

Troop 340 Scoutmaster expectations

Status: Adopted by Committee

As of: May 10, 2022

Purpose

The goal isn't to use this document to create a situation where a Scoutmaster (SM) has to worry about missing a few of these items. While it is desirable that the Scoutmaster meets all of these expectations, it is also recognized that volunteers have strong competing priorities outside of scouting. This document is meant to clarify the expectations of the SM role to facilitate discussions between adult leadership in the troop. The SM should use this document to aid in self-evaluation of ability to meet expectations of the role and initiate open dialog with adult leadership in the event that these expectations realistically cannot be met.

Document Organization

This document first reviews BSA's official SM requirements and then adds clarity by discussing T340 specific expectations. Further down we describe assistant scoutmaster (ASM) expectations.

BSA official guidance

Position Description

The Scoutmaster is responsible for training and guiding youth leaders in the operation of the troop, and for managing, training, and supporting his or her Assistant Scoutmasters (ASMs) in their role.

Scoutmaster Duties

- Conduct the Boy Scout program according to the policies of the Boy Scouts of America.
- Train youth leaders by conducting, at least yearly, an introduction to leadership and a team-building workshop.
 - [Introduction to leadership skills for troops \(ILST\)](#) is a great option for training youth leaders.
- Conduct an annual troop program planning conference to assist youth leaders in planning the troop program.
 - Since it is impossible to plan for all contingencies a year in advance, it is recommended to review and update planning periodically throughout the year such as at Patrol Leader Council (PLC) meetings.

- Conduct a monthly Patrol Leaders' Council meeting to plan weekly troop meetings and conduct troop business.
- Conduct, through the patrol leaders' council, weekly troop meetings.
- **Original BSA version:** ~~Provide a minimum of 10 days and nights of camping yearly, including participation in a local council resident camp.~~
 - **T340 replacement:** Work with the PLC and ASMs to provide a minimum of 10 days and nights of camping yearly, including participation in a resident summer camp. The SM should personally attend a minimum of 3 campouts per year (preferably after a new PLC) so as to facilitate coaching towards building scout skills and leadership behaviors.
- Assist in selecting and recruiting Assistant Scoutmasters to work with the new-Scout patrol and the Venture patrol for older Scouts.
- Work with the troop's Committee Chair in developing a monthly meeting agenda that will address the needs of the troop.
- Conduct Scoutmaster conferences for all ranks.
- Participate in Boy Scout Leader Fast Start Training, New Leader Essentials, and Scoutmaster and Assistant Scoutmaster Leader Specific Training.
- Provide the necessary framework (using the BSA's Youth Protection program) for protecting the young people in your troop from abuse.
- See that activities are conducted within BSA safety guidelines and requirements.

Characteristics of Successful Scoutmasters (BSA recommendations)

- Commitment to the ideals of Scouting
- High moral standards
- **Original BSA version:** ~~Ability to relate to boys~~
 - **T340 replacement:** Ability to interact with and to relate to scouts.
- Ability to keep a cool head under pressure
- Good organizational skills
- Ability to relate to and interact with adults
- Flexibility and the ability to compromise
- Good planning ability
- High energy level
- Good attention to detail

T340 Specific additions

- Attends and engages with scouts at an overwhelming majority of troop meetings. If the SM cannot attend a troop meeting, they delegate to a temporary scoutmaster, making sure to prepare the temporary scoutmaster ahead of the meeting, and to debrief afterward.

- Attends and engages in all the PLC and PLC annual planning meetings. Rescheduling them if necessary.
 - Ensures ASMs regularly attend patrol meetings, following two-deep leadership guidelines with the help of other adult leaders as needed.
 - Trains and coaches ASMs. Debrief with ASMs after outings. This includes occasional reviews of patrol meetings with ASMs.
 - Ensures the safety box is met for every camping trip including delegating to an ASM In Charge (AIC) if the SM is not going on the camping trip.
 - Some critical safety box elements include:
 - Med forms
 - 2 deep adult leadership (only registered and trained leaders may go on the trip)
 - Trip plan that meets scouting guidelines such a maximum drive time and properly trained adults for high adventure activities.
 - Provides active coaching and confirms that delegated responsibilities are met for ASMs to ensure the troop's consistent and continued adult leadership.
 - Operates a learning organization for the scouts, the ASMs, and themselves where everyone is seeking to improve. In addition, the SM helps the SPL to create an organization where newer scouts are learning from more experienced scouts.
 - Endeavors to set a good example / be a good role model for the scouts.
 - Provides [engaged supervision](#).
 - Serves as an escalation from the PLC. For example, if the PLC is having trouble enforcing a policy such as no phones, the SM should be their first point of escalation.
 - In the spirit of scout-led, the scoutmaster is not expected to proactively guide or to prevent failure unless it could result in an excursion outside of the safety box. Instead the scoutmaster should lean toward allowing failure when there is learning value from such failure. In the event that failure is no longer a learning opportunity (such as repeated failures) or after the event, the scoutmaster should step in to provide coaching to help build the scout skill. Leveraging senior scouts to coach younger scouts on learning these skills is a major win!
 - Exhibits strong interpersonal skills
 - Participates in parents' meetings to share the program and to encourage parent participation and cooperation.
 - Collaborates with the Senior Patrol Leader (SPL) to develop & execute a recruiting plan for new scouts.
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ASM expectations

- ASMs should attempt to meet all applicable SM expectations for their patrol (if assigned) and on camping trips they attend.
 - ASMs are not expected to conduct Scoutmaster conferences.

- They should be active in coaching patrol leaders and in attending the patrol meetings.
- ASMs practice [engaged supervision](#).
- ASMs will be the acting Scoutmaster when asked by the SM so as to ensure the safety box, to ensure consistent adult leadership, and to ensure that failures are able to be recognized and coached after the fact.
- When they see a safety issue, they engage immediately.
- ASMs actively coach the Patrol Leader (PL) for their assigned patrol (if assigned). In addition, ASMs can provide coaching to other youth leaders as necessary, but should be cautious not to duplicate or contradict the coaching of the scoutmaster as it could make scouts confused or feel hounded.

References:

Authoritative reference: Selecting quality leaders - BSA guide:

<https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/18-981.pdf>

Engaged supervision:

<https://blog.scoutingmagazine.org/2022/04/20/engaged-supervision-what-it-means-and-how-it-helps-keep-everyone-safe/>