

Supervision Guide for Scouting Activities

The Two-Scouter Rule, Youth:Scouter Ratios and Scouter Team Composition

Scouts Canada has Policies, Standards and Procedures with mandatory requirements and actions that relate to Section supervision that Scouters must use to ensure adherence to program quality and safety. This guideline provides further information and examples to help Scouters meet or exceed the requirements.

What is a Scouter?

A Scouter is a volunteer member of Scouts Canada that is 14 years of age or older and has met the screening and training requirements in the Scouts Canada Volunteer Screening Procedure.

The Two-Scouter Rule

The Two-Scouter Rule is the requirement for two registered Scouters to be with youth at all times. Notwithstanding Section ratios, two Scouters must always be within the field of view and within earshot of one another when with youth. The Two-Scouter Rule is an integral part of the Code of Conduct that applies to all Scouts Canada volunteers and staff.

Youth:Scouter Ratio

The Scout Method places emphasis on using Patrols (teams) comprised of six to eight youth of various ages as the primary unit in which Scouting takes place. Each Patrol or small team should have a designated Scouter to provide support, mentorship and a safe and respectful environment in which the team can work.

For each Section, there are required ratios of youth to Scouters. It is important that these be maintained for all Scouting activities, whether in the meeting hall, at a camp or visiting another facility.

- All Scouters may count towards Youth:Scouter ratio.
- **Colonies, Packs and Troops** must have one Scouter per small team with a minimum of one Scouter per eight youth (1:8).
- **Companies and Crews** must have enough Scouters to facilitate and support the Patrol (Team) System.

- While Scouter supervision is not always required for **Troops and Companies**, when Scouters are present there must be at least two.
- Risk management for certain types of activities may require additional Scouters to be present to ensure a safe experience for everyone.

Scouter Team Composition

The team of volunteers who facilitate the Scouting program for a single Section is called the Scouter Team. Notwithstanding the Two-Scouter Rule and Youth:Scouter ratio, each Scouter Team will have at least two registered Scouters, both of which are over the age of 18, and one who functions as the Section Contact Scouter.

Furthermore:

- Additional Scouters for **Colonies, Packs and Troop** must be over the age of 14.
- The Section Contact Scouter for **Companies** must be over the age of 21. Additional Company Scouters must be over the age of 18.
- Rover Crews do not require a Scouter Team. If appointed, **Crew Scouters** must be over the age of 25.

Important Information

By signing our Code of Conduct, Scouters, Rover Scouts and parents agree to respect our safety guidelines and procedures. This includes the Two-Scouter Rule. In exceptional circumstances, where one or more Scouters are unable to attend a meeting or activity, another registered Scouter should be recruited to take his or her place. If the Scouter in charge is to be replaced, the following rules apply:

- Colony/Pack/Troop: an adult Scouter, who is 18 years of age or older
- Company: an adult Scouter who is 21 years of age or older

Scouters under the age of 18 and the Two-Scouter Rule

Scouters under the age of 18, including Youth Commissioners, are considered to be Scouters for the purposes of the Two-Scouter Rule rather than youth participants.

Youth in leadership roles within their own Section (in which they are a youth participant) or in support of another Section (such as Cub Scouts helping at Colony activities) are not considered Scouters. These are leadership opportunities that all youth should have and are part of the Scouting program.

Scouts Canada acknowledges that youth under the age of 18 in positions of responsibility, while acting in their capacity as volunteers, will by necessity have private one-on-one conversations with people over the age of 18. These conversations are not seen as harmful or suspicious in other circumstances outside of Scouts. With that said, we must ensure that young Scouters and their parents are aware that it is inappropriate for an adult Scouter to repeatedly seek out opportunities to be alone with them or to display undue attention or affection towards them.

Scouts Canada believes these young volunteers are responsible enough to take care of youth, hold confidential information, deal with sensitive situations and have private conversations and interactions with adults without creating risk and liability. Therefore, volunteers are not bound to the Two-Scouter Rule when interacting with members under the age of 18 who are acting in a volunteer capacity.

Scouters should remain mindful that they are still interacting with a youth and it may appear to other Scouters that they would be violating the Two-Scouter Rule. Whenever possible, it is best to follow the Two-Scouter Rule when volunteering in collaboration with youth members.

Venturer Scouts that turn 18 while in the year they're registered as a youth participant may continue to participate as a youth for the year they are registered. They do not require screening unless they volunteer in addition to their Section-specific youth participation. At the end of the Scouting Year, or for the purposes of supporting or volunteering with other Sections, 18-year-olds will need to follow the Volunteer Screening Procedure. It is recommended that when a youth turns 18 they start the process of Police Record Check (PRC) as this will be required when they're a Rover or when working with youth.

Rover Scouts and Section Supervision

Our responsibility as Scouters to protect young people in the Scouting program does not stop when they turn 18 years old. While Rover Scouts are considered adult members of Scouting, Crew Scouters hold a position of trust and have a duty of care for youth in the Crew, as defined by the Scouts Canada Code of Conduct. It will sometimes be necessary, and indeed normal, for Crew Scouters to have one-on-one conversations with Rover Scouts. These conversations are not seen as harmful or suspicious in other circumstances outside of Scouts. With that said, it is inappropriate for a Crew Scouter to repeatedly seek out opportunities to be alone with Rover Scouts or to display undue attention or affection towards them. Rover Scouts are not strictly limited to youth over the age of 18. The Section age ranges are provided as guidance of "typical age"; many youth go to university at the age of 17 and thus it also follows that a youth may join Rovers at 17 and turn 18 in the first year of their Rover membership. Rovers are counted as "youth" for the purposes of participating in Rover Scouting and as Scouters (adults) when participating as an Active Scouter.

Rover Scouts must be aware that they are adult members of Scouting and must follow the Two-Scouter Rule **when working with youth in other Sections**. This may not be intuitive for younger Rover Scouts who recently considered Venturer Scouts as peers. In this case, it will be necessary to remind Rover Scouts of their responsibilities and duty of care outlined in the Scouts Canada Code of Conduct.

Case Studies

Case Study #1:

Scouter Jack and Scouter Jill take an eight-person Scout Troop on a nature hike. Four Scouts want to take one path and four want to take another. The Scouts beg Scouters Jack and Jill to let them split up: Jack with one group, Jill the other. Jack and Jill, though feeling pressured, realize that splitting up is not an option as it is not keeping with the Two-Scouter Rule. Jack and Jill explain to the Troop that both of them need to be with the Scouts at all times. They work together with the Troop to plan a route for the hike that keeps all Scouts happy.

Case Study #2:

After a meeting, a parent, Jen, approaches Scouter Will to speak with him about the camp for the coming weekend. Jen explains that since they live close to each other she would like Scouter Will to drive her daughter up to the camp with him and his son. Scouter Will explains to Jen the Two-Scouter Rule and that it applies to transportation. He further explains that he would not be comfortable taking on the personal liability of transporting her daughter to camp. He suggests that if Jen cannot drive her daughter, she should speak to another parent.

Case Study #3:

A Scout Troop is on a camping trip. Scouter Jack and Scouter Jill take their eight Scouts on a hike, while Scouter John stays behind to prepare for the evening's campfire. While Scouter John is at the campsite, a parent, Mr. Smith, arrives at camp with Scout Jimmy. Mr. Smith explains that Jimmy had been feeling ill, but is now feeling better and wanted to go to camp. Mr. Smith notes he cannot stay long as he has to pick up his other children from another activity. Scouter John realizes that he cannot stay alone with Jimmy to wait for the Troop to come back, as it would not be in keeping with the Two-Scouter Rule. Scouter John explains to Mr. Smith that he cannot leave Jimmy with him. He asks Mr. Smith to wait until Scouters Jack and Jill return with the rest of the Troop before leaving. Scouter John explains the Two-Scouter Rule to Mr. Smith and how it is Scouts Canada's policy. Mr. Smith then tells Scouter John that he is fine with Jimmy being alone with him until the others come back. After all, Mr. Smith knows Scouter John well and trusts that everything will be fine.

Scouter John is clear to Mr. Smith that he cannot agree to that arrangement. Scouter John further explains that the Two-Scouter Rule promotes a safe environment for youth. Scouter John points out to Mr. Smith that if anything were to happen to him, Jimmy would be alone and may not know how to get help. Mr. Smith is more understanding when Scouter John puts things that way, and after making a few phone calls, he agrees to stay until Scouters Jack and Jill returned with the rest of the Troop.

There are other ways Scouter John could have handled this scenario while following the Two-Scouter Rule:

- Scouter John could have contacted Scouters Jack and Jill by phone (or radio) and asked them to return to camp as soon as possible.
- Scouter John could have contacted Scouters Jack and Jill by phone (or radio) to see where they were. If they were in an appropriate area, Scouter John could arrange for Mr. Smith to drop Jimmy off with the rest of the Troop.

Case Study #4:

At a Scout meeting, a Scout named Sam asks to speak to Scouter Jill in private. Sam appears upset; he is fidgeting a lot and it is clear he is holding back tears. Scouter Jill wants to encourage Sam to tell her what is on his mind, but also realizes that she cannot talk to him in full privacy as it is not keeping with the Two-Scouter Rule. Scouter Jill takes Sam to the back of the hall where she can see Scouter Jack and the rest of the Troop at the meeting. Scouter Jill listens to Sam as he says he does not feel well. She calls Sam's mother, who comes to pick him up from the meeting early.

Case Study #5:

Scouter Kendra is a 15-year-old Colony Scouter and a youth participant in a Venturer Company.

On Tuesday night, Scouter Kendra and Colony Contact Scouter Simon facilitate a program planning session with a Lodge of Beaver Scouts. This is not a violation of the Two-Scouter Rule since both Kendra and Simon are Colony Scouters facilitating a Colony activity.

The following weekend, Kendra goes on a hiking camp with her Venturer Company supported by Company Scouters Joel and Janice. In this case, it would be inappropriate for Scouter Janice or Scouter Joel to have a one-on-one interaction with Kendra as she would count as a youth for the purposes of the Two-Scouter Rule.

Related Policies

- [Volunteer Screening Policy](#)

Related Standards and Procedures

- [Transfer Rover Scout or Scouter Procedure](#)
- [Police Record Check Exception Procedure](#)

Resources

- [Backcheck and Reference Check FAQ \(Online Support Centre\)](#)
- [Myscouts—create an Account/Member Profile](#)
- [How to Register as a Volunteer](#)
- [Scouts Canada's Screening Interview Guide](#)
- [Interview Assessment Guide for Youth Aged Applicants](#)
- [Interview Assessment Summary](#)
- [FAQs—Scouts Canada Online Support Centre](#)
- [Scouts Canada Codes of Conduct Standard](#)
- [Volunteer Screening Policy](#)
- [Volunteer Screening Procedure](#)
- [Appointment of Scouters Standard](#)
- [Requirements for Sections Standard](#)
- [The Scouter Manual](#)