



BSA Troop 1097

New Scout Information



Introduction to Troop 1097

Troop 1097 was founded in 1963 to provide boys with a chance to develop moral strength and character, participating citizenship, and physical, mental, and emotional fitness in the context of an active outdoor program. The Troop is based on fundamental Scout skills and traditions, an active and challenging outdoor program, and leadership development and advancement. We operate on the premise that it is the outdoor activities that attract boys to Scouting, and not the indoor Troop meetings. Regular outdoor activities provide attractive indoor programs as Scouts prepare to go outdoors.

As a matter of policy, the Troop is “Scout Run”. We try to give each Scout as much freedom to learn and to develop his independence, leadership skills, and responsibility as possible, consistent with safety, well being, and the overall best interests of the Troop. As a result, the Scoutmasters defer to the Scout-leaders as much as possible, even to the point of allowing failure of a program or plan, unless safety or well-being are threatened, or where allowing a poorly-planned activity to proceed will serve no useful purpose.

The Troop is sponsored by the Izaak Walton League of America, Rockville Chapter (IWLA). While we cooperate closely with the League and support its activities and facilities, membership in the League is not a prerequisite to joining the troop.

Troop Meetings

We meet each Thursday night from 7:30 to 9:00 at the IWLA Chapter House. Occasionally we meet at other times or places for special programs. Attendance at Troop meetings is generally a prerequisite for participation in outings.

The troop follows the MCPS policy for bad weather. If public school evening activities are cancelled for any reason on a troop meeting night, the meeting will not be held. If the school system declares “code blue” for evening activities (outdoor activities are cancelled but indoor activities are permitted) the troop will hold its meeting but the Scouts will be kept inside for the duration of the meeting.

Outings / Activities

Activities are planned for at least once per month. They almost always involve outdoor activities, and usually involve camping. The Troop attends summer camp each year for at least one week, and there are opportunities for experienced Scouts to visit BSA's high adventure bases across the country. Activities are handled as follows:

- Cost - the cost of the outing is covered by the outing fee. This normally includes food, camping fees, and special program items if needed. Scouts and non-registered parents and siblings all pay for the outing. Adult uniformed leaders pay for high adventure and other outings as designated. We periodically run fund raising programs where 50%-100% of the funds raised by each Scout are set aside for his use to offset the costs of camping and trips.

- Canceling - anyone who has indicated that they wish to take part in an outing is committed to paying for it if they cancel after food has been bought and/or camping commitments have been made which can't be reimbursed.
- Scouts camp in patrols, learn by "guided discovery" - doing for themselves and figuring out solutions to problems that arise. A Troop Guide or other experienced Scout works with the new Scout patrol on camping skills during the outing, and a registered adult leader provides supervision. The Scouts develop independence and self-confidence by doing for themselves.
- Adults assist in running the program and oversee safety. Adults are part of the "Staff Patrol" on outings and work cooking and other duties as assigned. Parents are encouraged to accompany the troop on outings - you do not have to be trained. Parents are expected to pay for attending the outing, however. The adults try not to interfere with the patrols unless there is a safety issue. Parents are encouraged to leave any discipline of their own child up to the Senior Patrol Leader or another adult (Boys tend to respond more reasonably to someone other than their parents. This also prevents the Scout from resenting his parent's presence on the outing because he feels he can't get away with anything - parents always seem to notice more!)

Registering with the Troop

New Scouts registering with the troop will pay pro-rated dues (@ \$5 per remaining month) for the program year. Boys Life magazine is available for an additional charge. They will need to buy a Scout shirt, a council patch, and a Scout belt for their "class A" uniform. The troop will provide the Scout with a Scout Handbook, a troop numeral, red shoulder tabs, and a troop neckerchief.

Finances

Dues of \$60.00 per year (October through September) are collected from the Scouts by the Treasurer, and include the re-registration fees for BSA. A Boys' Life subscription costs an additional \$12.00. Operating and capital funds for the Troop come from dues and from fund raising. The Troop conducts periodic fundraisers to raise money for equipment replacement and to allow the Scouts to pay their own way for outings. We expect all Troop families to participate as much as they are able. Some of the profits are allocated for individual Scouts' use for Scouting activities (camp, equipment, activities, etc.) in proportion to the amount worked.

- Dues pay for a portion of campsite fees, camping supplies, merit badges, patches, the annual membership fee which goes to the National office, and insurance.
- Fund-raisers pay for camping equipment, miscellaneous program

expenses, and scholarships (summer camp and high adventure trips for Scouts in the troop)

There will also be activity costs for Scouts participating in activities. Money for Troop-wide activities such as campouts, summer camp, high adventure, etc., is collected by the Troop treasurer. The money for patrol activities and for patrol food on Troop campouts will be handled by the Scouts in the patrol.

Leadership

The Senior Patrol leader (SPL) is the leader of the Scouts. He runs the Troop through the Patrol Leaders' Council, where decisions are made on meeting and Troop activities, assignments of Scouts to patrols, etc. The SPL is elected annually by the Scouts in the Troop. Each patrol elects their own patrol leader twice a year.

The Troop is governed by a Troop Committee, under the leadership of the Committee Chair. All parents are encouraged to participate in order to have a say in the operations of the Troop. Committee Members support the troop and handle administrative and planning details.

The Scoutmasters' Council, under leadership of the Scoutmaster, consists of uniformed adult leaders and is in charge of operations of the Troop relating directly to the Scouts. The Scoutmaster and all registered Assistant Scoutmasters are strongly encouraged to have completed the Boy Scout Leader Training courses. ASM's (Assistant Scoutmasters) work directly with the Scouts on a weekly basis offering guidance in jobs and advancement.

New Scouts

New Scouts joining the Troop are generally assigned to the New Scout Patrol (they select their patrol name). In this patrol they are led by a Troop Guide and a specifically assigned Assistant Scoutmaster so that they get the special attention needed to introduce them to the program and to teach them their basic skills. Patrols established when a Scout enters the Troop often stay together as a patrol after the completion of their first year.

Advancement

The BSA advancement program is an important part of any Troop's program. It encourages Scouts to learn vital skills which allow them to get the most out of the outdoor activities and to participate safely. However, while the development of certain skills is essential, participation in the formal advancement program is voluntary. We do not feel it is in the best interests of the Scout or of the Troop to push a Scout up the advancement trail if it is not important to him. However, we will provide all encouragement and assistance to the Scout who wants to advance and to learn new skills, and we strongly encourage every Scout to set a goal of becoming Eagle Scout.

As a Scout works on his Tenderfoot, Second Class, and First Class ranks, he will be instructed and tested by an older Scout, one who has at least the First Class rank.

One of the senior Scouts who has been approved by the Scoutmaster will initial the Scout's handbook indicating he has completed the skill.

A Scout may begin working on merit badges at any time but these become the primary requirements for the Star, Life, and Eagle ranks. When the Scout wishes to begin working on a merit badge, he should discuss this with the Scoutmaster, who will help him select a merit badge counselor and provide him a signed "blue card". It is the Scout's responsibility to contact the counselor to make an appointment with the merit badge counselor to discuss the merit badge. The Scout must take a friend or parent to all meetings with the counselor unless the meeting is conducted at a regular troop meeting. When the Scout has completed all of the requirements and the blue card has been signed by the counselor, it is the Scout's responsibility to turn in the troop portion of the card to the Scout serving as Troop Advancement Aide. He then retains the Scout portion for his records.

Uniforms

Uniforms are an important element in the methods of Scouting. We encourage all Scouts to obtain a Scout uniform and wear it at all Troop and Patrol activities. Your Scout's Patrol Leader or any Troop leader can provide information on uniforms. The Troop can often direct you to a Scout who may have an "experienced" uniform that you can obtain. The troop will occasionally hold uniform exchanges at Courts of Honor. In Troop 1097, the "class A" uniform, consisting of a Scout shirt, Scout belt, and Troop neckerchief, is required for all Scout meetings and travel to and from any activity. A "class B" uniform, consisting of a Troop or other Scout t-shirt, is often designated for camping, summertime meetings or other activities.

Your son may be asked to take part in an Eagle Court of Honor or may choose to participate in a national High Adventure trip with the troop. On these occasions, a full uniform, including Boy Scout pants or shorts and Boy Scout socks, is required.

Equipment

Besides a uniform, the only other equipment a Scout will need when he first joins Scouts is the Handbook. All of his sign-offs for rank advancement will be done in the book, so it becomes the primary source of record keeping in addition to a handy reference. Because it goes on all Scout activities with the Scout, you should consider getting a cover for it. The Scout shop sells a very nice plastic cover or a more durable nylon cover, although a quart-size zip-loc bag serves very nicely.

The Troop provides most of the required camping gear with the exception of a sleeping bag. For early warm-weather camp-outs, 2-3 blankets can serve very nicely in place of a bag. Over time, your son may wish to accumulate additional equipment. Please consult with one of the Troop leaders before making a big investment in any equipment as they can tell you what is appropriate and where to get a good deal. Many local shops will allow you to rent gear so that you can try various models before making the final purchase.

The first piece of equipment that many Scouts wish to purchase is a knife – the bigger and more elaborate, the better. Do not get your son a knife. He will not be allowed to carry or use a knife, ax, or saw at any Scout activity until he has passed the requirements for the Totin' Chip. He will get this out of the way at the first couple of camp-outs. After that, he may carry a pocketknife. Troop 1097 rules do not allow sheath knives to be carried or used at any time. Elaborate “Swiss Army” knives are simply not practical for most Scout activities.

Communications

We will do our best to keep you informed, and we ask that you do the same for us. Our normal communications are via notices sent home with Scouts, email from the Scoutmaster or Committee Chair, and through phone calls from Patrol Leaders. Please look for any notices which may have been handed out each week. If your Scout has a question about Patrol or Troop activities, advancement, etc., the normal order of resolving the issue is:

1. Patrol Leader
2. Senior Patrol Leader
3. Assistant Scoutmaster in charge (SMIC) of the specific outing - identified in the outing notice
4. Scoutmaster

For adult matters, please call the adult in charge of the specific function first (Treasurer for money matters, etc). In any case, feel free to call the Committee Chairman or Scoutmaster to resolve policy issues or conflicts and don't let misunderstandings or bad feelings fester.

The troop has established an email distribution list for announcements and a separate list used for Troop Committee discussions. See the attachment at the end of this packet for instructions on signing up for these lists.

Troop 1097 email lists

Troop 1097 has two mailing lists. One is a news list, news@troop1097.org. It's the Troop's primary way of getting reminders and late-breaking news out to everyone in our Troop. This list is intended for “one-way” communication, not discussion.

The other list, committee@troop1097.org, has been set up for the Troop's leaders to use to discuss Troop business. It tends to have more activity. Both lists are open to anyone in the Troop community who'd like to join.

Please email Paul Schimke (paul@schimke.org) to let him know which lists you'd like to join.

Troop 1097 Leadership

(as of January, 2007)

Senior Patrol Leader

Zach Sickman 301-208-1924 splt1097@yahoo.com

Scoutmaster

Paul Schimke 301-977-6073 paul@schimke.org

Committee Chair

Norene Guilford 301-926-0082 norene@guil4d.net

Treasurer

Lisa Gleason 301-798-0145 gleason84@adelphia.net

IWLA Liason

Len Valenti 301-869-2617 Len.Valenti@comcast.net

BSA Troop 1097

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Black Hill District
National Capital Area Council

Chartered by the
Rockville Chapter of the Izaak Walton League of America

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