

Troop Visitation Check List

Which Boy Scout Troop you join is a personal decision. Each Scout needs to decide which one to join. It's ok if all the Cub Scouts join different troops as long as they feel the troop is right for them.

Each Boy Scout Troop has its own personality, each one is different. The only way to discover which one is right for you is to visit as many as practical, (2-4) and then narrow down the list to finalists and then choose. A second or even third visit may be required. A lot can be learned about a troop simply by observing. Some things to look for include:

- Location - Just like in real estate, location is important as Troop meetings are usually held weekly. If the location is convenient for your family, your son will be more likely to attend regularly. Remember, however, that the closest may not be the best suited.
- Activity Level - Review the Troop's Schedule of Events and get a feel how active the Troop is. Talk to Scouts to find out what outings they liked best and why? What trips have they taken? Do they have a central theme? Do they offer varied experiences?
- Scout Led - A Boy Scout troop should be "Boy Led". The Senior Patrol Leader (SPL) should be in charge of the meetings. The chain of command should run through the patrol leaders. Adults should be there as resources, NOT LEADERS. The only time they should get involved in making decisions is as a reality check (done by the SM and PLC).

Quick check: Where is the scoutmaster standing? Front of the room or in the back? To determine this, watch a meeting. Ask who plans the annual troop calendar. Ask about the Patrol Leaders Council and how it works. The concept of a "boy run unit" might be hard parents and Cub Leaders to understand, but it is the way Boy Scout troops are designed to run. This is how the boys get the most out of the program.

- Outdoor Program - Does the troop maintain an active outdoor program? Review the troop calendar and see if they keep going back to the same places or try new things?
- Range of ages - Does the troop consist of only older or younger boys or is there a good mixture of all ages?
- Progression - Do the higher ranking boys (Star, Life) have positions of leadership? Do they appear more mature in behavior? Do they seem more comfortable with their knowledge? Do they interact with the younger boys or stay to themselves?
- Size - Smaller Troops offer a personal touch. Larger troops may offer a wide range of activities. Troops should be broken down into 6-8 boy patrols.
- Fun - Do the scouts appear to be having fun? Without the meeting being chaotic? THIS IS IMPORTANT!!
- Ceremonies - Is there a respectful flag ceremony to start/end the meeting? Is there a prayer or a Scoutmaster's Minute (where the Scoutmaster presents a thought provoking lesson)?

Troop Visit Checklist

Troop #	Sponsor:	
Meeting Place:	Meeting Day/Time:	
How many boys are in the troop?	How many patrols?	
Is there an upper limit to the size of the troop?	YES NO	What is it?
	10 ½ - 12	
	13 - 14	
	15 -16	
	17 - 18	
How many years has the troop been in existence?		
Is the troop a Quality Unit? (look for the patch on their uniform shirtsleeve)		YES NO
Who is the Senior Patrol Leader?		
Who is the Scoutmaster?		
Was the Scoutmaster a Scout as a youth?		YES NO
Was the Scoutmaster an Eagle Scout?		YES NO
How often does the troop go camping?		
What type of camping does the troop normally do? <i>Summer Camp</i> <i>Camporees</i> <i>Patrol Camping</i> <i>Backpacking</i> <i>High Adventure</i> <i>Other</i>		
Uniform requirements	<i>Required</i>	<i>Optional</i>
Cap		
Shirt		
Official BSA Pants		
Belt		
Official BSA shorts		
Socks		
Neckerchief		
Bolo		
Does the troop have a Class B uniform?		YES NO
Has the troop ever visited Philmont, Sea Base or Northern Tier?		YES NO

When does the troop plan to go again?		
Has the troop attended a National Jamboree?	YES NO	When?
Are you planning to attend the next one?		YES NO
Does the troop have a Patrol Leaders Council?		YES NO
If yes, how often do they meet?		
Where are new Scouts placed upon joining the troop?	A dedicated new boy patrol	Dispersed into existing patrols
Is a Troop Guide (older scout) assigned to the New Boy patrol to help them out?		YES NO
Can parents of new scouts be assigned to help with the new boy patrol?		YES NO
On average, how much time does it take for boys to earn each Rank?		
Scout		
Tenderfoot		
2nd Class		
First Class		
Star		
Life		
What percentage of boys makes Eagle?		
How many Eagles has this troop graduated in the past 5 years?		
Are Eagles Scouts still active in the troop?		
Average age of a boy when he attained Eagle rank?		
Who can sign off/check off my achievements?		
<i>Scoutmaster</i> <i>Asst. Scoutmaster</i> <i>Junior Asst. Scoutmaster</i> <i>Senior Patrol Leader</i> <i>Patrol Leader</i> <i>Troop Guides</i> <i>Scout Instructors</i> <i>Other Adult Leaders</i> <i>Parents</i> <i>Myself</i>		
How often are Scoutmaster's Conferences held?		
How many scouts in the Troop are members of the Order of the Arrow?		
How many scouts are elected to the OA each year?		

Does the Troop have a religious awards coordinator?	YES NO
How often are Courts of Honor held?	
Does the Troop have a published set of bylaws?	YES NO
Does the Troop have a published code of conduct?	YES NO
Does the Troop have a Troop Handbook?	YES NO
What is the average time for a scout to assume a leadership position?	

LEADERSHIP

Who runs the troop meetings? <i>Senior PL</i> <i>Patrol Leaders</i> <i>Scoutmaster</i> <i>Other Scouts</i> <i>Asst SM's</i> <i>Other</i> <i>Adults</i>	
Are leaders required to take training? <i>Basic + SM specific</i> <i>Youth Protection</i> <i>Woodbadge</i> <i>Philmont</i> <i>CPR/First Aid Safe</i> <i>Safe Swim & Safety Afloat</i>	
Are leaders encouraged to attend Roundtables?	YES NO
Does at least one leader from the troop attend RT's regularly?	YES NO
Do any of the leaders serve in a District or Council capacity? (Trainer, roundtable staff, Camporee staff, etc.)	YES NO

OLDER SCOUTS

Does the Troop have a program specifically for older scouts?	YES NO
Is there a Venture Crew associated with the Troop?	YES NO
If not, is one planned?	YES NO
Do scouts participate in Junior Leader Training?	YES NO
Does the Troop have Junior Asst. Scoutmasters?	YES NO
Does the troop provide Den Chiefs to local Packs?	YES NO

FINANCIALS

How much is registration fee?		When is it collected?	
How much are the annual Troop dues?		When is it collected?	
How much are the Patrol Dues?		When is it collected?	
What additional fees are there? (Type, Amount, when Due)			
Does the Troop have fundraisers? (Popcorn, Wreaths, Car Wash, Bake Sale, Other)	YES	NO	
Do Scouts have to solicit door to door?	YES	NO	

PARENT ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Can parents attend campouts or summer camp?	YES	NO
Are parents required to take on helper responsibilities (driving, etc?)	YES	NO
Are parents encouraged to become troop leaders (ASM's, Committee members)?	YES	NO
Are parents advised as to their behavior, responsibilities, etc. when around the boys?	YES	NO
What special equipment will I need to purchase for my new Scout?		