



BSA SAFETY MOMENT

SCOUTS FIRST HELPLINE

SUMMARY

Scouts First Helpline (1-844-SCOUTS1)

The protection of youth is the primary obligation of every individual involved in the Boy Scouts of America—including leaders, parents, members, and professionals. The BSA has been and will continue to be vigilant in creating barriers that help prevent abuse and educating those involved in Scouting to recognize and report child abuse regardless of where it occurs. As part of its “Scouts First” approach to the protection and safety of youth, the BSA has established 844-SCOUTS1 (844-726-8871), a dedicated 24-hour helpline to receive reports of known or suspected abuse or behavior that might put a youth at risk.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Who can use the helpline?

Scout leaders, registered members, parents, Scouting professionals, or anyone else who believes a youth in Scouting might be at risk.

When should I use the Scouts First Helpline?

Anytime you believe a youth has been harmed or their safety and well-being is at risk, and you cannot immediately reach your Scout executive or local council.

Below are some examples:

- A leader on a campout receives a report that one of the Scouts has been abused, and the council office is closed.
- Parents learn after their Scout has returned from camp that the youth was threatened with a knife, but they don't know who to call at the council.
- A Scouting professional receives an anonymous report of abuse and would like guidance on next steps.
- An individual is camped next to a Scout troop and witnesses behavior that appears to be unsafe.

Can I use the helpline during normal business hours?

Yes. The goal of the helpline is to provide immediate assistance that ensures the alleged victim as well as unit and council leadership are fully supported and appropriate actions are taken. During business hours, a member of the National Service Center will help you. Calls made after hours may be answered by an answering service that will take the information, determine the level of urgency, and then notify the appropriate person.

Reporting Tips

Accurate information is critical to an appropriate response. However, a lack of specific information is not a reason to delay a report. The Scouts First Helpline is not intended to take the place of council involvement. It is to provide 24/7 guidance to volunteers, Scouts, parents, and Scouting professionals to report abuse or serious youth protection violations outside of the local council's business hours. Local councils receiving reports of abuse or behavior that might put a youth at risk will contact Scouts First to report the incident.

RESOURCES

- Incident Reporting Resources—www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/incident-report/
- Incident Information Form—www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/680-676_web.pdf