

# Let's discuss the BSA's rule on registering all adults who participate in overnight activities

[By Aaron Derr](#) [November 8, 2023](#) [63 Comments](#) [Health and Safety](#), [Youth Protection](#)



Earlier this fall, the BSA updated Scouting's [Barriers to Abuse](#). The updated policy requires adults who spend the night at official BSA events to be registered.

*Effective Sept. 1, 2023, all adults staying overnight in connection with a Scouting activity must be registered as an adult volunteer or an adult program participant.*

Let's dive in with some of the most commonly asked questions we've heard

since this rule went into effect.

## **Q: What does it mean to be registered as an adult leader in the Boy Scouts of America?**

A: Being a registered adult leader indicates that you have been selected and approved to serve in your unit, or in a district or council position. This selection and approval process takes place at either the unit level through a charter organization, or through your council for council and district positions. Depending on your role(s) in Scouting, you may need to be registered in more than one position. You can register for multiple positions in the BSA at no additional cost.

Registration is more than just filling out an application. Unit level registration shows that your chartering organization has approved you to work with their youth in support of a specific unit. Registering also ensures that a criminal background check has been performed, and that a check against the volunteer screening database has taken place. The BSA's goal is to ensure that only the highest quality individuals provide supervision and leadership for our youth.

## **Q: What is the purpose of the new rule?**

A: "That rule is necessary for a basic, common-sense reason," [says BSA Youth Protection Executive Glen Pounder](#). "When you think about protection of our kids, not just from child abuse, but also from bullying, violence, any form of hazing ... we want to be sure that everybody who shows up doesn't have a criminal record. It's a real common-sense thing to put in place to make sure we are aiming to do absolutely everything we can do to keep our Scouts safe."

"I intend to work with the Youth Protection committee and others to simplify or clarify all of our policies as needed so that it's clear what the intention is and why the policy is in place."

## **Q: Does this rule apply to the parents of Cub Scouts, too?**

A: Cub Scout parents or legal guardians taking part in an overnight Cub Scout program with their own child or legal ward are not required to register as leaders. This is called the Cub Scout overnight exception. The unregistered parent or legal guardian must be accompanied by a registered leader any time they are with youth members other than their own child or ward. Any other adult that wishes to camp at a BSA event — no matter the age of the youth at the event — must register as a member of the BSA. You can read the full details on how the Barriers to Abuse applies to Cub Scout parents on the [Barriers to Abuse website](#).

## **Q: What is the ideal position for adults to register for so they can camp with Scout units if they aren't going to be unit leaders?**

A: Adults may select from the list of adult leader position options listed on pages 36-39 of the [Registration Guidebook of the Boy Scouts of America](#). Use this list to have a conversation with your unit leadership about what position makes sense for you to register for. There are many options, including committee members, assistant leaders or even Scouter Reserve.

## **Q: What if I'm an adult attending a district or council activity, as opposed to an activity hosted by a unit?**

A: If you stay overnight, you must be currently registered as an adult volunteer or an adult program participant. Adults need to register for the

position(s) they are serving in. For example, if you are staffing a weekend district camporee overnight event, you could be registered as a member of your district committee(s) or council committee(s) depending on your role at the event. Adults who are attending the event with their unit need to be registered as an adult with that unit.

## **Q: What about merit badge counselors?**

A: Registration as a merit badge counselor does not meet the overnight registration requirement. Check out our answer to this question on the [Barriers to Abuse FAQ website](#).

## **Q: What about when Arrow of Light dens camp with Scouts BSA troops? Do the Arrow of Light parents have to register?**

A: The Arrow of Light den must camp according to the specific camping guidance for Cub Scouts. That means that Cub Scout parents or legal guardians are not required to register as leaders if they are attending with their own child or legal ward. However, they must be accompanied by a registered leader any time they are with youth members of any age other than their own child or ward. As always, one-on-one contact between any adult and youth members other than their own child or ward is prohibited. Reminder, if the troop and pack to which the AOL den belongs do not share the same charter partner, the troop and AOL den must receive permission from the council to hold the joint activity (see the [camping section in the Guide to Safe Scouting](#) for more camping details).

## **Q: What about campouts at facilities where Scouts share accommodations with the public? For example, our Scout troop is staying at a public campground. Do the new**

## **guidelines mean that trips to these types of locations are no longer allowed?**

A: The requirement that all adults must register to stay overnight at a Scouting activity pertains to adults attending and participating with the Scout unit. It would not apply to the public. However, a unit needs to ensure they can meet all of Scouting's [Barriers to Abuse](#) at each location they are utilizing. As always, Youth Protection and supervision remains the responsibility of the unit, and unit leadership must ensure that all BSA policies and guidelines are followed. We encourage you to speak with your local council to determine if a location you're considering for an overnight stay is appropriate and can meet all of Scouting's Barriers to Abuse.

## **Q: Our pack is participating in an overnight stay at our local museum. Do the adult museum staff have to be registered with the BSA?**

A: Youth Protection and supervision remains the responsibility of the unit and Scout leaders. Vendors and other third parties must be licensed businesses that carry proper liability insurance, and units should be sure that they use reputable services. Vendors such as museums, climbing guides, hiking guides, rafting services all fall into these categories. Unit leadership must ensure that all BSA policies and guidelines are followed when using these services. As a reminder, all Cub Scout camping and Youth Protection policies apply, including ensuring that the location is approved by your local council, as required by the Guide to Safe Scouting.

## **Q: Our Venturing crew is going winter camping and have asked me to serve as an adult chaperone. I am registered in our chartered organization's troop, but not the crew. Do I also have to register in the crew?**

A: Yes, adult volunteers must register for the position(s) in which they are serving. As a reminder, you can multiple register for additional positions in Scouting at no additional cost. Registering with the crew ensures that your chartered partner has agreed to you serving in this capacity.

## **Q: Our Scouts BSA boy troop and our Scouts BSA girl troop are linked. Which troop do I need to be registered with to go on a joint campout?**

A: First, each troop is a separate unit and therefore each troop/unit must provide its own two-deep leadership, meeting the leadership requirements outlined in Scouting's Barriers to Abuse. Second, as with all adult volunteers, you must be registered for the position(s) in which you are serving. If you will be attending with the girl troop, you must be registered as an adult volunteer in the girl troop. If you will be attending with the boy troop, you must be registered as an adult volunteer in the boy troop. You can register for both troops (at no extra charge) and can select one troop for your primary registration and add the other troop as a multiple registration.

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