

Troop 9 (209) - Welcome Guide

Welcome to Troop 9! We hope that you will find this information helpful in orienting yourself in the troop. This is a compilation of advice from our scouts and their parents. The scouts and families of Troop 9 are always available to answer your questions, so let us know how we can help. Feel free to direct any questions to older scouts or scoutmasters.

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Committee Chair: Fname Lname (xxx-xxx-xxxx, Fname.Lname@gmail.com)

Website: www.Troop9Newton.Org

Council Website: <https://www.mayflowerbsa.org/>

WHAT IS A TROOP?

We are a group of boys/girls aged 10-18 who commit to follow the BSA Scout Law and Scout Oath. We use scouting as a method to develop skills and practice leadership. Adults support this boy/girl-led troop as we plan and conduct our activities through the year.

MEETINGS:

We meet every Sunday, year-round, at the Union Church, from 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. We do not meet if the immediate Monday succeeding the Sunday meet is a holiday. We follow the Newton School District calendar. In addition, we typically have one to two campouts or events per month on weekends.

UNIFORMS AND EQUIPMENT:

Each scout and ASM is expected to wear a full uniform including BSA socks, pants/shorts, shirt, emblems, neckerchief, neckerchief slide and belt. At a Board of Review, a scout must be in full uniform. The full details are here: <https://www.scouting.org/programs/scouts-bsa/troop-resources/scouts-bsa-uniform/>. Troop 9 has some inventory of handed-down uniform parts; they are in used condition but great for a second set of shorts for camp. We have these available if there is a special request or at some scheduled meetings.

The neckerchief, slide, epaulets, Council Patch, handbook and troop numbers are provided by the troop when a scout joins.

Scouts are encouraged to purchase and wear their merit badge sash; this is most often worn at formal ceremonies like Courts of Honor. Scouts will begin to earn merit badges within a few months, which should be sewn in rows across the front.

Uniforms can be purchased online at <https://www.scoutshop.org/> or at a BSA Scout Shop. Check their respective websites for current hours of operation

Here are some tips on uniforms and handbooks:

- Buy extra socks; these disappear.
- Keep the uniform and all scout items in one dedicated drawer to avoid losing parts!
- Only one handbook is issued, to last 8 years. Keep it in a handbook cover, make sure the scout puts his name in it. Photocopy the “sign off” pages at the back and keep the photocopy somewhere safe. If the handbook is lost, those signatures will be valuable, so that those requirements won’t have to be redone!
- Help your scout make a binder. Get together trading card plastic sleeve pages and create a binder dedicated to Scout stuff. Scouts get cards for each rank and merit badge along with service certificates, and it’s a good idea to have a safe place to keep these for record-keeping purposes.

THE NEW SCOUT CAMPOUT IN MARCH:

The New Scout Campout is a campout designed specifically for the new scouts to help them get used to camping with the troop, learn new skills and get a jump on many of the requirements for the Scout, Tenderfoot, Second Class, and even First Class ranks. Parents are welcome to come out and camp with the troop here and at other outings. Simply contact the scout leaders of the campout and they will give you specifics. Certain campouts have limited space for adults.

COURTS OF HONOR

Unlike Cub Scout units, who have monthly awards, troops hold periodic Courts of Honor. Troop 9 (209) holds One Court of Honor each year, in **June**, during our regular meeting time at a location decided by the Troop Committee. These are special nights, in which scouts are recognized for all their achievements over the last several months. Parents are encouraged to attend; you will hear scouts

reminisce about events and highlight upcoming activities. You may be escorted to the stage, where your scout pins his rank award onto your lapel. Scouts should wear full uniform.

EAGLE COURTS OF HONOR

An Eagle Court of Honor (ECOH) celebrates one or more scouts who have earned the Eagle rank. An ECOH is held as needed. The entire troop is invited, though the Eagle's family is in charge of securing the venue and planning refreshments. This is a moving event, and one that can inspire a younger scout to keep moving toward this goal. Typically, the Newton city official(s), MA Representatives and other dignitaries may attend. Scouts should wear full uniform.

WHAT IS THIS PATROL METHOD I KEEP HEARING ABOUT?

Patrols consist of a Senior Patrol Leader (SPL), Assistant Senior Patrol Leader (ASPL), Quartermaster (QM), Scribe and members. Each fall, new patrols are formed. In addition, a new SPL, ASPL, QM, Scribe and other leadership positions are determined for the entire troop. Further, each campout or event has a patrol leadership team. Thus, a scout might have the title of SPL for one campout, or for a year-long small patrol of scouts within the troop, or for the entire troop for the year. This allows for increasing levels upon which to practice leadership, and the chance to try out new roles within a leadership team.

HOW DOES A SCOUT BECOME A LEADER?

Generally, scouts in the early ranks learn skills and become acclimated to the troop. When a scout earns First Class rank, he is encouraged to attend the Patrol Leaders Committee (PLC) meetings, held weekly. This is where most event planning occurs, and where scouts volunteer for upcoming positions. **First Class scouts may be nominated for National Youth Leadership Training (NYLT), which is held by the Council, to learn leadership skills.** Each year, the scouts in the troop elect a new SPL for the troop, who selects his leadership team for the year.

ADULT OVERSIGHT:

Our scouts are supervised by a lead Scoutmaster (SM) and several Assistant Scoutmasters (ASMs). We follow BSA's two-deep leadership policies and training policies. In addition, our Troop Committee Chair (TCC) leads adult volunteers and holds a monthly troop committee meeting. Each family volunteers in some way throughout the year. See our Volunteer Guide. We are especially grateful to the ASMs who

devote a great deal of time to our scouts; becoming an ASM is a great way to spend more time with your son/daughter as (s)he enters the teen years.

ADULT DRIVERS:

Each family is expected to drive scouts to events on occasion. Two scoutmasters can't fit 20 scouts in their vans. Please volunteer when it fits your schedule; we should have plenty of coverage if each family volunteers even once a year. Drivers should have full collision coverage, a first aid kit and a car repair kit in their vehicle. Drivers must create an account and complete the online Youth Protection Training at <https://my.scouting.org/>

TYPICAL YEAR: Our calendar is posted on our website.

RANK ADVANCEMENT:

One large difference between Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts is that the Boy Scout takes over control of their advancement. Ranks are not based on grade or age. They move at their own pace through 7 ranks. Ranks are "signed off" by older scouts (First Class and above), not adults. Once all the requirements are satisfied, the scout requests a Scoutmaster Conference through the Senior Patrol Leader. After that, he goes to a Board of Review, a meeting with 3 adult committee members. Finally, he receives his new rank patch, which is sewn onto the left chest pocket.

The BSA Scout Handbook covers rank advancement details.

An overview is that the Scout, Tenderfoot, and Second Class ranks are mostly skill-based, and the ranks of First Class, Star, Life and Eagle are focused on leadership and service. To that end, there is no rush to get to a certain rank. A pitfall of rushing quickly to higher ranks is then struggling to be effective in a significant leadership role as a less mature teen.

If you feel your son/daughter is "stuck" or losing interest just when scouting might become more fun after First Class, talk to an Assistant Scoutmaster or ask your son to talk with an older scout. An ASM might direct a scout to more interesting activities, or help a scout to work through a challenging requirement.

We find that those scouts who have families active as adult volunteers tend to stick with the program. When scouting feels like an extended family, not a drop-off program, there are rewards for all of us. A scout ends his youth journey on his 18th birthday and cannot earn any rank or merit badges after that date. Any exception must be for a significant cause and approved at the national level. An 18-year-old scout is encouraged to become an ASM and stay active with the troop.

SERVICE:

Service is an important part of BSA. Troop 9 helps to set up the **XXXX** each **XXXX**. The troop also provides various kinds of service to our chartered organization, Union Church. We also conduct car wash and pasta dinner drive each year so that scouts themselves can contribute to the troop's operating expenses. All scouts are expected to participate in eagle projects; an eagle candidate can't demonstrate leadership without scouts there! Eagle projects are a great way for younger scouts to see the process in action.

TRAINING:

Adults who serve on the Committee or as ASMs must complete BSA online training. In addition, ASMs must complete in-person training in Scoutmaster Position-Specific Training and an Introduction to Outdoor Leader Skills (IOLS). Some scouts are nominated by their peers to attend National Youth Leadership Training when First Class. This is typically a weeklong summer course or two full weekends during the academic year.

THE ORDER OF THE ARROW:

Some higher ranked scouts and adult leaders are nominated by their peers to the Order of the Arrow, which is scouting's honor society. OA members give leadership beyond their troop and develop friendships with scouts from other units.

HIGH ADVENTURE:

Troop 9 (209) typically has some high adventure plan in the works. The BSA maintains 4 high adventure camps in the U.S. Scouts over the age of 14 may join a crew. Training and preparation may take up to 18 months, and these can be expensive, though memorable experiences. Scouts can fundraise through Trails End popcorn sales or other activities approved by Troop leadership.

- Philmont Scout Ranch, NM: This is the premiere backpacking, horseback riding, and adult training facility for the BSA.
- Florida National Sea base, FL Keys: Scout crews learn to sail and live on a sailboat for a week.
- Northern Tier, MN: Scouts sail the northern Boundary Waters and portage canoes in the summer; winter camp is *cold*
- The Summit, WV: River kayaks, bike packing, ATV treks and high ropes courses are just some of the adventures.

We hope this has been a helpful overview of this organization. We look forward to getting to know your scout and your family!