

Group Committee Handbook



DECEMBER 2003

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Group Contact Sheet:

Area Commissioner: _____

Group Commissioner: _____

Group Administrator: _____

Group Registrar: _____

Group Treasurer/Fundraiser: _____

Group Secretary: _____

Sponsor/Partner: _____

Council Office: _____

Executive Director: _____

Field Executive: _____

MDW _____

Section Leaders:

Section	Name, phone, e-mail
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Section 1

Group Committee Roles and Responsibilities

The Group Committee is essentially responsible for providing service and support to the section leaders and providing for Quality Programs on behalf of Scouts Canada. Through the Group Commissioner, the Group Committee provides the administrative foundation for the section leaders to do their job.

Typical responsibilities of the Group Committee include:

Program:

1. To provide for the operation of the programs in accordance with the Mission, Principles and Practices, Program Objectives, Operating Policies, Procedures and Regulations of Scouts Canada and in keeping with the goals and ideals of the sponsor.
2. To follow the Volunteer Recruitment and Development Procedures (VRAD) to secure and appoint Scouters who are acceptable to the sponsor/partner and to Scouts Canada.
3. To encourage Scouters in their personal development by making opportunities for training and development available them.
4. To approve programs as presented by leaders.
5. To maintain a program of growth for the Group/section.
6. To ensure that the program resources and personnel as required, are available.

Examples of this are:

- Instructors, resource persons, examiners and facilities;
 - Equipment
7. Where necessary, to assist Scouters in the operation of the Group/sections.
 8. To assist Scouters in preparations of camps and other special events and to approve arrangements and budgets.
 9. When necessary, to assume direction of the sections.
 10. To ensure that due emphasis is given to the religious aspects of Scouting in the conduct and life of the Group/section.
 11. To provide for an annual review of Group/section Scouters and to ensure that the appropriate recognition for service is provided.
 12. If, as a result of a complaint or observed behaviour a member may need to be suspended, Administrative Procedure #3 must be followed. Contact the Council Commissioner or the Council Executive Director for more information.

Administration:

1. To establish and provide for the continuous operation of the Group/section.
2. To register the Group/section annually.
3. Apply for and participate in the annual re-chartering of the Group.
4. To secure adequate facilities such as a meeting place for the Group/section.
5. To audit annually the accounts of the Group/section.
6. To prepare and submit to the supervising council, and the sponsor/partner, an annual report covering the activities of the Group/section. This report shall include a schedule of real property and audited financial statements.

7. To promote harmonious relationships within the Group/section and any institution or organizations in contact with or affecting the Group/section.
8. To approve budgets as presented by leaders.
9. To assume responsibility for all property and equipment including insurance matters.
10. To raise funds as required in accordance with the policy on finance of Scouts Canada and those of the sponsor/partner.
11. To ensure the prompt and efficient methods for recording and maintaining records are achieved. Where appropriate, forms, applications etc are forwarded to the nearest Council office.

Section II

Group Committee Structure

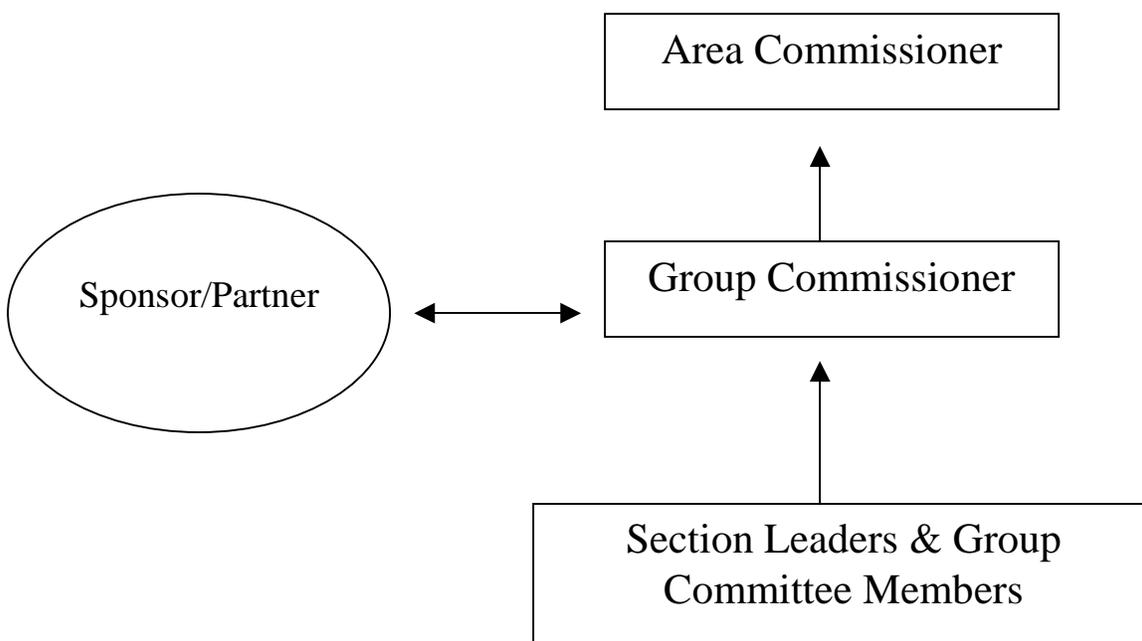
The Group committee is the first level of service and support in Scouts Canada. The leadership you provide impacts the safety and quality of our program by ensuring that we have the right people in the right place at the right time with the right equipment.

You are not alone in providing this service to the leaders in your Group – your Area and Council are there to support you in this function. All of the energy and effort of Scouts Canada is focused on the delivery of our programs and achieving our mission. Your time and effort enables the section leaders to conduct the program.

Across Canada, Groups vary in size and the communities they serve. The Group Commissioner must ensure the size of committee suits the size of the Group. However, there are key roles and tasks that are required to be completed within the umbrella of Scouts Canada through screened members. Finances and program approval need to be under the control of members of Scouts Canada for accountability.

To assist you in your role as Group Committee members, Scouts Canada has a comprehensive document containing the By-Law, Policies and Procedures of the organization. Group Committees, in the course of their duties do not develop By-Laws, Policies and Procedures but quite simply ensure that their Group is operated in compliance with those established by Scouts Canada.

The following diagram provides a description of the lines of **accountability** within the Group level of Scouts Canada. Communication and working relationships are to be open, and informal when possible. All arrows would show a reciprocal two way relationship.



Group Committee

The Group structure allows for flexibility in the way service and support is provided. It clearly has two main functions: the Group Commissioner focuses on Group management and program support and the Group Administrator focuses on the administrative functions of the Group. Both of these people may choose to add other positions as deemed necessary to provide the appropriate level of support to the Group.

Detailed Volunteer Job Descriptions can be found in Appendix C. The following provides a brief overview of the roles and responsibilities within the Group.

GROUP COMMISSIONER

This person is recognized as the principal point of contact for the Group and assumes the leadership of the Group Committee, directly accountable to the Area Commissioner. The Group Commissioner's prime function is to ensure compliance with Scouts Canada's Policies and Procedures and Program Standards, and ensures that section leaders receive appropriate program service and support.

Where warranted, a Group Commissioner may be responsible for more than one Group.

Typical roles and/or responsibilities include but not limited to:

- Recruiting, Selecting and Appointment of leaders
- Review and approval of section programs and outdoor activities
- Policy, procedure, and Program Standards compliance
- Encourage an attitude favorable for growth
- Assist leaders where necessary
- Leader Development
- Relationships; Parents, Leaders, Partner/Sponsor, other Commissioners

Group Commissioners cannot do this solely by themselves. They must build a team appropriate to the size of the Group. The basics would be someone to take care of the financial responsibilities (the Group Treasurer/Fund-raiser), a Group Registrar and perhaps a Group Secretary. In larger Groups, a Group Administrator may be recruited to take care of many of the administrative responsibilities of the Group Commissioner.

Appointment of Leaders

The Group Commissioner appoints leaders. For new leaders, this follows after the completion of the initial screening procedure, ending with submitting the *Application for Membership and Appointment of Adults* and *Screening Checklist* to the Council Office. The Council Executive Director checks to make sure the screening process is complete. For leaders returning to the same role, leaders may be re-appointed as deemed appropriate by the Group Commissioner as per the recognized VRAD strategy.

Finding the right people for each position is critical for the successes of the Group. Ultimately the Group Commissioner is signifying that they feel this person has the appropriate attitude, skills and knowledge to be working closely with youth. All volunteers in Scouts Canada are appointed for one year. If there is any doubt, or if the candidate does not meet the appropriate standards as indicated in the position description, the Commissioner should not appoint the candidate. An ineffective volunteer will drive out other good volunteers and youth from Scouts Canada.

Recruiting the right leader can be a time consuming process. Succession planning is important. Look at your leadership teams, the parents, and resource people your Group comes into contact with for future leadership and Group roles. Identify them early on so they can prepare for their new role.

This is a brief overview of appointing leaders and a portion of Scouts Canada's Volunteer Recruitment and Development (VRAD) procedure. The Volunteer Recruitment and Development Handbook discusses in greater detail Scouts Canada's Screening procedure including appointment of new leaders, returning leaders, leaders entering a new role as well as the evaluation of leaders.

Program Approval

Section leaders are accountable to the Group Commissioner. The Group Commissioner is responsible for approving section programs. The Group Commissioner will have the final authority on program approval for section activities. In turn, the Group Commissioner is accountable to the Area Commissioner for the Group's actions.

What is Scouts Canada's expectations when approving programs? Satisfy the following questions to make the right decision:

1. Is this the right decision for the youth involved?
2. Is this activity/decision consistent with Scouts Canada's policies and procedures?
 - Information contained in Scouts Canada Bylaw, Policies and Procedures, the Camping and Outdoor Activity Procedure and Program Standards provide Scouts Canada's expectations.
 - Are we "In the right place, at the right time, with the right people, and the right equipment"?
3. Does this meet the parents' needs?
 - Put yourself in the parent's shoes.
 - Meet with the parents to discuss programs that have a higher element of risk so everybody understands what the youth will be doing while in the care of leaders.
4. Does this meet the needs of your Partner/Sponsor?
5. Does this reflect your community's standards and care for the environment we live in?

Suspension

As defined in Administrative Procedure No. 3: “A suspension is the immediate action taken by Council Commissioners or Council Executive Directors to provide time for a full investigation into a problem with an individual person or a number of persons.”

1. If at any time you feel youth are in immediate jeopardy, it is every adult member's duty to protect the youth and ensure that the person is removed or the situation resolved.
2. Following this action, the Group Commissioner should be notified immediately.
3. Should a Group Commissioner feel that the behaviour or actions of a leader are inappropriate as a leader, suspending the leader may be necessary. If you feel there is a need to suspend, contact your Council Commissioner or Council Executive Director to discuss if this is warranted, and if so, how to proceed.
4. When a member is suspended, they may not participate in any Scouts Canada function pending the outcome of the suspension.

GROUP ADMINISTRATOR

Effectively administer the non-program activities that are related to the Group and the well being of the Group as directed by the Group Commissioner.

Typical roles and/or responsibilities may include but are not limited to:

- Assume, at the request of the Group Commissioner, the chair of Group Committee Meetings
- Create/provide opportunities for growth
- Assisting with the preparation and approving of budgets
- Preparing for and participating in the Group Annual Review
- Ensuring that all potential members are accommodated and registered
- Group functions/events
- Recording and maintaining Group records
- Assist leaders as required

Note: The Group Administrator need not do everything themselves. Part of their responsibility includes assessing the needs of the Group, determining the amount of work to be done and, if necessary, building a team to ensure that all tasks/responsibilities are achieved.

Depending upon the size of the Group, positions may be merged or other positions added as required, i.e., large Groups may find it helpful to add a Group fund-raiser, or Quartermaster to look after the purchasing, storage, maintenance and insurance of equipment.

Some examples of positions that they may choose to fill may include but are not limited to:

GROUP TREASURER/FUND-RAISER

Effectively record, maintain, plan and explain all financial matters pertaining to the Group. Ensure that the Group participates in all of Scouts Canada's fund-raisers. Take the lead in the development of fund-raising goals, action plans and the implementation of these goals and plans. Parents can be a fantastic resource assisting with fund-raising to support the Group.

GROUP SECRETARY

Effectively record and maintain minutes and decisions made as well as compose other correspondence as required by the Group Committee. Provides excellent support to section scouters and Group Commissioner ensuring appropriate forms are provided to the Council in a timely manner.

GROUP REGISTRAR

Effectively register all members through Scouts Canada's Membership Management System. Organize a pre-registration program in the spring for returning members as well as the fall registration process.

SECTION LEADERS

The emphasis on our section leaders is straightforward. Plan and conduct Scouts Canada's Programs as per Section Leader Handbooks, Program Standards and Scouts Canada's Policies and Procedures.

Section Scouters interact with the Group at Group Committee meetings to co-ordinate Group activities, discuss fund-raising and finance issues and gain program approval.

GROUP EVENTS

Outside of section programs, Groups may have events for all or a number of sections combined. The role of the Group Committee is to oversee the event while co-ordinating the program with the assistance of the section scouters.

The Area in which your Group is situated may call on members in your Group to help in organizing larger events for the whole Area. In these cases, the members recruited for a limited time may have additional roles. Clarifying expectations and roles prior to the event with the Area team are important for a successful event.

GROUP ADMINISTRATIVE CYCLE

To help your Group Committee plan and enjoy a smooth Scouting year, see Appendix A – the Group Administrative Cycle, "A Year At A Glance". The intention is to provide the Group Committee a focus on the various key tasks through-out the year.

Section III

Program Support

Supporting Leaders who Deliver the Program

The Group Committee supports section leaders delivering the program by creating the foundation for the Group to operate smoothly. Examples include: effective fund-raising support, ensuring there is a place to meet, and recruiting enough leaders.

The program is guided by the Program Standards (available on www.scouts.ca) for the Beaver Colony to Venturer Company sections. The nature of the Rover program makes it difficult to express standards in this way. Having these minimum standards in place, and working with leaders to meet or exceed them, ensures that leaders deliver programs at a high level of consistency across the country.

With Program Standards, you can ascertain many quality factors, such as the number of outings, number of camping trips per year, and linking opportunities.

The Program Standards allow leaders to more consistently plan and conduct their programs, and explain to parents and youth what they can expect to receive when they join.

Motivating Scouters

Simply put, excited and happy Scouters run awesome programs. If your volunteers need help, help them out or put them in touch with those who can answer their question or can provide the answer to their program questions. The Group Committee cannot provide every answer, but you can ensure that the answer is found through Scouts Canada's many resources.

Thank Scouters

Not only does everyone need encouragement and support, a thank-you goes a long way. There are two types of recognition: formal and informal.

Informal recognition should be ongoing: attending a section meeting and saying thanks to the leaders for a job well done in front of their section and parents; a thank-you at a banquet; certificates, pins and other creative ideas express your appreciation.

Formal recognition is through Scouts Canada's Honours and Awards program. Appreciation and admiration for the hard, dedicated work carried out by adult volunteers in Scouts Canada is shown with specific awards. Youth and adults participating in the program who show high character and courage, gallantry, meritorious conduct or outstanding service to Scouting are recognized through specific honours. We encourage Group Committee members and leaders to initiate the process for an award for volunteers whose dedication and commitment inspire others to 'do their best'.

On the www.scouts.ca web site, you can access an overview of the various honours and awards within Scouting. In addition, *A Guide to the Honours and Awards of Scouts Canada* is an excellent resource designed to help the initiator write an award application.

The forms for the various awards can be accessed on line or at your Council office.

Please note: Awards applications typically are viewed by one or more committees so be sure you allow sufficient time for consideration of an award.

Adult Development

To assist with the development of new leaders, Scouts Canada has developed a set of competency based learning objectives, Woodbadge Basic and Advanced (formerly Woodbadge Part I and Part II). These competencies can be achieved through a variety of methods: coaching and mentoring, on-the-job development or workshops. Your role is to help connect the new leader with the method best meeting their needs.

The objectives of **Woodbadge Basic** follow the typical activities leaders undertake: planning, delivering, evaluating and managing weekly programs and overnight outings, plus annual program planning. Every leader is expected to acquire the corresponding attitudes, skills and knowledge to meet these objectives within their first year of service.

The objectives for **Woodbadge Advanced** focus on leadership and the skills and knowledge leaders need to take the program outdoors.

For more information on the Woodbadge Basic and Advanced Learning Objectives and Guidelines for Coaches and Mentors, consult the Volunteer Development and Recruitment (VRAD) Procedures found in the Bylaw, Policies and Procedure document.

Councils and your broader community may offer other courses and workshops that may be very valuable to your leaders. Courses such as First Aid, or outdoor skills may be found through your Council, community centers, colleges, or provincial parks.

It may be necessary at times for Group Committee members to take on the leadership of a section. Some of your leaders may not be available for an event or are unable to recruit a parent to help. This ensures the program continues to be available to the youth of the section.

Membership

The number of youth participating is how we measure our success in achieving our Mission. The size of our membership determines the types of resources available within Scouting to our volunteers and youth as well.

At the Group and section level, membership can be addressed in a number of ways. Concentrate on maintaining the number of youth and adults in your Groups. Then expand within a section, then add a section, then add a Group to meet the needs of the youth in the community.

Registering all members including Group Committee members is critical; to provide for insurance coverage of our members, for leaders to receive *the Leader Magazine*, and for Scouts Canada to track members and membership trends. The Membership Management System is not just a place to register your members.

Start preparing for registration in the spring; understand which youth and leaders are moving up or returning – it secures the base of your Group for next year. It is important to determine who in your leadership team is returning. This will help identify leaders required and spaces available for new members.

Recruiting youth and leaders is an important, year round function. The ease of recruitment does revolve around the quality of the program provided by the section leaders (and by extension, the support the leaders receive from the Group Committee).

Youth Recruitment

Bring a friend nights, using e-postcards from the Scouts Canada web site, school talks (talk to your Council office for advice and assistance), post cards, answering phone calls promptly from parents, promoting and holding public registration nights, being involved in the community can all have significant impacts on the health of your Group.

Adult Recruitment

There are many opportunities to recruit volunteers. The obvious candidates are parents in the Group. But don't limit your search there. Community colleges and universities can be a source of great leaders who want to be involved in their community or are looking for program experience (such as early childhood education). High schools can be a great source for Scouters in Training (once they have completed their Woodbadge Basic, they can be used as part of section leadership ratios in your Colony and Packs). Ask around through your sponsor and key business people – they might know of someone who is an ideal candidate.

The Volunteer Recruitment and Development Procedures contains valuable information on adult recruitment as well as the screening process once you have identified potential candidates for the volunteer positions.

What resources are there to help you in recruiting members?

Your Council office:

- Council Field Executives or Membership Development Workers
- Recruiting pamphlets for youth and adults as well as recruitment posters
- The Volunteer Recruitment and Development Procedures
- Your Sponsor
- The Area Commissioner
- Community Newspapers, local media

Administration

Administration includes such topics as:

- appropriate outdoor forms and safety precautions as outlined in the *Camping / Outdoor Activity Procedures*
- registration is conducted in an efficient and timely manner
- finances are in order
- arrangements for the space the section meets are in place
- Fund-raising is conducted, not at the burden of the section leaders. Scouts Canada's national fundraisers (Popcorn, Hot Chocolate and Scoutrees) have been developed to provide unique, recognized fundraisers at the community level that support every level of Scouting

Finances

Funds for the Group must be held in accordance with Scouts Canada policy. Specific procedures for finances are found in the Bylaw, Policies and Procedures.

In practical terms, this means that funds are raised from the public. A Group must always be able to account for its income and expenses. Here's a list of "DO's" when dealing with finance and the Group.

- No financial transactions may take place without the approval of the committee.
- All expenditures must be requested at the committee meeting. Once funds are spent, receipts must accompany a statement of account at the next meeting.
- Anyone in the Group receiving or dispersing funds must keep an accurate record.
- Sections must submit at each Group Committee meeting a statement of accounts.
- As far as possible, cheques should pay all expenditures.
- Every Group account must have a minimum of two signing officers, one of which is the Group Treasurer.
- Petty cash may be held by the Group but should not exceed a reasonable amount agreed upon by the Group Committee.
- All sections and committees must submit an annual budget so that the Group can set fund-raising targets and also hold volunteers accountable for expenditures.
- The Group must submit to an annual audit usually performed before the re-chartering process.

The Group must take time to create a budget based on the program needs, and present this for approval. The Group Commissioner approves all budgets at the Group level. Then the Group Committee is responsible for ensuring that funds required to meet the budgets are raised.

Fund-raising

The Group Committee's role is to co-ordinate fund-raising in order to allow the leadership team to focus on running the program. Finding a volunteer to assist with co-ordinating the fund-raising involves parents and helps ensure a smooth fundraiser.

The Group Treasurer/Fundraiser will be able to accomplish the task when they recruit help from parents in the co-ordination of fundraisers. Do not overlook the valuable contribution parents can provide in supporting fund-raising.

Fund-raising is a key source of revenue for your Group. Scouts Canada has developed three national fund-raisers to help both the Group and the broader Scouting community. When you participate in these, everyone in Scouting benefits, keeping membership fees as low as possible. They are:

Scout Popcorn - Scouts Canada's #1 national fundraiser. There are two key aspects to this unique fund-raiser: the high quality product and it offers excellent value to the purchaser. Second, families sell popcorn because they know the return benefits are great program activities.

Scoutrees - is first and foremost an environmental program, but has over the years helped raise funds for Scouting. Through sponsors and donors, Scoutrees' income helps fund local Scouting activities; Council program and also provides much needed income for the Canadian Scout Brotherhood Fund.

More fund-raising information can be found on Scouts Canada's website or from your local Council office. Resources such as the *Ideal Year of Scouting* video-tape (available through your Council office) help your Group plan for your financial needs and provide an exciting program year.

Resources you should be aware of (available from Scout Shops):

- Financial Annual Record Book
- Section Annual Record books
- Scouts Canada's procedures on Finance, Fund-raising (See By-Laws, Policies & Procedures)

Communications

Open communication is essential for the healthy Group. Do you remember the telephone game you played in school – where one person whispers a message to the next and so on? The last person then says aloud what they heard and you compare this to the first message –it's always very different.

Group Committee meetings are a great place to ensure good communication flow. One representative from each section is responsible to represent their section.

The challenge in a large organization is communicating directly to Groups and sections. To help make this process as smooth as possible, it is essential that the Group Committee passes on information promptly to the section leaders. Consider the Group Committee as the primary source for communication. Scouts Canada's web site offers updates in program and policy. *The Leader Magazine* contains valuable program information and ideas as well as new program updates.

For the section leaders, the Group Commissioner is the key contact for new information. Section leaders can also communicate ideas and concerns with the Group Commissioner.

Keeping open communication with parents, youth, section leaders, sponsor, and the community will make for a smooth Scouting year.

How Often Do We Need To Meet?

Again, depending on the size of the Group and time of the year, it can vary. From August to November there may be a need to meet more often (and specifically the administrative members) to co-ordinate registration and fund-raising efforts. The Group as a whole typically meets monthly from September to May.

The Scouter in charge of each section, or in the case of a colony, a leader designated by its leadership team, automatically becomes a member of the Group Committee.

What do we need to discuss at our meetings? Here's a sample agenda for a Group Committee Meeting:

- Opening prayer
- Minutes of the previous meeting
- Unfinished business, including any from the last meeting
- Correspondence
- Reports from standing committees
- Financial update
- Reports from section leaders
- Reports of special committees
- Matters for current consideration
- New business
- Date and time for next meeting
- Adjournment

Program Review

The Program Standards provide the benchmark for section programming. In support of this, an annual review is a routine to ensure the attainment of the Program Standards and healthy operating of the section. This is to be conducted at the end of the program year as a wrap up tool. Consider it a co-operative effort between the section leadership team and the Group Commissioner as a form of continual improvement. Areas where the Standards were not achieved should be discussed. Plans to assist the leaders in achieving these Standards should be developed for the following year.

A Group Annual Review is in place for the Group as well. This is conducted by the Area Commissioner with the Group Commissioner as well as other members of the Group. The Review centers around providing program support and effective Group management. This is the template for the charter renewal process. The Group Annual Review can be found in Appendix "B".

Parents

Parents are a vital asset to your leaders and your Group. They may be future leaders, resource people, or people able to open doors for the Group to visit special places, or develop special contacts with members of the community. Ask them at the beginning of the year where their talents are and how they may be able to help. Make sure you follow up on offers to help made by parents; this will add variety to the program and may even result in more leaders.

Although there are many tasks that need to be accomplished in a Group, parents are excellent resources for:

- Helping coordinate fund-raising efforts
- Helping to cook at camps or to help set up special theme meetings
- Helping leaders at section meetings, camps and activities (Refer to Appendix “K” of the Camping and Outdoor Activity Procedure).
- **Transportation: it is the parent’s responsibility to get their youth to the events, not your leaders.**

Take time to develop a relationship with parents. This is invaluable when you need their assistance.

Record Keeping

Through the approval of the program, paperwork and forms are generated. These are important records, as they show the process that was undertaken for key areas such as volunteer screening, parent acknowledgement of risk, and safety precautions set out before an activity. These forms are all critical to Scouts Canada’s risk management process.

What is required to be kept:

At the Group level:

- Group Minutes
- Budgets & annual audit
- Annual Group Review

At the Council Level:

Submitted at time of Registration:

- Application for Membership for Youth
- Application for Membership for Adults
- Screening Checklist
- Police Record Check for leaders

Submitted at regular intervals:

- Application to Camp
- Parent / Guardian consent forms
- Tours, Visits and Fundraisers consent forms
- Physical Fitness Certificate (at the end of the year)

To the National Office:

Submitted upon an occurrence directly to the National Office without delay:

- Incident Report Form

In Summary

The Group Commissioner and their team of Group Committee volunteers allows the section leaders to focus on high quality programs for youth. Support from Scouts Canada through the Area Commissioner is in place to help your Group be successful. The contribution Scouting makes to the lives of young people is best realized with a successful Group in your community. Good luck and enjoy this rewarding opportunity to make a difference!

Attached Appendices:

Appendix A – Group Administrative Cycle – “A Year At A Glance”

Appendix B – Group Annual Review