

# Supplement 1

## How Church Scouting Operates Within the Structure of the Boy Scouts of America

A Supplement to

*A Scouting Reference for Ward Leaders*

2005 Edition

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Published by the LDS Scouting Area Relationships Committee of the  
National Capital Area Council and Adjacent Councils, President Kent W. Colton, Chairman  
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“Supplement 1: How Church Scouting Operates Within the Structure of the Boy Scouts of America” is one of five supplements to the 2005 edition of *A Scouting Reference for Ward Leaders*.

LDS Scouting Area Relationships Committee for the National Capital Area and Adjacent Councils, McLean, Va.  
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First edition circa 1994 as *A Bishop’s Guide to Scouting*. Expanded and printed in 2004 as *A Scouting Reference for Ward Leaders*. Second edition of *A Scouting Reference for Ward Leaders* April 2005. The supplements were revised in September 2005 (corrections of typographical errors, formatting, and minor changes in content).

2005 Edition  
Printed in the United States of America

Copies of *A Scouting Reference for Ward Leaders*, this and other supplements, and updates, can be found at [www.LDS-Scouts.org](http://www.LDS-Scouts.org).

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I have enjoyed a long and respectful relationship with Scouting. I believe in its potential to motivate young men to live with effectiveness and integrity and to help them prepare for their manhood. . . . The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints stands firm in its commitment to youth, to the families to which they belong, to the families they themselves will one day form, and to every program and effort that seek to build and strengthen and enrich and ennoble youth. The Boy Scouts of America has for many years found sponsorship in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Since in 1913, we became the first partner to sponsor Scouting in the United States. We have remained strong and firm in our support of this great movement for boys and of the Oath and the Law which are at its center. . . . Being true to Scout principles will help [a young man] in forming a companionship with his Heavenly Father that will strengthen all the other relationships and aspects of life. It is our understanding and belief that Scouting is still strongly centered in these duties and principles, and that there is a determination in its present leadership to strengthen them further. This being true, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints affirms the continued support of Scouting and will seek to provide leadership which will help boys keep close to their families and close to the Church as they develop the qualities of citizenship and character and fitness which Scouting represents.<sup>1</sup>

President Spencer W. Kimball  
Twelfth President of the Church  
Saturday, April 2, 1977

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<sup>1</sup> "Presentation of Scout Award," *The Ensign*, May 1977, 35.

## **The Three Tiers of Scouting**

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Scouting operates on three levels (or four if World Scouting is counted). These are National, Council, and District.

### **National**

In the early 1900s in England, Lord Robert Baden-Powell created what he called the “Scouting Movement.” It immediately became popular and boys were doing what they called “Scouting” even before a Scouting organization was officially organized in England. By 1910 the Scouting Movement had expanded explosively and boys were “doing Scouting” in a dozen nations. Some nations had their own Scouting program modeled after Baden-Powell’s. By this time Scouting could be found in England, Belgium, Canada, Chile, Denmark, France, Germany, India, New Zealand, Russia, Sweden, and the United States.

The Boy Scouts of America (the BSA) was organized February 8, 1910, following the general principles established by Baden-Powell. Since then Scouting in the United States has evolved somewhat, but its basic principles have remained the same. Scouting has also changed in other countries, but the different national Scouting organizations are still considered to be bound together in a Scouting brotherhood.

The national office of the Boy Scouts of America is located in Irving, Texas. When Scouters use the term “National” without qualifiers, they are referring to this organization.

The Boy Scouts of America (that is, the national office) defines the Scouting program, establishes its standards, and regulates the use of its uniforms, its insignia, and its awards. The national office publishes and copyrights Scouting literature, develops training courses, determines the membership requirements, and sets all Scouting policies.

Some Scouting programs and events are operated at the national level (for example, national jamborees, Philmont Scout Ranch, and other high-adventure bases), but most programs are operated at the local level, which brings us to the next tiers of Scouting: councils and districts.

### **Council**

To decentralize Scouting, the national organization works through Scout councils, which are located throughout the United States and are chartered to operate the Scouting program in the geographical area they oversee. The council has four major functions: membership, finance, program, and unit service. Because councils are often quite large and deal with a large number of Scout units, a council is subdivided into Scout districts so it can better serve individual Scouts and Scouters. Some Scout programs such as council summer camp<sup>2</sup> are operated at the council level, but most activities originate at the district level. Because of this, district leaders are the individuals with whom ward Scouters most frequently work.

### **District**

Most of the real action in Scouting takes place in the Scout district. The district organizes basic training courses for Scout leaders and develops “district activities” for the boys that can enhance a ward Scout unit’s program. The district also holds monthly “roundtables,” which provide continuing training for Scout leaders.

The district also provides each Scout unit with a “unit commissioner,” who meets with unit leaders to help them find solutions to the Scouting problems that they have. This help is especially valuable when the ward Scout units renew their charters, which they must do each year.

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<sup>2</sup> The National Capital Area Council operates Goshen Scout Reservation (near Lexington, Virginia) and Camp William B. Snyder (near Haymarket, Virginia).

## **How the District Is Organized**

*The Key 3* provides the leadership to the district. The district executive (a professional Scouter), the district chairman, and the district commissioner (the latter two being volunteers) comprise the Key 3.

*The district executive* is a professional Scouter who works under the direction of the local council Scout executive and acts as an adviser to the volunteer leaders in the district.

*The district chairman* is a volunteer who is nominated by the district nominating committee and is elected by the members of the district committee. The district chairman should be a person who is highly respected in the community and has strong executive abilities.

*The district committee*, consisting of chartered organization representatives and elected district committee members, coordinates the functions of the district to carry out the policies and objectives of the council. Under the direction of the district chairman, the district committee organizes district activities, supervises training, and has a staff of experienced Scouters who are available to help Scout leaders. This includes such persons as the Cub Scout activities chairman, the Boy Scout activities chairman, the Cub Scout and Boy Scout training chairmen, the advancement chairman, the Eagle board chairman, the merit badge chairman, the camping chairman, the high adventure chairman, the health and safety chairman, and the Order of the Arrow adviser.

*The district commissioner* is a volunteer who is recommended by the district nominating committee and appointed by the council's executive board. He or she supervises a staff of assistant district commissioners and unit commissioners who regularly meet to discuss the district program as it relates to units. The unit commissioners meet personally with the leaders of packs, troops, teams, and crews to give them the help that they need.

*A unit commissioner* provides a variety of services. Among these are such things as keeping the unit in contact with the district, informing the unit about district activities, helping the unit find solutions to its Scouting problems, helping the unit recruit boys, making the unit aware of changes in BSA policies, and helping unit leaders renew the unit's charter. A seasoned commissioner can also help a unit discover flaws in its program that an inexperienced leader might overlook, and point out warning signs that might otherwise be ignored. The bishop should know who provides commissioner service to his ward's Scout units. If he does not know who the commissioners are, this information can be obtained from the district commissioner or the district executive. Bishops are encouraged to inform the district commissioner of the name of experienced Scouters who might be willing to serve as unit commissioners in the district, either for LDS units or non-LDS units. A unit commissioner is appointed by the district and the position is a volunteer position, not a church calling. Therefore, the unit commissioner is not sustained by the ward membership although, with the approval of the bishop, the person's name may be announced in sacrament meeting

## The Chartered Organization

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The three levels of Scouting described above provide Scouting with the support structure that it needs, but real Scouting takes place in packs, troops, teams, and crews, where Scout leaders work with boys. These Scout units are sponsored by organizations such as churches, PTAs, men's clubs, and community organizations (for example, fire and police departments). In business terms, we can say that the BSA is the producer of the Scouting program while the organizations that sponsor Scouting are the consumers of the Scouting program.

To organize a Scout unit and use the Scouting program, an organization must obtain a charter from the BSA local council. With this charter, following BSA nomenclature, the organization is called a "chartered organization." The charter is a contract between the BSA and the sponsor in which each party promises to do certain things. The terminology used by the BSA to describe the organizations that sponsor Scout units has changed over time. In the past they have been known as sponsoring organizations or sponsoring institutions. Currently they are called chartered organizations, although other titles may be used in the future.

The BSA lets the chartered organization (in Church Scouting, this is the ward) use the Scouting program and promises to provide it with what might be called "the tools of Scouting." These tools include such things as a support structure to help the organization implement its program, authority to use the BSA uniform and other insignia, literature describing how Scouting is done, and a training program for the organization's Scout leaders.

In turn, the chartered organization promises to follow BSA policies, to provide trained adult leaders for each of the Scout units that it forms, and to provide its Scout units with a place to meet and adequate physical facilities. Implicit in this agreement is the understanding that the organization will have its Scout leaders trained so they will know how to operate the Scouting program properly. The chartered organization is expected to retain the basic features of Scouting. It must continue to be "Scouting" as Baden-Powell designed it to be and not become a boys' club with a totally different agenda.

These requirements may appear to be a straightjacket, forcing all chartered organizations to have identical programs, but this is not true. While the BSA does not want the traditional Scouting program to be distorted, it does allow chartered organizations to make some modifications in the program in order to accomplish the objectives of the sponsor, as long as the modified program retains the essentials of Scouting. It is this latitude that allows Scouting to be successfully used in conjunction with the Aaronic Priesthood program.

When charters are granted to units in an organization, in most cases each unit is assigned the same number. For example, if the number were 1234, the organization's Scout units would be called Pack 1234, Troop 1234, Team 1234, and Crew 1234. In unusual cases, an organization may end up with differing numbers for its units.

This is the appropriate place to clear up a misunderstanding that often exists. While The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints initially became a sponsor of Scouting in 1913, and received a national charter at that time, the general Church no longer sponsors individual Scout units. If it did, all Scout units in the Church today would have the same number. Instead, each ward sponsors its own Scout units by becoming a chartered organization and signing an agreement with the BSA local council, allowing it to organize Scout units. Thus in a general sense the Church sponsors Scouting, but in the specific sense it is the ward (and not the general Church, nor even the stake) that is the chartered organization and has the responsibilities described above.

This arrangement has several ramifications. First, each year every Scout unit in the ward must renew its charter, and the bishop, as its executive officer, is responsible for assuring that it is renewed. Second, by becoming a chartered organization the ward agrees to provide leadership for the ward's Scout units (i.e., continually keeping all Scouting positions filled<sup>3</sup>). And third, the ward has implicitly agreed to train its units' Scout leaders.

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<sup>3</sup> Only the bishop can assure Scouting positions are filled, since in the Church Scout leaders are called by the bishop or at his direction. This is unlike most non-LDS Scout units where individuals can volunteer to be Scout leaders. Many Scout units' charters are late because at charter renewal time they do not have the required leaders.

## **The Ward Scout Units: The Pack, Troop, Team, and Crew**

The basic component of Scouting is the age-appropriate unit. The *Scouting Handbook* states: “When properly carried out under the direction of priesthood leaders, Scouting supplements activities for young men of Aaronic Priesthood quorums and for eight-, nine-, ten-, and eleven-year-old Primary boys.”<sup>4</sup> All wards and branches should have, at the very least, a Cub Scout pack and a Boy Scout troop. If there are very few boys in the ward, alternatives may be implemented (see topic 38: “Scouting with a Few Boys”).

### **The Charter**

As discussed above, in order to use the Boy Scout program, each unit in the ward must have its own agreement or charter issued by the local council of the Boy Scouts of America. Charters have a rich historical heritage. During the colonial period, kings would grant charters to individuals or companies, giving them certain lands or certain rights. A person or company receiving a charter could then govern the granted lands, or exercise the granted rights, with the power of the king to back them. Royal charters determined the geographic boundaries of some of the original thirteen colonies.

Scouting also operates by receiving and granting charters. On June 15, 1916, Congress chartered the Boy Scouts of America to develop and operate a youth program. Boy Scout councils operate under charters granted to them by the national organization, and this charter must be renewed periodically by the council. Scout districts do not have a charter since they are just a subdivision of the council.

Likewise, for an organization to be able to use the Scouting program, it must receive a charter—from the local council of the Boy Scouts of America. This is a one-year charter, which must be renewed annually. The charter lapses if it is not renewed, and if this occurs the organization may no longer use the Scouting program nor may its members wear the Scout uniform. The procedure of renewing a charter is commonly known as “rechartering.”

### **The Annual Charter Renewal Process**

District leaders, especially the commissioner staff, have the responsibility for helping units renew their charters annually. Each district can choose how it wants to accomplish this. One way is to have unit commissioners work individually with units and turn the paperwork directly into council. Another way is to organize a district “recharter day” where units come together on a particular day, receive assistance from district leaders, and turn their paperwork in at that time. If you do not know how your Scout district handles rechartering, or when your ward Scout units need to renew their charters, have your committee chairman ask your unit commissioner or a district leader.

The charter renewal form and procedure can change from year to year so only the basic process of renewing a unit charter will be described here. See topic 10 for more a more detailed explanation of charter renewal, including the new online charter renewal process that was recently introduced in the NCAC.

Charter renewal materials are prepared by the local Scout council and distributed to the chartered organization well before the charter renewal date. A separate charter renewal form is prepared for each Scout unit that the ward sponsors.<sup>5</sup> Each form contains a list of the leaders and boys who are shown in council records to be members of that Scout unit on the date the form was printed. The Scout unit must update this form by making any corrections that are needed for boys and leaders who are still in the unit.<sup>6</sup> The list should also be reviewed to remove adults who are no longer leaders and boys who have moved or have passed the age for advancement to the next unit. Applications for

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<sup>4</sup> The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, *Scouting Handbook*, (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1998), 1.

<sup>5</sup> Thus the Cub Scout pack, the Boy Scout troop, the Varsity Scout team, and the Venturing crew each will receive its own charter renewal application.

<sup>6</sup> The adult and youth rosters on the renewal form ask for the name, address, phone number, date of birth, and *Boys’ Life* status; the adult roster asks for position held; and the youth roster asks for school grade. Both adults and boys have certain age requirements that must be met, and all required adult positions must be filled or the unit cannot renew its charter.

boys and leaders who have not yet registered must accompany the charter renewal form when it is submitted. In the past, rechartering has been done manually, that is with pen and paper. Online charter renewal is now available.<sup>7</sup>

Since the rechartering process renews the contract between the council and the chartered organization, the executive officer must sign the charter renewal form. For LDS units, this means that the bishop must sign this form; one of his counselors or a stake leader cannot sign for him. In addition, the Scout leader (for example, the Scoutmaster for a troop or the Cubmaster for a pack) must also sign the form to confirm that the information on the form is correct.

It is important to recharter on time. When a unit's charter lapses, advancements are no longer recognized and the unit is in danger of losing its unit number.

## Registration of Members of the Unit

Once a unit charter has been issued (i.e., the agreement between the council and the unit has been signed), the unit is allowed to start using the BSA program. Leaders must be "called" and registered in their new positions, and boys must be registered with the unit appropriate to their ages. Thereafter, any new boy or leader who joins the unit must also register. This process is discussed in topics 9 and 53 and in supplements 2 and 3 of *A Scouting Reference for Ward Leaders*, but will be briefly explained here as well. Registration of individuals with the BSA is a necessary, yet often misunderstood and occasionally overlooked, step. We cannot overemphasize the necessity of *immediately* registering every adult leader and every boy who becomes a member of the unit.

## Adult Registration

When the bishopric decides to extend a call to someone to serve as a leader in Scouting, the interview process is more complicated than that of many other Church callings. An adult application should be given to the person, and should be carefully read and signed by the prospective leader at the time of the interview. If the person wants to think about the calling before accepting it, the application may be taken home, but must be filled out and returned to the bishopric member as soon as the calling has been accepted. One reason for registering immediately is that a leader who is registered is protected under BSA liability insurance. However, the main reason for immediate registration of prospective leaders is that *it is required by the BSA and the Church*. General Authorities frequently reiterate the policy of the Church, which is that a person who is called to be a Scout leader cannot serve in that capacity until his or her application has been submitted to the Scout council. "Never allow a Scout leader to function in any position in a [Scout] unit sponsored by the Church in the United States until he has been registered with the Boy Scouts of America" (President Boyd K. Packer, from a letter to stake presidents, January 2, 1997). President Thomas S. Monson stated:

No man is called to work with youth until his membership certificate is in the hands of the bishop. In addition, no man is called to work in Scouting until he is fully registered with the governing board of Scouting and his record merits consideration for a call. This procedure has been expounded many times, yet wolves continue to enter with the intent to destroy the flock. President Hinckley asked that I stress tonight this instruction.<sup>8</sup>

In addition to the prospective leader's signature, the adult application must be signed by the unit committee chairman, and by either the head of the chartered organization (the bishop) or the chartered organization representative.

Because Scout leaders work very closely with boys, there is always the possibility that some irresponsible leader will take advantage of this closeness and abuse the boys. To avoid this, the BSA application requires the applicant to provide the names of three references who can vouch for his or her character. In addition, the applicant must answer several questions about his or her moral qualifications. Furthermore, the committee chairman must check the credentials of the applicant as far as he or she is able, and assure the Scout council that this individual can be trusted to safely work with the youth. A bishop should never issue a Scouting calling to a person who has recently moved

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<sup>7</sup> <[www.boyscouts-ncac.org/pages/2092\\_internet\\_rechartering\\_is\\_here.cfm?searchterm=charter\\_renewal](http://www.boyscouts-ncac.org/pages/2092_internet_rechartering_is_here.cfm?searchterm=charter_renewal)>

<sup>8</sup> Thomas S. Monson, "In Harm's Way," *Ensign*, May 1998, 46. (This is quoted from a priesthood session address at the 168<sup>th</sup> Annual General Conference on April 4, 1998). By inference this also means that no woman should serve in a Scouting calling without being registered with the BSA.

into the ward without consulting the new member's previous bishop, and he should be very careful in approving a newly baptized member for a Scouting calling because he is probably not well acquainted with that person. The bishop's or the chartered organization representative's signature on the adult application implies that careful checking has been done.

After the Scout council receives the application (which must include the applicant's social security number), a criminal background check is done in order to guarantee that the applicant has never been convicted of child abuse or other crimes. Once the application has been submitted to the district executive or has been turned in to council headquarters, the prospective leader may begin to work with the boys. As a precaution, and to avoid potential embarrassment, it would be wise to delay the person's sustaining vote in sacrament meeting for several days, in the expectation that the background check has been duly completed.

A registration fee normally would accompany the application, but the fee for LDS Scouters in the National Capital Area Council is paid directly through the stake's Z-Account (see the section entitled "The Z-Account" below). The Church ultimately pays the leader's registration fee, and when the Scout unit recharter the leader's registration is extended for another year and no new application form need be submitted. If the adult transfers to a different unit, a new application form must be submitted, but the cheaper transfer fee is required, not the higher fee required for a new leader. To be charged the cheaper fee, the applicant must be sure to complete the transfer block on the form. If the leader is just changing positions within a unit, a new application is still required, but no fee is charged if a notation is made on the new application stating that this is merely a change of leadership within the same unit.

### **Multiple (Dual) Registration**

If an adult leader is registered in more than one Scout unit (for example, as a member of the ward's pack committee and the ward's troop committee or if the leader is a member of units in two different wards) only one registration fee is required. To be certain that only one fee is collected by the BSA, the following procedure should be followed. First, determine which of the two Scout units is the leader's "primary Scout unit." This will be the one that has the greatest demand on the person's time and effort. The fee should be paid when the leader registers in the primary Scout unit. Next, in order to register in the secondary Scout unit, a second application should be filled out (or if the two applications are submitted at the same time, the applicant may make a copy of one application, changing the position or unit for the second). In filling out this second application the word "multiple" should be written on the top right hand corner of the form, along with the unit number of the primary registration. A second (i.e. multiple or dual) registration may be submitted at any time after the first is done, but if this doesn't occur *at the same time* the person initially registers, then a new application must be filled out (i.e., a copy of the first may *not* be used).

### **Boy Registration**

A young boy does not become a Cub Scout by merely attending a den or pack meeting, nor does an older boy become a Boy Scout by merely attending a troop meeting. To become a Scout, a boy must pay a registration fee and submit an application to the BSA, signed by the unit leader and the boy's parent or guardian. A Venturing-age youth (age sixteen to eighteen) must sign his own application form, rather than it being signed by his parent. The Church pays the registration fee for all boys in Church Scout units, whether or not the boy is a member of the Church.

It is important for a boy to register when he first begins attending a den or troop meeting. If he is not registered, he cannot advance in Scouting nor should he wear the Scout uniform. In addition, some liability and insurance problems might arise when an unregistered boy participates in Scouting activities.

Once a boy has registered as a Scout, he doesn't need to submit a new application every time his Scout unit renews its charter, as long as he remains in the same Scout unit. His registration is automatically extended at charter renewal time.<sup>9</sup> When a boy advances to the next Scout unit at ages eleven, fourteen, or sixteen, however, a new application is required (see next section: "Transfers Between Scout Units").

Once a boy reaches the age of sixteen, he is registered in the Venturing crew with the members of the priests quorum. He may, however, still want to continue working toward his Eagle rank while participating in Venturing

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<sup>9</sup> The annual registration fee must be paid, but the stake pays this fee for all youth and leaders registered in LDS sponsored units. The stake is reimbursed by Church headquarters.

activities. As long as he has already reached the rank of First Class Scout, he may continue to work on his Eagle requirements while registered with the crew. If he has not reached First Class by the time he is sixteen, he should dual register with the troop, so the Scoutmaster can monitor his progress toward Eagle.

## Transfers Between Scout Units

When a boy advances from one Scout unit to another (from a Cub pack to a Scout troop, from a Scout troop to a Varsity team, from a Varsity team to a Venturing crew, or if he moves from one ward to another ward) a new application form must be sent to council. If the move occurs within a charter year, the new application is considered to be a *transfer* as long as the transfer box is completed on the application form. In this case, he only pays a minimum transfer fee rather than the full registration fee. Although the Church ultimately pays this registration fee, and not the stake or ward, it is important to take advantage of this provision since this money comes from Church funds and should not be wasted. The same procedure should be followed for an adult who transfers into another unit in a leadership position.

As a boy moves along the Scouting chain from pack to troop to team to crew, many wards fail to process the paperwork properly, and, while this might be considered to be just an administrative detail, it can often jeopardize a boy's advancement. Scouting advancement is not like moving from one Sunday School or Primary class to another. It requires an application form to be submitted for each move.

## Fees

Registration fees for boys and adult leaders (and the fee for the annual unit charter renewal) are paid by the stake and ultimately reimbursed from the general Church budget. A check covering the application fee for each new Scout or leader must accompany the youth or adult application (or the recharter form, at charter renewal time) *unless a Z-Account is available* (see section below, "The Z-Account"). The head of the chartered organization (the bishop) does not pay a registration fee unless he also holds an adult leadership position in the Scout unit. It would be wise for the bishop to register as a committee member so he can receive magazines and other Scouting-related mailings with useful information regarding upcoming activities, training opportunities for ward Scout leaders, and so on.<sup>10</sup> If the ward has a Venturing crew, the bishop, as president of the priests quorum, would probably want to be registered with the Venturing crew committee. He would then periodically receive the age-appropriate BSA materials from National, the council, and the district. Alternatively, he might choose to register as a committee member in any (or all) of the other Scout units in the ward. Individual Scouts and leaders pay for their own subscriptions to *Boy's Life* magazine, and a personal check should accompany the application form to cover that cost.

## The Z-Account

The National Capital Area Council has set up a special account for LDS Scout units. It is called a Z-Account, and every stake has its own Z-Account. Other councils may have similar accounts as well. Money placed in the stake's Z-Account can be withdrawn by any unit in the stake to pay registration and rechartering fees, but it cannot be used to pay any other costs (such as summer camp or *Boy's Life*). When an adult or youth application is filled out, the applicant or committee chairman should write "LDS" followed by the name of the stake in the upper right corner of the application (for example: *LDS, McLean Virginia Stake*). This alerts the council membership office that the application fee should be taken from the stake's Z-Account. The stake financial clerk should occasionally check with the council membership office to assure that there is enough money in the stake's Z-Account to handle the registration fees that it anticipates paying. This is especially important at recharter time. Each year, the council provides the stake with a summary of its transactions for the year and estimates what funds will be needed for the coming year. The money the stake puts into the Z-Account is reimbursed from the general Church budget.

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<sup>10</sup> Non-paying adults, such as the executive officer or merit badge counselors, do not receive mailings from the BSA.

Scouting exposes young men to people and experiences that encourage and nurture positive moral values. But we mustn't take Scouting for granted. You can do nothing more important for young people today than to continue, or begin, your support of Scouting. I have never met anyone with devoted Scouting experience who was not a solid citizen, a loyal friend, and a patriot. We need more of them.<sup>11</sup>

Wallace G Wilkinson  
Former governor of Kentucky

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<sup>11</sup> "Scouting for a Quote," <http://www.scouting.org/factsheets/02-559.html>

## **How the BSA Communicates With a Chartered Organization and Its Scout Units**

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### **Communication Between the BSA and the Chartered Organization**

The BSA works with a chartered organization through two individuals. One is the person who can speak for the organization and legally obligate it (for example, the president of a company or civic organization, or the minister of a church). The BSA calls this person the head of the chartered organization (or the institution head or the executive officer of the organization). All contractual arrangements between the BSA and the chartered organization require the executive officer's approval and signature. This includes requesting or renewing a charter. In the Church, the ward is the chartered organization and the executive officer is the bishop. His signature is required on the annual charter renewal applications for the ward's Scout units. No other signature is accepted.

In many organizations the executive officer is an extremely busy person who does not want to be burdened with the details of managing the organization's Scouting program. Because of this, the BSA asks the head of the chartered organization to designate another individual to act as the liaison between the organization (in our case, the ward) and the BSA. This person should be someone who has more time available to work with district and council Scouters than the head of the chartered organization has. The BSA calls this person the chartered organization representative (abbreviated COR or CR). In the Church, the bishop may call any worthy adult to this position, but he usually assigns one of the counselors in the bishopric to be the COR.<sup>12</sup> In any case, whoever is assigned as the COR should work closely with the bishop and be willing and able to fulfill the duties of a COR.

The COR is a voting member of the district committee. This membership allows an active COR who regularly attends the district committee meetings to help shape the district's activity program. Frequent attendance at district committee meetings would narrow the gap that sometimes exists between LDS units and the district, and encourage district leaders to plan activities that better fit into our Church calendar (for example, no Sunday camping or Monday night activities). For a more detailed job description of the COR, see topic 14, "The Chartered Organization Representative (COR)."

### **Communication Between the BSA and the Units**

#### **Roundtable**

Each district holds a monthly "roundtable" which reinforces the basic training that leaders have received. This is a valuable resource for Scout leaders—a tool whereby the BSA can assist them in carrying out their responsibilities. At roundtable future district activities are announced, new BSA policies are introduced and explained, and Scouters are able to meet others in the same positions and benefit from their successes and failures. Cubmasters and den leaders are provided with suggestions about how to conduct the upcoming monthly Cub Scout program. Scoutmasters and Varsity Coaches learn more about Scouting skills in their specific programs. Unit committee members learn about unit administration and how they can best assist their particular units. In addition, some districts hold training sessions, such as New Leader Essentials and Safe Swim Defense on the same evening, prior to roundtable. Quarterly Venturing roundtables are generally held on a different night and venue. It is important for LDS Scout leaders to take advantage of district roundtables, to help them carry out a successful Scouting program.

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<sup>12</sup> "The bishop assigns one of his counselors or another worthy adult to serve as the ward's representative to the Scout district and council. This leader works with the district [leaders] ..." (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, *Scouting Handbook*, 2). A Fast Start video (V-02V017) has been prepared by the BSA to help the chartered organization representative understand the specific duties of the COR. The video can be obtained at the Scout Shop at your council service center.

## **The Unit Commissioner**

In addition to the general information available at roundtables, Scout leaders also need help with the specific problems confronting their own pack, troop, team, or crew. This help is provided by unit commissioners. The best way to describe the role of a unit commissioner is to compare him or her with a home teacher. Just as a home teacher visits members' homes to help the bishop know their needs, to assist them with their problems where possible, and to teach them gospel principles, so a unit commissioner visits with the leaders of a Scout unit and reports back to the district regarding how the unit is faring. The unit commissioner offers the leaders of the unit help with the Scouting problems that they have (or will lead them to where this help can be found), and can reinforce their knowledge of Scouting principles and methods. Unlike home teachers, however, who are called to their positions by their priesthood leaders, the position of unit commissioner is *not* a Church calling. Unit commissioners, whose names might be suggested to the district commissioner by the bishop, are considered Scouting volunteers, and are *not* called to serve by LDS Church leaders or sustained in sacrament meeting. Once they are appointed as unit commissioners, they must attend a full day BSA-sponsored commissioner training course

## The Bishopric's Role in Scouting

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Church leaders have repeatedly stressed that Scouting is part of the Primary and Aaronic Priesthood programs, and have asked wards to sponsor Scout units. Although the Church pays the BSA registration fees for boys and adult leaders, it has delegated to individual wards the task of making Scouting a working part of both the Primary and Young Men programs. The goal of the bishop and his counselors is to assure that this happens, and this occurs only if the bishopric takes seriously the stewardship they have over Scouting .

The specific details of how to make Scouting work are found in various sections of *A Scouting Reference for Ward Leaders*. Here we only list the main responsibilities of bishoprics:

Assist in the annual renewal of the units' charters with the BSA in order to allow the ward to continue using the Scouting program. If the ward does not yet have a unit for a particular age group, the bishop should apply for a charter when the ward has enough boys of that age.<sup>13</sup>

Call individuals to serve as Scout leaders. A Scout unit must have a committee with three or more members (one serving as its chairman) and a unit leader who works directly with the boys. Cub packs require additional leaders. Not having the required number of Scout leaders at charter renewal time could cause the unit to submit its charter application late, and this could hamper the boys' advancement and could cause the adult leaders to lose BSA liability protection.

Assure that Scout leaders are properly trained and are given the Scouting literature they need in order to carry out their callings.

Assure that Scout leaders have taken BSA Youth Protection training.<sup>14</sup>

Assure that no person called to be a Scout leader *works with boys* until his or her application has been submitted to the district executive or council headquarters. Prior to calling the individual, or at the interview when the calling is extended, the bishopric should ascertain that the person has nothing in their past that might prevent approval by council when the BSA criminal background check is done.

Make certain that the monthly Key Scout Leaders' meeting is held. This meeting coordinates the four parts of the ward Scouting program (Cub Scouting, Boy Scouting, Varsity Scouting, and Venturing) and is conducted by the COR, who usually is a member of the bishopric.

Help merge the Scouting program into the Aaronic Priesthood program in such a way that these two programs become one cohesive program and function well together.

Understand enough about Scouting to recognize when a ward Scout unit is having problems and is not delivering the program as it should. Bishopric members should know who to ask for help in rescuing a unit.

The first five of these responsibilities are straightforward and simply *need* to be done. Unless "the ball is dropped," there should be no problems.

The sixth responsibility (Key Scout Leaders' meeting) is a shared responsibility. The ward's chartered organization representative is responsible for coordinating *all* of the Scouting activities in the ward. For details, see "Supplement 2: The Role of Scouting in the Aaronic Priesthood Program." For further explanation and an agenda of the Key Scout Leaders' meeting, see topics 34 and 64 in *A Scouting Reference for Ward Leaders*.

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<sup>13</sup> For non-LDS units, this number is five, but arrangements have been made with the BSA so an LDS unit can be organized with fewer.

<sup>14</sup> The BSA *expects* Scout leaders to take Youth Protection (YP) training, and it is vital that LDS Scouters do this. YP training can be taken online at <[www.boyscouts-nac.org/pages/71\\_youth\\_protection.cfm](http://www.boyscouts-nac.org/pages/71_youth_protection.cfm)>, as part of basic training, or as a separate course. While we're on the topic of Youth Protection, it is important to note that there are three age-appropriate Youth Protection videos for Scouts that should be shown in April, Youth Protection Month. The General Scout Committee of the Church has asked that when the videos are shown to Cub Scouts (*It Happened to Me*) and Boy Scouts (*A Time to Tell*), that a parent or guardian be present. The Church suggests that unit leaders show the videos to parents prior to their seeing it with their sons. Parents of Varsity- and Venturing-age youth should be invited to view *Personal Safety Awareness* with their sons. It is critical, however, for these boys to watch the video, whether or not their parents attend.

The seventh and eighth responsibilities are not as simple as the other six. They require considerable thought and much effort. How smoothly the ward's Young Men program will work, and how much value the boys will get from Scouting will depend on how well, and how wisely, the bishopric handles these two responsibilities. Again see "Supplement 2: The Role of Scouting in the Aaronic Priesthood Program." Supplement 2 offers suggestions about how Scouting can be integrated into priesthood quorums.

## Scouting in the Church—Linked but Unique

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A Church member viewing Scouting, even from a distance, should recognize its uniqueness among Church programs. No other Church program is like it. In the first place, it is not a Church-developed program like other Church programs are. It was developed by Lord Baden-Powell a century ago. Second, a ward member when called to serve in a Scouting position, unlike other Church leaders, must join a non-LDS organization (the BSA). No leaders in any other Church auxiliary must do this. Third, a ward Scout leader must be trained in order to know how to fulfill his or her calling. No other local Church position requires such vigorous training. Fourth, a ward Scout leader must be acquainted with, and conform to, two sets of policies and procedures: Church Scouting policies and BSA policies and procedures (some of which are outlined in this supplement). Fifth, unlike most other Church callings, there are costs required in order to serve as a Scout leader (the Church should pay these costs so the member does not have to use personal funds to serve in the calling).

In the Scouting community, Church Scouting is just another part of the Scouting family, albeit a significant part as far as numbers are concerned. From the BSA's point of view, an LDS Scout unit is like any other Scout unit—its relationship with the Scout district and Scout council is the same as other units.<sup>15</sup> The unit is expected to follow BSA policies and procedures as all other Scout units must, and its success (or lack of success) is measured by the same criteria that the BSA uses to grade the success of non-LDS Scout units. The BSA expects every Scout unit to use the standard BSA leadership structure, although how the ward chooses its leaders is the ward's choice, following Church policy, of course. This allows the Scouting leadership structure in an LDS Scout unit to be aligned with the priesthood quorum structure as outlined in the *Scouting Handbook*.

From the Church's point of view, the Scouting program provides an excellent activity program for its young men. Scouting's moral and ethical mooring makes a perfect match with gospel principles, and Scouting's goals for young men parallel those of the Church. Scouting has a proven ability to teach leadership skills, and its outdoor program is well designed to fulfill a boy's desire for excitement and action.

Scouting has a wide range of activities for boys, although Church Scout units sometimes fail to take full advantage of the opportunities provided. A Scouting program that extends no further than the confines of the Scout room will not hold a boy's interest for long, nor will it build the character traits in him that Scouting is capable of doing. This is especially true in Varsity teams and Venturing crews, where older boys demand more challenging activities in order to hold their interest.

Some Church members consider Scouting to be just a "Church auxiliary," to be operated solely within the LDS community. Those who view Scouting this way lose the opportunity of mixing with non-LDS boys and leaders in district and council activities. Furthermore, Scout leaders who are not involved at the district and council levels miss seeing how other packs, troops, teams, and crews work, and thus they don't pick up the clues that will help them improve their Scouting programs by seeing other Scout units in action. It is important for ward Scout leaders to broaden their vision and take advantage of all of the opportunities that Scouting provides.

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<sup>15</sup> There are a few unique differences between LDS and non-LDS Scouting, however, and these are discussed in topics 7 and 8 of *A Scouting Reference for Ward Leaders*.