

## MEMORANDUM

**TO: Janine Halverson and Matt Myers**  
**FROM: Steve McGowan, General Counsel**  
**DATE: November 9, 2016**  
**RE: Hosting Scouts in Private Homes**

Opportunities for Scout families to host Scouting youth from other countries or areas of the United States can offer a rich experience for everyone. However, when hosting has any connection to the Scouting program, it presents special challenges. BSA provides insurance coverage for only official Scouting activities and hosting Scouting in private homes is not an official Scouting activity. (Being in residence at a BSA camp or property may be a part of an official Scouting activity unless the event is private or non-Scouting in nature). As such, guidelines should be provided to all involved before any arrangements are made.

Additionally, if Scouting volunteers or staff are involved in making arrangements, they should know in advance that they are not engaged an official Scouting activity in doing so. Furthermore, any promotion of the hosting opportunity *as part of* official Scouting event is prohibited. In most cases an appropriate disclaimer to the effect that hosting is not part of the Scouting activity should be included in materials used to promote or arrange the hosting.

The following guidelines may be helpful for those involved in hosting Scouting in private homes. These are not policies of the BSA. Rather, they are offered for informational purposes only as you requested.

- If a chartered organization or unit facilitates the arrangements, including the selection of both the visiting Scout and the host family, they should know that they are not engaged in an “official Scouting activity.
- If hosting is before, after or during the period for an official Scouting activity, the host family and Scout must acknowledge that the official Scouting activity begins and ends at the rally or assembly point for the activity. The activity does not include time spent at the host family home. An official Scouting activity does not include travel to or from the event.
- While BSA’s youth protection guidelines may not apply to non-Scouting activities, the barriers to abuse and other BSA guidelines offer some best-practices the host family and Scout should *consider* following during the visit, including:
  - Should a two-deep family presence be required while the visiting Scout is with the host family or in the home
  - Should a criminal records check should be performed on all residents of the home 18 or more years of age (a sponsoring organization may want evidence of such a check)

- Has a suitability assessment been performed that considers the age, sex, sleeping and bathroom accommodations and the individual needs of everyone who will be in the home
- What information should be shared before the Scout arrives – a profile of the host family, details of the accommodations and a schedule is always helpful and comforting
- How should behavior expectations be determined and communicated - written code of conduct or household rules may be appropriate.
- Should everyone who will be in the household complete Youth Protection Training
- What visitors may be in the home while the Scout is present and whether an adult of the host family should be present.
- Should neighbors be asked to keep a watchful eye.
- What identification, emergency contact information, and authorization for medical treatment should be available and where it will be maintained

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