

Unit Commissioner Orientation *fastStart*



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Unit Commissioner Orientation *fastStart*

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Welcome to the Commissioner Staff!

When the average person thinks of adults in Scouting, the typical image is that of an adult working with kids. The role of the unit commissioner is not as highly visible as that - but it's an essential and highly influential role, critical to the success of Scouting in the local community.

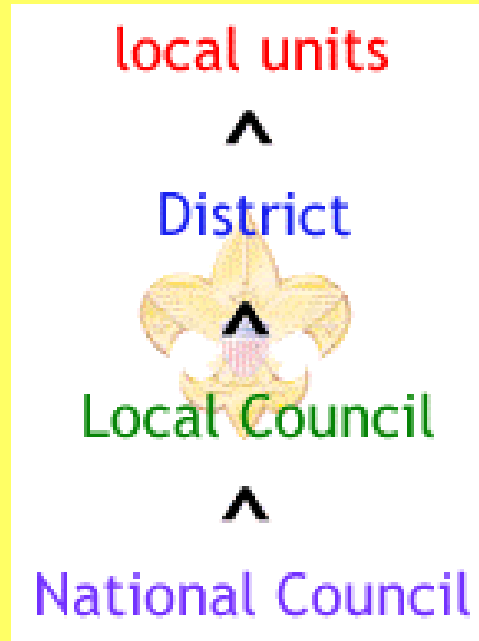
This online Unit Commissioner *FastStart* training is based on the BSA video, *Unit Commissioner's Orientation; Helping Units Succeed (AV-04V001R)* and is designed to help new unit commissioners get a quick start in their new roles. You can find out where to borrow a copy of the video from your district's commissioner staff.

Now, let's get started!



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The Big Picture

Let's look at how the Unit Commissioner fits into the Big Picture.

The National Council of the Boy Scouts of America works through more than 300 local Councils. Each Council is made up of smaller areas called Districts, which in turn are served by District volunteers, and a District Executive, who provides professional guidance and support to chartered organizations and their units.

An important point: The BSA doesn't own the local units; they belong to the BSA's chartered partners - churches, schools, civic and community groups, labor and business groups, and other organizations whose goals and mission are compatible with the Boy Scouts of America.



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The Big Picture *(continued)*

A *charter* is granted to a chartered organization by the Boy Scouts of America to operate a Pack, Troop, Team or Crew using the BSA's programs.

A *Chartered Organization* has three principal responsibilities:

- provide a safe meeting place
- select adult leaders who meet BSA's and the chartered organization's standards, and
- follow the policies and guidelines of the Boy Scouts of America.

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The Big Picture *(continued)*

The Council and District

- provide training
- ensure program guidance
- provide insurance, camps and other support services.

But the all important link between the BSA and chartered organization's Unit is you - *the unit commissioner.*

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The Unit Commissioner role

"A friend in need is a friend indeed."

The Unit Commissioner's sole purpose is to be a friend and to help units achieve success. A commissioner's role is to keep units alive, happy, healthy and re-registered on time.

Your units will likely face many problems. Your job is to solve them or assist in their solutions. To a unit - the UC is "The person we turn to when we need help."

Sounds, tough? Well it's an important job, but not nearly as hard as you might think.

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The Unit Commissioner role *(continued)*

One of the unit Commissioner's functions is to visit the meetings for the units they serve. Note that the they don't disrupt the meetings, they stay on the sidelines. A Unit Commissioner is the sort of friend who is ready to help solve problems as soon as they appear.

An important point: The UC does not take ownership of a problem. Instead, he helps people directly involved in the unit's operation to clearly see what needs attention and why, examine resources and other options, and to take action.

Remember you are backed up by the District Organization and the Council, including the Commissioner staff and the district committee.

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The Commissioner Staff

Let's look at the different types of commissioners and their roles.

The ***District Commissioner*** is responsible for the district's entire commissioner staff. He or she

- recruits and trains new commissioners,
- supports and guides all commissioners, and
- works in partnership with the district chairman.

The ***District Chairman*** oversees other groups of volunteers on the district committee. These groups handle finance, membership and program services. These are just some of the people you can call on to give specialized help to your units when they need it.

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The Commissioner Staff *(continued)*

The ***District Executive*** provides professional coaching and encouragement to the units, maintains contact with the heads of chartered organizations and provides behind the scenes help.

At monthly meetings of the District Commissioner and the commissioner staff you'll have an opportunity to exchange ideas and information. All are excellent resources that will help you.

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Unit Service

One of the best ways to help units is in a more relaxed setting - just you and the unit leader. You'll have the opportunity to learn more about the unit.

Remember the unit commissioner has many roles: friend, counselor, teacher, a doctor for sick units; your job is to do whatever it takes for success.

One way to measure success is to make sure each of your units earns the *Quality Unit Award*.

The criteria are the same solid goals that make for a healthy, active unit.

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Unit Service *(continued)*

Still another Commissioner task is to each year make sure the unit has its charter renewed on time.

You will help the unit conduct an inventory of youth and adults and turning their charter in on time. You'll have the special pleasure of presenting their charter to them in a special ceremony.

Your job will take you not only to some of the unit meetings but also separate time with the unit leaders.

You'll also be attending the occasional gatherings of the unit's committee to help solve problems and help unit operations.

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Unit Service *(continued)*

Another role you will have is assisting in the selection of new unit leaders. You'll make sure that successful techniques are followed using guidelines that have been designed to help units find quality leaders.

Remember, all leaders must be approved by the chartering organization and the Boy Scouts of America.

Then, as new leaders are selected, part of your job is to make sure they take advantage of appropriate training, which is provided by your district.

When working with the unit committee, the key for the unit commissioner is to practice good listening skills, give lots of encouragement and show respect for everyone's ideas.

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Unit Service *(continued)*

In addition to keeping in close contact with your unit, you'll be keeping in touch with the leaders of chartered organizations. By maintaining good communication with everyone, you'll be in an excellent position to monitor the health of each unit and to act quickly when a problem arises. That is when you become what is sometimes called - a Scouting paramedic.

These are situations, which can threaten the life of a unit. You have to go into action fast. When a unit has a life-threatening problem, the unit commissioner gives it top priority.

The unit commissioner works with the unit's leaders, asking questions, making suggestions, but not taking over or assuming control.

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Unit Service *(continued)*

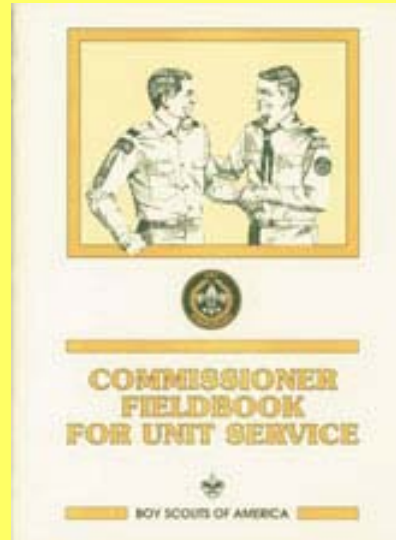
Once you have appropriate information, you can turn to your ***Assistant District Commissioner*** or ***District Commissioner*** for advice. Working together with the Unit Leader and Chartered Organization representative, the unit commissioner moves them through the a process to clearly identify the source of the problem, designing a strategy to solve it involving the appropriate individuals, and outlining a course of action.

The best way to deal with emergencies is, of course, to prevent them.



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Unit Service *(continued)*

Just as a paramedic checks vital signs, a good commissioner watches the health of his units.

Your commissioner field book has a helpful warning checklist. When a warning sign appears, you become a lifesaving commissioner. Without prompt intensive care, a unit could become a terminal case.

Remember, dead units do not provide a program for kids.

Make the commitment now to never lose a unit.



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Next Steps

You've taken the first step by taking this *FastStart* training. The next step is learn about your two most valuable resources:

- *The Commissioner Field book for Unit Service* and
- Your District Commissioner, Assistant District Commissioner or whoever has been assigned as your coach.

They'll help you fill in your ***Commissioner Program Notebook*** with key meeting dates. They'll give you unit rosters and background information on your assigned units. They'll connect you with adults involved in your units and take you to your first meeting. They'll give you a kit of helpful materials to help you serve your units. They'll also lay out a training path for you. After you've completed your basic training course, you'll receive a trained leader patch for your uniform.

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Summary

You've embarked on a challenging and rewarding leadership job. Your eyes, your ears, your efforts, your knowledge, and your willingness to learn will all contribute to a quality Scouting program.

From now on when you see a major unit event, a weak unit made healthy again, a quality unit award presented, a new leader recruited, you will know that you contributed to their success.

Hold those images close, for they are the symbols of a job well done.

Welcome to the ranks of commissioner service! The Scouting tradition is made stronger by your participation. Thanks!

Please contact your District Commissioner and let him or her know you have completed the Unit Commissioner Fast Start and to make arrangements to take Commissioner basic training.

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