

= Boy Scouting ( Boy Scouts of America ) =

Boy Scouting is a membership level of the Boy Scouts of America ( BSA ) for boys and young men . It provides youth training in character , citizenship , and mental and personal fitness . Boy Scouts are expected to develop personal religious values , learn the principles of American heritage and government , and acquire skills to become successful adults .

To achieve these , Boy Scouting applies eight methods of Scouting : Ideals ( viz . , the Scout Oath , the Scout Law , the Scout Motto , and the Scout Slogan ) , the patrol method , participation in outdoor programs , advancement , adult association , personal growth , leadership development , and the uniform .

Boy Scouting is generally available to boys between the ages of 10 and eighteen . They are organized in Scout troops , administered by volunteers with support of paid professional staff . Youth and adult members are Scouts , the boys are referred to as Boy Scouts , and the adults as Scouters .

In 1994 , the Chronicle of Philanthropy , an industry publication , released the results of the largest study of charitable and non @-@ profit organization popularity and credibility . The study showed that the Boy Scouts was ranked as the 7th " most popular charity / non @-@ profit in America " of over 100 charities researched with 42 % of Americans over the age of 12 choosing Love and Like A lot for the Boy Scouts .

= = Program and activities = =

The troop program and activities are determined by the senior patrol leader and the patrol leaders council under the oversight of the Scoutmaster . Troops generally hold meetings weekly , although they can be irregular during the summer . Troop meeting activities may vary from training in Scout skills to planning camping trips or playing games .

Troops may plan outings and activities outside the troop meeting . These may involve camping , backpacking , hiking , canoeing , rafting , climbing , caving , rappelling , and other activities . These outings are an important place for Scouts to work on skills and rank advancement , have fun , and engage in productive outdoor activities .

Most councils own and operate one or more permanent camps . These camps may host a variety of activities throughout the year . The summer camp program provides a week @-@ long session for troops that includes merit badge advancement and adventure activities . Facilities may include ranges for shooting sports ? archery , rifle , and shotgun ? and for climbing and rappelling .

It is common for several troops within a district or council to gather at least once a year at a special weekend campout called a camporee . A camporee is a district- or council @-@ wide event where several units camp and engage in activities , Scoutcraft competitions and learn specialized skills .

The national Scout jamboree usually occurs every four years , and draws more than 30 @,@ 000 Scouts from across the country and the world . The last jamboree took place in 2013 at the BSA 's new property , The Summit in West Virginia . The Summit is to be a permanent place for the Jamboree and an opportunity to construct a new high @-@ adventure base .

= = = Ideals = = =

The Scout Law , Scout Oath , Scout Motto , Scout Slogan , and Outdoor Code are the cornerstones of Boy Scouting . Each Scout learns to make these ideals a part of their way of life and personal growth . Boy Scouts must memorize and understand these ideals . They also represent these ideals symbolically in official emblems .

The Scout Sign is used when giving the Scout Law or the Scout Oath and as a signal for silence . The Scout Salute is used when saluting the flag of the United States . The left @-@ handed handshake is used as a token of friendship and as an identity with Scouts worldwide .

= = = Emblems = = =

Boy Scouting uses a series of medals and patches as emblems . The badge for the Scout rank consists of a simple fleur-de-lis , which symbolizes a compass needle . The needle points the Scout in the right direction , which is onward and upward . The Tenderfoot badge takes the fleur-de-lis of the Scout badge and adds two stars and an eagle with an American shield . The stars symbolize truth and knowledge ; the eagle and shield symbolize freedom and readiness to defend it . The Second Class badge features a scroll inscribed with the Scout Motto , with the ends turned up and a knotted rope hanging from the bottom . The knot reminds each Scout to remember the Scout slogan , and the upturned ends of the scroll symbolize cheerfulness in service . The First Class badge combines the elements of the Tenderfoot and Second Class badges . For years , the First Class badge was used as the emblem of the BSA . Star has a First Class symbol on a five-pointed yellow star , and initially indicated the five merit badges required to earn the rank . Life has a First Class emblem on a red heart , and initially symbolized the first aid and health-related merit badges that the rank required . Now it signifies that the ideals of Scouting have become a part of the Scout's life and character .

== Uniform and insignia ==

The uniform and insignia of the Boy Scouts of America gives a Scout visibility and creates a level of identity within both the unit and the community . The uniform is used to promote equality while showing individual achievement . While uniforms are similar in basic design , they do vary in color and detail to identify the different divisions of Cub Scouts , Boy Scouts , Varsity Scouts , Venturers , and Sea Scouts .

Scouts and adult leaders wear the Boy Scout uniform . It generally consists of a khaki button-up shirt , olive green pants or shorts , belt , and neckerchief . The Scouter dress uniform is appropriate for professional Scouters and Scouting leaders on formal occasions .

== Organization ==

== Troop and patrols ==

The troop is the fundamental unit of Boy Scouting . The troop size can vary from a minimum of five Scouts to several dozen . Each troop is sponsored by a community organization such as a business , service organization , private school , labor group or religious institution . The chartered organization is responsible for providing a meeting place and promoting a good program . A chartered organization representative manages the relationship between the troop , the chartered organization , and the BSA .

Each troop is divided into patrols of eight or so Scouts led by a patrol leader elected from within the patrol . Patrol meetings are generally held during the weekly troop meeting . The patrol's independence from the troop varies among troops and between activities . Patrols' autonomy becomes more visible at campouts , where each patrol may set up its own camping and cooking area . Divisions between patrols may disappear during an event which only a small part of the troop attends . Patrols may hold meetings and even excursions separately from the rest of the troop .

Troops mix older and younger Scouts in the same patrols , so that the older boys can teach the younger ones more effectively . When a Webelos den crosses over from Cub Scouting to Boy Scouting , the " new Scout patrol " method may be used . The new Boy Scouts are kept together as a group , elect their own patrol leader , and are assigned a troop guide ? an older Scout who acts as a mentor .

Some troops establish Venture patrols as an optional program for boys thirteen through seventeen years old . Venture patrols experience more autonomy from the troop than ordinary patrols , and provide older Scouts with expanded social contact and physical challenges . The Venture patrol is guided by the assistant Scoutmaster-at-large Venture who is responsible for Venture patrol activities .

Venture patrol members wear the standard Boy Scout uniform with the Venture strip over the right pocket . Patrol members are Boy Scouts and should never be referred to as Venture Scouts .

= = = Other sections = = =

The Lone Scout program serves boys who cannot take part in a nearby troop on a regular basis because of distance , weather , time , disability , or other difficulties . While the Scout does not participate in troop or patrol activities , he does learn the fun , values , and achievements of Scouting .

Varsity Scouting is part of the Boy Scouting division of the BSA . It is an alternative available to boys ages fourteen through seventeen that takes basic Boy Scouting and adds high adventure , sporting , and other elements that are more appealing to older youth to accomplish the aims of character development , citizenship training , and personal fitness . Varsity Scouts are organized into teams , which are separate chartered units from a Boy Scout troop . Varsity Scouts participate in the standard Boy Scouting advancement program along with programs unique to Varsity Scouting .

The Order of the Arrow ( OA ) is a program of the Boy Scout division of the BSA . It is the BSA 's national honor society for experienced campers , based on Native American traditions , and dedicated to the ideal of cheerful service . Scouts and Scouters must belong to a troop or team to become OA members . The OA is run by youths under the age of 21 with adult Scouters serving as advisers .

= = Advancement and recognition = =

= = = Youth advancement = = =

Boy Scouts has seven ranks , grouped into two phases . The first phase of Scout , Tenderfoot , Second Class , and First Class is designed to teach the boy Scoutcraft skills , teamwork , and self @-@ reliance . Scout is the first rank , awarded when a boy first joins the Scouts , and requires just a rudimentary knowledge of Scouting 's ideals . Further ranks have progressive requirements in the areas of Scoutcraft , physical fitness , citizenship , personal growth , and Scout Spirit . Scouts with a permanent mental or physical disability may use alternate requirements , based on their abilities and approved by the council .

The second phase of Star , Life , and Eagle is designed to develop leadership skills and encourage the Scout to explore potential vocations and avocations through the merit badge program . These ranks require that the boy serve in a position of responsibility and perform community service .

The Eagle Scout requires , in addition to merit badges and a position of responsibility , a community service project planned and led entirely by the Eagle Scout candidate . After attaining the rank of Eagle , a Scout may earn Eagle Palms for additional tenure and merit badges .

Although Eagle is the highest rank , for which Scouts should strive , the number of Scouts achieving First Class within one year of joining is still one of the key measures of unit effectiveness . Studies have shown that if a Scout achieves First Class within a year of joining , he typically stays in Scouting for at least three years . Scouts who do so are more likely to retain Scout values as an adult and achieve the BSA primary mission of " producing useful citizens " .

Ranks and other recognitions are presented in a troop awards ceremony called the court of honor . The Eagle Scout rank is usually presented in a separate and special court of honor .

= = = Adult recognition = = =

Boy Scout leaders who complete training , tenure , and performance requirements are recognized by a system of awards . The Scouters Training Award is available to leaders , while the Scouter 's Key and Scoutmaster Award of Merit are only available to the Scoutmaster . The pinnacle of Scout

leader training is Wood Badge , for which successful participants receive a special neckerchief , woggle and wooden beads on a thong .

= = = Awards = = =

Several religious emblems programs are administered by various religious institutions and recognized by the BSA . These are generally recognized by a medal and an embroidered square knot . Other advancement and recognitions ? such as the 50 @-@ miler award , Crime Prevention Awards , Emergency Preparedness Award and World Conservation Award ? are available to Scouts who show proficiency in special areas . BSA 's National Court of Honor is responsible for lifesaving and meritorious awards . All Courts of Honor for Eagle Scout rank are convened as National Courts of Honor also .

= = Leadership in the troop = =

Every troop has two separate leadership structures : one consisting of Scouts and another consisting of adults . The adult leadership manages the logistics of troop activities , administers rank advancement and awards , maintains troop records and finance , and recruits new Scouts and adult leaders . The youth leadership keeps order and coordinates labor at activities . Scouts and adults cooperate to plan agendas for troop meetings , as well as the troop 's schedule of outings .

= = = Adult leadership = = =

The troop committee is made up of responsible adults who are approved by the local council and the chartered organization . The committee chairman leads the committee and appoints its members to specific tasks such as treasurer , secretary , advancement , activities , equipment and membership . The committee and the chartered organization representative are responsible for the selection of the Scoutmaster and assistant Scoutmasters . The Scoutmaster must be at least twenty @-@ one and is directly responsible for training and guiding the boy leaders , working with other adults to bring Scouting to boys , and for using the methods of Scouting to achieve the aims of Scouting . A troop may have a chaplain who helps to provide a spiritual element in the unit program , provides spiritual counseling as needed , and encourage Scouts to participate in the religious emblems program .

= = = Youth leadership = = =

The youth leader of the troop is the senior patrol leader ( SPL ) , elected by the Scouts in the troop . He is responsible for the overall performance of the troop , runs troop meetings and ensures that the program for troop meetings and other activities is carried out . He is advised by the Scoutmaster . There may also be one or more assistant senior patrol leaders . Each patrol elects a patrol leader who then appoints an assistant patrol leader and other positions within the patrol . Together , the senior patrol leader , assistant senior patrol leader and patrol leaders make up the patrol leaders council ( PLC ) , the group of Scouts that is responsible for developing the troop 's program with the advice of the Scoutmaster .

There are other youth positions of responsibility in a troop ; the use of these positions is dependent on the size of the troop and the program . The junior assistant Scoutmaster ( JASM ) is a 16- or 17 @-@ year @-@ old Scout who performs the same duties as an assistant Scoutmaster ; the scribe takes minutes at patrol leaders council meetings and troop meetings and is often responsible for taking attendance and collecting money or dues ; the quartermaster maintains the troop 's equipment ; the librarian maintains the troop library ; the chaplain aide works with the troop chaplain and promotes the religious program in the troop ; the troop historian maintains photos and records of troop functions , meetings and outings ; a den chief works with a den of Cub Scouts , assisting the den leaders and helps retain Cub Scouts when they cross over into Boy Scouts ; the troop guide

is a senior Scout who provides guidance to new Scout patrols ; the Leave No Trace Coordinator ensures the Scouts are trained in and follow Leave No Trace Guidelines ; the Order of the Arrow representative provides a line of communication between the Order of the Arrow and the troop ; the bugler provides music as needed ; the instructor teaches Scout skills . These troop positions are appointed by the senior patrol leader with the advice and counsel of the Scoutmaster , except for the Junior Assistant Scoutmaster , who is appointed by the Scoutmaster .

= = = Development = = =

The BSA has a defined Youth Leadership Training Continuum to provide a growth path for youth leaders . The Scoutmaster provides Troop Leadership Training ( TLT ) at the troop level . Youth leaders are encouraged to attend National Youth Leadership Training ( NYLT ) at the council level and a select few may progress to National Advanced Youth Leadership Experience ( NAYLE ) at the national level . Those interested in staffing these courses may complete the Youth Staff Development Course ( YSDC ) at the regional level .

New adult leaders are encouraged to attend training for their position . Completion of such training becomes mandatory for Scoutmasters in January 2011 and for Assistant Scoutmasters in January 2012 . This training provides the essential information they need to provide a safe and successful quality program . Fast Start Training is the introduction for adult leaders new to the Boy Scout program ; it is self pace and provided as a video or online . " This is Scouting " is common online core training for adult leaders in BSA and gives an overview of the Scouting .

Youth Protection Training ( YPT ) covers the BSA policies on preventing child abuse , including types and signs of abuse , how to respond to disclosed abuse and how to report suspected abuse . All Adult leaders are required to complete the Youth Protection Program before becoming registered . YPT re certification is required every two years . At least one person with current YPT certification must be preset on outings .

Scoutmasters and assistants should then attend Scoutmaster and Assistant Scoutmaster Specific Training and Introduction to Outdoor Leader Skills for further instruction in Scouting and outdoor skills . This completes Basic Leader Training for these positions and the Trained emblem may be worn . The troop committee chairman and members should attend the Troop Committee Challenge for instruction in administering the program . This completes Basic Leader Training for these positions and the Trained emblem may be worn .

Supplemental training modules are designed to provide orientation beyond Basic Leader Training . These shorter training sessions are often provided at the Roundtable , a monthly meeting of leaders from the district , at a University of Scouting offered by the local councils , and at National Training Conferences held at the Philmont Training Center and the Florida National High Adventure Sea Base .

At least one leader with current Safe Swim Defense training is required for swimming activities . Boating activities require Safety Afloat and CPR training . Climb On Safely training and CPR certification are required for climbing and rappelling events .

Wood Badge is advanced training for leadership skills for adults in the BSA . Wood Badge consists of six days of training ( usually presented as two three @-@ day weekends ) and an application phase of several months . When training is complete , leaders are recognized with the Wood Badge beads , neckerchief , and woggle . Powder Horn is a high adventure resource course designed to help Scout leaders to safely conduct outdoor activities of a fun and challenging nature , provide an introduction to the resources necessary to successfully lead their youth through a program of high adventure and to understand what is involved in different high adventure disciplines .