

Boy Scout Troop 661

“A Boy Led Troop” The Patrol Method

INTRODUCTION:

So, now you've bridged over and you are a Boy Scout! In Cub Scouts the adult leaders run the show, but in Boy Scouts it's run by the boys. Very likely both you and your parents might wonder how that happens. It's simple. We follow the “**Patrol Method**” as first outlined by Robert-Baden-Powell. Patrols are the building blocks of a Boy Scout Troop.

Empowering boys to be leaders is the core of Scouting. Scouts learn by doing, and what the youth leaders do is lead their patrols and their Troop. A Boy Scout Troop is a small democracy. In Troop 661 the boys elect their top youth leaders twice a year, and following elections the junior leadership positions are appointed by the Senior Patrol Leader. The boys themselves develop the Troop's program and take responsibility for figuring out how to achieve their goals. The adult leaders are a resource to assist the youth leaders in achieving those goals, however the Troop is in fact boy led and boy run. With the Scoutmaster's direction the boys are formed into Patrols, plan the Troop's program, and make it a reality. In order for the Troop's youth leaders to be able to make everything happen the Troop relies upon Scouts serving in positions of responsibility.

THE LEADERSHIP HEIRARCHY:

The top level youth leader in the Troop is the **Senior Patrol Leader**, his job is like the President's. With the advice and consent of the Scoutmaster the Senior Patrol Leader picks his cabinet, a group of other youth leaders to assist him in running the Troop. The Senior Patrol Leader is in charge of Troop meetings from beginning to end. He appoints an Assistant Senior Patrol Leader to serve with him and assist in carrying out his responsibilities. The Assistant Senior Patrol Leader is similar to the Vice-President.

The Senior Patrol Leader also chairs the **Patrol Leaders' Council** and runs their meetings. At the Patrol Leaders' Council meetings the Senior Patrol Leader meets with **the Patrol Leaders** to plan the Troop's weekly meetings, activities and programs. Generally the Scoutmaster, or an Assistant Scout Master, attends these meetings to mentor and encourage the Senior Patrol Leader and give him the tools to succeed. These meetings should take place once a month to ensure that the Troop meetings and outings run smoothly.

The **Patrol Leaders** are elected by members of their respective Patrols during the general election. Only Patrol members can vote for their Patrol Leader. He takes responsibility for the Patrol's activities, organizes the Patrol members at weekly meetings, Camporees, and camp outs, and represents the Patrol as a member of the Patrol Leaders' Council. Each Patrol Leader appoints an Assistant Patrol Leader to serve with him and assist in the youth leadership responsibilities. Patrol Leaders are similar to the members of Congress in that they attend meetings with the higher youth leaders and represent the interests of their Patrol members.

The **Troop Guide** is both a leader and a mentor to the new Scouts. He is an older Scout who has achieved 1st Class or above rank and helps the Patrol Leaders and their new Scouts in much the same way that the Scoutmaster works with the Senior Patrol Leader, providing direction, coaching and support as determined by the skill level and morale of the Patrol Leaders and their new Scouts. New Scouts and their Patrol Leaders should look to the Troop Guide for direction and guidance in achieving rank, running their Patrols, and who to go to get things done in the Troop.

The **Troop Instructor** is a youth leader who has achieved 1st Class or above rank and both proficient in Scouting skills and the ability to teach those skills to others. New Scouts should look to the Troop Instructor for guidance on learning the skills that they need to achieve rank.

THE BOY LED PATROL:

As you can see from the above introduction a **Patrol** is the fundamental leadership unit of the Boy Scout Troop. Each Scout acts as a member of a Patrol, with the sole exception of the senior leaders (Senior Patrol Leader, Assistant Senior Patrol Leader, and Troop Guide). A Patrol is

a small group of boys who are more or less similar in age, development and interests. Working together as a team the Patrol members share the responsibility of making their Patrol a success. All Scouts in a Patrol enjoy the friendship, sense of belonging, and achievements of the Patrol and each of its members. Each Patrol selects a name for itself, decides on a Patrol yell and designs a flag. A Patrol takes pride in its identity and its members strive to make theirs the best Patrol possible. During meetings, at Camporees, and outings the Patrols often engage in friendly competitions involving Scouting skills.

The Patrol is the fundamental working unit where Scouts can seek to achieve rank advancement. During outings New Scouts should seek out older Patrol members (who are First Class Rank or above) to assist them in learning their Scouting skills. Basic skills learned on camp outs are generally learned under the direction and supervision of the Patrol Leader, with other older Scouts assisting in teaching the New Scouts their skills. Boys work within their Patrols to learn how to pitch a tent (and where), how to cook, clean dishes, and arrange the Patrol's grub box, cooler, and Patrol Box.

Scouting is a game with a purpose.

Fun is the game.

Values are the purpose.

Learning is the Process.

“It's not just about doing the dishes!”

⇒ Unknown Scouter

“The object of the Patrol method is not so much saving the Scoutmaster trouble as to give responsibility to the boy”

⇒ Robert Baden-Powell

Boy Scout Troop 661

“A Boy Led Troop” Part II The Patrol Method in Action

How the Patrol Method is Supposed to Work:

With the Scoutmaster’s direction the boys are formed into Patrols. As you know from before a **Patrol** is a small group of boys who are more or less similar in age, development and interests. Working together as a **team** the Patrol members share the responsibility of making their Patrol a success. During camp outs , at Camporee, and other outings the boys in each Patrol have **to work together** using their Scouting skills to achieve certain goals, such as pitching tents to sleep in for the night and cooking/cleaning so the boys can eat. Remember, you and your Patrol members are a team – so work together to get things done.

Leadership and YOUR Duties as a Scout:

In order for the **Patrol Method** to work each Scout in the Patrol has to **RESPECT** the leadership hierarchy, **follow** reasonable directions and orders, and **do their job** as part of the “team.” As we learned before the leadership hierarchy in Scouting involves youth leaders, coached or mentored by adult leaders. All Scouts in the Troop have to follow the leadership and direction of their elected Senior Patrol Leader (SPL), he is the proverbial “captain of the ship.” Second in command is the Assistant Senior Patrol Leader (ASPL) who acts in the SPL’s absence and handles special assignments from the SPL. However, most new Scouts have the most direct and frequent contact with their own Patrol Leader.

Your Patrol Leader is the first person that you should look to for help and guidance on a campout, at Camporee, at Troop Meetings or other events. You should **ALWAYS listen to and respect** the SPL, ASPL, and other youth leaders and adults, however when you have a problem or need help you need to ask your Patrol Leader for help first. If your Patrol Leader cannot help you solve your problem or is unavailable then you go to your Assistant

Patrol Leader. If neither of them can help you then you need to ask the Troop Guide for help. Remember, the Troop Guide is the person that new Scouts should look to for direction and guidance in achieving rank, working with their Patrols, and to get things done in the Troop. Once you have gone through all of these options, then you go to the SPL for help.

The Patrol Method works best when all Scouts do their best to always:

RESPECT
LISTEN
FOLLOW DIRECTIONS
DO THEIR JOB or DUTY

Think about it, how would you like to be a leader and have no one respect you, have no one listen to you, have no one follow your directions, and have no one help out by doing their part of the tasks necessary to have a safe and fun camping experience? Of course you would not like that! Who would? If you want to have fun in Scouting you have to be willing to do your part too. Remember the Scout Oath (“On my honor ...”) and Scout Law (“A Scout is Trustworthy, Loyal, Helpful, Friendly, Courteous, Kind, Obedient, Cheerful, Thrifty, Brave, Clean and Reverent”)? Those are the basic rules that guide all Scouts in their actions, so live them!

Using the Patrol Method While Camping: Lights, Camera, Action!

During outings New Scouts should seek out older Patrol members (who are First Class Rank or above) to assist them in learning their Scouting skills. Basic skills learned on camp outs are generally learned under the direction and supervision of the Patrol Leader, Instructor, Troop Guide, with other older Scouts assisting in teaching the New Scouts their skills. Boys work within their Patrols to learn how to pitch a tent (and where), how to cook, clean dishes, and properly arrange and care for the Patrol’s grub box, cooler, and Patrol Box.

The guidelines below will let you know what to do, how to act, and what your duties are. Read them carefully and be sure to follow these rules on all outings with Troop 661.

Preparing to Go Camping: Always wear your Class “A” uniform for group travel to campsites. Pack your gear carefully and make sure that you have everything that you will need (double check the suggested list). Arrive either early or on time, but never late. Be helpful and follow the directions of all youth and adult leaders. Don’t forget to say your goodbyes to Mom, Dad and your sibling(s).

What “Contraband” Items Are: In Troop 661 there are certain things that we do not allow on camp outs – these items are “contraband” and will be confiscated by the adult leaders if they see or hear about them. In Troop 661 we do not allow the following items at our camp sites: Soda, Candy, electronic games, radios, tape players, guns, CD players, cigarettes, alcohol, or controlled substances. Most of these are obvious, but some Scouts think that soda and candy are “OK” because they don’t harm anyone. The problems with soda and candy are: (1) that the sugar hypes up the Scouts, and (2) soda and candy might be taken by another Scout leading to unfriendly disputes.

At Camp - Obtaining & Caring for Troop Camping Gear:

Once the Troop arrives at the campsite and the vehicles are parked the Scouts get out and assist in unloading all of the personal gear and food supplies. The **Quartermaster** is a youth leader in charge of the Troop’s gear and equipment. All Scouts need to listen and follow the directions of the Senior Patrol Leader (or other senior Scout in charge) to unload Troop gear under his direction and that of the Quartermaster. Tents are handed to groups of Scouts who will be using them. Be sure to pick your camping buddy in advance of arriving so that you know who you will be sleeping with as you will need to work together to select a camp site and pitch your tent. Be sure to take good care of all Troop gear and respect it as it has to last for a long time (meaning no cutting tents or tarps, lighting matches or using lighters inside, and no food or drinks inside the tents).

Selecting a Site and Pitching Your Tent:

Once you have helped unload the Troop’s gear (including lamps, tables, stoves, and Patrol Boxes) you and your buddy need to select an appropriate site to pitch your tent. Listen to your Senior Patrol Leader, Patrol Leader, and other older Scouts who are in charge about where tents may be set up. Find a place in your Patrol’s area that is not too rocky, not on

a slope, and not in a low spot (in case it rains). Pitch your tent carefully and be sure not to jam the zippers, break the poles, or rip off strings or tabs. When you are done you can put your personal gear inside.

Helping With Troop and Patrol Gear:

Remember, you are a member of the **TEAM**. In order to have a fun time at camp everyone has to help with the Troop's gear and with their Patrol's gear. This means that all Scouts, from the Senior Patrol Leader on down to the youngest new Scout have a job to do. Do your duty as requested of you by your leaders. **A SCOUT IS CHEERFUL AS HE DOES HIS DUTY!**

The Patrol Box:

Each Patrol is assigned a **Patrol Box** with cooking gear and cleaning supplies. All Patrol Boxes are equal – this means that you should not take any gear or supplies from someone else's Patrol Box! Your **Quartermaster** has the tough job of keeping these Patrol Boxes properly supplied. Each Patrol Leader should pick a Scout in his Patrol and assign him the job of **Assistant Quartermaster**, who will have the responsibility of caring for and keeping the Patrol's gear together and notifying the Quartermaster of any missing or broken items.

The "Grub Master's" Responsibilities:

Before each camping trip the Patrols meet to decide what to eat, plan a menu (ensuring that it is healthy and contains food from the 4 food groups), and assign a Scout to be "**Grub Master**". The Grub Master is in charge of buying the food, keeping within the Patrol's monetary budget for the trip, and bringing the food to the campsite. The Grub Master also has to prepare a written menu, a **duty roster** (with the Patrol Leader's help and guidance), and participates in the cooking and cleaning along with all other Scouts in the Patrol.

Proper Food Storage:

A cooler is used to keep perishables cold. In case you don't know, perishables are foods that are kept in the refrigerator at home, such as: milk, eggs, cheese, yogurt, meat, butter / margarine, and other food items that say "Refrigerate after opening". The food stays cold in the cooler by using ice. Be sure to bring enough ice to last for the trip. Since ice melts we need to keep the food in closed containers so it doesn't get wet when the ice melts. For example, cheese that has been sitting in water is nasty and no one will want to eat it. Dry goods need to be kept in a safe storage container like a large plastic bin with a lid. Black trash bags, paper bags, and cardboard boxes will only encourage animals to try to forage in them. Also, food might get wet or might look like trash if left in an improper container. **KEEP YOUR FOOD CLEAN, AND PUT IT WHERE IT BELONGS.**

Duty Rosters:

The Grub Master also has to prepare a written menu, a **Duty Roster** (with the Patrol Leader's help and guidance), and participates in the cooking and cleaning along with all other Scouts in the Patrol. The Grub Master has to **KEEP HIS RECEIPTS** and show (or give) them to the **Trip Master** (an adult leader) in order to be reimbursed (**THIS IS IMPORTANT**). The duty roster is a written list of jobs, set up by meals, that tells Scouts who is supposed to cook and clean for each meal during the trip. All Patrol members have to help out and do their assignments in order for the team to be effective. **A SCOUT IS OBEDIENT.**

Meal Time and Proper "Grub" Etiquette:

Scouts should only eat food designated for meals at **MEAL TIME**. The Grub Master should have brought snack foods for you to eat between meals if you planned ahead. At meal time the Scouts in all Patrols get together and act as teams to prepare their food, eat and enjoy it, and then clean up the food, the cooking utensils and gear, the stoves, their personal mess kits, and clean their Patrol area. Proper "grub" etiquette means not eating food that does not belong to you or your Patrol. **DO NOT RAID OTHER PATROL BOXES OR YOUR OWN PATROL'S FOOD THAT IS MEANT FOR A FUTURE MEAL.** It is not fun to go hungry or not have a food item planned for a specific meal because another Scout was rude or unthoughtful.

Do's and Do Not's About "Grub":

Be sure to take only what you plan to eat and no more; Scouts do not waste. Do not throw food, steal someone's food, spoil food by putting trash or dirt in it, or waste food by burning it or simply throwing it away. A SCOUT IS CLEAN, AND A SCOUT IS THRIFTY.

Proper Camping Behavior:

Scouts are expected to remember that they set an example wherever they go. ACT LIKE A SCOUT. Be sure that you live up to the Scout Oath and Law at all times. Behave no worse on camp outs than you would in front of your teachers, preacher, parents, or grand parents. Remember that when we are in public people are watching us and look to us to set the right example.

RESPECT – Adults, Youth Leaders, Fellow Scouts, and Nature:

The twelve points of the Scout Law basically tell us to RESPECT one another, our leaders, public and private property, and Mother Nature. In fact, the **Outdoor Code** is a lengthy narrative that basically tells us to respect nature and to leave our campsites cleaner than we found them. Be sure to respect all adults, youth leaders, other Scouts, property, and nature at all times.

Camp Fires:

Campfires are privilege and not a right. We live in a desert environment and fire is a very real threat to the environment and to our homes and communities. When we are camping we need to respect fire and remember that it can either be a tool or a dangerous weapon. Fire is a useful tool to cook, to keep warm, and helps us have fun. Take care to be safe with fire, follow all of the safety rules, and listen to your leaders. Campfires can be a lot of fun for everyone, let's not spoil it by being foolish or dangerous. Do not burn plastic, glass, colored paper, lighters, watches, batteries, food, and remember that extremely flammable substances (like gas or lighter fluid) should not be put into or on a fire once it is going.

Campfire songs, skits and jokes must be kept clean and avoid using racial slurs, vulgarity, sexual innuendos, or other offensive language. Remember, if you think it might be offensive it probably is so either don't do it or run it by your Senior Patrol Leader, Scoutmaster or Trip Master before proceeding. As my grandfather used to say "Put brain in gear before putting foot in mouth!"

Camp Breakdown:

When it is time to go listen to your Senior Patrol Leader and follow his directions. Generally, we clean up all Troop Gear, Patrol Gear, and pack those items away in their proper storage containers before any personal gear is packed, and before tents are taken down. Follow the directions of the Quartermaster in bringing Troop and Patrol gear back to the trailer for loading. Personal gear and tents are last. After all gear and supplies are stowed we ALWAYS perform a "police line" for clean up.

Camp Site Clean Up:

Troop 661 prides itself in living up to the Outdoor Code at all times. We never leave a campsite dirty or littered with trash. Follow the directions of your Senior Patrol Leader (or other senior Scout in charge) to form a "police line" and pick up all trash and non-natural items. Return all rocks and logs to their natural resting places and make the campsite look as good or better than when we arrived.

Returning Troop Gear:

When you are done using your tent be sure to clean it out, dry it out, remove all dirt, leaves and dust, and pack it up properly. Be respectful of this property as you and your fellow Scouts will need it again. If your tent is wet when you leave, ask to take it home to set up in your garage or on your lawn to dry out. Wet tents smell horrible when packed and left in the dark for a month or more. Be sure that your Patrol Box is properly packed, that all items are clean and dry, and that you do not have another Patrol's gear in your Patrol Box. Your Quartermaster has color coded all Patrol gear with spray paint. So, if your Patrol is using the BLUE box then all items will have blue spray paint on them. If you have a RED or YELLOW item then it goes in another Patrol Box. Be careful when packing and returning Troop

and Patrol gear. Listen and follow directions in returning gear and repacking the trailer.

The Trip Home:

On the trip home you may be tired or you may be excited. Remember that other Scouts might feel the same or different from you, and that the adult leaders and drivers might be tired and cranky. Behave appropriately and respect others.

THE SCOUT LAW

“A Scout is Trustworthy, Loyal, Helpful, Friendly, Courteous, Kind, Obedient, Cheerful, Thrifty, Brave, Clean and Reverent.”