

TROOP 344 POLICY MANUAL

Aims & Methods

The purpose of the Boy Scouts of America is to help boys become honorable men. Every Scouting activity strives to achieve these aims of Scouting:

The Ideals of Scouting - These are spelled out in the Scout oath, law, motto, and slogan.

Patrols - This method is unique to Scouting. Patrols are boy lead and give Scouts an experience in-group living and in citizenship.

Outdoors - The program is designed to take place in the outdoors. It is in the outdoors that Scouts share responsibilities, learn from each other, and apply skills and activities learned in the Troop meetings.

Advancement - This helps the boy grow in self-reliance and the ability to help others. The Scout is recognized for each achievement made.

Adult Association - Boys learn from the example of the adult leaders. The Scoutmaster and the Assistant Scoutmasters provide an image for the Scouts.

Uniform - Wearing the Class A Uniform makes the Boy Scout Troop visible as a force for good and creates a positive image in the community. This practical attire for scouting activities provides a way for Scouts to display the badges and awards that show what they have accomplished.

Leadership Development - The program encourages boys to learn and practice leadership skills. Every Scout has an opportunity to participate in both shared and total leadership.

Personal Growth - The good turn concept is a major part of the personal growth method of Scouting. As Scouts plan their activities, and progress toward their goals, the idea of helping others should become second nature.

Scouting Ideals

The Scout Oath

On my honor I will do my best to do my duty to God and my Country and to obey the Scout Law; to help other people at all times; to keep myself physically strong, mentally awake, and morally straight.

The Scout Law

A Scout is trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean, and reverent.

The Scout Motto

Be prepared!

The Scout Slogan

Do a good turn daily!

A Scout's understanding and appreciation of the ideals as explained in the Boy Scout Handbook should increase as he advances.

Religion

The Boy Scouts of America maintains that no boy can grow into the best kind of citizen without recognizing his obligation to God. The recognition of God as the ruling power in the universe and the grateful acknowledgement of his favors and blessings are necessary to the best type of citizenship. No matter what religious faith the boy may be, the fundamental need of good citizenship and belief in God should be kept visible.

Religious Awards

All members of Troop 344 are encouraged to earn the religious award made available through Scouting by their particular religious organization. Most major religious groups have such programs and awards. Any Scout interested in pursuing these awards should talk with the Scoutmaster. The program is carried out by the Boy's religious organization. The award is worn on the Scout uniform, and is presented in a service in his place of worship.

Positions of Responsibility

Troop 344 holds elections the second Tuesday of every June and the second Tuesday of every December. Current policy for the Troop is to elect the Senior Patrol Leader, and the Assistant Senior Patrol Leader.

Each Scout that decides to run for SPL/ASPL is in fact running for both positions. The Scout is required to prepare a 2 to 5 minute speech that outlines who they are, why they are in Boy Scouts, what they bring to the Troop, and what they plan to do for the Troop if elected. After the speeches there is a round-robin Q&A session. All Scouts then cast ballots for both positions. The Scout earning the most votes for SPL will become SPL, and the Scout earning the most votes for ASPL becomes the ASPL.

Eligibility Criteria for Senior Patrol Leader

Rank: 1st Class or Higher

Scouting Tenure in Troop 344: One Year

Eligibility Criteria for Assistant Senior Patrol Leader

Rank: 1st Class or Higher

Scouting Tenure in Troop 344: One Year

Once SPL/ASPL elections are complete, the Senior Patrol Leader and Assistant Senior Patrol Leader will work with the Scoutmaster to determine all the other major Positions of Responsibility. These include Troop Quartermaster, Scribe, and Chaplain's Aide. The only exception is the position of Patrol Leader. Patrol Leaders are elected by their respective patrols, and are to be approved by the Scoutmaster following their election. Patrol Leaders normally hold their position for the same six-month interval as the Senior Patrol Leader and Assistant Senior Patrol Leader.

At the agreement of the Scoutmaster and Assistant Scoutmasters, Junior Assistant Scoutmasters can be selected. To be a Junior Assistant Scoutmaster, the candidate must be at least 16 years of age and an Eagle Scout.

Patrol Leaders Council

The Patrol Leaders Council (or PLC) is a decision-making and planning body for the Scouts in Troop 344. Scouting promotes democratic processes and this council supports this method of Scouting. The Patrol Leaders Council is composed of the following:

- Senior Patrol Leader (Chairman)
- Assistant Senior Patrol Leader
- Troop Scribe
- Patrol Leaders of each Patrol
- Scoutmaster
- Assistant Scoutmasters (if needed)

The Patrol Leaders Council will meet at least once monthly. The PLC will meet on a separate night outside of the Tuesday meetings. A Patrol Leader's Council can be called at any time as necessary, as long as the minimum representation requirements are met. The representation requirements include Senior Patrol Leader or Assistant Senior Patrol Leader, Scoutmaster or designated Assistant Scoutmaster, Patrol Leader or Assistant Patrol Leader (or designated patrol representative). Issues of concern or interest of the Troop are to be brought before the Patrol Leaders Council.

Troop Meeting

Troop 344 meets each Tuesday evening from 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at St. Mark's United Methodist Church at 4801 Six Forks Road. The actual meeting will run from 7PM to 8PM, the last 30 minutes is reserved for special events, or for one on one work as needed. Meetings that use the extra time will be planned and announced ahead of time. The only exceptions are the week that the Troop

attends summer camp or if there is a special announcement. Scouts should be picked up at 8:00 p.m. The meeting will commence on schedule. Therefore, it is important to be on time. Each meeting should have an agenda and schedule of activities prepared. Activities, demonstrations, and visiting speakers should be arranged by the patrols sponsoring the activity or event, and approved by the Senior Patrol Leader and the Scoutmaster. Any questions or concerns about an event or activity are to be referred to the Senior Patrol Leader, or the Scoutmaster.

Meeting Code of Conduct

1. Respect each other.
2. Follow the agenda.
3. Share responsibility.
4. Criticize only ideas, not people.
5. Offer solutions to problems.
6. Question and participate.
7. Attend all meetings; be on time.
8. Listen constructively; keep an open mind.
9. One person speaks at a time; do not interrupt.
10. No swearing, cussing, or words considered profanity.
11. A Scout is Reverent. Headgear is to be removed while inside.
12. The marker board is for writing Troop information, and is not to be erased without permission of the Scribe, SPL, or ASPL.
13. No writing or doodling on the marker board without permission.
14. Work together, the task will go faster.

Participation

The benefits of Scouting are many. The Scout benefits only by active participation. Limited participation will yield limited or disappointing results for the Scout. Surely if parents or Scouts expect to obtain the best Scouting has to offer, they and we must put our best effort into it. Advancement along the Scouting Trail requires active participation at each step (see the requirements in the Boy Scout Handbook). Active participation in all types of activities is needed to advance. This includes camping trips, hikes, patrol activities, and service projects as well as Troop Meetings. Our Troop Committee has dictated that their definition of "Active Participation" as a minimum attendance of Fifty Percent of all Troop Meetings, and minimum attendance of Fifty Percent of all Troop Outings and Activities. Scouts with conflicts such as Band, Sports, or other important school/church/civic activity, will speak directly with the Scoutmaster about the situation two weeks prior to the activity to be missed. Every effort will be made by the adult leadership to work with each situation as it arises. Emergencies are exempt from this rule.

Uniforms

The Boy Scouts of America is a uniformed organization. The wearing of the uniform is one of the fundamental methods of Scouting. It has proven to contribute to the aims of the organization.

Troop 344 requires that Scouts wear a complete uniform. **The wearing of surplus or other look-alike military clothing and accessories as part of the uniform is specifically discouraged to avoid the appearance of militarism in the Boy Scouts of America. (Note this is consistent with the policy of the Boy Scouts of America.) The wearing of unauthorized insignia on a Scout uniform is not allowed.**

- **Note: Jewelry such as earrings, chains, and inappropriate necklaces are not to be worn for reasons of safety.** According to BSA Policy, during activities this includes “Wood Badge Beads” and any other items that can cause a safety hazard.

“Class A” Uniform: This is the complete "Scout Field Uniform." It consists of: Scout pants suitable to the season, Scout socks, Scout belt, and Scout shirt with the proper badges and insignia located in the proper locations specified in the Scout Handbook. Underneath the Scout shirt every Scout is to wear an Official BSA T-shirt, T-shirt issued for specific Scout events/summer camp, or the Official Troop 344 T-shirt. **If for some reason the Scout does not have a “Class B” T-shirt on underneath the “Class A” Scout Shirt, the Scout will be expected to remain in Class A Uniform.**

Additionally, the Troop 344 Scout is in complete “Class A Uniform” **only** when carrying both his Boy Scout Handbook and an ink pen. The Scout hat and neckerchief are currently optional parts of the uniform in Troop 344. If the Scout chooses to wear a cap or other type of headgear, it is expected to be appropriate to the season and especially appropriate to Scouting.

“Class B” Uniform: This is the same as “Class A” uniform except that a Scout T-shirt is worn in the place of the official uniform shirt. The T-shirt may be an Official BSA T-shirt, or a T-shirt issued for specific Scout events, or the Official Troop 344 T-shirt.

The “Class A” Uniform (or complete Field Uniform) is **required** at all “special” activities, in route to and from any outing or special event for the Troop, for Scoutmaster Conferences, and Boards of Review for *any advancement*. Scouts should arrive at our place of trip departure in “Class A” and leave the place of arrival in “Class A” unless otherwise instructed.

The “Class B” Uniform may be worn to all Troop meetings. “Class B” is also acceptable during the normal course of a campout or during summer camp activities where the Class A is not required.

Note: Scouts that do not conform to Troop 344 Uniform Policy as approved by the Troop Committee are subject to being sent home, or not allowed to participate in the planned activity or outing.

Dues

Each Scout is required to pay annual dues in March of \$60.00. The dues are to cover our chartering

fees, as well as care and maintenance of our Troop gear. It is not intended, however, to hinder any Scout from participating. Please speak with the Scoutmaster, Committee Chairman, Troop Treasurer, or other member of the active adult leadership to work out alternatives.

Dues for adult leaders are \$11 currently.

Fund Raisers

Every member of Troop 344 is expected to attempt in raising funds to offset our operational expenses.

Troop 344 participates in the annual Occoneechee Council Popcorn Sale as a fundraiser for both the Troop and the Council at the discretion of the Committee and the Scouts. In an effort to assist all the Scouts in being successful, the Troop takes popcorn orders at Saint Mark's United Methodist Church following the Sunday 11:00 service during the drive, if the Troop chooses to participate.

Part of the profits is placed into an account on behalf of the Scout with the remainder placed in the Troop Treasury. The balance in the Scout's account may be used to purchase only Scout approved items, to support travel, or to pay registration for special Scouting events. Any funds remaining in the Scout's account at the end of the Scout's tenure with Troop 344 will revert to the Troop treasury.

The proportions of the profit sharing are established by the Troop Treasurer and announced prior to the fundraiser.

It is important that these events be successful for both the Troop and the Scouts in the Troop. For this reason, we ask your full support. Because of the number of other fundraisers in which the Scouts also participate, the family of the Scout can elect to donate to the Troop en lieu of fundraiser participation. This is a donation directly to Troop 344, and is separate from the Occoneechee Council Friends of Scouting effort.

Troop Equipment

Troop 344 will furnish patrol-cooking gear, woods tools, patrol boxes, and some tentage required for Troop Outings. This equipment is purchased with the Troop treasury. The equipment is assigned to patrols. Patrols or individuals not exercising reasonable care may be asked to replace lost or damaged items. This request is at the discretion of the Scoutmaster or Troop Committee. All Troop equipment is for the exclusive use of the Troop for scouting activities. Personal use of Troop equipment is not permitted for non-Scout activities.

Outdoor Program

Troop 344 offers a full outdoor program of camping, hiking, aquatic, and high adventure activities where Scouts can accomplish many of the objectives of the Scouting program. We schedule at least one outdoor activity each month. Locations are selected to meet the program needs of the Troop.

"Be Prepared" is the motto of the Boy Scouts and this means warm clothes in winter, rain gear at all times, and comfortable clothes suitable to the season. Scouts not prepared (which includes the required uniform) in the judgment of the Scoutmaster or trip leader will not be allowed to participate in the activity. Trips are canceled when safety is in question or there is not sufficient adult leadership. Two adult leaders are required for all trips. Often more than two adults are required to provide effective leadership for some activities.

Food Cost

Each Scout planning to participate in an overnight camping trip is expected to bring **\$10** cash for his share of the food cost to the Tuesday night Troop meeting **immediately prior** to the camping trip. This money is to be turned-in to the Troop Treasurer. A Scout in that patrol purchases food for the patrol, and turns-in the receipt to the Troop Treasurer for reimbursement. The menu is to be approved by an adult leader prior to the purchase and most preferably at that Troop meeting. Once a Scout agrees to go on a camping trip, his money is **not refunded** once the food is purchased. If there is money remaining after the food is purchased, they money will be turned over to the Troop Treasurer. If, however, there is a shortage after the food purchase, the difference is made-up in the Treasury by monies leftover from previous camping trips.

"A Scout is Thrifty"

Every effort should be made to buy wisely and minimize cost. Every attempt is made to keep the costs for weekend trips as reasonable as possible for the event.

Transportation

Transportation services may be asked of parents. The Scoutmaster and the Assistant Scoutmasters provide some transportation. However, this may not be sufficient in some cases. (Note to parents: Mileage incurred on outings is a deductible expense.) Scouts will assist in the cost of fuel for vehicles, by paying the whole dollar amount of the current cost of a gallon of gas. That means that if gas is currently being sold for \$3.29, that each Scout would pay \$3 to help cover gas expenses. This money will be split equally with all drivers. The travel cost to high adventure bases such as Philmont Scout Ranch is a cost borne entirely by the Scout.

Camping Fees

The cost for renting a camping area shall be paid for by the Scouts, and adults. The 2 registered adults leading the campout are excluded from paying the camping fee. The total cost will be added up, and then divided by the total number of paying campers.

Tour Permits

Tour permits issued by the Occoneechee Council office are required for any trip for which the Troop provides transportation for its members. A Local Tour Permit is required for trips of less than 500 miles. A National Tour Permit is required for trips of more than 500 miles. The general

requirements of the tour permits include current in-force insurance for the vehicles (this is the driver's responsibility), the driver must be an adult, not a Scout, with a driver's license, and must be a driver capable of safely driving the vehicle and adhering to all traffic laws. (North Carolina's minimum insurance coverage requirements exceed those currently required by the boy Scouts of America.)

Sleeping Arrangements & Requirements

The policy of Troop 344 and that of the Boy Scouts of America is that no adult and Scout occupy the same tent unless the adult is the parent or legal guardian of the Scout. All adults participating on a Scout outing will be required to complete the BSA Youth Protection Training. This is a free online course.

Travel

While traveling to campouts, or service projects, Scouts are discouraged from bringing caffeinated drinks, or snack foods. The Grubmaster provides food for campouts, and Scouts are encouraged to participate in menu planning, rather than packing food in their bags. Instances where a Scout has special dietary needs should be discussed with the Scoutmaster.

The Friday of a campout, everyone should bring a bag dinner. The Troop will not stop to pick up food on the way. Eating in vehicles is at the discretion of the driver. Scouts should check with the driver as to the best time to eat their dinner.

On longer trips, the Troop may decide to stop for lunch before returning to the Church. Adults will decide on the best place to stop, and Scouts can decide what to eat and drink based on where the group stops. Longer trips may include stops for gas, or restroom breaks. Scouts are only permitted to exit vehicles with a buddy, and after checking with the adult in charge. Scouts are discouraged from buying junk food, or caffeinated drinks. Water, Gatorade, or sports drinks are OK.

Since adults must lead as examples, it is expected that all adults participating in trips follow the same rules as the Scouts.

Summer Camp

Troop 344 participates in a weeklong "summer camp" each year. Summer camps are held at various Scout camps across the country, and the Troop has historically gone to different camps each year. Summer camp selection takes place in the fall during the PLC. Once a camp is confirmed, details about the various programs are then given out to the Troop. Summer camp costs vary depending on the camp attending, but Scouts generally pay about \$200 each. This cost includes transportation, meals, merit badge programs, and extra activities.

While not all summer camps offer the same programs, each camp usually has a 1st year program,

along with a wide selection of merit badges. 1st year Scouts are strongly encouraged to participate in the 1st year program as this allows them to get many of the requirements through 1st Class completed. 2nd and 3rd year Scouts are encouraged to enroll in as many Eagle required classes as they can fit into their schedule. This allows for older Scouts to participate in many higher adventure programs at camp, without running into issues later in acquiring all the badges needed for the rank of Eagle.

All Scouts will need to get Scoutmaster Approval on their schedules before they are handed in.

Health & Medical

A **Class 1 Boy Scout Medical Review** is required upon joining Troop 344. This medical review shall be updated annually.

A **Class 2 Boy Scout Medical Review** is required prior to attending summer camp or other long-term camp.

A **Class 3 Scout Medical Review** is required for Scouts participating at high adventure bases or adults over 40 for either high adventure or summer camp.

Important Note:

It is important that the Scoutmaster be advised of *any* special conditions, which limit a Scout's physical activity, provide for special medical needs, require regular medication, or otherwise require his attention or awareness.

Activity Release

For activities a release will be requested from the Scout's parents. The Troop Committee, Scoutmaster, or trip leader selects the activities requiring a release. Activities such as rock climbing, white water rafting, caving, and other high adventure activities are examples of such events. The release form will be distributed at least one week in advance. A Scout's failure to have the release signed will result in his not being allowed to participate in the activity for which the release is requested (see end of document).

Scout Equipment

The Scout needs a minimum amount of personal camping equipment for his first campouts. This list includes the following essentials:

- Complete Scout uniform (Class A uniform for travel)
- Sleeping bag (20° rated)
- Waterproof ground cloth
- Flashlight with extra batteries and bulb
- Canteen or water bottle
- Compass

Watch
Plate, cup, bowl (cook kit)
Knife, fork, spoon (eating kit)
Official Scout Handbook

Any item in the official Scout catalog is an example of an item that is acceptable. The Scoutmaster and Assistant Scoutmasters can be helpful in equipment selection and the best sources for equipment. Additional equipment will be required for high adventure activities.

Woods Tools

Woods tools include pocketknives (sheath knives are not allowed at any Troop 344 meeting or activity), axes, saws, and hand axes. A Scout must earn the right to use these tools by completing a woods tool class. A qualified adult leader teaches this class. Upon successful completion of this Class A "Totin' Chip" card is presented and must be carried by the Scout at all times when he is likely to use woods tools. If improper use of the woods tools or unsafe uses are observed, an adult leader (based on the nature of the unsafe act) removes at least one corner of the card. When all four corners are cut, the Scout must repeat the woods tool class. It is important to note this class is not taught on a frequent schedule. A good Scout knife is one from the Scout catalog or a "Swiss Army" type knife and is a folding pocketknife. Large knives and sheath knives are prohibited to be worn or carried in Troop 344. The Scoutmaster or Assistant Scoutmaster in charge of a trip will take any knife considered improper or unsafe and return it at the end of the Scouting activity to the parent or adult guardian.

Fire Safety

The Scout Fire Plan will be used on each outing. This plan includes at least two fire extinguishers for each patrol and at each fire. One Scout is assigned as Fire Brigade Chief responsible for implementing the Fire Plan. In order to build a fire, light a fire or serve as Fire Brigade Chief, a Scout *must* hold a "Firem'n Chit." These chits are awarded after completing training and demonstrating to a qualified adult leader of his ability to perform these duties. Each infraction of fire safety rules will result in the removal of at least one corner of the "Firem'n Chit." The loss of all four corners will result in the loss of the chit and its privileges. The Scout may retest for the card but not on the outing on which it was lost. Open flames inside any tent or other similar enclosure are forbidden.

Prohibited Items

Firearms, fireworks, liquid fuel (for unsupervised use), liquid fuel equipment (for unsupervised use), lighters, or any other item that can create a safety hazard are *strictly prohibited*. Other items that interfere with the Scouting program, activities, or meetings should be left at home.

Gambling

Gambling is prohibited at Scout events and any items used in such activities will be taken and

returned to the parents or adult guardian of the involved Scouts at the end of the Scout event. Gambling is forbidden in Scouting and will not be tolerated. This includes the purchase of lottery tickets while on a Scout Troop excursion in an area where available. Repeat infractions can result in suspension or dismissal from the Troop.

Drugs & Alcohol

These have no place in Scouting! Any Scout, Scout leader, family member (at a Scout event), or visitor who has in his possession or uses them in any form will be asked to leave the Scout activity. This position is absolute and a Scout in violation of this policy will be taken to the nearest phone to call his parents to pick him up. Parents' support of this policy is required. Infractions of this policy will be referred to the Troop Committee for further action. It is essential for parents to be aware of any such problems. Repeated infractions can result in suspension or dismissal from the Troop.

Tobacco

The use of tobacco products by Scouts is *absolutely prohibited*. Any tobacco product will be taken if found in the possession of a Scout and the parents will be called to pick up the Scout. The use of tobacco products by adults is tolerated as long as it is not used in the presence of the Scouts. The use of tobacco in the presence of Scouts is strongly discouraged. Repeated youth usage can result in suspension or dismissal from the Troop.

Hazing

Anything to cause a Scout to have an unpleasant, degrading, or embarrassing experience is not a part of Scouting. Any such behavior will not be tolerated and will be referred to the Troop Committee for review and action. Actions taken can include a reprimand and public apology (both oral & written), suspension, or dismissal.

Advancement

Scouts will naturally advance at different rates. There is no competition to see who can advance the fastest. Advancement is a key element of the Scout program but is not an end in itself. Scouts that set goals on paper may reach their goals more easily than those who do not. A realistic time to achieve first class Scout is approximately twelve months. It is one of our goals to get each Scout to the First Class rank consistent with the Scout's own pace.

The Scout Advancement Plan is designed to accomplish a progressive series of learning experiences in areas of citizenship, character, outdoor experience, leadership, and personal fitness. Each Scout must demonstrate his capabilities by participating in Scout activities that are important to his personal goals. Regular attendance is important to advancement but is not the only criterion. Requirements for all ranks are in the official Boy Scout Handbook. Merit badge requirements are listed in merit badge pamphlets and the Advancement Requirements Book (a separate book). The Troop has copies of many of the merit badge books. These can be borrowed on request from the Troop library.

The final stages of advancement require a Scoutmaster Conference where the Scout assesses his progress and his goals. The last step is a "Board of Review." This is a limited oral exam of the Scout's knowledge and skills. The Board is comprised of three registered adult leaders excluding the Scoutmaster. In all cases except Eagle Scout it is our policy to present the Badge of Rank upon completion of the Board of Review or shortly thereafter.

Service Hours

Many activities exist for the Scout to gain Service Hours. Eagle Projects being conducted by fellow Scouts is the best way to show Scout Spirit and team work. Other activities and events are appropriate for accumulating Service Hours. Service Hours *must be approved prior* to the Scout working the hours by the Scoutmaster or other appointed adult leader other than the Scout's parent. Additionally, the Scout should present the approving adult leader a note from the person or organization for which the Service Hours were performed. If for some reason this is not possible, arrangements with the Scoutmaster or approving adult leader should be made prior to performing the Service Hours.

"A Scout is Trustworthy"

Scout Spirit

Scout Spirit is generally determined by the Scout's observed behavior, as well as active participation at Troop meetings and activities. Every effort to exclude hearsay is made to not unjustly color the evaluation of a particular Scout's "Spirit." Scout Spirit is understood to be:

- How a Scout presents and conducts himself in public, especially when in Class A or Class B Uniform.
- Attitude and behavior of the Scout during meetings and other Troop events.
- Cooperation of the Scout with his patrol, adult leadership, Troop, or others involved in the event or activity.
- Leadership according to current rank of the Scout.

Scoutmaster Conference

A Scoutmaster Conference is required to complete each Scout rank. "The purpose of this conference is to develop, over a period of time, an increasing level of understanding between the Scoutmaster and each Scout." This is a time for the Scout to evaluate his participation in the Scout program. It is also a time to receive constructive feedback for both the Scoutmaster and the Scout. Scoutmaster Conferences for ranks below First Class may be requested at Troop meetings or at the Scoutmaster's convenience. Conferences for the ranks of First Class through Eagle must be scheduled at least one week prior to the conference with the Scoutmaster. The Scoutmaster conducts all Scoutmaster Conferences.

Troop 344 Board of Review

Board of Review will convene when asked for. It will consist of three adult leaders, 1 must be a member of the Troop committee, Scoutmaster and parents are not permitted. The purpose of the Board of Review is not to test the Scout or make them redo requirements. The purpose is to allow the committee to get a sense for what the Scout likes and dislikes, and to get a feel for how the Troop is being run. This is an opportunity for the Scout to discuss what they have accomplished and what they hope to accomplish in the future. Committee members will be looking for a Scout's perspective on the direction of the Troop.

Eagle Scout

This is Boy Scouting's highest rank. The national average is that two Scouts of each one hundred earn this rank. Achieving Eagle Scout is much more than the twenty-one (21) merit badges required for the rank. The Eagle rank requires maturity, leadership, and personal example. How the Scout lives by the Scout Oath and Law is very important.

This rank also requires a personal service project planned and led by the Scout. It must involve leading others, and provide a service or improvement to the community. The Eagle Candidate is now required to get written approval from the entity directly receiving or benefiting from the completed project. While most service projects are done for city, county, and state parks, Eagle Candidates may also work with schools, churches, and public non-profit organizations. In addition to the requirements of the Boy Scouts of America, the Troop Committee recommends that the Eagle project require a minimum of 50 hours on the part of the Eagle Scout candidate. After Troop review and approval of proposed service project, district approval is required. Once district approval is attained, the project may commence. Upon completion of the service project, the Eagle Candidate must receive written verification that the project was completed to the satisfaction of the receiving/benefiting entity. This documentation must be provided to the district as part of the total Eagle Packet submitted for review.

District and Council Scouters provide the Board of Review. Eagle Boards of Review are scheduled once all the paperwork contained in the Eagle Packet has been completed and approved. The National Office of the Boy Scouts of America reviews the proposed paperwork prior to the award of the rank of Eagle Scout to the Scout. Usually, the Scout holds his Eagle Court of Honor at either Saint Mark's United Methodist Church, or the church at which he attends. Each Scout plans his own Court of Honor ceremony, ensuring it covers the basic Scouting Ideals. The Troop has ceremony resource material available to the Eagle Candidate upon request.

Merit badge requirements for Eagle Scout include a minimum of 21 merit badges. There are 11 "Eagle required" merit badges. These are:

- First Aid
- Camping

- Citizenship in the Community
- Citizenship in the Nation
- Citizenship in the World
- Communications
- Family Life
- Emergency Preparedness or Lifesaving
- Environmental Science
- Personal Management
- Swimming, Hiking, or Cycling

Parents

Parents are encouraged to discuss matters of interest or concern with any of the adult Scout leaders and members of the Troop Committee at any time. Parents are welcome to visit a Troop meeting at any time. In fact, parents are encouraged to attend meetings and/or offer their assistance consistent with the program established by the Scouts and approved by the Troop Committee. Parents are also welcome on any outing. Two registered adult leaders are still required for any outing. If any of the parents desire to become a registered adult leader, they should contact the Scoutmaster. There is also an opportunity to serve as a member of the Troop Committee. (The sponsor must approve Adult Scouters.)

Parents may assist their son with Merit Badge work, but they are not permitted to sign off on any requirements. Only registered Troop Leaders may sign off on requirements. This holds true for rank advancement as well. The only exception to this rule would be if a parent is teaching a merit badge to a group of Scouts. However, this must be approved prior to the teaching by the Scoutmaster.

Troop 344 has a “no Dad” policy on campouts. What this policy means is that while a Dad is welcome to participate in the Scouting program, they are encouraged to not *act* like a Dad.

Sponsor

St. Mark's United Methodist Church at 4801 Six Forks Road in Raleigh, NC sponsors Troop 344. Scouting is a part of the church's ministry. Saint Mark's encourages you to contact the church office by calling 787-0544 if you have any questions or concerns. Troop 344 has been chartered for over 50 years.

Troop Committee

Supporting the Scoutmaster with much needed assistance is one of the chief responsibilities of the Committee. The other responsibility is administration. The Committee assists in providing support for planning the program, encouraging advancement, and in supporting the outdoor program. The Troop Committee is responsible for the operation such that it is a continuing organization. Committee members have a duty to make sure that meetings are held and that a Scouting program is offered. In this function, the Committee is responsible for leadership, finance, records, equipment, facilities, and membership. Membership of the Troop Committee includes the Scoutmaster, Assistant Scoutmasters, the Institutional Representative (who represents the sponsor), Troop Treasurer, and the other committee members. The Committee is led by the Troop Committee Chairman and meets on the 3rd Tuesday of each month.

Adult Scouter Training

It is the policy of Troop 344 to encourage the training of its adult leaders. Minimum training consists of completion of a video course called "Fast Start.", along with Youth Protection training, which can be conducted online.

For those adults involved in direct contact with Scouts, Troop 344 recommends that basic leader training consist of the completion of "Scoutmastership Fundamentals." (This is a weekend long course.)

Advanced leader training is also available and is called "Wood Badge." The Wood Badge Training Course runs for several instructional weekends. Upon the completion of the instructional weekends, the Wood Badge candidates begin working on their "Ticket" with their assigned Coach Counselor. Many consider this "Ticket" to be several "mini Eagle Projects" rolled into one. Each Wood Badge candidate is given two years to complete his or her "Wood Badge Ticket." Many of the Adult Leaders working with Troop 344 have successfully completed Wood Badge, which is a strong statement for the quality leadership with which your son is working.

Roundtable is a monthly program is also offered for Scout Leaders. Meeting the first Thursday of every month during the traditional school calendar, Roundtable offers a plethora of Scouting ideas and topics, as well as an opportunity to share information with other Scout Leaders in the Falls District. Roundtable is open to both Youth Troop Leaders as well as Adult Troop Leaders.

Training Adult Leaders is one of the methods used to ensure a quality program.

Commitment to Youth

The Scoutmaster, Assistant Scoutmasters, and the Troop Committee are pledged to assist each Scout in the development of his sense of duties to God and country, to others, and to himself. We strive to develop an awareness of self-reliance, to improve individual and group skills, and to increase one's ability to be successful in life. We are honored and feel privileged you have chosen to give Troop 344 the opportunity to work with your son to develop these life-long skills.

