

REFUND POLICY

Events • Facilities and Activities • Council Store

Policy Element	Detail
Applies to	All participants, families, units, chartered organizations, vendors, and outside groups transacting with the Western Massachusetts Council
Covers	Council and district events, camp and program fees, facility and property reservations, activity fees, and Council Store purchases
Owner	Scout Executive / CEO
Effective date	September 1, 2026
Never refunded	Membership fees, charitable contributions, and non-refundable deposits (see Sections 3.5 and 3.6)

1. Purpose

The Western Massachusetts Council is a nonprofit organization. Fees collected for registration, events, camps, facilities, and merchandise are committed in advance to food, program supplies, insurance, staffing, permits, and facility preparation. Once those commitments are made, the money has already been spent on behalf of the Scouts who registered.

This policy ensures every family, unit, and guest is treated consistently and fairly, volunteers and staff apply the same standard to every request, and the Council protects the resources entrusted to it to deliver the Scouting program.

2. Guiding Principles

- Refund decisions are applied uniformly. No participant, unit, or guest receives terms different from those published here.
- Deposits secure capacity that the Council cannot resell on short notice and are therefore non-refundable.
- No youth is denied a Scouting experience for financial reasons. Families facing hardship should apply for a campership or financial assistance rather than cancel.
- Refunds are never issued in cash and never issued at the point of service by event staff, camp staff, or Council Store staff.

3. General Provisions (All Refund Requests)

3.1 Requests must be in writing

All refund requests must be submitted in writing to the Council Service Center using the Council Refund Request Form. Verbal requests made to event staff, camp staff, Rangers, or Council Store personnel are not refund requests and will not be processed. Requests submitted by a unit leader on behalf of a unit must identify each affected participant by name.

3.2 Deadlines

Refund requests must be received no later than fourteen (14) days after the conclusion of the event, activity, or reservation, or within the return window described in Section 6 for merchandise. Requests received after that date will not be considered regardless of the underlying circumstance.

3.3 Method and timing of refunds

- Approved refunds are returned to the original method of payment whenever possible. If the original method is unavailable, we issue a check to the payer of record.
- Refunds are processed within thirty (30) days of approval. Refunds for summer camp and other multi-week programs are processed after the close of the season.
- Third-party online registration and credit card processing fees are retained by the processor and are not refundable by the Council.
- Approved amounts of \$25 or less are issued as a Council credit rather than a refund, unless the Council canceled the event.

3.4 Council credit

A Council credit is held in the unit account and may be applied to any Council event, camp fee, facility reservation, or Council Store purchase.

3.5 Items that are never refundable

- Charitable contributions, Friends of Scouting gifts, sponsorships, and Tribute Fund gifts. These are irrevocable gifts and are receipted as such.
- Membership fees. See Section 3.6.
- Deposits identified as non-refundable at the time of registration or reservation.
- Trading post, camp store, and food service purchases made on site.
- Fees for events that have already taken place when a participant simply did not attend.
- Third-party costs already committed on the participant's behalf, including tickets, charter transportation, permits, high-adventure base fees, and specialty equipment ordered to order.

3.6 Membership fees are not refunded

The Western Massachusetts Council does not refund membership fees under any circumstance. This applies to the Scouting America national membership registration fee, the Council program fee, the new-member joining fee, and any Scout Life subscription purchased with a registration.

- Membership fees are not refunded in whole or in part, and are not prorated, when a youth or adult member resigns, is dropped, moves out of the Council, transfers to another unit or council, or does not participate during the registration term.
- Membership fees are not refunded when a unit drops its charter, folds, or transfers members to another unit.
- Membership fees are not convertible to a Council credit and are not transferable to another person.
- A member who transfers between units keeps an active registration for the balance of the term. No new fee and no refund is due.
- Where an event or camp fee is bundled with a membership or program fee, only the event or camp portion is eligible for refund under Section I. The membership portion is retained in every case.
- The national membership fee is set and collected by Scouting America, not by the Council. The Council has no authority to waive or return it.

A family that cannot afford a membership fee should ask the Council about membership assistance before declining to register. Assistance is available, and no youth is turned away for inability to pay.

4. Section I — Council and District Events, Camps, and Programs

This section applies to all Council and district events, day camps, resident camps, summer camp at the Horace A. Moses Scout Reservation, training courses, merit badge programs, dinners, and fundraising events for which a registration fee is collected.

4.1 Deposits

Deposits are non-refundable. A deposit holds a seat, a campsite, a meal, or a staff position that the Council cannot fill once the registration window closes.

4.2 Standard event cancellation schedule

Unless the event's published registration materials state otherwise, refunds for participant-initiated cancellations follow this schedule:

Written request received	Refund	Notes
30 or more days before the event	Full refund less the deposit	Processing fees are not refunded
15 to 29 days before the event	50% of fees paid, less the deposit	Balance may be converted to Council credit on request
14 days or fewer before the event	No refund	
After the event begins	No refund	Includes early departure and no-shows

4.3 Summer camp and long-term camp

- The per-Scout camp deposit is non-refundable but is transferable to another Scout in the same unit at any time before the unit's arrival date.
- Cancellations received more than 30 days before the unit's arrival date receive a full refund of fees paid above the deposit.
- Cancellations received 15 to 29 days before arrival receive 50% of fees paid above the deposit.
- Cancellations received within 14 days of arrival receive no refund. Requests based on documented illness, injury, family emergency, or military deployment will be reviewed under Section 4.7.
- Unit reservations that fall below the guaranteed minimum headcount are billed at the confirmed headcount submitted at the final payment deadline.
- Merit badge day passes and add-on program fees follow the standard schedule in Section 4.2.

4.4 Transfers and substitutions

A unit or family may substitute another eligible participant at no charge up to 48 hours before an event begins, provided the substitute meets the age, rank, training, and health requirements of the program. Substitutions are made through the Council Service Center or the unit's registration account and do not require a refund request.

Fees may also be transferred once to another Council event within the same program year, subject to availability. A second transfer is not permitted; the balance becomes a Council credit.

4.5 Cancellation by the Council

If the Council cancels an event outright, participants receive a full refund of all fees paid, including deposits, or may elect a Council credit. Refunds in these circumstances are processed automatically and no request form is required.

4.6 Weather, program interruption, and early closure

- Scouting is an outdoor program. Rain, heat, cold, and mud are part of the experience and are not grounds for a refund.
- If severe weather or an emergency forces an event to end early, refunds are prorated only for unused meals, lodging, and unissued program materials, and only when the Council has not already incurred the cost.
- When a program is postponed rather than cancelled, registrations move automatically to the new date. A participant who cannot attend the new date may request a refund under Section 4.2 as measured against the original event date.

4.7 Illness, injury, and emergency

A participant who cannot attend because of documented illness, injury, hospitalization, a death in the family, or an unanticipated military deployment may request an exception. Written documentation must accompany the request. Approved exceptions are normally granted as a Council credit; a cash refund requires the approval of the Scout Executive.

4.8 Dismissal for conduct

No refund is issued to a participant or leader who is dismissed from an event or camp for violation of the Scout Oath and Law, the Guide to Safe Scouting, Youth Protection policy, or Council rules of conduct. This includes dismissal of an entire unit.

4.9 Camperships and financial assistance

Campership awards and other Council financial assistance are not cash and are never refunded to the family or unit. If a Scout who received an award does not attend, the award returns to the campership fund for use by another Scout.

5. Section II — Facility Reservations, Property Use, and Activities

This section applies to campsite and building reservations by Scouting units, to program activity reservations such as ranges, waterfront, and climbing, and to private, corporate, and nonprofit rentals of the Horace A. Moses Scout Reservation and other Council properties.

5.1 Scouting unit reservations

Units reserve campsites and facilities through the Council's online reservation system. Cancellations must be submitted in writing; simply removing a reservation from the system does not generate a refund.

Written cancellation received	Refund	Notes
30 or more days before arrival	Full refund less a \$25 administrative fee	Or full value moved to a new date at no charge
8 to 29 days before arrival	50% of fees paid	
7 days or fewer before arrival	No refund	One date change may be requested, subject to availability
No-show	No refund	Repeated no-shows may affect future reservation privileges

- Reservation fees for program activities that require certified staff — shooting sports, aquatics, climbing, and COPE — are non-refundable within 14 days of the reservation date because staffing is committed at that point.
- A unit that reduces its headcount after the final confirmation deadline is billed at the confirmed number.

5.2 Private, corporate, and nonprofit rentals

Rentals of Council property by outside groups — including weddings, receptions, corporate retreats, meetings, and nonprofit gatherings — are governed by the executed rental agreement. Where the agreement and this policy differ, the executed agreement controls. In the absence of contrary terms, the following applies:

Written cancellation received	Refund of amounts paid	Notes
At any time	Retainer is non-refundable	Retainer equals 25% of the contracted rental fee and is due at signing
180 or more days before the event	Full refund of amounts paid above the retainer	One date change permitted in place of cancellation
90 to 179 days before the event	50% of amounts paid above the retainer	Subject to availability, the date may be moved once within 12 months
Fewer than 90 days before the event	No refund	The date is considered sold and cannot be resold

- Rescheduling a confirmed date is treated as a cancellation unless the Council agrees in writing to transfer the retainer and payments to the new date.
- Vendor fees, licenses, insurance certificates, and permits obtained for a rental are not refundable once secured.

5.3 Security deposits, cleaning, and damage

- A refundable security deposit is required for building rentals and for all non-Scouting events. It is separate from the rental fee and the retainer.
- The security deposit is returned in full within 30 days of the event when the facility is left clean, undamaged, and vacated on time, and when all keys and equipment are returned.
- Post-event cleaning charges are assessed by the Camp Ranger against the published fee schedule and are deducted from the deposit.
- Damage and vandalism are assessed by the Camp Maintenance Committee. Where the assessed cost exceeds the deposit, the balance is invoiced to the renting party.
- Trash left on site, unauthorized use of restricted areas, and late departure each carry a charge deducted from the deposit.

5.4 Cancellation by the Council and conditions beyond control

The Council may cancel or relocate a reservation when weather, fire, flood, storm damage, loss of utilities, public health orders, government action, or a facility emergency makes safe use impossible. In those circumstances, the renting party receives a full refund of all amounts paid, including the retainer and any deposit, or may move the reservation to an available date at no charge. The Council's liability is limited to the amounts actually paid to the Council and does not extend to a renter's third-party costs such as catering, rentals, travel, or lodging. Renters of Council property for high-value events are strongly encouraged to carry event cancellation insurance.

5.5 Council-initiated relocation within a property

Assignment of a specific campsite, building, or space is not guaranteed. The Council may reassign a group to a comparable space to accommodate maintenance, capacity, or safety needs. A comparable reassignment is not grounds for a refund.

6. Section III — Council Store Returns and Exchanges

This section applies to purchases made at the Council Store and through the Council online store. A dated receipt or order confirmation is required for every return and exchange.

6.1 Standard return window

Time since purchase	Merchandise condition	Outcome
Within 30 days	Unworn, unwashed, unused, tags attached, original packaging	Full refund to the original method of payment, or exchange
31 to 60 days	Unworn, unwashed, unused, tags attached, original packaging	Exchange or store credit only
More than 60 days	Any condition	No return, exchange, or credit
Any time	Worn, washed, altered, or missing tags	No return, exchange, or credit

Uniform items must be free of insignia, patches, and unit numerals. Once insignia has been sewn or ironed on, the item cannot be returned.

6.2 Exchanges

Exchanges for a different size or color are made at no charge within the windows above, subject to stock on hand. If the exchange item costs more, we collect the difference at the time of exchange.

6.3 Items that cannot be returned or exchanged

- Custom, personalized, embroidered, or special-ordered items, including unit numerals and custom patches.
- Advancement items, rank badges, merit badges, and awards released against a unit advancement report. Corrections are handled through the unit's advancement chair, not as a return.
- Clearance, closeout, and marked-down merchandise, which is sold as final sale.
- Limited-edition, blind-packaged, and promotional merchandise sold under published no-return terms, including mystery-bag promotions. Any exception is stated in the published terms of that promotion and applies only as stated.
- Food, beverages, opened consumables, and health and safety items.
- Gift cards, certificates, and Council credits.

- Literature, handbooks, and printed materials once marked, written in, or otherwise unsalable.
- Camp t-shirts, event merchandise, and program items purchased on site at an event or camp.

6.4 Defective merchandise

Merchandise found to be defective in materials or workmanship is replaced at no charge within 90 days of purchase, regardless of the standard return window. Defective national supply items may be handled under the national supply group's warranty; Council Store staff will initiate that claim on the customer's behalf.

6.5 Online orders and shipping (Council Products Only)

- Online orders may be returned under the same conditions and windows as in-store purchases, measured from the delivery date.
- Shipping and handling charges are not refundable except where the Council shipped an incorrect or defective item.
- Return shipping is the responsibility of the customer unless the Council shipped in error.
- Orders designated for pickup at the Council Store that remain unclaimed for 60 days are considered abandoned and are not refunded.

6.6 Order cancellations

An online order may be canceled for a full refund at any time before it has been packed, shipped, or made available for pickup. Once an order has been fulfilled, the return terms above apply.

7. How to Request a Refund

1. Complete the Council Refund Request Form, available at the Council Service Center and on the Council website.
2. Include the participant or purchaser name, unit number, event or reservation name and date, amount paid, method of payment, and the reason for the request.
3. Attach the receipt, order confirmation, or registration confirmation, along with any supporting documentation for a hardship or medical exception.
4. Submit the form to the Council Service Center by email, mail, or in person within the deadline stated in Section 3.2.
5. The Council reviews the request and responds in writing within fifteen (15) business days of receipt.
6. Approved refunds are processed within thirty (30) days of the written decision.

8. Exceptions and Appeals

The Scout Executive, or a designee, may grant an exception to this policy where circumstances clearly warrant it. Exceptions are documented in writing and do not establish a precedent for future requests.

A requester who disagrees with a decision may appeal in writing to the Scout Executive within fourteen (14) days of the decision.

No employee or volunteer of the Council is authorized to promise a refund, waive a deposit, or vary the terms of this policy outside of this process.

9. Policy Administration

This policy is published in Council registration materials, on the Council website, in rental agreements, and at the point of sale in the Council Store. Registering for an event, confirming a reservation, or completing a purchase constitutes acknowledgment of these terms.

The Scout Executive is responsible for administration of this policy. Where an event's published registration materials or an executed rental agreement state different terms, those terms control for that event or rental only; all other provisions of this policy remain in effect.
