



## ORIENTATION MANUAL

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***This Orientation Manual is intended for the benefit of new Scouts and their parents. We trust that it will answer many of your questions. It is intended to be read in conjunction with the Troop 839 Organization and Operating Procedures Manual. The parents AND the Scout must read both to understand how the Troop functions, what to expect, and what is expected of the Scouts and parents. The last page of this orientation primer is a sign-off sheet, to be executed by at least one parent and the Scout that they have read, understand, and agree to abide by the provisions of both the Organization and Operating Procedures Manual and this Orientation Manual.***

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# 1) TROOP ORGANIZATION

## a) Patrol Method

### i) Boy Leadership

In Cub Scouting, Cub Scouts belong to a Den. The Dens compose a Pack. In Boy Scouting, Boy Scouts belong to a Patrol, and the Patrols make up a Boy Scout Troop. While the unit structure is similar, there is a very fundamental difference. In Boy Scouts, the boys, not the adults, plan and lead the activities. This is the “Patrol Method.”

### ii) Patrol Composition

Patrols are typically composed of 5-9 boys. We try to put each boy into a patrol with his friends and other scouts of similar skills, abilities or age. We strongly prefer to take entire Webelos Dens into the troop as a single patrol. Shifting from one patrol to another is not encouraged, but special circumstances may make this necessary. There is a specific procedure for moving to a different patrol that is set out in the *Troop Organization and Operating Procedures Manual*. For new scouts, we expect that each patrol will meet twice monthly on days other than regular troop meeting days. Patrol meetings should be set for times when all or at least the balance of the patrol members and troop guides can be present.

### iii) Troop Guides

To assist new scouts in learning basic scouting skills and to advance toward the rank of First Class, the Troop will assign a primary and back-up Troop Guide to each new patrol. The Troop Guides are experienced scouts who hold at least First Class rank and have completed the annual Troop Guide training normally offered at the Troop Leadership Training each spring. That training is coordinated through the Troop Trail to First Class Coordinator. The Troop Guides will attend each patrol meeting, assist the new scouts in learning camping and cooking skills on their first few campouts, and help new scouts master skills necessary for advancement toward First Class.

### iv) Assistant Scoutmasters

The troop will assign one experienced Assistant Scoutmaster or Committee Member to aid the new patrols. One adamant rule of the Boy Scouts is “two deep” leadership. Other than with his or her own son, no adult should ever be alone with a single scout out of sight of others. The Assistant Scoutmaster and the Trail to First Class Coordinator are to act as motivators, instructors, counselors, and organizers to back up the Troop Guides. Especially during the first 6-8 months in Scouting, the boys will need a bit of extra encouragement, training, and organization to master the skills and duties required of them. The Assistant Scoutmaster for the patrol will be ready to counsel Scouts who show signs of frustration or disinterest in the program, and to keep the patrol advancing in those first crucial months. We strongly encourage Committee Members to attend Introduction to Outdoor Leadership Skills Training in addition to other training classes offered by BSA. These courses are traditionally offered by the Flaming Arrow District each spring and fall. Additional on-line training is available through the BSA’s [www.my.scouting.org](http://www.my.scouting.org) portal.

## v) Patrol Leader Election

Each patrol elects a patrol leader. For established patrols, elections are held every six months, usually in November and May before the February and August starting term dates. In new patrols, the assigned Troop Guides will function as the patrol leader until the first election. This gives the new patrols experienced leaders to help organize patrol meetings and help move the scouts toward advancements. This gives the new scouts an example of what is expected of patrol leaders. To be eligible for the first regular election to patrol leader in February, a scout MUST have:

- Been active in troop activities
- Attended Troop Leadership Training (TLT) offered the previous spring.

TLT is administered annually by the Scoutmaster and Assistant Scout Masters. It consists of at least half a day of leadership training employing the guidance of senior Scouts, training exercises, and video instruction. The TLT training is followed that afternoon with an Orientation Campout for all new scouts that is organized and led by the SPL, ASPLs and TGs where the new scouts will become familiar with the troop camping equipment, its use and care.

Parents of the new scouts are strongly encouraged to participate in the overnight campout as the adults form a patrol and assimilate the activities being undertaken by the scouts.

## b) Troop Leadership

### i) Troop Leaders

The scouts also elect a Senior Patrol Leader (“SPL”) who directs the activities of the troop. He carries out the Troop’s plans through the patrol leaders and certain other troop positions. The SPL and Scoutmaster assign Assistant Senior Patrol Leader (“ASPL”) positions, and the positions of Troop Librarian, Scribe, Historian, Quartermaster, Bugler, Den Chief, Webmaster, OA Rep, Leave No Trace Coordinator and Chaplain’s Aide. The Scoutmaster appoints Junior Assistant Scoutmasters (“JASM”), Troop Guides, and Troop Instructors. Each Patrol Leader appoints an Assistant Patrol leader from among the members of the patrol.

### ii) Patrol Leaders Council

The SPL, ASPL’s, JASM’s, all patrol leaders, Troop Guides, Scribe, Instructors, Assistant Scoutmasters, and Scoutmaster make up the Patrol Leaders Council (“PLC”). Only persons holding these offices are permitted to attend the PLC. An Assistant Patrol Leader may attend if the Patrol Leader is unavailable. Meetings are held the Monday night of each month after a campout (usually the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of each month) – check the troop calendar for exact dates. This is the planning body for the troop. At the PLC meeting, the PLC will review the previous campout and discuss opportunities for improvement as well as planning for the next month’s activities.

Additionally, the annual plan for the troop is developed by the PLC at the end of each summer prior to the start of the next troop calendar year. The plan must be presented by the SPL to and approved by the Troop Committee (the adult leaders).

### **iii) Patrol Leader Role**

The Patrol Leader represents the members of his patrol at the PLC. He also carries out decisions made by the PLC and explains them to the patrol members. Generally speaking, all scouts look to their Patrol Leader for direction. In the first instance, scouts should direct questions or concerns to their Patrol Leader. If he cannot help them, the Patrol Leader should go to the SPL for assistance. If the SPL cannot answer the question or address the issues, the SPL will go to the Scoutmaster. While this chain of command is intended to foster leadership and decision-making skills in the scouts, any scout or his parents should always feel free to contact any of the adult leaders. This is especially true if the circumstances are personal or where normal use of the chain of command might cause embarrassment.

### **iv) Scoutmaster and Assistants**

One of the jobs of the Scoutmaster and the Assistant Scoutmasters is to train the Boy Leaders of the troop to run the troop. Other adult leaders are assigned to support specific areas of the Scouting program. In particular, for specific guidance, direction, and motivation, each new patrol is assigned adult leaders who are drawn from parents of patrol members, plus one experienced Assistant Scoutmaster.

### **v) Troop Committee**

The Troop Committee is composed of adult committee members drawn from parents of the troop, the Chartering Organization, and other members of the community. All registered adults are members of the committee. The Committee is responsible to the Chartered Organization. In Troop 839's case, that is First Presbyterian Church of Kingwood. The Church is the official owner and operator of our troop's charter from the Boy Scouts of America. Without any one of these pieces—Chartered Organization, Troop Committee, Scoutmaster, Assistant Scoutmasters, other adult volunteers, and most importantly, active and interested Boy Scouts – a troop cannot exist.

### **vi) District and Council**

Troop 839 is part of the Flaming Arrow District of the Sam Houston Area Council of the Boy Scouts of America. The District is currently comprised of the Huffman, Humble, New Caney, and Splendora school districts. There is a monthly Roundtable meeting of Troop representatives from the District the second Thursday of each month at 7:00pm. The current venue for Roundtable is the Strawbridge United Methodist Church, but the district website will have the most up-to-date information (<http://flaming-arrow.shac.org>). While the Scoutmaster and an Assistant usually attend in order to get updates on District news, policies, and events, all registered adults are invited and encouraged to attend. The Council (SHAC) headquarters is located at 2225 N Loop W, Houston, TX 77008-1311 near downtown Houston.

## **2) VENTURING**

### **a) Venturing Crews**

Venturing Crews are for Scouts aged 14-21, and are separate from Boy Scout troop activities.

Troop 839 is affiliated with Venturing Crew 839, but a Scout may join any Venturing Crew. Sea Scouting is the nautical oriented organization within Venturing. There are active Ships within this area. Venturing is co-ed and open to both male and female youth.

### **3) UNIFORM**

There are two classes of scout uniforms – the Field Uniform (formerly known as Class A) and the Activity Uniform (formerly known as Class B). The Field Uniform is always acceptable. The Activity Uniform may be worn only under specified circumstances at scout activities.

#### **a) Field Uniform**

BSA short or long sleeve tan shirt, olive shoulder loops (epilates), scout shorts or pants, official BSA scout socks, closed-toe shoes and a BSA leather or webbing belt. If the pants are BSA issued with the built-in belt, the built-in belt is acceptable - a secondary belt is not needed.

#### **Activity Uniform**

Activity Uniforms are generally worn once we have arrived at a campout, during the day at summer camp, and during strenuous physical activity or service or work projects. Summer camp is generally an exception to the Activity Uniform.

There are times where any type of clothing suitable to the special activity involved is permitted. Examples are swim suits, heavy pants when in thick brush, cave-crawling clothes, etc. When in doubt, check with the SPL or Scoutmaster.

#### **b) Uniform Do's & Don'ts**

This is not Cub Scouts – official Scout shorts or pants and Scout socks are part of the uniform and are expected to be worn anytime Field uniforms are prescribed. In cold weather, a dark, solid color, long sleeved sweatshirt may be worn under the short sleeve scout shirt. The troop does not prescribe caps, neckerchiefs or long-sleeved shirts, but will not exclude them (we just recommend saving your money). Should scouts or adults elect to wear a cap with the uniform, it should be scout specific or come from a scouting activity such as summer camp. The shirt-tail will always be tucked in. At NO time may Scouts wear jams, parachute pants, cut-offs, or other such fashion with a portion of the Scout uniform. A strict standard of uniform discipline will be maintained in Troop 839. We reward neat uniform appearance by offering, on a random schedule, refreshments at the end of troop meetings to those patrols that attend in full, correct Field Uniform. We also encourage parents that participate in troop activities (specifically campouts) to also be in uniform. Not only does this show leadership by example, but it also will help safety and identification when transporting scouts.

#### **c) Summer Camp**

For summer camp, besides a full Field uniform, we recommend taking at least an additional Field shirt, two pair of Scout shorts, and three (3) pair of Scout socks.



## d) Places Required

### i) Full Field uniforms are **MANDATORY** for the following activities:

- Troop & PLC meetings
- Patrol meetings
- While traveling to and from campouts and official, BSA related troop activities.
- All Council and District events
- Boards of Review
- Scoutmaster Conferences
- Courts of Honor
- Authorized parades
- Flag Ceremonies
- Scout Shows & Fairs
- Scout Sunday
- Scout religious services
- Appointments with merit badge counselors. Merit badge counselors may waive this requirement for classes that are conducted outside of troop meetings.
- Whenever directed by the SPL or Scoutmaster
- All Scout activities unless some other uniform is specifically authorized

## e) Activity Uniform

Troop or Scout T-shirt, Olive scout shorts, Official BSA scout socks, BSA leather or webbing belt. Activity uniforms are generally worn once we have arrived at a campout, during the day at summer camp, and during strenuous physical activity or service or work projects. Summer camp is generally an exception to the Activity Uniform.

There are times where any type of clothing suitable to the special activity involved is permitted. Examples are swim suits, heavy pants when in thick brush, cave-crawling clothes, etc. When in doubt, check with the SPL or Scoutmaster.

## f) Uniform Sources

Uniforms and patches may be purchased from any of the Scout Shop locations:

1. SHAC Headquarters  
2225 North Loop West Houston, TX 77008-131  
Phone: (713) 865-5190
2. Champions Area  
6512 FM 1960 West Houston, TX 77069  
Phone: (281) 444-1152
3. Southwest Area  
12300 Parc Crest Drive, Suite 130  
Stafford, TX 77477  
Inside the United Way building  
Phone: (281) 207-2340
4. Conroe Area  
1188-B West Dallas St  
Conroe, TX 77301

800-864-1568

5. [Online at www.scoutstuff.org](http://www.scoutstuff.org)

Uniforms may also be ordered from the National Boy Scout Headquarters in Irving, Texas through the Boy Scout catalog.

### **g) Patch Placement**

For placement of patches on the uniform, see the inside cover of the Scout Handbook. The Sam Houston Area Council patch should touch the shoulder seam on the left sleeve, with the Troop numbers "839" touching the bottom of the Council patch. This is necessary to provide enough room on the sleeve for the troop office and "Trained" patches. The cost of the full uniform, including patches is approximately \$100.

### **h) Troop T-shirt or other commemorative wear**

For most troop activities such as Summer Camp, the troop designs and provides commemorative t-shirts. The cost of the t-shirt is part of the summer camp fee. Often times a commemorative tee is made in association with the troop's annual high adventure outing or other occasions such as winter camp (hoodies or sweatshirts) for those attending the outing.

Scouts and adults are encouraged to wear the troop t-shirt under their scout shirt as part of their normal field uniform. Wearing of other troop commemorative wear such as hoodies or sweatshirts as weather appropriate over the field uniform is acceptable during travel to the event or as part of the activity uniform during the activity.

Additional Troop commemorative wear can be ordered at the time of summer camp registration. The troop normally has a limited number of attire left over at the end of each year which is offered for sale at certain Troop meetings.

### **i) Uniform Swap/Sale**

Periodically there will be a uniform swap/sale before a troop meeting. Consult an adult leader for further information on the uniform exchange program. This is a good opportunity to pick up very serviceable uniform segments at minimal cost. The troop also offers used/donated uniforms to scouts free of charge provided the item is returned to the troop uniform bank once the scout is finish with the item or has outgrown the article.

### **j) Footwear**

Closed-toed shoes are required footwear for most Scouting activities. Water sports and actively taking a shower are exceptions to when closed-toed shoes are required. Inappropriate footwear includes, but is not limited to, Crocs, flip-flops, sandals, shower shoes, bare feet, wearing socks only, Croc-style shoes, etc.

## **4) EQUIPMENT**

### **a) Advice and Assistance**

Whenever in doubt, check with an experienced adult (or older Scout) on equipment

recommendations. We have catalogue and discount resources available. We recommend buying better quality equipment and treating it well. Do NOT buy junk. It will not hold up in the rigors of camping, particularly in the hands of 11 year olds.

## b) Financial Reimbursements

The Troop has a financial reimbursement program based on each Scout's sales and participation in the delivery of Troop main fundraising event (bark mulch in the spring) as well as other fundraising events. These credits can be used to reimburse the Scout's family for scouting equipment purchases, as well as summer camp and other scouting outing costs. The Troop Treasurer keeps a record of these accounts and issues reimbursement checks to Scouts. Incentives can only be used as long as the scout is registered with Troop 839. After departure from Troop 839 the funds are transferred to the troop general fund.

## c) Required Equipment

- **Complete Field uniform**
- **Scout Handbook**– Most Current Edition
- **Troop or Scout T-shirt** -optional for new scouts joining the troop.
- **Poncho or Rain Suit**
- **Clear or see-through 32 oz. water bottle.** A clip is recommended so that the scout can attach his water bottle to his belt. NO bladder containers unless backpacking and only as a supplement to a water bottle. Solid color or metallic canteen, sports or water bottles are not acceptable as it is difficult to monitor the scout's fluid consumption.
- **Personal Mess Kit** – drinking cup, bowl/plate, and spoon/fork/spork (for campouts when patrol-issued chuck box is unavailable).
- **Orienteering Compass** (one with rectangular, plastic base plate – preferably Silva model)
- **Pocket Knife** – Boy Scout or similar variety without too many gadgets (NO sheath knives). "Totin' Chip" must be earned before a pocket knife can be carried on the person.
- **Sleeping Bag** (recommend 40F minimum)
- **Sleeping Pad** – *while not required, it is strongly recommended* (foam or insulated air mattress)
- **Flashlight or Headlamp**
- **Personal First Aid Kit** (consult *Scout Handbook* for contents)
- **Toiletry Kit** – toothbrush & paste, soap, comb, towel, toilet paper (all in zip-lock bags). No aerosol cans of anything are allowed.
- **Plastic Garbage Bag** (sleeping bag in it outbound & dirty clothes inbound)
- **Extra Pair Shoes** (if others get wet)
- **Clothing Change** – especially socks and underwear, and other items as necessary under the circumstances, jacket in cool weather
- **Backpack or Duffel Bag** – large enough to hold all gear for a weekend campout
- **Plastic Ziploc Bags** – for clothing and water-sensitive gear.
- **Notepad and Pen**

The Scout should carry as little as he can make do with. More equipment means more weight and more

space.

***PUT THE SCOUT'S NAME ON EVERYTHING IN INDELIBLE INK***

## **5) SCOUT HANDBOOK**

### **a) Purpose**

The *Scout Handbook (latest edition)* should be brought to ALL troop meetings, patrol meetings, on ALL campouts, and to summer and winter camps. This is imperative for scouts working on the Trail to First Class. The Handbook is the basic resource of Scouting, and contains the record of each Scout's advancement. A waterproof cover or container is useful to protect the book from the elements. Custom covers are available at the Scout shops, or you can improvise. The *Handbook* has all the information necessary to advance to the rank of First Class, and to learn basic outdoor skills, as well as stressing the intrinsic values for which Scouting stands.

### **b) Child Abuse**

There is a tear-out section in the front of the *Handbook* on the important subject of child abuse. For a boy to attain the Scout rank, which is the first step and is required before he will be permitted to attend a troop campout, he must complete, WITH A PARENT OR LEGAL GUARDIAN, the exercises contained in that section. Upon completion of these exercises, the PARENT OR GUARDIAN must initial and date the joining requirement item of the *Scout Handbook* as having been accomplished.

### **c) Scout through First Class**

The requirements for advancement to the ranks of Scout through First Class are found near the back of the Scout Handbook. (See the pages for Scout, Tenderfoot, Second Class and First Class Rank requirements for the specific requirements for each rank). These pages are the OFFICIAL record of the requirements met by the Scout toward rank. The Troop keeps records in Troop Master; however, the Scout's handbook is the official record should the records disagree. Completion of any requirement can be checked off ONLY by the Scoutmaster, an Assistant Scoutmaster, Troop Guide, or other designee by the Scoutmaster. Note: the parent of the Scout cannot check off requirements in Scouts BSA. This is a significant difference between Scouts BSA and Cub Scouts.

### **d) Record of Campouts & Service**

The Scout should keep a detailed record of the dates and locations of each troop or patrol campout, outing or event he attends. He should also keep a detailed record here of all hours spent on service projects, as well as the dates, locations, and nature of work. He can use the camping and service log sheets in the Handbook and supplement as appropriate in his Scouting journal. This information is needed to obtain rank advancement or complete merit badge requirements. Thus the scout should seek the signature of the SM, ASM or participating adult at the next available troop function following the campout or service opportunity. It is essential for the record to be complete prior to participating in the next SM conference or Board of Review.

### **e) Star through Eagle**

Requirements for the advanced ranks of Star through Eagle are found the *Scout Handbook*.

Again, this is the OFFICIAL record; do not lose the book. A listing of the various merit badges is available through the BSA national website (Scouting.org). To earn the rank of Eagle, a Scout must progress through each of the other ranks, and among other requirements must have earned a total of 21 merit badges. Of the 21, there are 14 specific merit badges that must be earned. The requirements for each of these 14 “Eagle Required” merit badges are listed within the *Scout Handbook*. Remember some changes in requirements occur with the issuance of new *Scout Handbook* editions, so previous books may not be accurate.

**TIP: ALL HANDBOOKS LOOK ALIKE; MAKE SURE THE SCOUT'S NAME IS ON THE BOOK IN SEVERAL PLACES INCLUDING THE OUTSIDE EDGE SO IT IS READILY IDENTIFIABLE.**

## 6) *Scouts' Life* MAGAZINE

When a Scout registers with the Troop, he has the option of subscribing to *Scouts' Life Magazine*, published by the Boy Scouts of America. We strongly encourage each Scout to subscribe. The magazine contains extremely helpful articles on cooking, camping, Scout skills, and meeting planning, as well as interesting reading on Scout activities and adventures.

## 7) EQUIPMENT

*Tip: Equipment suppliers other than Boy Scouts of America include Academy, REI, and various online retailers such as Campmor.com.*

### a) Packs

DO NOT BUY ONE IMMEDIATELY. Wait until the second year in Scouting. Until then, a simple day pack such as the ones used for school is ample for the day hikes the troop may have. Most backpacking outings will require the Scout to be First Class rank and have the physical strength to participate. Even then, the Scout is encouraged to borrow gear from older Scouts and/or siblings when possible.

A serious pack is not required unless a Scout is going to Philmont or similar high adventure camp, and the minimum age for Philmont is now 14. Until age 13 or older, the average scout simply does not have the physical development to support an adult sized pack, and good ones generally run in the \$250+ range. When you get ready to buy a serious pack, consult with one of the experienced adults. A backpack in the in the 3500-4000 cubic inch / 45-55 L capacity range will suffice for the balance of the troop's activities. However, for high adventure outings such as Philmont, it is recommended the pack be in the 4000 – 5000 cubic inch / 65–75 liter capacity range. It is strongly recommend purchasing a pack from a highly regarded manufacturer, such as Kelty, REI, Mountainsmith, Osprey, Gregory, etc. This is not a place to skimp on equipment if you are ready to buy one.

### b) Duffel Bag

This is generally the easiest thing for the Scouts to handle on a campout. Buy one big enough to hold EVERYTHING the Scout takes on a typical two night, three day campout, including the sleeping pad and sleeping bag. Multiple loose items tend to get lost, damaged, or soiled. Pack the sleeping bag in a plastic garbage bag in the duffel, and put each day's change of clothing in

a separate zip-lock bag. If we have to set up camp in the rain, this keeps everything from becoming soaked. Write the Scout's name in large letters on the duffel. Academy and other sporting goods mass merchandisers have suitable duffels at a reasonable price.

### **c) Compass**

Make sure that the compass purchased has a rectangular, plastic base plate suitable for orienteering use. The simple round ones will not work for our purposes. The troop recommends a Silva (about \$16.00), although other orienteering models will do. The scout should consider buying a Velcro belt carrying pouch for the compass (available at the Scout Shop at a modest cost).

### **d) Sleeping Bag**

The typical light, inexpensive sleeping bag that most people already have is fine for most campouts from mid-spring through mid-fall. For winter camping, however, especially when the troop travels out of the Houston area, an outdoor bag with a colder temperature rating is required. You can find a good bag that fits these requirements at any of the large sporting goods stores, or you can order from specialty manufacturers and merchandisers. Through certain manufacturers, we are able to order top-of-the-line equipment at substantial discounts for Scouts. Contact one of the Assistant Scoutmasters for catalogs and details on ordering using these discounts.

### **e) Knife**

No sheath knives are permitted. A standard Boy Scout or similar Swiss Army knife is fine. Do not buy one with too many gadgets (*e.g.*, forks and spoons) on it. They make it cumbersome and hard to carry. You can get a Velcro belt carrier for the pocket knife at the Scout Shop if you do not already have something similar. A Scout must earn a "Totin' Chip" before he can carry or use his pocket knife. "Totin' Chips" can be earned on campouts after receiving axe yard instruction.

### **f) Mess Kit**

It is not necessary to buy the official Scout mess kit for the following reasons. We cook by patrols, not as individuals, so you do not need metal dishes. The metal kits lose screws, burn fingers when containing hot food, and hold little. All a Scout really needs is a plastic eating bowl, spoon, and cup with a handle. Though not necessary, he may want to take a fork, eating knife, and plastic plate. A dunking mesh bag is convenient for carrying and rinsing eating utensils.

### **g) Rain Gear**

It is not necessary to buy an official Scout poncho. We suggest a heavier, better grade poncho. Rain suits are even better, but are more costly and will be worn out of more quickly than a poncho.

## **8) CAMPOUTS**

### **a) Camping Orientation**

For the first campout with tents and cooking that new Scouts will attend with the Troop, there

will be an orientation session to teach them how to pitch and care for the tents, safe care and use of the propane stoves and lanterns, and cooking and cleaning procedures. In general, the orientation campout is held in conjunction with troop leadership training (TLT). This orientation is conducted by the Troop Guides and Assistant Scoutmasters, with assistance from experienced Scouts in the Troop. Parents are encouraged to attend as parents are introduced to the same gear their youth will be using in the patrol and a more thorough discussion on how parents can help their new Scouts will be facilitated.

## **b) Personal Packing**

### **i) Uniform**

Full Field uniforms will be worn while traveling to and from campouts. Scouts not in proper uniform WILL NOT GO. Once we arrive at the camp site, we generally will switch to Activity Uniforms. For this reason, it is advisable to wear a Scout T-shirt under the Field shirt so that as soon as we arrive the Scout can take off and fold his Scout shirt to have it reasonably fresh for the trip home.

### **ii) Shoes**

Do not buy expensive leather hiking boots. The inexpensive hiking shoes or tennis shoes are fine. Be sure to take an extra pair of shoes on campouts in case one pair gets wet. NO OPEN TOE shoes are allowed on campouts. Open toe shoes include, but are not limited to, Crocs, sandals, and flip-flops. Remember, the point of shoes is to protect the feet in rugged environments and should be appropriate for the activity. That includes using water shoes for water activities.

### **iii) Wet Weather**

In packing for campouts, pack changes of clothing in zip-lock bags in case the duffel gets wet. Similarly, put the sleeping bag in a garbage bag or other water-proof cover to put into the duffel bag. The garbage bag can then double to hold dirty or wet clothing for the return home. We camp rain or shine.

### **iv) 32 oz. Clear Water Bottle**

Be sure to take a clear or see-through 32 oz. (or larger) water bottle that the Scout can put over his shoulder or strap on his waist. Do NOT put anything other than water in this container - they are very difficult to sanitize if something starts to grow. This is especially true for bladder types such as Camelbacks. We recommend this in order to ensure scouts are drinking sufficiently. A Camelback does not replace the need for a water bottle as the adults cannot readily monitor the level of water in a Camelback.

## **c) Personal Food**

Other than a sack meal to be eaten en-route, personal food items should not be taken on campouts. Because food attracts ants, rats, rodents, raccoons, and bears, NO FOOD OF ANY KIND is permitted in the tents. NO CARBONATED SOFT DRINKS are permitted in campsites or during campouts other than while en-route or returning. Carbonated beverages, especially those containing caffeine, tend to cause dehydration.

## d) Medications

No ingested medications and no prescription medications of any kind will be taken unless facilitated by an adult. There will be a designated medical officer on each outing who will hold all such medications with the exception of inhalers or EpiPen. The PARENT will supply detailed, WRITTEN instructions on the circumstances, time and dose of each medication to be administered. Scouts must inform the Medical Officer and their driver if they are carrying inhalers or EpiPen. If in doubt as to who the medical officer is on a particular outing, ask the Scoutmaster or an Assistant Scoutmasters at check-in. The medical officer will not administer the medication. They are there to assure the scout takes their medication. It is the scout's responsibility to know what to take and when to take it. Any scout, adult or visitor caught taking unauthorized prescription medications, in possession of an illegal controlled substance, or in possession of alcoholic beverages or tobacco products while on a Scout outing will be **EXPULSED** immediately from the Troop.

Troop 839 has a **ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY ON POSSESSION OF ILLEGAL DRUGS, ALCOHOL AND TOBACCO** by Scouts at Scout functions. The same policy applies to adults with respect to drugs and alcohol.

**The BSA has a Zero Tolerance Policy for any tobacco products. We realize this may be an insurmountable burden for some adults. If an adult cannot go the length of the event without their tobacco, adults may not use their tobacco in the presence of Scouts.**

## e) Stoves & Lanterns

Do not bring any liquid fuel equipment on campouts unless specifically instructed to do so. Many Scout camps and other properties do not allow any liquid fuel camping equipment on the premises.

Given the gear provided by the Troop, personal propane lanterns and stoves are not necessary. Due to the extreme fire hazard in nylon tents, no open flame and **NO FLAMMABLE LANTERNS OR ANY FUEL IS PERMITTED IN THE TENTS AT ANY TIME.**

## f) What Adults Do on Campouts

Troop 839 highly encourages adults to go on the campouts. They are as much fun for the parents as they are for the boys; however, there are some things to be aware of. First, adults must be registered with Troop 839 and have agreed to BSA's Mission and support the Aims and Methods of Scouting for the development of its youth members. Camping is the heart of Scouting, so please take a few minutes to read this. Scouts BSA is absolutely different from Cub Scouting or Webelos! And while parents (and sometimes whole families) often accompany the Scouts on campouts, the Scouts camp with their patrol and not with their parents and family members.

Adult Program Intervention—any adult suggesting a deviation from the planned activity should discuss with the Scoutmaster (or adult in charge of a specific activity), not to any of the youth. The Scoutmaster (or designee) can then decide whether the proposal can be forwarded to the Senior Patrol Leader for consideration. Adults are always allowed to act upon any significant



health/safety issues and immediately address any BSA policy violations (such as bullying).

**Scout Tenting & Meals**—Scouts tent with their patrol in a patrol site separate from the other patrols. Patrols plan their own menus, and cook and eat together as a team. In general, adults do not eat or tent with a youth patrol. Scouts may not tent with anyone who is less than or more than 2 years in age difference from themselves.

**Adult Tenting & Meals**—Adults tent with the adult patrol in a patrol site separate from the other patrols. We plan our own menu, and cook and eat together as a team. In general, adults do not eat or tent with a youth patrol.

**Adult/Youth Tenting**—BSA youth protection policies forbid an adult and a boy sharing the same tent. While youth protection policies may not restrict a parent and son from tenting together, the troop highly discourages this practice. If a father tents with his son, it has been our experience that the boy will lose out on many opportunities to make decisions and be part of the patrol team.

**Smoking/Drinking**—Drivers may not smoke while Scouts are in the car. Adults may not drink alcoholic beverages during any Scout activity. Adults who must smoke or chew must do so discretely out of sight of the Scouts.

**Boy Leadership**—Adults should not interfere with the functioning of boy leaders, even if they make mistakes (we all learn best from our mistakes). Step in only if it is a matter of immediate safety or if the mistake will be immediately costly. If possible, involve a uniformed adult leader first.

**Boy Growth**—Never do anything for a scout that he can do himself. Let him make decisions without adult interference, and let him make non-costly mistakes.

Scouts BSA camping activities center on the patrol, where boys learn teamwork, leadership, and most camping skills. It is important that adults not be in the middle of patrol activities such as site selection, tent pitching, meal preparation, and anything else where boys get to practice decision-making. A key difference between Scouts BSA and Cub Scouting/Webelos is leadership. Look for the word "leader" in a job title, and you will begin to appreciate the difference. The responsible person for a Cub/Webelos den is the adult Den Leader. The responsible person for a Boy Scout patrol is the boy Patrol Leader.

This isn't token leadership. A Patrol Leader has real authority and genuine responsibilities. Much of the success, safety, and happiness of six to ten other boys depend directly on him.

## 9) TROOP GEAR

A significant portion of a Scout's annual Troop membership fee, plus funds generated by the Troop's fundraising events goes to the purchase of equipment used by the Troop on campouts.

### a) The Troop provides the following:

- Tents
- Propane gas camp stoves
- Dutch ovens
- Cooking pots and pans
- Cooking utensils and mitts
- Dish cleaning supplies
- Water cans & on-site water
- Gas lanterns for communal areas
- Propane and tanks
- Wash tubs
- Chuck boxes
- Dining flies
- Campground permit fees

Scouts who have not yet earned First Class are required to utilize one of the troop provided tents and sleep at a minimum of 2 scouts per tent. In certain instances, depending upon campground facilities available, all scouts attending that campout must utilize a troop provided tent. Scouts that use a troop tent are expected to take a tent home to be spread out, cleaned up, and dried, when necessary, after campouts. The tent is to be returned to the Troop Quartermaster at the next Troop meeting.

The scout must take good care of the tent assigned to them and return it in good working condition. The current cost of replacing a troop tent is \$250. Any scout caught doing damage to a troop tent, losing a tent or returning a tent in non-serviceable condition will be required to provide the funding to replace the tent by either their reimbursement fund or monetary contribution to the troop.

First Class Scouts and above including adults may use their own tent; however, those are tents with a footprint no larger than a troop tent, typically **limited to 2 person maximum sized tents.**

### b) DO NOT PACK OR BRING:

- Sheath knives
- Any type of firearm, BB gun, or ammunition
- Fireworks
- Controlled substances or illegal drugs
- Alcoholic drinks
- Tobacco products
- Lewd materials
- Any aerosol product
- Liquid or canister fuel stoves (unless specifically directed to do so)
- Sling shots
- Bow and arrows

### c) Scout Travel Items

The following items may be brought for use in vehicles at the driver discretion while traveling, but they must not be used or leave the vehicle when the Troop arrives at a campsite:

- Mobile telephones
- Carbonated soft drinks
- Hand-held video games with headphones
- Portable music devices with headphones
- Any other electronic gear. This does not apply to cameras unless they are part of another electronic device (i.e. cellular phone) and to amateur radio equipment if the Scout is licensed by the FCC.
- Personal snacks (as opposed to patrol snacks) – no food of any kind is permitted in tents any time.

Neither the troop nor the driver / owner of the vehicle the Scout rode in will be responsible for any damaged or missing electronic gear including, but not limited to, cellular phones, iPads, laptops, hand-held video games, or any other personal items left in a vehicle.

## 10) PERMISSION SLIP & MEDICAL FORMS

In order to attend a Troop campout or outing, the Scout MUST present a permission slip signed by a parent at the time of departure. NO EXCEPTIONS. The permission slips generally are given out at the regular Troop meeting on the Monday before the campout and are posted on the Troop website. If the Scout loses his slip before the campout, there may be extra copies available at the campout departure location from the Scoutmaster but the scout should not assume this is always the case. The information portion of the permission slip will provide the date, time and location of departure, the camping destination, scout master contact number (or designated troop leader for the campout), date, time and location for pickup on return, any special fees involved, whether a sack meal is necessary, and any other special items of interest.

In addition to the permission slip, each scout and adult must have a current medical form on file with the Troop. The medical form consists of three parts – A, B and C. Parts A&B are general health information. Part C requires a doctor's signature and must be on file for any campout over 72 hours.

## 11) COOKING

### a) Patrol Cooking

The Scouts cook by patrols. Generally one Scout will be designated as the grub master and coordinate cooking activities for the campout. That Scout is responsible for setting a menu, collecting grub fees from the patrol members, buying the food supplies, and either cooking the meals or providing suitable instruction. All patrol members should have some duties for meal preparation, cooking, and clean-up.

### b) First Class Rank Requirement

One of the requirements for advancement to First Class is that a Scout plans the menu, purchase

the food, and cook the meals on a campout for his entire patrol. On a typical campout, the first meal will be a sack meal each individual Scout brings to eat on the road. Thus, if we depart late on Friday afternoon, each Scout will eat before departure or bring a sack meal to eat on the way. The cook would then be responsible for cooking Saturday breakfast, lunch, dinner and Sunday breakfast. Generally, the Troop will stop and eat on the return trip as necessary. A cold lunch on the return trip may be replaced by stopping for a purchased lunch. That decision will be announced before leaving for the campout. Should the patrols stop for lunch on the return trip; each scout will be responsible for purchasing his own meal.

“Cooked” meals for the First Class requirement must be just that – “cooked”. Sandwiches, hot dogs, etc. do not qualify as one of the four cooked meals; however, they do apply for the meal planning requirements for the rank advancement and cooking merit badge. That said, the cook should always bring plenty of bread, peanut butter, and jelly in case someone in the patrol does not care for the dish prepared, or if the preparation should somehow come out inedible. Any snacks should be purchased for the whole patrol and kept with the patrol grub.

To avoid ants, rats, rodents, raccoons, and bears, **NO FOOD IS ALLOWED IN THE TENTS.**

### c) Preparation for Campout

Cooking generally will be on propane gas camp stoves. Alternatives include cooking over open flame when allowed by the campsite as well as Dutch ovens (carried in the troop supplies). Parents are strongly encouraged to help their Scouts practice cooking at home before the campout when their Scout will be cooking. He should practice preparing each of the meals he will cook on the campout.

Each patrol needs to develop a duty roster which includes assigning cooks for each meal/campout, and thus who will be checking off his First Class cooking requirement. This can be done by volunteers, by lots, by who has the most requirements met for rank advancement, or whatever system the patrol chooses. Typically, only one Scout per patrol can meet the cooking requirement on a particular campout. As a result, it may take several months for all Scouts in the patrol to meet this requirement. The fairest method of determining who will get to cook for this requirement is to have the Scout who has met the most rank requirements toward First Class have the honor. Otherwise, the Scouts can either volunteer or draw lots to see who cooks.

### d) Menu Planning

Meals should be balanced. Typical weekend menus include items like pancakes and bacon or sausage, eggs, breakfast tacos, spaghetti and tomato sauce, soup, stew, hamburgers, fajitas, beans, salad, fruit, and dessert items. A portion of the Troop Meeting preceding a campout will be dedicated to patrol meal planning. As a reminder – a scout is Thrifty and should not purchase more food that the patrol can eat (First year patrols have a tendency to over buy). The troop has a camping cookbook available in the troop library. Patrol menus must be approved by senior leadership (SPL and/or ASPL's). The Troop provides drink mix (lemonade, Gatorade, Kool-Aid, etc.). Any other drinks should be part of the menu and provided by the grub master. **NO SOFT DRINKS** are permitted in camp – they tend to dehydrate the body in hot weather.

### e) Food Transport & Storage

The best ways to pack perishables is use a cooler (check with the patrol members to see if one is generally available) and cool items with “Blue Ice” or block ice. Hint: keep a couple of milk jugs full of ice in the freezer. For patrol condiments and staples that are carried over from one campout to the next, the patrol may want to purchase a plastic bin with cover to transport these items. Food costs can be reduced significantly if the person who is to be the cook on the following campout takes charge of these items at the end of the present campout, and assures that any items that need refrigeration are kept cool until the next campout. Do NOT bring loose bags of groceries to be taken on the campout. The bags tend to tear and spill their contents, as well as bags getting mixed up since all grub goes into the troop trailer for transport to the campsite. This is why we especially suggest that the patrol buy its own plastic bin to carry these foodstuffs.

### f) Grub Fees

Typically, each member of the patrol will contribute \$10-\$20 for all of the meals to be prepared on the campout. This grub fee needs to be paid to the grub master at the campout check-in. Scouts that cancel from a campout after the grub master has purchased the food is responsible for his portion of the grub fee. Please make sure the Scouts bring the correct grub fee, in proper change, to the check-in.

## 12) CAMPING SCHEDULE

Prior to the start of each Troop calendar year, the Troop prepares an annual calendar of events, meetings, and campouts for the next 12 months. This calendar is reviewed and approved by the Troop Committee prior to being set for the year. The Troop calendar year is defined as August to the following July. You should have received a copy at registration. The troop calendar is also posted on the troop website.

## 13) CAMPING RANK REQUIREMENTS

For regular monthly troop campouts, a boy must have attained the Scout rank to attend. The requirements for this rank are listed in the *Boy Scout Handbook*. Several of the campouts and outings have certain rank requirements. For example, a Scout must be First Class or above to participate in shotgun shooting on the shooting campout. In addition to achieving the rank of First Class, a scout must demonstrate the physical ability to carry weight over an extended distance prior being allowed to go backpacking overnight on a campout. This is a reflection of the level of both physical as well as emotional maturity and experience required on some of these outings, as well as serving as an incentive to advancement. Any special rank or training requirements for a campout will appear on the information section of the permission slip.

## 14) DROP OFF & PICK UP

The information portion of the outing permission slip will have details of the place and time for drop off for transport to the campout, and the place and time for pick up on return. Usually we depart from the parking lot of First Presbyterian Church, and return to the parking lot north of Luby’s in the front of Kingwood on the US-59 feeder road (across from Harley Davidson).

**BE ON TIME FOR DEPARTURES.** We usually have long distances to cover, and will not wait for a Scout who is late for check-in. If the slip indicates a 6:00 p.m. check-in and 6:30 departure, that means the Scout must be at the departure point at 6:00, not 6:25. The Troop does its best to be punctual for return times. We usually arrive back in Kingwood within the established return window. Scouts are advised to contact their parents 30 minutes before return arrival.

## 15) FUND RAISING

As a general principle, Troop 839 only does one fund raising event per year – Bark Mulch sales. The troop has been participating in this event for over 30 years. Through this one fund raising event, the Troop raises the funding necessary for troop equipment and to majorly defray the cost of troop activities throughout the year.

Additionally, the Scout also has a chance to defray their cost of scouting through the annual fund raiser. By actively participating in the event along with the delivery, the Scout can build a reimbursement credit that can be used toward scouting activities and equipment.

Other fundraising activities (popcorn sales, scout fair ticket sales, and Wreaths Across America – Houston sales) are available for scouts should they be interested; however, these are not troop wide events. The burden of the effort for these is upon the scout.

## 16) BEHAVIOR AND DISCIPLINE

### a) General Policy

The Troop's broad policy on behavior and discipline is contained in the *Troop Organization and Operating Procedures Manual*. Any Scout who intentionally participates in an activity that has the potential to cause harm to him or others, or behaves in a manner that reflects negatively on Troop 839 or the Boy Scouts of America, or intentionally participates in any activity that may cause damage to public or private property, will be disciplined.

Examples of intentional behavior which are cause for disciplinary action include, but are not limited to the following:

- a) Not following Scoutmaster's or other adult leader's directions
- b) Significantly unsafe actions
- c) Physical or verbal hazing or harassment of another person
- d) Leaving designated area without the permission of the Scoutmaster or designated adult leader
- e) Going to an area other than that requested
- f) Entering property designated as "off limits"
- g) Exploring physical hazards without adult leader permission and supervision (*e.g.*, lakes, creeks, cliffs, caves, boats, abandoned structures)
- h) Going near any type of motorized equipment, machinery or vehicle without the permission of the Scoutmaster or designated adult leader
- i) Actions which have the potential of causing significant or malicious property damage to natural or man-made areas

- j) Excessively rowdy, unruly, loud, disrespectful, disobedient or disruptive behavior
- k) Cursing or use of foul language
- l) Possession of controlled or illegal substances, alcohol or tobacco
- m) Possession of lewd items or literature
- n) Theft
- o) Fighting
- p) Actions contrary to the good order and discipline of the patrol or Troop, or which are unbecoming to a Boy Scout
- q) Refusal to perform properly duties assigned by the patrol, patrol leader, troop leadership, or adult leaders

## **b) Disciplinary Procedure**

Determining the appropriate response for disciplinary infractions is the responsibility of the Patrol Leaders Council, subject to the overriding supervision of the Scoutmaster, adult leaders at the scene, and the Troop Committee. Troop leaders and adult leaders will step in immediately to halt a disciplinary infraction. In addition to whatever responsive action may be determined by the PLC, and depending on the degree or severity of the offense, the following procedures may also be implemented:

### **i) First Offense**

The Troop Leader in charge will discuss the infraction with the Scout at the time of violation, reminding him of the Behavior and Discipline Policy. The Troop Committee Chair will be notified by the Scoutmaster, Assistant Scoutmaster, or troop leader in charge, and given all the details of the offense. The Troop Committee Chair or his designee will notify the parents or guardians of the Scout involved, informing them that such behavior will not be tolerated. This will serve as a first warning to the Scout and his parents.

### **ii) Second Offense**

The Troop Committee Chair will be notified by the Scoutmaster, Assistant Scoutmaster, or troop leader in charge and given all the details of the offense. The Troop Committee Chair will notify the parents or guardians of the Scout involved. The parents or guardians **and** the Scout must appear before the Troop Committee to discuss the problem.

### **iii) Third Offense**

Notification follows the same pattern as for the second offense. The parents or guardians will be directed to remove the Scout from Troop 839.

### **iv) Very Serious Offenses**

Notwithstanding any of the procedures outlined above, the Troop Committee reserves the right to expel immediately any Scout who commits an intentional offense that significantly endangers the health or safety of himself or others, causes the potential for significant property damage, involves possession of illegal drugs or controlled substances, alcohol, or tobacco or which would bring serious disrepute upon the Troop or the Boy Scouts of America.

#### v) On Campouts

Should there be a disciplinary issue on a campout, PARENTS WILL BE CONTACTED TO COME AND PICK UP THEIR SON IMMEDIATELY, regardless of the distance from Kingwood to the campsite (as much as 4-8 hours away for weekend campouts and potentially further for special campouts and summer camp).

#### c) Acknowledgement

Each Scout and his parents will be required to sign the form at the back of this manual acknowledging their understanding of the Troop 839 Behavior and Discipline Policy as set forth in the *Troop 839 Organization and Operating Procedures* and as described in this *Troop 839 Orientation Manual*. In signing this form, the Scout and his parents or guardians acknowledge and agree to abide by these measures which the Troop leadership deems necessary for the safety and benefit of all Troop members.

### CHOICES = CONSEQUENCES

## 17) ADVANCEMENT

#### a) Philosophy

The objectives of Scouting and the advancement program are to teach citizenship, leadership, and lifelong skills, while having fun and developing an ethic of service to others. Each Scout is strongly encouraged to work towards and earn Scouting's highest honor – the rank of Eagle Scout.

The Troop will monitor each Scout's progress along the advancement trail. This is intended to keep interest at a high level and to maintain the quality of the program. Some requirements will be accomplished by the Scouts as a group, but unlike Cub Scouts, the **primary responsibility rests with the Scout for advancement**. He is responsible for looking up the requirements, learning or completing the required steps, scheduling reviews by Assistant Scoutmasters or Troop Guides, scheduling a Scoutmaster conference, and requesting a Board of Review.

#### b) Maintaining Skills

Scouting teaches many skills that are useful throughout life. Therefore, it is important that the Scout really know and retain each required skill, rather than just knowing it at the time it is signed off in his Handbook. Troop 839's policy is that, as a boy advances, he will still be subject to examination on all of the skills he learned to earn previous ranks. We earnestly want each boy to advance, but we also want him to feel that advancement is a genuine accomplishment, not a reward for longevity.

#### c) Advancement Pace

We consider it best that each Scout advance steadily to maintain both his interest and sense of accomplishment. Scouts can have fun and learn without advancing, but they will not learn as much and are generally lost to the program fairly soon. As boys get older, other activities and interests compete even more strongly for their time. Thus, it is best to target earning the rank of Eagle around the time they turn 16.



At the same time, we do not want Scouts to advance so quickly that the underlying values of the program are not absorbed. The higher ranks and many of the merit badges require leadership, service, comprehension, and attitude that come only with more maturity.

There is no magic pace since different boys mature at different rates. Scouts will not be assigned “positions of responsibility” just because they need it for the next rank. Many positions such as Patrol Leader are elected, and others require significant maturity and judgment. Since our objective is that the Scouts lead Troop 839, it is essential that they be capable. As a rough yardstick, we look for Scouts to earn First Class within the first year 1-1/2 years in Scouting.

## **i) First Class Trail**

### **(1) Handbook**

The current edition of *The Scout Handbook* is the primary resource for, and record of, a Scout’s progress. Bring the Handbook to EVERY Troop meeting, patrol meeting, campout and troop function such as service projects.

### **(2) Scout Rank**

To be eligible to attend any troop outing, a Scout must achieve Scout rank (see the Handbook for the rank requirements). One of the requirements is that the Scout and his parents or guardians go over the exercises concerning child abuse found in the tear-out section in the front of the Handbook. When this has been done, the parents or guardians must initial and date that requirement in the book. The Scout should contact the Scoutmaster to have the other items checked off when the Scout is prepared to complete them.

### **(3) Tenderfoot through First Class**

These requirements can be signed off only by the Scoutmaster, an Assistant Scoutmaster (not the parent of the Scout involved), a Troop Guide, or other youth as designated by the Scoutmaster. The Scout should study his book and work with other Scouts, especially the Troop Guides for his patrol, to master the required skills.

The Trail to First Class Coordinator is expected to be an available resource to help motivate and instruct as necessary. The Scout must then demonstrate mastery of the skill to the Assistant Scoutmaster or Troop Guide, who will initial and date completion of the requirement in the Scout’s book.

As indicated earlier, the Scout should also keep a record of his camping nights, service hours, and troop or patrol activities (other than regular meetings) within his Handbook. Most Scout summer camps offer a “First Class Trail” emphasis program. This is a good way to supplement the skills training delivered through the troop. Unless authorized by the Scoutmaster, Summer Camp staff will not be allowed to sign-off on First Class Trail requirements. Scouts should not spend all of their time on First Class Trail at Summer Camp. Summer Camp should also provide the Scout the opportunity for them to earn various merit badges that suit their interests. Due to the nature of Troop 839 meetings and the ample opportunity for getting sign-offs, we encourage merit badge classes at

camp. Should a scout elect to attend the “Trail to First Class” sessions, the Scoutmaster may waive the restriction of regarding summer camp staff signing requirements.

#### **(4) Patrol Meetings**

Regular patrol meetings with the Troop Guides and Assistant Scoutmasters are essential to complete the First Class Trail in the first year of Scouting. We suggest that the patrol meet at least twice monthly at some time and place other than regular troop meetings. Usually an hour meeting at someone’s home on Sunday afternoon or Thursday evening seems to work best. This also serves to meet one of the requirements for the Baden Powell Award for patrol excellence. These patrol meetings should focus on mastering the skills required for Tenderfoot through First Class. Patrol meetings should be set for times when all, or at least most, of the patrol members can be present.

#### **(5) Parental Involvement**

Even if the parents are not registered with BSA, the troop, active committee members, or otherwise involved in Troop leadership, it is strongly encouraged that they sit down periodically with their son and go over where the Scout stands on advancement. Parental interest, motivation, and encouragement are vital to successful advancement.

#### **(6) Service Hours**

In addition to meeting the skill requirements and participation in a sufficient number of troop or patrol outings, Scouts must provide a certain number of hours of service on projects that benefit the troop, our charter organization or the community in which we live. Service opportunities are regularly announced at troop meetings, and often center around assisting older Scouts in performing their Eagle projects.

Assistant Scoutmasters assigned to the patrol should also help the Scouts identify potential service projects that could be undertaken by the patrol. Examples of some patrol projects include mulching the church flower beds, Scout Sunday participation, 4<sup>th</sup> of July Parade participation, assisting in flood relief, landscape clean-up at churches, schools or park areas, assisting HAAM in its food pantry drives, assisting with Project Graduation at the high school, collecting clothes for the homeless, etc. For the Baden-Powell patrol award, the patrol must undertake at least two one-hour service projects every three months. Patrol service projects must be approved by the PLC.

#### **(7) Scoutmaster Conference**

When all skill requirements for a rank have been signed off, the Scout must contact the Scoutmaster to schedule a conference. The purpose of the conference is to ascertain what the Scout feels he is getting from the Scouting experience and what suggestions he may have for the troop.

The Scoutmaster will constructively explore the Scout’s attitude toward Scouting, the Scout’s own values, and the degree to which he is exhibiting citizenship and leadership. Together they will set goals for advancement to the next rank.

Upon completion, the Scoutmaster will initial in the Scout’s handbook that the

conference has been completed.

***TIP: E-mail the Scoutmaster in advance to schedule a time and avoid confusion at meeting.***

### **(8) Board of Review**

It is the scout's responsibility to contact the Troop Advancement Chair to schedule a Board of Review. At a minimum, the Board is composed of three Committee Members (other than the particular Scout's parents). The purpose is to determine the quality of his experience and decide whether he has fulfilled the requirements for the rank. If so, the Board not only approves his advancement or Palm but also encourages him to continue the quest for the next rank. A Scout may be asked where he learned his skills and who taught him, and what he gained from fulfilling selected requirements. The scout will not be asked to demonstrate the learned skill at the Board of Review as this has already taken place during the Scoutmaster conference.

The answers provided by the scout will reveal what he did for his rank. It can be determined, then, if this was what he was supposed to do. Discussion of how he has lived the Scout Oath and Scout Law in his home, unit, school, and community should be included. Full Field uniform is mandatory for a Board of Review. Boards of Reviews generally are conducted during Troop meetings and on campouts, but the Scout **MUST** contact the Advancement Chair in order to schedule a Board. The Scout must also complete the Board of Review Form available on the troop website or from the Advancement Chair.

The Scout's parents, relatives, or guardians should not be in attendance in any capacity—not as members of the board, as observers, or even as the unit leader. Their presence can change the discussion dynamics. After the Board of Review the Scout is asked to wait outside the room or out of hearing range while the board deliberates. To approve awarding a rank or Palm (advancements beyond Eagle), the board must agree unanimously. Every effort should be made to deliberate with careful consideration of each member's perspective, and in sufficient detail as to avoid factual misunderstanding. It is appropriate to call the candidate back if additional questions may provide clarification. Still, if any member dissents, the decision cannot be for approval. In the case of such disagreement, the Scout shall not be informed about the specifics of the conversations or any arguments taking place.

### **ii) Star, Life & Eagle**

The primary requirements for these advanced ranks are completion of a certain number of merit badges (including certain mandatory merit badges), satisfactory demonstration of leadership, completion of service hours, and a major service project in the case of Eagle rank.

After completion of the Scoutmaster Conference, the Scout must contact the Rank Advancement Chair to schedule a Board of Review. Scheduling Boards of Review will depend on availability of sufficiently trained adults. The troop will endeavor to schedule the board of

review at the earliest convenience so as to not delay the scout's opportunity for advancement.

## **d) Merit Badges**

### **i) Subjects**

While the basic Scouting skills are learned through the requirements for Scout through First Class, merit badges require more advanced skills and allow the Scout to explore areas in which he has an interest. The ranks of Star through Eagle require completing a certain number of "Eagle Required" merit badges, plus some optional badges of the Scout's choice. There are well over 125 possible merit badges to choose from. Some require specialized instruction, many do not. Subjects run the gamut from scout skills to hobbies to sports to professions to citizenship.

### **ii) Troop Library**

The Boy Scouts of America publish a merit badge booklet for each badge. Additional literature is also available online through the national BSA website. Booklets are available at the Scout Shops for a nominal fee if you want your own copy. The Troop maintains a library of merit badge and instructional books that can be checked out by Scouts at no charge. The Scout should contact the Troop Librarian at a Troop meeting to check out desired books. We always welcome donations of merit badge books after Scouts have earned the badge.

### **iii) Procedure**

BEFORE a Scout can begin to meet any of the requirements for a merit badge, he should obtain a "blue card" from the Advancement Chair and a signature from the Scoutmaster authorizing him to begin work on the badge. The Advancement Chair will provide the name and contact information for the appropriate merit badge counselor. The Scout is encouraged to get in touch with the merit badge counselor. The counselor may ask to meet in order explain what is expected and to start helping the Scout meet the requirements. This is also an opportunity to discuss work already started or possibly completed.

### **iv) Courses**

The Troop may offer courses in various merit badges. In the first six months in Scouting, we do not encourage Scouts to work in the specific Eagle-required merit badges. These generally are more complex subjects that require a bit broader level of comprehension and maturity. We offer specific courses aimed at younger Scouts that they will find interesting and rewarding.

Courses may be offered for sign-up at Troop meetings. Assistant Scoutmasters and Troop Guides should encourage Scouts in their assigned patrols to take advantage of these opportunities. For the first year at summer camp, we strongly encourage younger Scouts to earn the Swimming merit badge, and to take other nature or craft-oriented courses at camp. More detailed guidance will be provided at the parents' meeting on summer camp. This meeting usually is held in the spring preceding summer camp.

## **v) Counselors**

For merit badges other than those being specifically offered in a course for the Troop, the Scout must contact one of the counselors for the merit badge he wishes to work on.

Questions regarding available merit badge counselors should be directed to the Advancement Chair. If unavailable, most other ASM's can advise on available Merit Badge Counselors.

Only approved counselors for that Merit Badge can check off merit badge requirements. Once the requirements are completed, the counselor signs the blue card and keeps one portion. The Scout must next obtain the signature of the Scoutmaster to complete the merit badge. The Scout then keeps his portion of the card and turns in the third portion to the Troop Advancement Chair for recording and award. He will be given the merit badge at the next Court of Honor. We welcome any interested adult to sign up as a merit badge counselor.

## **e) Courts of Honor**

While the Scout will be given his rank badge at the Troop meeting following his successful completion of the Board of Review, the Troop holds three Courts of Honor each year in the Fall, Winter and Spring. The Court is held on a Troop meeting night in the Church, and is a formal presentation and recognition of ranks, merit badges, and awards earned. Parents and guests are not only invited, they are strongly urged to attend to show their support for their son's achievements.

# **18) Special Recognitions**

## **a) The National Honor Patrol Award (formerly the Baden Powell Patrol Award)**

The National Honor Patrol Award (Formerly the Baden Powell Patrol Award, named after Scouting's founder) recognizes exemplary patrol performance. We have found that working toward this award also has the effect of assuring advancement. The requirements are to be met over a three-month period, and are as follows:

1. Have a patrol name, flag, and yell. Put your patrol design on equipment and use your patrol yell. Keep patrol records up to date.
2. Hold two patrol meetings every month.
3. Take part in at least one hike, outdoor activity, or other scouting event.
4. Complete two good turns or service projects approved by the patrol leaders' council.
5. Help two patrol members advance one rank.
6. Wear the full uniform correctly (at least 75 percent of the patrol's membership).
7. Have a representative attend at least three patrol leaders' council meetings.
8. Have eight members in the patrol or increase patrol memberships over the previous three months

The award is a gold star that goes under the patrol emblem on the uniform.

## b) Religious Awards

Each religious faith has an award which it confers on Scouts demonstrating the true meaning of the Scout oath to “Do my duty to God” and the Scout Law to be “Reverent.” The Troop works with the various churches which our Scouts attend to help establish a program of instruction for that faith’s religious award. Some religions require that a Scout have finished sixth grade before being eligible to begin the course of instruction. We solicit those Scouts who wish to work toward the award to do so beginning the summer after their first full year in the troop. Several faiths also offer weekend Scout camps specifically directed toward the faith’s religious award.

## c) Duty to Self

The three points of the Scout Oath, “duty to God, duty to country, and duty to self” are an active part of Troop 839’s program. Each Scout is encouraged to be active physically and mentally, both through our vigorous Troop outdoor program and our courses of instruction. We also strongly encourage Scouts to participate actively in school, church, and community organized programs and sports activities. Allowances will be made in the Troop’s programs and activities, where possible, to accommodate a Scout’s participation in non-Scout activities. For example, we often have boys come and join a campout that is already in progress after playing in a soccer or baseball league game. At the same time, we expect all Scouts to meet certain standards. If a Scout is coming from a sports practice to a Troop meeting, he may change into full Scout uniform in the car and be properly attired for the Troop meeting.

## d) Order of the Arrow

The Order of the Arrow (OA) is the honor society for Scouting. A Scout is eligible for election to this international brotherhood of service by being First Class rank and Camping 15 nights within 2 years including one long-term outing such as Summer Camp. This high honor is peer recognition of broad service, leadership and outdoor skill.

# 19) ADULT VOLUNTEERS

We Depend Upon YOU!

Without the volunteerism, energy, and efforts of scores of parents and other adults, the Troop cannot function. While the Scouts run the Troop, the countless hours of planning, organization, administration, teaching, counseling, management, transportation, and supervision provided by the adults assure the continued and smooth functioning of the organization. We depend upon **YOUR** active involvement and participation. *Scouting is not a babysitting service.* It is a partnership between parents and Scouts to help Scouts develop into mature and productive citizens who are capable of serving as tomorrow’s leaders.

## a) Trail to First Class Coordinator

### i) General Role

The role of Trail to First Class Coordinator, normally an Assistant Scoutmaster (ASM), is key to a patrol functioning in the first 6-8 months of existence. During this transition period from Webelos to Scouting, the ASM must help motivate, organize, and instruct, as well as

assuring the active participation of the Troop Guides. This does not mean that the ASM does the Scouts' tasks for them, but rather that he/she provides the supervision and impetus necessary to make certain that tasks are performed safely and correctly.

Most importantly, the ASM helps the boys organize themselves to learn the basic skills necessary for advancement to First Class. In addition to the ASM, we also need 2 parents drawn from the parents of the patrol's members.

## ii) Specific Duties

Among the duties of the new patrol ASM's are the following:

1. Help the patrol leader organize twice-monthly patrol meetings
2. Attend most patrol meetings
3. Attend most Troop meetings
4. Help patrol come up with and execute patrol service projects
5. Attend most campouts
6. Offer Scout skill instruction at patrol meetings and on campouts
7. Attend Introduction to Outdoor Leadership Skills training
8. Attend most Troop and Operations Committee meetings
9. Assure adequate transportation for members of the patrol to outings
10. Provide motivation and encouragement to Scouts
11. Set an example of proper Scout spirit, attitude, conduct and dress

## b) Troop Assistant Scoutmasters

Under the direction of the Scoutmaster, there are a number of additional ASM's that serve the Troop as a whole. Some have specifically assigned duties. Others fill needs and offer assistance as necessary. Among the many roles filled by these ASM's are skills instruction; planning and coordination of campouts, summer camp, other outings, Scout Fair, and fundraising activities; equipment acquisition and maintenance; program assistance and organization; Varsity/ Venturing programs and activities; First Class Trail and advancement coordination; Troop and advancement records; Eagle Scout Candidate Counselor; and participation in District and Council functions and activities.

## c) Troop Committee

The Troop Committee is the governing body of the Troop. Troop 839 does not stand on great formality as to whether an adult volunteer is an ASM or Troop Committee member. ASM's are strongly encouraged to attend and participate in Troop Committee meetings, and Committee members play many of the same roles as ASM's.

Committee Members participate on Boards of Review for Scout advancement. The Troop Committee is composed not only of parents of Scouts, but interested members of the community and our Chartered Organization, First Presbyterian Church of Kingwood.

We **STRONGLY** encourage parents to become active members of the Troop Committee. Registered adults are automatically committee members. The Troop Committee usually meets

the Tuesday following the Patrol Leaders' Council (PLC) each month in a meeting room at the Church. If in-person meetings are not available, such as during construction, disasters, pandemics, or the like, the Troop Committee may meet in a virtual format.

#### **d) Merit Badge Counselors**

Adults are strongly encouraged to register as merit badge counselors. Only adults who are officially registered with Boy Scouts are authorized to act as counselors. There is no fee involved in registering to be a merit badge counselor. Forms are available at each troop meeting for those wishing to sign up.

We try to make sure that our list of counselors is updated annually, and there are a number of badges for which we have no current counselors. A listing of merit badges is contained on the form. Given the number and breadth of options, there are opportunities for almost every skill and area of knowledge. As a reminder, any time a counselor is meeting with a Scout other than in public view, there **MUST** be a third individual present. If another adult is not available for this purpose, there must be at least two Scouts.

#### **e) Adult Training**

##### **i) Registration**

All adult leaders who attend Troop outings or campouts **MUST** be registered with the Boy Scouts of America and have completed Youth Protection Training. Registering with the troop simply entails filling out a form and an annual nominal payment. Forms are available from the Scoutmaster at all Troop meetings. Registration is necessary to be included for insurance coverage with the Boy Scouts.

##### **ii) Youth Protection Training**

All adult leaders must attend one of the Youth Protection Training (YPT) courses regularly offered by the District or Council. YPT is also available online through the [my.scouting.org](http://my.scouting.org) portal. Stay alert for upcoming training date announcements.

Outings lasting over 72 hours in Texas require classroom youth protection training. These classes are offered at various times and in various locations throughout the year. For adults planning on attending summer camp in Texas, classroom YPT is a requirement.

##### **iii) Safety Afloat and Safe Swim**

Any adult participating in a campout or outing involving water sports should receive this training. It is offered at selected Flaming Arrow District training days and online at [my.scouting.org](http://my.scouting.org).

##### **iv) Red Cross First Aid & CPR**

We strongly encourage adults, as well as Scouts, to obtain Red Cross Standard First Aid and CPR certification. Instruction can be arranged individually or on behalf of an entire patrol through the Red Cross or the Flaming Arrow District's Health & Safety Chairman, who is listed in the monthly council publications or e-mailings.



## v) Introduction to Outdoor Leadership Skills –

All new ASM's and Troop Committee members should plan on attending this training course for adults offered by the Flaming Arrow District. It consists of one Saturday of classroom sessions (usually in Kingwood or Atascocita). This class is offered in the spring and fall, usually in May and September. It teaches adults the aims and goals of Scouting, basics of Scout skills, Troop organization and functioning, patrol method and Scout motivation. If your outdoor skills are rusty or nonexistent, this course will give the basic knowledge necessary to be able to help teach the Scouts in new patrols. Besides ASM's and Committee members, we strongly encourage any interested parent or volunteer to attend this training.

## vi) Woodbadge Course

This is the National Youth Leadership Training (NYLT) equivalent for adults. This intense adult training course spans two three-day weekends of camping and class sessions over a one-month period. To "work your ticket" to earn this distinction, the adult must then plan and complete a project approved by and under the guidance of another Scouter assigned by the Woodbadge course director. Any adult who has been active as an adult leader with the Troop for a year should consider undertaking this challenging and very valuable effort training course.

## vii) Additional Training

There are many other training opportunities available through District, Council, and National. Online training is also available to broaden your knowledge of Boy Scouts. For those adults and scouts interested in additional training such as NYLT, NAYLE, Wood Badge and others, please contact the Troop Committee Chair or Adult Training Coordinator regarding opportunities, application, possible reimbursement and timing.

## f) Transportation

### i) Drivers

Transportation is provided for campouts and outings by the parents of the members of each patrol. **ALL PARENTS** are expected to help with transportation during the course of the year. When each parent takes his or her turn, it does not overburden a few. The troop traditionally reimburses the trailer hauler for fuel costs. Please contact the Troop Treasurer or Committee Chair for more information about reimbursements.

All drivers for any troop event must have a current driver's license, be over the age of 21, and carry the minimum insurance coverage recommended by the Boy Scouts of America (\$50,000 per person, \$100,000 per accident, \$50,000 property damage).

Any vehicle carrying 10 or more passengers is required to have limits of at least \$100,000/\$500,000/\$100,000. The vehicle must have a seat belt for each passenger, and they must be used. While we do not travel in caravans, we do travel the same routes and are prepared to offer assistance should a vehicle develop a problem. Drivers are encouraged to share their mobile numbers with other adults while traveling so that we have emergency communications available. The Trip Coordinator passes out a list of cell phone numbers to

facilitate this process.

### **g) Troop & Personal Gear**

Transporting a troop as large as Troop 839 on campouts and outings is no small task. We have two troop trailers, one for troop gear (chuck boxes, propane tanks, tents, etc.), and the other for special outings (ex – Shooting, Biking, Summer Camp). Obviously, this necessitates two sufficiently powered vehicles with trailer hitches. If you have a vehicle so equipped, please let the Outdoor Activities Chairman know, and note it on the Resource Sheet.

## **20) GLOSSARY OF TERMS**

ASM – Assistant Scout Master

ASPL – Assistant Senior Patrol Leader

NYLT – National Youth Leadership Training

NAYLE – National Advanced Youth Leadership Experience

OA – Order of the Arrow

PLC – Patrol Leaders' Council

SHAC – Sam Houston Area Council

SM – Scout Master

SPL – Senior Patrol Leader

YPT – Youth Protection Training



**TROOP 839 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM**

To: Troop File

I attest that both my son and I have read the Troop 839 Orientation Manual and Organization and Operating Procedures Manual.

We agree to abide by the provisions of both.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Scout Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent or Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Scout Name Printed

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent or Guardian Name  
Printed