

Guide to a Good Patrol System



The Scout movement began through the natural formation of small teams of youth. Across all sections, we call these 'Patrols'. It is recognised that through Patrols, many of Scouting's learning-by-doing experiences are encountered with peers. Working in Patrols provides opportunities to develop soft skills including leadership, teamwork and communication as well as building a sense of responsibility and belonging. Scouts working in Patrols is an important aspect of the Scout Method, providing a powerful learning environment, leadership opportunities, and the development of teamwork and communication skills.



A Patrol is a small team ideally:

- Consisting of 4-10 Scouts
- A range of ages and genders
- Led by a Patrol Leader (PL).
- Supported by 1 or 2 Assistant Patrol Leaders (APLs).

The Patrol Leaders, and sometimes Assistant Patrol Leaders, of each Patrol are members of the Unit Council. The Unit Council should plan and decide the Patrol size/s which work best for them, based on the size of the Unit and experience of the individual Scouts they lead. Units may choose to have Patrols of varying sizes within the Unit based on the needs of the individuals. One Patrol Leader may be suited to leading a smaller team, whilst another may work best with greater numbers. From a Unit perspective, a less experienced cohort may wish to have larger Patrols and train multiple Assistant Patrol Leaders, whilst another may decide it has enough experienced Patrol Leaders to have a larger number of smaller Patrols. The Unit Council should review and, if needed, adapt the size of Patrols regularly to ensure the Unit is working effectively.

A home Patrol is the kind of Patrol that a Scout belongs to during regular Scout meetings, and also undertakes activities together outside of these times. This Patrol's members work closely together, building a strong team culture. A sense of identity can work to build greater connections between the members of a home Patrol.

Home Patrols should endeavour to work closely together during their time in their respective sections. At times, this includes creating and participating in adventures of their own. Home Patrols undertake activities as a Patrol, away from the rest of the Unit, at a minimum of 6 times a year in Cub Scouts and 12 times a year for Scouts. Ideally in the Venturer Scout and Rover Scout sections, Project Patrol activities should make up around 50% of the overall program. These could be during the Unit's normal meeting time, with Patrols doing their own activity in the same location, on weekends, school holidays or a weekday evening. Patrols should use Plan>Do>Review> to create their challenges, and they should be approved by the Unit Council prior to being undertaken. Some Units and Patrols do this more frequently, and it should tie in to your Unit's overarching program cycle.

Activities that home Patrols undertake are about Patrol bonding and achieving common goals together. They can be based around the Achievement Pathways, such as completing a Special Interest Area project or Outdoor Adventure Skill, but do not have to be.

Below is a checklist for your Patrol to talk through, to help make sure you are using the patrol system:

Joey Scouts

- When our Patrol does activities and games a youth member helps lead
- We do activities that we are interested in
- We have a say in what activities our Patrol does
- We are supported by our adult leaders.
- We get to help make decisions about what our Patrol does
- We help each other in our Patrol.
- Our Patrol uses the Plan> Do> Review> cycle regularly

Cub Scouts

- We lead key aspects of the planning and reviewing of the activities our Patrol does
- Our activities and games involve youth leading in an appropriate way
- We take our programming ideas to the Unit Council for inclusion and consideration
- We review our Patrols activities through the Plan>Do>Review> cycle, and reflect on how we can improve them
- We sign off on the achievements of the members of our Patrol, with guidance from adults
- We have input into the development of the program and its delivery
- We look after one another in our Patrol
- Our Patrol supports the pursuit of personal accomplishment through the Achievement Pathways

Scouts

- The activities that our Patrol does are lead by Patrol members. Leading occurs in an age appropriate way.
- We use the Plan>Do>Review> cycle regularly
- We take our programming ideas and Project Patrol ideas to the Unit Council for inclusion and consideration
- We encourage all Scouts to participate, assist and lead.
- Project Patrols operate in our section and all members are encouraged to lead them
- We consult and communicate with our Unit and leaders when running activities.
- We develop supporting documentation for the activities our Patrol does, and adult leaders or older members support us with these tasks
- We sometimes run activities independently of other Patrols and adult leaders. Adults support the planning of these activities to make sure they happen safely.
- Our Patrol supports the pursuit of personal accomplishment through the Achievement Pathways
- We use the Scout Method and SPICES when reviewing our activities and learn from these reviews to enhance the next activities we do

Venturer Scouts

- We use the Plan>Do>Review> cycle regularly
- All Patrol members are involved in the planning and leading of Patrol activities through Project Patrols.
- Our Unit/Patrol sets the standard of behaviour in our Group
- Our Patrol regularly runs activities independently of our section and adult leaders. Adults mentor us as required
- Our Patrol Leaders are elected by us to support the Projects we want to do
- Our Patrol supports the pursuit of personal accomplishment through the Achievement Pathways
- We use the Scout Method and SPICES when reviewing our activities and learn from these reviews to enhance the next activities we do
- We develop supporting documentation (such as risk management strategies) for activities.
- We seek mentorship from adult leaders or older members as required
- We encourage all Venturer Scouts to participate, assist and lead
- We have established Project Patrols for various interests and activities that we are pursuing
- We teach and train each other in our Patrol

Rover Scouts

- We teach and train each other in the Unit/Patrol
- We actively participate in activities outside our Unit/Patrol
- We look out for the wellbeing of other members in our Unit/Patrol
- We are inclusive to members of the Unit in Project Patrol
- We select Project Patrol members on the desire of the member to be a part of a project not their length of service within the Unit or social standing within the Unit
- We all support each other in our Unit/Patrol
- We have established Project Patrols for various interests and activities that we are pursuing
- Our Unit/Patrol sets the standard of behaviour in our Group
- We use the Plan>Do>Review> cycle regularly
- Our Patrol Leaders are elected by us
- Our Patrols support the pursuit of personal accomplishment through the Achievement Pathways
- We seek mentorship from adult leaders or older members as required
- We encourage all Rover Scouts to participate, assist and lead