

T777 Parent Guide

A reference guide to introduce new parents to Scouting in general and to Troop 777 in particular.



Our Mission

Troop 777, through teamwork among the Scouts, adult leaders and parents, actively provides a quality program emphasizing leadership, self-reliance, self-esteem and recognition. We accomplish this with a focus on a meaningful High Adventure program, community involvement and rank advancement.

Welcome to Troop 777. Many of you may be familiar with Scouting from your experience as a youth or your son's Cub Scout involvement. Some of you will be joining Scouting for the first time. There's a lot of jargon, as in any large organization, and this document will help you to make sense of it; and describe how Troop 777 fits within the Scouting framework.

We are a **High Adventure** troop, which means we emphasize activities such as backpacking, rock climbing, canoe camping and cycling. The Boy Scouts of America (BSA) classifies these activities as High Adventure because they require more adult leader training and are often more strenuous than more traditional camping activities.

Troop 777 is a member of the **San Diego - Imperial County Council**. The Council is divided into Districts and our troop is within the **Pacific Coast District**, which covers the coastal region from Sorrento Valley to South Carlsbad. The Council headquarters is located on the northern edge of Balboa Park and is where you will find the Scout Shop that has all of the official BSA items you will need to purchase for your son.

All BSA troops must have a chartering organization that adopts the Scouting Program as their youth program. **Troop 777** is chartered by **Elks Lodge 2243** located at 1393 Windsor Road in Cardiff-by-the-Sea.

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Troop Meetings

Troop 777 meets Monday evenings, throughout the year, at **St. Andrew's Episcopal Church** on **890 Balour Drive** in Encinitas. The first meeting of each month is a special all hands meeting to conduct troop business for the month. Troop meetings start at 7:00PM (Scouts should arrive at 6:50PM) and end at about 8:30PM. Parents are always welcome to attend.

The Troop also has a number of special meetings throughout the year where parents are specifically invited to attend. Three times a year we meet in special "**Courts of Honor**" to recognize the achievements of the boys in the Troop. We also have special meetings for all Scouts and parents to go over the troop calendar when it is established in October, an update to the calendar in March, and Summer Camp Info nights in early summer.

Registration and the Uniform

Boys can join Scouting when they are **11 years old** or earlier, if they earn the Arrow of Light Award in Cub Scouts, or have finished the fifth grade. Participation in Cub Scouts is not a requirement. Registration requires filling out a Scouting Application (obtained from the Troop Registrar) and paying the annual registration fee. An optional subscription fee for *Boys Life* magazine is also indicated on the form.

You are asked to provide drivers' license and vehicle insurance information required by the BSA in the event that you or your spouse volunteer to drive on a trek or other Scouting event. There is also ***a medical consent form required for every Scout and a Medical form*** to be filled out by you and your son's physician. Our troop requires a BSA Class 3 Medical Form, which must be signed by a physician, on an annual basis, because of our High Adventure activities that often take Scouts to places where rapid medical response is not available.

The next step is *purchasing a **Boy Scout Handbook** and the official uniform*. These can be purchased from the Scout Shop at Council Headquarters. When a Scout joins the troop, they will be given a generic neckerchief to wear with their uniform. Once they earn the *Tenderfoot* rank they will receive the official Troop 777 neckerchief, which is custom made for the Troop and is not available at the Scout Shop.

The official uniform consists of socks, short or long pants, belt, shirt, epaulet loops (red for the Boy Scouts), and optionally, a cap. Be sure to allow for growth! ***Patches that you will need to obtain include the 3 sevens for the troop number, the Desert Pacific Shoulder patch, and the 40 year Veteran Unit patch (may be available from the Registrar) which are***

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all worn on the left sleeve. There is also the purple World Crest patch worn 3" above the left pocket. Later on, a sash is recommended to display merit badges.

In addition to the standard BSA Uniform (or **Class A** uniform), the Troop sells T-shirts, referred to as the **Class B** uniform, which can be worn with or without Scout pants. The Class A uniform should be worn at all official Scouting occasions (including troop meetings). Class B's are often worn on treks and at any event where Class A's are inappropriate because they might get too dirty or be too confining.

Adults are encouraged to join the troop as *Scouters*. An adult registration form is available from the Troop Registrar and requires a small registration fee. Adults designate whether they are signing up as a Committee member or as an Assistant Scoutmaster (see adult roles below). Uniforms are optional, but encouraged, to help set an example for the boys. *Both men and women can participate in any role. A Class 3 medical form, signed by your physician, is required for all adults joining the troop on High Adventure treks.*

Troop Organization

The key unit within the troop is the patrol. Patrols are 12 to 15 scouts and have established identities. To the maximum extent possible, all activities are geared to be conducted by the Scouts from within their patrols. Each patrol is led by an older scout elected as the Patrol Leader for a six month period.

A Troop Leadership Council (TLC) is made up of scouts that lead the troop, including the Patrol Leaders. Troop elections are held every September and March for each patrol to elect their patrol leaders and to nominate two of their members for the troop level leadership positions; in particular, the **Senior Patrol Leader (SPL)** position. The SPL is the leader of the TLC and he works with the rest of the TLC, including Assistant SPLs (ASPLs), Quartermaster, Librarian, Scribe, and so on to execute the troop's program.

Scouting is a boy led activity! Troop meetings and campouts are run by the SPL and his assistants based on agendas formed with the TLC and the Scoutmaster. There is a theme for each month that determines the types of activities the troop and the patrols will be working on.

Patrols learn to work together as teams that bridge age and experience. New scouts are assigned to a patrol and they will be supported by the older members of the patrol in their advancements and scouting experience. The Scoutmaster will make the initial assignments with an eye towards keeping the patrols balanced in size.

For Scouts 14 and older, Troop 777 offers Venture activities geared more specifically for them. Venture Crews may meet separately from the general troop, and there are a number

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of activities that are designated as “Venture Only” because of special training or skill requirements.

Roles for Adults— in a troop as large and as active as ours, adults play a crucial role in running the Troop, although the emphasis is on letting the boys lead. ***The primary adult leader of any Scout troop is the Scoutmaster, who is responsible for leading the boys in executing the Boy Scout Program.***

The Scoutmaster depends on two groups of adults for help, the Assistant Scoutmasters (ASMs) and the Troop Committee. The ASMs are more typically involved with the boys at meetings and on treks, while the Troop Committee manages and administers key functions within the Troop, such as finances, equipment purchase and maintenance, registration, and Scoutmaster selection. Parents are encouraged to register with the BSA and participate in either capacity as an ASM or Committee member.

Ranks and Merit Badges

The Boy Scout program is based on **rank advancement**. The definitive guide for all rank related information is the *Boy Scout Handbook* that every Scout is required to have. New Scouts come in without any rank and work with their Troop Guide, as a Patrol, to achieve ***the entry level rank of Scout***. This should happen within the first few months of joining.

The first three ranks are geared towards learning general Scouting skills and consist of *Tenderfoot*, *Second Class* and *First Class*. ***Requirements for Tenderfoot through First Class can be signed off by any Scout of First Class rank or higher.*** (Not by an adult!) The *Boy Scout Handbook* has all of the information and requirements needed to achieve these advancements. Scouts should bring their Scout Handbook to all meetings and to outings where rank requirements are likely to be taught, tested, and signed off.

Once a Scout has all requirements signed off in his *Handbook* for a given rank advancement, he will ***contact the Scoutmaster to arrange a Scoutmaster Conference - this is your Scout's responsibility!*** The Scoutmaster will review the Scout's skills and knowledge and discuss his progress and goals. The Scout will then ***meet with members of the Troop Committee at a Board of Review*** to discuss his overall experience within the Troop. The Board of Review is a great time to give feedback or suggestions on how the Troop may better meet the Scout's needs or interests.

Scouts earn their new rank as of the date of their Board of Review. The Scout will receive their new rank badge at the next Court of Honor or within a troop meeting.

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Merit badges are focused on learning skills in specific areas of interest. There are over 120 merit badges that can be earned! Merit badges are not required for *Tenderfoot* through *First Class*, but many scouts may earn a few at Summer Camp or as a patrol activity. **For the remaining ranks of Star, Life and Eagle, earning merit badges is mandatory.** To reach Eagle, there is a set of specifically required merit badges, and each rank above *First Class* requires the scout to earn several of these. See the *Handbook* for details.

Scouts should maintain a notebook to keep track of their achievements. A three ring binder works best, with sections for note-taking, holding merit badge and rank advancement cards, patches from treks, a log of all of their Scouting activities, newsletters, calendar, and other related information. Encourage your Scout to keep a Scouting diary – they'll find this very rewarding.

Attaining Eagle rank is a great goal within the scouting program, but don't make it your scout's sole aim. Work with him to set a rank advancement plan. BSA recommends that boys **reach the First Class rank within 12-18 months**, although there are no time limits for any rank advancement. **A good time to plan on reaching Eagle is between ages 15 and 17.**

Keeping Informed

Announcements of pending activities are always made at Troop meetings. Scouts should take notes in their notebooks that they should bring to each meeting (along with their *Handbook*). If you don't attend the meetings with your Scout, make sure to ask them about upcoming activities and help them to schedule those into your family calendar. **The primary source of Troop specific information is our troop website and email.** There will generally be write-ups describing upcoming events, past events, administrative information, and a message from the Scoutmaster. In addition, there will be signup sheets for upcoming events that provide detailed information and include permission slips.

The Troop Calendar is another important resource for parents and Scouts. It is crafted in September by the TLC and includes meetings, treks, activities, service projects, training opportunities, and anything else we are planning to do during the year. However, changes arise as the year progresses, so pay attention to the website! The calendar is reviewed in detail at the **Troop Calendar Night** in October.

The Troop website is located at <http://www.t777.org>. The calendar is available in PDF format as are the trek signup sheets. Trek photos, other resources and links to other BSA related websites are also available. Make sure you're family is on the troop email list by sending an email signup request to: webmaster@t777.org As a registered leader or committee member, adults will also receive **Scouting Magazine**, the Council's newsletter **The Beaver Log**, and our District's newsletter **The Pacific Coaster**.

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Treks and Service Projects

Trekking is the highlight of the Boy Scouting Program, and Troop 777 has a dizzying array of treks. New Scouts will focus on their rank advancements through First Class by working within their Patrol meetings and by going on activities specifically geared for them. These include training hikes, Lazyman Camps, Beginner Backpacks and Summer Camp. Signup sheets will point out the rank advancements that are possible at these events.

A brief listing of the types of treks we do includes:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| • Training Hikes | single day outings |
| • Lazyman Camps | overnight car camps |
| • Backpacking | overnight camps involving backpacking |
| • Cycling | single day or overnights |
| • Snow camps or Ski&Board Trips | single day or overnights |
| • Summer Camps | week-long camps at special BSA camps |
| • Aquatics, Canoeing and Sailing | single day or overnights |
| • Rock Climbing | single day or overnights |

Some activities require certain merit badges before the Scout can participate (ex: Rock Climbing). Others are geared towards the Venture Scouts because they may be strenuous or require more advanced skills.

On all overnight camps, cooking becomes an important activity. ***There are cooking requirements for Second Class and First Class*** that are also closely tied with fire building and knife and ax handling. The Troop website has step-by-step instructions for the critical role of **Cookmaster** which every Scout must perform.

If you volunteer to drive Scouts on a trek, you will be reimbursed for your gas expenses and will be given a Transportation book that includes the medical consent forms for every Scout in Troop (this covers all the Scouts in your vehicle and needs to be returned after the trek).

No Scout is permitted to attend a trek without a medical consent form and a current Class 3 medical form on file.

Equipment – if your family is new to backpacking, there is a daunting array of equipment needs that your Scout will suddenly be pressing you for. The Troop has some equipment that can be borrowed, but also be aware that some of the equipment you buy now will soon be outgrown. There is a balance that needs to be struck between quality, fit, and price. If you have questions, please feel free to talk to any of the adult leaders.

Service - Another important aspect of Scouting is **service projects**. These are projects geared towards helping others in our community and all Scouts should participate whenever they can. The Troop organizes several service projects with Quail Gardens, the

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Encinitas Library, St. Andrew's Church, conservation projects with a variety of organizations, and Eagle Scout projects that require assistance from members of the Troop.

Finances and Fundraising

Part of the annual registration fee goes to the Desert Pacific Council for operating expenses at the county and national levels. Treks are self-financed by the participants to cover food, transportation and permits. Sign-up sheets will indicate the cost of events that must be paid in advance by the date listed on the sign-up sheet. All other troop finances are raised through fundraisers, and the money earned is managed by the Troop Committee to pay for equipment, patches, and other troop expenses.

The primary fundraising activity is the **October popcorn sales** program which is a national fundraising program similar to Girl Scout cookies. A portion of the money earned by sales of these products is directed back to the Troop and some also comes back to the Scout.

Another big fundraiser is the **sale of Scout Fair tickets**, held every spring. Like popcorn sales, some of the proceeds come back to the troop and some goes into the Scout Account. The Scout Fair is a one-day event that highlights Scouting within our Council and is held at the Del Mar Fairgrounds. Troop 777 staffs a High Adventure booth featuring backpacking.

The Troop also has several smaller fundraisers that benefit us more directly. We have sold See's Candies, lollipops, holiday plants and wreaths, and hosted pancake breakfasts. Through all of these fundraisers, it is possible for Scouts to be completely self-funded via their Scouting fundraising efforts! As a parent, you can help your Scout by supporting their fundraisers at your place of employment.

Finally, National BSA offers a charitable means of supporting Scouting through the **Friends of Scouting program**. You can donate cash, in-kind gifts, or property to Scouting. You can also help Scouting through direct designation via your employer sponsored United Way program.

Scout Accounts: Any fundraising money that comes back to the Scout is held in a special *Scout Account* that is administered by the Troop Treasurer. Scouts may only use the money in their accounts to pay for treks, or other Scout related activities. If a parent volunteers to drive on an outing, they will be reimbursed for gasoline expenses via a deposit into their son's Scout Account. Refunds from trek expenses will also be put here.

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Getting Involved

With the natural turnover of boys as they progress through the program, ***the Troop is always in need of fresh adult leadership*** to replace the loss of experienced leaders. The Troop Committee and Assistant Scoutmasters are the primary ways of helping out within the Troop.

The Committee meets once a month during one of the General Troop Meetings and Assistant Scoutmasters meet at Scoutmaster Powwows every other month. Please feel free to sit in at any meeting and find out what's going on.

We also welcome parents who would like to help organize a specific activity. For example, coordinating Popcorn or Scout Fair fundraisers, organizing a special activity that matches an interest of yours, or helping to make arrangements for a Court of Honor.

Committee Positions – Here is a list of committee coordinator positions, but be creative! Some committee members wear several hats and the Committee can always use more help.

- Chairperson
- Treasurer
- Secretary
- Quartermaster
- Registrar
- Advancement
- Fundraising
- Trek Coordinator
- Transportation
- Service Project
- Court of Honor
- Webmaster
- Newsletter Editor
- Neckerchiefs/Class B
- Recruiting
- Charter Organization

Adult Training

Don't feel that you can't participate because you don't know how Scouting works, or you weren't a Scout yourself. There are numerous training opportunities offered at nominal cost by the Council, to give you the skills you need.

Youth Protection Guidelines (YPG): A 60-minute video course that covers how to spot such things as child abuse and how to report it within the BSA organization. At least one leader who is listed on a trek tour permit must have this training. ***YPG training is recommended for every adult in Scouting and is good for three years.***

New Leader Essentials: New Leader Essentials is the initial training for adult leaders. In this 90-minute course, leaders learn about the objectives of the Scouting program and the methods that are used to achieve these objectives. Leaders also gain a basic understanding of youth development, as well as how Scouting is organized and financed, policies related to the program, and resources to help leaders succeed. ***A Scout leader needs to attend New Leader Essentials only once.***

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Leader Specific Training: This training is broken into position specific segments. There is a session for Scoutmasters and Assistant Scoutmasters, one for Committee members, and one for Venture Leaders.

Intro to Outdoor Leader Skills: Teaches basic outdoor skills and safety issues to adults. This is a weekend camping experience. Depending on the position, completion of the courses in the table below allows an adult leader to wear the Trained patch on the left sleeve of their uniform.

Youth Protection Guidelines YPG	New Leader Essentials NLE	Leader Specific Training LST	Intro to Outdoor Leader Skills IOLS	Position
X				Parent Volunteer
X	X	Boy Scout Leader	X	Scoutmaster, Asst SM
X	X	Scout Committee Members		Committee
1 hour	1.5 hours	Varies, 4-8 hours	1.5 days w/overnight	

Advanced Adult Leader Training

Adults who wish to lead boys in High Adventure activities can complete an additional series of courses that focus on how to provide safe leadership.

High Adventure Leader Trek Training (HALTT): Teaches the skills and provides resources for adults to lead a backpacking outing. ***In order to earn one of the many patches available for High Adventure treks, at least one HALTT trained adult must be on the trek.*** This course consists of an evening session, a day-long Saturday session and a weekend session. ***The Troop needs more HALTT trained adults to help lead treks!***

Water Trek Leader Training: Teaches the skills and provides resources for adults to lead on-the-water outings, such as a canoe or kayak trips. This course shares the initial segments with HALTT (can be skipped if you have previously completed HALTT) and then focuses on a weekend of training with canoes.

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First Aid/CPR: *many of our High Adventure treks also require that at least one adult be trained with a Red Cross approved first aid and CPR program.* The Troop offers this course in January for a nominal fee.

HALTT Specialist Training: These are advanced classes available to HALTT certified leaders to extend their knowledge in areas such as desert backpacking, equipment making, snow camping, rock climbing, and water treks (canoeing, kayaking, etc.) ***The Troop needs adults to take these courses so that we can deliver a safe Scouting experience for our sons. Please consider becoming an active Scouter at any level you can and welcome again to Troop 777!***

Addresses and Phone Numbers

Council:	San Diego-Imperial County Council 1207 Upas Street (619) 298-6121 San Diego, CA 92103	http://www.sdicsa.org
Meetings:	St. Andrew's Episcopal Church 890 Balour Drive Encinitas, CA 92024	http://www.t777.org
Scoutmaster:	Tom Szczotka (760) 438-5300	scoutmaster@t777.org
Committee:	Ken Case (858) 794-7288	chairperson@t777.org
Registrar:	Jerry Shiller (760) 436-4629	registrar@t777.org
Recruiter:	Brum Darling (760) 944-7991	recruit@t777.org

Notes:

What if your son is having a problem? First, they should try to resolve the issues themselves. They should talk first to their patrol leader and then to the SPL. If problems persist, they can talk to the Scoutmaster and finally, to the Committee.

Merit Badge Procedure (Scouts do this - not parents!)

1. Get a "Blue Card" from the Scoutmaster, fill it out for the specific badge, and have the Scoutmaster sign it. Get the name of a counselor if you don't already know.
2. Find and meet with a counselor before working on the badge. Obtain the merit badge book from the troop Librarian – and read it! Work with the counselor to complete the requirements for the badge.
3. Upon completion, have the counselor sign your blue card. They will keep one portion. Return the remaining two sections (completely filled out), to the Registrar. You will get your badge and your section of the blue card at the next Court of Honor.

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Keep these cards (and all rank advancement cards) in a safe place. If you lose your badge, the card will allow you to obtain a replacement.