

Troop 584 Assistant Scoutmaster (ASM) - Getting Started Guide

The purpose of this guide is to provide those brave adults who have made the decision to stand on the front lines of the Scouts BSA program the information they need to get started and to share current Scoutmaster expectations.

1. **Submit a Scouts BSA Adult Application**

The welcome packet the membership team provides to families joining the Troop contains one (1) Youth membership and one (1) Adult membership application. Complete an adult application and submit to the membership chair (Amber Shushan as of Feb.2019). If you no longer have an adult application, ask the membership chair for another one, fill it out and return to the membership chair.

2. **Create a my.scouting.org Account**

If you do not already have a MyScouting account, create one. Visit <https://my.scouting.org> and click on "CREATE ACCOUNT".



When creating this account, use the same email address and other personal information that you provided when you completed your adult application. As noted in the "Online Training" section of the [Sam Houston Area Council training website](#), accounts may be created with or without your BSA membership number. The FAQ for the my.scouting.org website and online tools is [available online](#).

3. **Get In Uniform and Get Familiar with the Handbook**

We expect our Scouts to proudly wear the uniform. The same is true for our leaders. Everything the scouts need to know for rank advancement is covered in the handbook. Get your own copy and start reading; it's loaded with great information. Uniforms and handbooks may be purchased at local [Scout Shops](#).

4. **Be Present**

Come to Troop meetings, camp outs, patrol meetings and service projects - the more activities you can attend the better. The more scouts see you, the more they will come to see you as a reliable adult that can be trusted. As we often say at service projects, "Many hands make light work." This is true on camp outs as well. You're not expected to know everything, but come for the fun, for the fellowship and to see the outdoor program in action. The Scoutmaster often tells the scouts that one of the ways they can demonstrate loyalty is just by being present to support their patrol mates and the rest of the troop.

5. Complete Basic Training

Well-trained Assistant Scoutmasters are essential to the Troop's ability to provide a quality program to our scouts. Some training is available online (at my.scouting.org) and some training is only available in person. [Basic training](#) consists of the following:

- a. Y01: Youth Protection Training (Online training)
- b. [S24: Scoutmaster/Assistant Specific Training](#) (In-person training)
This course is often available at summer camps and district-wide camping events such as Webelos Woods in January and Camporee in March/April.
- c. [S11: Introduction to Outdoor Skills](#) (In-person training)
- d. SCO_800: Hazardous Weather Training (Online training)

See the Scoutmaster at this point so that you can receive a **"Trained"** patch for your uniform.

6. Continue Your Training

In addition to the basic training listed above, the Scoutmaster believes that the following online training courses will help volunteers develop a better understanding of the Scouts BSA program:

- a. SCO_402: Aims and Methods of Scouts BSA
- b. SCO_403: Ideals and Beliefs of Scouts BSA
- c. SCO_405: Patrol Method for Scouts BSA
- d. SCO_407: Advancement for Scouts BSA
- e. Review the [Guide to Safe Scouting](#)
** Complete the four (4) courses above first and the rest as your schedule allows.*
- f. SCO_801: Safe Swim Defense
- g. SCO_802: Safety Afloat
- h. SCO_803: Trek Safely
- i. SCO_804: Climb On Safely
- j. SCO_406: Outdoor Programs for Scouts BSA
- k. SCO_411: Troop Meeting for Scouts BSA
- l. SCO_410: Patrol Leaders Council Meeting for Scouts BSA
- m. SCO_404: Scoutmaster and Patrol Leaders for Scouts BSA
- n. SCO_400: Scouting Organization for Scouts BSA
- o. SCO_401: Role of the Unit Key 3 for Scouts BSA
- p. SCO_408: Uniforms for Scouts BSA
- q. SCO_409: Leader Uniforms for Scouts BSA
- r. SCO_415: Introduction to Merit Badges for Scouts BSA
- s. SCO_416: Merit Badge Counselors for Scouts BSA
- t. SCO_417: Merit Badge Counselors Sign Up for Scouts BSA
- u. SCO_418: Outdoor Ethics for Scouts BSA

Assistant Scoutmasters are encouraged to complete the courses above at their own pace, but are often asked to complete specific training prior to specific outings so that we can provide a safe environment (e.g., Safety Afloat before a water based camping event that includes the use of canoes/kayaks).

7. Find Your Footing

The best way to "learn the ropes" is to ask to observe another ASM as they work with individual scouts on advancement to observe the process. Observe several ASMs to become comfortable before attempting to tackle

advancement on your own. Get a copy of the Scouts BSA handbook and read it. All the information needed to satisfy the requirements is available in the handbook. Much of the skills take practice and continued review for both scouts and adults. Never agree to sign off on a requirement if you are unsure of the material. You may help the scout find another ASM that is comfortable with the material or offer to help the scout do a test-run with you - just make sure the scout knows that you can't sign off and that it's only an opportunity for him to review the material with an adult.

8. **Do Not Do What a Scout Can Do**

Leadership training is one of the aims of the Scouting program. There are many teaching and leadership opportunities for Scouts in the program; however, new adults often want to show Scouts the "right" way to perform a skill or deal with a problem. Every time an adult teaches a scout or group of scouts a skill or directs scouts rather than the youth leadership, we are denying scouts an opportunity for growth. The unit key 3 (Charter Organization Representative, Committee Chair, Scoutmaster) expect adults to address safety issues and bullying in a prompt manner to ensure a safe program environment, but it is also important to step back and allow (non-safety related) mistakes to happen. It is an opportunity for you to practice patience. Use the time to make mental notes to share with the youth leader after instruction is complete, rather than correcting in front of the entire group. If there is a scout who needs to learn a skill, find another scout to teach it - even though you may be able to teach it better. Get to know the ASPL of Advancement and the instructors who report to him.

9. **Become a Mentor to a Patrol Leader or Troop Guide**

Although new patrols are given a Troop Guide to help with skills instruction, there are many opportunities to mentor the Troop Guide(s) as well as the patrol leader(s). Get to know the Troop Guides and Patrol Leaders for a new patrol. Or get to know the new patrol leader of an established patrol. Since roles change every 6 months, there is almost always a new leader who could use some help. Help these young leaders become better leaders by offering advice and suggestions when you see them struggling, but don't deny them the opportunity to try it first. This role is designed for ASMs with experience who are very familiar with the Troop Guides, Scouting program, the patrol method, and the vision of a boy-led Troop.

10. **Volunteer to Be a Scout Spirit ASM**

We strive to have a few ASMs for each grade level to do Scout Spirit discussions required for rank advancement with scouts in that grade level. The goal is to enable more meaningful Scout Spirit discussions with the scouts, since the dedicated ASMs will have been conducting Scout Spirit discussions with the scouts as they progress through ranks.

11. **Volunteer to Be An Advisor**

Because we are a large troop, we have several Assistant Senior Patrol Leaders or ASPLs. Each of these ASPLs (Service, Meetings, Outings, Equipment, Advancement) deserves to have an adult advisor that will mentor them and help them be successful in the role. The job of the ASM advisor is to check in with the ASPL at least twice a month to offer guidance, suggestions and see if the scout feels he is satisfying the expectations of his position of responsibility (POR). By talking with the ASPLs frequently, advisors are able to help scouts course correct when needed, reinforce or elaborate on Troop expectations, and offer advice/guidance.