Troop 54 Handbook

Adapted by Troop 54 in 2019 and most recently updated in September 2026, this handbook is a practical guide for Scouts, parents, and adult leaders in Scouts BSA Troop 54, covering troop organization, family expectations, advancement, outdoor activities, key policies, and resources. Because troop practices and Scouting America policies may change, families should use the most current version of this handbook together with current troop announcements, Scoutbook, and official Scouting America guidance.

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Fast Facts About Troop 54

Introduction

Troop 54 is open to all girls aged 11-17 of any faith and background who commit to the Scout Oath and Law and leadership development, outdoor activities, and service opportunities.

- Registered youth: 87 girls
- Registered adults: 87 volunteers
- Number of Eagle Scouts: 40
- Founded: 2019
- Council: Sam Houston Area Council, Twin Bayou District in the East Division
- Chartered organization: The Church of St. John the Divine, 2450 River Oaks Blvd. Houston, TX 77019
- Troop meetings: weekly on Mondays from 7:00-8:00 pm in the Scout Room, located in the lower level of the Parish Life Center.

Membership numbers as of August 2026

"A game with a purpose"

Lord Baden-Powell, founder of the Scouting movement, famously said that "Scouting is a game with a purpose." In the words of Troop 54's mission statement, we view that purpose as helping Scouts (i) grow into "responsible, compassionate, self-reliant citizens of God's world" who live by the Scout Oath and Scout Law, and (ii) have a lot of fun in the process. We place great emphasis on having a "Scout-led" Troop.

Troop 54 serves girls aged 11 to 17. As with most average-size Scout troops, we expect to have between 30 and 60 registered Scouts organized into small patrols. Our Scouts are expected to attend many different public and private schools and come from a variety of faiths.

Whom To Contact

A *Scout's* first point of contact with questions, concerns, etc., should always be her Patrol Leader, or failing that, her Patrol Assistant Scoutmaster ("PASM"). A *parent's* first point of contact should be his or her daughter's PASM or, if a problem persists, the Scoutmaster. (The Scoutmaster is usually ***very*** busy on Troop meeting nights, so if possible, please pick another time to speak to him about your daughter's advancement, etc.) For all summer camps, the single designated Scoutmaster / Trek Leader / Campmaster for that camp from Troop 54 is a *parent's* first point contact for issues related to that trip. If you need further help, contact the Troop Committee Chair.

Use of Email

Troop 54 makes heavy use of email; addresses and other contact information are taken from Scoutbook and also made available on the Troop 54 website. Therefore, it is important to keep contact information of all registered participants up to date in Scoutbook.

Uniforms

See the Uniforms section in this Troop Handbook. Uniform items and other Scouting items can be purchased at the Scout Shop, on the southeast corner of the North Loop (inside the loop) and East T.C. Jester, 2225 N Loop W.

Registering with Troop 54

Girls between the ages of 11 and 17 (inclusive) may join Troop 54. Cub Scouts girls who have completed the Arrow of Light (or completed the 5th grade) may join the Troop at age 10. See the Troop website for a list of forms that you and your Scout will need to complete (https://troop54htx.com/about/join-or-renew/).

What Troop 54 provides for New Scouts

The Troop provides each new Scout who has paid her dues with an embroidered Troop 54 neckerchief and slide, a Scouts BSA Handbook, handbook cover, unit number, and personalized name tag. All other personal gear is the responsibility of the Scout and her parents. The Troop furnishes each patrol with a stove, propane, cooking gear, a dining fly, and a lantern owned by St. John the Divine (SJD). SJD also owns a fleet of canoes, a troop trailer as well as other gear that Troop 54 shares with Troop 55.

Dues and Expenses

Dues include two separate components: (1) the Scouting America registration fee, paid directly to Scouting America through my.scouting.org on a rolling 12-month basis beginning with the month of initial registration; and (2) the Troop 54 fee, paid annually through the Troop 54 online store. Scouting America fees are set annually by Scouting America and are subject to change; Troop 54 does not receive any portion of those funds.

Scouts BSA Registration (Youth): $91.00 + credit card transaction fee (for 2026)

Scouts BSA Registration (Adult): $71.00 + credit card transaction fee (for 2026)

Troop 54 Dues (Youth): $110 for returning Scouts; $175 for new and transfer Scouts. This fee is paid each calendar year directly to the troop through the online store.

In addition to annual dues, each Scout should anticipate additional expenses, including approximately $160 for the full Scouts BSA uniform. Monthly campouts cost about $45 per event (includes meals), with potential added costs for bus transportation or special activities such as canoeing, boating, or shooting. Summer camp typically ranges from $400 to $700 for a week-long merit-badge session (excluding transportation). High-adventure programs (such as Philmont Scout Ranch) designed for older Scouts generally involve higher fees.

Financial Assistance

Scouts have opportunities to earn some or all their dues and expenses by participating in Troop fundraising activities; in addition, scholarships may also be available (see the Scholarships section of this handbook for more details).

Special Needs Scouts

Make the Scoutmaster and your Scout's PASM aware of your daughter's special needs.

Troop Committee

The Troop 54 Committee meets monthly each month (except June & July), either in person during a troop meeting or virtually. Dates are announced via the troop calendar and newsletter. All parents of Scouts and Adult leaders are encouraged to attend.

Adult Involvement

We need YOU! As with any troop, the "official" adult leaders can't possibly do it all. We have both "outdoor" and "indoor" adult jobs. We're friendly and supportive, we'll train you, and we absolutely, positively guarantee you'll have a great time. Experience shows that, **the more involved a Scout's parent is in the Troop's adult leadership**, the more likely the Scout is to remain in Scouting and someday **earn the rank of Eagle Scout.**

Adult Leader Registration

Adults wishing to serve in any leadership capacity in Troop 54 must register as BSA adult leaders. The BSA registration application is available online at https://beascout.scouting.org/. The application requires the applicant's Social Security number as well as contact information for three references. It also includes a mandatory authorization for the Sam Houston Area Council to conduct a criminal background check. The Troop Committee Chair and the Troop's Chartered Organization Representative are each required by BSA policy to review and approve all adult-leader registration applications. BSA policy requires the completion of Safeguarding Youth Training ("SYT") with each new adult registration application.

Adult Leader Training

Troop 54 strongly encourages all parents to take the Scout leader basic training courses listed in the Scouting America Position Trained Requirements. This training helps all parents understand and assist in achieving the Troop's program and goals. NOTE: Safeguarding Youth Training (SYT), which is one of these introductory courses, is **required** for all registered adult volunteers and especially any adult leader having direct contact with Scouts. SYT can be taken either online or in person.

The Scouting America's Guide to Safe Scouting has a good summary of its youth-protection guidelines. (Parents would also benefit from taking the Troop Committee Member Position Specific online training.) All but two of these introductory courses can be taken online in about 30 minutes to 1 hour each. The one exception is Introduction to Outdoor Leader Skills (or IOLS) which is in-person/overnight training, and required for, the Scoutmaster and all Assistant Scoutmasters.

Active Participation

The advancement requirements for each of the Scout ranks (as set forth in the Scouts BSA Handbook) includes some requirement that the Scout be active in her troop and patrol. The BSA Guide to Advancement defines that "Active Participation" requires that:

1. The Scout is registered.

2. The Scout is in good standing.

3. The Scout meets the unit's reasonable expectations; or, if not, a lesser level of activity is explained.

Set forth below are a set of guidelines outlining Troop 54's reasonable expectations for participation These guidelines articulate a minimum set of expectations for Active Participation.

As outlined in the Guide to Advancement, if a Scout falls below these minimum expectations, a special Board of Review will decide whether the Scout meets the requirement of participation in order to advance.

Troop 54's minimum expectations for active participation:

- For advancement to **Scout**, **Tenderfoot**, **Second Class** and **First Class**, active participation is specifically defined in the Scouts BSA Handbook. For example, for Second Class, a Scout must, "since joining, have participated in five separate troop/patrol activities (other than troop/patrol meetings), at least three must be held outdoors." Possible troop/patrol activities include, e.g., Campouts, Advancement Sessions, Courts of Honor and Service Projects, and are signed off by the Scout's PASM. Troop Activities do not include a merit badge class, or Cub Scout Pack or Den activity.
- For advancement to **Star**, **Life** and **Eagle**, the Scouts BSA Handbook requires more broadly that the Scout "be active in [her] unit (and patrol if [she is] in one) for at least [X number of] months as a [Prior Rank] Scout." **To satisfy this requirement, a Scout must:**
    - For each month (or a 30-day period/month equivalent) being counted, attend at least two "Troop Activities" during the month (or 30-day period/month equivalent). Troop Activities can include Troop Meetings, Service Projects, First Class Trail and other Advancement Sessions, or Troop outdoor activities such as a climbing session or canoeing outing; Troop Activities do not include a merit badge class, Court of Honor, or Venture Crew/Cub Scout Pack or Den activity.
    - In at least half of the months being counted, attend one Overnight Outdoor Activity. An Overnight Outdoor Activity includes, e.g., the Troop's monthly weekend campouts but does not include Cub Scout Pack or Venture Crew campouts. Attending an Overnight Outdoor Activity requires the Scout's presence and participation at the bulk of the activity/campout and must include staying overnight. Camping both Friday and Saturday night on a weekend campout constitutes one event (not two).
        - For Star, this would require 2 Overnight Outdoor Activities.
        - For Life and Eagle, this would require 3 Overnight Outdoor Activities each.
    - During each rank period (First Class to Star; Star to Life, and Life to Eagle), attend at least one Troop Court of Honor.
    - During the period from First Class through Eagle, at least one of the Overnight Outdoor Activities must include participation in a long-term Troop 54 summer camp, NYLT or NAYLE.
    - Note: Regarding Summer Camp: Participation in a week-long summer camp, NYLT or NAYLE (including participation as Staff) will satisfy both the Troop Activity and Overnight Outdoor Activity for a one-month equivalent.

- For Eagle Palms, to satisfy this Active Participation requirement, a Scout must:
  - Attend at least 2 Troop Activities during the month (or 30-day month equivalent) she is counting. Troop Activities can include Troop Meetings, Service Projects, First Class Trail and other Advancement Sessions, or Troop outdoor activities such as a weekend campout, climbing session or canoeing outing; Troop Activities do not include a merit badge class, Court of Honor, or Venture Crew/Cub Scout Pack or Den activity.
- NOTES:
  - The months for active participation need not be contiguous.
  - It is the Scout's responsibility to ensure she has signed in with her Patrol Leader, ASPL, or Adult Leader to be counted as participating. The Patrol Leader, ASPL, or Adult Leader is responsible for turning in the attendance roster to the Troop Attendance Chair who will enter the participation into Scoutbook for tracking and advancement.
- These guidelines do not address the completion of leadership requirements for advancement to Star, Life, and Eagle.

Advancement

General Advancement Information

See the Scouts BSA Handbook for the specific requirements to advance to each rank. See also Scouting America's Guide to Advancement. Scouting's advancement program is a *self-paced* program. Parents should familiarize themselves with the advancement program, but it is essential that parents step back and allow their Scout to experience and learn from the safe failures, recoveries, and successes of the advancement program.

Advancement: The Scout's Responsibility

Each Scout should set a specific target date for a Scoutmaster conference and then a board of review for her next rank, then **work backwards** from that final target date to set interim target dates for completing the various requirements. Scouts are responsible for keeping track of their own progress, setting their advancement goals, and designing their own course and pace. The adult leaders and parents will encourage them, but success or failure is up to the Scout herself. Each Scout can check her advancement status through the approvals in her own Scouts BSA Handbook and on the Troop Web site, www.troop54.org.

A Scout should follow these basic procedures for advancing in rank:

1. Meet the requirements for the advancement or award; have all required spaces in her Scouts BSA Handbook signed by the appropriate adult leader(s). Unlike Cub Scouts, **parents do not sign off on their daughters' advancement work.**
2. Make an appointment for a Scoutmaster conference. *The Scout herself should do this, not the parent.*
3. Ask the Board of Review Coordinator, Advancement Chair or the Troop Committee Chair to schedule a board of review. *The Scout herself should do this, not the parent.* When a Scout completes a requirement for rank advancement or a merit badge, it's her responsibility to make sure that her book (or merit-badge card) is signed off by her PASM (or merit-badge counselor). When a Scout advances to the next rank or completes a merit badge, the Advancement Chair

records that in our electronic database. If a Scout completes a "partial" on a merit badge, that too will be recorded in our database. But to repeat, it is the Scout's responsibility to make sure this happens.

Advancement Timetable (Suggested)

Although the Scout advancement program is self-paced, the following is Troop 54's suggested time frame for minimum time and experience for rank advancement.
First Class: 9 to 12 months active; one summer camp.
Star: 12-36 months active; two camps (summer camp or National Youth Leadership Training)
Life: 3+ years active; two camps (summer camp or National Youth Leader Training) and one high adventure camp
A Scout who regularly and actively participates in Troop 54 activities should be able to advance to First Class rank during her first 9 to 12 months in the Troop.

Boards of Review

In Troop 54, each Scout must personally contact the Board of Review Coordinator, Advancement Chair, or the Troop Committee Chair to arrange a time for a board of review, except for her board of review for the Eagle Rank. *(A board of review for Eagle rank is scheduled by the Troop's Chief Eagle Advisor after the Sam Houston Area Council has approved the Scout's Eagle Application. One member of the Eagle board of review must be a representative of the Twin Bayou District from outside the Troop.)* All parents are encouraged to participate as members of boards of review and can do so without any training. The Troop 54 board of review report form has sample 'interview' questions on the back.

Another excellent source of questions is "A Guide to Conducting Boards of Review" by Ray Klaus. This is a good way for you to meet other parents and find out things that are going on at campouts and troop meetings. *(Some parents complain that the extent of dialogue following a campout is something like this:*
Q: "How was the campout?" A: "Fine." Participating in boards of review will help you know what is happening.)

For an overview of how to conduct a board of review, see "Boards of Review" at MeritBadge.org, based on the BSA publication Advancement Committee Policies and Procedures, 33088B. Some key points:
A board of review cannot be conducted until the Scoutmaster conference for that rank has been completed.

A board of review is made up of at least three and not more than six members of the Troop Committee. The Scout must present herself at the scheduled time *with her Scouts BSA Handbook properly signed* for the requirements for rank to which she is advancing. The Scout should be *in full Field Uniform (Class A).* Unless excused because of other circumstances approved by Scoutmaster or Board of Review chair. *The review is not an examination; the board does not re-test the candidate.* The Scout should be asked where she learned her skill, who taught her, and the value she gained from passing this requirement. The Scoutmaster, the Scout's PASMs, and the Scout's relatives and guardians *may not serve* as members of her board of review.

- The decision of the board of review is arrived at through discussion and must be unanimous.
- The chair of the board of review fills out a Board of Review Report Form and gives it to the Troop Committee Chair or Advancement Chair.

Scouts BSA Handbook

The Troop provides each new Scout with a Scouts BSA Handbook; if it gets lost, the Scout must purchase a replacement at the Scout Shop at her own expense. Each Scout should safeguard her Handbook by (i) clearly marking her name on the outside, and (ii) protecting it from "the elements," for example, with a cover available for purchase at the Scout Shop. The Handbook contains a wealth of practical information needed for advancement. Each Scout should carefully study the relevant section(s) of the Handbook when working on rank advancement.

A Scout's advancement is recorded in the pages at the back of her Handbook. *Each Scout is responsible* for asking the Scoutmaster (or his/her assistants) to sign her Handbook as soon as she completes any requirement. Even though advancement data is entered into the Troop's electronic Scoutbook.com database, **the Scout's Handbook is the official and primary advancement record.** and should be safeguarded in case of database problems. Before each campout or advancement session a Scout should photocopy all signed advancement pages of her Handbook in case the Handbook gets lost.

Buddy System (Activities)

The buddy system for Scout activities is very simple: *Never leave your buddy nor let her leave you.* If the buddy system is good enough for Navy SEALs, it's good enough for us. The buddy system should be used:

- For all water activities;
- When outside the immediate camp area; or
- If separating from the main group when traveling.

If you get caught without your buddy at a "buddy check," there will be consequences. For example, if you are swimming, both you and your buddy will have to get out of the water for a while. The buddy system for merit badge work is slightly different; see that section for more details.

Campouts

Troop 54's Weekend Campout Program

The Troop camps at least three times per semester (in addition to summer camps). The equipment list in the online Troop Handbook will give you an idea of what you will need to buy for your Scout. Each campout is organized around a program theme, for example:

• Canoeing and kayaking in the Hill Country, lakes, and the San Marcos and Guadalupe Rivers.
• Backpacking and climbing at Enchanted Rock, plus an in-town lock-in at Texas Rock Gym.
• Range and Target activities (archery, BB guns) at Camp Strake.

Campout Transportation

The Troop expects to travel to all campouts via private cars, or buses or vans that leave from St. John the Divine, on Friday around 4:45 pm. For campouts that are one to two hours away we will usually take private cars. For longer trips, such as Enchanted Rock, we often charter a coach bus. The cost for transportation is included in the campout signup. *Adult drivers are strongly encouraged to take as many Scouts with them as possible* (always observing the two-deep rule for youth protection). Per the Guide to Safe Scouting, we do not travel in convoys. The Troop trailers are pulled by an adult driver.

Campout Food ("Grub")

Both Scouts and adults (the "Goat Patrol") cook by patrols. Each patrol's designated grubmaster for the campout is responsible for planning the weekend menu, buying food, and supervising the cooking. Goats should plan to model good camping practices by cooking foods that Scouts could cook with their standard patrol gear. If a Scout or adult signs up for a campout and food is purchased, the Scout or adult is responsible for the grub fee even if he or she ends up not attending the campout. **TIP:** Before your new Scout's first campout, have her do some cooking **and clean-up** at home (ideally, together with her patrol); that will make it easier for her (or them) to cook and clean up at their first campout.

Campout Jobs

Everyone works at a campout, Scouts and adults alike. Each Patrol Leader designates individual Scouts to be in charge of planning patrol menus, arranging transportation, preparing equipment, buying food ("grubmaster"), cooking and clean up. Every patrol, including the Goats, should have a duty roster covering the entire campout weekend.

Campout Schedule

The typical schedule for campouts is approximately as follows:

- **Friday night:** Arrive at the campsite, set up camp, have a snack ("cracker barrel").
- **Saturday:** Breakfast. Morning activities. Lunch. Afternoon activities. Free time / advancement work. Dinner. Campfire.
- **Sunday:** Breakfast. Scout's Own chapel service. Break camp: clean up patrol equipment; inspection and stowage of patrol equipment. Clean sweep of the campsite. Depart for home.

Camping Equipment

Each Scout is responsible for her personal gear; see the list of recommended personal gear. Troop 54 provides shared patrol gear, including lanterns, stoves and cooking equipment, for each patrol. A Patrol Quartermaster (QM) is responsible for her patrol's cooking gear (action packer) on each campout. Generally, that Scout will bring home this gear from the Troop meeting the Monday before the campout. The Patrol QM should check for missing items and clean the gear if needed. The Patrol QM will also return home with this gear after the campout. She should clean it thoroughly and restock the action packer before returning it to the Scout closet at the following meeting. *(Patrol members should help clean up patrol gear* **before** *leaving the campout.)* No food should be left in the patrol equipment box between campouts.

Campout Rules

The following rules apply to all Scouts and adults. The Scout Oath and Scout Law govern everyone in camp, including both Scouts and adults, at all times.

Sign-ups: Everyone, Scouts and Adults, must be signed up in advance to attend any campout. (How to sign up will be announced at Troop meetings or by Troop newsletter or email.) **Just showing up at camp or at the departure point is not acceptable.**

Uniform requirements: Scout and adult leaders are to wear their Field Uniform (Class A) to and from the campout and to flags. Scouts should wear the Activity Uniform (Class B) for the remaining time, except for sleeping or activities that require different attire. *See the Uniform section on this Handbook for more details*

Camping is by patrols: At campouts, patrol members camp together in the location designated for their patrol. Sharing of tents by Scouts within a patrol is encouraged. **Adults do not share tents with Scouts, including their own daughters, and generally avoid the area of their own daughter's patrol.** Adults (the "Goat Patrol") ordinarily will camp in their own designated campsite. On some occasions, two to three adults (PASMs) will be assigned to camp with each Scout patrol, but not with the patrols of their own daughters.

Stay out of other patrols' areas: Scouts should request permission before entering another patrol's campsite. Adults should request permission before entering any Scout patrol site (except that patrol's PASMs, who camp with the patrol). Adults should discourage Scouts from being in the Goat area unless they have a specific need to be there.

Hands off: Don't touch someone else's equipment, tent, or belongings, unless you have the owner's prior permission.

Everyone works: All Scouts and adults are expected to do their share of patrol duties in accordance with the duty roster.

Keep the campsite squared away: All campers are to continually keep shipshape their tents, personal gear, and patrol- and troop gear. The entire Troop assembles for a "clean sweep" of the camping area at the end of each campout.

Fire safety: Scouts may build and light ground fires (cooking and campfires) only *when* and *where* authorized by the Scoutmaster, Patrol Assistant Scoutmaster, or the Campmaster. No unauthorized fires are permitted. Fire safety rules will be strictly enforced. *A fire must never be left unattended.*

No electronic equipment, liquid fuels or other prohibited items. The use of liquid fuels by Scouts or Goats for starting any type of fire is **prohibited**. EXCEPTION*:* If the Scoutmaster has previously authorized the use of backpacking stoves at a campout, liquid fuel will be dispensed and re-collected by the quartermaster or his/her designee at the campout. No Scout or Goat except the quartermaster or his designee shall travel to or from a campout with liquid fuel in a backpacking stove tank. (See also the list of prohibited items and Mobile Communication Device Policy.

No flames in or near tents. No fires or open flames (including stoves, lanterns or propane bottles) are allowed in or near tents.

Buddy system. The buddy system is simple: Never leave your buddy nor let her leave you.

Vehicle rules. Keep vehicles out of the campsite at all times, including when loading and unloading Scouts, adults and their personal gear, except as specifically authorized by the Campmaster. Leave cars in the designated parking areas.
Water-safety rules. Scouts and Goats are to follow Safety Afloat and Safe Swim Defense procedures and policies at all times for all water activities. All Scouts and adults must take the standard BSA swim test to determine how they can participate in aquatic activities.
Hazardous Weather: during a campout a unit may experience hazardous weather situations including thunderstorms, flash floods, excessive heat, ice, and/or snowstorms. To mitigate the risk of such situations, the Scoutmaster and/or Campmaster will adjust plans and activities as necessary and as prescribed by BSA's Hazardous Weather training (which is required for all Assistant Scoutmasters and Scoutmasters).
Lights Out: All Scouts are to be inside their tents at 10:00 pm (or otherwise at the Scoutmaster's or Campmaster's discretion). Lights will be out and talking will stop by 10:30 pm. No Scout should leave her tent (except for brief trips to the latrine or to report illness or other emergency) until reveille the next morning.

No fighting, hazing, harassment, or excessive rough housing: There will be no hazing or harassing (physical or verbal) of any kind. Fighting, hitting, wrestling, or rough horseplay are not permitted. A Scout will not put herself or another Scout in physical danger.

No early departures unless excused: Scouts are strongly encouraged to attend the entire campout. Scouts may not leave the immediate camp area without the express permission of the Scoutmaster or Campmaster and must check out with the Campmaster just before departure. Unless a Scout has an urgent need to leave early and has been excused by the Senior Patrol Leader (SPL) and Scoutmaster, all Scouts are to remain in camp until dismissed by their Patrol Leader after the Troop's "clean sweep" of the campsite.

No alcoholic beverages (it's Scouting America policy) **or illegal drugs** (it's the law). **Tobacco use** by adults is strongly discouraged (it's Scouting America policy), and by Scouts is **prohibited** (it's the law).

No non-Troop 54 siblings / youth: Non-Scout siblings are not welcome on campouts. Their presence tends to detract from the program focus and undermine enforcement of campout rules.

Consequences of failing to abide by the camp and Troop rules may include time-outs, extra work detail, calls home, *being sent home*, or in severe cases being suspended or even expelled from the Troop. Parents may be required to travel to camp at their expense and take a Scout home who fails to abide by the Troop and camp rules. A warning system will be in effect for minor inappropriate behavior problems. Consequences will be assigned as warranted. The most severe consequences may be assigned directly without assignment of less-severe consequences first. In the case of a situation requiring disciplinary action, only the Scoutmaster or single designated Trek Leader / Campmaster for a summer camp should be having those discussions with the Scout and/or their Parent(s). The Troop Committee Chair may be included, as necessary.

Campout Personal Gear

Scouts should strive to bring the **minimum** gear necessary to a campout, and to pack it so that all gear can be carried by the Scout to her patrol's campsite in a **single** trip. Print out the list below and use it as a checklist for each campout: BSA Troop 54 Camping Checklist (pdf). The Scouts BSA Handbook also has helpful information on camping and camping gear, especially its list of Outdoor Essentials that should be taken on any hike or other activity.

- ☐ Scouts BSA Handbook for advancement work (make a photocopy of all advancement pages that have signatures; leave the photocopy home in case the Handbook gets lost)
- ☐ Scout uniform - wear the Field Uniform (Class A) to and from the campout and at flags; wear the Activity Uniform (Class B) the rest of the time
- ☐ Sleeping gear and pack
- ☐ Sleeping bag - should be "backpackable," with a stuff sack, and sufficient for 20-degree weather, e.g., at Enchanted Rock
- ☐ Ground pad for sleeping bag, or inflatable Thermarest®
- ☐ Backpack (internal- or external frame)
- ☐ Tent (no larger than 2- or 3-person size). May be shared, but only with a Scout in the same patrol.
- ☐ Ground cloth for tent
- ☐ Water bottle(s) or Camelbak®-type water sack with drinking tube (sized to carry a minimum of 2 liters)
- ☐ Reusable cup, plate/bowl, knife, fork and spoon - the Troop does not use paper plates, plastic utensils, etc., except on rare occasions
- ☐ Folding knife (up to 4" blade; no sheath knives)
- ☐ Sturdy rain jacket and pants - ponchos do not provide sufficient protection, especially in wet winter weather
- ☐ Head lamp using small 2 AAA batteries (preferred) or small flashlight (head lamps are very handy for after-dark work in camp, e.g., pitching tents, cooking, dishes, etc.)
- ☐ Waterproof or water-resistant boots (not typical athletic shoes or sneakers)
- ☐ Small towel, toiletries (soap, toothbrush, non-aerosol insect repellent and sunscreen)
- ☐ Synthetic or wool hiking socks *
- ☐ Synthetic t-shirts or shirts *
- ☐ Extra underwear, including synthetic "long johns" for cold-weather camping.*
- ☐ Synthetic fleece jacket or pullover *
- ☐ Synthetic pants, either fleece or nylon, with good pockets — zip-offs are best *
- ☐ A warm hat (not a baseball cap) that will shed water
- ☐ One-piece swimsuit, swim shirts, quick-dry shirts, or other activity-appropriate clothing

** Note to Parents:* Cotton clothing is a very poor choice for camping; it's bulky, cold and slow to dry when wet, which can contribute to hypothermia. Layers of quick-drying synthetics such as Supplex®, are much better. Polartec®, or a similar synthetic fleece, is excellent for layering and remains warm even when wet.

Certain dangerous or disruptive items are prohibited at campouts; see the list of Prohibited Items for details.

Chartered Organization

Scout troops do not exist in a vacuum. Every troop is sponsored by a church or other community organization that has been granted a one-year charter by the Boy Scouts of America ("BSA"). Troop 54's chartered organization is The (Episcopal) Church of **St. John the Divine**, often referred to as "SJD." The church received its first BSA charter for Boy Troop 55 shortly after the parish was established in 1939 - the Troop itself actually pre-dates the parish - and has been continuously rechartered since that time. Troop 54 was chartered for girls in February 2019, and first Scout meetings began immediately thereafter. **NOTE: Scouts in Troop 54 are of many different faiths, and membership in the Troop is not restricted to SJD parishioners.**

The **Chartered Organization Representative** is a member of the chartered organization designated by its head to serve as a liaison between the chartered organization and its Scouting units.

Courts of Honor

Advancement is recognized at a formal Troop Court of Honor held periodically throughout the year. The Court of Honor provides an opportunity for Scouts to be acknowledged for their work. At a Court of Honor, each advancing Scout will receive a card for each rank advancement and merit badge. This proves receipt of the award - if other records are lost or incorrect, these cards could be the Scout's last-resort way of verifying her advancement. It's a good idea to collect and store these cards in a safe place in the unlikely event of other records being lost or incomplete.

Families are strongly encouraged to attend as the Court of Honor is a special occasion. In the case of higher ranks, parents are asked to stand with their Scout as she receives her rank award.

Expense Reimbursement

The Scoutmaster, Assistant Scoutmaster, Troop Committee members, and other volunteers who have or will extend personal funds for Scout activities, and expect to receive reimbursement for those funds, must know that such funds are:

1. to be within the established budget which is approved in the fall of each year or;
2. approved by the Troop treasurer, Scoutmaster and/or Troop Committee Chairman as funds which are available, but which are not so budgeted.

This means that Campmasters who have responsibility for monthly camping activities, summer camps, or other such activities must project costs and assess participants for the expenses associated with that specific activity in order to not exceed any budgeted funds which may be available from the Troop Committee. Campmasters for summer camps are expected to create a budget and collect sufficient assessments from the participants so that the entire activity will be self-supporting. Otherwise, those who spend personal funds on Troop programs do so at the risk that they might not be fully reimbursed.

Fundraising

Scouts have opportunities to earn some or all their dues and expenses by participating in Troop fundraising activities; in addition, scholarships may also be available (see the Scholarship section of this handbook for more details).

1. to be within the established budget which is approved in the fall of each year or;
2. approved by the Troop treasurer, Scoutmaster and/or Troop Committee Chairman as funds which are available, but which are not so budgeted.

This means that Campmasters who have responsibility for monthly camping activities, summer camps, or other such activities must project costs and assess participants for the expenses associated with that specific activity in order to not exceed any budgeted funds which may be available from the Troop Committee. Campmasters for summer camps are expected to create a budget and collect sufficient assessments from the participants so that the entire activity will be self-supporting. Otherwise, those who spend personal funds on Troop programs do so at the risk that they might not be fully reimbursed.

General fundraising

Troop-sponsored fundraising events (e.g., Council popcorn sales in the fall, Scout Fair tickets in the spring, fertilizer sales, etc.), provide important fundraising for the Scouting program. Troop 54 expects to receive approximately 30% of the proceeds of such sales. Troop 54 then credits the funds back to the Scout who sold the popcorn or tickets, and such credits are used to offset future fees for summer camps. Thus, participation in the popcorn and ticket sales provides each Scout with a way to earn some or all of her camp expenses.

Friends of Scouting annual campaign

Troop 54 will participate in this fundraising campaign each winter to support the Sam Houston Area Council ("SHAC"). Contributions are entirely voluntary but strongly encouraged. None of a Scout's troop dues goes to SHAC. For many years, parents and friends of Troop 55 have generated larger contributions than any other troop in the Twin Bayou District. Troop 54 will be justly proud of its philanthropic culture of supporting Scouting in the Houston area.

Goat Patrol

At campouts and Troop meetings, all adults present, other than the Scoutmaster and Assistant Scoutmasters, comprise the "Old Goats" Patrol, which is headed by the Troop Committee Chair or his or her designee (at campouts, that will often be the Goat Grubmaster).

The Goats are expected to operate by the patrol method, in part to serve as a model for Scout patrols, and in part because the patrol method works very well. See also the discussion in the "Troop meetings" section of this Handbook about the need for the Goats to stay out of the Troop meeting per se.

Medications

Scouts who take medications should do so during Troop activities, including campouts and summer camp. We know from experience that Scouts who don't take their meds may well cause problems for themselves as well as for other Scouts and adult leaders.

Parents should regularly update their Scouts' medical forms with all meds being taken or prescribed. Before departure for a campout, etc., each Scout's parent should give the Scout's meds to the duty **Health and Safety Officer (HSO)** in a plastic bottle clearly labeled with the Scout's name and dosage information. (The duty HSO might, but might not, be a physician, nurse, etc.) The HSO, in consultation with the Campmaster and PASMs, will decide how best to administer the meds. For example:

- At Enchanted Rock, where patrols (except new Scouts) backpack out to different sites in "the back country," the HSO likely will give a Scout's meds to one of the PASMs who will be with that Scout's patrol.
- At a merit-badge summer camp where the whole Troop contingent camps together, the HSO might decide to administer all meds him- or herself at a series of Troop-wide "pill calls." No Scout should share any prescription medication with any other person *(it's against the law),* nor any other medication without permission of both Scouts' parents.

Meetings (Troop)

The Troop's weekly meetings are on most Monday nights during the school year, at 7:00 pm in the Scout Room at The Church of St. John the Divine (Episcopal), our chartered organization at 2450 River Oaks Blvd. Scouts are NOT required to attend every weekly Troop meeting, but more is better. Our meetings are run by the Scouts themselves, with discreet coaching by adult leaders only when needed; that means meetings may seem chaotic.

Scouts who miss a lot of meetings also miss out on the fun; they start falling behind their peers in skill development; and often they eventually drift away from Scouting entirely.

Regular attendance at Troop meetings and activities is required for advancement.

Scouts should let their Patrol Leaders know when they will be unable to attend a meeting or activity. Scouts who miss meetings are responsible for obtaining any information they may have missed.

Scouts sit by patrol at Troop meetings.

The Scout Sign (ask your daughter to show it to you) is used to call for order, quiet, and attention, and should be observed by both Scouts and adults.

The Senior Patrol Leader (SPL) or one of her assistants might schedule different patrols to act as "service patrols" for Troop meetings. The service patrol typically sets up the Scout Room for the meeting; conducts the flag ceremony at the beginning of the meeting; and puts gear away after the meeting.

While any parent may observe the parent's Scout at any Troop activity, our Scouts have consistently expressed the view that **adults should stay out of the Troop meeting per se.** The Troop strongly encourages parents who are not Assistant Scoutmasters (PASM) to instead attend adult information and training sessions and visit other adults outside the Scout Room.

Any PASM or other adult who sits in on a Troop meeting should **take a seat** at the back of the room - don't stand or walk around in the room - and **remain quiet**.

Merit Badges (For Scouts, Parents, And Adult Leaders)

The guidelines below are based on the experiences of adult leaders in Troops 54 and 55 and Scouts BSA documents *Guide to Advancement 2025* (33088) - Section 7 (the Merit Badge Program) and *A Guide for Merit Badge Counseling* (512-065). In all cases, the two guides are the final authority if they address a specific issue.

Basic Information

Scouts wishing to advance in rank above First Class must earn a specified minimum number of merit badges for each rank. There are more than 135 merit badges covering a range of outdoor skills, life skills, hobbies, and careers. Some are designed to be of interest to younger Scouts and others to older Scouts. The rank of Eagle requires 21 merit badges, with 14 of them prescribed.

The difficulty of a merit badge depends on the badge and on the age and experience of the Scout. There are four basic categories of merit badges:

- Life skills – e.g., Personal Management, Citizenship in the Community
- Scout skills – e.g., Camping, First Aid, Pioneering, Orienteering
- Careers – e.g., Engineering, Law, Health Care Professions, American Business
- Hobbies – e.g., Stamp Collecting, Collections, Pets, Rifle Shooting, Canoeing

Note that the merit badges required for the rank of Eagle come from the first two categories.

Before beginning work on any merit badge or attending a group or virtual merit badge opportunity, a Scout must meet with their unit leader (Scoutmaster or delegated Assistant Scoutmaster) to identify an approved counselor for the merit badge work. This discussion is documented through adult leader approval in Scoutbook or signature on the Application for Merit Badge blue card. **Because of the size of Troop 54, the Scoutmaster has delegated authority to approve merit badges to the Scout's Patrol Assistant Scoutmaster (PASM)** or **Assistant Scoutmaster** (**ASPL**) leading a camp when the merit badge counselor, merit badge class, or merit badge camp is approved by the Sam Houston Area Council.

Current requirements for each merit badge are available online. Check for the latest requirements and download free digital pamphlets here: https://www.scouting.org/skills/merit-badges/all/

Many merit badge counselors work with groups of Scouts by holding merit badge classes on an occasional basis during the year. Announcements and signups for merit badge activities are made generally by email, in the troop newsletter, or by announcements at Troop meetings. Many merit badges can be earned in a group setting at summer camp or in district or council merit badge fairs.

Due to the nature of some merit badges, a Scout attending a merit badge class at a summer camp, merit badge fair, or museum might complete only a portion of the requirements for a merit badge, resulting in a "partial". Under these circumstances, the Scout should also identify the counselor she plans to use to complete the requirements.

Once all requirements are met, the merit badge counselor will approve them electronically in Scoutbook or sign the physical blue card. If approved electronically in Scoutbook, no further action is required from the Scout regarding submission. If using a physical blue card, the Scout submits the signed blue card to the Troop Advancement Chair. The Troop Advancement Chair reviews it for accuracy (without retesting requirements), signs the "Applicant's Record" portion, and then records the completion in Scoutbook.

Finally, the Scout receives the merit badge and achievement card at the next Court of Honor.

Troop 54 strongly recommends that a Scout should not:

- Earn more than three Eagle-required merit badges with the same counselor

- Earn more than five total merit badges with the same counselor
- Earn any merit badge with the Scout's parent as counselor unless the Scout is part of a merit badge class of five or more Scouts

Completing Merit Badge Requirements

A Scout cannot earn a merit badge merely by simply sitting through a class. Each Scout must individually demonstrate to the counselor that she has met each requirement for the badge. This can often be difficult to do in a class-type setting.

Each Scout is expected to follow the requirements exactly as stated in the merit badge pamphlet—no more and no less. If the requirement says *show* or *demonstrat*e, then just talking about the requirement or watching it demonstrated is not enough. The same is true for words or phrases such as *make*, *list*, *in the field*, *collect*, *identify*, and *label*.

Worksheets for most merit badges are available through various online resources. Merit badge counselors may ask you to use these worksheets, and many do, but simply filling out these worksheets is not evidence that the actual requirements were passed. The worksheets exist simply as a tool to aid communication between the Scout and the counselor.

Neither a counselor nor the Troop may modify, add, or delete requirements for a merit badge. Nevertheless, a Scout on his or her own initiative may exceed the requirements.

There is no time limit for completion of merit badge requirements, as long as the requirements are completed before the Scout's 18th birthday. A Scout may work with more than one counselor on completing requirements. For instance, a Scout might not complete all requirements at a summer camp. Subsequent counselors may not, however, retest the Scout on completed and documented requirements. To prevent confusion when such situations arise, the Scout should keep all records associated with the completed requirements to the extent possible and any issued blue cards until the merit badge is approved as completed by the PASM or Scoutmaster.

For practical advice about earning a merit badge, the following web sites might be useful:

- Scouting America Merit Badges Overview (https://www.scouting.org/programs/scouts-bsa/advancement-and-awards/merit-badges/)
- Boy Scout Trail (https://www.boyscouttrail.com/boy-scouts/merit-badges.asp)
- US Scouting Service Project (http://www.usscouts.org/mb/mbindex.asp)

Working with a Merit Badge Counselor

Counselors are volunteers and want Scouts to complete merit badges. Many of them are parents of your fellow Scouts in Troop 54. They will do their best to help you if you keep them apprised of your progress and have patience with them in scheduling meetings. If you don't hear from a counselor a few days after sending an email, please follow up with a second email. Adults can get busy, or email can get lost, so do not hesitate to try again.

As a cornerstone of Scouting, both counselors and Scouts must always observe Youth Protection guidelines. Scouts and counselors must always copy a parent or guardian on any communication. If a Scout

wishes to meet with a counselor for a one-on-one session, the Scout must plan to include a parent in the meeting if a second adult will not otherwise be present. If a second adult, whether a parent or other, is not present, expect the counselor to terminate the discussion and ask to reschedule the meeting.

With the advent of video conferencing software such as Zoom, counselors may ask Scouts to meet virtually rather than in person. This mode of communication is acceptable but still subject to Youth Protection guidelines.

External Merit Badge Classes

The Sam Houston Area Council has approved certain organizations to offer merit badge camps or classes. For instance, the Houston Museum of Natural Science offers selected merit badges using approved counselors throughout the year.

Here are the signs of a good merit badge class or workshop:

- Prerequisites are listed for requirements that should be completed before the class or for items that need to be brought to the class.
- The sponsoring organization makes it clear which requirements cannot be completed at the class and must be done before or after the class. These should include requirements that require a log or diary kept over several weeks.
- The sponsoring organization lists the resources that it will make available during the class.
- If asked, the sponsoring organization can present evidence that the counselor is registered with the Sam Houston Area Council and is up-to-date on Safeguarding Youth Training.

Merit Badge Process

1. Ask the appropriate unit leader to initiate the process before beginning any merit badge. The unit leader will either approve beginning the merit badge in Scoutbook or issue a blue card. The unit leader is -
   - **PASM** approval for merit badges offered by SHAC-approved counselors and partner organizations, SHAC events, and Scouts BSA summer camps
   - **Scoutmaster** approval for merit badges offered outside of SHAC or outside of an official Scouts BSA summer camp (rare)
2. Identify in your request how you will be counseled for the merit badge by providing the following information:
   - Merit badge class or workshop
   - Merit badge counselor you identified on your own, who should be from the approved list of the Sam Houston Area Council (available in Scoutbook and on the Troop 54 website)
   - Merit badge counselor recommended by your PASM or Scoutmaster
3. In rare cases, you might identify a counselor outside the Sam Houston Area Council. If so, please ask the counselor for the following information:
   - Evidence of approval to counsel the merit badge from another BSA council
   - Evidence of current Youth Protection Training
   - Troop 54 leaders are unable to see this information in Scoutbook for counselors outside the Sam Houston Area Council. Only the Troop 54 Scoutmaster may approve such counselors.

You can begin work on a merit badge before you have a counselor, but the counselor makes the final decision on whether to accept it (which is why it's best to reach out to a counselor before you start). Once you have a counselor, the best practice is to meet at least twice with the counselor. The first meeting is to set expectations and to cover any requirements already completed. The second meeting is to complete all remaining requirements, especially if logs or journals are part of the requirements. Some Scouts do complete a merit badge in one sitting with a counselor, and some need more than two meetings.

After you have completed all requirements, and a merit badge counselor has approved all of them in Scoutbook or on a blue card, you still need to get e-approval in Scoutbook or a signature on your blue card from your PASM or Scoutmaster. He or she may ask you how you completed one or more of the requirements as a quality-control check.

Please retain all of your worksheets, essays, projects, logs, etc. until you have completed this step. Your PASM or Scoutmaster, however, will not retest you on any requirement.

If your PASM or Scoutmaster realizes that you are missing a requirement (a "partial"), or were not asked to demonstrate a requirement, they will help you find a counselor to complete the requirement.

If you go to a merit badge workshop or class and do not meet all the requirements at the class, please ask your PASM or Scoutmaster to recommend a merit badge counselor to help you complete the remainder.

Recommended Merit Badge Sequence

Based upon the experience of Troops 54 and 55, Eagle-required merit badges and certain non-Eagle-required badges are best earned at different levels of physical and mental maturity. The troop recommends approaching these merit badges in the following age-appropriate sequence.

An asterisk (*) indicates an Eagle-required merit badge. A double asterisk (**) indicates a merit badge that is one of several choices in an Eagle-required merit-badge group. The list below is not a comprehensive list of the non-Eagle required badges.

Level 1 - New Scouts, ages 11-12, 5th-6th grades

First Aid *
Swimming ** (best at Scout summer camp)
Family Life *
Emergency Preparedness ** (First Aid MB required)
Environmental Science **
Basketry
Woodcarving
Leatherwork
Fishing
Climbing
Mammal Study
Pets
Dog Care

Level 2 - First Class & Star, ages 12+, 6th-7th grade up

Camping * (7th Grade)
Citizenship in the Nation *

Citizenship in the World *
Citizenship in the Community * (7th Grade+)
Cycling **
Cooking *
Environmental Science * (7th grade+)
Personal Fitness *
Sustainability **
Pioneering
Canoeing
Collections
Geology
Golf
Home Repairs
Law
Medicine
Nature
Photography
Radio
Reading
Scholarship
Sports

Level 3 - Star & Life, ages 14+, 8th-12th grade

Communications *
Hiking **
Lifesaving ** (Swimming MB required)
Personal Management *
Auto Mechanics
Backpacking
Rowing
Wilderness Survival
Whitewater

Merit Badges and Counselors (For Interested Parents)

The guidelines below are based on the experiences of adult leaders in Troops 54 and 55 and Scouts BSA guides *Guide to Advancement 2021* (33088) - section 7 (the Merit Badge Program), and *A Guide for Merit Badge Counseling* (512-065). In all cases, the two guides are the final authority if they address a specific issue.

Introduction

Every parent can help Scouts by serving as a merit-badge counselor (MBC) for one, several, or many merit badges. As a coach, the counselor advises the Scout about steps to take to fulfill the badge's requirements. As a counselor, he or she evaluates the Scout's performance and determines whether the Scout has met the prescribed objectives in the requirements.

Requirements to Serve as a Counselor

Merit badge counselors must be adults of good character, age 18 or older, who possess recognized skills and education in their subject areas, along with the ability to effectively work with Scout-age youth. Counselors must be registered for this specific position with Scouting America (using the Adult Application form), even if already registered as an adult leader in a unit. All merit badge counselors must also be approved by the Council advancement committee.

Merit badge counselors must complete the Safeguarding Youth Training course; see the *Training for Adult Leaders* section of this Handbook for more details.

An older Scout, while not yet 18 years old, may assist a registered and approved adult merit badge counselor in teaching a merit badge subject. However, the adult counselor retains full responsibility for ensuring that each Scout who works on the badge personally completes and demonstrates every requirement. This policy is the foundation for Scouts assisting in merit badge instruction, such as at summer camps.

Application Process for Merit Badge Counselor ("MBC")

Merit Badge Counselors are adult leaders who volunteer at the Council level, not at the Troop or District level. Even if you have registered as an adult leader with Troop 54, you need to submit a new adult application to add the Merit Badge Counselor position to your profile: https://my.scouting.org/VES/OnlineReg/1.0.0/?tu=UF-MB-576tb51

In addition to the *Adult Application*, you need to file a *Merit Badge Counselor Information* form (form 34405), which can be found at the following link: https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/34405.pdf

The following merit badges require specific certifications or training to counsel:

- Climbing
- Snow Sports
- Canoeing
- Kayaking
- Lifesaving
- Motor Boating
- Rowing
- Scuba Diving
- Small Boat Sailing
- Swimming
- Water Sports
- Whitewater
- Archery
- Rifle Shooting
- Shotgun Shooting

For any of these merit badges, please review section 7.0.1.1 of the *Guide to Advancement* for specific requirements and note your qualifications on the form. You should also consult the *Guide to Safe Scouting* for specific activity requirements.

For other merit badges, you do not need to describe your qualifications in elaborate detail, nor do you need to be an expert. A hobbyist level of interest and competency is adequate in most cases. If you wish to restrict yourself to counseling only Scouts in Troop 54 or in Twin Bayou District, you can check the appropriate circle. If you wish to add merit badges or drop them from your counseling list, you can fill out another copy of the *Merit Badge Counselor Information* form.

Once the adult application form is approved, the Merit Badge Counselor Information form may be taken to the SHAC office or emailed to 576Reg@scouting.org.

Merit Badge Counselor Training

Online position-specific training is available for MBCs through the *My Scouting* website, and new MBCs should take it at their earliest convenience. The guides referenced in the beginning of this section are also excellent resources for understanding better the role of MBCs.

Restrictions on Counseling Badges

There is no restriction or limit on the number of merit badges for which an individual may be approved as a counselor.

Under BSA policy, a registered merit badge counselor may counsel any Scout, including his or her own daughter, ward, or relative. **Troop 54, however, encourages adults not to counsel their own daughters except as part of a class of at least five Scouts.**

Working with Scouts

SYT guidelines for merit badge counseling are best implemented as follows:

- Any discussion between a counselor and one or more Scouts must occur within view of a second adult, whether in person or by teleconferencing.
- If a second adult is within view but not within earshot of the discussion, a single Scout must have a buddy.

The Scout should teach herself the necessary knowledge to the greatest extent possible, using the merit badge pamphlet and other resources. One of the benefits of the merit-badge program is teaching Scouts to teach themselves ("Give someone a fish, and you feed him or her for a day; teach someone to fish, and you feed him or her for a lifetime.").

Encourage the Scout to develop a timetable of short- and long-term goals for completing the merit badge. An important objective of Scouting is to teach Scouts to set goals for themselves and to plan and execute the tasks required to reach those goals.

You might find that a Scout needs help in learning particular skills that are required for the merit badge. Teaching those skills is a key role of the MBC. A best practice in those cases is to use the Scouts BSA EDGE method (Explain, Demonstrate, Guide, Enable).

If you stop hearing from a Scout who has started but not finished a merit badge, follow up periodically to check on her progress and on her plans for completing the requirements. Again, the Scout should be setting goals; the counselor's job is simply to help the Scout achieve those goals and confirm that she has done so.

Be supportive and not critical but make sure the Scout has indeed satisfactorily completed each requirement.

Mission Statements

Troop 54: Troop 54 is an open organization with exceptional resources dedicated to instilling in girls the values of the Scout Oath and Law. Our mission is to help girls become responsible, compassionate, self-reliant citizens of God's world.

Sam Houston Area Council: Leading Youth to Lifelong Values, Service and Achievement.

Scouting America (Boy Scouts of America): The mission of Scouting America is to prepare young people to make ethical choices over their lifetimes by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Law.

Mobile Communication Device Policy

Unless waived by the Scoutmaster or Trek Leader/Campmaster, Scouts will NOT be permitted to:

A. Use of phones and electronic devices while on Scout trips (i.e. weekend campouts, summer camp). However, Scouts can carry / use phones and electronic devices while in transport to/from those events, subject to:
    a. Use while traveling must be appropriate for both the Scout and others around her.
    b. Scouts must turn-in their phones and electronic devices to the Scoutmaster upon arrival at camp. Scoutmaster will return at departure
    c. Phones and electronic devices discovered at or during the event will be confiscated.
    d. All confiscated devices will be returned only upon conclusion of the event / return to Houston.
    e. Habitual violations will be addressed by the Scoutmaster.
B. Use of phones and electronic devices during troop meetings, advancement sessions and in-town activities. They may only be used at the conclusion of the activity for communication with parents for pickup.
C. Adult leaders should set an example for Scouts by minimizing use of cell phones and electronic devices in all settings in public view.

Order of the Arrow

The Order of the Arrow (OA) is a national group of Scout honor campers, based on brotherhood with fellow Scouts and cheerful service to others. Its purpose is to (1) recognize those Scout campers who best exemplify the Scout Oath and Law in their daily lives; (2) develop and maintain camping traditions and spirit; (3) promote Scout camping; (4) crystallize the Scout habit of helpfulness into a life purpose of leadership in cheerful service to others.

The Order of the Arrow program is conducted through a separate lodge (in Sam Houston Area Council, the Colonneh Lodge) under the jurisdiction of the local BSA executive.

Scouts are nominated and elected to OA membership by their fellow Scouts in their own troop. They must meet certain entry qualifications, which include: hold a rank of First Class or higher and have

experienced 15 days and nights of Scout camping during the two-year period prior to the election. The 15 days and nights must include one, but no more than one, long-term camp consisting of six consecutive days and five nights of resident camping, approved and under the auspices and standards of the Boy Scouts of America. The balance of the camping nights must be overnight, weekend, or other short-term camps. More information on the OA can be obtained by contacting the Troop's OA advisor or liaison, or by visiting the lodge website at www.colonneh.org.

"Org Charts"

Troop 54 Org Chart

• **Scouts** are organized into patrols, each headed by a **Patrol Leader** ("PL"), a Scout who is elected by the other Scouts in the patrol. New-Scout patrols are coached by two older-Scout **Troop Guides** appointed by the Scoutmaster.

• The **Senior Patrol Leader** ("SPL"), a senior Scout, is the "head Scout" of the Troop. She is elected at-large by all Scouts in the Troop. With the Scoutmaster's approval, the SPL appoints one or more **Assistant Senior Patrol Leaders** ("ASPLs").

• The Patrol Leaders' Council ("Greenbar") consists of the SPL; the ASPLs; the PLs; and other Scout officers such as the Troop Quartermaster, Librarian, etc.

• **Adult oversight** is provided by the Scoutmaster and Assistant Scoutmasters, especially the Patrol Assistant Scoutmasters, all of whom are appointed by the Troop's chartered organization with input from the Troop Committee.

Scouts BSA Org Chart

• **Troop 54,** is a Scouts BSA Troop (for girls 11 to 17) chartered to St. John the Divine Episcopal Church ("SJD"), the chartered organization, is part of …

• The **Twin Bayou District**, which is part of …

• The **Sam Houston Area Council** ("SHAC"), which is part of …

• The **Southern Region**, which is part of …

• The **Scouting America** (formerly Boys Scouts of America) National office

Patrol Assistant Scoutmasters ("PASMs")

The primary role of the Patrol Assistant Scoutmaster (PASM) is to mentor, coach, and support youth leadership while upholding the Patrol Method and ensuring a safe, positive Scouting experience.

PASMs are not assigned to their own daughters' patrols; this is so Scouts can learn from other adults, and to maximize *Scout* (rather than adult) leadership.

Typically, there is a "lead" experienced PASM, with other PASM's working as a team. The role of the PASM is described below.

PASM Duties at Troop Meetings

1. Patrol Leader Mentorship & Accountability

- **Supervise Patrol Leader elections** to ensure fair, democratic elections, and advise the Patrol Leader on leadership appointments such as the Assistant Patrol Leader.
- **Mentor and advise the Patrol Leader**, holding her accountable to:
    - Attend all Patrol Leaders' Council (PLC) meetings or arrange for the Assistant Patrol Leader or an alternate to attend.
    - Establish reliable communication channels (e.g., group chat or phone tree) to keep all patrol members informed.
    - Hold members of the patrol accountable to their responsibilities and commitments.
- **Support newer patrols** by partnering with assigned Troop Guides, providing constructive feedback to the Scoutmaster on the Troop Guide's effectiveness.
- **Preserve youth authority** by protecting the Patrol Leader and youth leaders from unnecessary adult intrusion, redirecting uninvolved parents away from direct interference with the patrol.

2. Meeting Operations & Troop Duty Rotations

- **Support the Patrol Leader** in maintaining order when necessary.
- **Establish a dedicated gathering space** for the patrol to conduct business, instruction, and team time during troop meetings.
- **Coach the patrol through assigned duty rotations** (flags, program, service clean up, etc.)
- **Cultivate patrol spirit** by encouraging independent, Scout-led patrol activities outside regular troop meetings (e.g., games, movies, or informal outings) to build camaraderie.

4. Parent Engagement

- **Engage patrol parents** to assist with organizing patrol outings, aiding with administrative record-keeping, serving as hall monitors at the charter facility, and coordinating rides home after meetings.
- **Handle sensitive issues discreetly**, discussing advancement status, medical/health concerns, or disciplinary matters privately with parents, the Health and Safety Officer, and/or the Scoutmaster.

5. Adult Leadership

- **Keep the Scoutmaster informed** of patrol achievements, challenges, and overall dynamics.
- **Maintain consistency across the troop** by coordinating regularly with fellow PASMs to ensure a uniform approach.
- **Mentor future adult leaders** by identifying and training successor PASMs to take over within a year, actively encouraging them to complete Scoutmaster Position-Specific Training and Introduction to Outdoor Leader Skills (IOLS).

6. Scoutmaster Conferences

Conduct, or help prepare for, Scoutmaster conferences as a critical part of the advancement process:

a. *Scout through First Class Ranks*: Under the direction of the "lead" PASM, a patrol's PASM's conduct all Scoutmaster conferences for Scouts in the Patrol seeking advancement up through rank of First Class. Use the Scoutmaster conference to motivate Scouts for advancement, praise and critique their performance, hold them accountable for showing patrol participation and Scout Spirit, and **assure satisfaction of rank advancement requirements**, including regular troop and patrol activities, and active participation requirements.

b. *Star through Eagle Ranks*: Conduct a "pre-conference" with Scouts in your patrol seeking advancement to Star- through Eagle ranks. Review with them the requirements for advancement – particularly fulfillment of their leadership position, Scout Spirit, and compliance with and knowledge of the Scout Law and Scout Oath. Then send them for their Scoutmaster conference to the Scoutmaster or designee.

PASM Duties at Campouts

7. Personally attend as many campouts as possible.

8. Ensure that a PASM attends every campout and is present each night at the campout. If no PASM is available, recruit another PASM to that campout.

9. Require Patrol Leader to post the duty roster at the campout and assist her in assuring its implementation.

10. Help make sure patrol members camp and tent together.

11. Encourage proper cooking and cleaning methods.

12. Using Troop Guides and more experienced Scouts, teach safe and efficient patrol campsite setup.

Patrol Method

"The patrol method is not a way to operate a Scout troop, it is the only way. Unless the patrol method is in operation, you don't really have a Scout troop."
- Robert S. S. Baden-Powell

[See also "Org Charts" *in this Handbook.]*

Parents and Scouts alike should carefully read Scouting America's discussion of the patrol method.

A fundamental difference between Scouts and Cub Scouts is the greater responsibility given to the Scouts (vs their parents). The Troop is governed by a Patrol Leaders' Council or "PLC." The PLC is sometimes known as the "Greenbar," referring to the green bars on the uniform sleeve patches worn by the SPL, assistant SPLs, Patrol Leaders, and Assistant Patrol Leaders.

The PLC comprises the SPL, the Patrol Leaders from each patrol, Troop Guides, and certain other Troop officers, such as the Assistant Senior Patrol Leaders and Troop quartermasters. Guided by the Scoutmaster and Assistant Scoutmasters, the PLC plans the yearly Troop program at the annual Troop program planning conference. It then meets monthly, or more often if necessary, to fine-tune the plans for upcoming events.

All Troop 54 parents are still encouraged and expected to be actively involved in the Troop. *Everyone's* help is needed, because a Scout-led troop actually requires *more* work by adults. Volunteer opportunities and appropriate training exist to match the interest and available time of every adult. Parents should also make an effort to meet their Scout's Patrol Leader and Troop Guides (if applicable) and the Troop's Senior Patrol Leader ("SPL").

Prohibited Items

The following items are prohibited on campouts, at summer camp, and at meetings unless specifically authorized by the Scoutmaster on a case-by-case basis:

- Fireworks or explosives of any kind
- Stoves
- Liquid-fuel lanterns, or other liquid fuels of any kind
- Cigarette lighters
- Aerosol cans (of any kind)
- Sheath knives (of any kind or length)
- Folding knives with blade longer than four inches
- Electronic Devices (e.g. Radios, televisions, video games, **cell phones**, MP3 players, electronic games)
- Tobacco, alcohol or illegal drugs
- Firearms or ammunition of any kind (including BB guns)
- Slingshots, clubs, spears, etc.
- Hatchets or axes
- Glass bottles

Scholarships

Scholarship Committee

The Scholarship Committee consists of the current Troop Committee Chair, Scoutmaster, Troop Treasurer, and the Chartered Organization Representative.

Troop Scholarships

1. General scholarship philosophy. Troop 54 will provide scholarships, in accordance with these guidelines, for Scouts with a genuine financial need, who could not participate in a particular event without the Troop's financial assistance.

2. Identifying scholarship candidates. The Scoutmaster and PASMs should make a positive effort, for each weekend campout and each summer camp, to identify Scouts who cannot afford to attend such event. If a Scout indicates that she will not be attending, and the Scoutmaster or PASM suspects that the cost might be the main reason, they should ask the Scout if she would be interested in being *considered* for a scholarship.

3. Adult leader input. The PASM or Campmaster should advise the Scholarship Committee of his or her recommendations concerning each Scout who requests a scholarship. The Scholarship Committee may also solicit input from other adult leaders to the extent it deems appropriate.

4. Dollar amount of scholarships. Scholarships will normally be provided for 50% of the cost of the event in question.

5. Scholarships for weekend campouts.

(a) Scholarships for weekend campouts, in cases of financial need, may be awarded for the cost of campsite fees, activity fees, and the like, along with the cost of transportation if applicable (for example, charter-bus fees). (b) Grub fees for weekend campouts will normally not be eligible for scholarships (because the Scout's family likely would have to spend at least that much to feed the Scout anyway).

6. Summer-camp scholarships. Scouts will normally be considered for summer-camp scholarships as follows:

(a) *Merit-badge camps:* Any Scout who has a financial need will normally be awarded a scholarship for one merit-badge camp per summer at the geographically-closest camp that the Troop attends.

(b) *High-adventure camps:* If a Scout who has a financial need has consistently been active in the Troop and demonstrated Scout spirit, then on a case-by-case basis the Scout may be awarded a scholarship for one high-adventure camp per summer. Scholarships normally will not be awarded for high-adventure camps that are unusually costly; for example, Blue Ridge or Packard likely would qualify for a scholarship but Alaska probably would not.

7. Other means of paying for camps. All Scouts are encouraged to participate in the Troop's fundraising opportunities, including the sale of popcorn and Scout Fair tickets. Many of our Scouts have raised hundreds of dollars from these sales that they could apply toward the cost of summer camp.

8. Adult scholarships. Adult leaders will normally not be eligible for scholarships.

9. National Youth Leadership Training.

(a) Any Scout, regardless of financial need, who attends SHAC's one-week National Youth Leadership Training course ("NYLT") shall be reimbursed by the Troop for the NYLT fee upon request, because of the

benefit of NYLT to the Troop. Parents not having a financial need are encouraged to have their daughters apply for reimbursement anyway (to reinforce the message that NYLT is important to the Troop) and then to make whatever donation to the Troop they feel is appropriate.

(b) Scholarships to the National Advanced Youth Leadership Experience conducted at Philmont may be awarded on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the Scout's level of consistent participation in the Troop and demonstrated Scout spirit.

10. Troop dues scholarships. The Scholarship Committee may award scholarships for Troop dues on the same general basis as provided above.

11. Other scholarships. The Scholarship Committee may award other scholarships (including for Uniforms), consistent with prudent use of Troop funds, when it deems such awards to be in the best interests of the Troop.

12. Confidentiality. A Scout's request for a scholarship, and the Scholarship Committee's consideration of and decision on the request, should not be disclosed to other Scouts, and should be disclosed to other adult leaders only on a need-to-know basis.

13. Leadership / service projects. The PASM of a Scout who receives a scholarship should privately, informally, and tactfully encourage the Scout to "do something extra" for the Troop as a way of giving back. This should not be done in a way that might discourage Scouts from seeking scholarship help.

14. Eagle Scout Incentives: to encourage the participation of older / highly trained Scouts; the weekend campout costs are waived for Troop 54 Eagle Scouts. They do need to pay for any fees charged by the Camp itself.

Scout Shop

The nearest Scout Shop operated by the Sam Houston Area Council ("SHAC") is at 2225 N Loop W Ste A, Houston, TX 77008, on the southeast corner of the North Loop (inside the loop) and East T.C. Jester.

Scoutmaster and Assistant Scoutmasters

The Scoutmaster is the adult leader responsible for the image and program of the Troop. The Scoutmaster is appointed by the head of the chartered organization with input from the Troop Committee.

The Scoutmaster's job is crucial, because the quality of the Scoutmaster's guidance will affect every youth and adult involved in the Troop.

Assistant Scoutmasters are appointed by the Scoutmaster with the approval of both the Troop Committee Chair and the Chartered Organization Representative.

Per BSA policy, the Scoutmaster and all Assistant Scoutmasters must successfully complete the required BSA training for adult leaders.

See also the "Patrol Assistant Scoutmasters ('PASMs')" section of this Handbook.

Scoutmaster Conferences

A **"Scoutmaster conference"** is a scheduled meeting between a Scout with the Scoutmaster (or an Assistant Scoutmaster designated by the Scoutmaster) to review a Scout's participation in the Troop. Scoutmaster conferences are required for rank advancement and are in the Scoutmaster's discretion for other reasons.

Procedure:

- The Scout, not her parents, should arrange all Scoutmaster conferences.
- The Scout should appear in full Field Uniform (Class A) and merit badge sash, if applicable.
- **Scout, Tenderfoot, Second Class, and First Class rank:** Scoutmaster conferences are conducted by a PASM assigned to the Scout's patrol or the Scoutmaster.
- **Star or Life rank:** The Scout should first review her preparation with her PASM, and then seek a conference with the Scoutmaster or, if authorized by the Scoutmaster, a designated Scoutmaster Emeritus or other Assistant Scoutmaster.
- **Eagle rank:** The Scout should first review her preparation with an Eagle Advisor, then seek a conference with the Scoutmaster.
- If the Scoutmaster agrees that the Scout has completed the advancement requirements, he/she will sign the Scout's Handbook in the place provided, and the **Scout** should then promptly seek a Board of Review.

Service Projects

Community service is an integral part of the Scouting program, designed primarily to aid development of character and citizenship. Scouts are required to take part in service projects for at least a specified number of hours for advancement to Tenderfoot, Second Class, First Class, Star, and Life ranks. Scouts can earn creditable service hours for these ranks by taking part in any of the following:

- Troop service projects;
- Patrol good turns approved in advance by the Patrol Leaders' Council to help qualify a patrol for the National Honor Patrol Award;
- Eagle leadership service projects organized by Scouts who are working on their Eagle rank (**participation in Eagle projects is particularly encouraged**);
- Order of the Arrow service projects, other than those as part of a Scout's Ordeal; and
- Other service projects, which **must be approved in advance** by the Scoutmaster. Service to the Troop itself, such as cleaning the Troop storage shed, does not qualify as service hours for rank advancement. Scouts should not double count service hours for rank advancement, such as those used for merit badge requirements, 50-mile awards, school requirements, or church requirements. Announcement of and sign-ups for service projects generally happen at Troop meetings, by email or Troop newsletter, or via the Troop Website.

Summer Camps

Troop 54 plans summer camps at awesome places, from merit-badge camps for all Scouts to high-adventure camps for the more-experienced ones. See the online Troop Handbook for examples. Summer camp is not mandatory, but it is highly encouraged - Scouts have a ton of fun, earn

advancement and merit badges, and literally grow up at summer camp. With Scoutmaster approval, we welcome adults who are willing to go to summer camp as Assistant Scoutmasters; they must take the required training.

Summer camp is a great time for advancement and practicing the patrol method. Often our Scouts have their greatest leadership experiences and earn memories for a lifetime at our summer camps.

Troop 54 sponsored summer camps are those approved in advance by the Troop Committee.

Registration for summer camps is open to all Troop 54 Scouts who meet the age and experience eligibility requirements for the program.

Registration is sometimes limited in number, in which case it is "first-come, first-served" among Troop 54 Scouts who are eligible.

“Merit Badge” Camps

The Troop typically offers one or two merit badge summer camps each year, including at least one camp in Texas. These camps provide Scouts with a weeklong opportunity to work on advancement, complete merit badge requirements, practice patrol living, and build confidence in a structured camp environment. Merit badge camps are especially valuable for newer Scouts and for Scouts working toward First Class, Star, Life, and Eagle ranks, while still offering experienced Scouts the chance to broaden their skills and enjoy time with the Troop.

“High-Adventure” Camps

The Troop schedules outstanding high-adventure programs every summer, including backpacking treks and often sailing, kayaking, climbing, and other wilderness trips. Ideally this includes trips to Philmont Scout Ranch in New Mexico for a two-week wilderness backpacking experience. Other camping adventures for older Scouts may involve the BSA Sea Base in Florida; Northern Tier High Adventure Base; canoeing for ten days in Maine; or backpacking in Colorado and Montana; or even Alaska above the Arctic Circle. Troop 54 engages in a variety of these programs every year

Many of these “high-adventure” camps require that the Scout meet the relevant age limit and sometimes a minimum weight requirement by the program start date. The age minimum for high-adventure camps is generally 13 or 14 (for Philmont it is 14). Attendance at high adventure camp may require new or additional medical forms.

Adult Participation in Summer Camps

New and experienced adult leaders are always needed for summer camps. Merit badge camps are a wonderful opportunity for adults new to the Troop who have completed the required training to "break-in" by spending a week camping with a portion of the Troop. Adult registration for summer camps works differently than for our Scouts. Adults who wish to attend summer camps with the Troop should be aware of the following:

1. All adults attending summer camp are required to complete adult leader training.

2. Selection of adult leaders for our summer-camp programs is up to the Scoutmaster, with the advice and consent of the Troop Committee Chair.

3. The Troop endeavors to find summer camp leaders that understand and accept the responsibility of providing a safe environment for Scouts and can also guide a **Scout-led** contingent; while being able to effectively respond to emergencies; and know the applicable BSA standards and commit to following

them. Adult leaders for summer camp must agree to demonstrate the principles of the Scout Oath and Law as they represent the Troop for our Scouts and many others at camp and during transit.

4. The Troop usually receives a limited number of slots for high-adventure programs. We try to fill those slots with the maximum number of Scouts and the minimum number of qualified adults needed for a safe outing.

5. Payment of deposits is required for adults, as it is for Scouts. Payment of a deposit does **not** guarantee a slot for a particular adult (if the adult is not selected to participate, the Troop will refund the deposit).

6. Adult participation in summer camps is **not** first-come, first-served; it is a privilege, not a right. Adult-leader selection, especially for high-adventure programs, takes into account such factors as the following:

a. Completion of all training required to be an Assistant Scoutmaster;

b. Commitment to live and act in accordance with the Scout Oath and Scout Law. Active and regular participation in the Troop's monthly camping program;

d. Any prior participation in Troop 54 summer camps;

e. Demonstrated competence and training in skills desirable for the particular high adventure program, for example, Wilderness First Aid; Leave No Trace; First Aid / CPR, BSA or American Red Cross Lifeguard; whitewater canoeing;

f. Regular, successful prior experience as an Assistant Scoutmaster;

g. Demonstrated success in working with our Scouts and promoting a Scout-led outdoor experience by all Scouts (including their own daughters);

h. Other needs of the Troop and of the particular program.

7. In addition to the BSA required online Safeguarding Youth Training, some summer camps, such as all those in Texas, may require additional background-checks and/or in-person SYT class.

a. Per SYT requirements, the minimum number of qualified adult leaders needed for a safe outing is three; with at least one being a female.

b. However, ideally, if the logistics can accommodate, Troop 54 targets to maintain about five-to-one ratio of trained leaders to Scouts at summer camp outings.

Summer Campout Rules

The rules & policies governing Troop 54 Scouts & adults at summer camp are consistent with those outlined within this Troop Handbook for weekend campouts & other troop activities. This includes, but is not limited to: Campout Rules, Prohibited Items, Mobile Communication Device Policy, etc.

Troop Committee

The Troop 54 Committee meets monthly each month (except June & July), either in person during a troop meeting or virtually. Dates are announced via the troop calendar and newsletter. All parents of Scouts and Adult leaders are encouraged to attend.

The Troop Committee could be thought of as the "board of directors" of the Troop. Its main responsibilities are (i) supporting the Scoutmaster in delivering quality Troop programs, and (ii) handling Troop administration. The Chair of the Troop Committee serves as something like a non-executive chairperson of the board. He or she is appointed by the chartered organization with input from the Troop Committee.

Troop 54 expects to have a very active Troop Committee, essentially all of whom are parents and even grandparents of current Troop 54 Scouts. *All* Troop 54 Scouts' parents are encouraged to participate in the Troop Committee by registering as an adult volunteer. See also Scouting America's article on "Troop Positions and Structure" for more information about the role of a troop committee and its various subcommittees and positions.

Uniforms

Each Scout is expected to wear their Scout uniform to every Scout function. The official Scouts BSA uniform includes all the elements described under Field Uniform (Class A) in the table below. The Scouts BSA Field Uniform Checklist specifies mandatory and optional items and how to wear them. For placement of patches, see Scouting America's official Guide to Awards and Insignia.

Troop 54 permits official Scouts BSA olive green pants, shorts, or skorts, as well as "Scout-like" bottoms that closely match the official color and style at all troop events, including formal occasions such as Boards of Review and Courts of Honor. However, please note that official BSA uniform bottoms may still be required for external Scouting America events not hosted by the troop, such as NYLT.

Uniform shirts should be fully buttoned and kept tucked in whenever practical. Belts should be properly sized with a centered buckle. Outerwear (including jackets, sweatshirts, and vests) should be removed while indoors to keep the uniform visible. For safety reasons, shoes must have a closed toe and closed heel; open-toe sandals, flip-flops, slippers, and Crocs are not permitted.

The uniform type worn for Scouting events depends on the formality of the activity and the need to maintain a clean, neat Field Uniform shirt. Expectations for which uniform to wear to each activity, including the more informal Activity Uniform (Class B), are outlined in the table below.

	Category	**Scout shirt**	**Scout Branded T-Shirt**	**Scout Bottom (pant/ short/ skort)**	**Scout Belt**	**Scout Socks**	**Troop Neckerchief & Slide**	**Merit Badge Sash (Optional)**
Field Uniform (Class A)	Full	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Partial	Yes		Yes				
Activity Uniform (Class B)	All		Yes	Yes				

Event / Activity	Field (Class A)		Activity (Class B)	Note
	"Full"	"Partial"		
Troop Meetings	Optional	Yes	No	
Courts of Honor	Yes	No	No	Add neckerchief/slide, socks, belt, MB Sash optional
Scoutmaster Conference	Yes	No	No	Add neckerchief/slide, socks, belt, MB Sash optional
Boards of Review	Yes	No	No	Add neckerchief/slide, socks, belt, MB Sash optional
Campout	Yes	Yes	Yes	Field for flags and travel at a minimum; Activity for other vigorous activity
Service Project	Optional	Yes	Yes	Depends on type of service work performed
Summer Camp	Yes	Yes	Yes	Field for flags, meals and campfire ceremonies at a minimum, Activity for other vigorous activity
Scout Sunday	Yes	No	No	Neckerchief/slide, socks, Sash optional
Travel	Yes	Yes	No	Includes travel to/from campouts, summer camp
Hiking	No	Optional	Yes	Need appropriate attire and footwear for trail and weather conditions
Swimming, Water	No	No	No	One-piece swimsuit, swim shirts, quick dry shirts or other appropriate clothing for activity

For Scouting activities not listed above, Scouts should wear the uniform or activity clothing appropriate for the event, weather, and safety requirements, as determined by the Scoutmaster.

If wearing the uniform is impractical for whatever reason, then the Scout should be dressed appropriately for the occasion. Appropriateness will be determined by Scoutmaster with a focus on Safety, examples include (but not limited to):

- School uniform would be appropriate if (on limited occasions) it is not possible to change into the Scouts BSA uniform before an indoor meeting
- Wearing proper clothes and gear for expected and probable conditions (no cotton, right shoes, and rain gear, etc.) would be appropriate for outdoor activities

All uniform questions or problems should be brought to the Scoutmaster's attention. Habitual uniform problems will be handled by the Scoutmaster, as deemed appropriate and necessary, including discussing the situation with the Scout and/or Scout's parents.

Uniforms can be purchased at the Scout Shop. The Troop provides one embroidered Troop 54 neckerchief and one sew-on name strip to each Scout; additional neckerchiefs and name strips may be purchased from the troop from Troop 54 Online Store.

Troop 55

Troop 55 is a separate Scouting unit for boys ages 11 to 17. Like Troop 54, it is also sponsored by St John the Divine (SJD) as its chartered organization. First chartered in 1933, Troop 55 has traditionally been one of the largest, most successful Scout Troops in America. As an example, in 2018 alone, Troop 55 had 240 Registered Scouts and 160 registered Adults and achieved 39 Eagle Scouts, 938 Merit Badges, 164 Board of Reviews. Since 1933, Troop 55 has had over 700 Eagle Scouts.

Venturing Crew 55

Venturing Crew 55 is a separate co-ed Scouting unit for older youths. It is also sponsored by SJD as the chartered organization and has traditionally had significant overlap with Troop 55 and Troop 54 in both membership and adult leadership. Crew membership is open to young men and women ages 14 through 20 who have completed 8th grade. Scouts may and often do have dual registration in Troop 54 or Troop 55, and the Crew.

For advancement purposes:

• Dual-registered Scouts who seek to complete regular Scout advancement in the Troop (instead of in the Crew) will be subject to Troop oversight and requirements.

• Members of the Crew who seek regular Scout advancement in the Troop must fulfill in the Troop at least the six months of leadership necessary for advancement from Life Scout to Eagle Scout.

• All other regular Scout advancement requirements in Crew 55 members will be fulfilled as established by the Crew Advisor (the equivalent of the Scoutmaster) and overseen by the Crew Advisor or his designee.

Assuming completion of the foregoing, Troop approval of the Eagle Scout project, and an Eagle Scout Board of Review at the Troop level, Crew members will have the opportunity to participate in Troop-administered Courts of Honor, should they so desire. Venturing Crew members who are not registered Scouts BSA Troop 54 or Troop 55 members may be directly assessed incremental costs associated with their participation.

Glossary Of Key Terms & Acronyms

Term	Acronym	Definition
Arrow of Light	**AOL**	Highest rank in Cub Scouting. The only Cub Scout badge that may be work on Scout BSA uniform
Assistant Scoutmaster	**ASM**	A trained volunteer Scouter, 18 or older, who helps the Scoutmaster by working with the troop and/or patrol of Scouts
Assistant Senior Patrol Leader	**ASPL**	A troop youth leader, usually in larger troops, who helps the Senior Patrol Leader with detail of his/her role
Be Prepared		The motto of Boy Scouting
Board of Review	**BoR**	A review held to with 3+ adults determine if a Scouts has satisfactory completed rank requirements (not re-test / more of an interview)
Boy Scouts of America	**BSA**	The Boy Scouts of America announced its rebrand to **Scouting America** on May 7, 2024, during its National Annual Meeting. The name change officially took effect on February 8, 2025.
Buddy System		Pairing of 2+ Scouts during activities and outings for safety reasons, particularly (but not only) aquatic activities
Campmaster		Adult who plans and organizes a weekend campout or summer camp for the troop. Often called the Trek Leader for a Summer camp
Chapter		A local district Order of the Arrow (OA) group
Chartered Organization		A religious, civic, educational organization that has applied for and received a charter to operate a Scouting unit (SJD for Troop 54)
Chartered Organization Representative	**COR**	The lead manager of Scouting from a charter organization who also represents that organization & it's units in the local council & district
Charter Renewal		Annual process to update unit roster and collect dues
Council		An administrative body responsible for Scouting in broad regional area. Troop 54 is part of the Sam Houston Area Council or "SHAC".
Council Service Center		The business center for the regional administration of Scouting

Court of Honor	**CoH**	A recognition ceremony for those who have met the requirements for any Scouts BSA rank advancement, merit badges, or special awards
Den Chief		A Scout who helps direct the activities of a Cub Scout den
District		A narrower regional administrative unit within a council (Twin Bayou for Troop 54)
District Committee	**DC**	A group of key volunteer Scouters who work to ensure the success of their collective units
District Executive	**DE**	A professional Scouter who works under the direction of the council Scout Executive to support units and act as an adviser to the volunteer leaders in the District
Eagle Advisor		An adult selected by the Troop Committee Chair to coach Life Scouts in their quest to complete their final Eagle Requirements
Eagle Scout		The highest rank a Scout can earn in the Scouts BSA program
Grubmaster	**GM**	Youth or Adult who plan, purchase, and prepare meals for their patrol at Campout.
Goats		The "Old Goats" is the adult patrol at campouts and other events
Junior Assistant Scoutmaster	**JASM**	Appointed office open to Scouts 16 years of age and older
Key 3		The three key Leaders of Unit, District, Council, or National. At the unit level they include the Charter Organization Representative, Scoutmaster, and Troop Committee Chair
L**odge**		The local Council's Order of the Arrow (OA) group; made of Chapters from the Districts
Long-term Camping		A camping experience consisting of five or more consecutive nights in the outdoors
Merit Badge	**MB**	A recognition given to a Scout for completing the requirements for the badge. Scouts BSA offers over 135 Merits Badges that teach life skills and introduce youth to many fields of interest & endeavor
Merit Badge Counselor	**MBC**	A registered adult volunteer who is expert in a merit badge field, has the ability to work effectively with Scouts, and that certifies the requirements are met

Order of the Arrow	**OA**	Scouting's national honor society, the members of which have been chosen by their peers for their Scouting spirit & camping ability
Patrol		A group of eight to twelve Scouts who belong to a Troop and work together in and out of the Troop meetings. There are usually several patrols in one Troop.
Patrol Assistant Scoutmaster	**PASM**	An Assistant Scoutmaster assigned by the Scoutmaster to advise a specific Patrol and its Patrol Leader and/or Troop Guide
Patrol Leader	**PL**	The youth leader of the patrol elected by its members
Patrol Leaders Council	**PLC**	The group of youth leaders who lead the troop. It is headed by the Troop Senior Patrol Leader, her Assistant Senior Patrol Leaders, the Patrol Leaders of each of the Patrols in the Troop, plus other youth as in leadership positions. The Scoutmaster is the PLC's adviser
Philmont Scout Ranch	**PSR**	National high-adventure base covering 137,000 acres in northern New Mexico. Includes center for volunteer training.
Rank		Rank represents a Scout's advancement in the program. There are six ranks in Scouts BSA: Tenderfoot, Second Class, First Class, Star, Life and Eagle. A First Class Scout is a "complete Scout"
Registration		The payment of an annual fee, one of the requirements for membership in Scouts BSA
Sam Houston Area Council	**SHAC**	The regional administrative body responsible for Scouts BSA in Troop 54's area
St. John the Divine	**SJD**	The chartered organization for Troop 54 and other SJD units
Scout		Youth member of Scouts BSA; between ages of 11 to 17.
Scouter		A registered adult member of Scouts BSA who serves in a volunteer or professional capacity
Scoutmaster	**SM**	A commissioned volunteer leader of a Scouts BSA Troop; appointed by the Chartered Organization
Scouts BSA		Scouts BSA is the flagship youth program of Scouting America (formerly the Boy Scouts of America) designed for youth roughly 11 to 17 years old.

Senior Patrol Leader	**SPL**	The elected youth leader who runs the troop and chairs the Patrol Leaders Council (PLC), with the guidance of the Scoutmaster
Troop Committee	**TC**	The committee appointed by the Chartered Organization to administer the affairs of the Troop
Unit		Term used to designate any of the following: Troop, Crew, or Pack