



A GUIDE

FOR

POST SCOUTING

CHAIRS

Department of Florida
November 2019

(This supersedes all previous Dept. of Florida Scouting Guides and Manuals)

FOREWORD

The purpose of this Guide is to provide an overview of the scope and duties of a Post Scouting Chair. It is not intended to be an encyclopedia on Scouting, as many other writings are available to describe each element of Scouting. This is particularly written with the newly appointed Scouting Chair in mind, who has ventured into a job that bridges the two cultures of the American Legion and the Boy Scouts of America and may easily be confused by new or contrasting terms and methods. Those who have held the position for a while will probably just find this guide an occasional reminder.

BACKGROUND

The Boy Scouts of America (BSA) is a congressionally chartered national corporation founded in 1910. Its mission is to provide a program for America's youth that will prepare them to make ethical and moral choices over their lifetimes by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Law. The American Legion (TAL) is also a congressionally chartered national corporation founded in 1919. Shortly after its organization, TAL adopted the BSA program as its official and primary program for one of its pillars, Children and Youth. TAL does this by encouraging its Posts to partner with local BSA Councils to charter individual local Scout units. TAL has emerged over the years to be the largest community organization to charter Scout units nationwide, and is third overall after the Methodist and Catholic churches. The bond between TAL and BSA is large and long-lived.

THE SCOUTING CHAIR

If you are your Post's Scouting Chair, thank you. You have volunteered to take on a unique position in your Post. While most other Chairs are involved in activities supporting the older generations of veterans, you will be assisting in the development of the youngest generation of Americans. Your involvement will impact how they embrace leadership, citizenship, patriotism and community service.

Your duties will vary depending on the level of your Post's involvement in Scouting. Not every Post has the resources to have its own Scout units. That should not be a deterrent in your involvement. There are many Scout units in every community that will benefit from the support of the Legion. You may involve your Post in Scouting in many ways, such as:

- inviting neighboring Scout units to march in veteran and patriotic parades
- providing instruction in flag handling and respect
- encouraging Legionnaires to be merit badge counselors
- allow Scout units to use Post facilities for meetings or fundraising events
- donate equipments directly to Scout units (but not funds)
- donate funds to the local Scout Council through Friends of Scouting
- present Eagle Scout certificates (downloadable from TAL national website)

If your Post charters Scout units (or wishes to start one) your Scouting Chair position will evolve into an even more important role. So, what is chartering?

CHARTERING

The term chartering is often used but seldom fully understood. It means that an authority outlines the conditions under which an organization is formed and grants in writing certain rights and responsibilities to that organization for a specific function. It is very similar to giving a franchise.

TAL charters all of its 55 departments to deliver the American Legion programs. Each Department then charters Posts to do the same. Similarly, the BSA charters 272 Councils nationwide to deliver its youth programs. The Councils then partner individually with Posts to jointly charter Scout units. This charter is renewed every year and is conveyed on an “Annual Unit Charter Agreement” which must be signed by the Post Commander. This agreement outlines the conditions under which the Post is allowed to have Scout units to deliver its youth program. It is very important that these conditions are read, understood and followed. This chartering procedure supports an important legal relationship.

SCOUT UNITS

A Post may charter as many Scout units as it can reasonably handle. There are several types of Scout units, each one tailored to a different BSA program and youth age group. They are:

BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA PROGRAMS

PROGRAM NAME	YOUTH INVOLVEMENT	UNIT NAME
1. CUB SCOUTS, BSA	grades K to 5, ages 5 to 10 ½	Organized as Packs.
2. SCOUTS, BSA	grades 6 to 12, ages 10 ½ to 18	Organized as Troops.
3. VENTURING, BSA	grades 8 to 12, ages 13 to 20	Organized as Crews.
4. SEA SCOUTS, BSA	grades 8 to 12, ages 13 to 20	Organized as Ships.
5. EXPLORING, BSA	grades 6 to 8, ages 11 to 13 grades 8 to 12, ages 13 to 20	Organized as Clubs Organized as Posts.

(NOTE – Varsity Scouts, BSA ended December, 2017 and STEM is a sub-program involved with any of the above.)

As of February 1, 2019 female youth may participate in all of the BSA programs. DO NOT call them “Girl Scouts” as that name belongs to the Girl Scouts of the USA which is not affiliated with the BSA. Just call all of the youth “SCOUTS”.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE POST AND ITS SCOUT UNITS

The relationships here are well established by the Charter agreement and various BSA Rules and Regulations referenced therein. To list some of them:

- The Post wholly owns all of the assets of its chartered units. This includes all properties, vehicles, trailers and any funds that the unit has raised or collected.
- The Post exercises reasonable control and approval of the activities of the Scout units, and in particular, the financial activities. The Post usually pays their Units’ annual registration fee.
- The Scout units are on an equal program level with the Post as are the SAL and ALR.
- The Post Commander gets Scouting titles - Institution Head (IH) or Executive Officer (XO) - and is the only person who may sign the Charter Agreement. The IH is, however, NOT registered as a Scout leader and does not need to pay dues or take Scouting training.
- The IH agrees to appoint one representative for all of the Post’s Scout units and that person is called the Charter Organization Representative (COR). The COR is in charge of all of the Post’s Scout units.

THE CHARTER ORGANIZATION REPRESENTATIVE

The Charter Organization Representative position title is a mouthful and almost always is just referred to as the C-O-R by pronouncing the individual letters. (Note – do not pronounce this as “core” otherwise you will embarrass yourself in Scouting circles.) Charter Rep is another acceptable way of shortening the title, especially when speaking with other Legionnaires.

The COR is almost always the Post Scouting Chair. The COR IS a registered Scout leader, may wear the BSA uniform, must comply with and enforce all BSA rules and regulations and must take the required BSA training. The COR is the only registered Scouter in the Post’s Scout units who may approve adults for leadership positions in the units. And if it becomes necessary (rarely) the COR is the only one who may remove an adult leader from a position. The COR approves fundraising activities and liaisons with the Post Finance Officer for periodic review of the Scout units’ financial activities. Additionally, since the CORs are registered Scout leaders, they are also voting members of both the partner Scout Council Executive Board and the Scout District Operating Committee. There the COR may contribute to the development of Scouting in the local area.

For these reasons, it is hoped that the Legionnaire filling the Scout Chairman/COR position will do so on a long term basis. With Post Commanders frequently changing annually it is important for the Scout units to have a consistent individual to go to in order to communicate with the Post. The COR should report the status of their Scout units to the Post Commander and the general membership frequently.

Although the COR is a registered Scout leader, their position does not require them to take an active role in the day to day delivery of the Scout program in their units. Many other Scout leaders will be required in order to do this.

SCOUT UNIT LEADERSHIP

The everyday operation of a Scout unit is entrusted to a Committee Chair (CC) which is approved by the COR. Every Scout unit has its own CC. The Unit Committee Chair:

- Reports the unit’s status to the COR on a regular basis
- Runs the Committee and all unit aspects
- Approves all youth for membership
- Recommends adults for leadership positions to the COR
- Holds a registered BSA position and is properly trained
- Ensures the unit knows and follows all BSA rules
- Has as many approved adults on the committee as is necessary to run the unit

The CC recommends Unit Leaders to deliver the Scout program to the youth. These Unit Leaders have different titles depending on the type of unit. The Unit Leaders will have as many assistants as are needed to properly deliver their program. The Top Unit Leaders are:

Cubmaster	for Cub Packs
Scoutmaster	for Scout Troops
Advisor	for Venture Crews
Skipper	for Sea Scout Ships
Advisor	for Explorer Clubs and Posts

Top Unit Leaders do the following:

- Deliver the official Scout Program to their Unit's youth
- Organize work for their assistant leaders and sub-leaders
- Develop youth to learn to organize themselves
- Serve as advisors only to the Unit Committee

(A word to the wise – It is very important on a practical level that each adult leader fully understands their role and does not confuse their position's duties. Leaders should not assume they have certain duties nor should they make any up, since each position in Scouting is already clearly defined.)

CONSIDERATIONS REGARDING ADULT LEADERS

For the Screening of Leaders, know that

- BSA will screen each adult applicant for legal background issues, driving records, credit checks and screen their names against lists of barred individuals, all as a part of registration.

For the Selection of Leaders, consider

- Interview of each adult by the CC and the COR before selecting and registering
- Ensure each adult's skills and attitudes match their position
- Institute a trial period before the assignment is permanent
- Remember, not everyone is always selected for the position they want

For the Training of Leaders, remember

- Youth Protection Training is completed before first registration & again bi-annually
- Position-specific training is completed before first registration and before every change of position
- Encourage advanced leadership training of your leaders
- Awards recognize accomplishments; there are several available

For the Protection of everyone, know that

- BSA National provides General Liability insurance and indemnification for all adult leaders
- Local BSA Councils provide secondary medical insurance for all during Scouting activities
- These coverages are in effect ONLY if all of the BSA rules are followed

Your Scout unit is a reflection of your Post and its leaders are a reflection of you. Be sure to take the time and care necessary in selecting them. The best question to always ask yourself is this: "Would I want this individual to supervise my child or grandchild?"

WHERE DO I GET HELP?

When you contact your local Scout Council for assistance you will be placed in contact with a professional, full-time Scout representative, typically called a District Executive. If you already have a Scouting unit, its Committee Chairperson will know your DE. These "DE"s are specifically tasked with helping the Posts' CORs establish and maintain their Scout units. Please be sure to make this important first contact, as they will simplify the process for your Post to deliver your Scouting programs.

The Scout District in which your Post resides will have a large number of volunteer Scout leaders whose mission is to help your Scout units succeed. Principal among these is the Unit Commissioner and one should be assigned to your units. If you don't have one, contact your DE to get one.

The Legion District in which your Post resides should have a District Scouting Chair. Some of the Legion Areas also have Area Scouting Chairs. And there is always the Department Scouting Chair.

You will find many resources and information at the Department website under the Scouting tab. These items will be updated and revised with new information as needed. There have been many changes in Scouting recently and there will undoubtedly be many in the future.

Also at the Department website are the monthly Legion Link publications which have Scouting articles dealing with current topical issues.

The important issue is to know when help is needed and to ask the appropriate position to assist. Never be afraid to ask for help, there are many competent people in Scouting waiting to assist you.

DETAILS THAT CAN KEEP YOU OUT OF TROUBLE

Remember that Scout units are NOT military-type organizations and should never be run like, or treated as such. No camo or any military type uniform items should be allowed at any Scout events.

Never let any of your adult leaders have ANY contact with a Scout unless another adult over 21 is present. This includes meetings, counseling, emails, texts, phone conversations, social media etc. BSA has explicit rules for all of this. (The Scout's parents are, of course, excepted.)

Remember that the Post, and not the unit, owns the unit funds. When the unit raises money, it does so for the unit needs and not the individual Scouts. ***Fiscal Policies and Procedures for BSA Units, March 2015, BSA Product Sales Guide, August 2014***, and the ***BSA Fundraising Policy and Procedures Manual*** are governing references for all BSA unit financial activities. They may easily be found by on line search.

Girls were allowed in Cub Scouts on Aug 1, 2018 and in Scouts, BSA starting Feb 1, 2019. There are special protective considerations for girls in BSA programs, some of which are still being developed. Stay in touch with your DE, Commissioner and Scout District as the details are revealed and updated.

Bylaws for Scout units are inappropriate and BSA will not recognize any of them; rather the units follow the Post Bylaws. The units may write up short procedural guides for their day-to-day operations. These Unit Handbooks are extremely valuable, particularly for parents of new Scouts entering the unit.

As a Scouting Chair/COR you may wear the BSA uniform, with certain approved modifications. These are posted at the Department website under the Scouting tab. No other Scout or adult leader in a Post chartered unit may wear any American Legion item or marking on the Scout uniform. The American Legion Boy Scout patches are not for wear by BSA unit members, rather they are for the Legion uniform. Similarly, Legion caps may not be worn with the BSA Uniform. The decisions for all of these issues were made jointly between BSA and TAL National Headquarters in December, 2018. They are posted at the Department website under Scouting. Recent communications indicate that there will be additional policies coming out soon.

The full list of ***Rules and Regulations of the BSA, June 2018*** may be found by simple internet search. Be sure to understand and follow them.

IN CLOSING

Again, this Guide is intended just to get new Scouting Chairs started in understanding and performing in their positions. For fear of overwhelming them with so much information that they wouldn't bother reading it, we opted for this shortened approach. Any recommendations for additions, deletions or clarifications are invited. Please forward them to the undersigned.

For all of you, who read this and are involved in Scouting, thank you immensely for your commitment to our youth. We know the importance of this program in developing tomorrow's leaders.

Yours in service to Youth, and

For God and Country,

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