

First Presbyterian Church
Warren, Pennsylvania
Troop Handbook
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Meetings

Troop Meetings

Troop meetings are an integral part of our program. The troop meets on the first and third Mondays of each month from 6:30 until 8:00 p.m. in the "Scout Room" at the First Presbyterian Church. Troop meetings are full uniform occasions. Scouts should bring their *Official Boy Scout Handbook*, a notebook, and a pen or pencil. These meetings are run in a business-like fashion by the Senior Patrol Leader with a Troop wide game if time permits.

Many of the announcements and details for upcoming events are made at Troop Meetings and there is almost always an informational handout sent home with each boy.

Advancement Meetings

The second and fourth Mondays of each month are reserved for advancement meetings. Like the regular Troop meetings, advancement meetings are held from 6:30 until 8:00 p.m. at the First Presbyterian Church. These meetings emphasize learning basic Scout skills and reaching First Class rank in a Scout's first year.

Advancement meetings are mandatory for all Scouts who have not yet reached First Class rank. This is to ensure that no scout is left behind as his fellow scouts master the essential Scout skills.

A syllabus is given out at the first advancement meeting following the Webelos Bridging. This syllabus indicates which requirement(s) will be worked on at each meeting and campout. Each requirement in the *Official Boy Scout Handbook* includes a listing of which page(s) cover the subject in question. Scouts are expected to come to each advancement meeting having read the appropriate material and prepared to meet the requirement(s). A Scout's book will only be signed if he can demonstrate proficiency in the particular skill being covered at that meeting. Otherwise the Scout will receive instruction and must demonstrate his proficiency at the next advancement meeting in order to get his book signed.

Additional information regarding advancement can be found in the "Advancement" section of this document.

Patrol Leader's Council Meetings

The patrol leader's council (PLC) meets on the first Monday of each month from 6:30 until 7:00 p.m. in the fellowship hall at the First Presbyterian Church. The PLC meeting is the key that makes the patrol method operate. The PLC consists of the Senior Patrol Leader(s), Assistant Senior Patrol Leaders, Patrol leaders, and the Troop Scribe. Attendance at PLC meetings is mandatory for all Patrol Leaders. In the event that a patrol leader cannot attend, his assistant must represent the patrol at the meeting.

PLC meetings are intended to allow the Senior Patrol Leader to communicate with the Patrol Leaders and plan details for upcoming outings. Each Patrol Leader is expected to share the details from the PLC meeting with the Scouts in his patrol.

Fifth Monday Meetings

In the event that a month includes a fifth Monday there will be no Troop or advancement meeting for the Scouts. Rather, the uniformed adult leaders will hold a meeting to address special Troop operations issues.

Committee Meetings

The Troop Committee is charged with the responsibility of seeing the Troop's needs, direction, and goals are achieved.

The Troop Committee meets on the second Monday of each month at 8:00 p.m. in Scout Room at the First Presbyterian Church. Troop operations issues such as finance, advancement, equipment needs and maintenance, awards and any concern of a leader, parent, or other Troop member are addressed and resolved at these meetings. All parents are encouraged to attend as an interested parent or to support your boy(s) and the Troop's program by volunteering for one of the vacant positions.

Outings

Rules

Though the troop encourages each Scout to have a good time on each day trip or weekend outing. There are several rules that must be observed by the Scouts:

- 1. No boy may carry a pocketknife unless he has earned his Totin' Chip.** This is part of the first year camper program held on the May campout. If a Scout is found improperly handling his knife it will be confiscated for the duration of the outing and given to his parents when the Troop arrives home. Furthermore, a Scout's Totin' Chip will be taken from him. Totin' rights will not be granted until the Scout has repeated the Totin' Chip safety training.
- 2. For obvious safety reasons sheath knives are not permitted and should not be carried by anyone (youth or adult) for any reason.** A sheath knife is one that has a fixed blade that cannot be folded back in the handle. Any Scout found in possession of a sheath knife will have his knife confiscated for the duration of the outing and given to his parents when the Troop arrives home.
- 3. Walkman, Discman, Came Boys, and other electronic devices are strictly prohibited.** Outings are an opportunity for boys to get to know fellow Scouts and enjoy the beauty around them. These devices create an artificial barrier between the Scout and his surroundings. If a Scout is found in possession of one of these devices it will be confiscated for the duration of the outing and given to his parents when the Troop arrives home.
- 4. The Buddy System is to be used at all times.** No Scout is to leave the rest of the Troop for any reason unless he has obtained permission from a uniformed adult leader and has another Scout to accompany him. After lights out no scouts are to leave the camp for any reason.
- 5. If a Scout or adult commits to attending a campout and subsequently is unable to attend, he remains liable for his share of the food bill.** The designated shopper for each patrol is not to purchase his food until the Thursday night prior to the campout. This is to give each scout the opportunity to cancel without affecting the Patrol's menu. If a boy does not notify his Patrol's shopper by Wednesday night it will be assumed that he is going on the outing.
- 6. No soft drinks or other junk food may be consumed before 10:30 a.m. on a weekend campout.** The 10:30 a.m. rule also applies to the Troop's week long Summer Trip/Summer Camp.
- 7. While on an outing each Scout is acting as an ambassador of Troop 8 and the First Presbyterian Church and is expected to act as such.** This includes behavior on the bus, in vehicles, in the campground, and when in any public setting.

8. Eating and drinking are not permitted on the rented Troop bus at any time.

9. All Scouts must ride on the Troop bus when rented unless the Troop is car-pooling to the activity. This rule does not apply to situations where a Scout must come to a campout late or leave early for sports or family activities.

Cost

From time to time the Troop imposes a nominal fee on Scouts and parents attending an outing. This is usually done when there is an exceptional expense involved or the trip is over one hundred miles round trip. In all cases the amount shall be sufficient to partially offset the cost of the outing, not to increase the Troop's coffers.

Equipment

There are a number of personal equipment items that each Scout should have. Some camping equipment can be expensive, so it is important to look for high quality products that will last for many years. Good camping equipment can be purchased from sporting goods stores, camping specific stores, and mail order companies such as L.L. Bean, Cabelas, or Campmor.com, the Chief Cornplanter Council Scout Shop or the USA National Supply Division catalog.

Complete equipment listings for a campout can be found in Chapter 9 on pages 224—231 of the *Official Boy Scout Handbook*. Should you have any questions or concerns please see your Scoutmaster or Assistant Scoutmaster.

Advancement

First Class - First Year

It is Troop 8's goal to help each new Scout earn First Class rank in his first year with the Troop. Informal studies and review of Troop records indicate that 80% of all new Scouts quit the Troop by the end of their second year if they do not make it to the First Class plateau by the end of their first year. That number jumps to 90% by the end of the third year and practically 100% after the fourth year.

This program is not intended to force a Scout to advance against his will but rather to ensure that he sees everything that Scouting has to offer. Boys are still free to earn merit badges and other awards at their own pace.

As was previously mentioned, advancement meetings are mandatory for all Scouts who have not yet reached First Class. Preparation is essential, from time to time we will have guest speakers whose knowledge and experience makes them better suited to teach the material than anyone in the Troop. Also, several second year Scouts who achieved First Class in their first year will be serving as instructors. These young men have demonstrated the same enthusiasm we hope to instill in the current group of first year Scouts.

Questions about the First Class - First Year program should be directed to the First Year Scout Coordinator or the Senior/Junior Program Coordinator.

Life to Eagle

The Troop has an Eagle Scout Advisor who is responsible for guiding Life Scouts through the process of becoming an Eagle Scout. Completing the Eagle Rank requirements can be a long and arduous task. There are a number of rules and procedures not used in the lower ranks. Each new Life Scout will be given a "Life to Eagle Packet" with a copy of the Eagle Scout Application, Service Project Workbook, a letter detailing procedures, and a parent's letter.

Life Scouts are encouraged to meet with the Eagle Scout Advisor as often as necessary throughout the process to ensure that all requirements are met properly.

Work Done in Webelos/Outside the Troop

All requirements are to be met while the Scout is a registered member of Troop 8 participating in a Troop or Patrol activity. No work done as part of a Cub Scouting program or individually (family camping, etc.) will be accepted unless specifically stated in the rank requirements in the latest edition of the *Official Boy Scout Handbook*.

The purpose of only accepting work done while registered as a member of Troop 8 is twofold. First, it allows the Troop's adult and junior leaders to get to know the new Scouts. Second guarantees that each Scout is tested on the requirement as thoroughly as possible.

Signatures

Rank requirements may only be signed by a registered leader of Troop 8. This leader may be an adult (the Scoutmaster and his assistants) or a member of the junior leadership (Senior Patrol leader, Assistant Senior Patrol Leader, Instructor, Troop Guide, or Patrol Leader). No parental signatures will be accepted unless the requirement in question indicates otherwise.

Merit Badges

Merit badges are the heart of the Scouting advancement program. Once a Scout has earned First Class rank he is free to work on any of the more than 100 merit badges that interest him. Some merit badges are offered as part of an organized class but most of them are taught on an independent study basis. The Troop has an extensive library of merit badge pamphlets available for loan before regular Troop meetings. If a book is not available in the library current copies can be purchased at the Chief Cornplanter Council Scout Shop. Many Scouts choose to donate the book to the Troop library once they have earned the badge.

When a Scout wishes to work on a merit badge he should begin by borrowing a copy of the merit badge book from the Troop library or purchasing one from the Chief Cornplanter Council Scout Shop. After having read the book and familiarized himself with the requirements the Scout should ask a uniformed adult leader for the name and phone number of a counselor for the merit badge. At this time the Scout should also get a blue merit badge application from the Advancement Chairman, fill it out and have the Scoutmaster sign it. There are usually several counselors in our area for any one-merit badge. It is up to each Scout to initiate contact with a counselor and make as many appointments as necessary to meet the requirements. When a Scout has successfully met all the requirements and secured the signature of his counselor he should turn the card in to the Advancement Chairman. Generally the badge will be available at the next regular Troop meeting. One of the purposes of the merit badge program is to teach a Scout to make and keep appointments and other commitments with adults he would not otherwise deal with in a "real world" setting. To that end **no Scout may earn more than 5 merit badges from any one counselor.**

Service Projects

Service projects will be accepted only if they have been approved in advance. For the Eagle badge this approval must come from the District Advancement Committee. For all other ranks this approval comes from the Scoutmaster. Scouts may not use a project already being counted for some other purpose (confirmation, etc.). Fund-raisers such as the quarterly highway cleanup may not be counted as service projects. Scouts may count time spent helping a Life Scout with his Eagle Scout Service project.

Scout Spirit

Showing Scout spirit means many things. The most obvious aspect of this requirement is a Scout's ability to explain how he applies the principles of the Scout Oath, Promise, Motto, and Slogan to his life in and out of Scouting. The other aspect of this is a little more easily measured. Correctly wearing the uniform, attending meetings and campouts regularly, participating in fundraisers and helping with service projects are all ways a boy can demonstrate his Scout spirit. The Scout spirit requirement is usually part of the discussion held in a Scoutmaster Conference.

Scoutmaster Conferences

Scoutmaster Conferences are held by appointment before and after regular Troop meetings. These are sometimes referred to as personal growth conferences due to the goal-setting nature of these one-on-one conversations. Scoutmaster conferences are to be the last requirement a Scout meets in order to allow some time to pass for the Scout to grow both physically and mentally. If the Scoutmaster is not available an Assistant Scoutmaster may perform the conference in an emergency. It should be noted that procrastination is not considered an emergency.

Board of Review

Boards of Review (BOR) are required for each rank advanced. BOR for all ranks except Eagle are held at the Troop level. They are held six times annually during advancement meetings. A typical Board of Review consists of 3 to 6 members of the Troop committee or other adults.

The names of Scouts up for review will be posted at the regular Troop meeting prior to the BOR date. If a Scout has reason to believe he is up for review but is not on the list he must see the Advancement Chairman immediately. Failure to do so will delay a Scout's advancement by at least 2 months.

These reviews are not intended to re-test Scouts on the skills they have mastered. Rather they are a chance to gauge the Scout's growth in the Scouting program. They also help a Scout grow accustomed to speaking with a group of people in an interview setting.

Boards of Review are complete uniform events. Merit badge sashes are encouraged, however please remember that this is not an Order of the Arrow event and OA sashes should therefore not be worn. Failure to appear in uniform, bring ones *Official Boy Scout Handbook* or incomplete requirements are all cause for postponement of a Board of Review.

Uniforms

Class A

The class A uniform is to be worn for all official scouting functions i.e. Boards of review, Service projects where appropriate, parades, scout camp etc. The Troop has chosen the class A Field as its regular weekly uniform.

The class A uniform consists of the official Scout shirt and pants with proper placement of badges of office and other insignia. The troop has chosen the ball—cap style hat as its headgear, though some boys opt for other styles available in the Boy Scouts of America National Supply Division catalog. Troop 8 will eventually design and wear a customized neckerchief however, until that point has adopted the red embroidered one. Class A uniforms and accessories are available from the Chief Cornplanter Scout Shop on 4th Avenue.

The Troop recognizes that a complete Scout uniform can be a substantial investment. For that reason the troop committee has decided that tan or green Dockers are an acceptable substitute for the official green pants. Parents are encouraged to buy the uniform a size or two larger than necessary to allow for "grow room". ***However, there are some circumstances where a 100% official uniform is required. For example if a Scout is chosen to attend Junior Leadership Training Camp he will be expected to purchase Scout socks, pants, neckerchief etc.***

When a boy joins the Troop, his Webelos patches from the Cub Scout pack should be removed. The only insignia carried forward are the Arrow of Light, religious award square knot (if earned), American Flag, Troop Numerals (Pack 8 only), and Chief Cornplanter Council Patch. See the inside front and back covers of the *Official Boy Scout Handbook* for correct placement of insignia or ask the Scoutmaster /Assistant Scoutmaster.

Class A Field (Adopted for weekly wear)

The class A Field uniform consists of the official Scout shirt and pants (substitution of green Dockers are acceptable for the official green pants) with the proper placement for badges of office and other insignia.

Class B

A Class B uniform is any Scouting related clothing including summer camp T-shirt, BSA polo shirts, and eventually, the official Troop 8 T-shirt available for a nominal fee from the Troop Recorder. The only restriction on Class B uniforms is that the pants must be single color, clean, and free of holes.

Fund-raisers

The Troop will schedule a variety of fund-raisers throughout the year to support our many activities. Scouts are expected to volunteer when asked. Supporting Troop fund-raising efforts is considered part of demonstrating Scout spirit. Parents are sometimes asked to participate in these events if they take place over several days.

Once we have established our fund raiser committee we will develop a few carefully thought out programs which will serve to underwrite the cost of the annual July summer camp program as well as one or two other major trips throughout the year.

Troop 8 also acknowledges that restarting the Troop after many inactive years will also require some time to reestablish funding and a core program. We are equally confident that with your help we can fast track the process.

Court of Honor

Annual Troop Court of Honor

Each February the Troop holds a Court of Honor to recognize each Scout's personal achievements. This event also includes a banquet and a year-in review slide show. All members of the Troop 8 family are strongly encouraged to attend.

The deadline for having an achievement recognized in the February Court of Honor is the second Troop meeting of January.

Eagle Scout Court of Honor

Whenever a young man earns his Eagle Award a special Eagle Scout Court of Honor is convened. This can take place in February immediately following the Troop Court of Honor or in a special ceremony in September. Due to the time needed to arrange guest speakers and congratulatory letters the deadline for passing an Eagle Board of Review is December 1st for a February Court of Honor and July 1st for a September Court of Honor.

An Eagle Scout Court of Honor represents a significant milestone and as such any family and friends of the new Eagle are invited. Eagle Scouts of all ages are extended an open invitation whether they have an affiliation with the Troop or not.

Parental Involvement

The key to running a successful Scouting program is dedicated volunteers and interested parents. Scouting allows parents to participate in their son's lives in a way no other youth activity can even dream of achieving. From helping out with fund-raisers to volunteering to counsel a merit badge to attending committee meetings as an interested parent, the opportunity exists to be involved. Every one of the Troop's past Eagle Scouts has had active parents. Hopefully, our future Eagle Scout parents will also share this kind of commitment to scouting ideals and perhaps remain involved long after their sons have turned 18 and left the Troop. Historically the Troop's leadership has been drawn extensively from the ranks of active, interested parents.

If at any time you have any questions please feel free to call one of the Troop's leaders. Only together can we maintain the excellent program now in place in Troop 8.

Disciplinary Procedures

Going Forward the Troop will use a very simple set of disciplinary rules. Scouts are expected to use the Scout Oath and Law as their "**personal code of conduct**" when involved in any Troop activity. If a Scout chooses to be unruly during a meeting or other activity he will be removed and his parents will be called to come and take him home. This applies for campouts as well. The Scout will be allowed to return to Troop activities after a conference with his parents, the Scoutmaster, and the leader who removed him from the activity is held.

Fighting and hazing **will absolutely not be tolerated**. A first offense will bring a warning and possibly removal from the activity. A Scout guilty of a second offense will be suspended from the Troop for a period of time to be determined by the Troop's uniformed leadership. The decision to allow a scout to return to the Troop at a later date will be made on a case-by-case basis. It is also the Troop Leadership's hope that we do not have to expand this section of the handbook knowing that the majority of incoming Scouts already know and abide by the principles of Scouting in their daily lives.