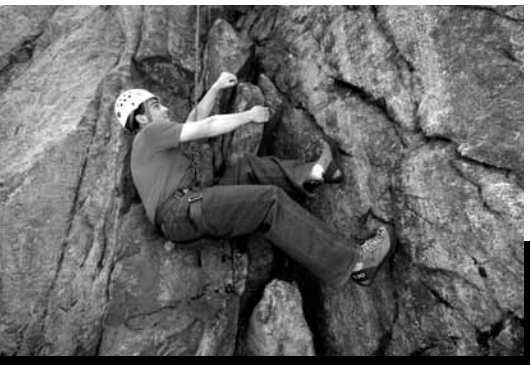




GUIDE TO SAFE SCOUTING

A GUIDE FOR CURRENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA®

GUIDE TO SAFE SCOUTING



A GUIDE FOR CURRENT
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Get the Latest Information!

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Go to **http://www.scouting.org/HealthandSafety/GSS.aspx.**



BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA®

Prepared. For Life.™

Emergency Preparedness BSA

It is a challenge to be prepared for emergencies in our world of man-made and natural phenomena. The Emergency Preparedness BSA program is planned to inspire the desire and foster the skills to meet this challenge in our youth and adult members so that they can participate effectively in this crucial service to their families, communities, and nation.

The emergencies of today's world demand more than ever that our young people and adults be trained as individuals and as units to meet emergency situations. The importance of this training is not new to the Boy Scouts of America, as Scouting has always taught youth to be prepared for all types of emergencies. Since Scouting began in the United States, Scouts have responded to the needs of their communities and nation in times of crisis.

When an emergency occurs, it affects every youth and adult member of the BSA in the immediate area, creating the responsibility to respond, first, as an individual; second, as a member of a family; and third, as a member of a Scouting unit serving the neighborhood and community. Because of these multiple levels of responsibility, the Emergency Preparedness BSA plan includes training for individual, family, and unit preparedness. Special training in all three areas is a prerequisite for BSA members conducting any type of emergency service in their communities.

Individual Preparedness

The primary emphasis of this initial step in the program is to train members to be mentally and emotionally prepared to act promptly and to develop in them the ability to take care of themselves. Teaching young people to know and be able to use practical survival skills when needed is an important part of individual preparedness.

Family Preparedness

Since family groups will be involved in most emergency situations, this part of the plan includes basic instructions to help every Scouting family prepare for emergencies. Families will work together to learn basic emergency skills and how to react when faced with fires, floods, hurricanes, tornadoes, explosions, warning signals, fallout protection, terrorist attacks, and other emergency situations.

Community Preparedness

The program fosters the desire to help others and teaches members how to serve their communities in age-appropriate ways. By taking the age-appropriate First Aid for Children course (Tiger Cubs) and Basic Aid Training (Wolf and Bear Cub Scouts), these boys help ease the burden on the family and community resources. Through all Scouting ranks and for adult members, the responsibilities and skills for community service increase with the members' maturity.

For more information on emergency preparedness, visit the these websites: www.scouting.org/Media/Publications/EmergencyPreparedness.aspx and www.ready.gov.

The BSA Ready & Prepared Award

The Boy Scouts of America's Ready & Prepared Award encourages and rewards Boy Scout troops, Varsity Scout teams, and Venturing crews that incorporate safe practices while enjoying challenging activities. While working to earn the award, units emphasize risk management as a way to help reduce fatalities and serious injury. Focus areas include:

- Driver and passenger safety
- Youth Protection
- Aquatic safety
- Premises safety and first-aid readiness
- Personal fitness



Units may apply for this award at the time of unit rechartering.

For more information, go to www.scouting.org/Awards/BSAReadyandPrepared.aspx.

Preface

The purpose of the *Guide to Safe Scouting* is to prepare members of the Boy Scouts of America to conduct Scouting activities in a safe and prudent manner. The policies and guidelines have been established because of the real need to protect members from known hazards that have been identified through 100 years of experience. Limitations on certain activities should not be viewed as stumbling blocks; rather, policies and guidelines are best described as stepping-stones toward safe and enjoyable adventures.

All participants in official Scouting activities should become familiar with the *Guide to Safe Scouting* and be aware of state or local government regulations that supersede Boy Scouts of America policies and guidelines. The *Guide to Safe Scouting* provides an overview of Scouting policies and procedures rather than comprehensive, standalone documentation. For some items, the policy statements are complete. Unit leaders are expected to review the additional reference material cited prior to conducting such activities.

In situations not specifically covered in this guide, activity planners should evaluate the risk or potential risk of harm, and respond with action plans based on common sense, community standards, the Boy Scout motto, and safety policies and practices commonly prescribed for the activity by experienced providers and practitioners.

Versions of the Guide

In addition to this printed version, the *Guide to Safe Scouting* is available online at www.scouting.org/HealthandSafety/gss.aspx.

To obtain additional printed copies of this book, contact your local Scout shop or order online at www.scoutstuff.org.

Don't forget to check Scouting Safely information at www.scouting.org/HealthandSafety.aspx.

I. Youth Protection and Adult Leadership

Mandatory Report of Child Abuse

Clause in first sentence deleted

How does the BSA help prevent child abuse in Scouting?

Changes throughout

Leadership Selection

Change to last sentence in section

Scouting's Barriers to Abuse

Section title change from Barriers to Abuse Within Scouting

Changes throughout

Frequently Asked Questions

What should I do if a child tells me that he has been sexually abused?

Insert clause "and the authorities"

New copy for last sentence

II. Aquatics Safety

Safe Swim Defense

New copy added at end of first paragraph

III. Camping

Venturing Camping

Venturing members can participate in the national jamboree

VIII. Sports and Activities

Climbing and Rappelling

Change "should" to "must;" "guidelines" to "requirements"

Unauthorized and Restricted Activities

Changes in wording for Nos. 8 and 9

Age-appropriate Guidelines for Scouting Activities (Insert)

Vehicles

Under "Dirt Bikes," insert "Venturers Only" into the chart under "Older Boy Scouts, Varsity Scouts, and Venturers"

Camping

Under "Jamboree," delete "Boy Scouts Only;" insert solid black rules in the chart under "Boy Scouts" and "Older Boy Scouts, Varsity Scouts, and Venturers"

Aircraft

Insert category "Hot Air Balloons (tethered only)" and a solid black rule across each of the age levels in the chart

Appendix

Unit Money-Earning Application

Addition of second page of the application

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Go to **http://www.scouting.org/HealthandSafety/GSS.aspx.**

I. Youth Protection and Adult Leadership

Youth Protection in Scouting

The Boy Scouts of America places the greatest importance on creating the most secure environment possible for its youth members. To maintain such an environment, the BSA has developed numerous procedural and leadership selection policies, and provides parents and leaders the following online and print resources for the Cub Scouting, Boy Scouting, and Venturing programs.

Mandatory Report of Child Abuse

All persons involved in Scouting shall report to local authorities, any good faith suspicion or belief that any child is or has been physically or sexually abused, physically or emotionally neglected, exposed to any form of violence or threat, exposed to any form of sexual exploitation including the possession, manufacture, or distribution of child pornography, online solicitation, enticement, or showing of obscene material. No person may abdicate this reporting responsibility to any other person.

Notify your Scout executive of this report, or of any violation of BSA's Youth Protection policies, so that he or she may take appropriate action for the safety of our Scouts, make appropriate notifications, and follow-up with investigating agencies.

How does the BSA help prevent child abuse in Scouting?

The Boy Scouts of America has adopted a number of policies aimed at eliminating opportunities for abuse within the Scouting program. These policies focus on leadership selection and on placing even greater barriers to abuse than already exist today in Scouting.

Youth Protection training is a requirement for all BSA registered volunteers, *regardless of their position*.

The BSA's Youth Protection training has been in existence long enough for it to be understood and accepted as a mandated training for **all** registered and new BSA adult volunteers.

Youth Protection training must be taken every two years. If a volunteer's Youth Protection training record is not current at the time of recharter, the volunteer will not be reregistered.

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 high-quality adult leaders. We work closely with chartered organizations to help recruit the best possible leaders for their units.

The adult application requests background information that should be checked by the unit committee or the chartered organization before accepting an applicant for unit leadership. While no current screening techniques exist that can identify every potential child abuser, we can help reduce the risk of accepting a child abuser by learning all we can about an applicant for a leadership position—including his or her experience working with children and why he or she wants to be a Scout leader.

Youth safety is of paramount importance to the Boy Scouts of America. It is important to implement this training at all levels of the organization. BSA continually seeks to increase awareness of this societal problem and to create even greater barriers to abuse than already exist today in Scouting to provide the most secure environment possible for its youth members.

Scouting's Barriers to Abuse

The BSA has adopted the following policies for the safety and well-being of its members. These policies are primarily for the protection of its youth members; however, they also serve to protect adult leaders.

Two-deep leadership on all outings required. Two registered adult leaders, or one registered leader and a parent of a participating Scout or other adult, one of whom must be 21 years of age or older, are required for all trips and outings. There are a few instances, such as patrol activities, when the presence of adult leaders is not required and adult leadership may be limited to training and guidance of the patrol leadership. With the proper training, guidance, and approval by the troop leaders, the patrol can conduct day hikes and service projects. Appropriate adult leadership must be present for all overnight Scouting activities; coed overnight activities—even those including parent and child—require male and female adult leaders, both of whom must be 21 years of age or older, and one of whom must be a registered member of the BSA. The chartered organization is responsible for ensuring that sufficient leadership is provided for all activities.

One-on-one contact between adults and Scouts prohibited. One-on-one contact between adults and youth members is not permitted. In situations that require personal conferences, such as a Scoutmaster's conference, the meeting is to be conducted in view of other adults and youths.

Separate accommodations for adults and Scouts required. When camping, no youth is permitted to sleep in the tent of an adult other than his or her own parent or guardian. Councils are strongly encouraged to have separate shower and latrine facilities for females. When separate facilities are not available, separate times for male and female use should be scheduled and posted for showers. Likewise, youth and adults must shower at different times.

Privacy of youth respected. Adult leaders must respect the privacy of youth members in situations such as changing clothes and taking showers at camp, and intrude only to the extent that health and safety require. Adults must protect their own privacy in similar situations.

Inappropriate use of cameras, imaging, or digital devices prohibited. While most campers and leaders use cameras and other imaging devices responsibly, it has become very easy to invade the privacy of individuals. It is inappropriate to use any device capable of recording or transmitting visual images in shower houses, restrooms, or other areas where privacy is expected by participants.

No secret organizations. The Boy Scouts of America does not recognize any secret organizations as part of its program. All aspects of the Scouting program are open to observation by parents and leaders.

No hazing. Physical hazing and initiations are prohibited and may not be included as part of any Scouting activity.

No bullying. Verbal, physical, and cyber bullying are prohibited in Scouting.

Youth leadership monitored by adult leaders. Adult leaders must monitor and guide the leadership techniques used by youth leaders and ensure that BSA policies are followed.

Discipline must be constructive. Discipline used in Scouting should be constructive and reflect Scouting's values. Corporal punishment is never permitted.

Appropriate attire for all activities. Proper clothing for activities is required. For example, skinny-dipping or revealing bathing suits are not appropriate in Scouting.

Members are responsible for acting in accordance with the Scout Oath and Scout Law. 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, theft, verbal insults, drugs, and alcohol have no place in the Scouting program and may result in the revocation of a Scout's membership.

Units are responsible for enforcing Youth Protection policies. The head of the chartered organization or chartered organization representative and the local council must approve the registration of the unit's adult leader. 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. Any violations of the BSA's Youth Protection policies must immediately be reported to the Scout executive.

Frequently Asked Questions

How can parents help protect their children?

Parents participate in the protection of their children in a variety of ways. The BSA recognizes the need for open lines of communication so that children are encouraged to bring any troubles to their parents for advice and counsel. In addition, parents need to be involved in their children's Scouting activities. All parents receive important information concerning the Scouting program as part of their children's membership applications. This information is provided so that parents can detect any deviations from the BSA's approved program. If any deviations are noted, parents should call these to the attention of the chartered organization or the unit committee. If the problems persist, parents should contact the local council for assistance.

Parents also need to review the booklet, *How to Protect Your Children From Child Abuse: A Parent's Guide,* inserted in every Boy Scout and Cub Scout handbook. The information in this booklet should be the subject of discussions between Scouts and their parents prior to joining a pack or troop.

Why do most child victims of sexual abuse keep the abuse secret?

A victim of child sexual abuse is under a great deal of pressure to keep the abuse secret. In many cases of child molestation, the molester has threatened to harm the child or a member of the child's family. The molester might have told the child that he would not be believed even if the child did tell. Another common situation is that the molester will tell the child that if the child tells about the abuse, he will get into trouble. The clear message is given to the child that if another person finds out, something bad will happen to the child. This pressure to maintain silence can often be successfully overcome by establishing open communication between children and adults through a proper educational program for children.

What should I do if a child tells me that he has been sexually abused?

How an adult responds to a child who tries to disclose abuse can influence the outcome of the child's victimization. By maintaining an apparent calm, the adult can help reassure the child that everything is going to be OK. By not criticizing the child, we counteract any statements the molester made to the victim about the child getting into trouble. Reassure the child that you are concerned about what happened to him and that you would like to get him some help. Allegations by a Scout concerning abuse in the program must be reported immediately to the Scout executive and the authorities. Since these reports are required, the child should be told that you have to tell the proper authorities but that you will not tell anyone else. Because the allegations have been referred to the authorities for investigation, you should not discuss the details of the allegations with others or make any accusations.

What Youth Protection educational materials does the BSA have for youth members?

How to Protect Your Children From Child Abuse: A Parent's Guide is a tear-out booklet bound with BSA youth handbooks. It is designed for parents or guardians and young people to use together for Youth Protection training.

The Power Pack Pals comic books, available in English and in Spanish, are for Cub Scout–age boys. They include *Power Pack Pals* (No. 33980)/*Los Superamigos del Pack* (No. 46-33979), *Power Pack Pals: Be Safe on the Internet* (No. 33981)/*Power Pack Pals: Seguridad en la Internet* (No. 46-34464), and *Power Pack Pals: Four Rules for Personal Safety* (No. 46-34750)/*Power Pack Pals: 4 Reglas Para Seguridad Personal* (No. 46-34465).

These and other resources can be found at www.scouting.org/training/youth protection.

The BSA has bilingual, age-appropriate videos for all youth age groups to address the problems of sexual abuse. *It Happened to Me/A Mí Me Pasó* (No. AV-09DVD11) should be used annually by Cub Scout packs or dens, but only for Cub Scouts accompanied by a parent or other adult family member. The video for Boy Scouts, *A Time to Tell/ Hora de Contarlo* (No. AV-09DVD04), introduces the "three R's" of Youth Protection, and should be viewed by troops annually. *Personal Safety Awareness/ Concientización Sobre la Seguridad Personal* (No. AV-09DVD33) is the video for Venturing-age young people.

How can Scout leaders who are not social workers teach children about youth protection?

The BSA recognizes that many of our leaders feel unprepared to talk to children about preventing sexual abuse. For this reason, the BSA has meeting guides online for all of the videos produced to be viewed by youths. The guides address everything from scheduling the meeting, contacting the police or social services for assistance, and notifying parents (a sample letter is provided), to questions and answers for discussion after the video has been viewed.

What are the "three R's" of Youth Protection?

The "three R's" of Youth Protection convey a simple message to youth members.

Recognize situations that place you at risk of being molested, how child molesters operate, and that anyone could be a molester.

Resist unwanted and inappropriate attention. Resistance will stop most attempts at molestation.

Report attempted or actual molestation to a parent or other trusted adult. This prevents further abuse and helps to protect other children. Let the child know he or she will not be blamed for what occurred.

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.

Each Cub Scout den and Webelos Scout den and each chartered Cub Scout pack, Boy Scout troop, Varsity Scout team, and Venturing crew shall have one leader, 21 years of age or older, who shall be registered and serve as the unit or den leader. The head of the chartered organization or chartered organization representative and the local council must approve the registration of the unit or den leader on the appropriate form.

Primary reference: *Rules and Regulations of the Boy Scouts of America*

Digital Privacy

A key ingredient for a safe and healthy Scouting experience is the respect for privacy. Advances in technology are enabling new forms of social interaction that extend beyond the appropriate use of cameras or recording devices (see "Barriers to Abuse Within Scouting"). Sending sexually explicit photographs or videos electronically and "sexting" by cell phones is a form of texting being practiced primarily by young adults and children. Sexting is neither safe, nor private, nor an approved form of communication, and can lead to severe legal consequences for the sender and the receiver. Although most campers and leaders use digital devices responsibly, educating them about the appropriate use of cell phones and cameras is a good safety and privacy measure.

Leadership Requirements for Trips and Outings

It is the responsibility of the chartered organization of any Cub Scout pack, Boy Scout troop, Varsity Scout team, or Venturing crew or ship to inform the committee and leadership of the unit that sufficient adult leadership must be provided on all trips and outings (coed overnight activities require both male and female adult leaders).

1. **Two-deep leadership.** Two registered adult leaders, or one registered leader and a parent of a participating Scout or other adult, one of whom must be 21 years of age or older, are required for all trips and outings. There are a few instances, such as patrol activities, when the presence of adult leaders is not required and adult leadership may be limited to training and guidance of the patrol leadership. With the proper training, guidance, and approval by the troop leaders, the patrol can conduct day hikes and service projects. Appropriate adult leadership must be present for all overnight Scouting activities; coed overnight activities—even those including parent and child—require male and female adult leaders, both of whom must be 21 years of age or older, and one of whom must be a registered member of the BSA. The chartered organization is responsible for ensuring that sufficient leadership is provided for all activities.
2. **During transportation to and from planned Scout outings,**
   A. Meet for departure at a designated area.
   B. Prearrange a schedule for periodic checkpoint stops as a group.
   C. Plan a daily destination point.

   A common departure site and a daily destination point are a must. If you cannot provide two adults for each vehicle, the minimum required is one adult and two or more youth members—*never one on one.*
3. **Safety rule of four:** No fewer than four individuals (always with the minimum of two adults) go on any backcountry expedition or campout. If an accident occurs, one person stays with the injured, and two go for help. Additional adult leadership requirements must reflect an awareness of such factors as size and skill level of the group, anticipated environmental conditions, and overall degree of challenge.
4. **Male and female leaders must have separate sleeping facilities.** Married couples may share the same quarters if appropriate facilities are available.
5. **Male and female youth participants will not share the same sleeping facility.**

6. **Single-room or dormitory-type accommodations for Scouting units:** Adults and youths of the same gender may occupy dormitory or single-room accommodations, provided there is a minimum of two adults and four youths. A minimum of one of the adults is required to be Youth Protection–trained. Adults must establish separation barriers or privacy zones such as a temporary blanket or a sheet wall in order to keep their sleeping area and dressing area separated from the youth area.
7. **When staying in tents, no youth will stay in the tent of an adult other than his or her parent or guardian.**
8. **If separate shower and latrine facilities are not available, separate times for male and female use should be scheduled and posted for showers. Likewise, youth and adults must shower at different times.** The buddy system should be used for latrines by having one person wait outside the entrance, or provide "Occupied" and "Unoccupied" signs and/or inside door latches. Adult leaders need to respect the privacy of youth members in situations where youth members are changing clothes or taking showers, and intrude only to the extent that health and safety require. Adults also need to protect their own privacy in similar situations.
9. **Two-deep adult leadership is required for flying activities.** *For basic orientation flights, the adult licensed pilot in control of the aircraft is sufficient for the flight,* while two-deep leadership is maintained on the ground.

Coed Overnight Activities Policy

All Venturing activities shall conform to the ideals and purposes of the Boy Scouts of America. In order to ensure that all coed overnight activities for Venturers and invited guests at crew, district, council, regional, or national levels meet proper moral standards, the national Venturing Committee has established the following policy:

1. The crew Advisor (or Skipper) or council Scout executive must give careful consideration to the number of adults necessary to provide appropriate leadership for both male and female participants. The number of adult leaders required by the hosting facility or organization (such as a BSA national high-adventure base) must be provided.
2. Adult leaders must be 21 years of age or older and be approved by the committee chairman and chartered organization.
3. Separate housing must be provided for male and female participants.
4. An adult male leader must be housed with the male participants. An adult female leader must be housed with the female participants.
5. Written parent or guardian approval is required for each Venturer or guest under 18 years of age.

Internet Safety

It is recommended that the following personal protection rules be shared with all youth members.

When you are online, you are in a public place, among thousands of people who are online at the same time. Follow these personal protection rules and you will have fun:

- Keep online conversations with strangers to public places, not in e-mail.
- Do not give anyone online your real last name, phone numbers at home or school, your parents' workplaces, or the name or location of your school or home address unless you have your parents' permission first. Never give your password to anyone but a parent or other adult in your family.
- If someone sends or shows you e-mail with sayings that make you feel uncomfortable, trust your instincts. You are probably right to be wary. Do not respond. Tell a parent what happened.
- If somebody tells you to keep what's going on between the two of you secret, tell a parent.
- Be careful to whom you talk. Anyone who starts talking about subjects that make you feel uncomfortable is probably an adult posing as a kid.
- Pay attention if someone tells you things that don't fit together. One time an online friend will say he or she is 12, and another time will say he or she is 14. That is a warning that this person is lying and may be an adult posing as a kid.
- Unless you talk to a parent about it first, never talk to anybody by phone if you know that person only online. If someone asks you to call—even if it's collect or a toll-free, 800 number—that's a warning. That person can get your phone number this way, either from a phone bill or from caller ID.
- Never agree to meet someone you have met only online at any place off-line, in the real world.
- Watch out if someone online starts talking about hacking, or breaking into other people's or companies' computer systems; phreaking (the "ph" sounds like an "f"), the illegal use of long-distance services or cellular phones; or viruses (online programs that destroy or damage data when other people download these onto their computers).
- Promise your parent or an adult family member and yourself that you will honor any rules about how much time you are allowed to spend online and what you do and where you go while you are online.