



Boy Scout Outdoor Program

Outdoor adventure is the promise made to boys when they join Scouting. Boys yearn for outdoor programs that stir their imagination and interest.

In the outdoors, boys have opportunities to acquire skills that make them more self-reliant. They can explore canoe and hiking trails and complete challenges they first thought were beyond their ability. Attributes of good character become part of a boy as he learns to cooperate to meet outdoor challenges that may include extreme weather, difficult trails and portages, and dealing with nature's unexpected circumstances.

Scouts plan and carry out activities with thoughtful guidance from their Scoutmaster and other adult leaders. Good youth leadership, communication, and teamwork enable them to achieve goals they have set for themselves, their patrol or squad, and their troop or team.

Scouting's Outdoor Program—Ever-Increasing Challenge Out-of-Doors



Learning by doing is a hallmark of outdoor education. Unit meetings offer information and knowledge used on outdoor adventures each month throughout the year. A leader may describe and demonstrate a Scouting skill at a meeting, but the way Scouts truly learn outdoor skills is to do it themselves on a troop outing.

Scouting uses the patrol method to teach skills and values. Scouts elect their own patrol leader and they learn quickly that by working together and sharing duties, the patrol can accomplish far more than any of its members could do alone. The patrol succeeds when every member of the patrol succeeds and Scouts learn that good teamwork is the key to success.

Exercise and fitness is part of the outdoor experience. As Scouts hike, paddle, climb, bike, or ride, their muscles become toned and their aerobic capacity increases. When they work as a patrol to plan menus for their outings, they learn to purchase cost-effective ingredients to prepare flavorful and nutritious meals.

Service to others and good citizenship is learned through such outdoor activities as conservation projects, collecting food, building trails and shelters, and conducting community service projects that promote healthy living. Through helping other people, Scouts learn to appreciate how they can share themselves and their blessings to those in need. By giving service to benefit others, Scouts gain a sense of personal satisfaction.



Types of Outdoor Activities

What are typical Scout outdoor activities? For younger Scouts, less-rugged activities are more appropriate as they begin to acquire outdoor knowledge and skills. These may include:

Day hikes—Reasonably short hikes (3 to 10 miles) in terrain without a lot of elevation gain or loss.

Service projects—Daylong projects that may be related to conservation, food collection, building shelter, or healthy living activities.

Patrol activities—A Boy Scout patrol or Varsity Scout squad may hike or camp with other patrols or squads in the unit or, with the permission of their Scoutmaster and parents or guardians, may hike or camp on their own.

Weekend overnights—Troops that plan and carry out outings once a month attract and retain boys at a much higher level than those that have fewer outings during the year.

Camporees—Councils and districts plan camporees and other outings during the year that give Scouts an opportunity to test their knowledge and skills in competitive events with other troops and patrols.

Summer camp—Summer camp is what many Scouts enjoy most. Camp programs provide numerous opportunities for Scouts to earn merit badges along their advancement trail. Resident Scout camping includes at least five nights and six days of fun outdoor activities.

Jamborees—Every four or five years, the Boy Scouts of America hosts a national Scout jamboree. More than 40,000 Scouts and leaders from across the country participate in this 10-day event filled with the most popular and highest quality outdoor activities Scouts enjoy. To participate, a Scout must be at least 12 years of age by July 1 of the jamboree year and be a First Class Scout.

Council high adventure—A high-adventure experience includes at least five nights and six days of trekking in wilderness and other rugged, remote locations. Trekking may include backpacking, canoeing, mountain biking, horse packing, mountain climbing, ski touring, rafting, kayaking, or a host of other outdoor adventures. Participants must be at least 13 years old by January 1 of the year they participate.

National high adventure—The BSA operates national high-adventure bases and programs. With two locations in the Florida Keys, the Florida National High Adventure Sea Base offers a variety of aquatic and boating programs. The Northern Tier National High Adventure Program, based in northern Minnesota with two satellite bases in Canada, provides a variety of canoe treks and programs. Philmont Scout Ranch and the Double H Ranch in the mountains of New Mexico provide excellent backpacking treks. Age requirements for these programs vary, but most programs are rugged and designed for older Scouts.



Unit high adventure—The highest level of challenge for a troop or team is to plan and carry out its own high-adventure experience. These activities for more experienced Scouts are planned and implemented by youth members with coaching from their adult leaders.



Qualified Leadership

Two-Deep Leadership Required

It is the policy of the Boy Scouts of America that trips and outings may never be led by only one adult. At a minimum, two registered adult leaders or one registered adult leader and a parent of a participant, one of whom must be at least 21 years of age, are required for all trips and outings. Sufficient adult leadership must be provided on all trips and outings based on the total number of youth attending.

Standards for Privacy on Trips or Outings

All volunteers and adults attending Scout outings are expected to conform to behavior that reflects Scouting's high standards and traditional values. Male and female leaders require separate sleeping facilities unless they are married and appropriate facilities are available.

Male and female youth participants must not share the same sleeping facilities. When tents are used, no youth will stay in the tent of an adult other than his or her parent or guardian. When housing other than tents is used, separate housing must be provided for male and female participants. Adult male leaders must be responsible for the male participants, and the female leaders are responsible for the female participants.

Adult leaders need to respect the privacy of the youth members in situations where the youth are changing clothes or taking showers, and intrude only to the extent that health and safety require. Adults need to protect their own privacy in similar situations.

Although it is not mandatory, councils are strongly encouraged to have separate shower and latrine facilities for females. In camps where separate facilities are not available, separate shower schedules for males and females should be posted. Use the buddy system for latrine use by having one person wait outside the entrance, or use signs on doors to signify "occupied" or "unoccupied."

Outdoor Activity Tips

1. Obtain permission from parents or guardians for activities that are held away from the regular unit meeting places.
2. Understand the local council's policies regarding filing tour permits for unit outings. File a local tour permit application, No. 34426, when necessary, or if the trip is longer than 500 miles, file a national tour permit application, No. 34419. For more information on tour permits, see *Tours and Expeditions*, No. 33737D.

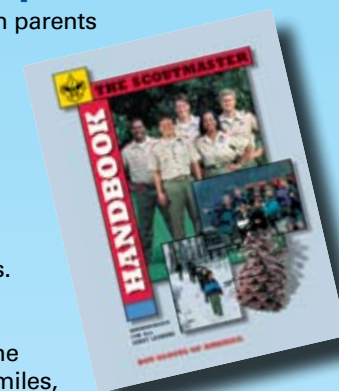
3. Be sure to have enough adult leaders for the activity.

If feasible, check out the site before the activity. Check on reservation procedures, restrooms, availability of adequate drinking water, and any potential hazards.

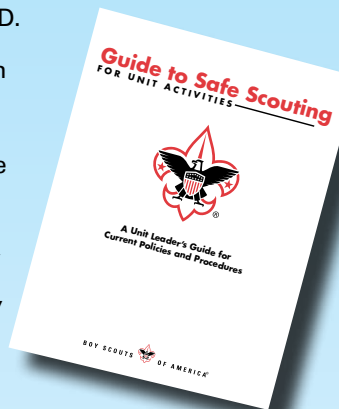
4. Use the buddy system. Coach the boys in advance on what to do if they get lost.
5. Carry a first-aid kit and make sure someone is qualified to use it. Be prepared with emergency procedures.
6. Arrange adequate and safe transportation.
7. Always leave a site in its natural condition.

Accident and Sickness Protection

For questions about current camper accident and sickness insurance, please contact your local council.



The Scoutmaster Handbook, No. 33009C



Guide to Safe Scouting, No. 34416A

