

# Troop-440 PATROL LEADER'S GUIDE

A Boy Scout troop is made up of many different kinds of people. Some are older, some are more experienced, some are leaders and some are learning the qualities of leadership.

Being a Patrol Leader is more than an honor, it is also a responsibility. Leadership can be a lot of fun and your role as a patrol leader may prove to be one of the most memorable parts of your scouting career.

The members of your patrol will come to depend on you for direction and will follow your orders - once you have proven yourself to them. The patrol leader's patch is a recognition for what you are and not a symbol of your popularity. Very often the best leaders are not the most popular, but they are the most remembered.

## TROOP LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE

The overall leader of the troop is of course the Scoutmaster. He is responsible for the general activities of the troop including instruction, advancement, troop and patrol activities, as well as general supervision in helping the boys to run the troop.

Next in line is the Senior Patrol Leader. The SPL is the most experienced scout who has a thorough understanding of all scouting activities and principles. He reports to the Scoutmaster and gives direction to the patrol leaders and his Assistant Senior Patrol Leader who helps the SPL in the running of the troop and is next in line in case of absence of the SPL.

The Troop Guide has a very important leadership role. Although he does not have boys reporting to him directly, he is responsible for teaching and encouraging the new patrol and to a lesser extent the senior Webelo Scouts that will soon be joining the troop. The Troop Guide works with an Assistant Scoutmaster that has been assigned by the Scoutmaster to help the new patrol.

The Patrol Leader provides the guidance and direction for his patrol of four to ten scouts. It is his responsibility to assign tasks for his patrol on campouts. For example, the Patrol Leader assigns who sets up the patrol's tent, who prepares the fire, who cooks and who cleans. The Patrol Leader reports directly to the Senior Patrol Leader and may look to him or his assistant for help. It is the purpose of this guidebook to help you as a Patrol Leader to understand what to do. As time goes by you will enjoy the rewards of leadership which include the personal satisfaction of seeing your patrol operating well, gaining respect from your friends in the troop and the chance to advance through the higher ranks.

The Assistant Patrol Leader has the task of helping the Patrol Leader to carry out his directions to the patrol. He also helps to supervise as well as participate in the various activities and jobs assigned by the Patrol Leader. The Assistant Patrol Leader reports directly to the Patrol Leader and is next in line to run the patrol in the absence of the Patrol Leader.

There are three major areas that we will cover in this guidebook where your skills as a Patrol Leader will be needed the most. They are:

1. **Ceremonies**
2. **Troop Meeting Activities and Games**
3. **Camping**

## CEREMONIES

One of the most important parts of a troop meeting is the opening ceremony. The opening ceremony sets the tone for the rest of the meeting. If it is taken seriously, you will have a better chance that your patrol will cooperate with you and the rest of the troop for the rest of the meeting. If there is no opening ceremony, or if it is done in an offhand or silly manner, the odds are that the rest of the meeting will follow the same pattern.

If the structure of the meeting is not maintained and chaos sets in, you will not only have a lousy meeting - you will have a boring meeting. You as a Patrol Leader are the first line for maintaining order. The SPL or Scoutmaster should not have to deal with your patrol members unless you are having a problem.

Once you have the attention of your patrol members and they are in formation for the opening ceremony, you will discover that the best form of leadership is leadership by example. Your patrol members will follow your lead once you set them to order. You can set a good example by a crisp scout salute or sign and by repeating whatever the opening is clearly and loudly enough so that your patrol can hear you.

There will be occasions when your patrol will be asked to lead an opening or closing ceremony. It will be your job to assign various tasks to the patrol members such as color guards and speaker. When you have the chance to do a

ceremony, don't make it too complicated. There is an old saying, "Less is more". You will find this very true when a ceremony is so complex that people lose interest or the participants make mistakes.

You will be surprised when you see the results of what you can accomplish by having a good opening and closing ceremony at any important scouting occasion.

## **TROOP ACTIVITIES AND GAMES**

Of course the troop cannot function without meeting regularly. It is vital though, that the meetings are interesting and fun. It is up to the Green Bar and the Scoutmaster to decide the activities of the upcoming troop meetings.

The troop is made up of several patrols and it can be a lot of fun to have inter-patrol competitions over a variety of different skills dubious or otherwise to see who is the best. Recognition is important. When one of your patrol members excels - tell him so. It will make him feel good about what he is doing and it will make you feel good too. It is amazing what a little encouragement will do for you and your patrol members.

Competition is an important and fun part of scouting. It is fun to compete against other patrols and when we are given the opportunity, against other troops. Competitive games will give experience that can be applied to real life situations as well as the chance to win awards, prizes and recognition for the troop, your patrol and you.

It is up to you to get and keep your patrol members interested and to keep them participating. You may find that a particular boy is reluctant to join in. Give him some encouragement. It may be because the activity involves some things that the boy does not know how to do. This can be a great time for you to show off your skills by teaching him. It may be that he feels silly at first, but once you get him started he will feel good about it, and again, so will you.

If you need some help, don't be afraid to ask one of the senior scouts or adult leaders to give you a hand. Scouting is a team effort.

## **CAMPING**

Scouting is to a large extent an outdoor activity. There is an old scout saying, " You can take the Scout out of camping, but you can't take the camping out of Scouting!". A large portion of the fun that we have takes place outdoors. All different types of camping can be fun if everyone is prepared. It is the job of the Patrol Leader to see that his patrol is properly organized and that the patrol campsite is set up in a proper and safe fashion. We will go over in some detail what you should be looking for in camp and how to assign various jobs such as camp setup, cooking, fire, cleanup, etc.

Remember - if things are forgotten like food or other essentials we don't leave the woods to go back for them. Remind your patrol members to "be prepared!".

## **CAMPSITE PREPARATION - ON ARRIVAL**

First thing! Hang up the duty rosters! Let there be no doubt in any one's mind what they have to do! Put the duty rosters where everyone can see them.

One thing that you want to avoid is having too many patrol members trying to do the same job. If you have boys standing around with nothing to do because there are too many of them trying to do the same thing, you will lose their attention. Once you have lost their attention it is very hard to get it back again. Assign jobs so that everyone has something to do as soon as you arrive at the campsite.

Do try to be aware of who needs or wants to work on second or first class requirements. Finally, your tents should be up, gear stowed and fire started before you begin any other activities.

Arrival is an important time to keep the members of your patrol from wandering off. The natural tendency will be for them to goof off first and worry later. Don't let them.

- **Tents** Assign two to three people to set up the tents. If you are using more than one tent for your patrol then still have the same team put up the tents. Less is more, remember?
- **Fire** Assign two scouts to gather tinder, kindling and firewood. Assign one scout to build the fire lay and to get the fire going.
- **Dining Fly** The dining fly is actually the first thing that should be set up. In the event of rain you will need the fly to store the patrol's food and equipment so it doesn't get wet while you set up camp. Two people are just right to set up the poles and fly properly.
- **Ax Yard** The ax yard is the wood cutting and chopping area and should be clearly marked by rope. For safety reasons only one scout should be assigned to the ax yard, and only he should be allowed into the yard. The scout assigned can vary as the need arises.

- **Cooking** If you are doing patrol style cooking be sure to have the various jobs worked out on paper before you arrive at camp. You should have every one's job posted for each meal for all to see. The meal jobs should be rotated from meal to meal. If the jobs are not posted, you can be sure that the only thing any one will show up to do will be to eat - and then they will disappear! Blank copies of a short term duty roster are provided here or you can make up your own.

If a scout is working on his first class cooking requirement he is to prepare the job roster for cooking on his own. You can give him advice, but let him do the job.

The jobs that are to be assigned for each meal are as follows:

- **COOK** - prepares meals and washes utensils used for preparation.
- **ASSISTANT COOK** - Helps cook as requested. Prepares water for dish washing and supervises meal cleanup.
- **FIRE** - Cares for and prepares equipment used to cook on and keeps fuel or firewood ready if needed.
- **SITE CLEANUP** - Cleans up eating area at campsite and maintains latrine.
- **WATER** - Gets drinking water and washes dishes and pots.

## **CAMPSITE INSPECTION**

The following is a list of things to look for in you patrol campsite. Some things are for safety and some are for convenience. All are important and will help you and your patrol members to have a better time. There are often campsite inspections as part of inter-troop or inter-patrol competitions.

### **TENTS**

1. Are all tents set up properly?
2. Are the insides of the tent neatly arranged?
3. Does each tent have a ground cloth or adequate protection?
4. Was the ground bed properly prepared?
5. Are sleeping bags stored neatly or airing out?

### **FIRES**

6. Are all fires at least 15 feet from any tent?
7. Is the ground cleared at least 10 feet from each fire?
8. Is there water to put out a fire in the case of an emergency?
9. Is there enough firewood?
10. Is the firewood protected?
11. Is there a well marked ax yard?
12. Are all cutting tools sharp and stored properly?

### **GENERAL**

13. Is the meal duty roster posted?
14. Is the camp duty roster posted?
15. Is the Outdoor Code being followed?

### **BREAKING CAMP**

16. Have all tents been stowed properly with no parts missing?
17. Has all garbage been properly disposed of?
18. Is the campsite as pristine or more than when you arrived?

**REMEMBER:** You are the leader. Your patrol will be looking up to you as an example, as well as for your help and direction.

**DO YOUR BEST!**