

# TROOP 888 HANDBOOK



ISTROUMA AREA COUNCIL  
BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA

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SCOUTMASTER



# TROOP 888 HANDBOOK

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## Statement on Youth Protection

*The Boy Scouts of America places the greatest importance on creating the most secure environment possible for our youth members. To maintain such an environment, the BSA developed numerous procedural and leadership selection policies and provides parents and leaders resources to deliver a quality program. Troop 888 complies with these guidelines.*

## General Information

Welcome to Troop 888, Boy Scouts of America. The Troop prides itself on being one of the most active in the Istrouma Area Council. Jointly sponsored by Most Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church and St. Andrews United Methodist Church, the Troop meets every Tuesday from 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. in the Friendship Building at St. Andrews.

The purpose of this handbook is to provide parents and Scouts with a concise overview of BSA and Troop policies. This handbook does not include all BSA policies. Further information on BSA policies can be obtained from official publications available through the Istrouma Area Council Scout Office or online at <http://www.scouting.org>.

## Web Site

The Troop web site is <http://troop888.net>. It contains pertinent information for Scouts and parents, including a calendar of events, which is updated on a regular basis.

## Meetings

All Scouts should attend meetings in [uniform](#). Adult leaders are also encouraged to purchase and wear uniforms. Meetings start promptly at 7:00 p.m. and normally follow the following schedule:

- |             |  |
|-------------|--|
| 6:15 - 7:00 | Troop Committee Meetings, adult leaders<br>3 <sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of each month             |
| 6:15 - 7:00 | PLC meetings 2 <sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of each month /<br>Merit Badge Work scheduled as needed |
| 7:00 - 7:10 | Opening ceremony - Scouts in uniform   |
| 7:10 - 7:40 | Patrol Meetings  |
| 7:40 - 7:55 | Instruction period (camping skills, merit badge courses, etc.)                               |
| 7:55 - 8:15 | Games  |
| 8:15 - 8:30 | Closing ceremony and announcements   |



## Courts of Honor

In addition to regular meetings, the Troop holds a quarterly Court of Honor. The location will be announced in advance, but are usually held in St. Ursula Hall at Most Blessed Sacrament. Parents and other family members are encouraged to attend Courts of Honor. The boys in the unit receive their rank advancements, merit badges, and special awards at these functions. Scouts must wear their [Field \(Class A\)](#) uniform at all Courts of Honor. Parents are asked to provide nominally priced refreshments for these events.

An Eagle Court of Honor is held whenever a boy attains Eagle Scout, the highest rank in Scouting. These are special events that include guest speakers and a reception put on by the parents of the Scout(s) receiving the award. Eagle Courts of Honor are held at a location of the Scout's choice.

## Uniforms

Uniforms may be purchased at the Backpacker, the Pennington Scout Shop located in the Istrouma Area Council office, or through the BSA catalog.

### **Field (Class A) Uniform**

The complete Field (Class A) uniform consists of a baseball style Scout cap, Scout shirt, Scout pants or shorts, Scout socks, Scout canvas or leather belt, Troop neckerchief, and neckerchief slide. Neckerchiefs are supplied by the Troop. Replacement or additional items are based on current prices, therefore prices may vary. Scouts are encouraged to have two pairs of pants, a long pair for fall and winter and shorts for spring and summer. Scout socks must be worn with shorts.

### **Activity (Class B) Uniform**

The complete Activity (Class B) uniform consists of the above, with the elimination of the neckerchief and slide and the replacement of the formal Scout shirt with any Scout T-shirt.

Field (Class A) uniforms are worn when traveling to and from Scout outings, such as weekend activities and summer camp. Field (Class A) uniforms are also worn to regular meetings on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> meetings of the month and to all Courts of Honor and other formal activities. Activity (Class B) uniforms are worn to all other meetings and Scout functions.



## Activities

Troop 888 has a campout or hike at least once per month that all Scouts are encouraged to attend. Scouting activities are held at various locations, and the decision of where to camp is usually left up to the Scouts. The cost of an activity varies.

Fees include food and patrol supplies for the weekend. This fee is placed on your quarterly bill. All meals while camping are supplied except for the Friday night supper, which is brown bagged by individual Scouts. Please send a sack dinner or snack with your Scout on Friday.

Since food and supplies are purchased, usually the Thursday before the campout, Scouts who sign up for a campout the meeting before the campout are obligated to pay for the campout. Scouts will be rotated with commissary duty for purchasing the food for activities. A duty roster is posted for each campout with all Scouts having a role in preparing, cooking or clean-up of the meals. Outside food is not permitted except for medical reasons and is kept with an Assistant Scoutmaster.

In cases of emergency, please notify the Senior Patrol Leader (or Scoutmaster if SPL is unavailable) by Wednesday evening if unable to attend the campout.

Camping trips usually begin with the Scouts meeting at St. Andrews United Methodist Church on Friday and returning to the church, or other designated location, Sunday afternoon. If the return trip Sunday extends beyond lunch, extra funds will be necessary to cover a nominal meal on the way home. An Emergency Calling Tree will be established in the case of cancellations or amendments.

The following is a list of supplies and equipment for a regular weekend campout:

2 pairs comfortable shoes or hiking boots	2 pairs shorts or pants
2 shirts	change of underwear
bathing suit	towel(s)
toiletries	eating utensils (plate, cup, knife, fork, spoon, or BSA mess kit and flatware)
canteen	individual cook set
Scout handbook	notebook and pencil
Scout knife* (See SAFETY below)	compass

*NO cell phones or other electronics are permitted to be used on camping trips! This is a time for Scouts to be away from these electronic items and experience the outdoors.*

*Scouts may have cell phones but we don't want to see them, and they will be confiscated if seen.*



## Medical Forms

The Boy Scouts of America carries an insurance rider on anyone attending a Scouting event that has correctly filled out the appropriate paperwork. This includes permission from the district office to attend an event (secured by the adult leader in charge of the event) and a current [Annual Health and Medical Record](#) from each Scout and adult participant. (AHMRs must be updated annually.) Each Scout and adult participant must have current [Parts A & B](#) on file to attend an overnight campout. [Parts A, B, & C](#), with a doctor's signature, are required for any campout that exceeds 72 consecutive hours (i.e. summer camp, winter camp). Tetanus shot dates are extremely important in the case of an accident. Please provide accurate dates. High Adventure camps and National Jamboree also have special additional requirements.

BSA medical insurance covers the first \$150, after which the parents' insurance needs to be submitted. BSA insurance will notify parents to submit the claim to their insurance. If the parent does not have insurance, they must notify the BSA designated insurance company that they have no insurance. After the parents' insurance picks up the claim to its maximum, BSA works as a secondary insurance for a limited amount.

## Rules and Regulations

The following are the rules and regulations of Troop 888:

- Have fun.
- Live by the Scout oath and law.
- Wear close toed shoes at all times at Scout functions and camp outs. (No Crocs, Skele-toes, etc)
- No swimming or canoeing, except when supervised by registered and trained adult leaders.
- Always let adult leaders know where you are going when you leave camp.
- Always fulfill the camp or meeting duties assigned to you by adult or junior leaders.
- No profanity allowed at any time.
- No Scout may bring tobacco products, alcohol, fixed bladed knives, firearms, or non-prescription drugs to Scout functions.
- All prescription drugs are given and distributed by a unit leader.
- Scouts are not allowed to leave an outing, even if being picked up by a parent, until checked out and released by the leader in charge.
- Unit leader reserves the right to send a Scout home for any reason at the parent's expense.



## Transportation

All vehicles used to transport Scouts must be registered, insured, provide enough seatbelts to safely transport the number of people in the vehicle and be operated by a licensed adult over 21 years of age. If you are willing to do this, please provide the Troop with all required information to appear on the Tour and Activity Plan.

Designated drivers for the Troop's activities will be reimbursed by the Troop for gas and billed to the individual Scouts using the service. Drivers must turn in gas receipts by the 2<sup>nd</sup> Troop meeting following the event, or forfeit their cost for gas.

Drivers who use their vehicle to pull the Troop trailer are reimbursed at 20 cents per mile. It is established that the distance from St. Andrews to Avondale Scout Reservation is 72 miles, round trip.

A parent transporting solely their Scout will do so at their expense.

## Safety

Safety rules and regulations are strictly enforced on activities and other Scout outings. No Scout is allowed to use a knife or ax until he has completed the Totin' Chip requirements. Violations of safety rules for knives, axes, and fire may result in the Scout's Totin' Chip and/or Fireman's Card(s) being lifted by a youth or adult leader, and the Scout will then have to re-take the course. The Troop has been blessed with having very few incidents where a Scout has been injured, and these injuries have always been of a minor nature. However, we do maintain medical insurance on all of our Scouts with a current [Annual Health and Medical Record](#) and current BSA registration. In addition, parents of all Scouts are required to sign a release authorizing adult leaders to obtain emergency medical care for a Scout, should the necessity arise.

Consistent violations of rules and regulations, particularly those pertaining to safety, by a Scout may result in the parents being called and the Scout being sent home from the campout or other activity at the parents' expense.

*NO fixed blade knives are allowed on ANY scout activity.*



## Advancement

Troop 888 encourages advancement by its members. Numerous opportunities are provided for Scouts to work on rank advancement, merit badges, and special awards, such as God and Country. Parents are encouraged to assist their sons in advancing in Scouting, since it is both beneficial to the boy and provides the boy with greater opportunities to participate in Scout activities as they reach the higher ranks. Any award will be withheld if dues or fees are outstanding.

### Rank Advancement

Rank advancements are outlined in *The Boy Scout Handbook*. **A registered Troop leader must sign all rank requirements.** All ranks conclude with a Scoutmaster conference and then a Board of Review. Scoutmaster conferences are done at the Scoutmaster's convenience and CANNOT conflict with scheduled activities. Scouts should contact the Scoutmaster in advance to schedule the conference. The Scoutmaster will then decide whether the Scout is ready for a Board of Review and schedule it.



### Merit Badge Policy

The Merit Badge Policy of Troop 888 is designed to fall completely within the guidelines of the Boy Scouts of America. It is Troop 888's intention to provide each Scout an equal opportunity to earn merit badges and to advance in rank. This policy is set forth to achieve these two objectives while maintaining a high standard of achievement for each Scout. The following sections outline the responsibilities of all parties involved in the merit badge program. Exceptions to this policy will only be made in conjunction with BSA policy regarding special case Scouts.

A Scout may participate in a merit badge course through three different routes. These are, Council offered courses, Troop offered courses, and Scout initiated courses.

#### Council Offered Courses

The procedure for taking a merit badge through the council will be set by the program committee offering the course. This policy does not cover merit badges offered in these programs.

#### Troop offered courses

Troop courses will be held at the request of the Patrol Leaders Council. During the planning stage of the Troop yearly program, the Patrol Leaders Council will select from





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those merit badges identified by the Troop Merit Badge Committee as being available, the courses desired for the coming year. Once selected, the Scoutmaster will notify the Troop Merit Badge Committee of the desired merit badges and the dates they are to be conducted.

The Troop Merit Badge Committee will recruit a trained merit badge counselor that specializes in the desired merit badge. The Troop Merit Badge Committee will obtain a list of Scouts that will be working on the merit badge at least three weeks prior to the merit badge course. Based on this list, access to a current version of the merit badge book will be made available to each Scout. This access may be through the Troop library, other Troop members, or purchased by the Scout.

Each Scout should have access to a copy of the merit badge book at least two weeks prior to the start of the course. Each Scout must read the merit badge book in its entirety prior to the start of the badge course. For more difficult merit badges it may be necessary to allow more time for the Scouts to read the merit badge book. The Troop Merit Badge Committee may extend the length of time given for reading the merit badge book.

## Scout Initiated Courses

A Scout may wish to work on a merit badge that is not offered by either the Council or the Troop. In such a case, the Scout must proceed as follows:

- Identify at least one additional Scout willing to work on the merit badge.
- Contact the Troop Merit Badge Committee and request the name of a merit badge counselor.
- Obtain an Application for Merit Badge card from the Troop Advancement Chairperson.
- Obtain permission to work on the merit badge from the Scoutmaster. The Scoutmaster must sign the Application for Merit Badge card.
- Obtain a copy of the current version of the merit badge book.
- Read the entire merit badge book.
- Contact the Merit Badge Counselor and arrange for a meeting between the Scouts and the Counselor.
- Present the Application for Merit Badge card to the counselor at the first meeting.
- Upon completion of the merit badge obtain the completed Application for Merit Badge card, minus the Counselor's Record portion.
- Obtain the Scoutmaster's signature on the Applicant's Record portion of the Application for Merit Badge card.
- Present the Application for Merit Badge card, minus the Applicant's Record portion, to the Troop Advancement Chairperson.

At all meetings of the Counselor and the Scout(s), at least two Scouts and/or two adults must be present. At no time shall the Counselor and a Scout meet one on one. For Scout initiated merit badges, the Merit Badge Counselor must not be related to any boy working on the merit badge.



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## **Special Awards**

Religious, Paul Bunyan, and Hornaday are just a few of the many special awards that can be earned. Requirements for these are outlined in various requirements books and pamphlets, or online at <http://www.scouting.org>. Counselors for each award can be contacted through the Troop or Council.

## **Summer Activities**

During June of each year our Troop attends Boy Scout Summer Camp for a week. All Scouts are encouraged to attend summer camp, since it is not only fun but also provides many opportunities for advancement in Scouting. Members of our Troop have always enjoyed summer camp to the fullest extent, and our Troop has won numerous awards while at summer camp.

Summer camp is open to all Scouts in the Troop, but some of the high adventure trips, such as Philmont, require that a Scout be 14 years old. When we schedule a special trip, such as Philmont, for the older Scouts, we will also schedule something during the same time period for the younger Scouts, such as a canoe trip.

## **Adult Leadership**

A successful Scout Troop depends on active adult leadership in order to provide quality programs for the Scouts. All parents are encouraged to take an active part in the Troop Committee in some capacity because the more parents are involved, the more we can do for the Scouts.

Troop 888 has a number of outstanding adult leaders who donate their time to assisting the Scout Troop. In addition to the Scoutmaster, there are a number of Assistant Scoutmasters and Troop Committee members. Committee meetings are held on the Night of Meetings each month at St. Andrews and are open to all. If an adult is not able to go on camping trips with the Troop, there are many other functions that can be performed, such as making arrangements for events, special Troop activities, and fund raisers.

The Boy Scouts of America also offer 136 different merit badges in many different areas. Parents who are proficient in areas matching merit badge requirements are encouraged to register as a merit badge counselor, purchase a merit badge pamphlet and offer to teach the particular merit badge to members of our Troop.

## **Assistant Scoutmasters**

Assistant Scoutmasters work under the leadership of the Scoutmaster. Leaders must be approved by the committee and registered through BSA. Training consists of Fast Start, Youth Protection, and Basic Training through videos and manuals and is conducted within the Troop with a trainer. Scoutmaster Fundamentals is a weekend



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long campout of training offered through the council. All Assistant Scoutmasters need to complete these four steps of training.

## **Committee Members**

The Troop Committee is composed of a Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer and the Chairpersons of various Troop subcommittees. The committee acts within BSA policy to set Troop rules and regulations. Other duties of the committee are to provide resources to the Troop and conduct Boards of Review.

## **Trainers**

Individuals who have received specialized training through the council may act as Troop trainers if they have completed Scoutmaster Fundamentals. The different types of training include, but are not limited to: Fast Start, Youth Protection, Basic Training, Merit Badge Counselor, Junior Leadership, and Committee Member.

## **Merit Badge Counselors**

A Merit Badge Counselor's job is to ensure that each Scout working on a merit badge meets all the requirements for the merit badge. As outlined in the BSA pamphlet *Merit Badge Counseling*, "...the counselor's larger opportunity lies in coaching - helping the Scout over the different hurdles of the requirements and making him aware of the deeper aspects of the subject from (the counselor's) knowledge and experience."

To become a Troop 888 Merit Badge Counselor an individual must view the BSA Youth Protection videos or complete the course online, prior to registering with the Council as a Merit Badge Counselor. This is required even if the individual is already registered as a leader. Prior to conducting their first merit badge class, each counselor must take Merit Badge Counselor training from the Troop Merit Badge Counselor Trainer and:

- Must be age 18 or older.
- Must be proficient in the merit badge subject by vocation or avocation.
- Must be able to work with Scout-age boys.
- Must be approved by the Council and District Advancement Committees.
- Must be registered with the BSA and certified as a Merit Badge Counselor.

## **Dues**

The yearly dues for members of the Troop are \$120.00, payable in equal quarterly installments of \$30.00 each. The dues are used for the cost of national registration, Boys' Life magazine (for those Scouts that desire it), medical insurance, the cost of the awards that are presented to the Scouts at Courts of Honor, and the purchase of various supplies and equipment for the Troop. Dues and fees are due upon receipt. A statement is mailed out once a quarter showing the status of dues, payments, etc.



## Equipment

Troop 888 provides the following equipment for campouts: cooking equipment; patrol boxes; lanterns; dining flies; tables; and basic supplies. The Scouts in the Troop are responsible for maintaining and caring for this equipment.

Scouts provide their own tents for weekend camping. Tent assignments are made prior to each campout and will consist of 2 or 3 boys per tent. Scouts should respect the property of others and treat another person's tent as their own property.

Summer Camps provide tents or cabins and, in many cases, cots for Scout use.

## Fundraisers

The Troop has at least one major fund raising activity a year, which provides the Scouts with an opportunity to not only raise money for the Troop, but also to raise money for themselves to be used to fund Scouting activities such as summer camp and other long term camping experiences like Philmont or the National Jamboree. It is possible for an industrious Scout to earn several hundred dollars a year, which is kept in a special Troop account and can be used for the funding of any Scout activity that the Scout wishes to participate in. Earned Scout credits are non-refundable.

The LSU Athletic Department also provides compensation to each Boy Scout who assists LSU parking pass holders to locate parking spots in reserved lots during home LSU Football games. The compensation is in the form of a credit to the Scout Account for Jamboree fees or may be applied to Summer Camp through the Troop Account. This credit is non-refundable. The council has a volunteer coordinator who oversees this program and the scheduling of volunteers for each game. Parents who assist with parking will have their son's scout account credited for their compensation.



## Conclusions

Scouting provides its' members with opportunities for adventure, fun, and knowledge that most boys only dream of. The attaining of the rank of Eagle Scout opens up numerous opportunities for Scouts who become members of this select brotherhood.

In past years, members of Troop 888 have participated in the following activities: camping, canoeing, swimming, black powder shooting, fishing, hiking, sports, backpacking, rappelling, and many others ... too numerous to mention.

In addition, our Scouts have obtained merit badges in such areas as computers, citizenship, astronomy, finger printing, Indian lore, law, orienteering, pioneering, photography, surveying, art, rifle, shotgun shooting, reptile study, small boat sailing, aviation, etc.

*You must understand that it is the Scout's responsibility to set his goals. We as Troop leaders want to present the ranks of scouting to you, but it is more important that the Scouts learn responsibility and gain the skills to succeed in life. The opportunities are there, and we look forward to working with you, as you attain your goals.*