



BSA SAFETY MOMENT

ROCKET SAFETY

SUMMARY

“We’re going on a trip in our favorite rocket ship ...” A lot of our Scouts know the opening of the Little Einsteins song, and many of them have probably dreamed of blasting off in a rocket. Shooting model rockets is just one of the broad range of cool activities that today’s youth can learn. The BSA has developed guidance for leaders in planning and participating in a rocket shoot.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Conducting rocket academies is a long-standing event for many Scouting packs, troops, and camps. These events are a good way to showcase the broad spectrum of activities and learning associated with Scouting, and can educate participants and attendees about the STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) program. Scouting.org has published several articles about rocket academies.

Safety considerations should be on the top of everyone’s list when dealing with projectiles that, if misused, could cause serious injury or damage. Follow these guidelines:

- Only use lightweight, non-metal parts for the nose, body, and fins on any rocket.
- Only use certified, commercially made rocket motors appropriate for the rocket, and make sure that nobody tampers with or modifies them.
- Find out if there are any rules and regulations regarding the type, size, and launching of rockets within your community.
- Always use a countdown when launching a rocket to make sure everyone knows the launch is about to happen. Minimum safe distance is 15 feet for small rocket launch.
- Only use a manufacturer approved launch rod or tower.
- Always use protective eyewear when launching. This can protect your eyes from being injured by rocket exhaust or nearby objects blown through the air by the launch.
- Do not use model rockets for shooting a payload, firing at a target, or launching into clouds or near aircraft.
- Do not attempt to recover rockets from power lines, tall trees, or other potentially dangerous areas.
- Take a PAUSE for safety prior to a launch: **P**ause before you start. **A**ssess possible hazards. **U**nderstand how to proceed safely. **S**hare your plan with others. **E**xecute the activity safely.

RESOURCES

- SAFE: www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/safe/
- National Association of Rocketry’s Model Rocket Safety Code: www.nar.org/safety_information/model-rocket-safety-code
- Blast Into Scouting: www.blastintoscouting.org