

## Troop 1018 Quick Start Guide

It seems like all manufacturers these days have a “quick start guide” to help you get new products operating before reading the instruction manual. In that spirit, Troop 1018 presents its “Quick Start Guide” to give new Scouts and their parents some essential information about our Scouting program and to help ease the transition to Boy Scouting. Lots more information is available – including quite a bit on the troop web site – but this should answer some of the more frequently asked questions for newcomers as they begin their Scouting journey.

The Scouting movement was started in England in the early 1900s by Lord Robert Baden-Powell, a retired British Army general famous for his leadership during the Boer War in South Africa. Scouting brought together skills that Baden-Powell had developed as a boy and his years of experience in training soldiers. The movement came to America in 1912 when an American businessman, Mr. William Boyce learned about Scouting during a trip to England and fashioned a similar program upon his return to the United States. Scouting today continues to embody the same principles of integrity, and service to God, country and others that were the cornerstones of the program set forth by Lord Baden-Powell.

Every Scout takes the following oath and is expected to live its principles in his daily life:

"On my honor I will do my best, to do my duty to God and my country and to obey the Scout Law; to help other people at all times; to keep myself physically strong, mentally awake, and morally straight."

Additionally, each Scout is expected to follow the 12 points of the Scout Law: “A Scout is trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean, and reverent.”

The opening chapters of the Boy Scout Handbook serve as an excellent introduction to the Scout program and are a must read for any new Scout family. Additionally, Troop 1018 maintains a web site ([www.troop1018.org](http://www.troop1018.org)) with information applicable to both new and seasoned Scouts. We highly recommend that everyone take the time to surf through the site. In particular, please read the Troop 1018 by-laws, which detail many policies and procedures unique to our troop. Following are a few highlights of the Boy Scout and Troop 1018 program to get you started:

**BOY LEADERSHIP AND THE PATROL METHOD:** Boy Scouts are run by the boys themselves under the guidance and mentoring of adults. The Senior Patrol Leader (SPL) is the Scout responsible for leading the troop. He runs the meetings, organizes activities, and works with the Scouts and Scoutmaster to ensure the smooth functioning of the troop. One of the underlying principles of the early Scouting program that still remains today is the "Patrol Method". Boys work better together when divided into small groups of 5-10 – each patrol develops its own identity and can have activities of its own apart from the troop as a whole. A "New Scout Patrol" is generally formed from new boys just joining Boy Scouts. This allows them to focus on basic Scouting skills. Each patrol is headed up by a Patrol Leader elected by the members of the patrol. There are a number

of other leadership positions in both the troop and patrols – a complete listing, with responsibilities for each, is included on the web site. A “Patrol Leaders’ Council” consisting of the Senior Patrol Leader, Assistant Senior Patrol Leader, and Patrol Leaders meets monthly to plan troop activities.

**TROOP ORGANIZATION:** The Scoutmaster and his assistants provide adult leadership for the troop and help the boys to select, organize, and carry out their activities. Additionally, the troop has a Troop Committee – a sort of “board of directors” that approves, oversees, and helps carry out the troop's Scouting program. All parents of Scouts are invited to join the Troop Committee and we highly recommend that a parent of each Scout attend the monthly committee meetings (held at the same time as troop meetings). Our troop is sponsored by the Dranesville United Methodist Church. The church provides us with a place to meet and other assistance as needed. Our liaison to the church is the Chartered Organization Representative. Finally, there is an extensive Boy Scout organization above the troop level made up of both volunteer and professional Scouters who help carry out the Boy Scouting program. Boy Scout troops in our area are members of the Powhatan District that is, in turn, part of the National Capital Area Council.

**RANK ADVANCEMENT:** Upon completing the joining requirements a boy becomes a "Scout" and begins his advancement trail. Basic "Scoutcraft" (e.g. camping, first aid, nature) skills are emphasized in the first three ranks: Tenderfoot, Second Class, and First Class. While Scouts can simultaneously work on the requirements for each rank, the actual ranks must be earned in order. Each requires demonstration of certain skills, completion of a number of service hours, and certain troop and leadership activities. Upon completion of requirements, each Scout will have a Scoutmaster Conference to review his readiness to advance, and a "Board of Review" – presenting himself before a board of committee members for final approval. Scouts in Troop 1018 also meet a “spirit board” – a group of Scouts led by the SPL – which makes a recommendation on the Scout’s advancement. After the First Class rank, advancement requirements are based primarily on "Merit Badges", service hours, and successful participation in troop leadership positions. Merit Badges require completion of certain requirements related to a skill, hobby, or avocation (e.g. Camping, Coin Collecting, Cooking, Aviation, etc). A Scout has to demonstrate completion of the requirements to a "merit badge counselor" – an adult specifically designated to help with a particular merit badge. A list of current Troop 1018 merit badge counselors and more detailed information about merit badges is contained on the troop web site. Scouts should familiarize themselves with these procedures *before* beginning work on a merit badge – to do otherwise could result in a Scout’s effort not being recognized for fulfilling merit badge requirements.

**THE COST OF SCOUTING -** Troop 1018 dues are \$50/year (\$25 for the remainder of the Scout year for new Scouts joining the troop after 1 Mar). This covers basic troop costs and a subscription for each Scout to "Boys Life", the official BSA Magazine. Additionally, each Scout is expected to pay registration fees, when required, for activities along with the cost of food during campouts. Anticipated costs for each event are published in advance on the troop web site. Each Scout can also earn "Scoutbucks" – a troop program that returns a portion of a Scout's fundraising dollars to help defray that Scout's expenses. A Scout is also expected to have certain items of personal camping

equipment. Suggested lists (what to get, and, just as importantly, what NOT to get) are on the troop web site, and most gear, particularly the items a new Scout needs to get started, is available for checkout from the troop quartermaster. Do NOT feel compelled to rush out and buy anything – the needs of a first time camper are very modest and leaders are very willing to make recommendations.

**ACTIVITIES:** The troop normally schedules at least one outdoor activity (hiking, camping) each month. Additionally, we schedule other activities such as tours, merit badge workshops, and game nights. We also schedule two summer camps each year – the first a “traditional” camp open to all, the second a “high adventure” camp open to boys 13 and older. Many other activities are available through the district and council. We try to list these on the web site, but don’t hesitate to ask if you’re interested in further information on a specific activity.

**UNIFORMS:** Boy Scouting is a uniformed organization and each Scout is expected to have a complete uniform and wear it in accordance with BSA and troop guidelines. See the troop by-laws for more information. The troop maintains a uniform exchange of uniform items available for checkout.

**YOUTH PROTECTION AND SAFETY:** BSA has an extensive set of guidelines concerning safety in the Scouting program and Boy Scouting has an excellent safety record. Also, youth protection guidelines require that at least two adults must be present at all Scouting activities and under no circumstances will an adult be left one on one with a Scout who is not his son. Likewise, Scouts participating in activities where they will be meeting with an adult (e.g. merit badge counselor) must bring a buddy along or the activity cannot take place.

**A FEW MORE RULES OF NOTE:** Boy Scouts are not allowed to carry or use knives, hatchets, saws, or other cutting tools until they’ve received their “Totin’ Chip” card following completion of a hands-on safety course. Additionally, Scouts cannot carry any knife with a blade exceeding 4 inches. Scouts cannot carry matches or build fires until receiving their “Firm’n Chit” certifying completion of a fire safety course. Troop 1018 does not allow the use of any electronic games or music players during any outdoor activity. Also, although Troop 1018 allows some flexibility in the wear of the uniform (see the by-laws for rules), we adhere to the BSA guidelines against the wear of camouflage clothing during BSA activities.

**A SCOUT'S RESPONSIBILITIES:** Boy Scouting teaches responsibility. A Scout is expected to take responsibility for his own Scouting career – seeking advancement, learning, and leadership. Adult leaders help guide the Scout, but it is up to the Scout himself to contribute to his own advancement and troop leadership. Scouts help their fellow Scouts by being both good leaders and good followers and always follow the 12 points of the Scout Law.

**SCOUT LEADERS' RESPONSIBILITY:** Scout leaders help the Scouts on their Scouting journey – mentoring, demonstrating, and teaching. Leaders ensure a quality, safe, and enjoyable Scouting experience.

**PARENTS' RESPONSIBILITIES:** Without strong parental support, the troop's program will fail. Encourage and help your son in his Boy Scout adventure. As a small troop, we rely heavily on ALL parents to make a contribution toward the troop program, but this need not be a large time commitment. An excellent way to begin is as a member of the Troop Committee.

A closing note: Boy Scouting is a program that prepares boys for life as an adult. It teaches leadership, responsibility and integrity while providing opportunities for new experiences and just plain fun. Many former Scouts say that the introduction to their life's profession came through merit badge work during their Scouting years. Rank advancement teaches the importance of pushing yourself and the rewards that come from working toward established goals. A board of review teaches Scouts to present themselves in a professional manner before a group of adults. Camping not only teaches outdoor skills, but the importance of teamwork and compromise. Leadership positions in Scouting prepare a Scout for leadership positions later in life. Service projects teach the importance of giving back to the community. And so the list goes on. But, also, as in all endeavors of life, you get out of something what you put into it. Scouting offers many opportunities, and the Scout must take the initiative to make those opportunities a part of his life.

Welcome to Troop 1018 and the world of Scouting. Best wishes for an exciting and rewarding Scouting adventure!!

P.S. – If you have suggestions for improving this guide, please forward them to the Scoutmaster or email to: [troop1018@yahoo.com](mailto:troop1018@yahoo.com).

Visit the Troop 1018 web site at [www.troop1018.org](http://www.troop1018.org)