



CANADIAN PATH COMPANY HANDBOOK

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It starts with Scouts

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THE VENTURER COMPANY

Scouts Canada's Section for 15–17 year-olds, Venturer Scouts, is made up of collections of youth organized in a "Company".

To organize and execute your adventures, your Company is divided into Expedition Teams. Expedition Teams are ad hoc Patrols that only exist for a finite period of time. They come together to plan, do and review an activity, and then disband. The size of an Expedition Team will vary, depending on the number of Venturers in a Company who are interested in a given expedition. Venturer Scouts can (and generally do) belong to more than one Expedition Team at a time, but their roles will vary in different Expedition Teams.

Ideally, your Venturer Company includes at least 12 youth. By including at least a dozen youth in your Company, you will find that Venturer Scouting offers a great variety of program opportunities. The membership will have the flexibility to plan and execute many different expeditions, and you will be able to pick and choose the adventures in which you'd like to take part. Also, Companies with more members generally have a greater capacity to fundraise, which means that you and your fellow Venturers can consider more ambitious (and expensive) expeditions.

A Venturer Company can be part of a local Group—an affiliation of different Sections supported by a Group Committee. Alternately, a Venturer Company may be an Area Company, linking with a number of nearby Scout Troops. Area Companies are supported by the Area Team, led by the Area Youth Commissioner and Area Commissioner.

Organizing and Building the Venturer Company

Company Leadership Team

Each Venturer Company will usually have a number of members who together will form the Company Leadership Team (sometimes referred to as the "CLT"). They will be elected by the members. Their selection is very important, as the success of the Company depends largely on the election of capable leaders. The size of the Company will determine the size of the Leadership Team. The term of the Leadership Team should not exceed one year in order to give others a chance at the experience.

It is the duty of the Leadership Team to administer the program of the Company with the advice and guidance of the Scouters and Company members.

Company Leader

The role of the Company Leader is filled by a senior Venturer Scout. The task of the Company Leader is to coordinate the activities of the Company. This includes:

- Working with the Leadership Team and Expedition Teams by helping to organize and administer the Company program
- Facilitating effective communication within the Company
- Ensuring that relevant materials and equipment are assembled for meetings and activities
- Providing for the periodic assessment of the Company's progress
- Preparing agendas for meetings

The Company Leader usually presides over meetings of the Company and its Leadership Team.

The Company Leader should acquire a working knowledge of the basic rules of order (such as "Robert's Rules of Order") for leading a meeting. These rules should be clear to the Leadership Team. More importantly, the Company Leader should ensure that meetings are both productive and friendly.

In addition, the Company Leader should represent the Company at Group or Area meetings, when necessary or appropriate.

Assistant Company Leader

Each Company may elect an Assistant Company Leader. The main duty is to act as a Company Leader in his or her absence. The Assistant Company Leader often assumes special responsibilities as directed by the Company Leader.

Secretary

The main task of the Secretary is to record Company activities. This job can include:

- Keeping the minutes of all Company and Company Leadership Team meetings
- Maintaining a brief log of all activities
- Managing outgoing communications and publicity
- Maintaining a record of attendance
- Keeping an updated list of equipment

Treasurer

The Treasurer's job is to attend to the accurate accounting of all the Company funds. This job includes:

- Recording detailed information on all income and expenses
- Preparing an annual statement of the Company's financial situation for consideration by Company members and the Group or Area
- Preparing a monthly statement for the Company
- Collecting and keeping track of dues (if payment of dues is a Company policy)

Expedition Leader

Expedition Leaders are the coordinators of different Company expeditions (or activities). Most Expedition Teams will have a single Expedition Leader, but occasionally an Expedition Team may decide to elect two Expedition Co-Leaders. The complexity and duration of a given expedition will vary, as will the makeup of the expedition leadership and the size of an Expedition Team. The Expedition Leader will be primarily responsible for deciding on how an Expedition Team is organized. He or she may decide that the Expedition Team requires a variety of specific roles—like the Company Leadership Team. An Expedition Team may have an Assistant Expedition Leader, Secretary, and other roles. Alternately, the Expedition Leader may delegate a variety of responsibilities to various team members at different times.

Expedition Leaders will facilitate the review of expeditions, and will report on the plans, progress and assessments of expeditions to the Company Leadership Team upon request.

Other Leaders

Each Company may have a Leadership Team made up of a Company Leader, Secretary and Treasurer. Larger Companies can, if they wish, have additional Venturers elected to specific positions. These may include a Program Coordinator, a Fundraising Coordinator, Log Keeper, Quartermaster and Sports Coordinator.

For efficient operation, however, it is recommended that the number on the Leadership Team be kept to a minimum. Many Company operations can be managed by Expedition Teams, ensuring reasonable flexibility and opportunities for all of the members of the Company to try out different roles. For example, rather than have a designated Fundraising Coordinator, different Expedition Leaders can have the opportunity to spearhead expeditions such as bottle drives and barbecues.

Electing the Company Leadership Team

A Company Leadership Team should be elected early in the Scouting Year, but Venturers should start giving the matter some thought late in the preceding Scouting Year.

First-year Venturers are generally not strong candidates for positions on the Company Leadership Team, but they should be encouraged to pursue other opportunities for leadership, particularly as Expedition Team Leaders.

If you are interested in joining the Company Leadership Team, talk about your prospective candidacy with senior Venturer Scouts and Company Scouters. Find out what responsibilities come with the different roles, and consider your own skills and aptitudes. This will give you a sense of what position you should may be suited to.

If you have already been a part of the Company Leadership Team, consider putting your name forward for the position of Company Leader. Typically, this will be a Venturer in his or her final year in the Section, and it will be somebody who's had plenty of leadership experience in Venturing.

Your Company will compile a list of the candidates for the different positions of the Company Leadership Team. The candidates will have an opportunity to present themselves to the Company. They should explain their qualifications for the role in question, and talk about their personal goals with regard to the position.

It is best to elect your Company Leadership Team by secret ballot. This will help to prevent any personal grudges, and will allow for productive and collaborative relationships going forward in the Scouting Year.

Company Scouters

Company Scouters are men and women not less than eighteen years old, whose primary duty is to help the Company to operate in accordance with the aim and principles of Scouts Canada, to keep the Company within the terms of the agreement with the Company's sponsor and to help operate a program of activities. They are the Company's most important resource people. They neither look on passively nor intervene in every decision.

Being a Scouter with Venturer Scouts presents some interesting challenges. It's critical that your Scouters create lots of opportunities for your Company to figure out what it wants to do and how to go about it. You will need a lot of support in learning to set appropriate goals. You may also need help learning to review the goals you and your fellow Venturers set for yourselves. It is up to your Scouters to facilitate your goal setting and support you as

you strive to meet your objectives. Just how they manage this will change as you become older and more experienced. Your Scouters will also look for opportunities for Venturers to mentor one another—for example, if a Venturer in your Company is an accomplished sailor, she should be the person to offer sailing-related advice to the other Venturers, even if one of your Scouters is also a strong sailor.

Scouters are appointed by the Group or Area, in consultation with the Company. They are accountable for Company actions. Scouters help the Company to pursue its objectives by working closely with all members.

The primary Scouter is called the **Contact Scouter**. He or she is at least twenty-one years old. **Assistant Scouters** support the Contact Scouter. They may have special duties assigned to them, such as working with specific Expedition Teams or select members of the Company Leadership Team. The ratio of Scouters to Venturers must always be at least 1:8, with no fewer than two Scouters within sight and earshot of each other at all times (regardless of how few Venturers are present).

Program Areas

The Canadian Path is divided into six Program Areas—categories of the different opportunities that Scouting offers. Each season, you will set goals for each of the Program Areas. Some of your goals will be pursued as part of an Expedition Team.

Planning according to the Program Areas ensures that your program is both challenging and balanced. A balanced program fosters development in all of the SPICES. The ideas below give a sense of the fantastic possibilities the six Program Areas can provide.

Creative Expression

During adventures in this Program Area, you share your own creativity and explore the creativity of others.

Activities associated with this Program Area emphasize imagination. Think composing and performing songs and plays, dancing, writing, sculpting, painting and so on.



Environment & Outdoors

During adventures in this Program Area, you explore, hike, camp, paddle and find other ways of enjoying the outdoors. You also learn new skills to live in, and take care of, the natural world.



Program activities for this Program Area include shoreline, park and roadside clean-ups; and developing outdoor skills, such as methods for lighting campfires and being able to identify wild edible foods.

Citizenship

During adventures in this Program Area, you endeavour to be a good citizens in your local community, Canada and the world.



Activities for this Program Area include getting to know the public servants and services in your community through visits and guest speakers. Your Company may visit a municipal council meeting or invite a local politician to talk about an issue. You can also be a part of an Expedition Team that contributes to your community by organizing a Scoutrees project, painting park benches or performing trail maintenance at a conservation area.

Active & Healthy Living

During adventures in this Program Area, you have fun while keeping active. You endeavour to develop good mental and physical habits for happy and healthy living.



This Program Area includes opportunities for dozens of activities in all seasons: hiking, mountain biking, climbing, snowshoeing, skiing, sailing, kayaking and canoeing—just to name a few!

Leadership

During adventures in this Program Area, you learn about and practise the skills of being a good leader in your Company, local community and Canada.



This Program Area involves organizing and leading expeditions (such as hiking trips and community service projects), and leading games and activities for other Sections in your Group.

Beliefs & Values

During adventures in this Program Area, you explore your personal values and beliefs as well as the diversity of cultures and faiths that make up your community, our nation and our world.



Adventures for this Program Area foster social awareness, such as strengthening your faith, learning about other belief systems and exploring political issues that are relevant to Scouting. Activities may include visiting a church, planning a Scouts' Own or inviting a guest speaker to a meeting.

Personal Progression: the Venturer Scout Journey

THE SOLO CLIMB

Your personal journey as a Venturer is all about setting challenges for yourself and meeting your goals using a Plan-Do-Review process. It is through these challenges that you make your way from Tree Line to Snow Line, eventually reaching the Summit. Progression through the Personal Journey does not have minimum or maximum time requirements. You should progress at your own pace. You can use the Solo Climb Plan to write down your goals and keep track of your progress. Scouters and other Venturer Scouts can provide advice on increasing or reducing the difficulty of a specific goal; however, the decision about what goals to pursue ultimately belongs to you.

The most important piece is that your progress is reviewed by yourself, other Venturer Scouts and your Scouters. As a Venturer, you climb your own mountain—but you are supported by others in your Company.

BASE CAMP

Base Camp meetings are opportunities for members of a Company to see the big picture. They represent a chance to discuss possible expeditions and to determine the leadership roles at both the Company and Expedition Team levels. This process should not be rushed. It will probably happen over two meetings, so that everyone will have time to reflect upon the expeditions that have been proposed.

At the beginning of the year, the structure of the Company and the nature of the Venturer program will be presented by experienced Venturer Scouts (likely a past member of the Leadership Team) as an orientation for new Venturer Scouts and as a refresher for returning Venturer Scouts. The roles of the Leadership Team can be explained, and members of the Company are able to consider whether to submit their names for positions. The Leadership Team should be elected by the Company at the following meeting. Submitting your name for a position on the Leadership Team could be a Leadership (Program Area) challenge you identify for yourself.

As a Canadian Venturer Scout, you are expected to set challenges for yourself in each of the six Program Areas. This expectation should help to inform the expeditions proposed. Not all expeditions proposed at Base Camp will work out, but you and your fellow Venturers should be able to narrow down your options and focus on some ideas. Experienced Venturer Scouts

| PROGRAM AREA | GOAL | COMPLETION DATE |
|---|------|-----------------|
|  | | |
|  | | |
|  | | |
|  | | |
|  | | |
|  | | |

Are all of my goals SMART?

☐ Specific
 ☐ Measurable
 ☐ Attainable
 ☐ Relevant
 ☐ Timely

Signatures: _____

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will understand how the Program Areas can influence possible expeditions. They may propose successful expeditions from previous years be repeated.

Between the first two Base Camp meetings, the members of the Company will attempt to identify six goals for themselves, one for each Program Area. Your personal challenges will probably fit in with one or two proposed expeditions, but some will also have to be pursued on your own time. At least two copies of these written challenges will be brought to the next Base Camp meeting (**see the Solo Climb Planning Sheet**).

At the second Base Camp meeting, you will have a better sense of what expeditions you want to be a part of. The Expeditions Teams will be decided upon, and you will be part of one or several. The Company should now divide itself into smaller groups of about five. Ideally, a Scouter is present with each group. It does not matter whether the members of these smaller groups are from different expeditions or not; however, there should be a good mix of Venturer Scouts at different stages in their Solo Climbs.

Share the goals you have set for yourself across the six Program Areas, and the other Venturers in your group will share theirs. This is an opportunity for less experienced Venturer Scouts to ask questions of those who have completed goals as part of their personal progression in the past.

More important, these small groups provide an opportunity to question whether each set of goals is SMART—Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Timely. Experienced Venturer Scouts will be able to suggest what realistic challenges consist of.

The personal goals also have to be considered as a group—that is, you need to consider whether your six goals are SMART when you imagine working on all of them at once. One very significant goal should be manageable, but your other goals should be easier. Knowing your limits is an important part of fulfilling your personal goals. The Venturers in your small group will help you review your goals. In light of the feedback of the group, some changes may need to be made to the goals you have set yourself. After amending the goals (if necessary), a copy of the written goals is submitted to the Scouters and Leadership Team for review. This allows for further amendments, as necessary, and helps the Leadership Team and the Scouters coordinate the Company activity in ways that make each Venturer Scout's Personal Achievement goals possible. The written goals also help the Leadership Team and the Scouters keep track of your progress in your Solo Climbs.

THE CHECKPOINTS

Trailhead



The Trailhead is the base of the mountain and the beginning of your path in Venturer Scouts. You reach

the Trailhead of your Solo Climb and are invested as a member of the Company when you have completed the following:

- Know and understand the principles of Scouting, including the Venturer Promise, Law and Motto.
- Understand how a Venturer Company works and join an expedition to do something interesting.
- Set six goals, one in each of the Program Areas.

These goals need to be realistic and manageable. That may mean the first goals are relatively easy to accomplish: "I want to succeed at my first canoe day trip..." or "I want to try my first rock wall

climb," or perhaps "My younger brother is a Cub Scout; I'd like to help out on the Pack's camping trip." As you become more experienced, your goals are expected to become progressively more difficult.

It's probably enough as a new Venturer Scout to set one or two initial goals. After you have planned and undertaken these first goals, you will be able to set yourself more diverse and difficult ones.

If you are a new Venturer, you can count on help from experienced Venturers and Company Scouters with goal setting so that the experience is not overwhelming. It is a good idea for your early goals in Venturers to be of a "take part" nature, strongly supported by the planning work and leadership of others in the Company.

It is important to note that you only set your six goals at this stage; they are to be completed later in your Solo Climb.

Work on reaching the Trailhead should be done with the support of the other Venturer Scouts and under the guidance of the Company Scouters. You will be presented with the Trailhead badge when you have completed the above.

Tree Line



The Tree Line marks the progress you have made as you journey along your Solo Climb. You reach the Tree Line when you have completed the following:

- Achieve six goals, at least one in each of the Program Areas. These should either be the goals set at the Trailhead, or comparable replacements developed as you progressed toward the Tree Line.
- Lead or co-lead an expedition with another Venturer Scout.
- Review the work done to reach the Tree Line and what you learned along the way, with a specific focus on development in the SPICES.
- Set six new goals, at least one in each of the Program Areas.

Work on reaching the Tree Line should be done with the support of the other Venturer Scouts and under the guidance of the Company Scouters. You will be presented with the Tree Line badge when you have completed the above.

Snow Line



The Snow Line climb represents the middle milestone of your journey through Venturer Scouts. At this stage, the majority of the Solo Climb is complete. Once you have reached your Tree Line, you will begin working

towards the Snow Line. The Snow Line is all about achieving the goals you have set and embarking on a new set of goals. You reach the Snow Line when you have completed the following:

- Achieve six goals—one in each of the Program Areas. These should either be the goals set at the Tree Line, or comparable goals developed as you progress towards the Snow Line.
- Lead at least one expedition with another Venturer Scout.
- Review the work done to reach the Snow Line, and what was learned along the way, with a specific focus on development in the SPICES.
- Set at least six new big goals, at least one in each of the Program Areas. These goals should carry into your life beyond Scouting and help you to continue to develop as an individual.
- Complete at least one linking activity with a Scout Troop in your Area.

Work on reaching the Snow Line should be done with the support of the other Venturer Scouts and under the guidance of the Company Scouters. You will be presented with the Snow Line badge when you have completed the above.

Summit



Reaching the Summit marks the last Venturer chapter of The Canadian Path. This may be the culminating adventure of the Venturer Scout journey, but it marks the entrance into the final stage of the Venturer

Scout program, as you prepare for Rovers. Attaining the Summit represents the attainment of the goals you set for yourself that you wanted to achieve in Venturer Scouts. The Summit is also where you complete your final review of your climb through the Section before embarking on whatever new adventures lay ahead. You reach the Summit of your Solo Climb when you have completed the following:

- Achieve six big goals. These should either be the goals set at the Snow Line, or comparable adaptations made as you climb.

- Help at least three other Venturer Scouts achieve one of the goals they've set for themselves.
- Lead or co-lead at least two expeditions. At least one expedition must be led independently.
- Review the most recent part of your journey in Venturer Scouts and in Scouting, the work done to reach the Summit and what you learned along the way, with a specific focus on development in the SPICES.

Work on reaching the Summit should be done with the support of the other Venturer Scouts and under the guidance of the Company Scouters. You will be presented with the Summit badge when you have completed the above.

Example

One of the very first goals you will face will be, appropriately, setting goals. In the beginning, you need to set one or two solo goals (based on Program Areas). There may be further goals that tie in to an expedition (or two) taking place within the Company; you may lead one of the expeditions as a goal in itself—that is, leading the expedition is the goal, regardless of the activity. Some goals will take place in your own time, or as part of another activity or interest. Each goal, once set, should be more fully pursued using the Plan-Do-Review process. A complete set of six goals may look like this:

- **Leadership:** Be the Expedition Team Leader for a diving expedition.
- **Environment & Outdoors:** After earning (or while earning) my Open Water certification, dive a local wreck. If I haven't earned my diving certification, snorkel the wreck. If possible, make this outing part of the diving expedition.
- **Active & Healthy Living:** Cycle to school daily instead of taking the bus.
- **Beliefs & Values:** Read *Into the Wild*, by Jon Krakauer, and think about how that helps me look at my life in a new way.
- **Creative Expression:** Earn (or pursue) PADI Open Water certification with the Venturer Company's diving expedition. Create a photo slideshow to document the experience.
- **Citizenship:** Run for grade representative for Student Council at school.

Note that a number of distinct goals stem from the same activity, but none of the goals is dependent upon the success any of the others. This ensures that the goals should be reasonably attainable.

To set bigger goals on your Summit Climb, imagine these same examples pursued at a greater degree of difficulty:

- **Leadership:** Be the Expedition Team Leader for the diving expedition (same as above, as leading an expedition always represents a big challenge).
- **Environment & Outdoors:** Dive three local wrecks.
- **Active & Healthy Living:** Cycle to school daily instead of taking the bus. Make the ride home a 40-minute extended route.
- **Beliefs & Values:** Read *Walden*, by Henry David Thoreau, and plan and execute a personal goal based on something Thoreau described, or initiate an expedition with one or two other Venturer Scouts based on something in the book.
- **Creative Expression:** Apply what I've learned from my shop woodworking class at school to build a wannigan for the Company.
- **Citizenship:** Run for Student Council president.

Program Cycles

At the start of every season, you and your Company will sit down to talk about your personal goals with regard to the six Program Areas. Like the first meeting or two of the Scouting Year, the review and planning meeting for each season is called a Base Camp meeting. There are different ways to review the past season and plan adventures for the next, but you will probably find it helpful to again work in pairs or small groups first, and then present your personal plans to the Company to ensure that you are planning expeditions that touch on all of the Program Areas.

For example, in the fall your Company might plan to go mountain biking (Active & Healthy Living) and gather video footage of your expedition. Later, you'll team up to edit and score the footage into an awesome video (Creative Expression). On your own (outside of Scouting), you might volunteer once a week at your local library (Citizenship). And your entire Company expects to take part in your Group's all-Section fall camp (Environment & Outdoors). You could join an Expedition Team that is organizing an exciting game of Survival for the Cub Scouts (Leadership), and facilitating a Scouts' Own on Sunday morning (Beliefs & Values).

You've probably noticed that some of these expeditions could be considered appropriate for more than one Program Area. There will often be some overlap between the Program Areas, but you should not count any one activity for more than one Program Area. Sharing a formal campfire, complete with skits and songs and cheers, could count toward all six Program Areas, but you would probably find that your fall program is a little dull if this was the only adventure you took part in.

At the end of the season, take the time to review your expeditions. What did you enjoy? What did not go quite as you hoped? How could you do things differently in the future? How successful would you say you were with respect to your personal goals?

Reviewing is an important part of your program cycle, and a good review will make planning your next set of goals easier and more effective. Consult the Program Quality Standard when planning and reviewing a program cycle to ensure your Company is practising a great, balanced program.

Trail Cards

Trail Cards are a resource that your Company can use to generate ideas for expeditions. Trail Cards are categorized by Program Areas. When your Company is planning its expeditions at a Base Camp meeting, it is important that every Venturer has goals for every Program Area. If some Venturers are having some trouble with one of the Program Areas, they can turn to the Trail Cards for some new ideas.

Your Company might not have any trouble coming up with its own ideas, in which case there's no need to even look at the Trail Cards. That's perfectly fine. On the other hand, you might want to have a look together, just to see if there are any ideas that sound really exciting but hadn't already occurred to anyone.



Trail Card for Venturers

Trail Cards provide some helpful advice on how your Expedition Team can use the Plan-Do-Review approach for an adventure, and they have important safety tips. If you are looking at Trail Cards online, you will find that every Trail Card has links to websites that can help your Expedition Team with its planning.

Planning Expeditions

Well-organized activities are generally successful. How effectively you plan events can make a significant contribution to the success of any activity your Expedition Team undertakes.

Be efficient when planning your activity. Similarly, aim to have a final plan that is simple and efficient so that participants can thoroughly enjoy the activity you've organized. Draw on the experience of your Scouters and other resource people, and learn to know and use the support groups available to you.

Planning is a built-in part of Venturing. It is necessary in order to realize what you wish to accomplish.

Whenever you are planning:

- Make use of people who can help, especially your Scouters.
- Involve all Venturers in the planning and carrying out of the program.

In some Expedition Teams, planning may be started by the Expedition Leader getting together with the Company Leadership Team and Company Scouters. They may meet to assemble a plan for the coming three, six or twelve months, considering the wants and needs of the whole Company and all of its expeditions. A proposed plan can be presented to the Expedition Team, and in turn to the whole Company at a Company meeting. This will allow members to consider the Expedition Team's plan, ask questions and make suggestions. As a result, the plan may be amended or expanded before being approved by the Company members.


That's one approach. Each Company can develop a method to suit its own needs. Most important is that the method used for planning has been agreed to by the whole Company.

GUIDELINES FOR PLANNING

The guidelines for planning that follow can be applied in almost any kind of situation. Be sure, however, that your plans are not sloppy, nor so rigid that they cannot be changed to meet new circumstances.

- Assess the needs of the Expedition Team as determined by the relationship between the expedition and the Expedition Team members themselves. Consider the interests and abilities of all of the Venturers on the Expedition Team.
- Set a goal for your expedition.
- Come up with a plan. Divide roles and responsibilities among the members of the Expedition Team, and agree to some common expectations. For example, certain skills may be needed for a given expedition. If so, all members of the Expedition Team must commit to taking part in the required training.
- Create a budget for your expedition. If funds need to be raised, a fundraiser and a fundraising goal should be part of your expedition's budget.
- Reference past experiences. Think about expeditions you've done in Scouting and some of the valuable lessons you've learned and can apply when planning. Your Company may have a logbook recording its adventures, and it might have some useful insights for your Expedition Team.

Consult the Venturer Scout Planning Template to organize your Companies adventures for each program cycle.


FALL

USE PLAN-DO-REVIEW TO HELP DRIVE THE DISCUSSIONS:

Plan

- How can we make sure everyone participates?
- How can we make sure everyone stays safe?
- What materials do we need?
- What does everybody need to do?
- What skills are required?
- Agree on all the details

Do

- Learn any new skills needed
- Take part in your adventure

ADVENTURES WE WOULD LIKE TO HAVE THIS CYCLE:

EVENTS

Investiture


Halloween

Fall camp


Remembrance Day

Apple Day / Scout Popcorn


WHAT PROGRAM AREAS HAVE YOU VISITED THIS CYCLE?




Environment & Outdoors




Citizenship




Leadership



Creative Expression




Active & Healthy Living



Beliefs & Values

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It starts with Scouts

Here is an excerpt from a planning template that can help you and your Venturers plan your meetings. You can find the full version at **Canadianpath.ca**.

What Does a Venturer Scout Meeting Look Like?

Venturer Scout meetings take a variety of forms. Some may take place around a campfire at a camp, on a hike through the woods or in a regular meeting location. The structure of the meeting is determined by the adventure, and there is generally less routine in Venturer Scout meetings than can be found in younger Sections.

A Venturer Company should aim to meet at the same time every week, and it should take advantage of these scheduled meetings to conduct Company business. This is an opportunity for the Company Leadership Team to touch base with each of the Expedition Teams and ensure that the planning of projects and adventures is proceeding smoothly. The Company Leadership Team can offer advice, support or encouragement to the Expedition Teams as needed. The Company Leader should chair the business part of the meeting, but this does not mean that the entire meeting should be spent seated around a table. To make things as efficient as possible, an agenda should be shared a day or two in advance of the meeting so that everyone is prepared. If the Company is having an outdoor meeting and going for an evening paddle, it can take some time at the beginning of the meeting to sit on shore and briefly conduct Company business before heading out on the water. (Remember, a quality program should include at least one outdoor meeting per month.)

At the beginning of each program cycle (season), the Company should hold a Base Camp meeting. This is a time for the Company to review the past cycle and set both individual and Company goals for the cycle ahead. Expedition Teams are formed and adventures for each Program Area are planned. There is a lot to hash out at a Base Camp meeting, and the Company Leadership Team should set out a meeting agenda and format that can facilitate all of the meeting's items of business.

Vocational Venturer Companies should dedicate one meeting per month to their vocational interests, but should bear in mind that a balanced program should explore all six Program Areas. The vocational dimension of a Company's program should not come at the expense of other exciting possibilities.

Venturer Companies are encouraged to link with Scout Troops and Rover Crews, but should refrain from linking more than once or twice per program cycle. Linking too often can undermine a Section's autonomy and get in the way of age-appropriate adventures.

MINUTES

The minutes of the Company should contain a brief record of what is done, not what is said:

- a. The date, place and time of meeting
- b. Whether it is a regular or special meeting
- c. Name of person presiding
- d. Name of Secretary and attendance and Treasurer's report, including monthly statement
- e. Treasurer's update: financial transactions and balance on hand
- f. All motions, whether adopted or defeated (a motion that was withdrawn should not be recorded)
- g. The names of persons making the motions
- h. Points of order and appeals, whether sustained or lost

TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE MEETINGS

If your Company wants to make its meetings more efficient, follow this guide. Use the Plan-Do-Review approach to come up with agenda topics.

PLAN

Come up with agenda topics based on your priorities. Simple topics can be resolved on the spot.

DO

Discuss your top three or four topics and generate action items.

REVIEW

Record action items and figure out who's responsible.

PLAN

- The Company Leader should email an agenda at least 24 hours in advance.
- Everyone should come prepared. The agenda should indicate individual responsibilities.
- Bring paper and a pen!
- Arrive five minutes early.

PLAN



DO

DO

- Start and end on time.
- Stay on topic. Put away your smartphones.
- No side conversations
- Silence = agreement
- Participate
- Challenge ideas—not people! Disagree without being disagreeable.

REVIEW

REVIEW

- Recap action items and responsibilities.
- Identify unresolved or undiscussed items for next time.
- Follow up by email within 24 hours.

Operating the Company

COMPANY CODE OF CONDUCT

Most national businesses and voluntary organizations, such as Scouting, have a constitution.

Scouts Canada's *By-law, Policies and Procedures* does not spell out the by-laws of each Venturer Company across Canada. The Venturer program instead encourages each Company to write and update its own Code of Conduct. A Company's Code of Conduct cannot, of course, contain anything that is contrary to Scouts Canada's by-laws.

A good Code of Conduct is usually short, written in simple language and understandable by all members of the Company. It should meet the needs of the Company, which are generally identified by the Company's activities. If the Code of Conduct is lengthy and complicated, it will not be used.

A special committee from the membership may be formed to write the Code of Conduct. The Code of Conduct should reflect the views of all the members of the Company. In its final form, the Company Code of Conduct should be acceptable to every member. The Code of Conduct should be reviewed annually.

A good Code of Conduct should include:

1. The name of the Company and its sponsor
2. A statement that the Company is part of Scouts Canada and subscribes to Scouts Canada's *By-law, Policies, and Procedures*
3. A statement about the make-up, election, term and duties of the Company Leadership Team
4. A statement on meetings
5. A statement on dues
6. A statement on uniform and activity dress
7. A statement on how the by-laws may be amended
8. Statements setting forth any other items deemed to be of continuing importance

FINANCES

Members of the Leadership Team of each Venturer Company are advised to examine Scouts Canada's financial policy with their Scouters to have a good understanding of the subject. This policy is found in Section 11000 of Scouts Canada's *By-law, Policies and Procedures*, "Financial and Fundraising Procedures."

Adherence to this policy is essential for the wellbeing and reputation of the Company.

BANKING

Each Company should have a bank account in the official name of Scouts Canada and the Company name. Three members of the Company should be appointed to be responsible for signing cheques on this bank account. It is customary for the Company Leader and Treasurer to fulfill this function, along with the Contact Scouter. Any two of these must sign cheques or withdrawals. All financial transactions made by the Company must be recorded to show clearly all monies received and paid out.

ACCOUNTING

The financial records should be presented to the Company at regular business meetings, together with a report of the current financial situation. The records should be checked regularly by the Contact Scouter and presented to the Group or Area for examination each year.

Keep your Contact Scouter fully aware of all financial matters of the Company and of the names of the people responsible for signing cheques. All fundraising projects must have the approval of your Company, your Contact Scouter and your Group or Area before they begin.

At the request of any member, the Company Scouter or the Group or Area, the Company Leader and Treasurer should be able to account for and produce a balance sheet of your Company's funds within forty-eight hours of the last entry.

FUNDS

Monies raised with other Sections are usually kept in the custody of the Group. At their discretion, however, a portion may be turned over to your Company to assist in its operations.

Dues collected by the Company and money raised entirely by the members of a Company should be controlled by the Company. Usually this is done through the Treasurer on the approval of the Company Leadership Team, Company Scouters and members. Scouters and the Company Leader should discuss this point with the Group or Area so that no misunderstandings can occur.

RAISING FUNDS

Your Company requires a certain amount of money to keep going and to do many of the things the members wish.

A camping trip, uniforms, sports equipment, a worthy service project or other events and materials all have to be paid for.

Some of the money may come from dues, or from donations from the Group or Area—but, generally, the money you require for your major projects will have to be earned by yourselves.

Scouts Canada has guidelines on how to go about earning money and what methods are approved. Before undertaking any fundraising drives, check with your Scouters, Group or Area.

To help you earn money for your own activities or to help other Sections in your Group or Area, sell Scout Popcorn. There are many other fundraising projects your Company can consider, from bottle drives to selling Christmas trees to canvassing in support of Scoutreets.

SUPPORT GROUPS

When you are operating your Company, keep in mind that there are a number of support groups which have a direct interest in your affairs. This interest is of two kinds. The first is to see that you and your Company have the necessary tools to plan and operate a successful program. The second is to ensure that your Company operates within the guidelines set down by Scouts Canada. These groups have a responsibility to and for them. They deserve your support. Keep your lines of communication with these groups open. Be actively interested in what they do and understand their functions.

1. Sponsor

A sponsor is an association, an institution or an organization which supports one or more of Scouting's programs. Sponsors become involved in Scouting because they recognize the value its programs have for young people in their community. They also see Scouting as a useful program to help promote their particular interests. For example, a church sponsors a Scouting program to help fulfill its responsibility to the community and to help increase awareness of its faith among young people. Similar examples can be made of service clubs, businesses, associations, schools and others.

Membership in a sponsored Group may be restricted to those families who are members of, or who are otherwise identified with, the sponsor.

2. Group Committee

Your Company may belong to a larger Group which contains two or more Sections. The larger Group will be supported by a Group Committee. Such a committee is made up of a number of adults and other youth from your community—i.e. parents, representatives of your sponsor, Scouters and other interested people.

Your Group Committee has specific responsibilities to your Company and to Scouting. Some of these are:

- To appoint Scouters (in consultation with your Company)
- To ensure you have proper facilities and equipment
- To provide your Scouters with adequate training
- To ensure that your program meets the aims and principles of Scouting
- To see that your Company is properly registered
- To audit your Company's financial statements
- To encourage your Company to operate in harmony with other Sections of the Group, with your sponsor and with your community
- To help you operate within the *By-law, Policies and Procedures* of Scouts Canada

A complete list of Group Committee functions can be found in *BP&P*.

Your Group Committee is a direct link to your community, since its members represent it. The committee is also directly accountable to Scouts Canada for your operation. For this reason, your Company is accountable to your Group Committee. Your Company Leader and perhaps one or two other Venturers should be part of your Group Committee, as well as the Contact Company Scouter.

3. Area

This is a group appointed by the Council to supervise Scouting over specified geographical areas. These service groups are responsible for assisting all Sections with their programs, for training Scouters, and for other activities such as camping and public relations.

In Areas where existing Venturer Companies are generally made up of fewer than a dozen members, Companies may be organized at the Area level rather than at the Group level.

These Companies will be supported by the Area, rather than a Group Committee, though Venturers are encouraged to maintain strong ties with their former Troops, Packs and Colonies, and to pursue linking opportunities.

Your Area Team will include an Area Youth Commissioner: a Rover Scout or Venturer Scout—possibly a member of your own Company! Your Area Youth Commissioner can be a supportive voice of your Company and the Venturer Scout Section as a whole. Your Company Leader should have a strong working relationship with your Area Youth Commissioner.

There may be more than one big Venturer Company in your Area. In these Areas, the Companies will most likely be supported by Group Committees. While your Company is responsible for its own activities and the way it carries out the Venturer program, it will be to your advantage to share ideas, programs and experiences with other Companies. This may be done through Area Venturer Councils made up of selected representatives from each Venturer Company. The purpose of such a Council is to plan joint activities, and to exchange information and generate friendships between Companies.

CHARTERS

Charters officially grant the right for one or more Sections to operate. Charters for the operation of Sections or Groups are granted by the Council to sponsoring institutions and Group Committees. These charters, renewed annually, may be cancelled at any time and remain property of Scouts Canada.

THE WIDER PICTURE

As a member of a Venturer Company, you belong to a large organization. Your sponsor and Group are integral parts of the Area, which is in turn part of the Council. Councils are generally provincial (Alberta, British Columbia, and Ontario have more than one Council, however). They are represented at the National Council, which is the policy-making level for Scouts Canada. The National Council is a member of the World Scout Conference, which includes representatives of over 215 countries and territories. Scouting altogether has more than 28 million members.

Being part of a big movement like Scouting creates many opportunities for your Company. Are you aware of other Venturer Companies in your Area? What adventures might you share? What Venturer-specific events are available to your Company, whether in your own Council or farther afield?

The possibilities before your Company are vast. Scouting adventures can take you all over the world. Visit **Scouts.ca/scoutsabroad** to discover some of the ways you can explore the world of Scouting.

ASSESSING THE COMPANY'S ORGANIZING ABILITY

The more organized your Company, the better it will run, and the greater the satisfaction of your fellow members.

The following questions can help you to check just how well your Company is doing:

- Do you have by-laws and are they supported by the members?
- Have you decided how you are recruiting members and Scouters to grow your Company?
- During the year's operation, are your members attending at least 75% of the meetings?
- Do you hold at least thirty meetings or events per year?
- Have you held at least five outstanding activities this year, including a "major" activity?
- Have you had your treasurer's book audited by a Scouter at least once this year?
- Have the members of the Company Leadership Team met with the Group or Area at least twice this year to discuss your progress?
- Did you hold an election for your Leadership Team and have you planned an election for next year's Leadership Team?
- Are your dues collected regularly? Has each Venturer been registered?
- Have the members arranged for guest speakers to attend your meetings to speak on interesting topics?
- Has your Company approved a long-term and short-term program?
- Has your Company planned adventures for all of the six Program Areas?
- Have you considered any events with other Companies or Groups?
- Has your Company linked with Scout Troops and Rover Crews?
- Are your Scouters fully participating and informed members of your Company? Are you using their knowledge and skill?

Can you think of other ways to check your Company's organization?

LEADERSHIP

People—youth and adults—display true leadership when they take an active role in a specific situation, set an example for others and have support from group members in their duties.

The Venturer program is designed to encourage and give opportunities for you and your friends to experience leadership in many forms. For example, officers are responsible to ensure that their Company runs smoothly. Expedition Leaders will often have to monitor events to guarantee that they are conducted satisfactorily. Effective leadership will encourage different people to voice an opinion or suggest an idea. It will make your Company more dynamic; everyone will benefit. Each of you should thus have the opportunity to learn about effective leadership.

The Venturer program involves **doing things**—not just talking about them. This requires effective leadership. The experience gained in an active Company will help you take leadership roles in school, church and sports teams. Eventually, this experience can bring on leadership roles in politics, in business or professional organizations, or in community service clubs.

It's important that you and your fellow Venturers personally operate your Company. Its success depends upon your active participation in the Company's affairs. Participation, commitment and communication are your individual responsibilities as members and leaders.

THE COMPANY SCOUTERS AND LEADERSHIP

Through experience, Venturer Company members will develop the ability to find areas of joint interest, make decisions and plan ahead. Your Scouters play a key leadership role helping this to happen. Scouters work with you as members of the Company.

In new Companies, the Scouters will probably be the only people familiar with the Venturer program. For this reason, your Scouters may do more to suggest activities, provide guidance to the Company on how to operate and explain the rules.

As a Company gains more experience and develops more confidence, knowledge and skills, Scouters will offer less and less leadership. One of the Scouters' main objectives is to help the Company become as self-sufficient as possible. Remember: your Scouters are held accountable to the community (Group Committee, parents, sponsor) for the Company's actions. For this

reason, your Scouters always have the authority to restrict any event considered unwise, unsafe or in bad taste. These restrictions are seldom necessary, however, when a Company works closely with its Scouters.

Your Company Scouters' role can be very demanding, and often requires special talents and skills. Scouters should be very interested in helping young people grow and develop into responsible adults. They will want to help each member succeed, as well as the Company as a whole.

Ask your Scouters for advice and support. Learn all you can. Feel free to confide in, and seek the help of, your Scouters. Don't expect your Scouters to sit silently in the background during meetings and activities. Instead, they should be full participating members of the Company, concerned about your success.

KEYS TO LEADERSHIP

A key objective of all Venturer Companies is to become self-governing to reach the point where members initiate, plan and carry out activities on their own with a high degree of success.

To reach this objective, a Venturer Company needs strong leadership. This is a skill that any interested Venturer can acquire.

Good leaders practise certain work habits and skills to help them get things done. These habits become second nature through use and refinement. No magic formula exists to speed the process.

Here's what you need to become a good leader:

- An interest in people
- A desire to do things well
- An ability to learn some leadership techniques

In a democratic system, leading requires the support of followers. Leadership is, therefore, an important form of service.

When can you give leadership? You do it whenever:

- You feel you have something to offer the Company
- The rest of the Company is aware of, and accepts, your offer

How can you give or express leadership? You can do it by:

- Asking what you can do
- Participating in group decisions and activities
- Supporting group consensus

- Being honest with yourself and others
- Only taking responsibilities you feel you have the time to handle
- Asking—not assuming or guessing—what others want
- Standing up for your rights and the rights of others
- Being flexible—this relates to at least two areas: being able to change your mind when required if you make a mistake, and accepting ideas from others

SELF-PREPARATION

1. Get to Know Yourself

Are you easy-going or short tempered? Are you approachable or domineering? It's important to know what traits you bring to the Company, and how others view your contribution. As a leader, you have been trusted with a position of authority with specific responsibilities. How you use that authority and take care of your responsibilities is important to you and the Company.

2. Get to Know the Other Members

You and the other members **are** the Company and you all have to be concerned with its welfare. Make sure all members have opportunities to use their own special talents.

Leaders must work with other people. It's no use trying to do everything yourself. Not only would that take too much time, but involving others is a good way to encourage and train less-experienced members.

3. Get to Know Your Job

Be familiar with your responsibilities, whether you're a Company Leader or an Expedition Leader, whether you're doing one small task or participating in a discussion. Study your duties. Understand what your job requires and do the best job you can. Don't think you have to do your job alone. Make use of all available resources. Your Scouters, fellow members, community people and parents can all help you learn the ropes.

4. Always Have a Plan

What interests your Company members? In what direction do they want the Company to grow? Try to understand everyone's needs and wants, and be prepared to provide direction.

This doesn't mean you make all the decisions for the Company. Other members should be ready with suggestions and ideas, too. If this doesn't happen, then you'll be able to provide sound ideas, having thought them out in advance.

As a leader, others will look to you for direction and ideas. You may get some feedback from the members, but if not, make sure you have some of your own. They'll provide a good starting point for the Company. Always look for new ideas; avoid getting into the rut of doing the same old activities. Not only will this move the Company ahead, but it will give other members confidence in your leadership ability.

TECHNIQUES OF EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

Once you've accepted a responsibility—whether as Company Leader, Expedition Leader or as a member of the Company with a specific goal—you can use several leadership techniques to improve your effectiveness.

1. Share the Work

No leader can or should be expected to do everything. Get into the habit of recruiting other members to take on certain tasks.

The ability to delegate: it's a sign of maturity that all good leaders exhibit. Delegating frees you to do other things. It's a clear road sign that says, "I have confidence in the ability of these people to carry out the jobs they've been asked to complete."

2. Don't Leave Things to Chance

Hard work makes things happen on time. If a canoe trip doesn't get into the water, or if a hiking weekend falls through, it may be because you (the Expedition Leader) didn't coordinate everyone else's part adequately.

A person who accepts a task and knows what to do should be left alone to get on with it. But, it's quite acceptable to check periodically to make sure all is going well. Finally, just before the event, touch base with the key people together to be sure everything is ready to go.

3. Be a Good Listener

Keep your ears open at all times and listen carefully to what other Venturers are saying. You'll gain valuable insights about what they want to do, and how they respond to you as a leader. Also, listen to what is left unsaid. Sometimes you can learn how a person feels by a gesture, a look or a lack of interest in some activity.

4. Be on Time

No matter what position you hold in the Company, it's a good leadership habit to be on time. Be the first person at a meeting or activity, have your work finished ahead of time and start meetings on time. Others will notice the good example you set.

5. Make the Best Use of Time

Everyone has many things to do, like completing homework, attending hockey practice, seeing friends or helping around the house. You'll be appreciated if you become known as someone who doesn't waste others' time. You don't have to be overly uptight, but if a meeting is called for 7:00, make sure it starts then, and not at 7:20.

A Company Leader will plan meetings ahead, set up an agenda, control in a diplomatic way any side talk, give everyone an opportunity to say what needs to be said, help members to arrive at appropriate decisions, assign jobs and close off meetings on time.

6. Be Honest

Ask your Scouters for an opinion about leadership. Work with your Scouters to draw up a program of leadership exercises.

Being a good leader requires both practice and an understanding of the meaning of leadership.

7. Keep Your Sense of Humour

A good leader never becomes too solemn or takes himself or herself too seriously. Venturing is FUN! The moment you start thinking of your role as tiresome, try to figure out what's wrong. Perhaps you're missing the comedy that exists in most human situations. Stay cheerful and keep calm, and look for the best side.

2. Are members all getting opportunities to act as Expedition Leaders? Are they getting help to do the work involved with these projects? Does everyone participate in decision making?
3. Have your Company leaders participated in a training session to help them do their jobs better?
4. As part of their leadership experience, as well as a service project, are members encouraged to spend some time with a Colony, Pack or Troop?
5. Do members spend time talking to new Venturers about how the Company works? Are new members really welcomed into the Company?
6. Do members understand the duties and responsibilities for each elected role of the Company Leadership Team?
7. Are all members supporting the Company's fundraising efforts?
8. Have the members acted as leaders or resource people at a camporee, bicycle rodeo, Troop hike or similar event?
9. Are your Scouters active in your Company's affairs? Are the Scouters consulted regarding your Company's plans?

These are only a few ways your Company can improve its leadership opportunities for its members.

GUIDELINES FOR ASSESSING YOUR COMPANY'S OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEADERSHIP

If your Company provides leadership opportunities whenever possible, everyone will benefit. Consider these points.

1. Are members of the Leadership Team doing a good job?
Are other Company members being groomed for future leadership roles?

CEREMONIES

The Venturer Scout Promise

On my honour
I promise that I will do my best
To do my duty to God and the Queen
To help other people at all times,
And to carry out the spirit of the Scout Law

The Venturer Scout Law

A Scout is helpful and trustworthy, kind and cheerful,
considerate and clean, wise in the use of all resources.

The Venturer Scout Motto

Challenge

Ceremonies are part of life and are carried out on many different occasions: weddings, graduations, athletic or academic presentations. They have special significance for all those taking part.

A Venturer Company will have occasions when a ceremony helps to make an event more meaningful and memorable. These events might include: when new members are invested or old ones leave, when Scouts come up from the Area's Troops, when the Leadership Team is determined, when you wish to recognize achievement, and when meetings are started and ended.

Each Company must decide what kind of ceremonies it will have. On what occasions? And in what way will they be conducted?

Here are some suggestions that may help:

1. Ceremonies should be short. This will avoid boring your audience or embarrassing participants. For example, if you're admitting a new member and the main element of the ceremony involves giving the Venturer Promise, you wouldn't want to stretch out this ceremony beyond a few minutes, or make unreasonable demands of the new member.
2. Any ceremony must have real meaning. It should be short, simple and sincere. It should make people feel important. Prepare each ceremony with care to ensure it runs smoothly from start to finish.
3. Usually the Company Leader and Leadership Team will take charge of a ceremony. Sometimes your Scouters will have a role to play. Occasionally, other members may have something important to do.

4. Some Venturers may wish to have their families and friends present for special ceremonies, while others may prefer to have only Company members. It's important to discuss these details to ensure that you respect the wishes of the particular member.
5. The official uniform is customary dress for ceremonies. At camp, however, informal or activity dress might be quite appropriate and just as meaningful.
6. Always be willing to develop or change your ceremonies; they're a Company responsibility. Ask the advice of other, well-established Companies.
7. You should be aware of three important Scouting traditions, common to the Venturer Section:

The Scout Salute. To make the Scout salute, raise the three fingers of your right hand, thumb holding the little finger down, palm outwards. Bring your hand smartly up to your head until your forefinger touches your eyebrow with the palm of your hand facing forward. Then bring your hand smoothly down to your side. The Scout salute shows respect, courtesy, and friendliness. Use it **only** when you're in full uniform.

The Scout Sign. To make the Scout sign, raise the three fingers of your right hand as you do for the salute, but raise your arm so that your forearm is upwards. Your three raised fingers should remind you of the three parts of the Venturer Promise: Duty to God, Duty to others, and Duty to self. Your thumb and little finger meet to represent the ties of friendship in Scouting. You use the Scout sign:

- When you are making your Promise
- When you are attending someone else's investiture
- At any gathering where the Promise is recited
- When you are **not** in full uniform, as a form of greeting

The Scout Handshake. Members of Scouting have a special handshake; they use the left hand instead of the right. This tradition originated in a legend that Baden-Powell heard when he was in West Africa. Two tribes lived next to each other, and they fought bitterly. At last, one of the chiefs dropped his weapon (held in the right hand) and his shield (held in his left hand); he advanced to his enemy, and said: "I come unarmed and I hold out my left hand to you as a sign of friendship and trust. We are neighbours and should not live as enemies. From now on we wish to live in peace and we trust you to do the same and to be friends." At the beginning of Scouting, Baden-Powell suggested the left handshake as a sign of trust and brotherhood.