



## UNIT COMMISSIONERS

Unit commissioners help units succeed with a good program that attracts and retains youth members.

Perhaps no other members of the unit service team have a more important or demanding responsibility. As friends, coaches, and counselors of unit leaders, unit commissioners operate quietly, generally in the background. They are effective communicators, providing the resources of the district and council to the units they serve. They aid the chartered organizations that operate the units through charters from the Boy Scouts of America.

Occasionally, unit commissioners find it necessary to recommend changes in personnel or in the way a unit is operating. Such action is taken with good judgment and tact and involves the chartered organization. Units are people.

To help units succeed, today's commissioners must be people-oriented more than procedures-oriented. They are truly a council's front-line diplomats. Because Scouting operates mostly by persuasion rather than by legislation, commissioners must exercise the highest degree of diplomacy.

### **What are the qualities of Scouting's diplomat?**

Perhaps no single description fits all situations. So, consider the following qualities, and apply them as you recruit and assign commissioners to fit the needs of your district and its units.

- Be an effective communicator.
- Be a good listener.
- Have sound judgment.
- Be tactful.
- Have a Scouting background or be a fast-track learner.
- Be persistent and patient.
- Be adaptable.
- Know and practice Scouting ideals.
- Be enthusiastic.
- Fulfill promises.
- Be a team player.
- Be a coach.

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Many unit commissioners serve more than one type of unit. One might serve a Cub Scout pack, Boy Scout troop, Varsity team, and Venturing crew in the same chartered organization. Other unit commissioners may serve only packs, only troops, only teams, or only crews. Check with your commissioner leader or coach to see how your district is organized.

The unit commissioner is a Scouting generalist whose passionate overriding mission in Scouting is to help units succeed. Specific responsibilities include:

1. Help each unit achieve the Journey to Excellence.
2. Use the annual commissioner service plan; maintain its scheduled opportunities for commissioner contact with units.
3. Know each phase of the Scouting program and be able to describe what each is and how each works. Review all Scouting program literature to support assigned units.
4. See that all direct-contact unit leadership completes basic leader training, including Youth Protection training.
5. Visit unit meetings regularly.
  - a. Observe the unit in action and determine the degree to which the descriptions in the literature are being followed.
  - b. Privately use the commissioner worksheet.
  - c. Annually, work with unit leadership in conducting the unit action planning meeting and completing the unit self-assessment form.
  - d. If called upon, participate or help in some of the regular activities of the unit.
  - e. Record your visit in the Unit Visit Tracking System (UVTS).
6. Visit regularly with the unit leader.
  - a. Be aware of the unit leader's needs and concerns.
  - b. Serve as the unit leader's friend and coach.
  - c. Offer encouragement and support.
  - d. Using the literature available, help the leader see new opportunities for improvement.
  - e. Maintain the best possible relationship with unit leadership.
  - f. Encourage unit participation in district and council program events.
  - g. Enter your visit in the Unit Visit Tracking System (UVTS).
7. Work to assure effective and active unit committees.
  - a. Visit with the unit committee periodically.
  - b. Observe the committee in action.
  - c. Using the literature, offer suggestions for improvement.
  - d. Work with the committee to solve problems and improve unit operation.
  - e. Record your visit in the Unit Visit Tracking System (UVTS).

8. Keep in touch with the chartered organizations of the units you serve.
  - a. Meet and encourage the orientation of the chartered organization representative.
  - b. Meet the head of the organization and explain your role as a help to the units.
  - c. Help develop a good relationship between the unit's leadership and the chartered organization leadership.
  - d. In close cooperation with the district executive, give the leaders of the organization a brief progress report and compliment them for using Scouting.
  - e. Record your visit in the Unit Visit Tracking System (UVTS).
9. Know the neighborhood in which your units are located.
  - a. Help graduating members of one program join the next level of Scouting.
  - b. Identify potential sources for new youth members.
  - c. Cultivate men and women of good moral character who might become Scouting leaders.
  - d. Know your chartered organizations and prospective ones.
  - e. Learn about resources and characteristics of the neighborhood that might impact a unit's program.
10. Know the district and council.
  - a. Identify resources that can help the unit.
  - b. Know and share information about scheduled events that will help the unit.
  - c. Work closely with the professional staff.
  - d. Use members of the district operating committees to help meet specialized needs of your units.
11. Set the example.
  - a. Adopt an attitude of helpfulness.
  - b. Keep your promises.
  - c. Be concerned about proper uniforming.
  - d. Be diplomatic.
  - e. Be a model of Scouting ideals.

*You have no choice about being a role model. You are one. The only choice you have is which role you'll model.*
12. Continue to grow as a commissioner through training, experience, and consultation with others in the district.
13. Be sure that unit adults attend Cub Scout, Boy Scout, Varsity Scout, and Venturing roundtables.
14. Make certain that proper techniques are used to select and recruit unit leadership.
15. Help the unit conduct a membership inventory (at least annually) of youth and adults.
16. Facilitate the on-time annual charter renewal of all assigned units using Internet rechartering or the traditional paper rechartering method.
  - a. Help the unit committee chairman conduct the charter renewal meeting.
  - b. See that a completed charter renewal application is returned to the council service center.
  - c. Present the new charter at an appropriate meeting of the chartered organization.