

Nationally Approved Historic Trails

www.scouting.org/outdoor-programs/trails

Opportunities for Scouts

Listing of opportunities for Scouts such as training courses, scholarships, and special programs

www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/youth/opportunities

Orientation for New Scout Parents

www.scouting.org/training/adult/supplemental/orientation-for-new-boy-scout-parents

Outdoor Ethics Awareness and Action Awards Program

www.scouting.org/outdoor-programs/awards

Planning Your Troop's Annual Program Budget

www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/program-planning-tools

Resources

Scoutmaster Position-Specific Training
www.scouting.org/training/adult

Selecting Quality Leaders
www.scouting.org/training/adult/supplemental/selecting-quality-leaders

Service Project Planning Guidelines
www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/guidelines-policies

Transfer Form (Youth Member)
https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/524-401WB.pdf

Tread Lightly!
www.scouting.org/outdoor-programs/outdoor-ethics/tread-lightly

Trek Safely
https://my.scouting.org

Troop Budget Planning
www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/planning

Troop Leader Resources
https://troopleader.org

Troop Meeting Plan
www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/planning

Troop Program Planning Chart (English/Spanish)
www.scouting.org/resources/magazines/boys-life-promo

Troop Program Resources
Games, ceremonies, Scoutmaster's Minutes, and more
www.programresources.org

Troop Resource Survey
https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/512-116_WB.pdf

Unit Budgeting and Planning Resources
www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/program-planning-tools

Unit Money-Earning Application
www.scouting.org/resources/info-center/forms

Webelos Transition
www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/adults

Worksheet for Building a Merit Badge Counselor List
www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/advancement-and-awards/resources

Year-Round Guide to Boy Scout Recruiting
www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/year-round-guide

Scoutshop.org Resources

The following items can be obtained at the BSA's official retail website: www.scoutshop.org.

Aquatics Supervision, No. 34737

Scouts BSA Handbook for Boys (No. 34622) and *Scouts BSA Handbook for Girls* (No. 39006)—The primary resource for Scouts (and for Scout leaders who need to learn basic Scouting skills).

Scout Requirements (current year), No. 33216—Requirements for ranks, merit badges, and special awards; updated annually.

Camp Cookery for Small Groups, No. 33592

Conservation Handbook, No. 33570

Den Chief Handbook, No. 33211

Fieldbook, No. 34006—A companion volume to the Scouts BSA handbooks that covers advanced outdoor skills.

Guide to Advancement, No. 33088—The official source for administering advancement in all Boy Scouts of America program phases.

Guide to Awards and Insignia, No. 33066—A comprehensive guide to wearing uniforms and badges correctly.

Merit Badge Application (blue card), No. 34124 (100 pack) and No. 34130 (25 pack)

Okpik: Cold-Weather Camping, No. 34040

Order of the Arrow Handbook, No. 34996

Patrol Monthly Dues Envelope, No. 33816

Patrol Record Book, No. 34516

Program Features for Troops and Crews, volumes 1, 2, and 3— Complete monthly program features, 16 per volume, that include meeting plans, outing ideas, and resources.

A Scout Is Reverent, No. 34248

This Is Scouting (DVD), No. 610460

Patrol Leader Handbook, No. 32502—The official guide for patrol leaders.

Senior Patrol Leader Handbook, No. 32501—The official guide for senior patrol leaders and other troop-level youth leaders.

A Time to Tell (DVD), No. 605696

Resources

Troop Committee Guidebook, No. 34505—The primary resource for troop committee members.

Troop Leader Guidebook, volumes 1 (No. 33009) and 2 (No. 33010)—The primary resource for Scoutmasters and assistant Scoutmasters. (Volume 2 will be introduced at a later date.)

Troop Record Book, No. 34508

My.Scouting.org Resources

The following resources can be found at www.My.Scouting.org. (A login is required to take My.Scouting.org training courses.)

Climb On Safely

Fast Start Orientation Training

How to Protect Your Children From Child Abuse: A Parent's Guide—found in the Scouts BSA handbooks

Physical Wellness

Safe Swim Defense

Safety Afloat

This Is Scouting

Trek Safely

Weather Hazards

Youth Protection Training

Website Listing for the BSA

Be a Scout: www.BeAScout.org

Boy Scouts of America: www.Scouting.org

BSA Training: www.Scouting.org/training

BSA Health and Safety: www.scouting.org/health-and-safety

BSA Supply Group: www.Scoutshop.org

My.Scouting: My.Scouting.org

Scout Life: www.scoutlife.org—The BSA's official youth magazine; published monthly

Scouting: www.Scoutingmagazine.org—The official magazine for Scout leaders; published five times a year

Glossary

Scouting has a language all its own. Here are some common terms you should be familiar with. For definitions of other terms, visit www.scouting.org/resources/info-center/los.

assistant Scoutmaster. A volunteer Scouter, 18 or older, appointed by the chartered organization to help the Scoutmaster by working with a patrol or carrying out other assigned tasks.

board of review. A review held to determine whether a Scout has satisfactorily completed rank requirements. A review may also be held to encourage Scouts who are not advancing.

Scout Life. The magazine for all Scouts, published by the Boy Scouts of America.

campmaster. A volunteer Scouter trained to assist in short-term camping.

charter. In the BSA, charters authorize (1) an organization to operate BSA Scouting units; (2) a local council to incorporate as a BSA local council; (3) operation of an Order of the Arrow lodge; or (4) the Boy Scouts of America to incorporate.

charter presentation. A formal ceremony at which the charter, Scouter commissions, and membership certificates are presented to organization authorities and members of the unit.

charter renewal. An annual meeting attended by the chartered organization representative, head of the chartered organization, troop leaders, and unit commissioner for the purpose of completing the charter application and making plans for the charter presentation.

chartered organization. A religious, civic, fraternal, educational, or other community-based organization that has applied for and received a charter to operate a BSA Scouting unit.

chartered organization representative. A manager of Scouting in a chartered organization who also represents this organization in the local council and district.

commissioner. A commissioned Scouter who works with Cub Scout packs, Scout troops, and Venturing crews to help units succeed.

council service center. *See* local council service center.

council. An administrative body chartered to be responsible for Scouting in a designated geographic territory.

court of honor. A recognition ceremony for those who have met the requirements of any one of the Scouts BSA ranks, merit badges, or other awards.

Cub Scouting. That part of the BSA program for youth who are in the first grade through fifth grade (or are 7 through 10 years old).

district. A geographical area of the council determined by the council executive board to help ensure the growth and success of Scouting units within the district's territory.

district executive. A professional Scouter who works under the direction of the local council Scout executive and acts as an advisor to the volunteer leaders in the district.

Friends of Scouting. An annual opportunity for Scouters and interested people in the community to be identified with the local council through their financial support and influence in the expansion of the council program.

Good Turn. A distinctive feature of Scouting is its emphasis on service to others. The Good Turn habit is one that all Scouts endeavor to acquire.

jamboree. A national or international gathering of Scouts.

Journey to Excellence. A performance recognition program designed to encourage and reward success and measure the performance of units, districts, and councils.

junior assistant Scoutmaster. A 16- or 17-year-old Scout who helps the senior patrol leader; the junior assistant Scoutmaster is appointed by the senior patrol leader, with the Scoutmaster's advice and consent. The troop may have more than one junior assistant Scoutmaster.

Leave No Trace. A nationally recognized outdoor skills and ethics awareness organization that seeks to reduce impacts on the environment and other people; its mission informs the BSA's outdoor ethics principles.

local council. An administrative body chartered by the National Council to be responsible for Scouting in a designated geographic territory.

local council service center. The business center for the local administration of Scouting.

lodge. A local council Order of the Arrow group chartered annually by the National Council. A large lodge may be organized into chapters.

My.Scouting. An internet portal for our members that provides access to their account data, automated tour and activity plan applications, the E-Learning Course Management System, and more.

new-Scout patrol. A youth who joins a Scout troop may become a member of a patrol composed of new Scouts; an assistant Scoutmaster and a troop guide help them to get a good start in Scouting.

older-Scout patrol. A patrol of Scouts ages 13 and older in a troop; the patrol participates in high-adventure activities.

Order of the Arrow. Scouting's national honor society. The aim of the OA is to promote the outdoor program and service to Scouting.

outdoor ethics. A set of principles that guide Scouts' ethical decision making in their relationship to the natural world.

patrol. A small group of Scouts (usually five to eight) who belong to a troop and work together in and out of troop meetings. Normally, there are several patrols in one troop.

patrol leaders' council. Each patrol leader, representing their patrol, meets with other patrol leaders and the senior patrol leader to plan the troop program. The Scoutmaster acts as an advisor.

Glossary

roundtable. An event conducted by a roundtable commissioner and roundtable staff to help the unit leaders of a district plan and carry out their own unit programs.

Scout benediction. "May the Great Scoutmaster of all Scouts be with us until we meet again."

Scout executive. The chief executive officer of the local council responsible for the administration, financing, marketing, motivation, recruitment, and staffing required for successful council operations.

Scout Sabbath. The Saturday after February 8, Scouting Anniversary Day.

Scout shop. A BSA-owned store, operated by the Supply Group, that sells official Scouting merchandise.

Scout Sunday. The Sunday before February 8, Scouting Anniversary Day.

Scouter. An adult leader in the Boy Scouts of America.

Scouting Anniversary Week. The week, beginning on Sunday, that includes February 8, Scouting Anniversary Day. During the week, units are encouraged to conduct rededication ceremonies and to demonstrate Scouting's purposeful activities.

***Scouting* magazine.** The official magazine for all Scouters. It aims to interpret the program, stimulate action, and strengthen a desire to serve.

Scoutmaster. A volunteer Scouter, 21 or older, appointed by the chartered organization to lead a Scout troop.

Scoutmaster's Minute. A part of the closing ceremony of a troop meeting or campfire in which the Scoutmaster encourages Scoutlike conduct by telling a story.

Sea Scouting. A branch of Scouting that specializes in traditional nautical activities, e.g., sailing, motorboating, and maritime careers.

senior patrol leader. A Scout elected by the Scouts to help all the patrols succeed. Each troop has one senior patrol leader, who may be assisted by one or more assistant senior patrol leaders.

service center. *See* local council service center.

square knot. Generally, embroidered square knots are representative of pin-on medals or around-the-neck awards and are designed for the greater convenience of the wearer.

Supply Group. The arm of the Boy Scouts of America that supplies official uniforms, equipment, literature, and other resources to the field. Includes administrative offices located in the national office, the National Distribution Center, and Scout shops located nationwide.

trading post. The camp or reservation store where campers may purchase equipment and supplies. A distributor's Scouting department is sometimes referred to as the trading post.

Tread Lightly! A national nonprofit organization with a mission to promote responsible outdoor recreation through ethics education and stewardship; its mission informs the BSA's outdoor ethics principles.

troop. The entity that conducts the Scout program for the chartered organization; it is typically composed of several patrols.

unit. The entity that conducts Scouting for the chartered organization; it consists of registered youth members and registered adult volunteer members. A unit may be a Cub Scout pack, Scout troop, Venturing crew, or Sea Scout ship. Its affairs are administered by the unit committee, which is appointed by the chartered organization.

Venturing. The young adult program of the Boy Scouts of America for men and women ages 14 through 20, or 13 with completion of the eighth grade.

Youth Protection. This BSA emphasis fights child abuse by teaching youth the "three R's" (recognize, resist, and report child abuse); by helping parents and Scouters learn to recognize indications of child abuse and situations that could lead to potential abuse; and by teaching them how to handle child abuse situations or reports.

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See also Glossary for definitions of specific terms

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Scout Oath

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

Scout Law

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

Scout Motto

Be Prepared.

Scout Slogan

Do a Good Turn Daily.

Prepared. For Life.®

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