

Troop 97

Scout and Family Handbook



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Welcome Letter

Dear Scouts and Parents,

Welcome to Boy Scout Troop 97! We are excited to have you joining us.

Hundreds of boys throughout the history of Troop 97 have contributed to our reputation as a fun, hard working and award-winning troop. One of the major factors contributing to our continued success is the active cooperation and participation of Scouts and parents like you.

When a boy joins the troop, his parents join the troop as well. Experience has taught us that your son's interest and accomplishments will be in direct proportion to your participation with him. You will find that time spent in Scouting is quality time between parent and son. We encourage you to become involved in the troop in a leadership or support role.

This handbook is meant to smooth your transition into Boy Scouting and Troop 97. The following pages will answer many questions you may have. Please review this handbook together and save it as a reference during your son's scouting career.

This handbook is not a replacement for the official Boy Scout Handbook. All national policies are not covered here. The information in this handbook is meant to supplement the Boy Scout Handbook and to provide specific information on our troop. Every Scout who joins Troop 97 will get a copy of this Troop Handbook and will be expected to know what it says. If you don't understand something, ask.

Feel free to call me at (845) 639-0551 or one of our Assistant Scoutmasters any time you have questions.

Welcome to Troop 97! We are glad you're joining us!



Sincerely,

Jim Olson
Scoutmaster

Mission

Service, Honor, and Duty on the Trail to Eagle. Troop 97 believes in a program that

- Emphasizes outdoor experiences and community service.
- Provides opportunities for leadership development.
- Provides an appreciation of our environment.
- Promotes a life exemplifying the Scout Oath and Law.

We emphasize community service as an important way of demonstrating good citizenship. We are very proud of the tradition of excellence that has allowed a high percentage of our Scouts to advance to the rank of Eagle, and we encourage every Scout to work hard to achieve this lofty goal.

Boy Scouting Is Different

You may have already noticed some big changes. Throughout Cub Scouts and Webelos, adult leaders planned every aspect of Pack activities and advancement. In Boy Scouts, however, the boys are responsible for almost everything, including communicating with parents. We encourage you to have your Scout ask the troop leadership, following the "chain of command" beginning with his Patrol Leader, for guidance in any questions he or you might have. This is a very important part of building self-confidence and teamwork!

Frequently Asked Questions

Question: How fast will my Scout advance and how involved should I be in his advancement?

Answer: Scouts are encouraged to learn skills and to achieve rank advancements at their own pace, not simply because they have been pushed to do so. A key benefit of Scouting is a boy learning that he has to take responsibility for his success. When this occurs, the Scouting movement has achieved its first aim - to build character. Some of our most skilled Eagle Scouts have taken significantly longer than four years to earn that rank, but truly learned what it means to take their destiny in their own hands and to learn something on their own. The skills and lessons learned will help them mature to be successful, good citizens.

Though many older Scouts aren't rushing through rank because they enjoy the Scouting experience, younger Scouts often get discouraged if not advancing in rank. We suggest that you encourage your new Scout to achieve Second Class rank at approximately their first anniversary in the troop, as well as earning a few merit badges. When a Scout does this, he stays in Scouting! For older Scouts, be concerned about stagnation if your Scout remains at the same rank for more than a year.

Question: When will my son be recognized for his achievements?

Answer: Generally, Scouts are awarded rank advancements and merit badges at Courts of Honor that are generally held several times a year. The Court of Honor is a ceremony where the advancement and accomplishments made by the Scouts can be recognized. All members and families are invited to attend.

Expectations of a Scout Parent

Each young man and his family are important members of our troop. Active, involved parents and family members are vital to a Scout's advancement and level of interest.

The parent of a Scout should:

- Enjoy the Boy Scout experience alongside your son!
- Provide the necessary uniform, equipment and transportation for your Scout so that he is properly clothed and equipped to participate in troop and patrol activities.
- Provide encouragement to your Scout and help him set and abide by priorities, which will help further his Scouting experience. The success and enjoyment of the Boy Scout increases as the Scout's participation increases. Allow time to review, study and practice his rank requirements.
- Provide never-ending encouragement to your Scout in his advancement, service and commitment to the Scout Oath and Laws.
- Provide Information to the Scoutmaster or one of the Assistant Scout Masters regarding problems or concerns you or your Scout may have (medical conditions, learning disabilities, medications etc.).
- Allow your Scout to "learn by doing". He will make mistakes when trying to accomplish tasks on his own, but this builds character! Remember, there are many older boy and adult leaders present to ensure that new Scouts and their patrols don't do anything that jeopardizes safety or other basic requirements.
- Encourage your Scout to attend summer camp! Experience proves that new Scouts are much more likely to stay in Scouting, enjoy Scouting more, and advance more quickly by attending summer camp.
- Help your son to find the time to study his advancement requirements, and if possible, test your son on those requirements so that he is more comfortable when reviewed by the troop leadership. In accordance with Boy Scout policy, parents are not authorized to sign-off Boy Scout requirements for their son.
- Attend and/or support Courts of Honor, campouts, fund-raisers and other Troop 97 activities as your time allows. We welcome your participation for both the Troop's and your son's benefit.
- As a parent, participate in the troop's activity based on your own family and work situation and demands. Troop 97 historically has had an excellent level of adult volunteers; and we expect each family to help the troop to the extent possible. Adult leadership opportunities include: Assistant Scoutmaster positions, troop management positions and troop committee participation etc.
- We welcome the participation of all parents and guardians in our program in all areas, meetings, departments, training, merit badge counseling and camping. Some levels of participation require registration as an adult leader and BSA training.

The support and involvement of parents and family members in Troop 97 are what has made the Troop so successful throughout the years. As a parent, you will have to decide how active you can be based on your family situation and its demands, but there are always positions available in which the troop needs help. Many positions honestly

will require only a few hours of your time. Experience has shown that parental involvement, either in a leadership or a support role, has a direct bearing on the motivation a Scout has and the accomplishments he achieves.

New Leaders Are a Must. With new scouts, we expect to gain new leaders as well. Parent volunteers are a must in order to support the new scouts. Typically, at least two parents of new scouts will need to become trained assistant scoutmasters to assist with new Scouts (and to replace any outgoing adults). There are additional volunteer opportunities on the troop committee.

Weekly Meetings

Troop 97 meets every Wednesday evening during the school year from 7:30 to 9:00 p.m. (approximate ending) at the Street School Community Center. The Troop calendar will indicate which Wednesdays are general meetings and which are reserved for Patrol Leaders Council Meetings.

At troop meetings, Scouts are expected to arrive **on time, in uniform**, with their **Scout handbooks**, as they work on advancement. We are all expected to conduct ourselves as guests of the Community Center and leave it in the same condition and order as it was when we arrived.

At the meetings, Scouts:

- Gather for the opening ceremony, hear announcements of upcoming events, make plans by patrol for upcoming activities, and plan for upcoming outings. Sometimes there is a special program planned with a guest speaker or visitors.
- Work on rank advancements, including merit badges, either in class or individually with older scouts or merit badge counselor.
- Gather for the closing ceremony

It is our hope that meetings will be fun and productive. Some of this is dependent on the boy-led nature of the meeting as well as the Scouts' level of participation and behavior during a meeting.

Schedule Conflicts

From time to time, scheduling conflicts will arise. The Troop has always held schoolwork, religious education and family responsibilities as a higher priority than scouting. Be assured there is no penalty for an excused absence from any meeting. If a Scout is unable to attend a troop meeting, or make some other troop function due to such a conflict, it is expected that the Scout will call his Patrol Leader and let him know. This is a responsibility of the Scout and not of his parent.

The Boy Scouts Organizational Structure

Nationally, the BSA is broken down into large regions called Councils, and Councils are further divided into Districts. Districts are made up of Cub Scout units called Packs, Boy Scout units called Troops, and Venturing units called Crews.

Boy Scout Troop 97 is a part of the Hudson Valley Council. The Hudson Valley Council Boy Scouts of America is comprised of five counties in two states (Sullivan, Orange, Rockland and Dutchess Counties In New York State and Pike County in Pennsylvania). Troop 97 is part of the Rockland District.

Our Chartering Organization, Germonds Presbyterian Church, sponsors our Troop. The Chartering Organization owns our Troop and is responsible for approving leadership and providing us with a place to meet.

Membership Requirements

Every Scout and adult leader must fill out an official Boy Scouts of America application to join the Troop. In addition, each Scout and registered adult leader* must have on file a current **Medical Form**. Due to the nature of activities the troop participates in, all three sections of the medical form (Parts A, B and C) need to be completed. The form can be found on our web site as well as the Council and National BSA web sites. The medical information on the form will be kept in strict confidence, but it is very important. It lets the Troop leadership know about any medical situations that the Scout or adult may have (asthma, allergies, medical restrictions, etc.) and, in the event of an emergency, gives permission for a doctor to treat a Scout (or adult) if a parent cannot be reached. Please be truthful and thorough when completing the medical form. In addition, a copy of a current health insurance card (both front and back) must be on file with the troop.

**Adult leaders must have a medical form on file in order to participate in any outdoor troop activity.*

Participation Requirements

In order for a Scout to advance in rank, Boy Scout policy requires him to be active in the troop. Although specific attendance requirements are not required for advancement, Troop 97 encourages scouts to participate in at least 50% of the Troop meetings and events, and 50% of the Troop outdoor activities unless other arrangements are made with the Senior Patrol Leader and/or Scoutmaster. If a scout is unable to participate at this level, the SPL or Scoutmaster may ask the Scout to a conference to discuss the scout's participation. Troop events are important to the Scout's development. Every event missed may mean a skill or lesson lost. Scouts are expected to participate in all aspects of the Troop program, including high adventure and community service.

Troop Finances

Dues

Dues are paid once a year, as determined by the troop committee at the first committee meeting in September. Scouts joining the troop mid year will pay a pro-rated portion of the annual dues subject to the committee's discretion. Payment of dues entitles Scouts to hold positions of leadership within the Troop, attend meetings, camping functions and any other scout function. If dues are not paid by the end of October, the Scout is considered "inactive." If dues are not paid by the end of November, as we re-charter our Troop, a Scout's membership is dropped from the BSA and Troop rolls. The money generated from dues is used for insurance, advancement material, annual re-chartering and training classes for adult leaders. A copy of our annual budget with details regarding our fees and expenses is available to all parents and our Treasurer provides regular updates on the Troop's finances at our Committee meetings.

Camping/Troop Activity Fees

The troop keeps the cost of dues low, and collects fees for most camping events or activities that have additional expenses associated with the specific event, such as food costs and transportation. Fees will vary depending on the duration of the campout or activity (2 nights versus 1 night), the distance traveled, whether or not registration fees or park permits are required and any special equipment for the activity. Most activities will have an activity flyer describing the event that will be posted on our web site. Registration and fee payment is an online process through our web site. In some circumstances, we will accept paper permission forms and check payments, but the online method is the primary means for registering and paying for troop activities. Failure to register and/or pay on time as indicated in the activity flyer could result in exclusion from the event.

Fund Raising

The Troop requires funds to purchase equipment, help subsidize activities etc. The dues collected do not support the troop for the whole year. The Troop raises funds through money-earning activities approved by the Troop Committee. There may be times that the Troop may have a special fundraiser to pay for high adventure trips. Even if a scout is not going on a high adventure trip, we encourage the scout to support the other scouts by participating in the fundraiser.

Fundraising activities have included candy sales, car washes, garage sales and pancake breakfasts. In addition, we are always looking for new ideas. We also have received donations from individuals as well as local corporations. We would like to increase the latter two to ease the burden on the scouts (and parents) from selling candy and other items.

Troop Organization

Scouts

Troop Youth Leadership

The top boy position in the Troop is the Senior Patrol Leader, or SPL. Next is the Assistant Senior Patrol Leader, or ASPL. Senior Scouts also serve as Troop Guides, mentoring younger scouts. Then come Patrol Leaders, Assistant Patrol Leaders, and other Troop leadership positions like the Scribe, Quartermaster, Chaplain Aide, Historian and any other position stated in this handbook. The SPL, ASPL and Patrol Leaders are elected positions. The Patrol Leaders appoint Assistant Patrol Leaders. The SPL and Scoutmaster appoint all other troop leadership positions. It is very important to remember that the real leadership in a Scout Troop comes from the Scouts themselves. Adults are involved to maintain safety, provide guidance when necessary, and make sure the aims of Scouting are being met. The Scouts should run the Troop. Lord Baden-Powell, the founder of Scouting, said "Never do a thing for a boy that he can do for himself." Allowing the Scouts to run their Troop provides opportunity for personal growth and chances to learn leadership skills.

Patrols

The Troop is organized into groups called Patrols. Patrols work together to develop pride in their group, learn new skills, go on outings, play games, and compete in inter-Patrol contests. Patrols are mixed with boys of various ages, so that each patrol has older scouts available to guide and instruct younger scouts.

Scouts who are newly bridged from Webelos will be assigned a Troop Guide, an older scout who will help the new Scout get oriented and begin to learn basic Scouting skills. Each patrol will also be assigned an adult mentor, generally one of the assistant scoutmasters. The troop structure helps to ease the transition and give the new Scout encouragement and guidance as he learns about Boy Scouts.

Meetings are planned and run by the Scouts with the guidance of the Scoutmaster and Assistant Scoutmasters. Having the Scout leadership run the Troop meetings is an important part of helping the Scouts grow. A typical Troop meeting will include a review of activities that have just past, discussion and planning on future activities, some skill development or practice, a Patrol meeting, and possibly a brief ceremony or discussion on topics highlighting Scouting ideals.

The Patrol Leaders Council

The SPL, ASPL, Patrol Leaders, Assistant Patrol Leaders, Quartermaster, Troop Guides, Scribe, and other Senior Scouts, make up the Patrol Leaders Council, or PLC. The PLC will meet once a month, or as directed by the SPL. Its purpose is to plan monthly meetings, trips, outings, and discuss issues that may be arising in the Troop. The PLC is the real leadership organization within the Troop and is where the real decisions that guide the Troop come from. The SPL, ASPL, Troop Guides and Patrol Leaders are the members of the PLC that may vote on issues. The other members are non-voting members. A member of the PLC must make at least 2 of 3 meetings on a rolling basis or risk losing his leadership position.

The Scoutmaster, Assistant Scoutmasters and various Troop Committee members provide appropriate support to the PLC.

Troop Elections

The SPL and Patrol Leader positions are elected positions within the Troop. These are very important leadership positions that are vital to making the Troop function well. The SPL is elected by the entire troop. Patrol Leaders are elected by their patrol, with Assistant Patrol Leaders appointed by the Patrol Leader. The Scoutmaster has the right to remove any leader at his/her discretion.

Instructors

An important aspect of scouting is the learning of certain core skills that each scout needs to master. To help facilitate that learning, the troop has assigned several senior scouts to the instructor role. The instructor is expected to be proficient in the skills they will be teaching, and available to all scouts, with an emphasis on younger scouts to teach the various skills. The core skills that instructors will teach are camping, knots, orienteering, cooking and first aid.

Junior Leader Job Descriptions

This section details the leadership positions in the Troop. Leadership is important to advance in rank, to have a good program, and to develop as a young man. Even if the Scout does not currently hold a leadership position in the Troop, he should make sure he understands the responsibilities of those that do. Those being led should take responsibility to make sure that those they choose as leaders do their job.

Senior Patrol Leader

REPORTS TO: Scoutmaster

SPECIFIC DUTIES:

- Preside at all troop meetings, events, activities, and annual program planning conference. Chair the Patrol Leaders Council.
- Name appointed boy leaders with the advice and consent of the Scoutmaster
- Assign duties and responsibilities to other leaders.
- Work with Scoutmaster in training junior leaders.
- Coordinate activity calendars (troop, district, school).

Assistant Senior Patrol Leader

REPORTS TO: Senior Patrol Leader

SPECIFIC DUTIES:

- Be responsible for training and giving direct leadership to the following appointed junior leaders: Scribe, Librarian, Troop Historian, Instructor, Quartermaster, and Chaplain Aide.
- Help with leading meetings and activities as called upon by the SPL.
- Take over troop leadership in the absence of the SPL.
- Perform tasks assigned by the SPL.
- Function as a member of the PLC.

Patrol Leader

REPORTS TO: Senior Patrol Leader or Assistant Senior Patrol Leader

SPECIFIC DUTIES:

- Plan and lead patrol meetings and activities.
- Keep patrol members informed.
- Assign patrol members a job and help them succeed.
- Represent the patrol at all patrol leaders' council meetings and at the annual program planning conference.
- Prepare the patrol to take part in all troop activities.
- Develop patrol spirit.
- Work with other troop leaders to make the troop run well.
- Know what patrol members and other leaders can do.

Assistant Patrol Leader

REPORTS TO: Patrol Leader

SPECIFIC DUTIES:

- Assist the patrol leader in:
- Planning and leading patrol meetings and activities.
- Keeping patrol members informed.
- Preparing your patrol to take part in all troop activities.
- Take charge of the patrol in the absence of the patrol leader.
- Represent the patrol at all patrol leaders' council meetings in the absence of the patrol leader.
- Help develop patrol spirit.
- Work with other troop leaders to make the troop run well.

Troop Guide

REPORTS TO: Assistant Scoutmaster for New Scouts

SPECIFIC DUTIES:

- Help Scouts meet advancement requirements through First Class.
- Advise Patrol Leader on his duties and his responsibilities at Patrol Leaders' Council meetings.
- Attend Patrol Leaders' Council meetings with the New Scout Patrol Leader.
- Prevent harassment of new Scouts by older Scouts.
- Help Assistant Scoutmaster train new patrol leader when he is elected.
- Guide new Scouts through early troop experiences to help them become comfortable in the troop and the outdoors.

Junior Assistant Scoutmaster

A Scout must be at least 16 years of age, but not yet 18 years of age to serve as a Junior Assistant Scoutmaster. On his 18th birthday, he must register as an adult and he is eligible to become an Assistant Scoutmaster.

REPORTS TO: Scoutmaster

SPECIFIC DUTIES:

- Accomplish any duties assigned by the Scoutmaster.

Troop Quartermaster *

REPORTS TO: Assistant Senior Patrol Leader

SPECIFIC DUTIES:

- Keep records of patrol and troop equipment.
- Keep equipment in good repair.
- Issue equipment and see that it is returned in good order.
- Suggest new or replacement items.
- Work with troop committee member responsible for equipment*.
- Maintain troop trailer and keep organized.
- This position requires considerable adult involvement and oversight. The adult's title is called Equipment Coordinator.

Grubmaster *

REPORTS TO: Assistant Senior Patrol Leader

SPECIFIC DUTIES:

- Maintain troop food supply tubs in a clean and orderly fashion.
- Provide inventory of troop food supplies.
- Coordinate food supplies with scout trip leaders.
- Coordinate meal planning and supply purchases with cooking coordinator.
- Help ensure only needed supplies are purchased.
- This position requires considerable adult involvement and oversight. The adult's title is called Cooking Coordinator

Troop Scribe

REPORTS TO: Assistant Senior Patrol Leader

SPECIFIC DUTIES:

- Attend and keep a log of Patrol Leaders' Council meetings.
- Record attendance.
- Record advancement in troop records.
- Work with appropriate troop committee members responsible for finance, records, and advancement.

Troop Historian

REPORTS TO: Assistant Senior Patrol Leader

SPECIFIC DUTIES:

- Gather pictures and facts about past activities of the troop and keep them in scrapbooks, wall displays, or information files.
- Take care of troop trophies and keepsakes.
- Keep information about troop alumni.

Troop Librarian

REPORTS TO: Assistant Senior Patrol Leader

SPECIFIC DUTIES:

- Establish and maintain a troop library.
- Keep records on literature owned by the troop.
- Add new or replacement items needed.
- Have literature available for borrowing at troop meetings and camping trips.
- Keep system to check literature in and out.
- Follow up on late returns.

Den Chief

REPORTS TO: Cub Scout Den Leader and Assistant Senior Patrol Leader

SPECIFIC DUTIES:

- Serve as the activities assistant at Webelos den meetings, to help prepare boys to join Boy Scouting and our Troop.
- Meet regularly with the den leader to review the den and pack meeting plans.
- Project a positive image of Boy Scouting.

Bugler

REPORTS TO: Assistant Senior Patrol Leader

SPECIFIC DUTIES:

- Play Taps at the end of each scout meeting closing ceremony.
- Close every Court of Honor with the playing of Taps.
- At Trip Outings (where it would be possible to bring a bugle), play Taps each evening at the appropriate time.
- Play at anytime deemed appropriate by the Scoutmaster or Senior Patrol Leader.

Instructor

REPORTS TO: Assistant Senior Patrol Leader

SPECIFIC DUTIES:

- Instruct scouting skills as needed within the troop or patrols.
- Attend at least 50 % of the troop meetings and actives during his service period.
- Prepare well in advance for each teaching assignment.

OA Troop Representative

REPORTS TO: Assistant Senior Patrol Leader

SPECIFIC DUTIES:

- Coordinate service opportunities within the unit.
- Coordinate unit involvement with the Order of the Arrow, including Unit Elections, Camp Promotions, and Inductions.
- Request lodge and chapter resources to help meet unit needs.

Webmaster

REPORTS TO: Assistant Senior Patrol Leader

SPECIFIC DUTIES:

- Works with various unit members on need topics.
- Ensures the Web site is as youth-run as possible.
- Helps out Web site where needed.

Leave No Trace Trainer

REPORTS TO: Assistant Senior Patrol Leader

SPECIFIC DUTIES:

- Helps minimize impact on the land by teaching members the principles of Leave No Trace and improving Scouts' outdoor ethics decision-making skills.

For all the above positions the scout must:

1. Set a good example.
2. Wear the uniform correctly.
3. Live by the Scout Oath and Law.

Adult Troop Leadership

Parents are encouraged to show support for their Scout as an adult leader with the Troop. Many hands make light work; and the more adult involvement with the Troop, the better program we can provide for our sons.

Only registered troop leaders may accompany the Troop on outings, unless the outing is specifically designated as a family outing. To become a registered adult leader an adult must complete and submit an Adult Leader Application that must be approved by the Troop Committee Chair and the Chartered Organization Representative. The application is then submitted to the Hudson Valley Council for final approval. All adult leaders are required to submit a BSA medical form. All registered adult leaders are expected to have a specific function within the Troop.

Before a parent joins the Scouts on an outing, it is important for that parent to remember that Boy Scouts is a Scout run program, not an adult led program. ***The Scout run Troop is one of the most basic and important principles of the Scouting program.*** If a parent participates in an activity, it is very important that s/he do their best to be adult Scout leaders, not parents. In order for the Scout program to succeed, the Scouts have to be free to make decisions, succeed, fail, and learn by running their own Troop. Failure is sometimes the best teacher, and success is a reward both for the Scouts and the adults who guide them. Parents should not be offended if the Scoutmaster or Assistant Scoutmaster asks them not to make suggestions or to help in certain situations, and should not worry when the Scout leader appears to be letting the Scouts make a bad decision. Adult leaders are there to guide and maintain safety, and we will never allow a Scout to make a mistake that would seriously compromise their safety. Being a Scout leader is not easy in any capacity, and becomes even harder when your own son is involved. Rest assured that the Troop adult leaders want parents to participate in all aspects of the Troop, and they will do anything they can to make the experience fun and rewarding.

All adult leaders serving an active role with the Troop must make arrangements for the BSA training class appropriate for their position. This training is offered several times a year and helps to assure that everyone involved in the Troop's leadership understands the goals of Scouting. In addition, trained leaders are one of the requirements for the Troop to earn the Quality Unit Award. Many of the required training courses are available online.

The Adult Troop leadership consists of two main groups: The Troop Committee and The Scoutmaster and Assistant Scoutmasters (also referred to as direct contact leaders).

The Troop Committee

The first group, the Troop Committee, is made up of concerned adults who meet on occasion to discuss issues and make decisions for the Troop. The Committee is led by the Committee Chair and must have a Treasurer and Secretary. The members of the troop committee fill other committee positions. The Committee makes policy decisions, keeps records, and constantly monitors the program quality. Committee members also are welcome to join outings and help with special events. Committee meetings are held as necessary. All parents are encouraged to attend these meetings, however, voting on troop matters is restricted to members of the troop committee.

In order to serve on the troop committee, you need to be a registered adult of the Boy Scouts of America. You must complete the training requirements for your position, and have a specific role within the troop committee. The committee may appoint other members to serve on the troop committee as needed.

Troop Committee Positions

Committee Chair: Organize committee to see all functions are delegated, coordinated and completed. Maintain a close relationship with the chartered organization representative and the Scoutmaster. Interpret national and local BSA policies to the troop. Prepare troop committee meeting agendas. Call, preside over and promote attendance at troop committee meetings and any special meetings that may be called. Ensure troop representation at monthly roundtables. Secure top-notch, trained individuals for camp leadership. Arrange for charter review and recharter annually. Plan the charter presentation.

Secretary: Keep minutes of meetings. Send out notices for committee meetings. Secure location for committee meetings. Conduct the troop resource survey; maintain results. Maintain troop records as agreed between chair, treasurer, scoutmaster, and advancement coordinator. Maintain the database of driver and vehicle information for the troop. Complete tour permit applications (with the help of Scoutmasters and Activity Coordinators) for each troop-sponsored activity or outing that requires a tour permit. Provide outing or activity leaders copies of approved tour permit. Act as the troop point-person for the annual process of troop charter renewal. Includes attending district orientation, developing a timeline and plan for our troop recharter, distributing information, collecting fees, updating membership records and submitting charter to the District Scout Executive for processing.

Treasurer: Handle all troop funds. Pay bills on recommendation of the Scoutmaster and authorization of troop committee. Maintain bank accounts. Train and supervise the troop scribe in record keeping. Keep adequate financial records. Supervise money-earning projects, including obtaining proper authorizations. Prepare the annual troop budget. Report status to troop committee at committee meetings as necessary.

Outdoor Activity Coordinator: Ensures that each troop activity is conducted so that it meets a common set of criteria, including adherence to BSA guidelines, participation minimums, and troop standards for organization and coordination. Recruit Activity Coordinators for each activity planned by the scouts and acquaint the coordinator with standard methods for making a successful troop activity happen (e.g.: historical records from prior similar activities, promoting the event, sign ups, tour permits, fee collection, organizing transportation, etc.) The Activity Coordinator's goal is to have each activity

organized and coordinated in a consistent fashion, leading to a level of consistent high quality in our outings.

Training Coordinator: Ensure that troop leaders and committee members have opportunities for training. Maintain, as appropriate, an inventory of up-to-date training materials. Keep the troop informed regarding the availability of district or council sponsored training opportunities. Be responsible for BSA Youth Protection training within the troop. Encourage periodic junior leader training within the troop.

Advancement Coordinator: Encourage Scouts to advance in rank. Maintain troop scout advancement records (Troopmaster software). Complete and forward to the council troop advancement reports. Secure badges and certificates for courts of honor. Provide advancement status reports to scoutmaster and assistant scoutmasters. Oversee troop advancement advisory committee and secure adults to serve on Boards of Review.

Eagle Scout Advisor: Advise Life Scouts as they work toward their Eagle rank. Help the scout with the process of selecting and preparing his plans for his Eagle project. Guide the scout through the process of project approval through the District Eagle Committee.

Equipment Coordinator: Work with the quartermaster on inventory and proper storage and maintenance of all troop equipment. Maintain the troop trailer. Make periodic safety checks on all troop camping gear, and encourage scouts in safe use of all outdoor equipment. Report to the troop committee at meetings as necessary.

Cooking Coordinator: Provide assistance to the PLC and scouts assigned to meal planning for troop activities. Give advice in planning the menu, to ensure a healthy balance of food choices. Work with scout(s) to ascertain the amounts of food needed to meet menus as planned. Assist scouts in preparing a shopping list. Consult with the grubmaster to ascertain what supplies are already on hand in troop inventory.

Procurement Coordinator: Help the troop procure any necessary equipment. Research prices and report to troop committee. Make necessary purchases upon approval of troop committee. Coordinate with troop committee chair and treasurer.

Health Officer: Collect and maintain BSA Medical Forms for all troop scouts and leaders. Keep list of expirations of all medical forms, and advise troop leadership and individual members when new medical forms are required. Provide copy of medical forms to trip leaders in advance of any troop outings.

Summer Camp Coordinator: Prepare camp flyer in advance of camp registration. Collect all registration forms and fees for summer camp. Coordinate with Health Officer to ensure medical forms for all camp attendees are up to date as of the week of camp. Work closely with the troop assigned in-camp scoutmaster. Forward any fees and paperwork to camp (usually council office for the chosen camp).

Historian Adviser: The historian adviser will assist the troop historian with research and documentation of the troop history.

Librarian Adviser: The librarian adviser will assist the troop librarian maintain the troop library.

Communications Adviser: The Communications adviser will work with the troop webmaster to administer the troop web site and other electronic forms of communication. This position requires knowledge of web-based language, such as HTML and CSS.

Ceremonies Coordinator: The Ceremonies Coordinator will coordinate with event leaders or hosts to develop the guest list for the event. They will maintain a standing list of local dignitaries and district and council scouting representatives, and invite or suggest guests that should be invited to major troop events such as Courts of Honor or Eagle Courts of Honor.

Swap Meet Coordinator: The Swap Meet Coordinator will maintain the inventory of used scouting items donated to the troop. They will coordinate with the troop webmaster so the inventory can be maintained on the troop web site. They will collect any funds for items purchased from the inventory, and remit these funds periodically to the troop treasurer.

The Scoutmaster and Assistant Scoutmasters

The second group of adult leaders is the Scoutmaster and Assistant Scoutmasters. The Scoutmaster and Assistant Scoutmasters work directly with the Scouts and help them advance, learn new skills, and live by the Scout Oath and Law. The Scoutmaster and Assistant Scoutmasters also accompany the Scouts on outings.

The Scoutmaster is ultimately responsible for a quality program that provides opportunities for advancement, leadership experience, and an exciting outdoor program. He also maintains the safety of the Scouts. The Assistant Scoutmasters are responsible for specific areas of the Troop Program based upon their interests and expertise and the needs of the Scouts. Currently, we have ASMs working with Program, Troop Guides, Instructors, Community Service, New Scouts, Den Chiefs and High Adventure.

The ASM-Program, or First Assistant Scoutmaster, fills the SM role at any activity that the Scoutmaster cannot attend.

Adult Activity Leader Responsibilities

Troop 97 will make every effort to share the responsibilities for overseeing the planning and conduct of troop activities amongst the troop adult leadership. Therefore, below is a set of expectations for adult leaders of such activities:

- Work with the Scoutmaster and/or PLC to identify activities during the year that you would like to oversee;
- Assure that they are appropriately scheduled on the troop calendar;
- Take the lead in making arrangements in advance, as needed, e.g., campground reservations and payments;
- Attend a PLC to discuss the event planning at the appropriate time – include coordination of meal planning and shopping;
- Assure that adequate adult leadership (e.g., two-deep) is in place and assure that proper adult training (e.g. Safe Swim, Safety Afloat, etc) has taken place;
- Work with the troop secretary to have a tour permit prepared, if required;
- Prepare an activity flyer at the appropriate time and share this with the Scoutmaster and Outdoor Activity Coordinator. Arrange for distribution to the troop. Consult with the troop treasurer, if necessary, regarding event costs;
- Discuss the event openly with the troop at a troop meeting;
- Communicate all final travel arrangements;
- Check with Health Officer regarding records of any special medical needs or issues with the scouts. Obtain medical records and be responsible for them on the event. Return the records to the Health Officer upon completion of the event;
- Assure that all scouts and scouters attending have a completed permission form;
- Oversee the event, assuring that appropriate boy leadership is in place and working properly. Make every effort to allow the boys to run the event, to a reasonable extent;
- In lieu of a Scoutmaster, take attendance and give this information to the Scoutmaster;
- After the event, document and discuss any 'performance issues' with the scout, as appropriate. Include praise for any scout who demonstrated good spirit, leadership, etc.
- In line with the point above, also share this information with the Scoutmaster and the Advancement Coordinator. This will be valuable information in future coaching sessions.

Advancement

Through participation at Troop meetings, outdoor activities, and working on his own, the Scout will have an opportunity to work on badges and skills that will help him advance through the scouting ranks. The first of these ranks is the Scout badge, which the Scout will earn by joining the Troop, learning some simple scouting concepts, and having his first Scoutmaster Conference. After the Scout Badge, the Scout will continue through Tenderfoot, Second Class, First Class, Star, and Life. Finally, he may be able to earn the highest honor in Boy Scouting, the Eagle rank.

The Tenderfoot, Second Class, and First Class ranks require work mainly on the basic outdoor and first aid skills every Scout needs to know.

The Star and Life ranks require work on merit badges, leadership, and service to the community. The Eagle rank continues to work on merit badges, leadership, and service to the community. The leadership requirement can be fulfilled by actively and satisfactorily fulfilling a formal troop junior leadership job. The requirement may also be fulfilled by demonstrating leadership on special projects as agreed to with the Scoutmaster. An approved Eagle project that provides a lasting improvement for the community must also be completed. The Scout must complete all Eagle requirements before his eighteenth birthday.

All ranks (except Scout) also have a requirement that specifies that a Scout must show Scout Spirit in his daily life. How the Scout behaves at meetings and during outings is usually the greatest measure of his Scout Spirit and will affect the decision of the Scoutmaster to sign off on this requirement and permit advancement. Scout Spirit also includes behavior outside of scouting. Any pertinent information that the troop receives concerning a scout's behavior outside of scouting may be considered by the troop leadership in assessing Scout Spirit.

As the requirements for rank are completed, the Scout must present himself with his *Boy Scout Handbook* to a Scoutmaster or Assistant Scoutmaster. The Scoutmaster will make sure each requirement has been met and will initial and date the item in the Scout's *Boy Scout Handbook*. The Scout should be ready to prove he really has completed the requirement before he asks someone to sign his book. Requirements can only be approved in the *Boy Scout Handbook*, so the Scout should make sure he has the book with him at all times.

Troop 97 also encourages all scouts to participate in 50% of all meetings and events and 50% of all outdoor activities. While specific attendance is not a criterion for advancement, participation in troop activities is a measure of scout leadership fulfillment and scout spirit and Scouts are expected to participate in all aspects of the Troop program, including high adventure and community service.

After the requirements for a rank are completed, the Scout must schedule a Scoutmaster Conference and Board of Review. Once the Scoutmaster Conference and Board of Review are successfully completed, the Scout earns his rank.

Scoutmaster Conference

The Scoutmaster Conference is a time for the scout and the scoutmaster to sit down and talk about how the scout is progressing towards his next rank. The scoutmaster will ask questions regarding how well the scout has learned the items required for the rank he is completing. The scout should come to the scoutmaster conference with his *Boy Scout Handbook*, wearing his full Class "A" uniform or, if appropriate, his activity uniform, and be ready to talk openly and honestly about his scouting experiences. The scoutmaster will be assessing the individual needs of the scout, helping him to set goals for his next rank, and trying to gauge the success of the Troop program.

- Scoutmaster Conference's will be scheduled monthly, as needed. A scout can request a Scoutmaster Conference at any time by notifying the Scoutmaster in advance. The scout cannot just ask for a Scoutmaster Conference the night of a meeting.
- Before a scout can have a Scoutmaster Conference for purpose of advancement, all the requirements must be signed and dated in his Boy Scout handbook. **Unlike Cub scouts, a parent is not authorized to sign off on their son's book.** The handbook should also document (event and date) activities in fulfillment of community service hours. If the requirements for advancement were completed at scout camp, then the Scout is responsible to have the requirements transcribed from any documents given at camp into the Boy Scout Handbook
- The Scoutmaster will notify the Advancement Coordinator of those scouts who wish to advance. The Advancement Coordinator will then convene as well as chair the Advancement Advisory Committee to review each scout and make a recommendation to the Scoutmaster whether such scout is ready for advancement. The advisory committee process will be required for the ranks of Star, Life and Eagle, and will be convened as necessary for ranks lower than Star at the discretion of the Advancement Coordinator.
- The Advisory Committee will consist of at least three adult leaders of the troop, one of whom shall be the Advancement Coordinator. The members of this committee will be approved by the Troop Committee. Members of this committee shall be adult leaders who have demonstrated in depth familiarity with the scouts of the troop via their participation in troop meetings and outings.
- The advisory committee will make its recommendation based upon the knowledge of the scouts, including the scout's level of participation over the previous six (6) months, and the aspirational ideals set forth below.
- The Advancement Coordinator will notify the Scoutmaster of the advisory committee's recommendation as soon as possible, where after a Scoutmaster Conference can be held.
- If the Scoutmaster does not sign off on the Scoutmaster Conference, the Scout may be asked to review some of the requirements and schedule another Scoutmaster Conference when the Scout feels he is ready. The Scout needs to know that if he needs any help he must ask. There are many people, Scouts and adults who are available to help the Scout succeed.
- After passing the Scoutmaster Conference, the Scout must schedule a Board of Review, by contacting the Advancement Coordinator.

A Scout may request an informal Scoutmaster Conference at any time.

A Scout may advance at any time once the requirements for the rank have been achieved and the Scoutmaster and Board of Review have approved the advancement. The advancement will take effect immediately after final approval of the Board of Review. However, formal recognition of the advancement will take place at the regularly scheduled Courts of Honor.

Board of Review

After completion of the Scoutmaster Conference, the scout will appear before a Board of Review. A Board of Review will be comprised of 3 adult leaders, one of whom shall be the Advancement Coordinator (if available). There shall be a pool of committee members available to sit on a Board of Review. These members will be selected to serve by the Advancement Coordinator and approved by the Troop Committee. Members serving on Boards of Review will receive training on how to conduct a Board of Review. Boards of Review shall be held for all scouts who have completed a Scoutmaster Conference, regardless of whether they have been approved for advancement. The Scoutmaster is not in attendance. During the Board of Review, the Scout presents himself to the Board. He must be in full Class A uniform, including merit badge sash. His appearance should be neat, his attitude good, and his manner respectful. He may be asked to repeat the Scout Oath, the Scout Law, the Outdoor Code, the Scout Motto, or The Scout Slogan. He will then be invited to sit down, and the Board will ask him questions about his scouting life. The questions can range very widely, so the Scout should be ready to communicate openly and honestly. The object of the Board of Review is to ensure that documentation is present verifying that all requirements for advancement have been met; to examine the attitude of the Scouts in the Troop, and to ensure that the program offered by the Scoutmaster is fun, exciting, and meets the goals of Boy Scouting.

The Scoutmaster Conference and Board of Review can be stressful, particularly for the younger Scouts. It is important to remember that this experience is part of the Scout's development as a young man and helps him to learn to communicate and handle situations.

A Scout being considered for the Eagle rank, in addition to the troop level Board of Review, must undergo a special Eagle Board of Review, consisting of officials from throughout the District. The Scoutmaster and Eagle Advisor will work with the Eagle candidate to prepare him for the District Board of Review.

Other Advancement Considerations

Advancement is the responsibility of the Scout! Parents are encouraged to help, but the ultimate responsibility must lie with the Scout. A parent who takes those responsibilities robs the Scout of his opportunity to share in the Scouting experience.

Scouts who do not advance over a long period of time may be asked to participate in a Scoutmaster Conference and/or Board of Review to see what can be done to help the Scout continue to advance.

The Scouts will be asked to interact and communicate with adults that they may not know very well throughout their Scouting experience, but particularly when working on merit badges. Learning to do this is an important part of the Scout experience. Communication can be face-to-face, by phone, or by e-mail.

“Scout Qualities” Considered for Rank Advancement

Rank	Quality	Examples
Tenderfoot, Second and First Class	Participation	Actively participates in a minimum of 50% of all troop activities, including community service activities, and 50% of outdoor activities
	Scout Spirit	Adheres to all points of the Scout Law, without significant exception
	Proper Uniform	Appears at scout activities in the appropriate uniform, neat and orderly
Star	All of the above plus:	
	Leadership	Fulfills a leadership role in the patrol or troop AND demonstrates leadership by: Willingly volunteering to lead activities; Accepting clear responsibility and accountability for the position that he holds; [If ‘role’ is as Den Chief, then scout must also demonstrate the qualities above at the troop level.] Actively contributes to troop planning through the PLC or through appropriate other planning opportunities; Accepts the authority of others who may be called upon to lead
	Mentoring/Guiding	Helps younger scouts with specific skills
	Role Model	Is neat in appearance and displays appropriate respect for the values of scouting
Life	All of the above plus:	
	Leadership	Consistently takes the lead when needed, without always being asked; Appropriately represents the troop at all functions;
	Mentoring/Guiding	Helps younger scouts in identifying and delivering programs that address their advancement
	Role Model	Always presents himself in a manner that sets a high standard for other scouts, without exception

“Scout Qualities” Considered for Rank Advancement

Eagle	All of the above plus:	
	Leadership	<p>In completing the Eagle project, demonstrate and clearly explain the appropriate leadership qualities required in that project and how these were assumed without undue adult assistance;</p> <p>Spontaneously knows when a leadership role needs to be filled and steps in;</p> <p>Always assures that (particularly outdoor) activities are led consistent with scout policy – two-deep leadership, Outdoor Code, Leave No Trace, etc. and that the safety of each scout is always assured;</p> <p>Recommends improvements in troop policy and the troop program;</p> <p>Leadership qualities must be a clear asset to the adult leadership of the troop</p>
	Mentoring/Guiding	<p>Demonstrate a commitment to the advancement of younger scouts by monitoring and taking partial ‘ownership’ for their advancement;</p> <p>Willingly and spontaneously addresses the safety and comfort needs of other scouts, particularly in the outdoors</p>
	Role Model	<p>Always displays qualities and traits which exemplify the highest standards of scouting as a model for younger scouts</p>

Scouting Skills

Scouts are expected to be proficient in the scouting skills appropriate for the rank being sought (remember that this includes skills from any previous ranks as well). The Scout should be able to demonstrate and, if First Class or above, be able to teach these various skills.

Scouts who are actively participating will have numerous opportunities to demonstrate their proficiency with map and compass, knots and lashings, fire building and cooking and first aid. At the discretion of the Scoutmaster, a Scout may be asked to teach a specific skill to younger Scout prior to advancing to the next rank.

The Court of Honor

Courts of Honor are special Troop meetings held during the school year where awards, badges, and other recognition are presented. Parents, siblings and other family members are encouraged to join the Scout at the Court of Honor to participate and help celebrate the young man's achievements. It is very important that all scouts, even those not receiving any award or advancement, attend to support their fellow scouts. All Courts of Honor are planned well in advance and are on the Troop calendar.

Traditionally, Troop 97 holds three Courts of Honor per year – one in the fall, one in winter, and one in the spring.

Merit Badges

Merit badges are awards that concentrate on a particular field of expertise or a specific skill and can be earned by Scouts in cooperation with a merit badge counselor. Each merit badge has an accompanying booklet that can be borrowed from the Troop library, or purchased at the Scout Shop. There are over 100 merit badges available, and some are required before a Scout can earn his Star, Life, or Eagle rank. The required merit badges can be earned in any order. Consult the *Boy Scout Handbook* for information on which merit badges are optional and which are required. Merit badge opportunities are also offered on the district and council levels and at summer camp. Announcement of these opportunities will be given at troop meetings or by troop mailings.

The following policies govern troop merit badge work:

- The Scout should approach a Scoutmaster or the Advancement Coordinator on the Committee and ask for the names and phone numbers of merit badge counselors in the area. A list of troop merit badge counselors is also available from the troop web site.
- The Scoutmaster must assure that the Scout has met any prerequisites for the merit badge. i.e. pass swimming requirements before canoeing or lifesaving merit badges.
- When the Scout first asks for the name of a merit badge counselor, he will be issued a "blue card" to track his progress through the merit badge requirements. This card will be filled out by the Scout, signed by the Scoutmaster, and then taken to every meeting with the merit badge counselor. ***The counselor will not meet with a Scout without a blue card.***
- The Scout is then responsible for contacting the counselor, asking for help working on the badge, and setting up the first meeting time.
- Merit badge work is to be done outside of the troop meetings unless scheduled as part of the troop program.
- When the merit badge is complete, the merit badge counselor will sign the card, and the Scout will be given a section to keep for his records. **These records are very important.** If something happens to the Council records, the copy of the blue card given to the Scout may be the only record that the merit badge was completed. Make a copy of the blue card. There have been cases where Eagle Scout applications have been turned down because the Council records were not correct and the Scout could not produce the blue card to prove he had completed a particular merit badge. The Scout should be very careful to save all the completed blue cards and store them in a safe place. Plastic notebook pages used by baseball card collectors are a great way to store the blue cards for safekeeping.
- Meetings with a merit badge counselor must be with a buddy, either another Scout or an adult. Scouts should never meet with a merit badge counselor without someone else being present.

- Maximum time limits to complete a merit badge are directly controlled by the merit badge counselor. Minimum time will be controlled by the merit badge requirements. Every merit badge will have limits to insure the Scout is learning and displaying the skill necessary to complete the merit badge.
- Scouts must present a properly completed blue Merit Badge application card to the Advancement Coordinator before award of the Merit Badge can be made.
- The Merit Badge will be awarded at the next Court of Honor. Merit badges are worn on the merit badge sash.

The troop appreciates the involvement of parents in the merit badge process. If you have expertise or knowledge of a particular merit badge topic and would like to serve as a merit badge counselor, please contact the Advancement Coordinator.

A Scout may not use a parent as their merit badge counselor unless the advancement coordinator and committee chair grant approval. This will usually occur only when there are no available counselors within reasonable distance for the merit badge in question. **Under no circumstances may a scout use a parent as the merit badge counselor for an Eagle required merit badge.**

Uniform Requirements

The Boy Scouts of America is a uniformed organization. Our policy is that volunteers and unit members are expected to be in as complete a uniform as financially possible during unit meetings and activities. The Scout uniform is the ONLY PLACE where official insignia that you or your son has received, earned or are entitled to wear is to be displayed. The uniform instills a bit of pride and ownership in the program and the members of our Troop. During scouting activities, it is easy to recognize who is "in our Troop" or other Troops or even scouting members at a distance -- this also prevents those who desire to do harm to children to stay at a distance if not away period. Finally, the wearing of the uniform reminds Scouts and Scouters of their obligations to uphold the scouting ideals and that of service.

We side with the BSA in areas of identification, sense of pride and health and safety in asking that you go with this policy, and we will work with you to insure that your son or you are in as complete a uniform as possible. If you have concerns about our uniform policy, we encourage you to talk with us. We are proud of who we are and proud of our Troop's heritage and identity in the community. The Scout uniform is an outward sign of identification with the scouting program and should be worn with pride. The uniform makes our troop visible as a force for good and creates a positive youth image in our community. It gives the Scout an opportunity to practice being neat, take pride in his appearance, display his awards and badges, and feel a part of a group.

The Class A uniform consists of the following items:

- BSA short or long-sleeved khaki Scout shirt with appropriate patches and insignia properly sewn
- Scout shorts and/or Scout long pants
- Scout socks
- BSA green web belt with Scout buckle or scout leather belt (unless pants are self-belted)
- Neckerchief and slide
- Scout hat

Scouts should be prepared for a uniform inspection at any time.

While Scouts are in Class A uniform, they may not wear any hats except Scouting hats. This includes troop hats, camp hats, OA hats or official BSA hats. Only the official BSA hat should be worn at Courts of Honor.

Class A uniform is required for admittance to a Troop meeting, unless otherwise advised. **If a Scout comes to a Troop meeting when not in uniform, he may be asked to go home to change or may not be able to fully participate. A Scout may not be credit with participation at Troop activities if he is not appropriately dressed.** It is expected of your son to be in his uniform for scouting just as well that he needs to be in his uniform for other actives such as baseball or karate, etc.

Insignia Placement

Correct placement of uniform insignia is shown on the inside cover of the Boy Scout Handbook and in the BSA Insignia Guide. Patches must be placed on the uniform in the correct location and attached in a neat manor.

Merit badges are worn on the merit badge sash. Merit badges are not worn on the Scout shirt. Merit badges may be worn in three columns on the sash; there is no required order. The sash is worn over the right shoulder and only on formal occasions such as Boards of Review, Courts of Honor, special flag ceremonies etc.

Wearing The Uniform

The Class A uniform is required to be worn:

- To all Courts of Honor
- At all troop meetings and functions, unless otherwise advised, as above. (merit badge sash is not required at our general meetings)
- To all Boards of Review
- To District, Council and National Scouting events
- Scoutmaster Conferences (unless the activity uniform is appropriate based upon the location of the conference)
- To other events as specified by the Scoutmaster

For more formal occasions (Courts of Honor, Webelos crossovers, religious worship services and public appearances) the Scout may add his merit badge sash and religious medals.

For members of the Order of the Arrow (OA), the OA sash is to be worn at OA functions and other functions that render service to OA such as elections; camp promotion and OA tap outs. The OA sash is not worn with the merit badge sash at a Court of Honor, nor is it to be worn folded over the Scout belt.

Wearing of military clothing, camouflage and the imitation of United States Military uniforms at any Scouting activity is a violation of National BSA policy (BSA Rules and Regulations, Article 10, Section 4, Clause 4b) and will not be permitted.

A Scout is expected to wear his uniform with his shirt buttoned and tucked in.

The following additional rules apply to clothing worn at campouts or other events when a Class A uniform is not required:

- Clothing items including headgear that display or advertise drugs, illegal controlled substances, alcohol, tobacco, suggestive wording, profanity, gangs or advocate violence are never permitted.
- Grooming or attire, which disrupt Scouting activities, are not appropriate and therefore are prohibited.

"Class B" uniform is the Troop 97 or other BSA T-shirt.

Where To Buy

Uniforms and other Scouting accessories are available at:

Cleats 'N Sneaks: Rt. 59 Nanuet, 845-623-2900

Ramsey Outdoor: Rt. 17 North, Paramus, NJ 201-261-5000 or
Rt. 17 South, Ramsey, NJ 201-327-8141

Local Scout Shops Hudson Valley Council:

6 Jeanne Drive, Newburgh, NY 12550

Phone: (845) 566-7300 Web site: <http://www.hvcbsa.org>

Northern New Jersey Council:

25 Ramapo Valley Road, Oakland, NJ 07436

Phone: (201) 651-9743 Web site: <http://www.nnjbsa.org>

Westchester-Putnam Council:

41 Saw Mill River Road, Hawthorne, NY 10532

Phone: (914) 773-1216 Web site: <http://www.wpcbsa.org>

Don't forget to check our troop website for deals on slightly used uniforms that our scouts have outgrown. We also will occasionally hold used uniform and equipment sales at troop meetings. These are great opportunities to purchase items at significantly reduced cost.

Troop Calendar Development Process

Sometime in the summer before September 1st of each year the Troop will schedule and execute a planning conference. At the annual planning conference, the Troop calendar for the next 12 months is created by the PLC with the guidance of the Scoutmasters. The plan for the next 12 months will be comprehensive and take into account events as detailed as the theme for weekly Troop meetings

Prior to the conference, the Patrol Leaders will get input from their Patrols about activities or outings they are interested in. The Patrol Leaders will then bring those ideas to the conference for consideration, and the PLC will determine the Troop's schedule for the coming year. After the PLC has determined the year's calendar, it is submitted to the Troop Committee for final approval. The purpose for Committee review is to ensure that the calendar provides a quality program that meets the goals of the Troop and supports the Boy Scout ideals, not to question individual events. Care must be taken to make sure the plans made by the Scouts during the planning conference are not superceded. After the Committee approves the plan, it will be distributed to all the Scouts.

The calendar will be reviewed by the PLC periodically to make any needed updates or modifications.

The Scouts should remember that the yearly planning conference is their chance to decide what their program is going to be like. During the conference, it is the Scouts that decide what will be done for the following year. It is the Scouts who have the responsibility to come up with ideas for activities and plan to make them a success. It is the Scouts who take responsibility for their program and make sure they are doing exciting, memorable events. This is the best and greatest chance for the Scouts to take control of their program and make it what they want it to be.

Camping

Camping is an exciting time for the Scout, but it is also a time of great responsibility. The Scouts will be expected to take most of the responsibility by planning the trip, setting up their own camp, cooking their own food, washing their own dishes, and building their own fires. Scoutmasters and other adult leaders will always be available to provide guidance and assistance, but these trips are primarily the responsibility of the Scouts.

There will be minimum amounts of required equipment that a scout will need. Please refer to the Scout handbook for a list of equipment. The BSA *Fieldbook*, an extension of the *Scout Handbook* will provide an extensive amount of information to help you plan and prepare for a variety of outdoor adventures. It is highly recommended that it is purchased. The Troop web site also has lists of suggested gear for various outings.

In order to participate on a campout, the Scout is expected to attend appropriate planning meetings, which help to assure a safe and successful outing.

Summer Camp

Every summer, Troop 97 attends a weeklong summer camp. Summer camp offers each Scout advancement opportunities and outdoor challenges that he will remember for a lifetime. The summer camp program is geared for Scouts for all ages and ranks. The first year camper program is specifically designed for new Scouts and has them working on many requirements needed for ranks through First Class. There are merit badge sessions for Scouts who need merit badges to attain their rank.

Besides the advancement offered at summer camp, the Scouts have many opportunities to swim, fish, canoe, hike, participate in shooting sports such as rifle and archery, make new friends and have fun. Attending summer camp is one of the most important highlights of the scouting year. No Scout should miss attending!!

If he wishes, a Scout has the option to attend camp for provisional weeks. A provisional week takes Scouts who want to attend camp during a week that their troop is not in camp, and joins them with other similarly situated Scouts, under the guidance of volunteer campmasters. If you wish additional information you may contact the Scoutmaster or Troop Committee Chair.

The troop also has and will continue to explore high-adventure summer camp options for those Scouts looking for a more challenging summer experience.

Other Outings And Events

During the year the Troop will hold some special events. It may be a weekend campout, day hike, a trip to a local event or special location, or a community service project. The Scouts are expected and encouraged to participate in these events.

Outings fall into four types of trips:

1. Family oriented for all.
2. Outdoors adventure for all scouts.
3. High adventure for advanced scouts having appropriate skills.
4. Community service activities, including Eagle Service Projects.

There also will be at least one high adventure outing every year. In order for a Scout to participate in a high adventure outing, he may have to meet certain age or rank requirements, usually 13 years of age and/or First Class. High adventures include extended hiking trips, climbing and rappelling, extended canoeing trips, and many other exciting adventures.

With ALL trips, day or overnight, prior to the trip the scout will need a signed permission form confirming he is going on the trip and has his parents consent. The form must be filled out and submitted with the payment for the trip. All trips have a deadline. To be fair to the other members of the troop there will be no exceptions to this policy. Adults participating in trips will need to submit permission slips as well. These forms and appropriate medical forms are vital in cases of emergency where medical treatment may be required.

Fire Building

Scouts must pass specific requirements before they are given the responsibility for working with fires. To work with fires, the Scout must earn his Firem'n Chit by demonstrating knowledge of fire safety and the ability to safely start a fire.

Knives

Scouts must pass specific requirements before they are given the responsibility for working with knives, axes and saws. In order to use woodworking tools, including his personal pocketknife, he must earn the Totin' Chip by demonstrating knowledge of the safety precautions that are important when using wood tools. Sheath knives, those with fixed blades that do not fold, are not to be used at any time during Troop activities. There really is no use for these types of blades during Boy Scout outings, and they can be dangerous. Small pocketknives, multi-bladed camp tools, or single-blade knives that lock open and fold into the handle are acceptable. When in doubt, consult a Scoutmaster before purchasing a new knife.

The Whittling Chip, if earned when the scout was a cub scout, does not carry over to boy scouts. He must not use any knife, ax or saw until he earns a BSA Totin' Chip.

The requirements for both of these awards are listed in the *Boy Scout Handbook*, and the Scout should review them as soon as possible after joining the Troop. After a Scout demonstrates his knowledge and satisfies a Scoutmaster or a Scout designated by the Scoutmaster that he has mastered the required skills, he will be issued a Totin' Chip and/or Firem'n Chit card signed by the Scoutmaster. These cards must be in the Scout's possession at all times so that he can prove he has mastered the appropriate skills.

If a Scout is observed disregarding the safety rules for fire or wood tools, he may be asked to present his card, and one or more corners may be cut off. If a Scout loses all four corners of any card, he must again demonstrate that he understands the rules and regulations before he will be issued another card. Throwing a knife at any time will result in disciplinary action up to possible expulsion from the troop. Only a Scoutmaster or his designee may sign or cut corners from a Scout's Totin' or Firem'n cards.

Prohibited Items

Absolutely, no radios, electronic games, DVD players, game boys or other electronic devices as well as toy guns, bows and arrows, homemade or otherwise, fireworks or aerosol cans (pump sprays are allowed) will be allowed on any scout event such as camping trips, troop meetings, Court of Honor, hikes, service projects, summer camp etc. These devices do not support an appreciation and enjoyment of the outdoors. If a Scout is found with any of the above items during a trip, it may be confiscated by the Scoutmaster and returned later. Repeated incidents may result in disciplinary action. Cell Phones are permitted, and are good tools of communications with parents to arrange for pick up times and the like, but may not be used except in an emergency situation or by permission of an adult leader. A personal MP3 player (or similar device) may be used with headphones in a tent or cabin.

Equipment

Very often, our camping trips will include several miles of hiking with backpacks, and will almost always involve staying safely outdoors overnight. Good equipment is very important. Scouts should use the personal equipment checklist in the *Boy Scout Handbook* and at the end of this document when packing for a campout. These checklists are very important. Small items forgotten can make for an uncomfortable trip. If you need help finding equipment to purchase or borrow, please let a Scoutmaster know. There is a list of catalogs and web sites at the end of this document that may help when purchasing equipment. **All personal equipment must have the scouts name on it.**

Generally, the troop will try to schedule a yearly trip to Campmor for a brief equipment instruction and an opportunity to purchase gear at a 10% discount.

The Troop Quartermaster is in charge of assigning Troop owned equipment to Patrols during an outing. Patrol Leaders are expected to supervise the use of the equipment and make sure it is returned in good condition. All equipment should be returned and checked in by the Quartermaster by the next Troop meeting. The person who checked out the equipment is expected to thoroughly clean and dry any Troop equipment before returning it to the Quartermaster. The Quartermaster may refuse to accept equipment that has not been adequately cleaned and may refer repeated problems to the Scoutmaster. The Quartermaster should immediately report any damaged equipment to the Scoutmaster and/or the Equipment Coordinator. Any equipment that is not returned over a period of time will be considered lost. The person responsible for that piece of equipment will also be responsible for the replacement at their cost.

Transportation

In most cases, the Troop will need adults to help provide transportation to and from outings. Drivers are expected to obtain drivers insurance that meets at least the minimum as defined by State Law. If you ever intend to assist as a driver, you will need to be listed on the troop's driver list. Specific information on limits can be found on the Driver Information Form, which is available on our troop web site. Troop parents should complete the Driver Information Form available on our web site and submit the form to the Troop Secretary.

Behavior

Scouts are expected to live their lives in accordance with the Scout Oath and Scout Law. There will be no throwing rocks, sticks, or any objects that may cause harm or personal injury.

A Scout is clean in thought, word, and deed. Vulgarity or profanity is not acceptable Boy Scout behavior and will not be tolerated.

Verbal or physical bullying of any Scout will not be tolerated. Fighting and hazing are not permitted; this is not considered Boy Scout-like conduct.

Each Scout will respect Leadership at all times. Any scout that refuses to cooperate with either boy or adult leaders at any Troop function will be sent home (parents will be called to pick the Scout up). Boy Scouts will not be disrespectful. Scouts who refuse to conduct themselves in accordance with the Scout Oath and Scout law will be subject to disciplinary action.

Destruction of Troop, Patrol, or personal property will not be tolerated. At the Scoutmaster's discretion, repairs or replacement will be at the Scout's or Parent(s)/Guardian(s) own expense. All Troop equipment will be maintained properly including all tents, lanterns, utensils, dishes, pots, and pans etc.

The youth leaders of the Troop will recommend Scouts who are repeatedly involved in discipline issues to the Scoutmaster. The following procedures will be followed:

Incident #1: Verbal warning

Incident #2: Conference with the Scoutmaster

Incident #3: Scoutmaster Conference with the Scout's parents

Incident #4: Membership termination with the Troop.

If at any time, any Scout (or his parents) does not feel safe on any Troop activity, he should immediately bring the matter to the attention of the adult leader(s) in charge.

Youth Protection

All activities that include adult leadership will strictly follow the Youth Protection and Safe Scouting guidelines set forth by the Boy Scouts of America in the BSA publication *The Guide to Safe Scouting*. Adult leadership is *always* two deep, which means two leaders must be with the Scouts at all times. No Scout should ever be in the company of an adult without being in sight of others, or without having another adult or Scout in attendance. Adults may transport a Scout from one location to another without another adult in the vehicle as long as there are at least two Scouts in the vehicle. Other policies as spelled out in the Youth Protection and Guide to Safe Scouting guidelines may apply. BSA policy requires adult volunteers to take Youth Protection Training before they can become a registered leader. All registered adult leaders involved with the Troop must take Youth Protection training at least every two years and review these policies before attending a Troop event. Youth Protection training is offered at most Boy Scout adult training and is also available online. Other adults are also encouraged to take this training course. Youth Protection guidelines are for the protection of both the Scout and the adult leader and should be strictly adhered to. If two adults cannot accompany the Scouts on a trip, the trip will be cancelled.

Drug, Alcohol and Tobacco Policy

The following policy on smoking and alcohol is quoted from the current BSA Committee Guidebook and Scoutmasters Handbook.

It is the policy of the Boy Scouts of America that the use of alcoholic beverages and controlled substances is not permitted at encampments or activities on property owned and/or operated by the Boy Scouts of America, or at any activity involving participation of youth members.

Health is a most valuable possession. Smoking will dangerously impair a person's health. The BSA recommends that leaders maintain the attitude that young adults are much better off without tobacco. Leaders are encouraged not using tobacco products in any form nor allow their use at any BSA activity.

Troop Roster

The Troop roster will be developed annually or when needed as determined by the Troop Secretary. The roster will contain names, addresses, phone numbers, e-mail address and positions for every Scout and Adult leader in the Troop. To ensure the safety of our youth, the Troop roster should remain with the Scouts, leaders, and their parents, and not given to any outside group or persons.

A Note On Communications

Much of our communication will take place via e-mail. Depending on the nature of the message, the e-mail will be followed up by a phone call. It is worth taking a moment to remember that e-mail is not a replacement for a direct conversation either in person or by phone. If an e-mail is sent and not acknowledged, it should be assumed it was never received. If a Scout sends important information via e-mail, he should always follow up to make sure it was received. "I sent you an e-mail" will never excuse a Scout who has missed a deadline or not taken some other important responsibility. Your son's direct line of communication will be with his Patrol Leader. If the Patrol Leader does not have the information needed, the scout will then go through the chain of command and contact an Assistant Senior Patrol Leader and then if necessary the Senior Patrol Leader.

Troop Web Site

The troop maintains a web site at <http://www.troop97newcity.org>.

This handbook, as well as the troop calendar, listing of events, forms, and virtually all other information about the troop and scouting in general can be found by visiting our site.

Local Outdoor Gear & Equipment Resources

Eastern Mountain Sports:

66 Rockland Plaza, Nanuet, NY
845-623-5282
www.ems.com

Ramsey Outdoor:

240 Route 17 North, Paramus, NJ / 835 Route 17 South, Ramsey, NJ
201-261-5000 / 201-327-8141
www.ramseyoutdoor.com

Campmor:

810 Route 17 North, Paramus, NJ
201- 445-5000
www.campmor.com

Dick's Sporting Goods:

2400 Palisades Center Drive, West Nyack, NY/240 Route 17 North, Paramus, NJ
845-353-1086/201-261-2926
www.dickssportinggoods.com

Other Outdoor Gear and Equipment Resources

REI - www.rei.com

Sierra Trading Post - www.sierratradingpost.com

Bass Pro Shops - www.basspro.com

Cabela's - www.cabelas.com

Outdoorsportz - www.outdoorsportz.com

Gander Mountain – www.gandermountain.com

Outdoorsports – www.outdoorsports.com

Web Sites

Knots Tying

Knots Gallery - www.tollesburysc.co.uk/Knots/Knots_gallery.htm#knots

Animated Knots Index - www.animatedknots.com/index.php

Basic Scout Knots - www.folsoms.net/knots/

Other Helpful Web Sites

There are miscellaneous Web sites that have good information on the outdoors and equipment selection.

Outside Magazine - <http://outside.away.com/index.html>

The Lightweight Backpacker - www.backpacking.net

The Backpacker - www.thebackpacker.com

Adventure Sports - www.adventuresportsonline.com

GORP - www.gorp.com

Boy Scout Web Sites

The National BSA Web site - www.scouting.org

Hudson Valley Council - <http://www.hudsonvalleyscouting.org>

Rockland District -
www.hudsonvalleyscouting.org/openrosters/view_homepage.asp?orgkey=2368

BSA Field book - www.bsafieldbook.org

Scouting Magazine - www.scoutingmagazine.org

InsaneScouter.com – www.insanescouter.com

Closing

Welcome to the Scouting adventure. Get ready for hard work, exciting times, and most of all fun!

To the Scouts, remember, this is **your** Troop. How well it functions, what adventures you experience, where you go, and what you do are **your** choices. Get involved with the Troop leadership. Take pride in your Patrol. Get to be good friends with the other Scouts in the Troop. Help out when needed, and when you have a job assigned, do it well. Work hard to become an Eagle Scout. You can talk to a lot of adults who once had the opportunity to become an Eagle Scout and did not. None of those adults will be glad that they did not achieve the rank of Eagle, and almost all will say that if they knew then what they know now, they would have spent the time and made the commitment to finish. No matter what your rank, remember that the Scout Oath and Law are more than just words we say at Troop meetings. The Scout Oath and Law are ideas Scouts use to guide their actions throughout their lives.

To the parents, remember that your son is embarking on a new adventure. He will need your support, but you have to walk a fine line between encouraging him to do well and actually doing for him. Sometimes a thing not given teaches more than a thing easily gotten. Encourage your son to work hard and commit to working on his ranks and merit badges. Join us as a leader if you have the time and interest. Help out whenever you can to make this a better Troop. And thank you for allowing your son to join us on this great adventure!

Links to Troop/BSA Forms

BSA Medical Form

[www.troop97newcity.org/pdf/BSA Medical.pdf](http://www.troop97newcity.org/pdf/BSA%20Medical.pdf)

Troop Trip/Activity Flyer Template

www.troop97newcity.org/forms/ActivityFlyerBlank.doc

[www.troop97newcity.org/pdf/Activity Flyer Blank.pdf](http://www.troop97newcity.org/pdf/Activity%20Flyer%20Blank.pdf)

Troop Handbook Signature Page

[www.troop97newcity.org/pdf/Troop Handbook signpage.pdf](http://www.troop97newcity.org/pdf/Troop%20Handbook%20signpage.pdf)

Troop Web Consent Form

[www.troop97newcity.org/pdf/Web Consent.pdf](http://www.troop97newcity.org/pdf/Web%20Consent.pdf)

Driver Information Form

[www.troop97newcity.org/pdf/Driver Info.pdf](http://www.troop97newcity.org/pdf/Driver%20Info.pdf)

Troop Personal Data Collection Form

[www.troop97newcity.org/pdf/Personal Data Form.pdf](http://www.troop97newcity.org/pdf/Personal%20Data%20Form.pdf)

Troop Contact Update Form

[www.troop97newcity.org/pdf/Troop Contact Form.pdf](http://www.troop97newcity.org/pdf/Troop%20Contact%20Form.pdf)

Troop Resource Survey

[www.troop97newcity.org/pdf/Troop Resource Survey.pdf](http://www.troop97newcity.org/pdf/Troop%20Resource%20Survey.pdf)

Merit Badge Counselor Application

[www.troop97newcity.org/pdf/MBC App.pdf](http://www.troop97newcity.org/pdf/MBC%20App.pdf)