



A Troop 512 How-to Guide

# HOW TO BECOME AN ASSISTANT SCOUTMASTER IN 10 EASY STEPS

VERSION 1.2

## Congratulations

Becoming an Assistant Scoutmaster or ASM in the troop can be a satisfying and rewarding experience. It will allow you to share similar experiences with your son. You will also be able to help guide the growth and development of the other young men in the troop.

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### Overview

Aspiring scoutmasters must be at least 21 years old. There are a number of steps that have to be completed within the first year after applying:

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#### 1. Complete the BSA Adult Application

The first step is to fill out the Adult Application for volunteers, which the Scoutmaster can give you. You will need to provide three references, submit to a background check and provide other personal information. A small processing fee must also be paid,

Your application must be approved by the Scoutmaster, Troop Committee Chair and the designated Representative from our Chartering Organization, Covenant United Methodist Church before being forwarded to the Cradle of Liberty Council for processing. The Chartering Organization Representative may require an interview to make sure that your views are consistent with those of the church.

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#### 2. Complete the PA State Clearances

Recently the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania passed a new law known as the Child Protective Services Law. The intent of this law is to protect the youth of Pennsylvania. All youth serving organizations within the Commonwealth are covered under this new law. Volunteers, registered and unregistered, in the Cradle of Liberty Council are affected in two ways; we are mandated child abuse reporters and required to provide background check clearances.

All chartered adults in the Troop are therefore required to complete current criminal record and child abuse background clearances (and update them every three years). Information on how to do so can be found here: [www.colbsa.org/palaw](http://www.colbsa.org/palaw)

You can have hard copies of the certificates mailed to you. But it's better to get the digital copies in case you need them again. When you have digital versions of the documents, you'll need to submit copies to Covenant United Methodist Church, our chartering organization, and to the Cradle of Liberty Council. You can email copies of the documents to Pastor Jim Anderman at [jim.anderman@covumc.com](mailto:jim.anderman@covumc.com). You'll need to upload copies to the Council's Background Check System, as explained in the above guidance.

Todd Shaner, our Training Coordinator, will record compliance with this requirement, just as he records Youth Protection training. If you have any questions about how to obtain the reports, please contact Todd (at [todd.shaner@navy.mil](mailto:todd.shaner@navy.mil) or 610-543-1804). Please let him know when you have completed your requests for the clearances from the state **and** when you have submitted the clearances to the Council and the Pastor so he can monitor our compliance.

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### 3. Buy a Uniform

Adult leaders in the Troop are expected to set an example for our Scouts. This includes wearing the Scout uniform. The uniform includes the official Scout shirt and pants. We suggest a short-sleeved shirt and pants with legs that zip off to convert to shorts. Also note that when wearing shorts, official Scout socks are required.

Additionally you'll need to learn the Scout Law and the Scout Oath. You'll live by these as well.

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### 4. Complete Youth Protection Training

Complete Youth Protection Training, a required course for all registered adult Boy Scouts volunteers. The course is available online and is regularly offered as in-person training at locations in the area. The online course takes about 30 minutes to complete and must be taken every two years. You will need to provide proof of completion (you can print out a certificate) to Todd Shaner, the Troop's Training Coordinator.

To take the course, go to [www.scouting.org](http://www.scouting.org) and click onto the 'My Scouting' link. You'll then be able to create an account and manage your training.

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### 5. Observe and Participate

This means attending weekly meetings, participating in our monthly trips and even going to summer camp if you are able. Of course you won't be able to attend every meeting or go on every trip, but the more you participate the more you'll learn.

It's not always easy to always figure out what's going on and what you can do. Talk to the other more experienced ASMs, they'll explain it for you.

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### 6. Complete Additional Training

To be effective you'll need to be trained. Plan to take two courses within your first couple of months in the Troop: *This is Scoutmaster* and *Scoutmaster and Assistant Scoutmaster Specific Training*. The first course is offered online while the second is regularly offered at area locations.

Within the first year of signing up you'll need to take the *Introduction to Outdoor Leader Skills* course. This is given as a weekend camping trip and is offered two or three time a year in the area.

Working as patrols, this hands-on course provides adult leaders the practical outdoor skills they need to lead Scouts in the out-of-doors. Upon completion, leaders should feel comfortable teaching Scouts the basic skills required to obtain the First Class rank.

These training courses are provided free of charge and are designed by the BSA.

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## 7. Read Troop 512's *Parent's Guide*

This is our comprehensive documentation of how the Troop works. The *Parent's Guide* is intended to help parents new to Boy Scouting to understand the Scouting program. In this way, you may be better able to support your son in the Troop so that he may gain the most from his Scouting experience. This guide will facilitate your understanding of the Troop's operations and procedures so that you can be a more knowledgeable and therefore more effective ASM.

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## 8. Decide on a Role and Responsibilities

To receive satisfaction as a volunteer you'll want to feel useful and needed. Therefore, having a specific role or assignment in the Troop is important. Each of the Troop's ASMs has been assigned specific program duties. Some of our ASMs have special certifications or training to assist in carrying out our program, such as NRA-certified Range Safety Officer or Safety Afloat training. Others are patrol advisors or have specific Scouts to mentor. We have ASMs who are the Advancement Chair, Camping Coordinator, Summer Camp Director, leads for fundraising and Trail to Eagle advisors. Some are involved in scout recruitment, communications or leadership development. ASMs are also encouraged to be merit badge counselors. Let the Scoutmaster know of your interests and he'll assist in finding a good role for you in the Troop.

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## 9. Learn the Lingo

Soon you'll learn to talk like an ASM.

In Troop 512, we avoid using the word 'boy' and even 'Boy Scouts'. Use 'young man' or 'Scouts' instead. Young men today don't like to be called boys.

Don't refer to adult as leaders. Being an adult doesn't make you a leader. We're guides, mentors or counselors. Just call us adults instead of leaders so as not to confuse us with (or diminish the importance of) the 'youth leaders', who run the Troop. You'll often hear people refer to young men as Scouts and adults as Scouters.

Here are common acronyms that you'll come across.

ASM = Assistant Scoutmaster

ASPL = Assistant Senior Patrol Leader

BSA = Boy Scouts of America

COPE = Challenging Outdoor Personal Experience

DE = District Executive

FOS = Friends of Scouting

IOLS = Introduction to Outdoor Leader Skills

JASM = Junior Assistant Scoutmaster

LNT = Leave No Trace

NYLT = National Youth Leadership Training

PLC = Patrol Leaders' Council

SM = Scoutmaster

SPL = Senior Patrol Leader

OA = Order of the Arrow

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## 10. Get Busy

You've been approved, you've been trained and you know what to do. Now it's time to work. Get to it.