

Patrol Leader Training



Baden-Powell wrote 'The best progress is made in those Troops where power and responsibility are really put into the hands of the Patrol Leaders. This is the real success of Scout training.' While this is undoubtedly the case, to achieve this, Patrol Leaders and Assistant Patrol Leaders require continuous and ongoing training coupled with specialist training opportunities.

Real responsibility

Patrol Leaders are important members of the Troop and require the support of adult Leaders. Training opportunities can play a significant part in the development of young people and helping them to make decisions and accept responsibility for them. Such skills can be used in later life in, for example, the family business, management and everyday work.

Patrol Leaders sometimes need help to work out their responsibilities and ways in meeting them. This can be achieved through gradually increasing their opportunities for responsibility. In other words, a Patrol Leader could be encouraged to lead a small Patrol project at which it can quickly succeed. This can be followed by a larger or perhaps more complex project as confidence improves. The next project might take on a completely different aspect of responsibility such as planning.

One of our fundamental principles is that of learning through doing. If a Patrol Leader is experiencing some difficulty with the job, then the Scout Leader should be careful not just to take over, but rather support the Patrol Leader by giving the necessary help and support to succeed. The idea of increasing real responsibility in small measurable steps whilst improving confidence, should be an important feature in the training of Patrol Leaders.

The Patrol

Patrol Leader training should also encompass the different types of Patrol that a Patrol Leader may lead, and the varying styles of leadership that would be needed to do so. While one Patrol may have members in the age range 10« to 15« years, another Patrol may consist of a group of Scouts of all of the same age. In the first Patrol, the older Scout would probably be the Patrol Leader and could rely on telling the other Scouts what to do, particularly the younger ones. In the second, even though the oldest may be the Patrol Leader, the Patrol Leader will know how to share leadership. This sharing would need to take into account individual interests and abilities as well as the task in hand.

It is important to remember that Patrol Leaders may also find themselves in a leadership role in different situations outside of

their own usual Patrol. They may have to lead a group of young Scouts from various Patrols in the Troop who particularly wish a specific activity or Proficiency badge. Giving Scouts the opportunity to lead some of these groups on an occasional basis will obviously give them more opportunity to practise their leadership styles.

The Patrol Leaders' Council

The Patrol Leaders' most important job will be the running of the Troop together with the Patrol Leaders' Council. Patrol Leader training must therefore also equip Patrol Leaders with the skills of consulting their Patrols, organising and managing meetings and putting their plans into action.

Overleaf you will find two starter lists of practical skills and leadership skills that a Patrol Leader needs. Perhaps it is worth spending a moment considering - seeing you are being asked to put a considerable amount of time into training your Patrol Leaders,- what's in it for the Scout Leader? Patrol Leader Training is important in that it prepares older Scouts to take on responsibility - this in turns helps them to stand on their own feet. Such an opportunity should not be missed and is in keeping with the Aim of the Association to help them become responsible citizens of their communities.

As small children grow, they become less dependent on their parents, begin to share in decision making with them and finally become independent of them. The position of a Scout Leader and the Patrol Leaders is similar to this. A gradual process of encouraging Patrols Leaders to take on fuller management of the Troop should occur with the acceptance of increasing responsibility, an inter-dependent relationship between the Patrol Leaders' Council and Scout Leader develops. Through this process the young people continue growing as individuals yet are still able to turn to their Scout Leader for valuable guidance. Depending upon the age and maturity of the Patrol Leaders, the amount that they can take on will vary greatly, but continual increase should always be sought.

Ultimately, as the Patrol Leaders are encouraged to become actively involved in the development of the Troop, take on more responsibility, particularly for their Patrols and jointly for the running of the Troop, then the job of the Scout Leader is made easier.

Baden-Powell said, 'Expect a great deal of your Patrol Leaders and nine times out of ten they will play up to your expectations, but if you are always going to nurse them and not trust them to do things well, you will never get them to do anything on their own initiative'.

Practical skills

Below is a list of some of the practical Scouting skills Patrol Leaders need to be able to lead their Patrol. Tick under the appropriate heading on the right, if you need any help with these.

To get the best use of this list, copy it and discuss it with each Patrol Leader to see what help is needed.

Practical skills required to lead a Patrol	none	a little	some	a lot
Setting up a camp	_____	_____	_____	_____
Menu planning	_____	_____	_____	_____
Cooking	_____	_____	_____	_____
Lightweight camping	_____	_____	_____	_____
First Aid	_____	_____	_____	_____
Conservation	_____	_____	_____	_____
Knots and lashes	_____	_____	_____	_____
Pioneering	_____	_____	_____	_____
Hiking	_____	_____	_____	_____
International Scouting	_____	_____	_____	_____
Service	_____	_____	_____	_____
Games	_____	_____	_____	_____
Adventurous activities	_____	_____	_____	_____
Emergencies	_____	_____	_____	_____
Map and compass	_____	_____	_____	_____

Leadership skills

On the table below are listed some of the jobs that a Patrol Leader might do in your Troop. Do you agree with this list? Are there some jobs you would take out? What jobs would you add? You will need to discuss you additions and deletions with your Patrol Leaders. Once again, copy this list and give it to the Patrol Leaders asking them to put a tick in one of the four columns beside each job, showing if they feel they need any help with them.

The job of a Patrol Leader is to .../ The help I require is...	none	a little	some	a lot
Set an example	_____	_____	_____	_____
Help train younger Scouts	_____	_____	_____	_____
Plan programmes	_____	_____	_____	_____
Run programmes	_____	_____	_____	_____
Maintain discipline	_____	_____	_____	_____
Organise Patrol meetings and activities	_____	_____	_____	_____
Organise Troop meeting and activities	_____	_____	_____	_____
Organise camps	_____	_____	_____	_____
Help the Scout Leader	_____	_____	_____	_____
Promote Patrol spirit	_____	_____	_____	_____
Work as a member of the PL's Council	_____	_____	_____	_____
Complete my own training	_____	_____	_____	_____
Accept responsibility	_____	_____	_____	_____
Make new Scouts feel welcome	_____	_____	_____	_____
Keep records	_____	_____	_____	_____