

# New Scout Leader (SM) Start-Up Process

This document is designed as a simple check-the-box style start-up process for the new Scoutmaster who may be unfamiliar with Scouts BSA. Best wishes for a successful and rewarding experience!

A new troop may differ in many ways from an existing one. Existing troops typically have established calendars, policies, and parents who are involved in the troop's operation. New troops need to "hit the ground running" from the first point of contact with new Scout families.

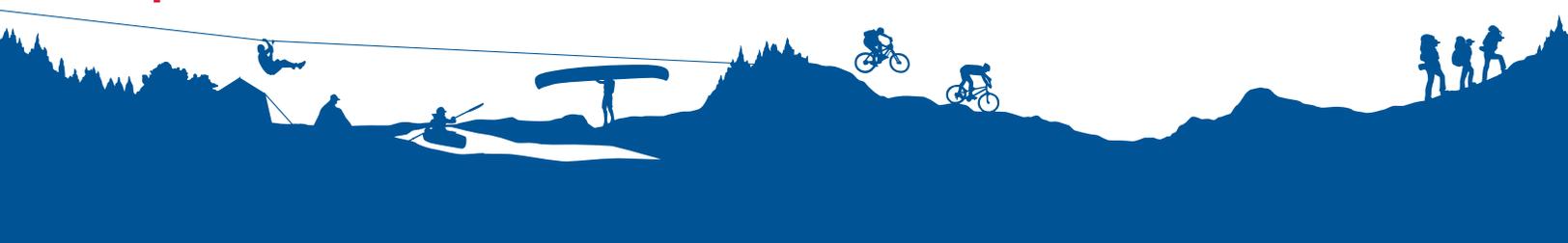
## A. What does a new leader need to do/consider before the first meeting? The first issue to be settled is completion of the chartering process. Then:

- 1. Meet with the chartered organization representative (COR) and the troop committee chair to ensure that everyone is ready to support the new unit. Part of their responsibility is to recruit committee members (MCs) and one or more assistant Scoutmasters (ASMs).
- 2. Register and complete Youth Protection training (YPT). Ensure that all adults working with youth (ASMs, MCs, COR, etc.) are registered with the BSA and have completed YPT.
- 3. Go to [my.scouting.org](http://my.scouting.org) and, under BSA LEARN CENTER, select BOY SCOUTING. Under PROGRAM, select Scouts BSA. Then sign up for the Scouts BSA—Scoutmaster Training and complete the six sections in the "Before the First Meeting" module. Try to have ASMs complete this as well.
- 4. Review one or both of the following:
  - The January 2019 Scoutcast "A Step-by-Step Guide to Starting a Troop" at [podcast.scouting.org](http://podcast.scouting.org).
  - The September-October 2018 *Scouting Magazine* article, "The New-Leader Guide: Tips to Get You Started Down the Scouting Trail," at [scoutingmagazine.org](http://scoutingmagazine.org). Search for "New Leader Guide" on the website to find the article.
- 5. Buy a complete proper uniform. Information about what this constitutes can be obtained by completing the training unit in the second section of the Scoutmaster—Position Trained module (below the module you began in #3 above) entitled Leader Uniforms for Scouts BSA. Then visit your council Scout shop to purchase the uniform.
- 6. It would be useful for the troop to have an older youth member who could serve as senior patrol leader (SPL). This Scout might be a new member, a Scout reactivating who had withdrawn from the program, or possibly a Venturer or Sea Scout who is interested in becoming involved with the new troop's program. Scouts, Venturers, and Sea Scouts who have participated in the National Youth Leader Training course are a good resource. If recruited ahead of time, the SPL can assist with preparing and presenting the first meeting.

## B. How does a new leader prepare for the first meeting?

- 1. If possible, attend a meeting of one or more established Scouts BSA troops to see how the meetings are conducted. Ideally this happens before the new leader's first troop meeting, but it can take place afterward as well. In addition, once your youth leaders are selected, you might consider doing this again with the youth leaders so that they can see their roles in action.
- 2. Go to [www.scouting.org/programs/scouts-bsa](http://www.scouting.org/programs/scouts-bsa). Scroll down the page to Additional Resources: TroopLeader.org and follow this link path: Planning > Meeting Planning > Basic Resources for Planning Troop Meetings.
- 3. Print a copy of the Printable Troop Meeting Planning Form and review the form briefly.
- 4. Using the back arrow, return to the Planning Troop Meetings page and select Planning Meetings for NEW TROOPS. At the end of the Initial Meeting paragraph, select "meeting link"; this will take you to a meeting plan entitled "Initial Meeting: Welcome and Orientation." This plan can be used as is or modified to meet the needs and experience of the leaders and youth involved.
- 5. Part of the initial meeting will include dividing the Scouts into two or more patrols of even size, and each of these patrols should begin discussing a patrol name, flag, and yell.

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### C. What else does the new leader need to know/do soon?

- 1. Many resources are available on the Planning Troop Meetings webpage in #4 above, including outlines for further meetings, so returning there would be helpful.
- 2. Return to the SM/ASM Specific training program begun on [my.scouting.org](http://my.scouting.org) and complete the sections marked "First 30 Days."
- 3. Purchase the following key resources from the council Scout shop or online at [www.scoutshop.org](http://www.scoutshop.org):
  - *Troop Leader Guidebook, Volume 1*, which is the handbook for the Scoutmaster
  - *Senior Patrol Leader Handbook*
  - *Patrol Leader Handbook* (ideally one copy for each patrol leader)
  - *Program Features for Troops and Crews*, volumes 1, 2, and 3, which contain troop meeting and outing plans on 48 topics
- 4. Consider subscribing to the "Bryan on Scouting" blog at: <https://blog.scoutingmagazine.org>. This blog site offers tips and tricks that should be helpful.
- 5. Hold a parent meeting sometime within the first 30 days. While the youth are participating in a troop meeting, the parents should be receiving an orientation that could cover the following topics:
  - Youth protection guidelines and training requirements
  - Troop leadership needs
  - The aims and methods of Scouting
  - Expectations of Scouts and their parents and, if developed, the troop calendar
- 6. Finally, who do you turn to for information? Ask the district executive where and when the district roundtable meets. The roundtable meetings will give you access to experienced leaders, and you can ask questions and receive information about available resources and activities. Also, the district executive can direct you to a commissioner, who will be your immediate contact when you have questions or concerns.



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