



Troop 31

Ramsey, NJ

www.bsa-troop31.org

Scout/Parents Guide

Introduction

This Guide is designed to be a useful tool to help both Scouts and Parents to better understand the Boy Scouting program and Troop 31 in particular. We firmly believe that your family will have a great scouting experience with our Troop, and will enjoy every step of the way as the scout progresses through the ranks.

TROOP 31 KEY PHONE NUMBERS

Scoutmaster

Mike McKiever 845-368-4436

Committee Chair

Jim McCarthy 201-934-8285

Advancements Chair

Stan Rutkowski 201-826-4270

Treasurer

Laura McDermott 201-818-9652

Registrar

Laurie Stephen 201-934-4941

Troop Web Site

www.bsa-troop31.org

Troop 31 Parent / Scout Guide

I. Mission Statement

The committee and the leaders of Troop 31 are committed to providing a quality Boy Scouting program in a supportive, learning environment.

Boy Scout Troop 31 will abide by the rules and regulations as set forth by the Boy Scouts of America and its governing bodies.

The Scouts are required to understand and agree to live by the Boy Scout Oath or Promise, Law, Motto, and Slogan. They are asked to “demonstrate Scout Spirit by living the Scout Oath (Promise) and Scout Law in their everyday life”. See Page 9 in The Boy Scout Handbook.

II. Troop Structure

Patrols: Patrols are teams of approximately 6-8 boys who work together along the Scouting trail. Each patrol elects a patrol leader to help lead and coordinate the patrol’s activities. An assistant patrol leader is appointed by the patrol leader. The patrol leader represents the patrol at the PLC (patrol leaders’ council). Each patrol has a name, flag, and yell.

Troop: The troop is made up of all the patrols. Troop 31 holds their troop meetings on Wednesdays of every month (except July and August) at 7:30 - 9:00 pm at the Dater School. There are no meetings when school is not in session. Generally, the first Wednesday of each of those months the Patrol Leaders’ Council is held. The PLC is made up of the patrol leaders, senior troop leaders, assistant senior patrol leaders and troop guides. They discuss and plan future meetings and outings for the troop.

Committee: The Committee consists of registered volunteer adults who are responsible for the troop’s welfare and budget. Troop 31’s Committee is comprised of the committee chair, secretary, treasurer, advancements chair, and other positions of responsibility. They generally meet the fourth Thursday of every month.

Chartered Organization: A chartered organization is the group that has ownership (or sponsorship) of the troop, to help fulfill aims and goals for the development of youth. Troop 31’s chartered organization is the Hawthorne Fortitude Lodge #200 Free and Accepted Masons (located at the corner of Lake Street and Franklin Turnpike in Ramsey).

District and Council: Troop 31 belongs to the Iaoapogh District (pronounced yawpaw), which is part of the Northern New Jersey Council. Our district and council headquarters are located in the Oakland Service center.

III. Membership/Registration

The Boy Scout program is open to boys who have completed the fifth grade, or are 11 years old or have earned the Arrow of Light Award, but are still under 18 years old.

Troop 31 has a yearly troop-wide registration. The current registration fee is \$50.00 for the first scout in the family, and \$45.00 for each subsequent scout. This cost covers the annual registration with BSA, Boy’s Life subscription, as well as advancements, badges, supplies, etc. This does not cover the costs of trips/outings. They are budgeted separately and each participant will be notified of that trip’s costs.

Scholarships are available should any fees or costs become a problem for a scouting family. The Committee Chair should be contacted for any scholarship requests.

IV. Uniforms

Official Uniform: The Official uniform consists of the BSA shirt (with appropriate patches and current rank), BSA pants or shorts with belt, neckerchief, and slide. (Additional Troop 31 neckerchiefs can be purchased from the Scoutmaster for \$10.00). Please note that BSA socks must be worn with shorts. The BSA hat is optional. Uniforms are available at the Scout Shop at the Service Center in Oakland, as well as at the Outdoor Store. A guide as to the official placement of insignia on the uniform is attached and can also be found on the inside covers of the Boy Scout Handbook. These uniforms are to be worn at all troop meetings, Courts of Honor, some troop outings and camps. Scouts will be notified if there is a deviation from this.

Activity Uniform: The Activity uniform consists of the official Troop 31 T-shirt, along with the BSA pants or shorts with belt and BSA socks. Again BSA hats are optional. Each boy, upon reaching the rank of Scout, will be given a troop T-shirt for free. Additional T-shirts may be purchased from the Troop for \$10.00 each. The Activity Uniform is worn only when instructed by the Scoutmaster or Senior Patrol Leader.

V. Ranks/Advancements

For the Tenderfoot to First Class ranks, there are a number of skills that a scout must master. These are listed in the Scout Handbook. As each skill is learned and demonstrated, the Scoutmaster or an Assistant Scoutmaster will initial and date the individual scout's book. Additionally, for Scout to First Class ranks (except for demonstrating Scout Spirit and the Scoutmaster Conferences), the following designated scouts are allowed to initial and date the book: Senior Patrol Leader, Assistant Senior Patrol Leaders, Junior Assistant Scoutmaster, Troop Guides and Instructors (as long as they are at least First Class), and Patrol Leaders who have achieved the rank of First Class. No one outside Troop 31 can sign off advancements in the Handbook.

Parents are encouraged to read the Scout Handbook. It will help you understand your son's scouting program and the requirements that he will need to complete.

Once all of the skills are mastered and signed off it is up to the scout to request a Scoutmaster's conference. This can be done at any scouting event where the Scoutmaster is present, or the scout can call the Scoutmaster at home to arrange for the conference. The conference will generally take place before, after, or during a Troop meeting. Some of the items involved in the conference are: to review the skills that the scout has learned, determine if the Scout is ready to go before the Board of Review, discuss his activity in the troop, his understanding and practice of the ideals of Scouting, and reviewing the requirements for his next rank. The scout must be in full "Class A" uniform with correct insignia placement and current rank badge for the Scoutmaster Conference.

Once the Scoutmaster conference is completed, the scout must request a Board of Review. The scout must ask the Advancements Chair from the troop committee to set up the Board of Review. There must be a minimum of one week between the Scoutmaster conference and the Board of Review. The Board of Review is composed of three members from the Advancement Committee. The purpose of the Board of Review is not to retest the scout, but rather to ensure that he has completed all of the requirements, to determine the quality of his troop experience, and to encourage him to advance toward his next rank. Once again, the scout must be in full Class A uniform for his Board of Review.

To insure timely processing of advancement and merit badge requests, all requirements must be completed at least two weeks prior to a Court of Awards to receive recognition. Advancements and merit badges completed after that date will be formally recognized at the next Court of Awards.

The date that the Board of Review signs off in the scout's book is the day that the scout has earned that rank. Generally, the Scoutmaster will try to present the scout with his new rank badge at a troop meeting shortly after the completion of the Board of Review. The presentation of the certificate of rank will take place at the next scheduled Court of Awards (assuming it falls within the above completion deadline). It is important to keep rank advancement cards, merit badge cards, and blue cards in a safe place. This is their official record of their badges and advancements, and may be needed at some future time.

Scout: (page 4) A scout can easily earn this rank by accomplishing the requirements on page 4 of the BSA Handbook. (Parents: upon completion of reviewing the "How to Protect Your Children from Child Abuse" pamphlet found inside the front cover of the BSA Handbook with your child, please sign the cover page of the pamphlet). This rank should be completed within the first few weeks of the scout joining the troop.

Tenderfoot: (pages 31-61) The Tenderfoot rank requirements offer a taste of the great adventure awaiting scouts on their scouting trail. The requirements are listed on pages 32 & 33, and should be initialed and dated on pages 438 & 439.

Second Class: (pages 63-109) This rank will teach the scouts how to use a map and compass, ways to observe wildlife, how and when to build a campfire, the safe use of pocketknives and other wood tools, go on more campouts, and add to their knowledge of first aid. The sign-off pages are 440 & 441.

Troop or Patrol Activities: Second and First Class requirements include 5 and 10 troop or patrol activities respectively. These activities should be recorded on pages 75 (second class and 127 (first class) in the handbook. Acceptable activities include: any event planned by the Troop in its annual planning conference and listed on the Troop Activity Calendar (except Ramsey Day); Courts of Awards; Eagle Ceremonies; Troop summer camps or trips; Tenderfoot camp; any patrol activities (other than a meeting) in which over 50% of the patrol members participate. Not acceptable are: participation in Troop fundraisers, personal service hour projects, and sporting event outings not run as a Troop activity. If there are any questions as to whether or not an activity qualifies, please ask the Scoutmaster before the event.

First Class: (pages 111-165) Becoming a First Class scout prepares scouts to be more of a leader in their patrol, troop, and community; more time in the outdoors; more responsibilities; and more knowledge of scouting skills. The requirements should be initialed and dated on pages 442 & 443.

Star, Life and Eagle: (pages 167-183) Building on the knowledge and experience in becoming a First Class scout, the trail to Eagle is an exciting pathway that will challenge, test and open many doors to new ideas and opportunities for the scout. Sign-off pages are. Star- 444, Life - 445, Eagle - 446 & 447.

VI. Positions of Responsibility

Being a good leader is a skill that can be learned only by doing. Beginning with the Star requirement, a scout must hold a position of responsibility. These include: senior patrol leader, assistant senior patrol leader, patrol leader, Order of the Arrow troop representative, instructor, troop guide, quartermaster, den chief, bugler, junior assistant scoutmaster, troop historian, chaplain aide, scribe, and librarian. The scout should sit down with the senior patrol leader to discuss the responsibilities of the positions, as well as the availability. The Troop offers training for these positions once a year. Scouts holding a position of responsibility are strongly encouraged to attend this training.

VII. Service Hours

Service to others has been a hallmark of the Boy Scouts of America since its beginnings. The requirements for the ranks of Star and Life call upon the scout to give at least 6 hours of service to others. (The Second Class requirement calls for at least one hour). A service project is a Good Turn that allows for Scout Spirit to be put into action. Service projects are generally planned at the troop level and aim to benefit the chartered organization or the community. Service projects can take many forms: community cleanup, repairing a church, improving a wildlife habitat, volunteering to help out at a soup kitchen, or any of a thousand possibilities. Service projects can be organized at a patrol level or even done by an individual. When a scout is performing a service project, he is a representative of the scouting organization in general and Troop 31 in particular. Because of this, there is a requirement that scouts only work "approved" service projects. The approval for any service project, be it on the troop, patrol or individual level, is given by the Scoutmaster. If a scout wants to count this particular service project as Service Hours towards their rank advancement, such approval must be secured in advance of actually working the service project. You can ask for approval at a Troop meeting, or if there is a need for immediate approval, call the Scoutmaster at home. Giving of yourself will improve the lives of those around you, and it will also enrich your own life as you discover that your actions make a real difference.

VIII. Merit Badges

A merit badge is an invitation to explore an exciting subject. With more than 100 to choose from, some merit badges encourage you to increase your skill in subjects you already like, while others challenge you to learn about new areas of knowledge. Earning a merit badge can even lead you toward a lifelong hobby or set you on the way to a rewarding career. Scouts may work on any badge at any time, assuming they have the approval of the Scoutmaster. While merit badges are not required for the ranks of Tenderfoot, Second Class, or First Class, scouts moving toward those ranks also may work on merit badges. If you have an interest in a particular merit badge, you can start working on it anytime (once you have earned the rank of Scout). You must (1) get an approved merit badge application (blue card) **prior** to starting the work, (2) work with a registered Merit Badge Counselor, and (3) find a scout buddy (or parent) to go with you to each meeting with the merit badge counselor. Each boy that is asking for a blue card should know what the merit badge is about, and should have read, at least once, the requirements for the badge.

The application for all merit badges that are required for Eagle (pages 188 & 189) need to be approved by the Scoutmaster. The approval of applications for all elective merit badges (pages 190- 193) can also be approved by an Assistant Scoutmaster. The Scoutmaster has a complete listing of all registered merit badge counselors in the Northern New Jersey Council.

Once again, in order to be presented with a merit badge at an upcoming Court of Awards, the completed blue card must be given to the Advancements Chair at least two weeks prior to that Court of Awards.

IX. Outdoor Activities

Outdoor activities are the highlight of Boy Scouting. Troop 31 has, for many years, had one of the most outstanding outdoor programs in northern New Jersey, probably in the whole state. Almost every month the scouts of Troop 31 organize and participate in outdoor activities. Events include tent camping, backpacking, canoeing, hiking, white water rafting, and winter cabin camping. During the school year, there are usually two events scheduled for each month.

Some events are specifically organized to help younger scouts develop their outdoor skills while others are "high adventure" events for more experienced scouts. Also, throughout the year, the Troop participates in Council sponsored outings such as Camporees, Merit Badge fairs, and the Iditarod (a winter event formerly known as the Klondike Derby).

The values of camping, canoeing, and backpacking are many – Scout-craft, adventure, advancement, fun, fellowship – just to mention the more obvious. Of even greater importance is the training and experience that a boy receives in self-reliance, leadership, acceptance of responsibility, and the building of a sound body adaptable to various situations.

Each Scout attending a Troop outing is charged a fee which is applied towards expenses (e.g. food, gas, equipment rental, etc) for the weekend.

X. Summer Activities

Troop 31 has no regularly scheduled troop meetings in the months of July and August. The Troop does, however, offer some outings during the summer. Generally there is at least one week-long adventure camp, as well as a week at a Scout-sponsored merit badge camp. The District also offers Tenderfoot Camp for those boys who just crossed over from Webelos.

The ranks of Star, Life and Eagle call for a minimum of four or six months of activity in the troop and patrol, as well as serving actively in one or more of the positions of responsibility. The procedure in Troop 31 is to give a week of active participation for each week that you attend a troop-sponsored outing. Additionally, a week of active leadership will be credited for each week during a summer outing where the scout serves in the position of patrol leader or above. (this includes leadership positions in Tenderfoot camp). Any questions should be directed to the Scoutmaster prior to the summer.

XI. Parent Volunteers

Troop 31 is comprised of parent volunteers. Every family is expected to volunteer their time and talent to help run the Troop. As such, each family must sign up for at least one committee/activity in addition to our annual Christmas tree sale where we ask all our scouting families to help.

XII. Fundraisers

Troop 31's big fundraising event is the Christmas Tree Sale. The troop raises money to pay for badges, advancements, some activities, troop equipment, and more. Our booth at Ramsey Day has also become a small fundraiser for the Troop.

XIII. Scout Accounts

Each scout automatically gets set up with a “scout account” when he joins the troop. Money will be credited into his account when he participates in the fundraisers. The amount of money is based upon the total net profit and the amount of time each scout worked.

A scout is able to use the money in his account ONLY for scout-related and/or troop sponsored events including registration fees, camps, outings and his Eagle Ceremony. Any deviations from the above will require pre-approval from the Troop Committee. A Scout can find out the balance in his scout account by contacting the Troop Treasurer. Once a scout officially resigns from the Troop, all money is returned to the general fund, except when a younger sibling is still active in the troop. The remaining funds can be deposited directly to his account. Parents cannot use their son’s account to fund the parent’s portion of a trip.

XIV. Useful Websites

Troop 31 www.bsa-troop31.org

Cub Pack 175 www.ramseypack175.org

Cub Pack 306 www.pack306.com

Iaoapogh District [http://home.att.net/~Ramapo Mountains District/](http://home.att.net/~Ramapo_Mountains_District/)

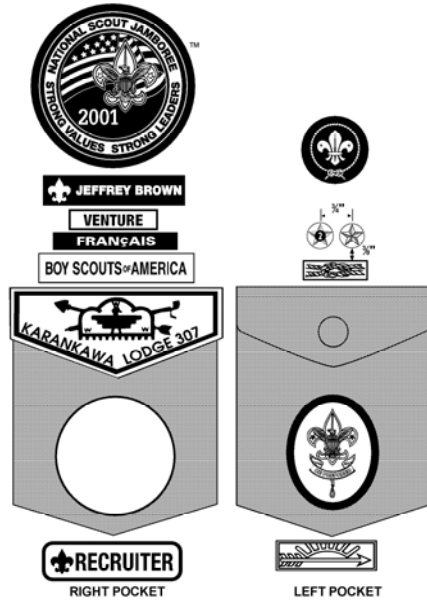
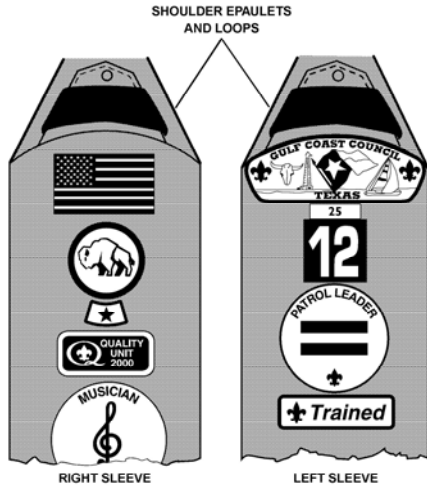
Northern New Jersey Council www.njbsa.org

Boy Scouts of America www.scouting.org

U.S. Scouts Service Project www.ussscouts.org

Merit Badge info www.meritbadge.com

BOY SCOUT/VARSITY SCOUT UNIFORM INSPECTION SHEET
OFFICIAL PLACEMENT OF INSIGNIA



Conduct uniform inspection with common sense; the basic rule is neatness.

Merit Badge Sash. If worn, merit badges are attached to front (and back, if needed) of sash. Venture/Varsity letter is attached at bottom front corner. Temporary insignia may be worn on back.

Shoulder Epaulets. Red shoulder loops identify Boy Scouting (all members of a troop). Blaze (orange) loops identify Varsity Scouting.

Left Sleeve. Council patches, unit numeral, and badge of office are worn as shown snug up, and touching each other. Badge of office is centered below and touches unit numeral. The veteran unit bar (25, 50, 55, 60, 65, 70, 75, or 80 years) is positioned above and touching troop numeral and in turn touching council patch. Den chief cord is worn over the left shoulder and under epaulet.

Left Pocket. Service stars above the pocket. If a medal or embroidered knot for youth members is worn, service stars are raised. Embroidered square knots are worn centered above the pocket in rows of three. Not more than five medals may be worn, pinned centered immediately above the pocket (extending over knots if both are worn). The wearing sequence for knots or medals is at the wearer's discretion and lead color is to the wearer's right. Badges of rank are worn centered on the pocket above the Arrow of Light Award. Flap buttoned. The World Crest is worn centered horizontally over the left pocket and vertically between the left shoulder seam and the top of the pocket.

Right Sleeve. U.S. flag. Only the most recently earned Quality Unit Award may be worn below patrol emblem or below National Honor Patrol star. Musician badge, if in band or drum corps, is worn 1/2 inch below patrol emblem. Up to six merit badges may be worn on the long-sleeve shirt in two columns of three starting 3 inches above the bottom edge of the cuff.

Right Pocket. Jamboree insignia (only one) worn above BSA or interpreter strip. Order of the Arrow lodge insignia worn on pocket flap. Temporary insignia worn centered on the pocket. Flap buttoned. The Varsity or Venture strip is worn above the BSA strip or above the interpreter strip. Nameplate, if worn, is centered above the BSA strip, interpreter strip, and Venture or Varsity strip.