

Commissioner Service

What is a Commissioner?

The commissioner is the liaison between the local council and Scouting units. The commissioner's mission is to keep units operating at maximum efficiency, maintain regular contact with unit leaders, counsel leaders on where to find assistance, note weaknesses in programs, and suggest remedies. The commissioner is successful when units effectively deliver the ideals of Scouting to their members.

Roles the Commissioner Plays

A commissioner plays several roles, including friend, representative, unit "doctor," teacher, and counselor.

The commissioner is a friend of the unit. Of all their roles, this one is the most important. It springs from the attitude, "I care, I am here to help, what can I do for you?" Caring is the ingredient that makes commissioner service successful. He or she is an advocate of unit needs. A commissioner who makes himself known and accepted now will be called on in future times of trouble.

The commissioner is a representative. The average unit leader is totally occupied in working with kids. Some have little if any contact with the Boy Scouts of America other than a commissioner's visit to their meeting. To them, the commissioner may be the BSA. The commissioner helps represent the ideals, the principles, and the policies of the Scouting movement.

The commissioner is a unit "doctor." In their role as "doctor," they know that prevention is better than a cure, so they try to see that their units make good "health practices" a way of life. When problems arise, and they will even in the best unit, they act quickly. They observe symptoms, diagnose the real ailment, prescribe a remedy, and follow up on the patient.

The commissioner is a teacher. As a commissioner, they will have a wonderful opportunity to participate in the growth of unit leaders by sharing knowledge with them. They teach not just in an academic environment, but where it counts most—as an immediate response to a need to know. That is the best adult learning situation since the lesson is instantly reinforced by practical application of the new knowledge.

The commissioner is a counselor. As a Scouting counselor, they will help units solve their own problems. Counseling is the best role when unit leaders don't recognize a problem and where solutions are not clear-cut. Everyone needs counseling from time to time, even experienced leaders.

Commissioner Positions

- ◆ Unit Commissioner
- ◆ Assistant District Commissioner
- ◆ District Commissioner
- ◆ Roundtable Commissioner
- ◆ Assistant Council Commissioner
- ◆ Council Commissioner

Commissioner Qualifications

- ◆ Trained Scouter (or willing to be trained)
- ◆ Meet basic BSA membership requirements
- ◆ Willing to visit and regularly contact scout units
- ◆ Willing to attend district activities
- ◆ Be pro-district and pro-council
- ◆ Willing to attend Commissioner staff meetings
- ◆ Willing to live by the Scout Oath and Law

Commissioner Job Descriptions

From time to time people ask what is the actual job of a particular kind of commissioner. Here is a brief description of each of these jobs.

District Commissioner

The district commissioner leads the commissioner staff of the district, guiding and measuring the district's unit service program. Major responsibilities include:

- ◆ Recruit and train a full staff of commissioners.
- ◆ Oversee the commissioner training program.
- ◆ Work with the district chairman and district executive as a member of the district's Key 3.
- ◆ Plan and preside at the monthly meeting of the district commissioner staff.
- ◆ Attend district committee meeting to report on conditions of units and to secure specialized help for units.
- ◆ Represent the district as a member of the council commissioners cabinet.

Assistant District Commissioners

A district may have one or more assistant district commissioners. Each is responsible for an assigned share of the units in the district, and the unit commissioners who serve those units. Assistant district commissioners are often assigned a geographic or specialty area of the district. They work closely with the district commissioner and district executive. Major responsibilities include:

- ◆ Recruit enough unit commissioners to serve their assigned units and areas.
- ◆ Conduct personal coaching and orientation sessions for unit commissioners.
- ◆ Maintain regular contact with their unit commissioners to provide guidance in unit service needs.
- ◆ Serve units with no assigned unit commissioner.
- ◆ Help unit commissioners evaluate and improve their unit service performance.

Roundtable Commissioners

- ◆ Recruit and train a staff qualified to put on quality roundtables for unit personnel.
- ◆ Plan monthly roundtable programs.
- ◆ Make all arrangements for roundtables including meeting places, equipment, and supplies.
- ◆ Conduct regular critiques to determine how round tables can be improved.

Unit Commissioners

The unit commissioner is a generalist whose passionate overriding mission in Scouting is to help units succeed. Specific responsibilities include:

- ◆ Help each unit earn the Quality Unit Award.
- ◆ Use the annual commissioner service plan, with its scheduled opportunities for commissioner contact with units.
- ◆ Know each phase of the Scouting program. Review Scouting program literature.
- ◆ Visit unit meetings.
 - a) Observe the unit in action and determine the degree to which the descriptions in the literature are being followed.
 - b) b. If called upon, participate or help in some of the regular activities of the unit.
- ◆ Visit regularly with the unit leader.
 - a) Listen to what the unit leader has to say.
 - b) Offer encouragement and support.
 - c) Using the literature and profile sheet, help the leader see new opportunities for improvement.
 - d) Maintain the best possible relationship with unit leadership.
 - e) Help the leader with forms and applications.
 - f) Encourage unit participation in district and council program events and training opportunities.
- ◆ Work to assure effective and active unit committees.
 - a) Visit with the unit committee periodically.
 - b) Observe the committee in action.
 - c) Using the literature, offer suggestions for improvement.
 - d) Work with the committee to solve problems and improve unit operation.
- ◆ Keep in touch with the chartered organizations of the units you serve.
 - a) Meet and orient the chartered organization representative.
 - b) Meet the head of the organization and explain your role as helper of units.
 - c) Help develop a good relationship between unit leaders and chartered organization leaders.
- ◆ Know the neighborhood in which your units are located.
 - a) Help graduating members of one program join the next level of Scouting.

- b) Identify potential sources for new youth members.
- c) Cultivate men and women of good moral character who might become Scouting leaders.
- d) Know chartered organizations and prospective ones.
- e) Learn about resources and characteristics of the neighborhood, which may affect a unit.
 - ◆ Know the district and council.
- a) Identify resources that can help the unit.
- b) Know scheduled events that will help the unit.
- c) Work closely with the professional staff.
- d) Use members of district operating committees to help meet specialized needs of your units.
 - ◆ Set the example.
- a) Adopt an attitude of helpfulness.
- b) Keep promises.
- c) Be concerned about proper uniforming.
- d) Be diplomatic.
 - ◆ Continue to grow in experience and knowledge.
- a) Attend commissioner training experiences and earn the commissioner training awards.
- b) Meet with, and share information with, other commissioners.
 - ◆ Involve unit personnel in Cub Scout roundtables, Boy Scout roundtables.
 - ◆ Make certain that proper techniques are used to select and recruit unit leaders.
 - ◆ Facilitate the on-time annual charter renewal of all assigned units.
- a) Help the unit conduct a membership inventory of youth and adults.
- b) Help the unit committee chairman conduct the charter renewal meeting.
- c) See that a completed charter renewal application is returned to the council service center.

Commissioner's Basic Library

The following publications and audio-visual products form a core commissioner service library. Depending on your position you may find some or all of them useful.

- ◆ Boy Scout Roundtable Commissioner Training, No. 34256
- ◆ Boy Scout Roundtable Planning Guide, No. 7263A
- ◆ College of Commissioner Science, No. 34522
- ◆ Commissioner Administration of Unit Service, No. 34120 (1994)
- ◆ Commissioner Basic Training Manual, No. 33614
- ◆ Commissioner Conference, No. 33616
- ◆ Commissioner Fieldbook for Unit Service, No. 37123
- ◆ Commissioner Helps for Packs, Troops and Posts, No. 33618
- ◆ Commissioner Job Description Cards, No. 34265
- ◆ Commissioner Unit Service Booklet #34119
- ◆ Continuing Education for Commissioners, No. 33615 (1995) (Supersedes College of Commissioner Science and Commissioner Conference)
- ◆ Cub Scout Roundtable Planning Guide, No. 34249
- ◆ Cub Scout Roundtable Staff Guide, No. 33013
- ◆ Highlights for District Commissioners... An Overview, No. 37123 (For DCs and ADCs)
- ◆ Highlights of District Operations: Helping Units Succeed and Recruiting District Volunteers, AV-06V002 (Video Tape)
- ◆ Highlights of District Volunteer Recruiting, No. 37130
- ◆ Scouting's Library of Literature, No. 33000
- ◆ Selecting District People, No. 34514
- ◆ Self-Evaluation for Unit Commissioners and Exploring Service Team Members, No. 34424
- ◆ The Commissioner (Newsletter distributed quarterly to Council Commissioners and Scout Executives), No. 14-975
- ◆ The Unit Commissioner's Orientation: Helping Units Succeed, AV-04V001 (Video Tape)
- ◆ Unit Commissioner Program Notebook, No. 26-006
- ◆ Unit Commissioner Work Sheet (Pack), No. 34125
- ◆ Unit Commissioner Work Sheet (Post), No. 33619
- ◆ Unit Commissioner Work Sheet (Troop), No. 34126