

HOW TO RUN A SAFE SECTION MEETING

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the rationale for limiting Section meetings and activities to a maximum of two small teams (Patrols) of 8 or fewer youth per Patrol (maximum 16 youth per meeting)?

This is not an exact science but a balanced risk-based approach that leverages practical considerations of working with youth and takes our cues from Provincial Health Operational Planning guidance for schools, day cares, outdoor activities and day camps. Guidance varies but in general proposes cohorts of 8 or 10 people, including staff.

Practically speaking, the vast majority of our Sections have fewer than 16 youth, so this is not material for the majority of our 55,000 youth in 1,500 Groups. Where we do have Sections with more than 16 youth, the 16-youth maximum, split into two Patrols, enables further reinforcement of the Canadian Path model and usage of the Patrol Method. This will make it easier for Scouters to be able to adapt program, manage risk controls in a more manageable way and provide reassurance to parents that their youth can experience Scouting safely.

The **Two-Scouter Rule** must always be in effect and maintained.

2. How do we plan, and possibly enforce, a 16-youth maximum for in-person activities, to keep participation inclusive?

Many of the activities we run for Scouting, as well as those we participate in outside, have restrictions on the number of attendees. The Section, in conjunction with the Group Commissioner as appropriate, should discuss this during the planning phase and communicate openly to parents and youth the restrictions and the why. We will always prioritize youth safety and have risk controls in place to manage risk levels within acceptable tolerance levels.

3. If the activity site is public access (such as a park or schoolyard), what are the expectations regarding taking attendance and other private citizens unrelated to Scouting who may be present as well?

If planning on using public spaces, this must be taken into account in preparation for the activity or meeting. Known confluences (or 'hot spots') where lots of other people will likely gather must be avoided. If there are areas in which other people are congregating, select a location that limits as much as practical potential transmission and enables as much as practical physical distancing. This should be discussed with the Group Commissioner in the planning and approval phase of the activity in advance and in anticipation of such.

4. Am I required to submit a form or request approval from the Provincial Health Authority?

At the time of writing (June 7, 2020), no provinces are mandating that workplaces or non-profit organizations submit a form for approval. The majority are requiring that a documented plan is available at any time but not submitted. This is the same for Scouts Canada, which has additional legal requirements for its employees.

5. What would be a "reasonable" approach to inform all meeting attendees for the planned activity?

At a minimum, all parents should be informed via email two days in advance of the planned activity. Ideally, an RSVP would enable the parent to share they have understood and confirmed and had an opportunity to ask any questions they may have. Your Scout Groups may also have regular virtual meetings, Facebook or other channels to engage parents.

Scouts Canada will be developing materials, including a standard template email/letter, to support Section Scouters engaging parents.

6. If activities should be designed to eliminate, as much as is practical, the need to be less than 2 meters apart to prevent the need for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) like face masks, what do we do if we need to help tie the shoelaces of a Beaver Scout or encounter a similar challenge?

All safety and risk controls work as a system; no one barrier or control is designed to be used alone. If we design a program as practical as possible, screen for symptoms and use good hygiene practices, we will reduce the risk to acceptable levels within risk tolerance. The Scouter-in-Charge is responsible to reduce risk and contamination as much as reasonably practical, recognizing that common sense combined with flexibility and adaptability are important to keep our youth safe while balancing the need to have fun.

7. The Standard requires all youth, volunteers and family members participating in activities to be screened for symptoms before entering the activity area. How are we meant to do this? Temperature checks? Questionnaire?

Scouts Canada has modified a set of questions, that are suggested by provincial guidance, for Scouters to use to screen for symptoms. No temperature checks or physical checks are required.

8. What is the definition of 'vulnerable' or 'at-risk' persons?

This definition varies slightly by province, but in general they all follow the Federal Government definitions. For the purposes of Scouts Canada, it includes anyone who is:

- an older adult (highest risk: adults > 60 years of age)
- at risk due to underlying medical conditions (e.g. heart disease, hypertension, diabetes, chronic respiratory diseases, cancer)
- at risk due to a compromised immune system from a medical condition or treatment (e.g. chemotherapy)
- from [this website](#)

9. If Sections follow each other into the same area, will cleaning be required between Sections?

Yes. It is necessary to clean all surfaces and equipment before and after use to reduce the chance of disease transmission. Combined with hand washing, this is the best prevention for transmission.

10. Why is Beaver Scout overnight camping prohibited during a pandemic?

Given the inherent challenges associated with risk management for young children, Scouts Canada has taken a prudent, risk-balanced approach to limit Beaver Scout activities to day events only at this time. Typically, Beavers would be reliant on significant support including preparation of meals, shared accommodation, provision of indoor (or weather-resistant) back-up facilities and a higher level of oversight.

11. What is the rationale for permitting 2 or 3 youth to use a tent for camping? Why is this considered an acceptable risk (As Low As Reasonably Practical) if combined with other risk controls in place, such as screening and hygiene.

Combined with effective additional risk controls (specifically, hand washing, hygiene, cleaning and screening) and given the fact that children are at a much lower risk of developing COVID-19, the risk associated with 2 or 3 youth sharing a tent is within risk tolerance levels. This takes into consideration the practical application of camping for young people, the provision of materials, shared cooking stoves, etc. while balancing risk to reasonable levels.

Parents should be informed of camping sleeping arrangements before providing approval of their youth to attend and, as required, modifications must be made to accommodate if the parent or youth is uncomfortable. Adults may not share tents.

12. If we are to permit 2 or 3 youth to share a tent for camping, can they also share a stove and other cooking materials?

Sharing of equipment should, as much as practical, be minimized. However, it is recognized that if other risk controls are effective and in place and sharing is maintained between a 2 or 3 youth

only, the risk within reasonable risk tolerance. Food and drink sharing is prohibited, but sharing a stove, a lightweight cooking pan, a tarp or water filter is permitted if other controls are maintained. If 2 or 3 youth do share equipment or a tent, this should be considered the meeting, day or activity "social bubble" for the duration of the adventure. Mixing of 'social bubbles' is to be avoided.

13. How are we to go camping with our Troop if we are required to eliminate or minimize food provision?

Cooking on shared 'base-camp' stoves is not permitted, but using lightweight stoves in small "social-bubbles" of 2 or maximum 3 youth is a great way for the youth to practise [the Outdoor Adventure Trail Skills](#) and [Camping Skills](#). The youth can also develop their meal-planning skills, practise cooking new menus and be self-contained: planning, purchasing, carrying, storing, cooking, cleaning and eating their own meals. For emergency purposes, you may want to consider having individually packaged food items on hand. No buffet-style, shared cooking for the fall; this is a great opportunity to experience Scouting at its best.

14. Will Scouts Canada be providing a standard template or a revised Safe Scouting Form for the purposes of attendance to aid potential contact tracing?

Yes. This is in development including reviewing the possibility of including it in the Scout Safe App.

15. What cleaning is required for COVID-19? Will Scouts Canada develop a standard, or the standard in force at the facility we are using? Does this have to be done by the professionals?

Yes, Scouts Canada will be providing further guidance, but in general the best practice is to refer to Provincial or Federal Health Authorities, an example of which is [here](#).

16. Drop-off and pick-up can be chaotic times at the best of times, as parents accompany youth to the meeting from the car. We would benefit from a process where parents pull up and youth are released from the parents in a defined manner with social distancing in mind. Maybe a directional flow in the parking lot with a designated reception Scouters screening and guiding youth?

To aid this process, Scouts Canada will be providing further guidance and a generic template example of how to manage drop-off and pick-up procedures as well as sign-in that maintains physical distancing. Groups will be strongly encouraged to modify these for their local situation and conditions.