



[TROOP 344 POLICY MANUAL]

BSA Troop 344 Policy Manual, Falls District, Occoneechee Council.

TROOP 344 POLICY MANUAL

Scouting is a values-based program with its own code of conduct. The Scout Oath and Law help instill the values of good conduct and honesty. A boy who spends one year in a Scout troop will learn lifetime skills. He will learn basic outdoor skills, self-reliance, and how to get along with others. Scouting will prepare him to live a more productive and fulfilling life. Therefore, the goal of the Boy Scouts of America is to help boys become honorable men and productive citizens. The mission of the Boy Scouts of America is to prepare these young people to make ethical and moral choices over their lifetime. Troop 344 promotes this goal and mission by providing an environment in which Scouts can grow and learn through the ideals of Scouting and the practical application in meetings, outings, events and activities as outlined in this manual.

The Ideals of Scouting

Each Scout is challenged to do their best in duty to God, country and self. These ideals are spelled out in the Scout oath, law, motto, and slogan with reminders that this duty is meant to be carried out in a polite manner focused on service to others.

The Scout Oath

On my honor I will do my best to do my duty to God and my Country and to obey the Scout Law; to help other people at all times; to keep myself physically strong, mentally awake, and morally straight.

The Scout Law

A Scout is trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean, and reverent.

The Scout Motto

Be prepared!

The Scout Slogan

Do a good turn daily!

The Scout oath, law, motto, and slogan can be found in the Boy Scout Handbook. A Scout's ability to recite, understand and appreciate these ideals will be expected as he advances.

Troop Meetings – Troop 344 meets each Tuesday evening from 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at St. Mark's United Methodist Church at 4801 Six Forks Road. The actual meeting will generally run from 7PM to 8PM, with the last 30 minutes is reserved for special events, or for one-on-one work as needed. The only exceptions are the week that the Troop attends summer camp or if there is a special announcement. Scouts should be picked up at 8:00 p.m. Each meeting should have an agenda and schedule of activities prepared. Activities, demonstrations, and visiting speakers should be arranged by the patrols sponsoring the activity or event, and approved by the Senior Patrol Leader and the Scoutmaster. Any Scout with questions or concerns about an event or activity should refer to their Patrol Leader who will bring it to the attention of the Senior Patrol Leader. Adults are encouraged to raise their questions or concerns at a Committee Meeting.

Meeting Code of Conduct

- Be on time.
- Respect each other.
- Follow the agenda.
- Share responsibility.
- Criticize only ideas, not people.
- Offer solutions to problems.
- Question and participate.
- Attend all meetings.
- Listen constructively; keep an open mind.
- One person speaks at a time; do not interrupt.
- No swearing, cussing, or words considered profanity.
- A Scout is Reverent. Headgear is to be removed while inside.
- The marker board is for writing Troop information, and is not to be erased without permission of the Scribe, SPL, or ASPL.
- No writing or doodling on the marker board without permission.
- Work together, the task will go faster.
- Take notes regarding calendar and events.

Uniforms – The Boy Scouts of America is a uniformed organization. The wearing of the uniform is fundamental of Scouting. It has proven to contribute to the aims of the organization. All Scouts are expected to wear a uniform at all times while participating in meetings, outings and activities or when travelling to and from meetings, outings or activities.

The Boy Scouts of America have two uniforms: Field and Activity. Wearing the **FIELD Uniform** makes the Boy Scout Troop visible as a force for good and creates a positive image in the community. This practical attire for scouting activities provides a way for Scouts to display the badges and awards that show what they have accomplished. It

consists of: Scout pants suitable to the season, Scout socks, Scout belt, and BSA Scout shirt with the proper badges and insignia located in the proper locations specified in the Scout Handbook. Underneath the Scout shirt every Scout is to wear an Official BSA T-shirt, T-shirt issued for specific Scout events/summer camp, or the Official Troop 344 T-shirt. **If for some reason the Scout does not have a scouting related T-shirt on underneath the “Class A” Scout Shirt, the Scout will be expected to remain in the FIELD Uniform.** Additionally, the Troop 344 Scout is in complete uniform only when carrying both his Boy Scout Handbook and an ink pen. If the Scout chooses to wear a cap or other type of headgear, it is expected to be appropriate to the season and especially appropriate to Scouting.

The **ACTIVITY Uniform** is a less formal garment allowing Scouts the ability to participate in more active events comfortably. This uniform is similar to the FIELD uniform except that a Scout T-shirt is worn in the place of the official BSA uniform shirt. The T-shirt may be an Official BSA T-shirt, or a T-shirt issued for specific Scout events, or the Official Troop 344 T-shirt.

- **NOTE:** The wearing of surplus or other look-alike military clothing and accessories as part of OR in place of the uniform is not allowed by BSA policy and strictly enforced by Troop 344
- **NOTE: Jewelry such as earrings, chains, and inappropriate necklaces are not to be worn for reasons of safety.** According to BSA Policy, during activities this includes “Wood Badge Beads” and any other items that can cause a safety hazard.
- **NOTE:** Scouts that do not conform to Troop 344 Uniform Policy as approved by the Troop Committee are subject to being sent home, or not allowed to participate in the planned activity or outing.

Participation – The benefits of Scouting are many. The Scout benefits only by active participation. Limited participation will yield limited or disappointing results for the Scout. Surely if parents or Scouts expect to obtain the best Scouting has to offer, they and we must put our best effort into it. Advancement along the Scouting Trail requires active participation at each step (see the requirements in the Boy Scout Handbook). Active participation in all types of activities is needed to advance. This includes camping trips, hikes, patrol activities, and service projects as well as Troop Meetings. Our Troop Committee has dictated that their definition of “Active Participation” as a minimum attendance of Fifty Percent (50%) of all Troop Meetings, **AND** a minimum attendance of Fifty Percent (50%) of all Troop Outings and Activities. Scouts with conflicts such as Band, Sports, or other important school/church/civic activity, will speak directly with the Scoutmaster about the situation two weeks prior to the activity to be missed. Every effort will be made by the adult leadership to work with each situation as it arises. Emergencies

are exempt from this rule.

Religion – The Boy Scouts of America maintains that no boy can grow into the best kind of citizen without recognizing his obligation to God. The recognition of God as the ruling power in the universe and the grateful acknowledgement of his favors and blessings are necessary to the best type of citizenship. No matter what religious faith the boy may be, the fundamental need of good citizenship and belief in God should be kept visible. Troop 344 has always encouraged Scouts of every religion to join the troop and share in their faith journey.

Religious Awards – All members of Troop 344 are encouraged to earn the religious awards made available by their particular religious organization. The religious awards are offered to Scouts at various ages. This allows the Scout to understand the relationship of the principles of their faith and how those principles relate to Scouting as they mature. Because these programs are focused on the specifics of the religion and their practices, the Scout will work with a mentor typically from the boy's religious organization. Any Scout interested in pursuing these awards should talk with the Scoutmaster. The award is worn on the Scout uniform, and is presented in a service in his place of worship.

Service Hours – Many activities exist for the Scout to show Scout Spirit and gain service hours. Service Hours ***must be approved prior*** to the Scout working the hours by the Scoutmaster or other appointed adult leader other than the Scout's parent. Additionally, the Scout should present the approving adult leader a note from the person or organization for which the Service Hours were performed. If for some reason this is not possible, arrangements with the Scoutmaster or approving adult leader should be made prior to performing the Service Hours. Service hours needed for rank advancement must be conducted through Troop activities.

Advancement - The Scout is recognized for each achievement as he accomplishes rank. The goal of advancement is to help the Scout grow in self-reliance and the ability to help others. Scouts will naturally advance at different rates. It is the Scouts responsibility to continually to improve himself utilizing the resources of the troop, district, council and the worldwide organization of Scouting. There is no competition to see who can advance the fastest. Advancement is a key element of the Scout program but is not an end in itself. Scouts that set goals on paper may reach their goals more easily than those who do not. A realistic time to achieve first class Scout is approximately twelve months. It is one of our goals to get each Scout to the First Class rank consistent with the Scout's own pace.

The Scout Advancement Plan is designed to accomplish a progressive series of learning experiences in areas of citizenship, character, outdoor experience, leadership, and personal fitness. Each Scout must demonstrate his capabilities by participating in Scout

activities that are important to his personal goals. Regular attendance is important to advancement but is not the only criterion. Requirements for all ranks are in the official Boy Scout Handbook. Merit badge requirements are listed in merit badge pamphlets and the Advancement Requirements Book (a separate book). The Troop has copies of many of the merit badge books. These can be borrowed on request from the Troop library.

The final stages of each rank are a Scoutmaster Conference and Board of Review. The purpose of the Scoutmaster Conference is to develop, over a period of time, an increasing level of understanding between the Scoutmaster and each Scout. This is a time for the Scout to evaluate his participation in the Scout program. It is also a time to receive constructive feedback for both the Scoutmaster and the Scout. Scoutmaster Conferences for ranks below First Class may be requested at Troop meetings or at the Scoutmaster's convenience. Conferences for the ranks of First Class through Eagle must be scheduled at least one week prior to the conference with the Scoutmaster. The Scoutmaster conducts all Scoutmaster Conferences.

- **NOTE: In order to comply with BSA policy of two-deep leadership, these meeting may occur away from the rest of the troop activities, but only after notifying and in under the complete supervision of another adult leader.**

The last step is a Board of Review. The Board is comprised of a minimum of three registered adult leaders, typically Committee Members and excluding the parent of the Scout and the Scoutmaster. The purpose of this review is for the Board to confirm that the Scout has met the requirements of the rank, it is NOT to make a Scout redo requirements. In addition, it is an opportunity for the Board to evaluate the strength on the Scoutmaster and the Scouting program. The board members will be looking for the Scout's perspective on the direction of the Troop and try to gage what the Scout likes and dislikes by encouraging the Scout to share suggestions about improvements for the program and comment on the current leadership.

With the exception of the rank of Eagle, it is our policy to present the Badge of Rank upon completion of the Board of Review or shortly thereafter.

Scout Spirit – Scout Spirit is subjective but generally determined by observing the Scout's behavior as well as participation at Troop meetings and events. Every effort to exclude hearsay is made to not unjustly color the evaluation of a particular Scout's Spirit.

Scout Spirit is understood to be:

- How a Scout presents and conducts himself in public, especially when in uniform.
- Attitude and behavior of the Scout during meetings and other Troop events.
- Cooperation of the Scout with his patrol, adult leadership, Troop, or others involved in the event or activity.
- Leadership according to current rank of the Scout.

Eagle Scout – This is Boy Scouting's highest rank. All requirements must be completed and filed with the Occoneechee Council office prior to the Scout's 18th birthday. Historically, the national average is that only two out of each one hundred Scouts that begin this journey achieve this rank. Attaining Eagle Scout is much more than the twenty-one (21) merit badges required for the rank. The Eagle rank requires maturity, leadership, and personal example. How the Scout lives by the Scout Oath and Law is very important.

This rank also requires a personal service project planned and led by the Scout. While a Life Scout, plan, develop, and give leadership to others in a service project helpful to your religious institution, school, or your community. The project should benefit an organization other than the BSA. The project plan must be approved by the organization benefiting from the effort, your unit leader, unit committee, and by the council or district advancement committee before you start. You must use this Eagle Scout Leadership Service Project Workbook, No. 18-927D, in meeting this requirement. Thorough documentation is required throughout this process. To better serve our Scouts, Troop 344 implements a Life to Eagle program utilizing an adult mentor.

Eagle Boards of Review are conducted by the council or district advancement committee and are scheduled only after all the paperwork contained in the Eagle Packet has been completed and approved. The National Office of the Boy Scouts of America reviews the proposed paperwork and the findings of the Eagle Board prior to sending the ceremonial Eagle Scout kit back to the Troop. The Scout is presented this prestigious award at an Eagle Court of Honor planned by the Eagle Scout, ensuring it covers the basic Scouting Ideals. These ceremonies have been held at Saint Mark's United Methodist Church, or the church at which the Scout attends. In addition, Eagle Court of Honors have been held at state parks or the Scout's home.

- **NOTE: The Troop has an Eagle ceremony template.**

Leadership Development - The program encourages boys to learn and practice leadership skills. Every Scout has an opportunity to participate in shared or total leadership roles. Sometimes these responsibilities are for a specific event and other times the Scouts maintain a leadership role for a period of time.

Positions of Responsibility – One of the best leadership learning opportunities for a Scout is through a position of responsibility. The following is a list of the recognized leadership positions: SENIOR PATROL LEADER, ASSISTANT SENIOR PATROL LEADER, PATROL LEADER, ASSISTANT PATROL LEADER, TROOP GUIDE, TROOP QUARTERMASTER, TROOP SCRIBE, TROOP HISTORIAN, TROOP LIBRARIAN, INSTRUCTOR, CHAPLAIN'S AIDE, and DEN CHIEF.

Elections – Troop 344 holds elections the second Tuesday of every June and the second Tuesday of every December. Current policy for the Troop is to elect the Senior Patrol Leader, and the Assistant Senior Patrol Leader. Each Scout that decides to run for SPL/ASPL is in fact running for both positions. The Scout is required to prepare a 2 to 5 minute speech that outlines who they are, why they are in Boy Scouts, what they bring to the Troop, and what they plan to do for the Troop if elected. After the speeches there is a round-robin Q&A session. All Scouts then cast ballots for both positions. The Scout earning the most votes for SPL will become SPL, and the Scout earning the most votes for ASPL becomes the ASPL.

Eligibility Criteria for Senior Patrol Leader or Assistant Senior Patrol Leader Rank – 1st Class or Higher **AND** scouting tenure in Troop 344: One Year

Once SPL/ASPL elections are complete, the Senior Patrol Leader and Assistant Senior Patrol Leader will work with the Scoutmaster to determine all the other Positions of Responsibility. The only exception is the position of Patrol Leader. Patrol Leaders are elected by their respective patrols, and are to be approved by the Scoutmaster following their election. Patrol Leaders normally hold their position for the same six-month interval as the Senior Patrol Leader and Assistant Senior Patrol Leader.

At the agreement of the Scoutmaster and Assistant Scoutmasters, Junior Assistant Scoutmasters can be selected. To be a Junior Assistant Scoutmaster, the candidate must be at least 16 years of age and an Eagle Scout.

Patrol Leaders Council – The Patrol Leaders Council (or PLC) is a decision-making and planning body for the Scouts in Troop 344. Scouting promotes democratic processes and this council supports this method of Scouting. The Patrol Leaders Council is composed of the following:

- Senior Patrol Leader (Chairman)
- Assistant Senior Patrol Leader
- Troop Scribe
- Patrol Leaders of each Patrol
- Scoutmaster and Assistant Scoutmasters

The Patrol Leaders Council will meet at least once monthly. The PLC will meet on a separate night outside of the Tuesday meetings. A Patrol Leader's Council can be called at any time as necessary, as long as the minimum representation requirements are met. The representation requirements include Senior Patrol Leader or Assistant Senior Patrol Leader, Scoutmaster or designated Assistant Scoutmaster, Patrol Leader or Assistant Patrol Leader (or designated patrol representative). Issues of concern or interest of the Troop are to be brought before the Patrol Leaders Council.

Patrols – *“The object of the patrol method is not so much saving the Scoutmaster trouble as to give responsibility to the boy.” —Robert S. S. Baden-Powell*

This method is unique to Scouting. Patrols are boy lead and give Scouts an experience in-group living and in citizenship.

Outdoors - The program is designed to take place in the outdoors. It is in the outdoors that Scouts share responsibilities, learn from each other, and apply skills and activities learned in the Troop meetings. Troop 344 offers a full outdoor program of camping, hiking, aquatic, and high adventure activities where Scouts can accomplish many of the objectives of the Scouting program. We schedule at least one outdoor activity each month. Locations are selected to meet the program needs of the Troop.

"Be Prepared" is the motto of the Boy Scouts and this means warm clothes in winter, rain gear at all times, and comfortable clothes suitable to the season. Scouts not prepared (which includes the required uniform) in the judgment of the Scoutmaster or trip leader will not be allowed to participate in the activity. Trips are canceled when safety is in question or there is not sufficient adult leadership. Two adult leaders are required for all trips. Often more than two adults are required to provide effective leadership for some activities.

Sleeping Arrangements & Requirements – Troop 344 and the Boy Scouts of America do not allow adults and Scouts to occupy the same tent unless the adult is the parent or legal guardian of the Scout. Even then it is strongly discouraged. All Scouts share sleeping arrangements with other Scouts. This policy is to ensure that all Scouts maintain the “buddy system” at all times; minimizing the opportunity for a youth to be bullied, picked

on or singled out by anyone.

- **NOTE:** All adults participating on a Scout outing will be required to complete the BSA Youth Protection Training. This is a free online course.

Personal Equipment – EACH Scout needs a minimum amount of personal camping equipment. This list includes the following essentials:

- Complete Scout uniform (Class A uniform for travel)
- Sleeping bag (20° rated)
- Flashlight with extra batteries and bulb
- Canteen or water bottle
- Compass
- Watch
- Official Scout Handbook

Any item in the official Scout catalog is an example of an items that are acceptable. The Scoutmaster and Assistant Scoutmasters can be helpful in equipment selection and the best sources for equipment. Additional equipment will be required for high adventure activities.

- **NOTE:** Scouts are not allowed to carry pocket knives until they have completed the required safety instructions.

Troop Equipment – Troop 344 will furnish patrol-cooking gear, wood tools, patrol boxes, and some tents as required for Troop Outings. This equipment is purchased with the Troop treasury. The equipment is assigned to patrols. Patrols or individuals not exercising reasonable care may be asked to replace lost or damaged items. This request is at the discretion of the Scoutmaster or Troop Committee. All Troop equipment is for the exclusive use of the Troop for scouting activities. Personal use of Troop equipment is **not** permitted for non-Scout activities. On occasion, Scout will be asked to take Troop Equipment home after an outing for the purpose of cleaning and maintenance. The Scout is expected to perform these tasks with appropriate care and return the equipment at the next Troop meeting.

Expenses associated with Outings *"A Scout is Thrifty"*

Every effort is made keep the costs for weekend trips and activities as reasonable as possible. Typical expenses include *transportation, camping fees and food*.

Transportation – Recently, cost associated with transportation has varied dramatically. In order to assist in this cost, Troop 344 as implemented a policy to calculate a per person assistance based on current gas prices. Each Scout is responsible for a rounded whole dollar amount of the current gas price. For example, if gas is currently selling for \$3.29 then each Scout would pay \$3.00; if gas is currently selling for \$3.89, then each Scout would pay \$4.00. This money will be evenly distributed among the drivers. For many of our outings the participating Scoutmasters can provide sufficient transportation. Although very popular events may require the assistance of additional adults. These additional drivers are encouraged to consider participating in the event as well.

- **NOTE:** Mileage incurred on outings is a tax-deductible expense.
- **NOTE:** The travel cost to high adventure bases such as Philmont Scout Ranch is a cost borne entirely by the Scout.

Camping Fees – The cost of renting a camping area shall be paid for by the Scouts. The registered adults leading the campout are excluded from paying the camping fee. The total cost will be added up and divided by the total number of paying campers.

Food – Most weekend outings consist of preparing four meals: Saturday breakfast, lunch and dinner, as well as Sunday breakfast. Meal planning occurs at the Troop meeting prior to the event and approved by an adult leader. Currently a budget of \$10.00 per participant for the weekend is used for meal planning. **This money is collected at the Troop meeting PRIOR to the event.** Once a Scout agrees to go on a camping trip, his money is **NOT REFUNDED**. If there is money remaining after the food is purchased, they money will be turned over to the Troop Treasury. If, however, there is a shortage after the food purchase, the difference is made-up in the Treasury. A participating Scout is designated as grub master and is responsible for purchasing all food and supplies need for the event. Receipts are turned into the Troop Treasurer for reimbursement.

- **NOTE:** While participating in Scouting activities, Scouts are discouraged from bringing personal drinks or snacks. As noted, the grub master provides food for campouts, and Scouts are encouraged to participate in menu planning, rather than packing their own food. Food and drinks packed in personal gear can attract unwanted animals and insects. Scouts with special dietary needs should bring these concerns to the attention of the Scoutmaster.

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- **NOTE:** If transportation to the activity begins on Friday evening, everyone is responsible for providing their own bag dinner. The Troop will not stop to pick up food on the way. Eating in vehicles is at the discretion of the driver. Scouts should check with the driver as to the best time to eat their dinner.
- **NOTE:** On longer trips, the Troop may decide to stop for lunch before returning to the Church. Typically this will be predetermined at the time of the meal planning and Scouts will be aware that they are responsible for having the funds for the additional meal. Adults will decide on the best place to stop, and Scouts can decide what to eat and drink based on where the group stops. Longer trips may include stops for gas, or restroom breaks. Scouts are only permitted to exit vehicles with a buddy, and after checking with the adult in charge. Scouts are discouraged from buying junk food, or caffeinated drinks.
- **NOTE:** Since adults must lead by example, it is expected that all adults participating in trips follow the same rules as the Scouts.

Tour Permits – Tour permits issued by the Occoneechee Council office are required for any trip for which the Troop provides transportation for its members. A Local Tour Permit is required for trips of less than 500 miles. A National Tour Permit is required for trips of more than 500 miles. The general requirements of the tour permits include current in-force insurance for the vehicles (this is the driver's responsibility), the driver must be an adult, not a Scout, with a driver's license, and must be a driver capable of safely driving the vehicle and adhering to all traffic laws. (North Carolina's minimum insurance coverage requirements exceed those currently required by the boy Scouts of America.)

Activity Release – Certain activities such as rock climbing, white water rafting, caving, and other high adventure activities may require parental notification and release. The release form will be distributed at least one week prior to the activity. A Scout's failure to have the release signed will result in his not being allowed to participate in the activity for which the release is required. (A sample form is provide at the end of this manual).

Dues – Each Scout is required to pay annual dues in March of \$60.00. The dues are to cover our chartering fees, as well as care and maintenance of our Troop gear. It is not intended, however, to hinder any Scout from participating. Please speak with the Scoutmaster, Committee Chairman, or Troop Treasurer.

- Currently annual dues for adult leaders are \$16.00.

Fund Raisers – Every member of Troop 344 is expected to participate in raising funds.

The majority of funds raised at each event are placed in trust for the individual Scouts. These funds can be used by that Scout to pay for annual dues, approved uniforms and approved equipment, Scout outings or activities. A fraction of the funds are used for the troops operating expenses, maintaining troop equipment, purchasing badges and awards. The proportions of the profit sharing is established by the troop committee and typically announced prior to the fundraiser. Any funds remaining in the Scout's account at the end of the Scout's tenure with Troop 344 will revert to the Troop treasury.

Troop 344 participates in the annual Occonechee Council Popcorn Sale as a fundraiser for both the Troop and the Council at the discretion of the Committee and the Scouts.

It is important that these events be successful for both the Troop and the Scouts in the Troop. For this reason, we ask your full support. Because of the number of other fundraisers in which the Scouts also participate, the family of the Scout can elect to donate to the Troop en lieu of fundraiser participation. This is a donation directly to Troop 344, and is separate from the Occonechee Council Friends of Scouting effort.

Summer Camp – Troop 344 participates in a weeklong “summer camp” each year. Summer camps are held at various Scout camps across the country, and the Troop has historically gone to different camps each year. Summer camp selection takes place in the fall during the PLC. Once a camp is confirmed, details about the various programs are then given out to the Troop. The cost of a summer camp varies by location and the programs offered. In general, Scouts pay \$200.00. This cost includes transportation, meals, merit badge programs, and some extra activities. Scouts have the opportunity to spend more on memorabilia, crafts and snacks.

While summer camps cannot offer the same programs, most include a special program for first year Scouts, along with a wide selection of merit badges. New Scouts are strongly encouraged to participate in the first year program as this allows them to get many of the requirements through First Class completed. Other Scouts are encouraged to enroll in as many Eagle required classes as they can fit into their schedule. Older Scouts, well on their way to becoming Eagle, are encouraged to participate in higher adventure programs generally not offered at the troop level.

- **NOTE:** All Scouts need to get Scoutmaster Approval on their schedules before they are handed in.

Health & Medical Forms

A Class 1 Boy Scout Medical Review is required upon joining Troop 344. This medical review shall be updated annually.

A **Class 2 Boy Scout Medical Review** is required prior to attending summer camp or other long-term camp.

A **Class 3 Scout Medical Review** is required for Scouts participating at high adventure bases or adults over 40 for either high adventure or summer camp.

- **IMPORTANT NOTE:** The Scoutmaster must be advised of *any* special conditions, which limit a Scout's physical activity, needs for special medical attention (including emergency situation, e.g. bee stings) and required regular medication.

Wood Tools – Troop 344 maintains axes, saws, and hand axes for the use of the Scouts. Prior to **ANY** Scout using **ANY** wood tool, including pocketknives, a Scout must earn the right to use these tools by completing a woods tool class. A qualified adult leader teaches this class. Upon successful completion of this Class, a "Totin' Chip" card is presented and must be carried by the Scout at all times when he is possession of or using any woods tool. A good knife is one from the Scout catalog or a "Swiss Army" type knife with a folding blade.

- **NOTE:** Large knives and sheath knives **are prohibited** to be worn or carried.
- **NOTE:** If improper use of the woods tools or unsafe uses are observed, an adult leader can remove at least one corner of the card. When all four corners are cut, the Scout must repeat the woods tool class.
- **NOTE:** This class is NOT taught on a frequent schedule.

The Scoutmaster or Assistant Scoutmaster in charge of a trip will take any knife considered improper or unsafe and return it at the end of the Scouting activity to the parent or adult guardian.

Fire Safety – The Scout Fire Plan will be used on all outings. This plan includes at least two fire extinguishers for each patrol and at each fire. One Scout is assigned as Fire Brigade Chief responsible for implementing the Fire Plan. In order to build, light or serve as Fire Brigade Chief, a Scout *must* hold a "Firem'n Chit." These chits are awarded to the Scout after completing training and demonstrating to a qualified adult leader of his ability to perform these duties.

NOTE: Each infraction of fire safety rules will result in the removal of at least one corner of the "Firem'n Chit." The loss of all four corners will result in the loss of the chit and its privileges. The Scout may retest for the card but not on the outing on which it was lost.

NOTE: An open flame inside any tent or other similar enclosure is strictly forbidden.

Prohibited Items – Firearms, fireworks, liquid fuel (for unsupervised use), liquid fuel equipment (for unsupervised use), lighters, or any other item that can create a safety hazard are strictly prohibited. Any item that may interfere with the Scouting program, activities, or meetings should be left at home.

Gambling – Gambling is forbidden in Scouting and will not be tolerated. Items found to be used in such activities will be taken and returned to the parents or adult guardian of the involved Scouts at the end of the Scout event. Repeat infractions can result in suspension or dismissal from the Troop.

Drugs & Alcohol – These have no place in Scouting! Any Scout, Scout leader, family member (at a Scout event), or visitor who has in his possession or uses them in any form will be asked to leave the Scout activity at once. **This position is absolute!** If a Scout is found to be (or suspected of being) in violation of this policy, the Scoutmaster will call the parent or adult guardian immediately. Then it will be parent or adult guardian responsibility to pick up any Scout as soon as possible.

- **NOTE:** Parents' support of this policy is required.
- **NOTE:** ALL infractions of this policy will be referred to the Troop Committee for further action.

Tobacco – The use of tobacco products by Scouts is ***absolutely prohibited***. Any tobacco product will be taken if found in the possession of a Scout and the parents will be called to pick up the Scout. The use of tobacco products by adults is tolerated as long as it is not used in the presence of the Scouts.

- **NOTE:** Parents' support of this policy is required.
- **NOTE:** ALL infractions of this policy will be referred to the Troop Committee for further action.

Hazing – Anything to cause a Scout to have an unpleasant, degrading, or embarrassing experience is not a part of Scouting. Any such behavior will not be tolerated and will be referred to the Troop Committee for review and action. Actions taken can include a reprimand, public apology (both oral & written), suspension, or dismissal.

Adult Association - Boys learn from the example of the adult leaders. The Scoutmaster and the Assistant Scoutmasters provide an image for the Scouts in meetings and on outings. In addition, the Scouts interact with the committee at their board or review. Adults are encouraged to participate as they can: as leaders, committee members, merit badge counselors and volunteers.

- **NOTE:** *BSA has a “two-deep” policy. Scouts should never find themselves in a one-on-one situation, especially one youth and one adult. Troop 344 continually reminds youth to use the buddy system (at all times) as well as ensuring that the adults understand the importance of the “two-deep” policy.*

Parents and Adult Guardians – Troop 344 is a volunteer organization. Please be respectful of the fact that the leaders volunteer their time and talents for the benefit of the Scouts.

Parents and adult guardians are encouraged to discuss matters of interest or concern with any of the adult Scout leaders and members of the Troop Committee at any time.

- **NOTE:** Committee Meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month, fifteen minutes prior to the Troop meeting (usually 6:45 pm).

Parents and adult guardians are welcome to visit a Troop meeting at any time. In fact, parents are encouraged to attend meetings and offer their assistance consistent with the program established by the Scouts and approved by the Troop Committee. Parents and adult guardians are also welcome on any outing. A minimum of two registered adult leaders are always required for any outings and events.

There is always an opportunity to serve as an adult leader. If any of the parents and adult guardians desire to become a registered adult leader they should contact the Scoutmaster, Committee Chairperson or Recruitment Chairperson.

- **NOTE: The Charter Organization must approve Adult Scouters.**

Parents and adult guardians may assist their son with advancement work, but they are not permitted to sign off on any requirements. Only registered Troop Leaders may sign off on requirements. The only exception to this rule would be if a parent or adult guardian is teaching a requirement to a group of Scouts. However, this must be approved prior to the teaching by the Scoutmaster.

Troop 344 has a "NO DAD" policy. What this policy means is that while a dad is welcome to participate in the Scouting program, they are encouraged to not **ACT** like a dad. In practical means, this policy is typically carried out by a Scout travelling to and from outings, activities, and events with someone other than their dad. Additionally, initial conflicts between Scouts should be handled by someone other than the dad.

Adult Scouter Training – Training Adult Leaders is one of the methods used to ensure a quality program. Troop 344 encourages the training of its adult leaders. Minimum training consists of completion of "Fast Start." and Youth Protection training.

For those adults involved in direct contact with Scouts, Troop 344 recommends the current basic leader training presented by Occonechee Council.

Advanced leader training is also available (Wood Badge). The Wood Badge Training Course runs for several instructional weekends. Upon the completion of the instructional weekends, the Wood Badge candidates begin working on their "Ticket" with their assigned Coach Counselor. Many consider this "Ticket" to be several "mini Eagle Projects" rolled into one. Each Wood Badge candidate is given two years to complete his or her "Wood Badge Ticket." Many of the Adult Leaders working with Troop 344 have successfully completed Wood Badge, which is a strong statement for the quality leadership with which your son is working.

Troop Committee –The Troop Committee is the troop's board of directors and supports the troop program. The troop committee is responsible for the following:

- Ensures that quality adult leadership is recruited and trained. In case the Scoutmaster is absent, a qualified assistant Scoutmaster is assigned. If the Scoutmaster is unable to serve, a replacement is recruited.
- Provides adequate meeting facilities.
- Advises the Scoutmaster on policies relating to Boy Scouting and the chartered organization.
- Carries out the policies and regulations of the Boy Scouts of America
- Supports leaders in carrying out the program.
- Is responsible for finances, adequate funds, and disbursements in line with the approved budget plan.
- Obtains, maintains, and properly cares for troop property.
- Provides adequate camping and outdoor program (minimum 10 days and nights per year).
- Serves on boards of review and courts of honor.
- Supports the Scoutmaster in working with individual boys and problems that may affect the overall troop program.
- Provides for the special needs and assistance some boys may require.

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- Helps with the Friends of Scouting campaign.
- Assists the Scoutmaster with handling boy behavior problems.

Charter Organization – Troop 344 is grateful to St. Mark's United Methodist Church for their continued sponsorship. St. Mark's United Methodist Church is located at 4801 Six Forks Road in Raleigh, NC. Scouting is a part of the church's ministry. Saint Mark's encourages you to contact the church office by calling 787-0544 if you have any questions or concerns. Troop 344 has a proud tradition and has been chartered for over 60 years.

Roundtable – Meets the first Thursday of every month during the traditional school calendar. Roundtable offers a plethora of Scouting ideas and topics, as well as an opportunity to share information with other Scout Leaders in the Falls District. Roundtable is open to both Youth Troop Leaders as well as Adult Troop Leaders.

Commitment to Youth – The Scoutmaster, Assistant Scoutmasters, and the Troop Committee are pledged to assist each Scout in the development of his sense of duties to God and country, to others, and to himself. We strive to develop an awareness of self-reliance, to improve individual and group skills, and to increase one's ability to be successful in life. We are honored and feel privileged you have chosen to give Troop 344 the opportunity to work with your son to develop these life-long skills.

Insert 1 –

Annual Review of the Troop - At the end of each year, the Troop will participate in an annual Scout 360 Review.

What is a 360 review?

A 360 review is a process of collecting data from multiple sources for the purpose of obtaining different perspectives. By combining these perspectives, a better understanding is garnered of the person/item being reviewed. 360 reviews allow for feedback to be more objective.

Why the 360 review?

The purpose of performing an annual 360 review of the Troop is to collect feedback from multiple sources to see how the Troop is performing. By collecting the data from multiple sources, Troop leadership will be able to see what is going well, what is not going well, and what the Scouts would like to do that isn't currently being done.

Who participates?

The Annual Scout 360 Review of Troop 344 is for the Scouts. Only active Scouts will be asked to participate. Parents should not fill out the form, or assist in filling out the form.

How does the process work?

Scouts will be given a form at a Tuesday night meeting, typically during the December time frame. Scouts will be given 2 weeks to complete the form, and will need to turn in before the holiday break. Forms will be turned in to a designated committee member, and will remain anonymous to the Troop leadership. The designated committee member will summarize all the forms, and deliver a report to the Scoutmaster. The Scoutmaster report will not contain any names. The Scoutmaster will then review the report with Troop leadership, during a scheduled leaders meeting.

The form:

The form will follow the Start, Stop, Continue method. There will be targeted questions for Troop leadership to get specific feedback on certain areas. The remainder of the form will be "free form". Under the Start section, Scouts should list things that they would like to start doing. Under the Stop section, Scouts should list things that they want to stop doing. Under the Continue section, Scouts should list things that they want to continue doing. Scouts should provide a response to each category, and should list supporting reasons for each. Remember, this is your opportunity to provide candid feedback, and to institute change. Be fair, be specific when you can, and be honest.

Insert 2 –

Merit Badge Counselors - The Scouting program emphasizes helping young men develop character, citizenship, and mental and physical fitness. Among the handful of methods used to build on these aims of Scouting are adult association, leadership development, and advancement.

The merit badge program (part of the advancement process) is an important part in this development, and one that requires the assistance of the community. Scouting offers 121 merit badges, in a wide range of topics, aimed at giving Scouts an opportunity to learn life skills and experience new things. Often, a Scout will learn a merit badge and transform that knowledge into a career. The merit badge counselor is key to the success of the program, and the young men being taught.

Merit badge counselors assist Scouts as they plan the assigned projects and activities to meet the merit badge requirements. They coach Scouts through interviews and demonstrations on how to do the required skills of the craft, business, or hobby. They certify that the Scout has met all the requirements, and qualify them for the badge.

Troop 344, sponsored by St. Marks United Methodist Church, is looking for people in the community that would be interested in becoming merit badge counselors. Becoming a merit badge counselor is a rewarding opportunity to help our leaders of tomorrow. There is no cost, and in most cases only requires a few hours a year. In the list provided, if you see areas that you feel you would be able to coach Scouts, and would be interested in becoming a counselor, Please contact Scoutmaster Nathan LaPlaine.

Thanks you for your time, and consideration.

Nathan LaPlaine

Scoutmaster – Troop 344

919-850-9988

NATER@Bellsouth.net

www.bsa344-raleigh.org

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[SWIMMING](#), [WATER SPORTS](#), [WHITEWATER](#)
13. **TRADES**
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14. **TRANSPORTATION**
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Insert 3 –

SAMPLE ACTIVITY RELEASE FORM:

Boy Scouts of America Troop 344
King's Dominion Trip
Saturday, September 25, 2005 to Sunday, September 26, 2005
Reservation Form and Fee must be returned by September 12, 2005 to attend this event.
My son, _____ will attend this activity.
Print Name Patrol

I understand that the fee for this activity is \$30.00, not including meals and camping fee.
The fee must be returned with this form by September 12, 2005.

My son is in good health and may engage in all activities except as noted below. In the event I cannot be reached in an emergency, I hereby give permission to the physician, selected by the Adult Leader in Charge, to hospitalize, secure proper anesthesia, or to order injection or surgery for my son.

Parent Signature Date Phone Number

I will furnish transportation To ____ /From ____ this activity for ____ boys if needed.

Exceptions to Activities:

Regular Medication Required:

Signature Page (1 of 2):

Family copy

As a member of Troop 344, I have read and understand the policies set forth in this manual and agree to abide by them. I am aware that from time to time these policies may be updated without notice and that I am still held accountable to these changes. This policy manual is available for my review at all times on Troop 344's website (http://www.bsa344-raleigh.org/documents/troop344_policy_manual_20090104.pdf).

Scout signature

Date

Scout's printed name

As the parent or adult guardian of a member of Troop 344, I have read and understand the policies set forth in this manual and agree that my son and I can abide by them. I am aware that from time to time these policies may be updated without notice and that my son and I are still held accountable for these changes and that I too can review this manual on the troop website. I further understand that a copy of this signature page will be kept on file with the Troop Secretary and the Charter Organization as evidence of this declaration.

Adult signature

Date

Adult's printed name

Signature Page (2 of 2):

Troop and Charter Organization copy

As a member of Troop 344, I have read and understand the policies set forth in this manual and agree to abide by them. I am aware that from time to time these policies may be updated without notice and that I am still held accountable to these changes. This policy manual is available for my review at all times on Troop 344's website (http://www.bsa344-raleigh.org/documents/troop344_policy_manual_20090104.pdf).

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Adult signature

Date

Adult's printed name