

COMMISSIONER FIELDBOOK FOR UNIT SERVICE

A Guidebook for Unit Commissioners

THE DISTRICT COMMISSIONER STAFF

A district commissioner staff is made up of several types of commissioners. There are unit commissioners who relate directly to units and there are other commissioners who lead and support unit commissioners.

The District Commissioner

This leader is recommended by the district nominating committee for approval and appointment by the council executive board with the concurrence of the Scout executive. The district commissioner leads the commissioner staff of the district, guiding and measuring the district's unit service program.

Major responsibilities include:

1. Recruit a full staff of commissioners.
2. Oversee the commissioner training program.
3. Work with the district chairman and district executive as a member of the district's Key 3.
4. Plan and preside at monthly meetings of the district commissioner staff.
5. Attend district committee meetings to report on conditions of units and to secure specialized help for units.
6. Represent the district as a member of the council commissioner cabinet.

Assistant District Commissioners

A district may have one or more assistant district commissioners. Each is responsible for an assigned share of the units in the district and the unit commissioners who serve those units. Assistant district commissioners are often assigned a geographic area of the district. They work closely with the district commissioner and district executive.

Major responsibilities include:

1. Recruit enough unit commissioners to serve their assigned units and area.
2. Conduct personal coaching and orientation sessions for unit commissioners.
3. Maintain regular contact with their unit commissioners to provide guidance in unit service needs.
4. Serve units with no assigned unit commissioner.
5. Help unit commissioners evaluate and improve their unit service performance.

Unit Commissioners

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

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

1. Help each unit earn the Quality Unit Award.
2. Use the annual commissioner service plan, with 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 Scouting program literature.
4. Visit unit meetings.
 - 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. If called upon, participate or help in some of the regular activities of the unit.
5. Visit regularly with the unit leader.
 - a. Listen to what the unit leader has to say about being a unit leader.
 - b. Offer encouragement and support.
 - c. Using the literature and profile sheet, help the leader see new opportunities for improvement.
 - d. Maintain the best possible relationship with unit leadership.
 - e. Encourage unit participation in district and council program events.
6. 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.
7. Keep in touch with the chartered organizations of the units you serve.
 - a. Meet and orient the chartered organization representative.
 - b. Meet the head of the organization and explain your role as helper of units.
 - c. Help develop a good relationship between unit leaders and chartered organization leaders.
 - d. In close cooperation with the district executive, give the leaders of the organization a brief progress report and compliment them for using Scouting.
8. 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 chartered organizations and prospective ones.
 - e. Learn about resources and characteristics of the neighborhood which may affect a unit.
9. Know the district and council.
 - a. Identify resources that can help the unit.
 - b. Know scheduled events that will help the unit.
 - c. Work closely with the professional staff.
 - d. Use members of district operating committees to help meet specialized needs of your units.
10. Set the example.
 - a. Adopt an attitude of helpfulness.
 - b. Keep promises.
 - c. Be concerned about proper uniforming.
 - d. Be diplomatic.
 - e. Be a model of Scouting ideals.
11. Continue to grow as a commissioner through training, experience, and consultation with others in the district.
12. Involve unit personnel in Cub Scout roundtables, Boy Scout roundtables, Varsity Scout huddles, and Venturing roundtables.
13. Make certain that proper techniques are used to select and recruit unit leaders.
14. Facilitate the on-time annual charter renewal of all assigned units.
 - a. Help the unit conduct a membership inventory of youth and adults.
 - b. Help the unit committee chairman conduct the charter renewal meeting.
 - c. See that a completed charter renewal application is returned to the council service center.

- d. Present the new charter at an appropriate meeting of the chartered organization.
15. See that unit leadership participates in adequate training.

Roundtable and Huddle Commissioners

1. Recruit and train a staff qualified to put on quality roundtables/huddles for unit personnel.
2. Plan monthly roundtable/huddle programs.
3. Make all arrangements for roundtables/huddles including meeting places, equipment, and supplies.
4. Conduct regular critiques to determine how roundtables/huddles can be improved.

Your District Executive

Strictly speaking, district executives are not commissioners, but they are full-time *commissioned* leaders of the Boy Scouts of America. District executives share the same objectives as commissioners: to help units succeed in providing a quality program for youth.

The district executive is a Scouting friend and counselor for every commissioner in the district. He or she is employed by the council and works under the direction of the council Scout executive. The district executive works to get the Scouting job done through volunteers.

You can expect your district executive to:

1. Provide professional coaching
2. Give inspiration and encouragement
3. Maintain regular contact with heads of chartered organizations
4. Keep district records up-to-date
5. Arrange for help from the council service center such as doing mailings, and distributing meeting notices
6. Provide vital behind-the-scenes administrative skill
7. Develop his or her own work schedule
8. Work with and support volunteers
9. Suggest action plans for recruiting district volunteers

Both commissioners and professionals share responsibility for building good working relationships. Good volunteer-professional relationships are characterized by mutual trust, mutual respect, and mutual recognition of each other's role and competency.

Be accessible to your district executive. Exchange phone numbers, e-mail addresses, mailing addresses, etc. Return his calls. Help make the most efficient use of each other's Scouting time.

Commissioners should know that they can turn to their pro for advice or troubleshooting. Develop good communications in which you and your professional district executive really listen to and understand each other.

Take good care of your district executive. Your district executive cares about you.