



Patrol Leader

Job Description and Responsibilities Troop 39 • Cumming, Georgia

Introduction:

Congratulations! When you accepted the position of Patrol Leader, you agreed to a position of service and leadership. Service to others—"to help other people at all times." Leadership by example—bringing your patrol into the decision process. Asking, not telling. Listening.

Attendance at Troop Functions

We all understand that you have other responsibilities besides Scouting. You should always put God first, your family second and Scouts after both of these. However, you're not just a "Scout" anymore—you're the man elected by the members of your patrol to lead them. It's a serious responsibility.

You need to be at every troop function. If you can't, then you need to step down and let someone else lead your patrol until you can attend. You obviously can't lead your patrol if you're not going to be there.

Planning for Each Meeting

Generally, you should expect to spend about an hour in preparation for each meeting:

- *Take plenty of notes during the Patrol Leader's Council (PLC) meetings, so you'll know what's being planned and when. Keep your notes in a 3-ring binder.*
- *Are you in charge of opening ceremony, closing ceremony or cleanup during tonight's meeting? What do you need to do to prepare for this? If you have a ceremony, put someone in charge of the ceremony other than yourself. It gives others a chance to take charge once in a while.*
- *What do you want to get accomplished during your Patrol meeting? And more important—what do your guys want to get accomplished? Your meeting needs to be fun, it needs to be interesting, and it needs to accomplish a mission. Constantly ask yourself if you're meeting these three goals. If it's not fun or interesting, attendance will be shoddy or the guys will get restless. And if it doesn't accomplish a mission, why bother?*
- *Challenge your guys to come prepared for every meeting. Call them in advance and find out what requirements they need, get a consensus from your patrol, call everyone back and let them know what to study for the meeting. Your advance communication will make for a much better meeting, because they'll come prepared.*

So to summarize this section: 1) plan, 2) make sure everything's lined up and ready, 3) keep it fun, 6) keep it interesting, 7) communicate and 8) accomplish a mission. Got it? Don't worry! You'll do fine as long as you plan your work and work your plan.

Planning and Running Troop Outings

The same rules apply to troop outings. Plan your work and work your plan! You should figure on at least two hours of planning and preparation for outings, just to make sure you have it all under control.

First, take good notes at the PLC so you're on track as to what's going to be accomplished and what's going to happen. And if at all possible, make copies of the schedule and give copies to your guys (so you

don't get asked ten times each hour, "What do we do now?")

Draw up a duty roster for cook, assistant cook/cleanup, fire (if there's a campfire) and water. Make sure you put yourself in the dirtiest jobs, and make sure your list is both fair and that it insures that guys are working on rank requirements (such as First Class cooking). Again, make copies of the duty roster and give it to everyone in the patrol. (It's easier if you have a home computer.)

Keep the schedule and duty roster with you at all times, and refer to them often. And remember, you're job isn't to tell each member of the patrol what to do, but to be the team leader, the coach. Wander around. See if they need help, see if things are on track, see if you need to lend a hand or ask someone to lend a hand. (That's why we have Troop Guides and Instructors!)

When problems arise (and they will!) or changes are needed in the plan, don't lose your cool. Instead, call your guys together, outline what needs to be done and ask their opinion. Remember what you learned during your Junior Leader Training about outlining problems and seeking solutions from the group?

Leadership first says "Follow me."

The best leaders are those we can look up to. Think back on the best leaders that you've known. They might be a grandparent, school teacher, a Bible class teacher, a coach, a friend, an older Scout or a Scout Leader you're known. Great leadership is first about example, and as leader *what you say* to people won't be noticed as much as *what you do* and *the way you act.*

Set a good example in speech and in habit. Weigh your words carefully and use them to build people up, not tear them down. Your most important job is team building, and others are looking up to you. Your ability to handle the small problems that life throws your way will all be noticed by younger Scouts. If you're grumpy, it'll rub off. But if you keep a smile on your face even when things don't go well, they'll see that it's no big deal and that they can "go with the flow" like you have.

Wear your uniform correctly to every function. The greatest team-building tool you have at your disposal is the Scout uniform. When you see someone wearing the uniform well, make a "big deal" about it by praising the person in a quiet way.

A quiet word of encouragement really goes a long way. Notice good things that Scouts do, and then tell them you noticed. No need to make a big deal about it in front of other guys, but when you see someone doing something well, tell them so later. Everyone likes to be noticed.

Live by the Scout Oath and Scout Law. These words you first began to recite as a young Scout should be a part of you by now. Live by them. Do your duty to God and country. In all things be trustworthy. Loyal. Helpful. Friendly. Courteous. Kind. Obedient. Cheerful. Thrifty. Brave. Clean. And especially, Reverent to God!

Service, Service and... Service.

A famous sports figure, when told how "lucky" he was, said with a grin, "You know, you're right. But you know, the harder I work, the luckier I get."

There's no such thing as "luck." Winners make their own "luck" through hours of planning and work—but the rewards are fantastic. Well-run meetings, well-run campouts, hikes, canoe trips, fishing trips and the hundreds of other activities that a Scout troop does together will *only* be fun if they're thought out and planned out in advance.

Remember, your whole attitude has to be one of service to others. That's what Scouting is all about. When you have to assign a dirty job to someone, offer to jump in and help them with it—and then, roll up your sleeves and help! Your example will be noticed, and your hard work will be contagious.

When your example is one of putting the needs of others ahead of yours, people will respect you and want to be led by you. No one wants to follow someone that seems selfish or that doesn't seem to have the best interests of the guys in mind. Remember that, and you'll do great!