



This communication is being sent to Scout Executives, Area Directors, Region Directors, Group Directors, Department Managers and Team Leads

Dear Scouting Friends:

Over the decades, the Boy Scouts of America has been a leader in developing training and policies designed to keep young people safe. These comprehensive policies were considered groundbreaking when they were developed and soon became the standard used by other organizations for safeguarding youth. But when it comes to the safety of children, our goal is to continually improve.

Sustained vigilance on youth protection is a central part of our culture.

Over the past two years, we have worked with experts in the field of child abuse, child sexual abuse and maltreatment to develop new training and resources that will further strengthen our ability to protect youth. These changes include:

- Fully updated and revised Youth Protection Training developed with leaders in the field of child abuse prevention and includes insights from experts, survivors and the latest strategies for recognizing and preventing major forms of abuse. **This is the designated Youth Protection training for all adults.**
- Expanded youth protection content across all our communications channels will inform and engage our volunteers and parents.
- An expanded ScoutsFirst Helpline to aid volunteers and families in addressing potentially dangerous situations.
- The BSA also provides unlimited counseling and support for healing to anyone who has ever been abused in Scouting.
- Youth protection training for youth members will be available in 2019.

In addition to updated training and resources, we recently announced new policies to ensure compliance with mandatory training requirements, including:

- As of January 1, 2018, no new leader can be registered without first completing youth protection training.
- As of January 1, 2018, no council, regional or national leader will be allowed to renew their registration if they are not current on their youth protection training.
- As of September 1, 2017, no unit may re-charter without all leaders being current on their youth protection training. Registrars no longer have the ability to approve charters without full compliance.



Youth Protection Resources

To aid regions, areas and councils in this rollout, the National Service Center is releasing this resource kit that provides a comprehensive overview of the updated training, resources and policy changes, as well as guidance on how to make youth protection and safety a part of every conversation in Scouting. This represents an evolution in our approach to youth protection and is more than just new training modules.

Also included with this information, you will find new supplemental youth-on-youth training resources required for camp staff. This resource is important in delivering a safe outdoor experience.

With these changes, and many more outlined in the attached document, we will continue to build a safe environment for our youth. Nothing is more important than the safety of our children. The Boy Scouts of America will not stand by while people take advantage of our trusted program to harm children.

Thank you for all you do for our youth and for Scouting.

Randall Stephenson, National President
Charles Dahlquist, National Commissioner
Mike Surbaugh, Chief Scout Executive



Updated Youth Protection Training Resource Kit

In Scouting, our first obligation is to provide a safe environment where we can foster character and leadership in the youth of our nation. It's a duty we take seriously.

As an organization, we are committed to continuous improvement. This commitment includes our approach to youth protection. Over the decades, the BSA has taken bold, innovative steps in establishing barriers to prevent child abuse. These barriers include two-deep leadership for all youth activities, mandating youth protection training for leaders, involving our chartered partners in the selection of leaders, and requiring mandatory reporting of any suspicious conduct with a youth to governmental agencies, just to name a few. As our understanding of these threats has evolved, so has our approach to keeping youth safe. We continue to rely on leading experts and the latest research to help us better understand threats facing young people and to design barriers to abuse.

Youth Protection in the BSA: What we believe

- Nothing hurts more than having one of our youth participants abused.
- We are heartbroken and outraged that there have been times when Scouts were abused, and we sincerely apologize to victims and their families.
- We are committed to sustained vigilance and continuous efforts to improve and enhance our youth protection program.
- Along with our volunteers, partners and professionals, we will make Scouting a safe place for youth and families.

Youth Protection: The Next Evolution

The next generation of the BSA's youth protection program begins today. Our updated youth protection training draws on research from experts in the field of child abuse and child maltreatment, as well as survivors, to identify the contributing factors and threats across the spectrum of child abuse including bullying, neglect, exposure to violence, physical and emotional abuse, as well as child sexual abuse.

Using a blend of interviews from psychologists, law enforcement professionals and survivors, leaders and parents alike will learn about the root causes of abuse, how to recognize types of abuse and how to respond. It's a bold approach and it's just one part of our ongoing effort to enroll the entire Scouting community in the fight against child abuse.

The training is available now on my.Scouting at <https://my.scouting.org>



Updated Policies to Ensure Compliance with Mandatory Training Requirements

In addition to updated training and resources, we recently announced new policies to ensure compliance with mandatory training requirements, including:

- As of January 1, 2018, no new leader can be a registered without first completing youth protection training.
- As of January 1, 2018, no council, regional or national leader will be allowed to renew their registration if they are not current on their youth protection training.
- As of September 1, 2017, no unit may re-charter without all leaders being current on their youth protection training. Registrars no longer have the ability to approve charters without full compliance.

Training is Just the Beginning

Training is a critical part of our strategy, but it's only one part. Our ultimate goal is make sure the safety of our youth, adults and families is top of mind at all times. So, along with fully updated and revised youth protection training, the Boy Scouts of America is also implementing a comprehensive communications strategy that will provide ongoing information, training and resources across every aspect of Scouting. This includes even more content in ScoutingWire, regular youth protection webinars, a youth protection newsletter, and Safety Moments to bring safety into all of our meetings with youth and adults alike. This information will continue to ensure that youth protection is always top of mind and that our parents and leaders are prepared to be proactive and decisive in recognizing, responding and reporting all forms of child abuse.

ScoutsFirst Helpline

ScoutsFirst for Help with Questions, Concerns and Reporting. The ScoutsFirst Helpline also makes it easier for volunteers and families to address dangerous situations. If a leader or parent has a question about a situation, or something they've seen or if they want to report a possible incident, they can contact the Helpline for assistance. In cases of abuse, they should also notify the local authorities. **ScoutsFirst Helpline (844)-Scouts1 or (844)726-8871.**

ScoutsFirst for Counseling and Support. The Boy Scouts of America is committed to providing ongoing support to victims and their families, including counseling. We want to help victims heal, on their own terms, with a professional counselor of their choice. Through the ScoutsFirst Helpline, the Boy Scouts of America offers assistance with counseling to any youth member, former youth member, or the family of any youth member who suffered abuse during their time in Scouting. To reach the ScoutsFirst Helpline, call (844)-Scouts1 or (844)726-8871, or email scouts1st@scouting.org. Support is available 24-hours a day, seven days a week.



Implementation Schedule

To quickly and effectively implement the updated youth protection training, we are encouraging regions, areas and councils to follow this implementation schedule. Many of these tasks should be carried out by Youth Protection Champions:

- **February 2018:** Updated Youth Protection Training available.
- **February 2018:** Emails sent from councils informing units of the updated youth training and requirement for all registered volunteers to take the training *before October 1, 2018*.
- **February 2018:** All professional staff and Youth Protection Champions take the updated Youth Protection Training.
- **February 2018:** Youth Protection Overview Power Point presentation (attached) to be shared with council boards, training, program and outdoor committees.
- **February – April 2018:** Youth Protection Champions and training chairs use the Youth Protection Overview PowerPoint presentation to make youth protection presentations at roundtable meetings.

Resources

- **Youth Protection Training Quick Facts.** Answers to questions about the new Youth Protection Training.
- **Youth Protection Overview PowerPoint presentation.** For use at region, area, council and district meetings to educate volunteers and professionals about the BSA's youth protection policies and guidelines.
- **Youth Protection Webinars.** Watch for announcements about upcoming webinars.
- **Youth Protection Key Messages.** Specific language for use in discussing the BSA's policies for preventing child abuse.
- **Youth Protection Frequently Asked Questions.** Answers to questions often asked about the BSA's safety policies.
- **Youth Protection Infographic.** Provides an overview of the BSA's youth protection policies, and the role everyone plays in our ongoing commitment to keep our youth members safe, including volunteers, parents, chartered organizations and youth. We encourage you to make the poster available at your Scouting office and at all Scouting events. It can be shared with anyone seeking to understand our policies in more details.
- **Posters.** Located on the Marketing Toolbox, these youth protection posters are designed to be used at camps, offices and shared with units.



- **Safety Moments Content.** Safety Moments are exactly what the name implies: opportunities to share tips and guidelines on making all Scouting activities fun and safe. Make Safety Moments part of all meetings at all levels. You can find a full selection of safety moments at the [Safety Moments](http://www.scouting.org/home/healthandsafety/safety_moments.aspx) web page. (http://www.scouting.org/home/healthandsafety/safety_moments.aspx)
- **Semi-Annual Youth Protection Newsletter.** Published in April and November, the Youth Protection Newsletter will highlight policies, resources and provide valuable information to help unit leaders create a safe environment for youth in Scouting. **Ongoing content in ScoutingWire and other BSA channels.** To keep the safety of our youth and families top of mind, the BSA will continue to publish content that highlights information on creating a Safe Environment in Scouting through our communications channels.

Coming Soon:

- In-person youth protection training available June 2018.
- Spanish-language resources will be available later in August 2018.
- Local Youth Protection Symposium Guidebook. Guidance on hosting a local council youth protection symposium.
- Youth protection training for youth members will be available in 2019.

Additional resources can be found online at:

- **Youth Protection Web Site.** www.scouting.org/youthprotection
- **Safety Moments Web Site.** www.scouting.org/home/healthandsafety/safety_moments
- **ScoutingWire.org**

Key Action Steps for Councils

Youth Protection isn't just a 'check the box' exercise. Far from it. It's about creating a culture of safety.

Take the lead in your community. Beyond completing the updated training, here are some action steps to incorporate youth protection and safety into your program:

- Become a subject matter expert: Attend an upcoming youth protection webinar.
- Become an advocate for youth protection training in your service area.
- Distribute youth protection resources to volunteers in your service area.
- Ensure every volunteer in your area of responsibility is trained.
- Implement 'Safety Moments' at every meeting (unit, district, council, area and region).
- Engage and empower volunteers to drive a culture of youth protection in the Boy Scouts of America.
- Offer courses on the updated Youth Protection Training at commissioner colleges, University of Scouting events and other training events.
- Talk to other organizations and community leaders about the steps Scouting is taking to protect youth from abuse.