



How To Organize a Sea Scout Ship

WELCOME TO SEA SCOUTS

Sea Scouts is a program of Scouting America for young men and women 14 years of age, or 13 years of age with completion of the eighth grade. The maximum age for participation is under 21 years of age.

The purpose of Sea Scouts is to bring a program of character building, citizenship training, and personal fitness to the youth of America while having fun on the water. Sea Scout units called ships are organized by churches, civic clubs, schools, maritime organizations, businesses, unions, and other community organizations that provide adult volunteer advisors, program resources, and meeting facilities. Ships plan programs related to maritime careers, seamanship, and service.

Sea Scouts began in 1912 and have a long and colorful tradition. Thousands of young men and women have had the opportunity to follow the traditions of the sea while learning what the future holds, whether it's a career related to the sea or a lifelong hobby of recreational boating. Many Sea Scout ships maintain sail or power vessels, have fleets of paddlecraft, follow a challenging rank advancement program; and have distinctive uniforms, customs, and ceremonies.

What Does a Sea Scout Ship Do?

A ship's program is based on matching the interests of members with the skills, equipment, and resources of the chartered organization. Most ships follow the traditional advancement program found in the *Sea Scout Manual*. The ship's program follows the customs and traditions of the sea and encourages members to earn the ranks of Apprentice, Ordinary, Able, and Quartermaster (equivalent to the Boy Scouts' Eagle rank).

Sea Scout advancement includes uniforms, safety, customs, swimming, boating, marlinspike seamanship, piloting, signaling, cruising, galley, sailing, boats, tackle, first aid, navigation, boat maintenance, engines, sea history, lifesaving, equipment, weather, radio, customs, and ideals.

Some Sea Scout ships prefer to plan their program around a specialty such as sailing, careers, SCUBA, or an aquatic sport. They may not utilize Sea Scout uniforms and advancement but still offer a flexible program to those young adults with a specific career or hobby interest.

Steps to Organize

Step One

When an appropriate chartered organization is selected to charter a Sea Scout ship, the Scouting America council assigns an organizer to guide the following steps. The chartered organization may be a church, civic club, school, labor union, maritime association or business, or other community group.

Step Two

The organizer and a council staff member visit the top person in the chartered organization (pastor, president, CEO, etc.). They review the purpose and program of Sea Scouts and the responsibilities of the organization in chartering a ship. The top person agrees to:

- Commit the chartered organization to support a Sea Scout ship.
- Inform the key leaders of the chartered organization about Sea Scouts.
- Recruit adult ship leaders.
- Provide program resources and a meeting location.

Step Three

The organizer meets with the chartered organization's key leaders. This may be an executive committee, church board, group of department heads, etc. The purpose and program of Sea Scouts are reviewed. The top person asks the key leaders to:

- Support their Sea Scout ship.
- Help secure program resources and equipment.
- Identify prospective adult advisors. These are men and women over 21 years of age who are of good character and can lead a quality Sea Scout program for youth.

Step Four

The top person and the key leaders invite prospective adult advisors to an organizational meeting. The purpose, program, and leadership of a Sea Scout ship are reviewed using the *Sea Scout Manual*. An adult basic training session is scheduled to cover the material found in the Sea Scout Adult Basic Training Instructor's Guide. After these training sessions are completed, the organizer guides these prospective leaders to select a Skipper, two or more mates, and the ship committee. The chartered organization's top person is involved in this selection. The job descriptions for these positions are found online and in the *Sea Scout Manual*.

Step Five

The Sea Scout ship program capability inventory is completed. This is a list of adults in the chartered organization who can help with instruction, resources, and equipment for ship meetings, activities, and cruises. The ship committee secures the use of watercraft, as needed, for the ship program, keeping in mind that the cost of operating and maintaining a large vessel may be prohibitive for a new ship.

Step Six

The first three months of meetings and activities are planned and scheduled. These should include weekly or bimonthly ship meetings, Saturday or weekend activities or cruises, and monthly ship committee meetings. The program for the first few ship meetings might include the following:

- Introduction to the Sea Scout program
- Instruction related to Sea Scout advancement, particularly the Apprentice rank
- Discussion of ship uniforms
- Election of officers
- Boating safety—swim checks
- Basic nautical skills instruction

Step Seven

Young adults are recruited to join the ship. Names from the council career interest survey may be used. Announcements and publicity are developed. Prospective members can be recruited through schools, churches, and community organizations. Sons and daughters of members of the chartered organization can be invited.

The first ship meeting (called an open house) is carefully planned to provide an exciting program to attract prospects to join. Hands-on maritime activities should be featured. The ship leaders review the schedule of meetings and activities, along with the structure, activities, and advancement opportunities in Sea Scouts. Adult advisors and members from nearby ships may be invited to help. The chartered organization determines if its membership is coed, all-female, or all-male.

Step Eight

The ship is chartered by the local Scouting America council. All members and advisors must be registered. Registration forms and information will be provided by the organizer. The charter and membership cards will be presented to the chartered organization at an appropriate occasion.

Step Nine

The new ship members elect officers as soon as possible. The Skipper may appoint temporary officers until the ship members know each other well enough to elect.

Step Ten

The Skipper trains the new officers using the *Sea Scout Manual*. A year's schedule of meetings and activities should be developed to avoid any conflict with school, church, or community events.

For Further Information

Full details of Sea Scout ship organization, training, and Sea Scouts are found in the following publications available from the Scouting America council service center.

For new Sea Scouts and advisors

Sea Scout Manual online at seascout.org

For ship adults

Safeguarding Youth at my.scouting.org

Sea Scout Adult Basic Training at my.scouting.org

Safety Afloat at my.scouting.org

Safe Swim Defense at my.scouting.org

Hazardous Weather at my.scouting.org

Program support for Sea Scouts may also be found online at seascout.org. Additional questions about the Sea Scout program may be answered by calling your local council service center.

First Ship Meeting

Open House Sample Agenda

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| 1. Greetings and welcome (Greet the young people at the door, welcome them, hand out nametags.) | Ship committee |
| 2. Introductions and welcome | Ship committee chair |
| 3. Greetings from the host (Express the chartered organization's interest in youth and enthusiasm for Sea Scouts. It is important to coach this individual in the use of proper Sea Scout terms.) | Head of chartered organization |
| 4. What are Sea Scouts? (Have youth speak to youth Sea Scout representatives about Sea Scouts and their relationship to Scouting America. This is the best way to get across the meaning of the program.) | Sea Scout representative |
| 5. Ship committee support (Explain how the ship committee supports the ship program.) | Ship committee chair |
| 6. Description of the program and activities planned for the next six meetings (Give out copies of the program outline and explain how officers will be elected from membership. Briefly describe the duties of officers.) | Skipper |
| 7. A hands-on activity in which everyone can participate | All |
| 8. Question and answer session (Divide young adults into groups of eight or ten. Assign each group an adult committee member who is prepared to answer questions about Sea Scouts and the chartered organization.) | Ship committee |
| 9. Reassemble small groups. Explain the national registration fee, which includes participation in local and national activities. Demonstrate how to locate the Sea Scout Manual online | Skipper |
| 10. Invitation to join: Demonstrate how to join at BeAScout.org. Help those that want to join at the meeting to do so. | Ship committee |
| 11. Closing comments (Be sure everyone knows date, place, time, and program for next ship meeting.) | Ship committee chair |
| 12. Refreshments and fellowship | All |

NOTE: If a number of parents attend, a ship committee member might take them aside and explain the purpose and program of the ship, and the tie to Scouting America. Parents might be included in the program capability inventory and enlisted to provide transportation, serve as chaperones, and offer support for ship activities.

Second Ship Meeting

This meeting should be a high-powered one centered on the Sea Scout program. Plan to get Sea Scouts involved and doing things in their area of interest.

Sample Agenda

(Greet members at the door and hand each a name tag.)

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| 1. Opening - Pledge, Scout Oath, Scout Law followed by welcome and introduction of any new faces. | Temporary boatswain or Skipper |
| 2. Business meeting (keep brief) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Check on status of applications.• Announce plans to elect officers. | Temporary boatswain or Skipper |

- (Optional) Divide members into groups by school. Each group elects a representative to serve as a temporary officer and plan carpools for future ship meetings.
 - Introduce, explain, and demonstrate Scoutbook
 - Other business. (Might include ideas on transportation to meetings—carpools, mass transit, etc., and a discussion of uniforms.)
3. Introduction of program for the evening Temporary boatswain or Skipper
 4. Program tour, demonstration, informative presentation, hands-on experience (This is the major portion of the meeting.) Make it fun. All
 5. Announcement of date, place, and time of next meeting Temporary boatswain or Skipper
 6. Skipper’s minute Skipper
 7. Closing – Sea Scout Promise Temporary boatswain or Skipper
 8. Refreshments and fellowship All

After ship meeting: The skipper and temporary officers (or school representatives) meet to plan the election of officers and the program for the next meeting.

Third Ship Meeting

Sample Agenda

(Temporary officers arrive early and greet others.)

1. Opening – Pledge, Scout Oath and Scout Law followed by introductions, if necessary Temporary boatswain
2. Business meeting (keep brief) Temporary boatswain
 - Temporary Yeoman reads minutes of previous meeting.
 - Temporary Purser collects any fees that are due
 - Other business
3. Election of officers (Established ships usually elect officers for a one-year term. New ships may want to adjust the term of office for their first-year officers.) Skipper or committee chair
 - Report on officers to be elected:
 - Boatswain
 - Boatswain’s mate—administration
 - Boatswain’s mate—program
 - Yeoman (secretary)
 - Purser (treasurer)
 - Other officers as desired
 - Election
 - Congratulations and challenge to new officers
 - Installation of new officers
4. Continuation of meeting New boatswain
 - Review upcoming opportunities and discuss ideas for future ship activities.

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| 5. Evening's program (informative presentation, demonstration, etc.) | All |
| 6. Announcement of date, place, and time of next meeting | Boatswain |
| 7. Skipper's minute | Skipper |
| 8. Closing – Sea Promise | Boatswain's mate -
administration |
| 9. Refreshments and fellowship | All |

After ship meeting: Skipper conducts officers' briefing following outline in the *Sea Scout Manual* (online at seascout.org).

Suggested Program for a New Sea Scout Ship

Meetings

Ship meetings can be held as frequently as the time of the leaders and members will permit. Many ships meet an average of once a week, not always on the same day and not always formally. For instance, one week the members may gather at the marina to work on boats. Another week they may get together on a Friday night to go to a show, skating, bowling, etc. At least once every three months a business meeting is necessary to elect officers, plan the ship's next three-month program in detail, make assignments, and transact other business. (See the *Sea Scout Manual* online at seascout.org.)

Program Planning

At a program planning meeting, it is essential to have school and council calendars available. When the ship's members have agreed upon the program content they desire, the officers appoint chairs for the selected activities and help them name a committee. An adult advisor or committee member is selected to serve as an advisor to each committee. These committees have the responsibility for the complete planning, promotion, and conducting of the activity in their charge.

Program Content

The following program outline has been developed as a suggestion for a new ship just getting under way. It is based on two meetings a month of the entire ship, an officers' meeting (quarterdeck), plus an activity or field trip. It can be modified or adapted to fit the needs and interests of members and leaders. It is also assumed that May is the first month. Modify the program accordingly if the ship begins in another month.

In some locations, council and/or area Sea Scout events are conducted. These dates should be included in the ship's calendar.

Sample Program Outline

FIRST MONTH (May)

- **Ship meetings**—Open House to recruit new members; cover the basic organization of the ship, election of officers, orientation on Sea Scouts, and the planned program for the first three months; ship members and leaders should determine ship identity items such as T-shirts, jackets, etc.
- **Quarterdeck meeting**—Review duties of the officers; acquaint everyone with the calendar, training courses, etc.; establish two to three goals for the coming year; prepare for next month's ship meetings and activity.
- **Activity**—Visit another Sea Scout ship or conduct a boating safety program.

SECOND MONTH (June)

- **Ship meetings**—Safe boating course consisting of three, two-hour sessions; hold orientation sessions on ship organization and duties of the commissioned and elected officers; practice “coming aboard” and a few simple ceremonies; start learning the language of the sea (glossary of sea terms).
- **Quarterdeck meeting**—Review ship meetings and their effectiveness; plan outlines of “formal” and “informal” ship meetings; check on arrangements for planned activity; prepare for next month’s ship meetings.
- **Activity**—Schedule a session at a swimming pool; check the swimming ability of every member; practice simple safety and rescue techniques; review Safe Swim Defense, review Safety Afloat. (These are available in the *Sea Scout Manual* and online at scouting.org in the online learning center.)

THIRD MONTH (July)

- **Ship meetings**—Construct a landship; conduct classes in water safety and rescue methods—rescue lines, rope work, artificial respiration; hold several skill-teaching contests; plan next three months of meetings, assignments, etc.
- **Quarterdeck meeting**—Critique meetings using Start/Stop/Continue; check on programs, activities, etc.; prepare for next month’s ship meetings.
- **Activity**—Weekend trip to camp, lake, etc.; practice boating and aquatic skills.

FOURTH MONTH (August)

- **Ship meetings**—Continue work on landship; review customs and courtesies of the sea; practice ceremonies; review advancement program and schedule classes; conduct uniform inspection; hold skill-teaching contests.
- **Quarterdeck meeting**—Critique meetings using Start/Stop/Continue; check on program committees, coming activities, etc.; prepare for next month’s ship meetings.
- **Activity**—Long cruise or high adventure.

FIFTH MONTH (September)

- **Ship meetings**—Orientation on boats and boat handling; practice session on water if possible; learn boat etiquette.
- **Quarterdeck meeting**—Critique meetings; check on program committees, coming activities, etc.; prepare for next month’s ship meetings.
- **Activity**—Participate in district or council activity, or plan one for ship.

SIXTH MONTH (October)

- **Ship meetings**—Orientation in marlinspike seamanship (rope work); practice sessions in knots and knot tying; classes in advancement subjects; knot tying contests; plan next three months of meetings, assignments, etc.
- **Quarterdeck meeting**—Critique meetings using Start/Stop/Continue; check on program committees, coming activities, etc.; prepare for next month’s ship meetings.
- **Activity**—Small boat sailing or Halloween party.

SEVENTH MONTH (November)

- **Ship meetings**—Continue marlinspike seamanship; instruction in splicing, practice sessions; classes in advancement subjects; skill-teaching contests; practice session at swimming pool.
- **Quarterdeck meeting**—Critique meetings using Start/Stop/Continue; check on program committees, coming activities, etc.; prepare for next month's ship meetings.
- **Activity**—Plan a swim meet.

EIGHTH MONTH (December)

- **Ship meetings**—Continue marlinspike seamanship; instruction in special knots, clinches, straps, lashings, seizings, worming, parceling, servings, whipping; practice sessions; preparation for parents' night and bridge of honor.
- **Quarterdeck meeting**—Critique meetings using Start/Stop/Continue; check on program committees, coming activities, etc.; prepare for next month's ship meetings.
- **Activity**—Holiday party; parents' night; Bridge of Honor.

NINTH MONTH (January)

- **Ship meetings**—Continue marlinspike seamanship; instruction in tackles, purchase, and blocks; practice sessions; skill-teaching contests; plan next three months of meetings, assignments, etc.
- **Quarterdeck meeting**—Critique meetings using Start/Stop/Continue; check on program committees, coming activities, etc.; prepare for next month's ship meetings.
- **Activity**—Winter weekend: tobogganing, skiing, ice skating, ice fishing, etc.

TENTH MONTH (February)

- **Ship meetings**—Sail/Paddle/SCUBA training plan.
- **Quarterdeck meeting**—Critique meetings using Start/Stop/Continue; check on program committees, coming activities, etc.; prepare for next month's ship meetings.
- **Activity**—Sailing instruction, Valentine's Day party, or ship banquet.

ELEVENTH MONTH (March)

- **Ship meetings**—Sail training plan continued; skill-teaching contests.
- **Quarterdeck meeting**—Critique meetings using Start/Stop/Continue; check on program committees, coming activities, etc.; prepare for next month's ship meetings.
- **Activity**—Service project for chartered organization.

TWELFTH MONTH (April)

- **Ship meetings**—Sail training plan continued; piloting; skill-teaching contests; ship inspection and drill; plan three months of meetings, assignments, etc. for second year.
- **Quarterdeck meeting**—Critique meetings using Start/Stop/Continue; check on program committees, coming activities, etc.; progress on goals established in May; prepare for next month's election and ship meetings.
- **Activity**—Participate in council/region activity, if available.

Suggested Subjects and Activities for Second Year

FIRST MONTH (May)

- Elections, advanced seamanship course consisting of eight, two-hour sessions; continue orientation on sailing/paddling/SCUBA (subject: navigation).
- **Activity**—Knot typing contest.

SECOND MONTH (June)

- Complete advanced seamanship course; prepare for council or area regatta, if available.
- **Activity**—Participate in council or area regatta.

THIRD MONTH (July)

- Continue orientation on bridge and quarterdeck (subject: signaling—international Morse code); build blinker and buzzer sets; plan three months of meetings, assignments, etc. **Activity**—Beach party or cruise.

FOURTH MONTH (August)

- Continue orientation on bridge and quarterdeck (subject: signaling— semaphore), also flag signals and bell signals.
- **Activity**—Long cruise or high adventure.

FIFTH MONTH (September)

- Conduct open house to recruit new members; continue orientation on bridge and quarterdeck (subject: weather lore and weather forecasting).
- **Activity**—Weekend cruise.

SIXTH MONTH (October)

- Provide orientation for new members; continue orientation on bridge and quarterdeck (subject: types of vessels); plan three months of meetings, assignments, etc.
- **Activity**—Weekend cruise.

SEVENTH MONTH (November)

- Orientation on boat maintenance, safety equipment, and procedures.
- **Activity**—Swim meet.

EIGHTH MONTH (December)

- Orientation on cruising.
- **Activity**—Holiday party; parents' night.

NINTH MONTH (January)

- Orientation on safety; plan three months of meetings, assignments, etc.
- **Activity**—Winter weekend or ski trip.

TENTH MONTH (February)

- Open house demonstrations and recruiting.
- **Activity**—Ship banquet.

ELEVENTH MONTH (March)

- Uniform inspections; discuss construction of sailboats and sails.
- Activity—Service project for chartered organization.

TWELFTH MONTH (April)

- Plan the long cruise; begin construction of sailboats; plan three months of meetings, assignments, etc.
- **Activity**—Council/region Bridge of Honor and banquet.

The home of Sea Scouts is www.scouting.org or www.seascout.org.

National Sea Scout Committee
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