

BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA[®]



SCOUTS
BSA



HANDBOOK



CHARTERED ORGANIZATION
Saint Aidan's Episcopal Church
3201 Edinburgh Drive
Virginia Beach, VA 23452

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Introduction

Welcome to the Scouts BSA and Troop 481!

2021

Congratulations! You are starting your son on the great adventure of Scouting. This is an important and rewarding endeavor that you will share with him. We are glad you and your son have chosen Troop 481.

Troop 481 was founded in 1973 and is chartered through Saint Aidan's Episcopal Church in Virginia Beach. Our troop is part of the Bayside District. Bayside District is one of four districts within the Tidewater Council. The Troop initially was chartered through King's Grant Baptist Church and later moved to Saint Aidan's. Over the course of 45 years, the Troop has seen 150 young men achieve the rank of Eagle Scout (as of March 2021), the highest award in the youth Scouting program.

We are proud of the numerous outdoor activities offered to our Scouts as well as numerous advancement and personal growth opportunities. Service learning is also a key feature to our Scouts' experience in the troop. Our program will give your son the fundamental tools to be successful in whatever path he chooses in life. Scouts work together in patrols and with our active and trained adult leaders. Last but not least, your son will have fun! Scouting is fun with a purpose.

We have prepared this parent handbook to answer many of your questions. You are encouraged to become an active troop participant, sharing your time and skills for the good of the entire troop.

Please contact me, the Troop Committee Chair, or another adult leader with any questions about our Troop or how you can contribute to the success of Troop 481.

Yours in Scouting,

Tom Skidmore
Scoutmaster
Troop 481

Scouts BSA Mission

The mission of the Scouts BSA 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 Law.

Scouts BSA seeks to achieve three specific aims:

**Character
Development**

**Citizenship
Training**

**Physical, Emotional
& Mental Fitness**

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.

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; and be conservation minded.



Scouts BSA

Scouts BSA provides a program for community organizations that offers effective character, citizenship, and personal fitness training for youth. Specifically, the BSA endeavors to develop American citizens who are physically, mentally, and emotionally fit; have a high degree of self-reliance as evidenced in such qualities as initiative, courage, and resourcefulness; have personal values based on religious concepts; have the desire and skills to help others; understand the principles of the American social, economic, and governmental systems; are knowledgeable about and take pride in their American heritage and understand our nation's role in the world; have a keen respect for the basic rights of all people; and are prepared to participate in and give leadership to American society.

Scouts BSA, one of the membership divisions of the BSA, is available to youth who have earned the Cub Scout Arrow of Light Award and are at least 10 years old or have completed the fifth grade and are at least 10, or who are 11, but not yet 18 years old. The program achieves the BSA's objectives of developing character, citizenship, and personal fitness.

The Organization of Scouting

Boys Scouts of America was incorporated on February 8th, 1910, and chartered by Congress in 1916 to provide an educational program for boys and young adults. Scouting was modeled after the Scouting movement founded by Robert S. Baden-Powell in England in 1908.

Starting February 1, 2019, scouting programs for youth ages 11-18 are referred to as Scouts BSA.

The organizational structure of the Scouts BSA consists of the National Council, Regions, Local Councils, Districts, Chartered Organizations, Troop Committees and Troops. Each entity has designated and specific responsibilities as outlined by the BSA.



Aims and Methods of the Scouting Program

The Scouting program has three specific objectives, commonly referred to as the “Aims of Scouting.” They are **moral strength, participating citizenship, and development of physical, mental, and emotional fitness.** To accomplish these aims, Scouting has developed its program using eight methods.

1. Ideals

The ideals of Scouting are spelled out in the Scout Oath, Law, Motto, and Slogan. The Scout measures himself against these ideals and continually tries to improve.

2. Patrols

The patrol method gives Scouts an experience in group living and participating citizenship. It places a certain amount of responsibility on young shoulders and teaches boys how to accept it.

3. Outdoors

Scouting is designed to take place outdoors. It is in the outdoors that Scouts share responsibilities and learn to live with each other. It is here that the skills and activities practiced at troop meetings come alive with purpose.

4. Advancement

Scouting provides a series of surmountable obstacles and steps to overcome them through the advancement method. The Scout plans his advancement and progresses at his own pace as he overcomes each challenge. The Scout is rewarded for each achievement, which helps him gain self-confidence. The steps in the advancement system help a boy grow in self-reliance and the ability to help others.

5. Adult Association

Boys learn from the example set by their adult leaders. Troop leadership may be male or female, and association with adults of high character is encouraged at this stage of a young man’s development.

6. Personal Growth

As Scouts plan their activities and progress toward their goals, they experience personal growth. The Good Turn concept is a major part of the personal growth method of Scouting. Boys grow as they participate in community service projects and do Good Turns for others. The religious emblems program can be a large part of the personal growth method.

7. Leadership Development

Scouting encourages boys to learn and practice leadership skills. Every Scout has the opportunity to participate in both shared leadership and total leadership situations. Understanding the concepts of leadership helps a boy accept the leadership roles of others and guides him toward the citizenship aim of Scouting.

8. Uniform

The uniform makes the Scout troop visible as a force for good and creates a positive youth image in the community. Wearing the uniform is an action that shows each purpose of Scouting. The uniform gives the Scout identity in a world brotherhood of youth who believe in the same ideals.



What Is Expected of Scouts

A successful troop involves many ingredients—a responsive chartered organization, a challenging and rewarding program, dedicated and knowledgeable adult leaders, adequate resources, a supportive program, but most importantly, interested and motivated Scouts. You, as parents, have certain expectations of your son’s troop that probably include the first four of these ingredients, as well as the opportunity for new experiences, growth of character and the rewards of a team environment.

When a boy joins the Scouts, he is frequently not aware of the obligations and responsibilities he must accept that are vital to a successful Scouting experience. Since parents may not be familiar with all of these responsibilities, or expectations, the following list is provided for your information. While the Scouts are constantly reminded of these responsibilities during troop meetings and other activities, your assistance in assuring that your son understands these expectations is required and important.

Expectations of Troop 481 Scouts

1. Live by the Scout Oath, Scout Law, Outdoor Code, Scout Motto, and Scout Slogan in his day-to-day living, and in all troop meetings and activities. When the Scout sign goes up, his sign will go up and he will become quiet and stand still where he is standing. He will treat others with the same respect he wishes to receive from others.
2. Attend weekly troop meetings. (Attendance at 2/3 of the meetings since joining or in the past 6 months, whichever is shorter, is required for advancement). Troop meetings are noted on the annual calendar and in quarterly updates. If a Scout cannot attend a troop meeting, he should inform his Patrol Leader before to the meeting.
3. Participate in troop activities. If a Scout signs up to participate in an activity, but does not attend, he is still responsible for his financial obligations for the activity (food, transportation, share of camping fees, etc.). In the event an activity is cancelled, the Scout will still be responsible for financial obligations for the outing that cannot be recovered, though every effort will be made to reach an equitable and fair redistribution of costs not incurred (money for food will not be refunded).
4. Attend summer camping activity (normally one week in length.)
5. Wear the complete designated uniform at meetings and activities in a neat, well-groomed manner. See the SCOUT HANDBOOK for uniform requirements. Camouflage clothing and fatigues are not appropriate. If special clothing is appropriate for a specific activity, then the leaders will let the Scout know in advance.
6. Keep his handbook up-to-date and bring it to **ALL** troop meetings and activities. The **SCOUT HANDBOOK** is also part of the uniform, and should be in the boy's possession at all times while in uniform. Each Scout must have a pen or pencil, and a small notebook with which to take notes at troop meetings.
7. Turn in permission slips and registration fees for troop activities on time. This is usually two troop meetings prior to the planned activity. A two-week notice is often required in order to make reservations, pay a deposit, or to otherwise properly plan an outing.
8. Enter and exit the church by the meeting room doors at the front parking lot. Scouts will stay in the area designated for Scouts before, during, and after troop meetings. **Treat Saint Aidan's Episcopal Church with the same care and respect as your own home. Scouts are guests in the church.**
9. Do not bring to any troop meeting or activity radios, electronic games, comic books, motorized cars, or items that are hazardous (firearms, firecrackers, etc.) or cause distractions with non-Scout related activities. This includes homework and non-Scout books. Electronic devices are allowed in the car to and from scouting events such as a campout or summer camp or if explicitly authorized for scouting purposes.

10. Do not wander off from the group, whether at a troop meeting, activity, or campout. A Scout's whereabouts will be known by his Patrol Leader and adult leaders at all times. Always use the buddy system.

11. While at troop meetings or activities conduct oneself as an example of the fine Scouts in Troop 481, so that he can be proud, his parents can be proud, and the adult leaders can be proud of him and his conduct.

Your son's commitment to these expectations should lead to having lots of fun, learning a great deal and earning higher ranks.

I promise on my honor as a Scout to live up to these expectations.

(print name)

(signed)

(date)

I promise to support my son in living up to these expectations.

(print name)

(signed)

(date)

Expectations of Troop 481 Scout Parents

1. Enjoy the Boy Scout experience alongside your son!
2. Provide the necessary uniform, equipment and transportation for your Scout so that he is properly clothed and equipped to participate in troop and patrol activities.
3. Provide encouragement to your Scout and help him set and abide by priorities, which will help further his Scouting experience. The success and enjoyment of the Scout increases as the Scout's participation increases. Allow time to review, study and practice his rank requirements.
4. Provide never-ending encouragement to your Scout in his advancement, service and commitment to the Scout Oath and Law.
5. Provide Information to the Scoutmaster or one of the Assistant Scoutmasters regarding problems or concerns you or your Scout may have (medical conditions, learning disabilities, medications, etc.).
6. Allow your Scout to "learn by doing." He will make mistakes when trying to accomplish tasks on his own, but this builds character! Remember, there are many older boys and adult leaders present to ensure that new Scouts and their patrols don't do anything that jeopardizes safety or other basic requirements.
7. Encourage your Scout to attend summer camp! Experience proves that new Scouts are much more likely to stay in Scouting, enjoy Scouting more, and advance more quickly by attending summer camp.
8. Help your son find the time to study his advancement requirements, and test your son on those requirements so he is more comfortable when reviewed by the troop leadership. In accordance with Scout policy, parents are not authorized to sign-off Scout requirements for their son.





9. Attend and/or support Courts of Honor, campouts, fund-raisers and other Troop 481 activities as your time allows. Your participation benefits and supports both the Troop and your son.

10. As a parent, participate in the troop's activities. Troop 481 historically has had an excellent level of adult volunteers; and we expect each family to help the troop to the extent possible. Adult leadership opportunities include: Assistant Scoutmaster positions, troop management positions, troop committee participation, campout drivers, activity coordinator and merit badge counselors.

11. We welcome the participation of all parents and guardians in our program in all areas, meetings, departments, training, merit badge counseling and camping. Some levels of participation require registration as an adult leader and BSA training. The support and involvement of parents and family members in Troop 481 are what has made the Troop so successful throughout the years. There are always ways in which you can assist your son's troop and scouting experience, no matter how limited your time or availability. Many positions will require only a few hours of your time. Experience has shown that parental involvement, either in a leadership or a support role, has a direct bearing on the motivation a Scout has and the accomplishments he achieves.

New Adult Leaders Are a Must. With new Scouts, we expect to gain new adult leaders as well. Parent volunteers are a must to support the new Scouts. Typically, at least two parents of new Scouts will need to become trained assistant Scoutmasters to assist with new Scouts (and to replace any outgoing adults). There are always additional volunteer opportunities on the troop committee.

Troop Adult Leadership

Scoutmaster. The Scoutmaster is the adult leader responsible for the image and program of the troop. The Scoutmaster and his assistant Scoutmasters work directly with the Scouts. The importance of the Scoutmaster's job is reflected in the fact that the quality of guidance will affect every youth and adult involved in the troop.

The Scoutmaster's duties include:

- Train and guide boy leaders.
- Work with other responsible adults to bring Scouting to boys.
- Use the methods of Scouting to achieve the aims of Scouting.

Troop Committee. The Troop Committee is the troop's board of directors and supports the troop program. The Troop Committee's primary responsibilities are supporting the Scoutmaster in delivering a quality troop program and handling troop administration. The Troop Committee does the following:

- Ensures that quality adult leadership is recruited and trained. In case the Scoutmaster is absent, a qualified assistant Scoutmaster is assigned. If the Scoutmaster is unable to serve, a replacement is recruited.
- Provides adequate meeting facilities.
- Advises the Scoutmaster on policies relating to Scouting and the chartered organization.
- Supports leaders in carrying out the program.
- Is responsible for finances, adequate funds, and disbursements in line with the approved budget plan.
- Obtains, maintains, and properly cares for troop property.
- Ensures the troop has an outdoor program (minimum 10 days and nights per year).
- Serves on boards of review and courts of honor.
- Supports the Scoutmaster in working with individual boys and problems that may affect the overall troop program.
- Provides for the special needs and assistance some boys may require.
- Helps with the Friends of Scouting campaign.
- Assists the Scoutmaster with handling Scout-related behavioral problems.

Information and Policies of Troop 481

Troop Meetings

Troop 481 meets Thursdays, beginning with a flag ceremony at 7:00 pm, at St. Aidan's Episcopal Church at 3201 Edinburgh Drive, Virginia Beach, 23452. Scouts, with the support and guidance of the Scoutmaster, plan and conduct the meetings. Parents are always encouraged to attend and participate. The Patrol Leaders Council members (Scout leaders) arrive at 6:45 pm for meeting preparation activities.

Attendance at weekly meetings is vital for a Scout to stay informed and to contribute his part within his patrol and his troop. Meetings allow for Scout advancement, campout planning, instruction of Scout skills, troop games, patrol development, mentorship and leadership development.

In the event that Virginia Beach Public Schools are dismissed early or are closed due to weather/snow, the troop meeting will be cancelled.

Required Forms

Scouts

- BSA Youth Application (524-406)
- Annual Health and Medical Form (680-001, 2019 printing); located on troop website
- Troop Event Permission Slip; located on troop website

Adults

- BSA Adult Application (524-501) (application is bound along the left side) required if you hold a position in the troop or are a merit badge counselor
- Annual Health and Medical Form (680-001, 2019 printing) required if you attend campouts. Merit Badge Counselor Application (34405, 2019) required if you wish to be a merit badge counselor
- Adults must complete Youth Protection Training (myscouting.org) and submit their training certificate to be eligible for BSA membership, or to participate in any activity with the Scouts.

Dues

Dues are collected each fall and are used for BSA National and Council registration fees, Boys' Life magazine subscription and Troop 481 yearly expenses.

The Buddy System

The Buddy System is used at all Scout functions, including campouts, meetings, and summer camp. No Scout is to leave their assigned area without an adult leader's permission. When a Scout receives permission, he is never to leave alone. Each Scout must leave with, and remain with, a buddy at all times.

The Patrol Leaders' Council (PLC)

The Patrol Leaders' Council, not the adult leaders, is responsible for planning and conducting the troop's activities. The Troop 481 PLC is composed of Scouts holding troop leadership positions (Senior Patrol Leader, Assistant Senior Patrol Leaders, Chaplain Aide, Quartermaster, Scribe, Librarian, Webmaster, Troop Guides, Order of the Arrow Representative, Den Chiefs, Patrol Leaders and Assistant Patrol Leaders). Those positions on the PLC that have voting privileges are Senior Patrol Leader, Assistant Senior Patrol Leader(s), Patrol Leaders and Troop Guide(s).

At its monthly meetings, the Patrol Leaders' Council organizes and assigns activity responsibilities for the weekly troop meetings. The Troop Committee interacts with the Patrol Leaders' Council through the Scoutmaster.

The troop's activities are selected and planned at the annual program planning conference. The troop's yearly plan is then submitted to the troop committee for its support. The Troop Committee may make alternative suggestions for the patrol leaders' council to consider.

Troop Outings

Without parental support, our Scouts would not be able to experience the variety and number of scouting activities we currently do each month. Parents do not need to hold a leadership position in order to participate in activities or campouts.

Portable electronic devices are approved for Scouts only on car rides to and from campout. Scouts and drivers are asked to lock electronic devices in vehicles during campouts. Adults are encouraged to set a positive example for Scouts by using electronics sparingly with discretion during campouts.



Troop Finances

The Troop Treasurer is in charge of all money-related matters. The Treasurer will efficiently reimburse for pre-approved expenses. Reimbursement requests should be accompanied with a receipt. This allows our troop to maintain accurate and thorough records. Reimbursement requests over \$100.00 without a receipt will not be accepted.

In the event that another BSA Unit joins Troop 481 on an outing of any kind, that unit will equally share in the expenses. This can be done as an equal split of expenses or as a per Scout ratio, whichever is agreed upon by the units involved. This includes the cost of transporting the trailer, if it is taken on the outing.

Rank Advancement

Scouts join for a variety of reasons, all of which are valid and fully supported by the troop. Those boys who wish to advance through the ranks for Scouting have many opportunities to do so within Troop 481. Refer to the section in this handbook titled *Rank Advancement and Merit Badge Guidelines* for detailed information on this topic.

Courts of Honor

Multiple times a year Troop 481 holds a Court of Honor. This is a ceremony in which ranks and other awards are presented to the Scouts who earned them. They are held at St. Aidan's Episcopal Church. All Scout families are encouraged to attend and celebrate the Scouts' achievements.

Scout Sunday

Each year, the Sunday that falls before February 8 (Scouting Anniversary Day) is designated as Scout Sunday. Troop 481 celebrates the twelfth point of the Scout Law each February with a Sunday worship service with our sponsoring church, St. Aidan's Episcopal Church.

Troop Equipment

Troop equipment will be signed in/out of the equipment shed using the sign out forms and after coordination with the Quartermaster or Equipment Manager.

Attendance

In accordance with national BSA advancement guidelines regarding a Scout being “active” while serving in a position of responsibility for advancement to the higher ranks, Troop 481 attendance policy guidelines are as follows:

- All Scouts First Class rank or greater holding an assigned leadership position must attend regular troop meetings, PLC meetings and troop Courts of Honor to be eligible for a Scoutmaster Conference and a Board of Review for Star, Life and Eagle ranks. Attendance must be met for a four-month period for Star rank and a six-month period for Life and Eagle ranks while holding a position of responsibility. See specific leadership position attendance requirements for more information. Ideally, the Scout will attend at least one campout during the six months in which they hold an elected or appointed leadership position.
- Attendance records for each meeting will be maintained by the Troop Scribe and forwarded to the Advancement Chair for future reference and will be posted periodically at troop meetings. Scouts who have attendance close to the requirement for the period may elect to carry over last year's attendance while serving a position and hold a new position to complete their four or six months serving while active. Attendance is also reset on a Scout's Board of Review (BOR) date.
- Full attendance at a campout is defined as staying overnight at the location. Any Scout attending any portion of a regular troop campout but not the overnight gets one-half credit for campout attendance.
- Special one-time exemptions may be granted for special “one-time” circumstances such as confirmations, weddings, funerals, special one-time Scout functions, special one-time academic functions, etc. These must be requested in advance and will be decided by the Advancement Committee and Scoutmaster.



Troop Communication

Parents are expected to subscribe to the troop's e-mail distribution group. The Troop 481 email distribution list is the primary method for leaders to distribute information in a timely fashion to the entire troop. This e-mail distribution list is intended for the sole purpose of troop-related communications. Solicitations for non-scouting fund-raising are not acceptable. Parents and Scouts are asked to create their own distribution list for the purpose of contacting a small group of individuals, rather than sending out messages to the entire troop.

One-on-one contact between adults and unrelated youth members is not permitted. In situations that require personal conferences, such as a Scoutmaster's Conference or merit badge counseling session, the meeting is to be conducted in view of other adults and youths.

There should be no private messages and no one-on-one direct contact between adults and youth (and exception would be an adult leader and his son). All communication between adults and youth should take place in a public forum. At a bare minimum, electronic communication between an adult and a Scout should always include one or more authorized adults (can be a parent) openly "copied" (included) on the message or message thread. This applies to all email, chat, social media and all other forms of electronic communication (e.g. Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Skype, etc.).

Saint Aidan's Episcopal Church

Saint's Episcopal Church is our chartering organization. At all times individuals should show respect when in the church. All rooms used by the troop should be returned to their original condition after each meeting. If other groups are meeting at the church, please be courteous and set a good example. It is a privilege for our troop to use this space.

The Troop Charter Representative organizes all scheduled meetings and events with the church office and serves as the liaison between the church and the troop.

Uniform Policy

The following are the Troop 481 Uniform Requirements:

Official Field Uniform (Class A) - Scout shirt, scout pants or shorts, scout socks and scout belt/buckle.

Activity Uniform (Class B) – Scout t-shirt, jeans or shorts, and running shoes.

Official field uniforms are worn at weekly Troop and monthly PLC meetings, Courts of Honor, Boards of Review and Scoutmaster Conferences. Unless otherwise noted, when traveling as a group, Scouts are to wear official field uniform. The activity uniform will be used for outdoor activities and troop meetings where physical fitness activities will take place.

The Senior Patrol Leader or Scoutmaster may require the official field uniform or the activity uniform at any activity.

Tenting

- Separate tenting arrangements must be provided for male and female adults.
- Youth sharing tents must be no more than two years apart in age.
- In Scouts, BSA, a parent may NOT share a tent with their son. (Cub Scouts has a different policy.)
- Spouses may share a tent.



Uniform Inspection Sheet

Conduct the uniform inspection with common sense; the basic rule is neatness.

15 POINTS GENERAL APPEARANCE Allow 3 points for each:

- Good posture
- Clean face and hands
- Combed hair
- Neatly dressed
- Clean fingernails

Notes _____

5 POINTS HEADGEAR

All troop members must wear the headgear chosen by vote of the troop/team.

Notes _____

15 POINTS SHIRT & NECKWEAR

Official long- or short-sleeve uniform shirt with green or blaze orange shoulder loops on epaulets. The troop/team may vote to wear a neckerchief, bolo tie, or no neckwear. In any case, the collar should be unbuttoned. The troop/team has the choice of wearing the neckerchief over the turned-under collar or under the open collar.

Notes Troop 481 does not wear neckwear

15 POINTS PANTS/SHORTS

Official uniform pants or shorts; no cuffs. (Units have no option to change.)

Notes _____

5 POINTS BELT

Official Boy Scout web belt with BSA insignia on buckle; or official leather belt with buckle of your choice, worn only if voted by the troop/team. Members wear one of the belts chosen by vote of the troop/team.

Notes _____

5 POINTS SOCKS

Official socks with official shorts or pants. (Long socks are optional with shorts.)

Notes _____

5 POINTS SHOES

Leather or canvas, neat and clean.

Notes _____

5 POINTS REGISTRATION

Current membership card or temporary certificate on person.

Notes _____

70 POINTS UNIFORM POINTS Total points from above (70 possible)

30 POINTS INSIGNIA* (Allow 5 points for each)

- Correct placement: left sleeve right sleeve left pocket right pocket merit badge sash
 Correct shoulder epaulets

Use the checklist on the reverse of this form to help determine score.

*For more information about insignia, see the *Insignia Guide*, No. 614937.

Notes _____

TOTAL UNIFORM INSPECTION SCORE A perfect score is 100 points.

Name _____ Unit No. _____

District _____



Our unit inspection will be on _____

BRING THIS FORM WITH YOU



Uniform Inspection Sheet

Official Placement of Insignia

Conduct the uniform inspection with common sense; the basic rule is neatness.

5
POINTS

MERIT BADGE SASH (not shown)

- If worn, merit badges are attached to front (and back, if needed) of sash.
- Venturing/Varsity letter is attached at bottom front corner.
- Temporary insignia may be worn on back.

Notes _____

5
POINTS

SHOULDER EPAULETS

- Green shoulder loops identify Boy Scouting (all members of a troop).
- Blaze (orange) loops identify Varsity Scouting.

Notes _____

5
POINTS

RIGHT SLEEVE

- U.S. flag emblem centered directly below shoulder seam. Only the most recently earned Journey to Excellence Award may be worn below patrol emblem or below the National Honor Patrol star (if earned).

Notes _____

5
POINTS

LEFT SLEEVE

- Council shoulder emblem, unit numeral, and veteran unit bar are worn as shown and touching each other.
- On official shirts with left-sleeve pocket, the badge of office is centered on pocket and the trained emblem is centered at top of pocket's flap.
- On shirts without left-sleeve pocket, the badge of office is centered below and just touching the unit numeral, or centered 4" below shoulder seam. The trained strip is worn just below the badge of office.
- On the official uniform shirt, the veteran unit bar (25, 50, 55, 60, 65, 70, 75, or 80 years) is positioned above and touching the troop numeral; below and touching the council emblem.
- Den chief cord is worn over the left shoulder, under epaulet.

Notes _____

5
POINTS

RIGHT POCKET

- Jamboree insignia (only one) is worn above BSA or interpreter strip.
- Order of the Arrow lodge insignia is worn on pocket flap.
- Temporary insignia is worn centered on the pocket or hung from the button.
- The Varsity or Venture strip is worn above the BSA strip or above the interpreter strip.
- Nameplate, if worn, is centered above the BSA strip, interpreter strip, and Venture or Varsity strip. If no Order of the Arrow lodge emblem is worn, the name plate is centered on the pocket flap.

Notes _____

5
POINTS

LEFT POCKET

- Service stars are centered above the pocket, 3/4 inch from top point to top point and 3/8 inch from either the pocket or embroidered knots.
- Embroidered square knots are worn centered above the pocket in rows of three.
- No more than five medals may be worn, pinned centered immediately above the pocket (extending over knots if both are worn).
- The wearing sequence for knots or medals is at the wearer's discretion and lead color is to the wearer's right.
- Badges of rank are worn centered on the pocket above the Arrow of Light Award, as shown.
- The World Crest emblem and (optional) 1910 World Crest Ring are worn centered horizontally over the left pocket and vertically between the left shoulder seam and the top of the pocket.

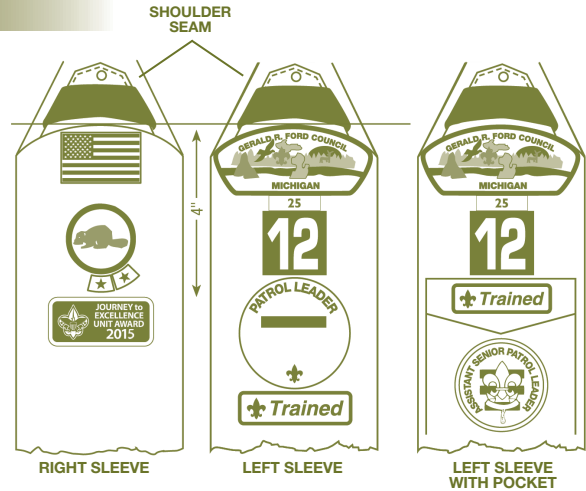
Notes _____

30
POINTS

TOTAL INSIGNIA SCORE _____ (transfer to other side)



BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA
1325 West Walnut Hill Lane • P.O. Box 152079 • Irving, Texas 75015-2079
<http://www.scouting.org>



RIGHT POCKET

1910 WORLD CREST RING
(Optional)



LEFT POCKET

SKU 618365 8/16



7 30176 32384 8

Troop 481 Resources

Internet Resources

Troop 481 Website: <https://bsatroop481vb.org>

BSA Official Sites: www.scouting.org

Tidewater Council: www.tidewaterbsa.com

BSA Forms: www.scouting.org/forms.aspx

On-line Training: www.scouting.org/Training/YouthProtection/BoyScout.aspx

Scout Supplies: www.scoutstuff.org

Merit Badge Information: www.scouting.org/meritbadges.aspx

Scout Reference: scoutmastercg.com

Troop Squareup Payment Site:

<https://squareup.com/store/boy-scouts-of-america-troop-481-virginia-beach>

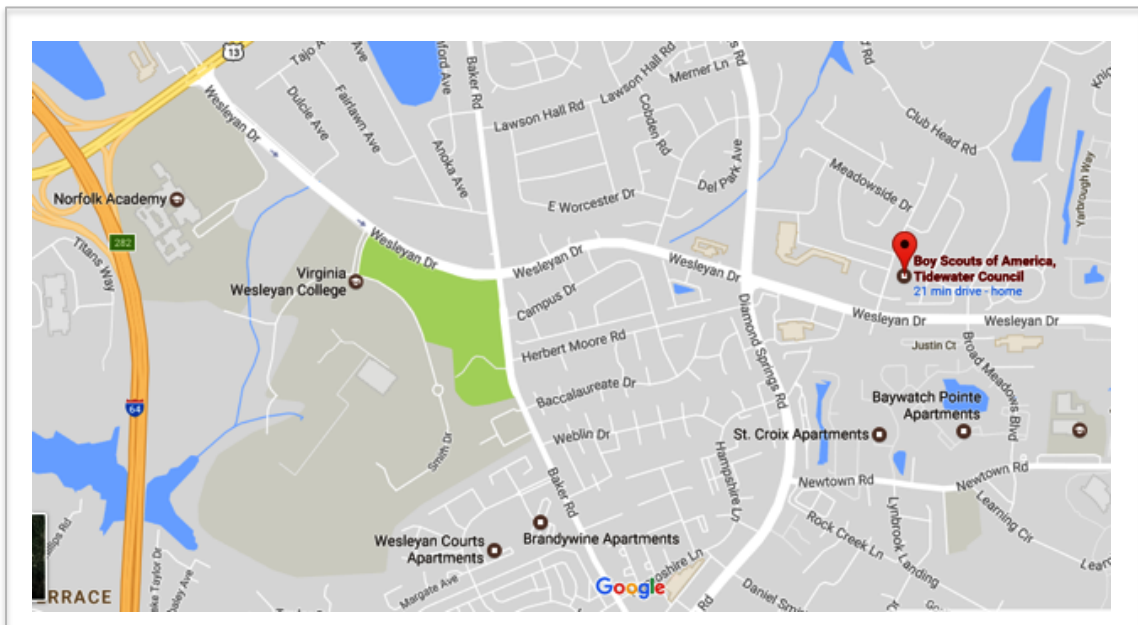
Tidewater Council and Scout Shop

1032 Heatherwood Drive

Virginia Beach, VA 23455

757-497-2688 (recommend calling to verify schedule before driving there)

Sunday & Monday	Closed
Tues & Thurs	11 AM – 6 PM
Wednesday & Friday	11 AM – 5 PM
Saturday	12 – 3 PM



Troop 481 Scout Leaders

The troop is run by its boy leaders. With the guidance of the Scoutmaster and his assistants, they plan the program, conduct troop meetings and provide leadership among their peers. The Patrol Leaders' Council is composed of the following voting members: Senior Patrol Leader, Assistant Senior Patrol Leaders, Patrol Leaders and Troop Guide.

Junior Leader Positions

- **Senior Patrol Leader** — top youth leader in the troop. He leads the Patrol Leaders' Council and, in consultation with the Scoutmaster, appoints other junior leaders and assigns specific responsibilities as needed.
- **Assistant Senior Patrol Leader** — fills in for Senior Patrol Leader in his absence. He is also responsible for training and giving direction to the Quartermaster, Scribe, Troop Historian, Librarian and Instructors. There can be more than one Assistant Senior Patrol Leader.
- **Troop Historian** — collects and maintains troop memorabilia and information on former troop members.
- **Librarian** — keeps troop books, pamphlets, magazines, audiovisuals, and Merit Badge Counselor list available for use by troop members.
- **Instructor** — teaches one or more advancement skills to troop members.
- **Chaplain Aide** — assists in troop religious services and promotes religious emblems program.
- **Junior Assistant Scoutmaster** — a Scout 16 or older who supervises and supports other boy leaders as assigned.
- **Patrol Leader** — gives leadership to members of his patrol and represents them on the Patrol Leaders' Council.
- **Assistant Patrol Leader** — fills in for the Patrol Leader in his absence.
- **Troop Guide** — advisor and guide to the new Scout patrol.
- **Den Chief** — works with a Cub Scout den as a guide.
- **Quartermaster** — responsible for troop supplies and equipment.
- **Scribe** — the troop secretary.
- **Webmaster** — assists with the troop website.

General Leadership Responsibilities

Uniform

Set the example by wearing your uniform correctly. This means that you will wear all of the parts of the troop uniform, shirttail tucked in, with all required badges and patches in their correct locations.

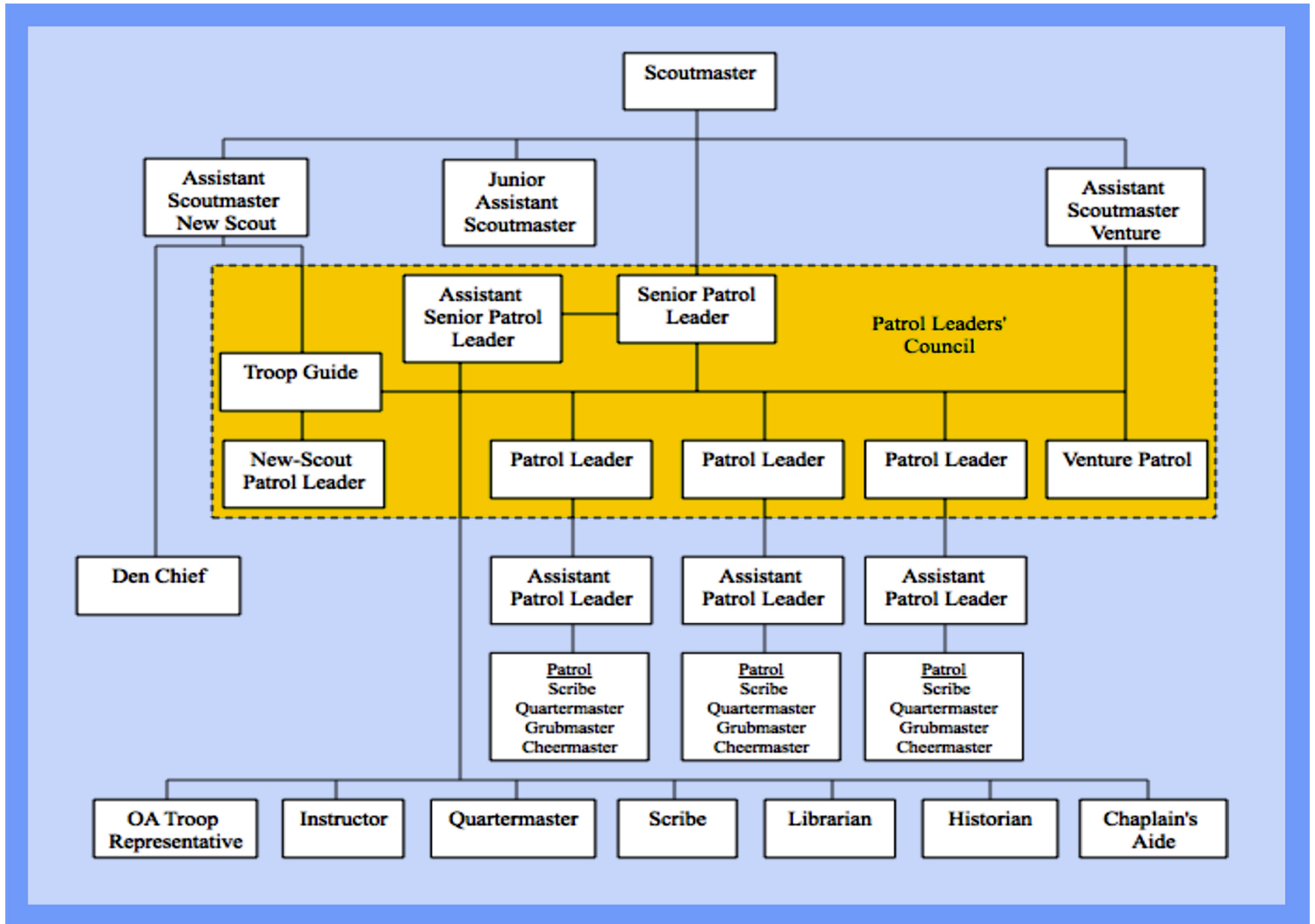
Behavior

Set the example by living the Scout Oath and Law in your everyday life. Show Scout Spirit in everything you say and do.

Attendance

Set the example by being an active Scout. Be on time for meetings and activities. You must call or notify the person your position reports to if you are not going to be at a meeting or if you suddenly have to miss an outing. You also need to make sure that someone will assume your responsibilities if you cannot make a meeting or outing.

Troop 481 Organization Chart



Scout Leadership Positions



SENIOR PATROL LEADER (SPL)



ASSISTANT SENIOR PATROL LEADER (ASPL)



PATROL LEADER (PL)



ASSISTANT PATROL LEADER (APL)



DEN CHIEF



TROOP GUIDE



CHAPLAIN AIDE



TROOP HISTORIAN



LIBRARIAN



QUARTERMASTER



SCRIBE



WEBMASTER



ORDER OF THE ARROW (OA) REPRESENTATIVE

Rank Advancement and Merit Badge Guidelines

Rank Advancement: Scout to Life

Scouting provides a series of surmountable challenges and steps to overcome them through the advancement method. The Scout plans his advancement and progresses at his own pace as he meets each challenge. The Scout is rewarded for each achievement, which helps him gain self-confidence. The steps in the advancement system help a Scout grow in self-reliance and in the ability to help others.

The Scout should contact adult leaders himself throughout the advancement process.

- Scouts advance in rank in the order of Scout, Tenderfoot, Second Class, First Class, Star, Life and Eagle. Scouts may work on requirements from multiple ranks simultaneously, but must earn ranks in order.



- Once the Scout has completed all requirements listed in the Scout handbook for a given rank, he may contact the Scoutmaster to arrange for a Scoutmaster's Conference.



- After the Scoutmaster has signed off on the rank advancement during the Scoutmaster Conference, the Scout contacts the Advancement Chair to request a Board of Review (BOR).

- BORs are usually held in conjunction with the regular troop meetings. However, scheduling involves coordinating with 3-4 adult leaders, so there are times when the BOR could take place at a leader's home. The BORs are usually 15 - 20 minutes in length.
- The Advancement Chairperson and adult leaders are very responsive to the Scouts and wish to recognize advancement soon after it has been accomplished. Therefore, an attempt is made to schedule most BORs within 2 weeks of the request.
- For rank advancements to be recognized at an upcoming Court of Honor (COH), the BOR must be completed two weeks before the COH. Those BORs that occur later will be included in the next scheduled COH. All rank advancements are official and recorded on the date earned regardless of when the Scout is publicly recognized at a COH. Deadlines are set to provide the adult and Scout leaders with adequate time to hold a BOR, obtain rank patches and organize the COH program. Scouts are recognized, and rank patches are distributed at the next Court of Honor.
- It is the Scout's responsibility check the accuracy and completeness of his Handbook entries and ensure completion of requirements is recorded in the electronic tracking system.

Merit Badges

Scouts can learn about sports, crafts, science, trades, business, and future careers while earning any of the 100+ merit badges offered through Scouts. Any Scout may earn any merit badge at any time; Scouts don't need to have had rank advancement to be eligible. There are 21 badges required for a Scout to earn his Eagle rank, 13 of which are pre-determined by BSA.

The Scout should contact adult leaders and merit badge counselors himself throughout the advancement and merit badge completion process.

- Choose a merit badge to earn. Do not begin work on the merit badge until you have met with the Scoutmaster. Merit badge information is available online on multiple sites (myscouting.org, etc.). Merit badge books are available for purchase at the Scout Shop or to borrow from the Troop 481 library. Our Troop Librarian can assist you in obtaining a copy of the merit badge book. Confirm that it is an updated copy. The website **meritbadge.org** is one reference to tell you if there are any updates to the merit badge. You may use an older version of the merit badge book for purpose of instruction. However, you must complete the updated requirements. Make sure there are no prerequisites you need to have before beginning the merit badge.
- Request permission from the Scoutmaster (SM) to begin work on the merit badge and obtain a blue card from the SM.
- Scouts contact a Merit Badge Counselor to ask if the counselor is able to counsel them on that badge. The list of Merit Badge Counselors is posted on the Troop 481 bulletin board and also located on the troop website.
- Fill out the Scout information portions of the blue card, legibly, *in ink*, using your full name (no nicknames). Include your address. Do not put any dates on the card. You may insert the counselor's name.
- The Merit Badge Counselor may hold on to the triplicate card until it is complete, or they may have the Scout keep it. Do not separate the sections until it is complete.
- Once you have met with your counselor and completed all the requirements, your counselor will sign your blue card, and date it.
- Please check that the date of completion is the same on all parts of the blue card before separating the cards or turning in the "Application for Merit Badge" portion. This is critical for record keeping, especially for eagle-required merit badge cards! Incomplete cards or cards with conflicting or missing dates may delay Eagle rank advancement.
- Turn in the completed blue card to the Advancement Coordinator.
- The merit badge counselor will keep their 1/3 portion of the card. The Scout keeps his 1/3 portion, labeled "Applicants Record." A binder with clear dividers that have pockets for baseball cards is a good way to keep blue cards. Partially completed blue cards are the responsibility of the Scout to keep in a safe place.





Parents Guide: Emphasizing Progress to First Class

The *Guide to Advancement*, in topic 3.0.0.3, “Unit Advancement Responsibilities,” item 7, says, “**Establish practices that will bring each new Scout to First Class rank within a year of joining, and then to Star rank the following year.**” The question is, why does this objective exist, and is it worthwhile for unit leadership to coordinate and promote it?



Achieving First Class in the first year of Scouting membership has been a BSA emphasis for nearly 30 years, and its importance is covered in Scoutmaster Leader Specific Training. Simply put, it is a focused effort that, for example, can be used in new-Scout patrols where a fast-paced program is presented that provides the learning experiences necessary for a youth to reach that critical First Class milestone. Although advancement, as a method, is supposed to be done at the youth's pace, not by a pre-ordained schedule, **the goal is to keep each Scout involved, active, and interested in the troop**

for those important first few years. And what better way to measure achievement of this goal than individual advancement?

The aim is to give Scouts the basic skills needed to become fully integrated into the troop program, along with the activity, confidence, experience, and self-esteem needed for that decision to remain in Scouting. And it seems to work. Many troops using a new-Scout patrol and a First Class “emphasis” approach report higher retention—not only for the first year but also through the first three. There also seems to be a correlation to the Scout eventually achieving Eagle Scout rank. For example, a random sampling of 200 Scouts who achieved Eagle Scout rank in 2011 conducted by the national Advancement Team showed that on the average, they had taken just 18 months to achieve First Class rank.

While a First Class emphasis stresses planning activities that are rich in advancement opportunities, the program should not become a must-do-or-fail initiative. Some Scouts will make it to First Class in a year or perhaps two, but others won't. The important thing is that every one of them is given the opportunity and that the program—regardless of whether advancement takes place—is so good that youths have no reason to quit.

Once a Scout has mastered the required skills for First Class, he is a camper. He can get himself ready for an outdoor experience and survive comfortably. That's the idea, anyway, and this is another good reason for teaching the skills required for Tenderfoot, Second Class, and First Class as soon as possible. Whether the Scout shows up for enough outings and does enough work to complete the requirements are up to him. The responsibility of unit leadership is to make sure the opportunities are there and that they are so much fun that he wants to show up.

Of course, there are no real shortcuts. Scouts must meet the requirements as written—no more, no less. In Scouting, learning is by doing, so boys need to be out actually practicing the skills. Thus, a First Class emphasis is about planning a focused program for the first 12 to 18 months, wherein each new Scout learns and advances as a member of his patrol and troop.

As the entire troop supports the new Scouts on their path to First Class, it will be inspiring to watch as each becomes a year more mature, a year stronger, a year smarter, and a year more skilled and knowledgeable about how the troop and patrol work. **The result is a stronger Scout, a stronger patrol, and a stronger troop.**

Scout Handbook and Record Keeping

As your son is working his way through the ranks to his ultimate goal of Eagle, he will be earning numerous ranks, merit badges, and awards. He will be a participant in campouts, work on community service projects, and receive various patches. It is very important for your son to keep track of these items. The Troop keeps records on many of these items, but not all.

Important pieces of information for a Scout to record and keep in a safe place are:

- A list of campouts (including dates, locations, activities, number of nights slept in a tent)
- A copy of each rank sign-off record (in the Scout Handbook) once each rank is achieved
- Merit badge blue cards
- Work completed for merit badges
- Troop leadership positions, including dates
- Attendance
- Service activities, including the number of volunteer hours

The items listed above are not easily recreated or retrieved so it is highly recommended Scouts keep accurate and complete records throughout their Scouting career, beginning with their first activity.

When you son presents himself for Eagle Scout consideration, these items become important for review boards to review. We suggest the following in this regard:

- A three-ring loose-leaf binder (two inch)
- Plastic card holders (sheets baseball card holders work well) to hold Blue Card Merit Badge Achievements and Rank Advancement cards. Generally these sheets hold 9 cards. Separating merit badges from rank advancements is recommended.
- Plastic sheet protectors to hold information on Leadership Positions, events for which your Scout was the Scout in Charge, and Troop activities that he participated in during his time in the Troop. Letters of accommodations should also be placed in protective sleeves.
- Plastic sheet covers that can hold two to four items per page are recommended for various pictures, patches, or other items that need to be saved.
- Reserve a section to keep a record of all campouts and the nights your Scout spent camping. This is important information needed for rank advancement and some merit badges, including the Eagle-required Camping merit badge. Campouts and associated sign-offs are primarily kept in the Scout Handbook, but it is recommended that an additional record be kept. Campouts must be officially signed off in order to count toward rank advancement and the Camping merit badge.
- Reserve a section to keep a record of community service projects that your Scout participated in. This is important information for advanced rank of Star and above. Community service projects and associated sign-offs are primarily kept in the Scout Handbook, but it is recommended that an additional record be kept. Community service projects must be officially signed off in order to count toward rank advancement.
- Reserve a section to keep a record off ALL Troop activities that your Scout participated in during his time in the Troop. Participation in certain activities is required for rank advancement and he must show that he attended these activities in order to receive an official sign-off. The rank advancement required activities are officially signed off in the Scout Handbook, but it is important to keep track of all activities separately.

Eagle Scout Application Checklist

Eagle Scout Service Project (ESSP): The ESSP does NOT have to be the final thing you do to earn Eagle. If you find a great project, jump on it and do it! You can complete merit badges and rank-advancement requirements after the ESSP. When your ESSP is completed, make sure you get the signature of the beneficiary then finish your project book with post-project information: project sign-in sheet to track hours worked by Scouts and adults in attendance, before/after pictures, amended notes about how you had to change things on the fly, what went right, what went wrong, how you directed the efforts of the work party, and don't forget to fill in the project completion date on your paperwork and provide to the Advancement Coordinator with a list of the Scouts who helped out and how long they were on the job. Count planning hours, time spent gathering materials, pre-project preparation time, etc. as well as the time spent on the project itself. And make sure the number of hours in your project book matches the number of hours on your Eagle application.

Letters of Recommendation: Get your letters of recommendation in as soon as you prepare your application. You need a minimum of five. They **must** be **mailed** by the person you are requesting a letter from to the Troop Committee Chairman. There are templates on the national BSA website that give an outline of what these letters should include if the writers of your letters are uncertain of what to say or how to say it. You should have **one letter** from your parents, it can be a joint letter that both sign; no need for both parents to write one. Then get one from one of your teachers; an employer, if you have one; a religious leader; and then other adult friends of the family, coaches, Scout leaders, or leaders of clubs or organization to which you belong. Make sure these people know you need the letters ASAP. **These letters are confidential and should not to be returned directly to you.** Current Committee Chairman is Grey Glover, 604 Kings Grant Road, Virginia Beach, VA 23452, cell 757-685-8831, email: grey.glover.sr@cox.net.

Scout Handbook: Make sure every rank-advancement page in your Scout Handbook has every box for every rank initialed and dated, especially your Eagle requirements. Don't let the Eagle Board be the ones to find that you have undocumented work in your book.

Scoutmaster Conference: You've done this a few times before. Appear in **full** Class A uniform, including merit badge sash, and have the Scoutmaster or an Assistant Scoutmaster review your paperwork, prepare you for your Board of Review and **SIGN** your paperwork. Make sure all your paperwork is signed by the appropriate people and make sure there are **NO blanks** on your form.

Eagle Application: Check merit badge dates with the Advancement Coordinator by requesting a copy of your Scout record/history. Check contact information for all the folks who wrote letters of recommendation for you. Make sure the Scoutmaster and the Troop Committee Chairman have signed it. Take your completed application to Council Headquarters. There can be no blanks on it. Take your project book with you and let them make copies of the pages they need. Make sure the number of hours for your ESSP on your application matches the number of hours on your finished project book. The person at Council headquarters who processes the Eagle applications only processes them on Thursdays, so plan your submission accordingly.

Board of Review: You will be notified when your application has been verified by Council and your letters have been received. Once the application comes back, give the Advancement Coordinator several dates when you can do your EBOR. Allow a minimum of two hours. The panel has you bring all your materials a half-hour before the board begins so they can read through them. The troop will make the arrangements with the Council representative to come and conduct your board. **Important:** Arrange for an adult leader of the troop to introduce you to the panel. It can be the Scoutmaster or an Assistant Scoutmaster. You should do a brief interview with the person who introduces you to the board so they can make an informed introduction. That person can stay in the room if they wish to, but they do not participate in the board.

What You Need for Your EBOR

- Make sure your “brag book,” the one with all your blue cards and rank-advancement cards, is neatly arranged with cards in those plastic pages for trading cards and placed in a three-ring binder. Neatness counts!!!
- Have your “Letter of Life Ambition” done. The theme? What I want to be when I grow up, essentially. You should mention how what you've learned in Scouts will help you in your educational and career pursuits.
- Be prepared to talk about your future plans: college, career, family, etc.
- Have all your merit badges sewn on your merit badge sash. (Alert: Advancement Coordinator will count them as you're standing there doing your oath, law and outdoor code.)
- You must appear in FULL Class A (socks, belt, sash, pants, etc.)
- Be prepared to talk about your leadership on your ESSP and especially any leadership roles you have had outside of Scouts: sports, clubs, hobby groups, school organizations. Be ready to discuss what qualities make for a good leader. Be ready with a convincing answer if you're asked: Why do you think you should be awarded the rank of Eagle?

What's Next?

Eagle Court of Honor: You can have your Eagle Scout award presented at a Troop Court of Honor or you and your family can plan and stage a special ceremony, it's completely your choice. Let Advancement Coordinator know if you want to be recognized or have your Eagle awarded at a Troop COH. **Important:** Be aware that it takes **4-6 weeks** for the Eagle recognition package to come back from BSA National once your paperwork is submitted to the local BSA office. If you wish to be recognized for your achievement before the Eagle package comes back, you can do that, knowing you will not get your award at the ceremony but when it arrives from National.

Eagle Palms: If you have not turned 18, you can work on Eagle Palms, each of which requires that you be active in the troop for three months and earn an additional five merit badges. Here are the other requirements:

- Since earning the Eagle Scout rank or your last Eagle Palm, demonstrate Scout Spirit by living the Scout Oath and Scout Law. Tell how you have done your duty to God and how you have lived the Scout Oath and Scout Law in your everyday life.
- While an Eagle Scout, or since your last Eagle Palm, participate in a Scoutmaster conference.

Leadership Positions: If you have not turned 18, you can also become a Junior Assistant Scoutmaster or a Troop Guide. If you've turned 18, or are about to, consider submitting an adult application and becoming an Assistant Scoutmaster. While you line up the two classes you need to be an ASM, Scoutmaster Specific and Introduction to Outdoor Leadership Skills, the troop can register you as a "Unit College Scouter Reserve," a "place-holder" type designation so you can continue to be active. You can't be a member of the Troop Committee until age 21.

Please return a signed copy of this page to the Advancement Chairman.

I have read and understand what is required for me to prepare myself to earn the rank of Eagle.

(Signature of Scout)

(Date)

Acknowledged:

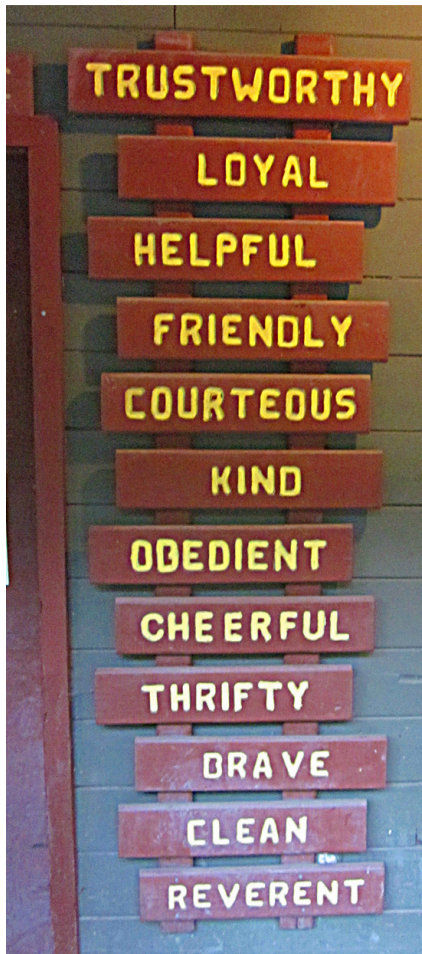
(Signature of Advancement Chairman)

(Date)

Return this signed copy to the Advancement Coordinator

(Name of Scout)

(Date)



Troop 481 Guide to Camping Equipment

New Scouting parents often ask what equipment is needed for their Scout and which products are best suited for his needs. Good camping equipment is not cheap, and not all equipment needs to be purchased right away. So, perhaps your son can accumulate good, quality equipment over time by obtaining what is absolutely needed now and then adding items as your Scout's needs grow.

Over the years, we have found the selection of proper camping equipment can make the difference between an enjoyable experience and a distasteful and possibly dangerous one. Therefore, we have certain suggestions regarding equipment. These are only personal opinions and are not mandates. Many adult members of the troop have spent significant amounts of time backpacking and camping. Through their experiences, we have tested most brands and types of equipment. Sometimes, experience is the best reason to purchase one brand or type of gear over the next. Also, this is not a complete list of equipment. Other lists can be found in the Scout Handbook or camping books. Other possible sources of equipment are REI, Dick's Sporting Goods, Bass Pro Shops, Walmart or Target.

Backpack: A pack is needed to carry all the Scout's equipment. Except for summer camp, a backpack is the best means of carrying gear on a troop campout, and will help the scout stay organized. Duffel bags and sports bags are not usually suitable for the type of camping we do. You need a good backpack, especially if your Scout is sharing a ride to the campground. Do not get caught up in the external vs. internal frame debate. Both work well. The most important thing about a pack is its fit. It must have comfortable shoulder straps with adequate padding and a hip belt that also is padded and fits snugly atop the hips, not around the waist or thighs. It also must be large enough to hold all his gear.

All packs are designed to fit certain torso lengths—so in selecting a pack, make sure you chose an adjustable pack that will be comfortable from ages 10 to 18.



Sleeping Bag: It is important to be warm and dry at night. Get a bag rated to temperatures of 20-35 degrees with a synthetic filling such as hollofil, microloft or other synthetic fiber. This will be suitable for spring, fall and winter camping. We rarely camp colder than 20 degrees. If we camp in colder conditions, a liner or layered clothing can be used to provide the extra warmth, or you can tuck one bag inside another. Down bags are warmer but are much more expensive and are worthless if they get wet. Cotton bags are not acceptable; as they will not keep you warm if they get wet. They are also much heavier and do not pack well. A good sleeping bag is a balance of warmth, water resistance, lightweight and compact size. "Stuff bags" are a must for backpack camping. A good backpacking bag should stuff into a carrying bag smaller than a football. This type of sleeping bag can be used for all types of camping, so you will only need one sleeping bag. Avoid the Kmart, Walmart or Target sleeping bags. Get a good one—large enough to accommodate your Scout as he grows.

With the exception of the most reliable brand names (Kelty, North Face, REI, Slumberjack), bag ratings tend to be subjective, and a good rule of thumb is to consider an inexpensive bag only good to ten degrees above its rating. For a first sleeping bag, your Scout should focus on a sleeping bag that will handle most conditions rated to 20 degrees if possible.

Sleeping Pad: A sleeping pad under the sleeping bag is essential. It not only provides padding for comfort, but more importantly, it provides insulation, minimizing heat loss to the ground and it prevents condensation from forming between the sleeping bag and the tent floor. Closed-cell, foam pads are much less expensive, often only \$10 to \$20, but the tradeoff is less comfort, usually more of a problem for the adults than the boys.

Tent: Troop 481 provides tents for Scouts to use on campouts. These tents are “troop equipment.” Scouts are expected to use these tents on campouts. Our current troop tent is the Marmot Limelight 3P. Two scouts will share this tent on a campout. Scouts will take the tent home at the conclusion of the campout, and set it up so that it will dry out completely. After it is dry the scout will repack and return it to the scout shed at the next scout meeting.

There is no requirement to purchase a tent. However, if you decide to purchase a tent, it is worth it to spend extra money to get a quality tent. A good tent will last for many years. Learn how to set up your tent before you use it for the first time camping. Every tent needs a ground cloth (very important) under the tent to minimize condensation inside. A plastic drop cloth works well. It should be fairly thick, six millimeters or so. Cut it so it is the shape of the tent floor but two inches smaller in each direction. If it is larger than the tent, it will direct rainwater under the tent and defeat the whole purpose of having a ground cloth. Pack the ground cloth with the tent. After every trip, the tent (including troop tents) must be set up to dry immediately or mildew will form. The garage is a great place to hang a tent. Sponge off any dirt on the inside and outside before putting the tent away.



Pocketknife: Another personal item. The standard Scout knife is fine. The Swiss Army knives are also good; “The Camper” is a suitable model. Refrain from getting the huge Swiss *Everything* Model, like the “Champ”. Most of the items on it do not work very well and the handle is not comfortable for holding while cutting. Remember that its primary function is as a knife. Some people have Leatherman tools. These tend to be heavy and the knife is not very convenient to open.

Flashlight: Recommend using a headlamp. This keeps the Scouts hands free when walking and working in the campsite. Good headlamps with multiple features can be found for less than \$15.

Compass: All scouts must have a compass with a rotating dial; it should have a clear base for setting it on top of a map and an oil-filled housing. Skip the models with the fold-up mirror. Silva, Suunto and Brunton make good ones.

Water bottles: Wherever we go, we must carry water. Get two and put your name on them. Save the small-mouth canteen for the museum; it’s hard to fill and clean.

Boots: Probably the most important of the **required** items. The boots may be worn to any Scout function. They should be comfortable, waterproof and warm in cold climates. We expect the boys to have sturdy hiking boots. You do not need to get the \$200 Merrills. Good boots can be had for less than \$100. Go to a sporting goods or camping store and have the boots properly fitted. Poorly fitted boots will produce nothing but misery. Tennis shoes are not acceptable for trail use, and sandals are forbidden on all outings, except for water-sport events at the beach, pool, lake or river such as swimming, canoeing, kayaking, etc.

Rain Gear: We recommend a rain suit for two reasons. A rain suit will keep both top and bottom dry in even the worst weather, and it



can double as an extra layer in cold weather. I recommend purchasing an inexpensive rain suit, as it may not survive for more than a year or two.

Rain jackets and rain pants are drier than a poncho. Get a decent, inexpensive nylon set, not vinyl, as the vinyl will tear on the first outing and it's uncomfortably hot. Gore-Tex is the best and most waterproof outerwear.

First Aid Kit: Your Scouts initial first aid kit should be nothing more than a ziplock bag filled with the supplies listed in the Scout handbook. By the time he reaches 1st class rank he should have experience with the proper amount of band-aids, gauze, first aid cream, etc. he will need for himself and/or his buddy. Alternatively there is a wide range of inexpensive ready-made first aid kits.



Local Shopping Sources

REI and Great Outdoor Provision Company: Quality camping gear with knowledgeable staff.

Dick's Sporting Goods and Bass Pro Shop: Good outlets for specialized equipment if you know what you are looking for. Help will be limited, but the price will be right.

Walmart and Target: A small selection of lower-end camping gear. You must definitely know what you are looking for; the help is limited. Not a recommended outlet for a backpack, sleeping bag or backpacking tent. Great stores for cookware, camp stove fuels, etc.

Scout Service Center: A small selection of items. Not recommended for shopping for camping equipment. Items are usually expensive. It has specific items you might want to buy such as an official knife, etc. All items are available through the catalog.

There are several excellent mail-order companies and sometimes significant money can be saved. One must have a good idea of what item is desired, as the catalogs don't always show a picture. Also, the catalogs do not necessarily have better prices than local stores.

REI www.rei.com 1-800-426-4840

Sierra Trading Post www.sierratradingpost.com 1-800-713-4534

Campmor www.campmor.com 1-800-226-7667

Eastern Mountain Sports www.ems.com

Amazon www.amazon.com

THREE THINGS PARENTS CAN DO

**to help their Scouts
with their Gear**
(and save a Scoutmaster's sanity)



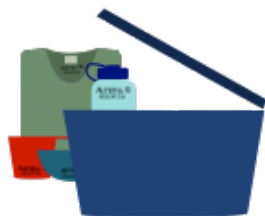
**Put Your
Scout's
Name &
Troop
number
on everything.**

If they are attending an event with dozens or hundreds of other Scouts and misplace a piece of clothing or gear there's a much better chance it will find its way back to them if it is clearly marked with their full name and Troop number.



**Please
DON'T
PACK
for your Scout!**

If you pack for your Scout, they won't know what they have or where it is. Letting Scouts pack for themselves is a little trying for some parents. Work with them instead: start with a list, lay everything out, and check it off as they pack. Will they forget some things? Almost certainly! (I still forget things after forty years of camping!) Building self-sufficiency is an important part of Scouting, and packing your own gear is a great way to do just that.



**Help your Scout
Keep
Track of
Their Gear**

I can't tell you how many times a Scout has told me that they are without some key piece of gear because they couldn't find it at home. After every camping trip see that your Scout unpacks, checks their gear is clean and dry, and stores it all in a plastic storage bin so it's there for the next trip.

SCOUTMASTERC.G.COM

TEN ESSENTIALS

'Be prepared'! Just like every Scout every camper should be equipped with these ten essentials on any camping trip:

Contingency & First Aid Kit 1

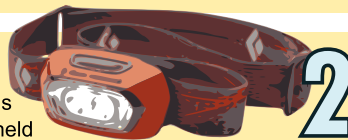
"Contingencies" (someone forgot a flashlight, wet weather makes fire building difficult, etc.) are more common than emergencies. A first-aid kit supplemented with a spare flashlight, spare whistle, trail food, matches, and fire starters is your 'air bag' – essential but you hope, (like the air bag in your car), you'll never need it.



First Aid Kit Bag
+
Spare Whistle
+
Spare Flashlight
+
Trail Food
+
Matches and Fire Starters

Flashlight 2

A sturdy headlamp is better than a hand-held flashlight. LED lights (one with a brightness of 35 lumens is more than adequate) use less power and batteries last longer.



Trail Food 3

Carry a few granola bars, protein bars, trail mix, or other compact, high-energy, high nutrition food (avoid sugar-based snacks). Carry a couple of additional nutrition bars in the Contingency & First Aid Kit.



Matches & Fire Starters 4

There are any number of fire starter alternatives; many can be made at home. If you need to get a fire going in difficult circumstances, you want a proved fire starter and matches in a waterproof container.



Sun Protection 5

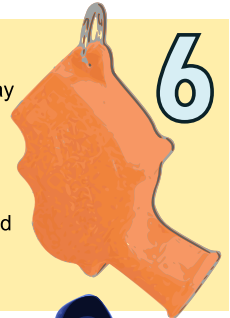
In direct sun in hot weather sunburn and some level of heat exhaustion are common. Staying hydrated, using sunscreen and wearing a broad-brimmed hat are important.



Whistle 6

If you become lost or separated stay put and use a whistle. Signal by blowing three blasts (a well-known emergency signal).

Spend a little more on one designed to signal over distances; cheap insurance should you need it.



Rain Gear 7

Staying warm is crucial, and it's hard to stay warm if you are wet.

Rain pants and a rain jacket are essential, Ponchos restrict movement and don't trap warmth near your body.



Water 8

An adequately sized (32 ounces), wide-mouthed rugged water bottle. In dry or hot climates carry two. Include some simple way to purify water, tablets or other chemical treatments don't take up much space.



Map & Compass 9

A simple base-plate compass is best.

Buy a reliable brand rather than a cheap knock-off, it's worth spending a bit more for an accurate compass.



Pocket Knife 10

A sturdy, well-made simple combination knife is ideal for camping.



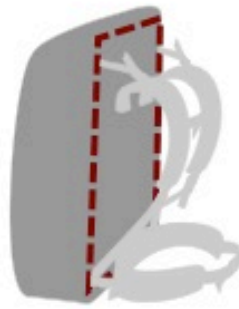
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BACKPACK BASICS

Two basic types - **External frame** and **Internal frame**.

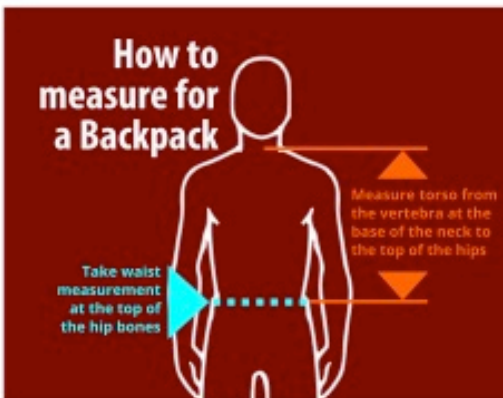


External frame packs have the pack bag attached to the frame.



Internal frame packs have the frame built into the bag.

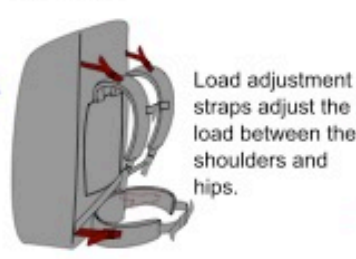
External frame backpacks are *generally* easier to pack and adjust. Internal frame packs are *generally* lighter and have a narrower profile but are *generally* more difficult to pack and adjust.



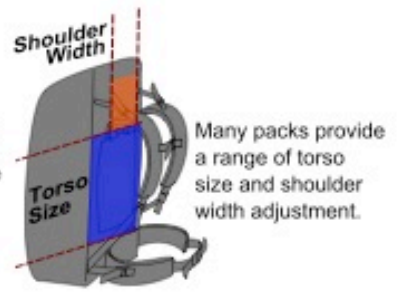
The most important thing about choosing a backpack is getting a proper fit.

To carry correctly and comfortably a pack must fit both torso length and hip size. Torso length is measured along the spine between the base of the neck and the top of the hips and hip size is measured around the top of the hips, (don't confuse this with waist size).

Backpack Suspension System



Load adjustment straps adjust the load between the shoulders and hips.



Many packs provide a range of torso size and shoulder width adjustment.

Other Features



Some backpackers find external pockets or divided compartments aid in packing and keeping track of their gear. Choice is based on personal taste.



Traditional packs (both internal and external frames) are designed for heavier loads, weigh more and generally have more adjustment features than lightweight packs.



Lightweight packs are designed for lighter loads, weigh less and have fewer adjustments and other features than traditional packs.

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Outdoor footwear jargon can be confusing!

Most hiking boots and shoes fall into three basic categories:



Backpacking Boots

High-cut with better balance and ankle support, designed to carry heavier loads on multi-day trips. Stiffer mid soles than lighter footwear.



Hiking Boots

Mid-cut models flex easily and require little break-in time, but lack the ankle support, debris protection, and durability of stouter backpacking boots.



Walking Shoes

Low-cut models with flexible mid soles are excellent for day hiking or camping. They provide less roll-resistance for ankles are more vulnerable to dirt, sand or mud getting inside.

A Proper Fit

feels secure, as if hand is holding the foot over the instep where the laces are. The foot should not move around inside the boot while walking.

Width: Feet don't slide around (too loose) or feel compressed from side to side (too tight).

Length: Toes wiggle easily.

Get an accurate shoe size and width measurement!

Wear a liner sock and hiking sock when trying on boots or shoes.

Socks

Liner socks are thin socks worn next to the skin under other socks. Liners wick sweat away and limit blister-causing abrasion between the outer sock and foot.

Hiking socks are available in a number of weights for different conditions.



Stiffer soled boots and shoes lend stability and comfort to long hikes on rocky, uneven terrain. When testing boots stand on an uneven surface. If you feel each bump the boot is probably not stiff enough to protect your feet.

Squat while testing boots to see if the boot digs into your foot or ankle while it is fully flexed.



Keeping Feet Dry

Wet feet are more prone to blisters. During rest breaks and in camp remove your boots and air out your feet. In warm weather waterproof boots may make feet hot and sweaty because they are not as breathable. Synthetic or wool socks dry quickly and hold moisture away from the skin.

Sandals

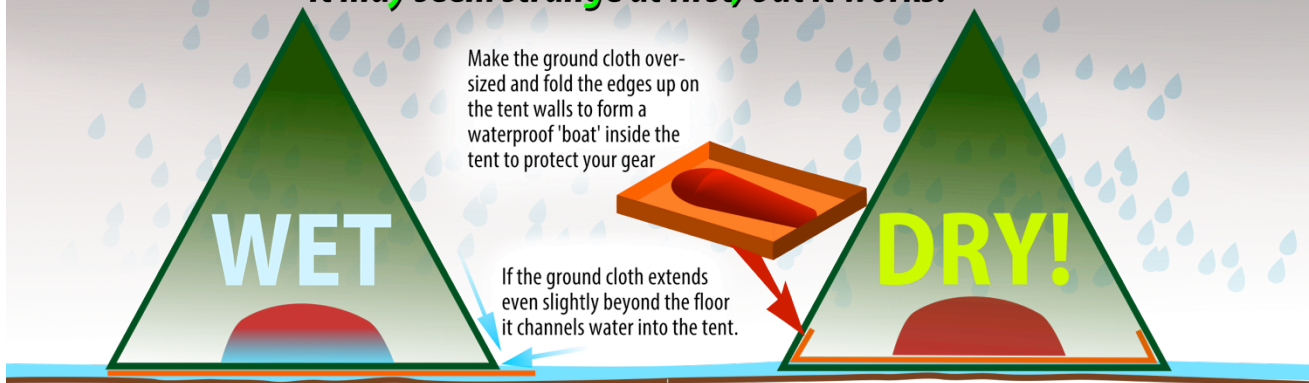
Sandals and slippers are supplemental footwear, rarely a replacement for boots or shoes.

~~Open-toed sandals or flip-flops can lead to stubbed toes and cuts to feet.~~

In warm weather sandals with toe protection are a reasonable alternative

Slippers or other lightweight footwear are great after a long day of hiking or paddling.

When it rains here's how to
KEEP YOUR CAMPING GEAR DRY!
 It may seem strange at first, but it works!

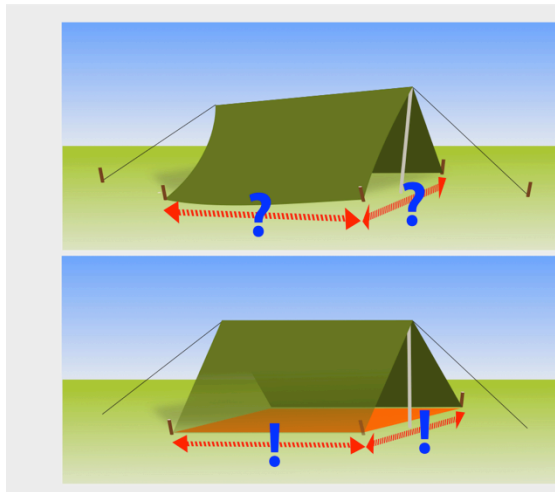


Plastic ground cloth UNDER the tent floor.

Rainwater flows between the ground cloth and floor, and is pressured by body weight into the tent.

Plastic ground cloth INSIDE the tent.

When rainwater flows over the ground into the tent an over-sized ground cloth inside will keep your gear dry.

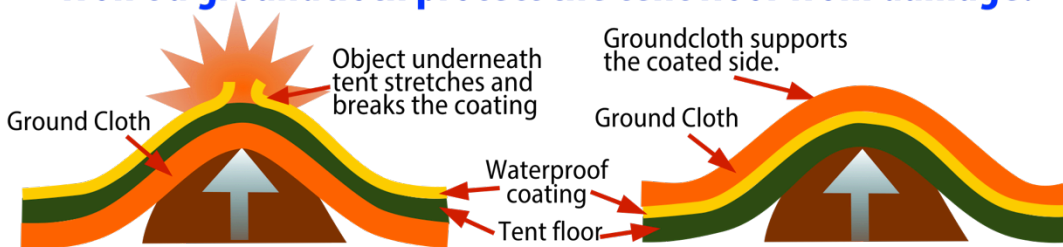


If the tent floor won't keep things dry why have it in the first place?

Originally tents had no floor to establish their shape, so pitching the tent properly required a lot of trial and error. Floors in tents make them easier to set up.

Even the best coated fabric and meticulously waterproofed seams eventually fail and allow water into the tent. Water that gets inside stays inside, an interior ground cloth protects your gear from getting wet.

Won't a groundcloth protect the tent floor from damage?



A ground cloth under the tent floor provides little protection. An object (stick or rock) pressing against the floor from beneath (the non-coated side) compresses and the coated side on top stretches. Eventually the top coating breaks. An interior ground cloth is an added layer of support for the coated surface.

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 Thanks to outdoorsman, author, guide and distinguished Eagle Scout, **Cliff Jacobson**

HOW TO SLEEP WARM

1. GO TO BED WARM

Do a few jumping jacks, push ups – just enough to warm yourself up but before you start sweating. If you get in a sleeping bag when you are cold you'll likely stay cold.

2. FUEL UP

If it's going to be a very cold night consider a pre-bedtime snack that will keep the furnace burning. Slow burning fatty snacks are better than refined sugars or caffeine.



3. WATER

You need to be well hydrated to stay warm.



How much water to drink within the hour or two before you go to sleep is determined by how fast you process it. If you need to get up early drinking a lot of water before bedding down will serve as a natural alarm clock – it can be tricky to get the timing right. If nature calls in the middle of the night get up and go! Holding it in makes you colder.

4. CLOTHING

Change as much of your clothing as possible. The clothes you wore all day will be a bit damp and cold. If you wear them to bed you'll have to warm your cold damp clothes up before you get warm.



5. HOT WATER BOTTLES

Consider filling your water bottles with hot water, wrapping them with some spare clothing and warming up your sleeping bag before you get in it.

6. WEAR A HAT

We lose heat from our heads. It's not an old wife's tale; wear a hat to keep your feet warm.



7. KEEP YOUR NOSE AND MOUTH OUTSIDE

Don't put your nose and mouth into your sleeping bag. Moisture from breathing will make the bag and your clothing damp. A well-designed mummy style sleeping bag will allow you to close the bag so only your nose and mouth are exposed.

8. KEEP OFF THE GROUND

Sleeping warm means insulating your self from the ground. A good insulating pad is important.

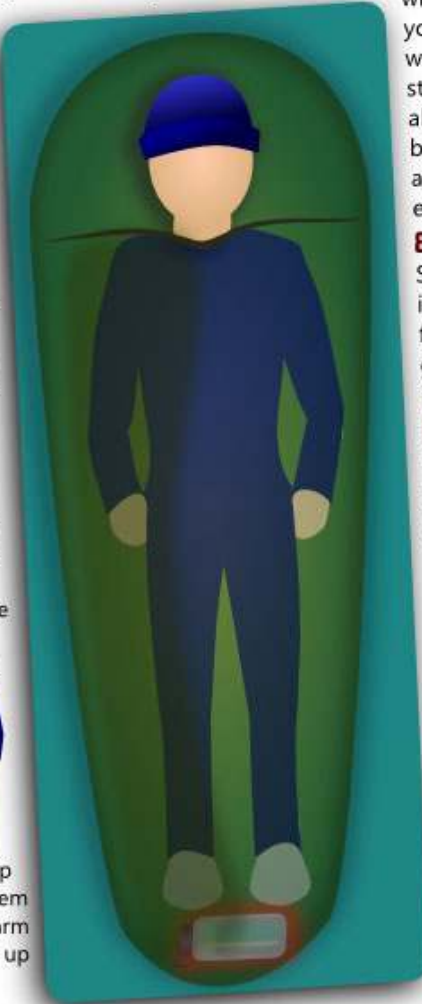
9. SLEEPING BAG SOCKS

If you get cold feet try keeping a dedicated pair of thick, loose fleece or wool socks worn only in the sleeping bag.



10. SHAKE UP YOUR BAG

Whatever type of insulation is in your sleeping bag it will be compressed from packing. Do a good job of shaking and re-distributing the insulation before you get in the bag.



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IDEAS, INFORMATION, AND INSPIRATION FOR SCOUT LEADERS

- Camping skills & outdoorsmanship
- Gear reviews and advice
- Practical help for Scout volunteers



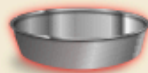
THE HIGHLY EVOLVED MESS KIT



The old-style aluminum clam-shell mess kit is long on tradition but short utility - It's time to scrap it for something better!

Mess Kit Plate

The thermodynamic design of the plate half of a mess kit would make engineers who design heat dissipating equipment proud. An aluminum plate sucks the heat out of food and transfers it directly to your hands.



The 'Frying' Pan

Fry frying something without it sticking and burning. Never mind the handle with nuts and bolts that inevitably disappear into a pile of leaves.



The Cup

Thin-walled mess kit cups don't keep things hot, they are flimsy and unstable (try to drink hot coffee using the twiddly little appendage they call a handle).



The Pot

The mess kit pot is tiny and impractical. It holds barely a cup of water, and can't hold enough food for anything resembling a decent meal.



Utensils

The traditional interlocking knife, fork, spoon is just plain silly. Lugs on the spoon collect crud and the bowl is shallow and small. The fork is a utilitarian masterpiece compared to the dull, flimsy, useless knife that shames knives everywhere.



Canteens

Anyone who ever used an aluminum canteen recalls the distasteful metallic tang imparted to the contents along with the ghost of last year's Kool-aid. Is there anything more uncomfortable on a hike than a canteen slapping against your hips at every step?



Evolved Plate

Anything else is better than an aluminum plate: a recycled carry-out or Tupperware container holds your other gear approximating the old style mess kit.



Evolved Frying Pan

The frying pan is extinct, besides you probably weren't going to fry anything anyway. If you must get a cast-iron frying pan.



Evolved Mug

Insulated plastic mugs are everywhere, they keep things warm, have a lid, and they can do double duty as a bowl.

Evolved Pot

A 1-2 quart aluminum camping pot is big enough for two or three people to use. Camping cookware is usually two or three times the price of 'normal' cookware, look for a suitable pot at the discount store.



Evolved Utensils

Why carry a fork and a spoon when a spoon will do? Plastic spoons are pretty easy to find (I do like Lexan spoons - they are cheap, light and indestructible). You don't need a special eating knife if you're carrying a pocket knife



Evolved Canteen

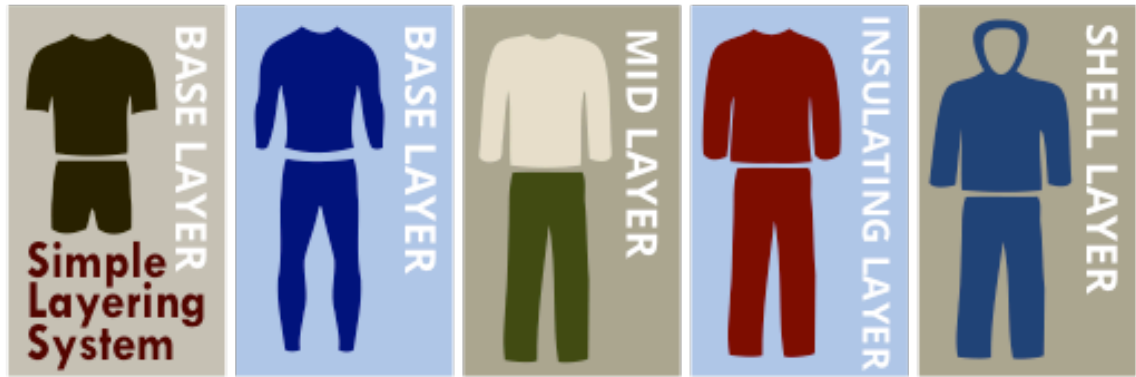
The capacious plastic water bottle now rules the day. A wide easy-to clean mouth, inert materials and a secure cap make for a perfect camping container. Disposable soda or water bottles can be reused many times over. They are light, cheap and, if the cap leaks, can be fixed with some plumber's Teflon tape.



Provided courtesy of 
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Ideas, Information, & Inspiration for all Scout leaders
Home of the Scoutmaster Blog and weekly Scoutmaster Podcast

OUTDOOR CLOTHING BASICS

The secret to dressing for the outdoors is layering. The base layer is worn against the skin, a mid layer goes over the base, an insulating layer is next, and a shell layer is worn over everything. Layers are adjusted according to the season and conditions.



Synthetic tee shirt and undershorts for all seasons.

Synthetic or wool long underwear for cold conditions.

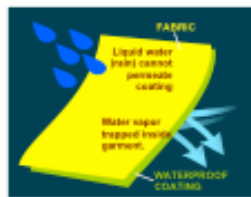
All-purpose layer that can be worn in any conditions.

Synthetic fleece pullover, jacket or wool sweater, synthetic fleece pants for cool to cold weather.

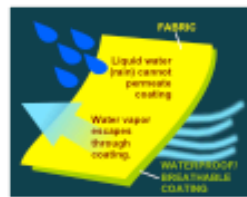
Rain jacket with hood and rain pants for all seasons.

Waterproof or Waterproof Breathable?

Basic waterproof rain gear works very well. The relatively small amount of moisture trapped inside a waterproof rain suit will be wicked away from the skin by the under layers, and you'll stay comfortable. Waterproof fabrics are less expensive.



Waterproof fabrics have an impermeable coating that does not allow water vapor to escape from the inside out, but still keeps the rain out.



Waterproof breathable fabrics are constructed with a permeable membrane that permits water vapor to escape from the inside out without allowing liquid water to penetrate from the outside in.

What about Ponchos? Ponchos are awkward when doing just about anything other than sitting still. A waterproof jacket and pants are much more serviceable.

THE "SAFETY SUIT"



I know from experience a rain jacket, rain pants, and synthetic or wool long underwear tops and bottoms can keep you reasonably warm and safe in the worst kind of weather no matter what the season. **Carry these two essential layers on any trip.**



Cotton Kills

It may sound overly dramatic, but it isn't. Cotton is fine for dry, warm conditions but ideally dry and warm conditions are rare. It is much harder to stay dry and warm outdoors than most people think.

Cotton holds moisture and moisture saps body heat. When the body loses heat faster than it can produce heat hypothermia sets in. At first, this is merely uncomfortable; but it can become serious medical emergency. Hypothermia can happen at temperatures well above freezing.

Synthetic or wool fabrics insulate even when wet and are strongly recommended for cold weather. In warmer weather, a synthetic base layer draws perspiration away from the skin and keeps you cool and comfortable.

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Youth Protection and Adult Leadership

Scouting's Barriers to Abuse

The BSA has adopted the following 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 outside of scouting activities.

Registration Requirements. The chartered organization representative, or in their absence the executive officer of the chartered organization, must approve the registration of the unit's adult leaders. Registration includes:

- Completion of application including criminal background check and mandatory Youth Protection training
- Volunteer Screening Database check

Current Youth Protection training is required for leaders when renewing their registration or at unit charter renewal. Adult program participants must register as adults and follow Youth Protection policies.

Adult Supervision. Two registered adult leaders 21 years of age or over are required at all Scouting activities, including meetings. There must be a registered female adult leader 21 years of age or over in every unit serving females. A registered female adult leader 21 years of age or over must be present for any activity involving female youth. Notwithstanding the minimum leader requirements, age- and program-appropriate supervision must always be provided. All adults accompanying a Scouting unit who are present at the activity for 72 total hours or more must be registered as leaders. The 72 hours need not be consecutive. One-on-one contact between adult leaders and youth members is prohibited both inside and outside of Scouting.

- In situations requiring a personal conference, the meeting is to be conducted with the knowledge and in view of other adults and/or youth.
- Private online communications (texting, phone calls, chat, IM, etc.) must include another registered leader or parent.
- Communication by way of social media (Facebook, Snapchat, etc.) must include another registered leader or parent.
- Discipline must reflect Scouting's values.
- Corporal punishment is never permitted.
- Disciplinary activities involving isolation, humiliation, or ridicule are also prohibited.

Responsibility. Leaders must ensure that all participating in scouting activities abide by the Scout Oath and Scout Law. Adult leaders and youth members share the responsibility for the safety of all participants in the program, including adherence to Youth Protection and health and safety policies. All leaders are required to adhere to the Scouter Code of Conduct.

- Adult leaders are responsible for monitoring behavior and intervening when necessary.
- Physical violence, sexual activity, emotional abuse, spiritual abuse, unauthorized weapons, hazing, discrimination, harassment, initiation rites, bullying, cyberbullying, theft, verbal insults, drugs, alcohol, and pornography have no place in the Scouting program and may result in revocation of membership.

Accommodations. Separate accommodations for adult males and females and youth males and females are required.

- Separate tenting arrangements must be provided for male and female adults as well as for male and female youth.
- Youth sharing tents must be no more than two years apart in age.
- In Cub Scouting, parents and guardians may share a tent with their family.
- In all other programs, youth and adults tent separately.
- Spouses may share tents.

Lodging/Cabin Accommodations. Whenever possible, separate cabins or lodging should be provided for male and female adults as well as for male and female youth. Where separate accommodations cannot be provided due to group size or limited availability, modifications may be made. Where completely separate accommodations are not available, additional supervision is required.

- If adults and youth of the same gender occupy single-room accommodations, there must be a minimum of two adults and four youth, with all adults being Youth Protection trained.
- Physical separation by other means, including temporary barriers or space, should be used only when no other arrangements are possible.
- These modifications are limited to single-gender accommodations.

Restrooms. Separate shower and latrine facilities should be provided for male and female adults as well as for male and female youth. If separate facilities are not available, separate times should be scheduled and posted. Privacy of youth is respected.

- Adults and youth must respect each other’s privacy, especially in situations such as changing clothes and taking showers at camp.
- Adult leaders should closely monitor these areas but only enter as needed for youth protection or health and safety reasons.

Program Requirements

- The buddy system should be used.
- The use of smartphones, cameras, mirrors, drones, etc., in places or situations where privacy is expected is prohibited.
- All aspects of the Scouting program are open to observation by parents and leaders.
- The BSA does not recognize any secret organizations as part of its program.
- Hazing and initiations are prohibited and have no part during any Scouting activity.
- All forms of bullying and harassment including verbal, physical, and cyberbullying are prohibited.
- Inappropriate public displays of affection are prohibited.
- Sexual activity is prohibited.
- Appropriate attire is required for all activities.

Reporting Requirements. Adult leaders and youth members have a responsibility to recognize, respond to, and report Youth Protection violations and abuse.

Youth Protection Policy Violations

- Serious Youth Protection policy violations or behaviors that put a youth’s safety at risk must be reported to the Scout executive.
- Alternatively, policy violations may be reported to the Scouts First Helpline when the Scout executive is not available.
- Online reporting is also available at **Incident Reporting** (<https://www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/incident-report/>)

Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse

- All persons participating in Scouting programs are mandated reporters of child abuse.
- Reports must be made to local law enforcement and child protective services. State law may require additional reporting.
- This reporting duty cannot be delegated to any other person.
- Reporting to the Scout executive or Scouts First Helpline ensures that follow-up can occur for the safety of our youth. Scout executives and Scouts First coordinate follow-up actions.

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 might put a youth at risk.

1-844-SCOUTS1 (1-844-726-8871)

When to use it:

- Anytime you believe a youth has been harmed or their safety and wellbeing is at risk, and you cannot immediately reach your Scout executive or local council.
- If a youth is bullied because of race, color, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, or disability, and local help is unable to resolve the problem. If someone is at immediate risk of harm, always call 911.



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