

A Guide to
Boy Scout Troop 351
for Scouts, Leaders, and Parents

Chartered by Asbury United Methodist Church Men's Group
Madison, AL

Talakto District / Greater Alabama Council



Prepared and Approved by the Troop Committee
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This guide is provided to clarify the procedures and policies of Troop 351. It does not supersede any official policies of the Boy Scouts of America. In case of conflicts, the BSA policies will always take precedence.

A BOY LED TROOP

Troop 351 strives to be a boy led troop as specified by the Boy Scouts of America. Scouts are encouraged to run all meetings and outings using the patrol method. As Baden-Powell said, "The patrol method is not a way to operate a Boy Scout troop, it is the only way. Unless the patrol method is in operation you don't really have a Boy Scout Troop."



One of the primary goals of Scouting is to provide a means for young men to learn the skills of leadership. There are many opportunities for leadership, including Patrol Leader and Assistant Patrol Leader as well as Quartermaster, Historian, Scribe, Librarian, Chaplain, Bugler and others. The Troop is led by the Senior Patrol Leader (SPL) and the Assistant Senior Patrol Leader. Leadership positions are usually held for six months.

All of the Scout leaders comprise the Patrol Leaders Council, which meets monthly on the first Monday of each month to plan future meetings and outings. The SPL runs the weekly meeting of the Troop and makes sure that the Troop is operated efficiently by delegating responsibilities to his staff. Patrol leaders make sure that the patrols operate successfully.

The Scoutmaster and Assistant Scoutmaster serve as advisors and make sure that all activities and advancements meet the requirements of the BSA in a safe and fair manner. As stated in the Scoutmaster Handbook, one of the most important challenges in Boy Scouts "is to train boy leaders to run the Troop by providing direction, coaching, and support. They will make mistakes now and then and will rely on you to guide them. But only through real hands-on experience as leaders can boys learn to lead."

Scouts can obtain information on the boy led troop method in The Patrol Leader Handbook (BSA publication 32502A, available at the Scout Shop) and The Senior Patrol Leader Handbook (BSA 32501). Scouts are trained in the method at the Troop level with periodic Leadership Training (usually soon after leader elections in typically March and September), as well as at National Youth Leadership Training Camps in the summer.

Adult leaders and interested parents can find details on the method in the Scoutmaster Handbook which is recommended for all adult leaders, not just the Scoutmaster (BSA Publication #33009B). Training in the method is offered periodically at the District level for adult leader training courses, as well as at the online learning center (<http://olc.scouting.org/>).

Parents are strongly encouraged to join the Troop as an adult leader. There are numerous ways to serve the Troop, and your contributions are essential to the survival of the troop. Please see the Scoutmaster or any other adult leader for ideas.

SCOUT SPIRIT

A Scout advances by completing defined goals to advance through seven ranks (Scout, Tenderfoot, Second Class, First Class, Star, Life and Eagle), earning merit badges, serving in positions of leadership, and participating in community service projects. As a Scout, he is expected to develop Scout spirit. Scout spirit is a way of living, as demonstrated by the way a Scout treats people, cares for the environment, and deals with everyday situations. It is

considered to be one of the most important aspects of Scouting. A Scout should strive to live by the Scout Oath, Law, Slogan, Motto and Outdoor Code.

HOW TO JOIN

Scouts

Boys of the appropriate age are encouraged to join the Troop by filling out a Youth Application and paying the yearly dues. In order to apply, a boy must have

- 1) completed the fifth grade and be at least 10 years old, or
 - 2) be at least 11 years old, or
 - 3) have earned the Arrow of Light Award and be at least 10 years old,
- and, he must be under 18 years old.

Applications are available from the adult leaders and the Scout Office.

Adults

Parents are encouraged to become adult leaders. Parent/guardian involvement is the key to a quality Scouting program.

- Parents and/or guardians are encouraged to become adult leaders with the troop by registering as an Assistant Scoutmaster or Committee Member and completing Youth Protection Training and adult leader training appropriate for their position.
- All adult leaders who interact with Scouts must complete an Asbury United Methodist Church background check from and turn it in to the Chartered Organization Representative.
- Parents and/or guardians with special skills required by various merit badges may teach merit badge courses in accordance with BSA policy
- Parents and/or guardians are expected to participate in providing transportation to troop outings and events as needed in accordance with BSA policy.

SCOUT UNIFORM

The wearing of the Scout uniform plays an essential role in establishing Scout spirit. Partial uniforms should never be worn by Troop 351 Scouts or adult leaders.

The 'full' troop uniform includes:

- Boy Scout uniform pants
- Boy Scout uniform socks (short or long)
- Boy Scout uniform belt & buckle
- Boy Scout uniform khaki shirt (short or long sleeve) with red or green shoulder loops and proper insignia



- Troop neckerchief and slide are optional (except at formal occasions such as Boards of Review and Courts of Honor where they are strongly encouraged).

The 'activity shirt' uniform includes a Troop 351 tan polo shirt or T-shirt with Troop designation.

Scouts and adult leaders are to be in full uniform at troop meetings. Uniform inspections can be performed at any time, and especially before formal events and outings.

If a Scout is unable to obtain a complete Scout uniform, a uniform scholarship may be obtained by consulting with the Scoutmaster.

New Scouts

Upon joining the troop, new scouts will be provided with the following:

- Neckerchief
- Neckerchief Slide
- Green shoulder loops



Board of Review and Court of Honor

The Scout will always wear full uniform at a Board of Review and Court of Honor. The Order of the Arrow (OA) sash should only be worn at OA events and OA meetings.

Outings

All Scouts will travel to and from outings in either full uniform or Troop 351 activity shirt as directed by the Scoutmaster or leader in charge of the outing.



Other Events

At other Troop events the Scout is expected to conform to the uniform requirement as set by the Scoutmaster.

ATTENDANCE

As a reflection of Scout spirit and troop involvement, a Scout is expected to attend a majority of the scheduled Troop meetings, outings, and service projects. A Scout in a leadership position can only miss a PLC meeting with prior approval of the Scoutmaster. A Scout may not be referred to a Board of Review if attendance is unacceptable.

PARTICIPATION

Scouts are expected to play an active role in Troop meetings and outings by contributing to programs when needed and encouraging other Scouts. They should show respect towards other Scouts and Leaders during meetings by listening and participating as appropriate. They should learn that an important part of leadership is knowing how to follow.

TROOP LEADERSHIP

The development of leadership skills is an essential part of Scouting.

Troop elections take place twice a year for Senior Patrol Leader (SPL) and Patrol Leaders. All nominees must be in attendance (or have prior approval by the Scoutmaster) and must agree to the nomination. The elections are conducted by the outgoing SPL and his staff using secret ballots. A nominee must receive a majority of the vote, or a run-off will be held. The election is conducted in two (2) steps.

Step 1. The first step is the election of the SPL by the majority of the Scouts in attendance at the meeting. Once the SPL is elected, he will select his Assistant Senior Patrol Leader (ASPL) from those Scouts eligible at the meeting.

Step 2. The second step is the election of each PATROL LEADER by the members of the patrol in attendance at the meeting. The PATROL LEADER will select an Assistant Patrol Leader (APL) from the Scouts eligible in his patrol. Scout advancement needs may affect eligibility.

The SPL will appoint his staff within one week of his election. All staff positions must be approved by the Scoutmaster.

In order for a Scout to serve in any leadership position, the Scout should meet the following qualifications, with exceptions subject to the Scoutmaster's approval.

SPL (Senior Patrol Leader):

- Achieved the rank of Star or higher
- Served as a Patrol Leader or ASPL
- Been a member of the troop for a period of one (1) year or more
- Demonstrated compliance with troop attendance requirements and behavior standards
- Not served as SPL for the preceding 12 months (2 election terms), unless granted special permission by the Scoutmaster
- Have Scoutmaster approval

ASPL (Assistant Senior Patrol Leader)

- Achieved the rank of First Class or higher
- Served as a Patrol Leader
- Been a member of the troop for a period of six months or more
- Demonstrated compliance with troop attendance requirements and behavior standards
- Not served as ASPL for the preceding 12 months (2 election terms), unless granted special permission by the Scoutmaster
- Have Scoutmaster approval

Patrol Leader:

- Achieved the rank of Second Class or higher (unless a Scout of this rank is not available within the patrol, or with approval of the Scoutmaster)
- Been a member of the troop for a period of three months or more
- Demonstrated compliance with troop attendance requirements and behavior standards
- Not served as PL for the preceding 12 months (2 election terms), unless granted special permission by the Scoutmaster
- Have Scoutmaster approval



Assistant Patrol Leader:

- Achieved the rank of Tenderfoot or higher (unless a Scout of this rank is not available within the patrol, or or with approval of the Scoutmaster)
- Been a member of the troop for a period of three months or more
- Demonstrated compliance with troop attendance requirements and behavior standards
- Have Scoutmaster approval

The newly elected leaders will assume their positions on the first day of the month following the election (typically March 1, and September 1). Troop Junior Leader Training will be provided within one month of elections.

ADVANCEMENT

Signing off requirements

The Scoutmaster is in charge of Advancement. The Scoutmaster, Assistant Scoutmasters and Scout leaders authorized by the Scoutmaster are responsible for testing a Scout and signing off the requirements in the Scout's Handbook. Parents are encouraged to have another adult leader sign off on their son's advancements. Only the Scoutmaster, or a person explicitly authorized by the Scoutmaster, should sign off on Scout Spirit and Scoutmaster Conference requirements.

Merit badges

Merit badge blue cards must be obtained from the Scoutmaster prior to beginning a merit badge (except at Summer Camp). The Scoutmaster enters the name of the merit badge counselor on the blue card.

Troop Records

The Advancement Coordinator is the Troop Committee member who maintains the Troop



advancement records at both the Troop and Council levels. This Committee member works with the Troop Scribe, the Scoutmaster, and Assistant Scoutmasters to maintain an accurate record of advancements.

A Scout may obtain at any time a copy of his current Progress Report from the Scoutmaster, the Advancement Coordinator, or the Troop Committee Chair.

As a Scout completes advancement requirements, new information that needs to be entered into the Troop records should be submitted to the Troop Scribe or Advancement Coordinator.

It is the responsibility of the Scoutmaster to resolve any discrepancies between a Scout's Handbook and the Troop records and, where appropriate, to discuss the discrepancies and their resolution with the Scout, and the Advancement Coordinator.

Scouts are encouraged to maintain a notebook containing a complete summary of all their Scout activities, including evidence of advancement, merit badge and advancement cards, merit badge workbooks, lists of service projects and outings (with photos), and photocopies of advancement pages from their handbooks.

Eagle Scout Procedures

Scouts who are considering advancement to Eagle are encouraged to work with an adult leader to advise them on the process. The Scout should choose a counselor in consultation with the Scoutmaster.

Once a Scout has completed an application for Eagle, the Application must be submitted to the Troop Committee for approval.

Upon completion of the requirements for Eagle, the Eagle application must be submitted by the Advancement Coordinator to Council for approval.

The Scoutmaster Conference

It is the responsibility of the Scoutmaster, or a person authorized by the Scoutmaster to act in his place, to ensure that the Scout is ready for a Board of Review. Following a Scoutmaster Conference, the Scoutmaster may recommend a Scout for advancement or he may suggest ways for the Scout to complete any missing or incomplete requirements.

After a Scoutmaster Conference has been held, a Scout may request a Board of Review. The Scoutmaster will notify the Committee Chair and/or Advancement Coordinator that the Scout requests a Board of Review.

BOARD OF REVIEW

A Board of Review is designed to focus on the accomplishments of both the Scout and the Troop. A Board of Review is required for rank advancement. In addition, a Board of Review may be scheduled to review a Scout's progress, especially in cases where it appears that the Scout is not meeting the goals which he established for himself at his previous Board of Review. The Board of Review may also be used to review the development of Scout spirit. Boards of Review will be conducted according to the Troop Committee Handbook.

In addition to having met the advancement requirements for the rank, the following must be met in order for the Scout to have a Board of Review for advancement:

- He must have participated in a Scoutmaster Conference for the specific rank
- He must be in full uniform
- He must have his Boy Scout Handbook in his possession with all rank requirements signed off
- He must have a Progress Report in his possession
- He should be able to recite the Scout Oath, the Scout Law, and the Outdoor Code

If the Board recommends advancement, all members of the Board should sign the Scout's handbook and indicate the date of the Review. The advancement becomes effective on that date. The necessary advancement forms are completed by the Board and provided to the Advancement Coordinator who will enter the information into the Troop records, and transmit the information to Council.

As a part of the Board of Review the Scout will be asked to commit to a goal for completing the requirements for his next rank. This goal will be recorded in the Scout's Handbook.

How a Scout Schedules a Board of Review

A Scout should notify the Scoutmaster that he would like a Board of Review. The Scoutmaster will notify the Advancement Coordinator or the Committee Chair who will schedule the Board of Review and provide the Scout with an updated Progress Report.

Members of the Board of Review

The members of the Board of Review for all ranks (except the rank of Eagle Scout) will consist of a minimum of three (3) members of the Troop Committee as described in the Troop Committee Handbook. The Board of Review will be constituted by the Committee Chair or the Advancement Coordinator.

Eagle Boards of Review

An Eagle Board of Review must be composed of at least 3 and not more than 6 members. All members must be at least 21. At least one must be a District or Council Representative. The other members are chosen from the Committee. The Board of Review should be constituted by the Committee Chair or Advancement Coordinator.

The BOR should not be scheduled until the Eagle Application has been approved by the Committee and the Council. References are contacted by the Council. The Scout should not be involved in transmitting reference letters to the Troop or Council. The contents of the reference letters should not be shared with anyone outside the Board of Review. Following the Board of Review, the letters are returned to the Council service center.

MONTHLY OUTINGS

Troop 351 strives to have at least one outing each month, typically on the third weekend of the month. Outings are planned by the PLC with assistance from the adult leaders. Adult leaders are encouraged to suggest outing possibilities. A planning guide/checklist is available to assist both Scouts and Adult leaders in planning an outing.

In order to be fully briefed on the requirements for an outing, a Scout is expected to attend the troop meetings prior to the outing. Exceptions must be approved by the Scoutmaster

Permission forms for each Scout must be completed and signed by a parent/guardian before a Scout can participate in an outing. A copy of the BSA Annual Health and Medical Record must be completed and made available to the adult tour leaders. Finally, a BSA Tour Permit Application must be submitted to the Scout Office (Kathy), and approval must be obtained before the outing. Signed permission forms, medical forms, and the tour permit must be taken by one of the adult leaders on the outing.



A Scout is expected to maintain acceptable behavior at Scout meetings and outings. The Scoutmaster (or the assigned outing leader) has the authority to disallow a Scout from attending an outing or activity due to poor behavior, lack of Scout spirit, or for not meeting minimum requirements for the activity.

The Scoutmaster (or the assigned outing leader) also has the option of sending a Scout home from an activity for disciplinary reasons. In such cases, the parent/guardian will be contacted to pick up the Scout immediately.

Two-deep leadership as defined in the Guide to Safe Scouting is required for all outings. If this is not met, the Scoutmaster (or the assigned outing leader) will cancel the planned outing. Two-deep leadership is defined as follows:

Number of Scouts Attending	Minimum Number of Adults
10 or less	2
11 - 20	3
21 - 30	4
More than 30	1 additional adult for each 10 Scouts

Additional leaders may be required for specific outings where safety is a consideration (e.g., caving, climbing, etc.). Adult leaders must have the training required for the outing. Certification in CPR and Wilderness First Aid are strongly encouraged.

TROOP EXPENSES

General Expenses

Troop funds may be used for Troop equipment, special outing expenses and reimbursements. Prior approval by the Troop Committee is required before incurring such expenses. The purpose of this is to:

- Insure that troop funds are available for the proposed expense
- Determine that items are being purchased at competitive rates

Troop Outing Expenses

Each Scout is encouraged to earn a portion of the money required to pay for his share of the cost for troop events.

The full costs of troop outings are to be covered by the participants (Scouts and adult leaders) except when approved by the Troop Committee. If a Scout or leader commits to attend an outing, but backs out without due notice, he remains responsible for covering his portion of the outing costs.



ANNUAL PLANNING

The Patrol Leader's Council is responsible for planning and establishing the troop's annual calendar. The August Committee Meeting is set aside as an Annual Planning Meeting. The SPL should submit a list of events and outings, which the Patrol Leader's Council has recommended for the new Scouting year beginning in September. Dates for Courts of Honor, PLC meetings, Troop Committee meetings, high adventures, troop service projects, troop fund raisers, merit badge classes, major school events (Fall and Spring break, prom, graduation, etc.), Scout Sunday, holidays, etc., should be included in the annual plan. Any event that involves the use of church facilities (e.g., a Court of Honor that uses the church sanctuary) should be coordinated with the Sponsoring Organization.

After a preliminary calendar has been created, it is submitted to the Scoutmaster for final review and to the Troop Committee for approval.

Following approval by the Troop Committee, the Scoutmaster has the authority to make any routine changes to the troop calendar. Any major changes should be submitted to the Troop Committee for review and approval.

TROOP RECORDS

Because of the need to maintain accurate records, the Official Troop Records are defined as follows:

- **Troop Advancement.** All records related to advancement, Boards of Review, merit badges, and personal information are maintained by the Advancement Coordinator utilizing the TroopMaster computer program.
- **Troop Finances.** All records related to troop income and expenses are maintained by the troop Treasurer.
- **Medical Records and Permission Slips.** The Scoutmaster is responsible for maintaining BSA medical records and troop permission slips. These records must be current at the beginning of each troop outing. BSA medical forms may be downloaded from <http://www.scouting.org>.

In addition to these official records, a Troop website is maintained by the Historian and a designated Committee member, and contains, at a minimum, the troop's annual plan of events and outings. The website may also have images and text showing previous events and outings. The website also lists contact information for the Scoutmaster, Committee Chairperson, Advancement Chairperson and Chartered Organization Representative.

COMMUNICATIONS

Email to the Scouts is accomplished using the Yahoo group bsatrop351. Communications with adult leaders is through the Yahoo group asmtrop351. Information on having your name added to these groups can be obtained from the Scoutmaster or on the Troop website.

The Troop website is used to provide information, the yearly calendar, forms, and useful information on the Troop: <http://troop.bsa351.org>

