

Patrol Leaders' Council Manual



Troop 54

Worcester, Massachusetts

Revised: August 2, 2018

Introduction	3
Troop Leadership Positions	4
Senior Patrol Leader	4
Assistant Senior Patrol Leader	4
Patrol Leader	5
Assistant Patrol Leader	5
Troop Guide	6
Quartermaster	6
Scribe	7
Historian	7
Librarian	8
Instructor	8
Den Chief	9
Junior Assistant Scoutmaster	9
Order of the Arrow Troop Representative	10
Leave No Trace Trainer	10
Filling the Roles	11
PLC Membership	11
Patrol Leader Council Meeting	12
PLC Meeting Structure	12
Elements of the PLC Meeting	13
Opening and Call to Order	13
Roll Call and Reading of the Minutes	13
Patrol Reports	13
Old Business	13
Big Event Planning	13

Troop Meeting Planning	13
New Business	13
Scoutmaster's Minute	14
Assessing the Patrol Leaders' Council Meeting	14
Follow-up Makes It Happen	14
Patrol Meeting	15
Troop Meeting	15
Camping	15
Preparation	15
Conducting the Event	15
Goal Setting	17
Objective	17
Setting Your Goal	17
S.M.A.R.T. Goals	17
Leadership Toolkit	18
Other Resources	18
Information Sources	18

Introduction

A Scouts BSA troop is run by the Scouts in the Troop. The purpose of this manual is to provide structure and tools to enable the members of the Patrol Leaders' Council (PLC) to function in their roles as leaders of the Troop.

Troop Leadership Positions

Senior Patrol Leader

Position description: The Senior Patrol Leader (SPL) is the top junior leader in the troop. This position is elected. The SPL may serve only two consecutive terms.

Qualification: The SPL must hold at least the First Class rank and must have participated in at least four overnight events in the previous year or three overnight events in the previous six months and must have participated in at least one backpacking trip.

Reports to: The Scoutmaster

Duties:

- Runs all troop meetings, events, activities, and the annual program planning conference.
- Runs the patrol leaders' council meeting.
- Appoints other troop junior leaders with the advice and counsel of the Scoutmaster.
- Assigns duties and responsibilities to junior leaders.
- Assists the Scoutmaster with junior leader training.



Assistant Senior Patrol Leader

Position description: The Assistant Senior Patrol Leader (ASPL) is the second highest-ranking youth leader in the troop. He is appointed by the SPL with the approval of the Scoutmaster. The assistant senior patrol leader acts as the senior patrol leader in the absence of the senior patrol leader or when called upon. He also provides leadership to other youth leaders in the troop.

Qualification: The ASPL must hold at least the First Class rank and must have participated in at least one backpacking trip.

Reports to: The Senior Patrol Leader

Duties:

- Helps the Senior Patrol Leader lead meetings and activities.
- Runs the troop in the absence of the senior patrol leader.
- Helps train and supervise the troop scribe, quartermaster, instructor, librarian, historian, and chaplain's aide.
- Serves as a member of the patrol leaders' council.
- Sets a good example.



Patrol Leader

Position description: The Patrol Leader (PL) is elected by his patrol as its leader. He represents his patrol on the Patrol Leaders' Council.

Qualification: A Patrol Leader must hold at least Second Class rank.

Reports to: The Senior Patrol Leader

Duties:

- Appoints the Assistant Patrol Leader.
- Represents the patrol on the Patrol Leaders' Council.
- Plans and steers patrol meetings.
- Helps Scouts advance.
- Acts as the chief recruiter of new Scouts.
- Keeps patrol members informed.
- Knows what his patrol members and other leaders can do.



Assistant Patrol Leader

Position description: The Assistant Patrol Leader (APL) is appointed by the Patrol Leader and leads the patrol in his absence.

Reports to: The Patrol Leader

Duties:

- Helps the PL plan and steer patrol meetings and activities.
- Helps the PLC keep patrol members informed.
- Helps the patrol get ready for all troop activities.
- Represents his patrol at Patrol Leaders' Council meetings when the Patrol Leader cannot attend.



Troop Guide

Position description: The Troop Guide works with new Scouts. He helps them feel comfortable and earn their First Class rank in their first year. He is appointed by the SPL with the approval of the Scoutmaster.

Reports to: The assistant Scoutmaster for the new-Scout patrol in the troop

Duties:

- Introduces new Scouts to troop operations.
- Guides new Scouts from harassment by older Scouts.
- Helps new Scouts earn First Class rank in their first year.
- Teaches basic Scout skills.
- Coaches the patrol leader of the new-Scout patrol on his duties.
- Works with the patrol leader at patrol leaders' council meetings.
- Attends patrol leaders' council meetings with the patrol leader of the new-Scout patrol.
- Assists the assistant Scoutmaster with training.
- Counsels individuals Scouts on Scouting challenges.



Quartermaster

Position description: The Quartermaster keeps track of troop equipment and sees that it is in good working order. He is appointed by the SPL with the approval of the Scoutmaster.

Reports to: The Assistant Senior Patrol Leader

Duties:

- Keeps records on patrol and troop equipment.
- Makes sure equipment is in good working condition.
- Issues equipment and makes sure it is returned in good condition.
- Makes suggestions for new or replacement items.



Works with the troop committee member responsible for equipment.

Scribe

Position description: The Scribe keeps the troop records. He records the activities of the patrol leaders' council and keeps a record of dues, advancement, and Scout attendance at troop meetings. He is appointed by the SPL with the approval of the Scoutmaster.

Reports to: The Assistant Senior Patrol Leader

Duties:

- Attends and keeps a log of patrol leaders' council meetings.
- Records individual Scout attendance and dues payments.
- Records individual Scout advancement progress.
- Works with the troop committee member responsible for records and finance.



Historian

Position description: The historian preserves troop photographs, news stories, trophies, flags, scrapbooks, awards, and other memorabilia. He is appointed by the SPL with the approval of the Scoutmaster.

Reports to: The Assistant Senior Patrol Leader

Duties:

- Gathers pictures and facts about troop activities and keeps them in a historical file or scrapbook.
- Takes care of troop trophies, ribbons, and souvenirs of troop activities.
- Keeps information about former members of the troop.



Librarian

Position description: The Librarian oversees the care and use of troop books, pamphlets, magazines, audiovisuals, and merit badge counselor lists. He is appointed by the SPL with the approval of the Scoutmaster.

Reports to: The Assistant Senior Patrol Leader

Duties:

- Sets up and takes care of a troop library.
- Keeps records of books and pamphlets owned by the troop.
- Adds new or replacement items as needed.
- Keeps books and pamphlets available for borrowing.
- Keeps a system for checking books and pamphlets in and out, and follows up on late returns.



Instructor

Position description: The Instructor teaches Scouting skills. He is appointed by the SPL with the approval of the Scoutmaster.

Reports to: The Assistant Senior Patrol Leader

Duties:

- Teaches basic Scouting skills in troop and patrols.



Den Chief

Position description: The Den Chief works with the Cub Scouts, Webelos Scouts, and den leaders in the Cub Scout pack. There may be more than one Den Chief in the troop. He is appointed by the Scoutmaster.

Qualifications: A Den Chief must hold at least First Class ranks and must have taken the Den Chief Training.

Reports to: The den leader in the pack and the assistant Scoutmaster for the new-Scout patrol in the troop

Duties:

- Knows the purposes of Cub Scouting.
- Helps Cub Scouts advance through Cub Scout ranks.
- Encourages Cub Scouts to join a Boy Scout troop upon graduation.
- Assists with activities in the den meetings.
- Is a friend to the boys in the den.
- Helps out at weekly den meetings and monthly pack meetings.
- Meets with adult members of the den, pack, and troop as necessary.



Junior Assistant Scoutmaster

Position description: The Junior Assistant Scoutmaster (JASM) serves in the capacity of an Assistant Scoutmaster except where legal age and maturity are required. He is appointed by the Scoutmaster based on his leadership ability.

Qualifications: The JASM must hold at least the Life Scout ranks and must be at least 16 years old (but not yet 18).

Reports to: The Scoutmaster

Duties:

- Functions as an assistant Scoutmaster.
- Performs duties as assigned by the Scoutmaster.



Order of the Arrow Troop Representative

Position description: The OA Troop Representative serves as a link between the troop and the OA Lodge. He is appointed by the SPL with the approval of the Scoutmaster.

Qualification: The OA Troop Rep must be a member of the Order of the Arrow.

Reports to: SPL

Adult Mentor: Scoutmaster

Duties:

- Encourages all OA members to pay their annual OA dues.
- Keeps OA members informed about events and activities of the lodge.
- Assists with planning service projects for the troop.



Leave No Trace Trainer

Position description: The Leave No Trace (LNT) Trainer ensures that the troop understands and practices Leave No Trace in the outdoors. He is appointed by the SPL with the approval of the Scoutmaster.

Qualification: The LNT Trainer must have taken the LNT Trainer course, which requires an age of at least 14.

Reports to: SPL

Adult Mentor: Scoutmaster

Duties:

- Attends all outdoor activities of the Troop, especially backwoods camping events
- Teaches troop members the principles of Leave No Trace.
- Assists the Librarian in finding up-to-date LNT reference materials for the troop library.
- Helps the troop and patrol to prevent avoidable impacts and minimize unavoidable impacts from their use of the outdoors.
- Encourages Scout participation in the outdoor program of the troop.



Filling the Roles

All of the following steps (through patrol leader election) will preferably be completed in a single troop meeting. If there is no candidate who satisfies the qualifications for a position, the SM may approve other specific candidate(s).

SPL Election - The SPL is elected by the members of the troop. A majority of the active youth members must be present during the voting, however, there is no minimum to the number of votes cast. A candidate may vote for himself. Votes only count if cast for a candidate who has agreed to run for the office. If no candidate receives a majority of the votes, a run-off vote will be held between the two candidates with the highest number of votes.

ASPL Appointment - The newly elected SPL appoints the ASPL subject to the approval of the Scoutmaster. Until the SPL and SM have conferred on the appointment, no announcement is made to the Troop regarding who is appointed.

Patrol Selections - After the ASPL appointment is confirmed, the SPL and ASPL create new patrols, dividing up all of the members of the troop into approximately equal size patrols of 6-9 Scouts each. The SPL and ASPL may choose to make these selections by lottery.

- If the Troop has fewer than 18 active members (as determined by the SM), the SPL and ASPL will be in the same one of the two patrols.
- If the Troop has 18 or more active members, the SPL and ASPL will constitute a separate Senior Patrol.

Patrol Leader Election - Any patrol that does not include the SPL as a member elects its patrol leader from among its members at its first meeting.

Other Troop Positions - Appointed by the SPL, provided the candidate meets the qualifications, both in accordance with the position information in this document. Such appointments may be made at any time and should be made when the incumbent is not performing the job satisfactorily.

PLC Membership

The patrol leaders' council is made of of the following junior leaders:

- Senior Patrol Leader
- Assistant Senior Patrol Leader
- Patrol Leader of each patrol (If a patrol leader cannot attend, the assistant patrol leader should represent the patrol)
- Troop Guide

The Scribe may attend to take minutes but is not a voting member of the council.

The Scoutmaster is present at patrol leaders' council meetings, but only in a supportive role to provide information and insight on issues and activities. To the greatest extent possible, it is the members of the patrol leaders' council who plan and carry out the program of a boy-run, boy-led troop.

Patrol Leader Council Meeting

The patrol leaders' council runs the troop according to the policies of the Boy Scouts of America under the guidance and counsel of the Scoutmaster. The patrol leaders' council plans the troop program at the annual program planning conference. It then meets every month to fine-tune the plans for the coming month.

At the conclusion of troop meetings (and at other times the senior patrol leader feels the patrol leaders' council should consider an issue) the council meets informally (a "stand-up meeting") to review the success of a troop activity and to go over responsibilities for future meetings and events.

PLC Meeting Structure

Monthly PLC meetings can be held in any private place free of distractions. The best setting will allow everyone to face each other and have adequate space in which to work. The length of each meeting will vary from 60 to 90 minutes depending on the amount of business before the council.

The SPL will chair meetings of the patrol leaders' council. He should stick to the agenda and keep things moving along. If council members are spending too much time on an issue, it may be necessary to table that item for future consideration and move on with the agenda. Keep the council focused on issues of importance.

Suggested Agenda

- **Item (Run By)**
- Opening and Call to Order (Senior Patrol Leader)
- Roll Call and Reading of the Minutes (Troop Scribe)
- Patrol Reports (Patrol Leaders)
- Old Business (Senior Patrol Leader)
- Big Event Planning (Senior Patrol Leader)
- Troop Meeting Planning (Senior Patrol Leader)
- New Business (Senior Patrol Leader)
- Scoutmaster's Minute (Scoutmaster)

In addition to program planning, the PLC may deal with other issues concerning the troop and its members, such as:

- Advancement needs
- Fund raising projects
- Recruitment plans
- Disciplinary issues

Elements of the PLC Meeting

Opening and Call to Order

Start the meeting on time with a simple opening ceremony such as reciting the Scout Oath or Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call and Reading of the Minutes

The SPL asks the Troop Scribe to call the roll and read the minutes from the previous meeting. Council members may make additions or corrections to the minutes before voting to approve it as part of the council's permanent record.

Patrol Reports

Each patrol leader should be prepared to make a report on the progress of his patrol. His report should include information about new members, advancement progress and anything the patrol has done since the last patrol leaders' council meeting.

Old Business

Take up any discussion items left unresolved at the last patrol leaders' council meeting. When necessary, bring matters to a close by asking for a vote.

Big Event Planning

Review and discuss the big event related to the upcoming month's troop program feature. While the event itself will have already been determined during the troop program planning conference, details may need to be worked out. Determine the who, what, where, when, why, and how of the event. Patrol leaders can add to the discussion by voicing ideas raised by their patrols. Explore the issues and bring any essential matters to a vote.

Troop Meeting Planning

Determine how many troop meetings the Troop will have during the next month (there may be a holiday or event that takes the place of a regular meeting). Distribute Troop Meeting Plan Work Sheets for each of the month's troop meetings. (The plan sheets can be found in the BSA publication Troop Program Features.) As you and the patrol leaders' council review plans for each of the month's meetings, assign responsibilities for portions of the meetings, taking care to distribute the load equally among the patrols and troop leaders. When possible, plan different levels of skills instruction for each meeting so that all age groups will be equally challenged.

New Business

This portion of the meeting is devoted to discussion of items not previously on the agenda. A patrol may be requesting permission to embark on a patrol hike, for example, or the opportunity for a special troop service project may have recently come up.

Among the issues to be addressed by the patrol leaders' council are any disciplinary problems within the troop. The troop's youth leaders can consider the best ways to encourage appropriate behavior by each Scout and develop strategies for dealing with any instances of inappropriate behavior. Information about the more serious behavior problems should be passed on to the Scoutmaster and troop committee so that they can handle the situation, often by meeting with the Scout and his parents or guardians.

Scoutmaster's Minute

Up to now the Scoutmaster probably observed the patrol leaders' council meeting and asked a question or two, but otherwise allowed you to run the meeting and guide the agenda. As a closing to the meeting, the Scoutmaster can share some constructive thoughts on what has happened and offer an upbeat, supportive Scoutmaster's Minute to provide a sense of completion to the proceedings.

Assessing the Patrol Leaders' Council Meeting

Immediately following a meeting of the patrol leaders' council, the SPL takes a few minutes to review the meeting with the Scoutmaster. The following questions can guide your assessment:

- Was there a written agenda, and was it followed?
- Were all patrols allowed input on troop decisions?
- Were specific tasks assigned to individuals?
- Were necessary resources for troop activities considered?
- Were the tasks spread evenly among patrols and individuals?
- Was a specific schedule planned for upcoming event?
- Did the group come to a consensus on handling problems?
- Was a minutes kept?

Follow-up Makes It Happen

At the conclusion of an effective patrol leaders' council meeting, the troop's youth leaders should understand the plan for troop meetings and events. They also will understand who is responsible for various portions of those meetings and events and be clear about what information must be shared with the patrols.

In the weeks to come, the SPL checks in with patrol leaders' council members now and then to ensure that they continue to be on top of the troop's plans. Get them together before and after meetings and activities to double-check their understanding of the manner in which events will unfold and to review the just-concluded troop events.

The SPL and the Scoutmaster will also visit briefly before meetings and activities to look over the agenda developed by the patrol leaders' council and ensure that everything is ready to go according to plan.

Patrol Meeting

In this troop, patrol meetings are a segment of the regular troop meetings. The patrol leader is responsible for knowing what his patrol is to accomplish during that segment and for keeping his patrol members focused on accomplishing it. To succeed in this, the patrol leader needs to know the “what” before the troop meeting. He should resolve any questions about that with the SPL and come prepared to lead his patrol.

Troop Meeting

The SPL (or the ASPL in his absence) leads the troop meeting. If the previous PLC meeting was successful, the troop meeting has a plan. Key tools for executing the troop meeting:

- Troop Meeting Plan
- Youth Leader Scripts (flip book) - Use this if you don't know the ceremony portion by memory. Includes a copy of the troop's Leadership Toolkit for ready reference.

Camping

Preparation

During troop meetings prior to a camping trip, certain key elements need to be addressed by each patrol.

Meal Planning - For details on this process, see the [Cooking and Food page](#) of the Troop 54 website. The patrol leader should ensure that Scouts working on a rank requirement get the needed opportunity and take the appropriate responsibility for meal planning and cooking. Keep in mind that some Scouts have never cooked before; make sure they view learning to cook as an opportunity to become a bit more independent.

Gear Planning - Knowing the details regarding the trip and the meals, the patrol can assemble the gear needed for a successful trip. The patrol leader must ensure that the patrol accomplishes this by assigning gear assembly tasks to members of the patrol, supervising the work, providing guidance and ensuring completion of the tasks. To ensure that the patrol at least considers each of the various items that may be needed, use the Troop 54 [“Patrol Detailed Campout Planning List”](#) on the Troop 54 website under Resources > Forms. Also see the various sections of the Camping section of the website under Outings Guide > Camping. If gear is lacking or requires repair or replacement, advise the Quartermaster.

Duty Roster - Decide who is to cook each meal and clean up after each meal. The meal jobs should be rotated from meal to meal. If a Scout is working on his first class cooking requirement, he is to prepare the duty roster for cooking on his own. You can give him advice, but let him do the job.

Conducting the Event

Upon arrival at camp, the Patrol Leader needs to take charge of his patrol and camp site. The first order of business should be to hang up the duty rosters. This leaves no doubt in any one's mind what they are responsible for. Put the duty rosters where everyone can see

them. The SPL is responsible for assigning troop-oriented duties - collecting firewood, filling water containers (includes drinking water and water for dousing fires) and building fires.

Avoid is having too many patrol members trying to do the same job as this can result in boys standing around with nothing to do; This, in turn will cause you to lose their attention. Once you have lost their attention it is very hard to get it back again.

Assign jobs so that everyone has something to do as soon as you arrive at the campsite. Also, try to be aware of who needs or wants to work on second or first class requirements. Ideally, your tents should be up, gear stowed and fire set up before you begin any other activities. In some cases, the Troop may need to move onto a scheduled day activity first. Arrival is an important time to keep the members of your patrol from wandering off. The natural tendency will be for them to play and have fun first and worry later. Make sure you keep your Scouts focused to avoid this.

Tents - In this troop, each tent is set up by the Scouts who will sleep in the tent (so no need to assign Scouts to those). The patrol leader's job is to ensure that the tents are set up in a timely manner and are set up properly. Provide guidance as needed.

Fire - Assign two scouts to gather tinder, kindling and firewood. Assign one scout to build the fire lay.

Cooking Area - For car camping trips, the pop-up tents are the first thing that should be set up. In the event of rain you will need these to store the troop's food and equipment so it doesn't get wet while you set up camp. After these are in place, set up the cooking gear (tables, stove stands, stoves, wash table, coolers, lanterns etc.) in a way that provides the needed working space and access. Assign Scouts to this.

Ax Yard - The ax yard is the woodcutting and chopping area and should be clearly marked by rope. For safety reasons, only one scout should be assigned to set up the ax yard, and only one Scout should be allowed into the yard at any time.

Site Cleanup - In this troop, picking up trash is a duty shared by all Scouts. The SPL and patrol leaders should ensure that each Scouts understands this duty and acts accordingly.

Water - Gets drinking water and water for dousing fires and prepares the washing station.

Goal Setting

Objective

As a member of the Patrol Leaders' Council, your fellow scouts rely on you to take your responsibilities seriously and to do what is in the best interest of the Troop. One of the keys to your success is to set a goal, something you would like to accomplish during your time in your position, and work to achieve that goal before you complete your term. This can be a simple goal, such as teaching a new skill to a group of scouts, or a more complex goal involving many scouts and resources.

Setting Your Goal

Part of your responsibility as a Patrol Leaders' Council member is to set a goal for yourself or the troop. PLC members will be asked to complete a goal-setting worksheet before the first PLC meeting following election or appointment. This will be submitted to the Scoutmaster and will be reviewed at a PLC meeting when you have been in your position for three months and again at the end of your term. Use the following process:

1. Complete a [goal worksheet](#). You can obtain one from the Scoutmaster. You should set at least one goal for yourself, but you can set more if you wish.
2. Submit the goal worksheet to the Scoutmaster at the troop meeting following your election.
3. The scoutmaster will make a copy of the worksheet and give the copy to you at the next troop meeting.
4. When you have been in your position for three months, be prepared to review your progress with the Scoutmaster at a troop meeting.
5. When you have completed your term, work with the Scoutmaster to show how your goal was achieved. If it was not achieved, develop a plan to complete it.

S.M.A.R.T. Goals

The main objective when setting a goal is not its complexity, but how achievable it is. The effectiveness of a goal can be measured by how "SMART" it is. SMART is an acronym for Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Time-bound." Following is a description of this goal setting concept.

Specific - The goal must be clear and straightforward. To make goals specific, they must state exactly what is planned, why it is important, who's involved, where it is going to happen, etc.

Measurable - If a goal is not measurable, it is not possible to know whether you are making progress toward success. Measuring progress will help you stay on track to reach the goal.

Attainable - Goals need to be realistic and attainable. When you identify goals, figure out ways you can achieve them. If you can't reach the goal, it is not a good goal to set.

Relevant - When setting a goal, choose a goal that matters. A Scout's goal to "make 50 peanut butter and jelly sandwiches by 2:00pm" might be Specific, Measurable, Attainable, and Time-Bound, but it might not be Relevant.

Time-bound - A commitment to a deadline helps you focus your efforts on completion of the goal by the due date you set for yourself.

Leadership Toolkit

1. **Scout Sign**
 - Say "Signs up!" if it is taking too long.
 - If a Scout puts the sign up but keeps talking, single him out to explain how this works.
2. **Project your voice** to the back of the room.
3. **Meeting Script** - Know it or use it.
4. **Connect**
 - **Look people in the eye** while speaking to them.
 - **Confirm** - If someone is not paying attention, stop and ask that person what you just said.
5. **Control the Chaos**
 - **Set expectations** for what Scouts should do and should not do.
 - **Avoid free time.** Ensure that everyone always has something to do.
 - **Challenge.** If someone is doing the wrong thing, stop him and ask him what he is supposed to be doing.
6. **Motivate** - Use motivation to keep everyone focused.
7. **Demand Compliance** with the troop Discipline Policy.

Other Resources

[Troop 54 Website](#) - Lot of tools for running a troop and planning its activities. This site has over 900 web pages and over 12,000 files.

Patrol Leader Handbook (BSA) - Includes a section on handling difficult interpersonal situations.

Senior Patrol Leader Handbook (BSA) - Includes a section on displaying leadership.

Information Sources

- Overall structure, goal setting section and in part the camping section were based on [Patrol Leader Council Guide Book](#) by Troop 97 of Chatham, IL (8/27/12 version), with additions and deletions..
- Position descriptions were based on the Troop 54 "Guide to Youth Leadership Positions" (2011 version).
- Details on operation of the PLC meetings were based on "The Senior Patrol Leader Handbook", publication of BSA (2010 printing).
- The leadership toolkit was developed by Troop 54 leaders in 2017.