



BSA Troop 1097
New Scout Information
For Parents

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WELCOME TO TROOP 1097

We are happy that you and your son have chosen our troop to start his Boy Scouting adventure!

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 outdoors 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 “fuel” meaningful indoor programs as Scouts prepare to go outdoors.

Boy Scouting, as is our Troop, is “Scout Run”. We give each Scout as much freedom as possible to learn and to develop his independence, leadership skills, and responsibility, 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 Izaak Walton League of America, Rockville Chapter (IWLA), sponsors the Troop. 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.

As with all volunteer organizations, the benefits derived are only as good as the efforts put forth. We encourage parents to become involved and to participate in your son’s activities and accomplishments. As parents of current and past Scouts, we have come to see the importance of parent participation in your Scout’s journey through Scouting. The journey is filled with adventure and learning. Shared with other adults in the Troop, it can be one of the most treasured experiences you will have.

Communication among Scouts, leaders, and families can be very challenging. Hopefully this guide will cover most areas in general, but additional information is available from our website at <http://www.troop1097.org>. Since this is a Scout-led organization, the boys themselves are the primary source of information about the troop.

We recognize that when you first join an organization there is a lot of information you need to know as soon as you start. This guide is intended to be an orientation guide to information you want to know now. It addresses such issues as parent participation, uniform requirements, equipment, advancement, and dues.

The Difference Between Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts

Cub Scouts: Come in as a boy, leave as a boy. Parent led. Involves supervised activities.

Boy Scouts: Come in as a boy, leave as a young man. Scout led, parent advised. Involves activities requiring greater degrees of self-supervision.

At Troop 1097, the Scouts plan and decide on the program, run the meetings, manage the equipment, plan and execute the trips, and become self motivated to advance.

Your Role as a Scouting Parent: Be Informed

We are a very active Troop. Most young Scouts cannot hope to keep track of all the events going on. We recommend that parents:

- Meet and converse with other parents and leaders.
- Attend the beginning and end of Troop meetings when announcements are made.
- Join our Monthly Parent Meeting, held at IWLA the first Thursday of the month while the Scouts meet separately.
- Read email notifications regarding meetings, outings, and calls for volunteers. The calendar of meetings and events is on our website (<http://www.troop1097.org>).
- Sign up as early as you can once outings are announced. In order for the scouts to learn and practice planning skills, appropriate deadlines will be set and advertised. In most cases, the deadline for Sign up and Payment will be three weeks before the outing. Advance email notifications are provided to all members.
- Explore and be aware of the resources on our website – Calendar, Adult and Scout Directories, Forms, Training, Videos, you name it. If you think something is missing, we will do everything we can to improve. If you need help with your log in or navigation, just contact webmaster@troop1097.org.
- Consider joining the Troop Committee, becoming a merit badge counselor, and attending events.

Your son will, at times, have specific responsibilities to the Troop and his patrol. He may be a Patrol Leader or hold some other leadership position. He may also have an assignment for a trip. As a parent, be aware and encouraging.

Uniforms: A Sign of Belonging

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.

In Troop 1097, the “class A” uniform, consisting of a Scout shirt, Scout belt, and Troop neckerchief, is required for all Scout meetings; for travel to and from any activity, “class A – without Neckerchief” is required.

A “class B” uniform, consisting of a Troop or other Scout t-shirt, is often designated for camping, summertime meetings and other activities.

For Boards of Review, beginning with the Star Rank, the Scout should wear his Sash and bring his Scout Book (needed for Eagle). For special ceremonies, such as a Court of Honor or Flag Retirement ceremony, a full uniform, including a Merit Badge Sash and Boy Scout pants/shorts (or something equivalent), is required. Casual pants, such as sweatpants and gym shorts, are not appropriate.

Equipment

Besides the 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 rank record keeping in addition being a handy scouting reference. Because it goes on all Scout activities with the Scout, consider getting a cover for it. The Scout shop sells a plastic cover or a more durable nylon cover, although a quart-size zip-loc bag serves very nicely (especially at Summer Camp!).

The Troop provides most of the required camping gear with the exception of a sleeping bag/ground pad. 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.

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 is not 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 earn this out of the way at the first couple of camp-outs. After that, he may carry a pocketknife. Troop 1097 and BSA 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.

Meetings

Scouts 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. **If MCPS schools are closed (e.g. teacher work day) but administrative offices are open, we will hold our meetings as scheduled.**

Courts of Honor are special meetings where the Scouts are recognized for their achievements. It is very important for Scouts and parents to attend these as a sign of respect for the Scouts' hard work. For this reason, Class A uniforms are mandatory. Courts of Honor are held three times a year (generally Fall, Winter, and Spring).

Other meetings:

- Patrol Leadership Council (PLC)– last Monday of every month for Scout leaders. Planning for future meetings and activities.
- Troop Committee Meeting – first Tuesday of every month for registered adults who are not serving as Assistant Scoutmasters. Overall planning and administration.
- Monthly Parent's Meeting – first Thursday of every month for all parents. A must-attend event!
- District Roundtable – second Thursday of the month for Scoutmasters, Unit Commissioners, or other troop representatives. Sharing of District and Council information.
- Scoutmasters' Council – ad hoc for uniformed adults. Program and boy-focused planning and support.

Outings / Activities

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

- Cost - the per person (Scouts and adults) outing fee covers the cost of the outing. This generally includes food, camping fees, and special program items if needed. We periodically run fund raising programs where 50%-100% of the funds raised by each

Scout are set aside in a passbook account for his use to offset the costs of camping.

- 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 and 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 independently, doing their own 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! Another way to look at this: you are an Adult on the outing, not someone's Parent.

Code of Conduct

For all Scouts:

I agree to abide by the Boy Scout Code of Conduct as stated in the Scout Oath and Law, Scout Motto and Slogan, as well as the Outdoor Code (see p.9 of Scout Handbook). If my behavior does not reflect the above Code of Conduct I understand I may be sent home from this and other Troop activities at the discretion of the Scoutmaster or designated leader. I agree to participate in a full and constructive manner in this troop activity.

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 Scouts in the Troop elect the SPL annually. Each patrol elects their patrol leader twice a year.

A Troop Committee, under the leadership of the Committee Chair, governs the Troop. 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 trained, 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 required 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 responsibilities 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 a Troop Guide and a specifically assigned Assistant Scoutmaster lead them 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 that 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.

After the requirements for a rank are attained, the Scout asks the Scoutmaster for a Scoutmaster Conference. After a successful Scoutmaster Conference, the Scout asks the Advancement Chair for a Board of Review. After a successful Board of Review, the Scout has earned the rank. Through this process, the Scout learns how to take initiative and interact with other adults.

A Scout may begin working on merit badges at any time after earning the Scout badge. Merit Badges 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 counselor has signed the blue card, it is the Scout's responsibility to turn in the blue card to the Advancement Chair so that the merit badge can be recorded and purchased.

- ☛ We advise parents to be very aware of these "Blue Cards". It is the often-irreplaceable proof of accomplishment required for receiving the badge. Suggestions: Keep "Blue Cards" in a safe place. Plastic, 9-slot baseball card sheets in a 3-ringed binder are an excellent way to store them, as they will be part of the Scout's Eagle Book. From time to time, photocopy your son's Rank Achievement pages in his handbook as well.

Communications

We work hard to keep you actively informed, and we ask that you do the same for us. Our normal communications are via email using our membership database through our secure website. We will also make announcements at meetings, send flyers home with Scouts, and through phone calls and text messages from Patrol Leaders. If your Scout has a question about Patrol or Troop activities, advancement, etc., the expected 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 Chair or Scoutmaster to resolve policy issues or conflicts and don't let misunderstandings or bad feelings fester.

Finances

Fees of \$76 are collected annually for each Scout in October. A Boys' Life subscription costs an additional \$12. Adult registration fees are \$16/year.

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 that 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. The Troop treasurer collects money for Troop-wide activities such as campouts, summer camp, high adventure, etc.

GETTING STARTED

Registering with the Troop

New Scouts registering with the troop will pay pro-rated dues (@ \$5 per month) for the remainder of the program year ending in September. For example, Webelos bridging by April will pay \$25 dues. Boys Life magazine is available for an additional charge. We will need a completed Youth Application for the Scout.

Adults who would like to be part of the troop should also register. Adults who would like to be part of the committee need to fill out an adult application, including the disclosure page regarding the background check, take Youth Protection Training (20 minutes online; navigate to the BSA Online Learning Center through www.troop1097.org/training), and pay the registration fee, which is currently \$15 a year. For those adults not interested yet in becoming a committee member but would like to participate in activities, such as camping, or to serve as a Merit Badge Counselor, you will need to also fill out the registration form including the background disclosure, take Youth Protection Training, but no fee is required.

About Training

Boy Scouts of America requires that all adults working with Scouts must take the online Youth Protection Training every two years. This is required for uniformed and non-uniformed adults, including Merit Badge Counselors and Committee Members. This certification is required before BSA will accept Adult Registrations, so when we submit your application, we include a printed copy of that certification you receive at the end of the course. BSA will also verify our compliance when we recharter every year. If this is your first training through the BSA Online Learning Center, the system will guide you through how to create an account.

Resource Survey

Parent support is the backbone of our troop. Everyone has one or more talents that can help maintain a great Scout program. Please be sure to complete our Troop Resource Survey (www.troop1097.org/forms).

Annual Health Form

Every Scout and adult who attends an outing must have a completed and **annually updated** health history (Parts A & B) with a copy of an insurance card on file. An **annual** physical (Part C) is required for activities lasting longer than 72 hours (for us that would be summer camp) or is considered strenuous (our High Adventure activities). For the current BSA information about this policy, see our website (www.troop1097.org/forms).

Our Health Forms Coordinator keeps record of when your updated records are due. The Coordinator also keeps copies so that a set of forms for the Scouts on a given outing is readily available to the Scoutmaster in Charge should medical care become necessary. If a Scout or adult does not have an update-to-date health form on file, they will not be able to participate in the outing.

What to Buy

1. Boy Scout Class "A" Uniform (**Shirt, purple World Crest emblem, Council Patch, and Belt**) – available at the Scout Store. "Experienced" uniforms may also be available from time to time from the Troop's uniform person. Most boys opt for the short-sleeved shirt to get the most out of it during warmer months.
2. Boy Scout Handbook and Sash for merit badges– also available at the Scout Store.
3. The **Troop will supply** the "1097" numerals, green Shoulder Epaulets and neckerchief & slide when your Scout first joins the Troop.
4. **Class "B" T-shirt** – For the summer meetings/outings. One or more can be purchased from the troop through the Troop's uniform person. Since we begin wearing these at the end of the school year, you can also expect to be able to purchase them at our Family Picnic/Spring Court of Honor.

Signing up for Activities

This booklet has mentioned our Troop website (www.troop1097.org) several times. In addition to it being the primary source of information about the operations of our troop, parents and Scouts use the **secure** part of the site to sign up and pay for camping and other activities requiring registration. In particular, the email used to sign up for an activity is the email address that will receive reminders or notifications regarding the activity as necessary. Likewise, the system knows not to send a signup reminder, since this email/contact is already signed up!

We use this directory for email, phone calls, and texting. We will use the email address you provide to set up your access with an initial password. Once you log in, you can do the rest to enter contact and driving information.

Scouts may have their own login/access; for those Scouts who are not actively checking and using email, we have the ability to generate a copy of any email sent to them and have it resent to your email.

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Montgomery County District
National Capital Area Council
Chartered by the
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