

# SEA SCOUTING COUNCIL GUIDE

Sea Scouting utilizes the program, advancement, ceremonies, traditions, uniforms, and insignia found in the *Sea Scout Manual*, No. 33239. This guide is designed to help council staff and volunteers improve and expand this program.

Sea Scout ships that specialize in maritime careers, recreational boating, SCUBA diving, or other aquatic activities are organized and serviced in the same manner as all Scout units. The *Sea Scout Manual*, along with other BSA publications found at the end of this guide, support the program. Sea Scouting is a unique and time-tested program that provides exciting and worthwhile activities of interest to young men and women. Many councils find that their longest tenured units are Sea Scout ships. Since the leaders of these ships are involved in a common program, councils may find it desirable to encourage leaders' wardrooms, activities, and training.

## WELCOME TO SEA SCOUTING

Sea Scouting is a division of the Boy Scouts of America for young men and women at least 13 years old who have completed the eighth grade, or youth age 14 through 21. Its purpose is to bring a character-building, citizenship-training, and fitness program to the youth of America. Sea Scout ships are organized by churches, civic clubs, schools, maritime organizations, businesses, unions, and other community organizations which provide adult volunteer leaders, program resources, and meeting facilities. These ships plan programs related to maritime careers, seamanship, and service.

Today's Sea Scouting started in 1912 and has a long and colorful tradition. Thousands of young men and women have had the opportunity to follow the traditions of the sea while learning about potential maritime careers or a lifelong hobby of recreational boating. Many Sea Scout ships maintain sail or power vessels, follow a challenging rank advancement program, and utilize nautical uniforming, customs, and ceremonies.

### **Help via the Internet**

The home of Sea Scouting on the Internet is <http://www.seascout.org>.

## PART ONE – GETTING STARTED

### A Marketing Plan for Sea Scouting

This section is designed to guide local Boy Scouts of America council staff and volunteers in expanding Sea Scouting.

#### **STEP ONE: Determine the interests of the youth.**

Many young adults aged 13 to 21 are interested in sailing, motorboating, maritime careers, SCUBA diving, and related careers. The BSA local council's career interest survey may contain career categories such as sailing, boating, diving, etc. Many of these young adults will be interested in the Sea Scouting program.

In addition to the survey, or in those locations where a survey is not available, young adults can be recruited to Sea Scouting by school notices, after-school meetings, announcements through churches or community organizations, newspaper and radio publicity, Scout show booths, contacts with older Boy Scouts, and similar methods. In some cases, an existing youth group in a school, church or sailing club can be organized as a Sea Scout ship.

The number of ships to be organized depends upon the council's estimate of the number of youth available to join.

#### **STEP TWO: Determine the organizations that might charter ships.**

Any organization – church, school, business, civic club, labor union, or other community organization – can charter a Sea Scout ship. As with any Scouting unit, the organization has to provide capable adult leaders and program support, and must secure a meeting location. Obviously, these adult leaders should be able and willing to use the Sea Scouting program. Those with careers or hobbies related to seamanship are the most likely prospects. In addition to churches, civic clubs, fraternal groups, unions, schools, and community organizations, the following organizations might be considered:

- Maritime businesses and industries
- U.S. Power Squadrons
- Yacht clubs
- Sailing clubs
- Marinas, boatyards, boat builders
- Propeller clubs
- Maritime schools
- College or university boat clubs
- Maritime museums
- SCUBA diving schools, businesses, and organizations
- Maritime labor unions
- Navy ROTC units

- Maritime research institutes
- Boating safety organizations and agencies

The majority of Sea Scout ships are chartered to churches, civic clubs, fraternal organizations, and yacht clubs.

**STEP THREE: Sea Scout ships are organized.**

Once the council determines which organizations to contact about chartering Sea Scout ships, the following BSA publications available at [seascout.org](http://seascout.org) that contain complete information on the Impact Plan, steps to organize, training, and program.

- *How to Organize a Sea Scout Ship*
- *Sea Scout Manual*, No. 33239

In addition to the procedures outlined in those publications, the council should conduct Sea Scout Adult Leader Basic Training for new Sea Scout leaders.

It is vital that these new Sea Scout leaders become familiar with boating safety procedures and state and/or U.S. Coast Guard regulations before they plan boating activities. These leaders should attend local boating safety courses. Check [BoatUS.com/CourseLine](http://BoatUS.com/CourseLine) for courses in the local area.

Full information on the Sea Scouting program, advancement, leadership, uniforms, insignia, activities and procedures are found in the *Sea Scout Manual*, No. 33239 (2016 printing).

**STEP FOUR: Service to Sea Scout ships.**

As new ships are organized and chartered, the council recruits volunteers to provide ongoing service to these ships. This person helps the Skipper with recruiting, training, program ideas, rechartering and problem-solving. He or she may be a member of a district commissioner staff. Councils with a number of Sea Scout ships may provide this service through a council Sea Scouting Committee which is described later in this guide.

## **PART TWO – BOATS, UNIFORMS, AND EQUIPMENT**

Securing boats, uniforms, and equipment for use by a Sea Scout ship is the responsibility of the ship committee and chartered organization. While the local council may be able to assist, it is not the purpose of the council to secure boats, uniforms, or equipment for packs, troops, posts, or ships.

### **Boats**

Many Sea Scout leaders believe that ownership of sail- or powerboats is essential to a successful program. A number of Sea Scout ships plan an exciting program by chartering boats as needed or utilizing boats owned by members of their chartered organization. On occasion, private boats may be donated to a Sea Scout ship. Ownership of these boats remains with the chartered organization or a nonprofit corporation formed by ship leaders. If the donor requires

that ownership remain with the BSA council, the council Scout executive and key council volunteer leaders determine whether or not to accept this donation. The council is not obligated to accept donated boats since they may not be appropriate for the program, or repair and insurance costs may be prohibitive. For this reason, *boats over 50 feet in length are generally not recommended.*

All boats used in the Sea Scout program must be operated in accordance with the BSA Safe Boating/Sailing Standards (see Appendix A). The responsibility for necessary repairs and equipment to meet this certification along with maintenance, moorage, and insurance costs, is held by the ship committee and chartered organization. The cost of operating larger boats must be balanced against the number of youth served. Most experienced Sea Scout leaders would recommend that moderate sized boats be used for Sea Scouting with larger boats chartered as needed.

## Equipment

As with any Scouting unit, the Sea Scout ship will probably need to secure a variety of ropes, navigation instruments, charts, flags, landship equipment, etc. Much of the equipment can be donated, secured through surplus outlets, borrowed, or purchased as necessary. The ship committee and chartered organization are responsible for securing, maintaining and storing such equipment.

## Uniforms

Sea Scout ships should utilize a uniform as described in Section 1 of the Sea Scout Manual. Particularly for new units starting up, the New Century Universal Uniform is recommended. Some Sea Scout ships prefer to wear traditional uniforms derived from military-style uniforms. BSA policy requires that Sea Scouts and leaders wearing military-style uniforms must be clearly identified as Sea Scouts and so as not to be mistaken for military personnel. Full details on Sea Scout uniforms and insignia are found in the Sea Scout Manual.

# PART THREE – LEADER TRAINING

It is mandatory that a Skipper be trained with Sea Scout Adult Leader Basic Training, but it is highly recommended that all Sea Scout leaders should complete SSALBT. An advanced training course for Sea Scout leaders called Seabadge is conducted on a region or cluster council basis in several locations each year. Councils wishing to conduct this advanced course may obtain information from the National Director of Sea Scouts.

## Wardrooms

A number of councils conduct monthly or quarterly meetings of Sea Scout adult leaders. These may be called “Squadron,” “Wardroom,” or “Fleet” meetings and are essentially program roundtables. These meetings should be coordinated by a council staff member. Since Sea Scout leaders are operating a common program, such meetings offer the opportunity to share ideas and plan joint activities.

## PART FOUR – ACTIVITIES

Councils with a number of Sea Scout ships may plan one or more council- or area-wide activities during the year. The leadership for these activities comes from the various ships or a council Sea Scouting Committee supported by a council staff member. The number and type of such activities are determined by the council. These activities might include regattas, rendezvous, dances, bridges of honor, sailing races, weekend campouts (“land cruises”), etc. Sea Scout ships may enter local yacht or sailing club races when possible. Several BSA regions or areas conduct annual Sea Scout regattas which can be a program highlight.

Any council activity involving Sea Scouts should meet the following criteria:

1. Skippers and their boatswains desire the activity, believe it meets the needs and interests of their ship members, and are involved in planning the activity.
2. The timing and location of the activity is convenient, at a reasonable cost, and does not conflict with scheduled school, church, or community events.
3. The activity provides a good image and publicity for Sea Scouting and the Boy Scouts of America. Attention is paid to the security, safety, and conduct of youth and adult participants.
4. The local Boy Scouts of America council is able and willing to provide staff volunteer, and office support to the activity. Proper accounting of funds related to the activity should be supervised by a council staff member.
5. The activity should be something the ship could not do on its own.

### Suggested Activities

The following Sea Scout activities are found in councils across the United States.

**RENDEZVOUS:** The folklore of the sea defines the rendezvous as a “gathering of ships.” A Sea Scout rendezvous is an informal day long or weekend event held at a military base, college campus, BSA council camp, sea base, or similar facility. Its program may include instruction, recreation and inter-ship competition in swimming, paddle sports, boating, sailing, fitness, sports, and seamanship, along with fun and social events.

**REGATTA:** The terms regatta and rendezvous are probably interchangeable in Sea Scouting. However, a regatta is usually held on a waterfront where ships can moor their vessels. The regatta program may provide competition among ships which may include uniform inspection, drill, pulling boat races, and team competition in Sea Scout skills. A regatta may be held at a Navy or Coast Guard base, aquatic park, yacht club, or similar facility. Several regattas are held on a regional or area basis.

**BRIDGE OF HONOR AND BALL:** Many councils hold an annual bridge of honor and ball for Sea Scout ships. The bridge of honor may recognize those Sea Scouts earning Quartermaster rank during the year along with other achievements by Sea Scouts, ships, and adult leaders. The

bridge of honor often utilizes the traditional landship format which is described in the *Sea Scout Manual*. The bridge of honor may include a meal and may be followed by a semiformal ball.

**SAILING RACES OR COMPEITION:** If a number of small sailboats of the same class can be located, then a program of races or related events can be organized. Yacht clubs, sailing organizations, schools, Scout camps, and related organizations may have sailboats of similar design that can be used by Sea Scouts for a race or other event.

**CONFERENCES:** Some councils conduct day long or weekend conferences for Sea Scouts and adult leaders. These conferences may be held at military bases, college campuses, conference centers, or motels. The program may include leadership training, personal skill workshops, activity planning, idea sharing, recreation, and social events.

**OTHER ACTIVITIES:** Many councils have unique Sea Scout service projects, games, Sail-offs, team sports tournaments, bowling events, ski trips, campouts, and other events that are of interest to Sea Scouts or leaders. Many of these are rendezvous or regattas under another name.

**COUNCIL EVENTS:** Most traditional Sea Scout ships have strong ties to Scouting and are willing to participate in council shows, banquets, conferences and other events. Sea Scouts can lend a colorful and nautical presence to council events. Many ships utilize these events to recruit older Boy Scouts into Sea Scouting.

## Keys to Success

The following items should be considered for a successful council Sea Scout activity.

1. **Recruit the right chair.** A man or woman who will give dynamic leadership, secure the necessary resources, recruit a committee as needed, and direct their efforts.
2. **Plan ahead.** Ships must know the date, time, location, and cost of any event well in advance.
3. **Involve ship leaders.** The Skipper and boatswain should be involved in determining and planning Sea Scout activities. If they are involved, their ship will attend.
4. **Time and place.** Secure a location that has adequate facilities, a reasonable cost, and is appealing to Sea Scouts. Check high school and community calendars to avoid conflict.
5. **Watch the cost.** Prepare a budget. Get written confirmation of food, housing, and facility costs. Avoid surprises. Keep the cost within reach of Sea Scouts. Look for donations of equipment, meals, printing, publicity, etc.

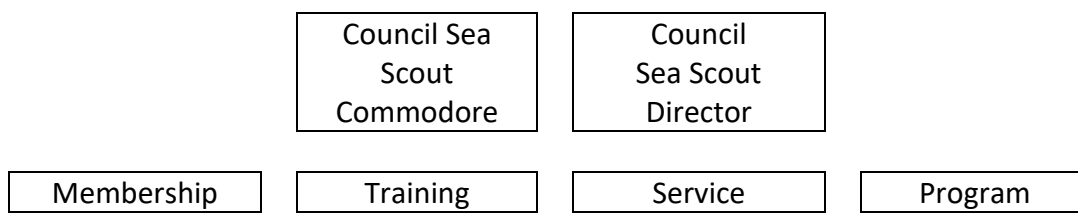
## PART FIVE – COUNCIL SEA SCOUT COMMITTEE

Councils with a number of Sea Scout ships may organize a council Sea Scouting Committee to provide training, service, and program help to ships. This is a council option and some councils find that adequate support is provided by the district committee. For those councils interested in a council Sea Scouting Committee, the following information may be helpful:

*Option one:* The council Sea Scouting Committee is in a support role and assists with the planning of activities, leader meetings, and training as needed. The organization and service to ships is provided by the district. A council staff member facilitates their efforts.

*Option two:* The council Sea Scouting Committee is responsible for the organization of new ships, rechartering of existing ships, leader training, activities, and unit service. A council staff member facilitates their efforts and may be accountable for Sea Scout ships and membership.

### SAMPLE COMMITTEE STRUCTURE



Councils may add additional subcommittees as needed for a sea base, boats and gear, etc. The following suggested job descriptions can be adapted to fit the council's needs and structure.

**COUNCIL SEA SCOUT COMMODORE:** Works closely with the council staff members assigned to Sea Scouting. This person should have the ability to recruit and give leadership to the various subcommittees and should have influence with the maritime community. Experience as a Sea Scout leader is desirable but not necessary.

#### Suggested Job Description

1. Recruit, train, and direct Vice Commodores as needed for sales and membership, training, service, program, and others.
2. Work in cooperation with the council staff member assigned to Sea Scouting.
3. Conduct regular meetings of the council Sea Scouting Committee. Give leadership to their efforts, set objectives, and make decisions in the best interests of Sea Scouting.
4. Represent Sea Scouting to the executive board if appointed.
5. Help the various subcommittees achieve their objectives.
6. Give leadership to the growth and quality program of all Sea Scout ships.

#### VICE COMMODORE FOR MEMBERSHIP

1. Encourage the organization of new Sea Scout ships.

2. Conduct an Impact Plan or personal visits to “sell” the leadership of organizations to organize Sea Scout ships.
3. Recruit and train organizers to guide the organization of new ships.
4. Help all ships with recruiting efforts to attract new members.
5. Assist in the reorganization of Sea Scout ships when necessary.
6. Attend meetings of the council Sea Scouting Committee.
7. Work closely with the council staff member assigned to Sea Scouting.
8. Give leadership to plans to achieve Sea Scouting membership and new ship objectives.

#### **VICE COMMODORE FOR TRAINING**

1. Recruit trainers to provide Sea Scout Adult Leader Basic Training for new Sea Scout leaders.
2. Provide “Fast Start” training for new Sea Scout Skippers.
3. Plan and conduct regular meetings for Sea Scout leaders.
4. Encourage Sea Scout leaders to attend *Seabadge* courses when available.
5. Encourage the presentation of training awards to qualified leaders.
6. Assist with Sea Scouting training sessions during council or district conferences or events.
7. Encourage Sea Scout leaders to attend safe boating classes offered by the U.S. Power Squadron, U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary and other organizations.
8. Work closely with the council staff member assigned to Sea Scouting.
9. Attend meetings of the council Sea Scouting Committee.

#### **VICE COMMODORE FOR SERVICE**

1. Recruit and train service team members on the basis of one for every three ships. Give leadership to these service team members to support the leadership, membership, and program of all Sea Scout ships.
2. Coordinate the annual rechartering on time of all Sea Scout ships and charter presentations.
3. Work closely with the council staff member assigned to Sea Scouting.
4. Attend meetings of the council Sea Scouting Committee.

#### **VICE COMMODORE FOR PROGRAM**

1. Organize activities for Sea Scout ships in cooperation with the council staff member assigned to Sea Scouting.
2. Promote attendance at area/regional regattas and meetings when held.
3. Promote attendance by Sea Scouts at council Venturing activities.
4. Assist Sea Scout leaders with ideas for long cruises, activities, awards, and programs.
5. Encourage advancement opportunities for Sea Scouts and assist with Quartermaster bridges of review if requested.
6. Attend meetings of the council Sea Scouting Committee.



**BOATS AND GEAR AND/OR SEA BASE SUBCOMMITTEE**

If the council has a sea base or has secured a dock or mooring location for Sea Scout boats, then a subcommittee to administer this facility may be needed. In cooperation with the council staff member assigned to Sea Scouting, this subcommittee would assist with utilities, maintenance, permits, safety equipment, security, and other items necessary to the facility. The subcommittee would supervise and schedule the use of the facility by Sea Scout ships.

If the council obtains boats and/or equipment for use by all ships in the council then a subcommittee may be formed to manage its use. One subcommittee could supervise both a base and equipment or this task could be assigned to the program subcommittee. Inspection of Sea Scout boats may be coordinated by this subcommittee.

In some councils, a finance subcommittee is formed to assist with council fundraising plans. Often, boats are donated to the council for resale purposes as a council fundraising effort. This subcommittee may assist with funding necessary to a council sea base and/or boats and equipment. Any fundraising on behalf of Sea Scouting must have the approval of the council executive and all funds must be included in the council's budgeting and accounting systems.

**YOUTH REPRESENTATION**

The council Sea Scouting Committee may wish to appoint, or organize an election for a Sea Scout youth to serve on the committee. This individual is often called the Council Boatswain. This person would represent the interests of youth. He or she could be elected by the boatswains of the various ships, or simply recruited by the Council Sea Scouting Commodore.

**AREA/REGIONAL STRUCTURE**

The organization of a volunteer structure for Sea Scouting on an area or regional basis is determined by each region. This group may organize regattas, training courses, activities, or conferences if desired by councils in the area or region.

**NATIONAL SEA SCOUTING COMMITTEE**

The National Sea Scouting Committee is responsible for the literature, training, insignia, advancement, policies, and activities related to Sea Scouting. The National Commodore and the National Sea Scout Director appoint committee members with the concurrence of the individual's council and region.