

SO, YOU'RE A NEW SKIPPER

Congratulations on becoming the skipper of a Sea Scout ship. You are now a leader in one of the largest youth movements in the world—the Boy Scouts of America. By making the commitment to serve as a leader, you have joined the ranks of almost 5,000 adult leaders in 700 ships around the country. These leaders are giving time, ability, enthusiasm, and energy to build a better future for our nation. As you give leadership in Sea Scouting, you help to enrich the lives of young men and women and make a difference in the kind of people they will become. An exciting and rewarding experience lies ahead of you.

This information is designed to help you get started as a successful leader. Many resources are available for your use. There are many people who are interested in helping you to be successful in your job. Furthermore, training opportunities are provided so that you may continue to grow in effective leadership. So good luck, and welcome to Sea Scouting.

WHAT IS SEA SCOUTING?

Sea Scouting is an avenue for the adventurous, a vehicle for the curious, and a really good time for a young person starting out in life's most exciting time—growing up and reaching toward the world around them. Through community organizations, the Boy Scouts of America provides young adults with an effective program designed to build good character, to train in the responsibilities of citizenship, and to develop personal and mental fitness. Sea Scouting is part of Venturing, one of three divisions of the Boy Scouts of America (the others are Cub Scouting and Boy Scouting).

Each Sea Scout ship is unique. It revolves around the interests, needs, concerns and; most importantly, the curiosity of youth. A ship's activities are limited only by imagination and resourcefulness.

SEA SCOUTING IS . . .

Sea Scouting is part of the Venturing young adult program of the Boy Scouts of America for young men and women aged 14 through 20. The program is developed by local community organizations such as businesses, industries, professions, churches, and civic groups that match the interests of young adults with the program resources of the organization. These community organizations support their ship in three major ways:

1. A program inventory of adults related to the organization who are willing to provide program help to the ship. This includes careers, hobbies, skills, contacts, facilities, and ideas.
2. Adult leadership to organize this program inventory and serve as advisors to the ship's elected youth leaders.
3. Meeting facilities.

A Sea Scout ship is a young-adult organization that recruits members, elects officers, and plans programs based on the organization's program inventory. Adult skippers, mates and consultants provide training and guidance for the ship's elected officers.

A typical Sea Scout ship meets weekly (or twice a month) for general meetings and has at least one activity each month. In addition, the youth officers and skippers meet once a month to track the ship's program. Each ship program is selected, planned, and executed by its

youth members, with guidance from the skippers. Parents, adults from the chartered organization, and the ship's adult committee support the program as consultants.

Sea Scouting is different from Cub Scouting and Boy Scouting in that its members may choose not to wear the traditional uniform. While many ships adopt the national standard uniform that is based on naval history, some ships do not use formal uniforms. Moreover, Sea Scouting uses a progressive program of advancement, including both Sea Scout ranks and Venturing achievements.

SURE I SIGNED UP —BUT WHAT DO I DO NOW?

1. Obtain (or borrow temporarily) and read the Venturing Leader Manual and the Sea Scout Manual. These books will describe your role as the skipper and will answer a lot of questions.
2. Get acquainted with the other leaders in your ship. You will need their help in carrying out a successful program. You will be working closely with the ship committee chairman and your ship's elected youth officers.
3. Meet your unit commissioner and your district executive. They will do everything possible to help you be successful.
4. As soon as possible, attend Venturing Leader Specific Training. It will provide you with a good overview of the program. Follow that with Sea Scout Officer's Specialized Training the next time it is offered.
5. Attend the monthly fleet (skippers') meetings sponsored by the Sea Scouting fleet. These meetings will: (a) keep you informed about BSA activities designed to support your ship's program, and (b) provide you the opportunity to share experiences with other ship skippers. These meetings are held on the third Wednesday of each month at the Scout Service Center at 7:30 PM.
6. Work with your elected officers so that they and your ship members run the program.

Don't hesitate to ask for help. There are a number of people who are available to help you provide the Sea Scouting experience to young adults.

By the time you have completed these steps, you will be well on your way to becoming a successful skipper.

OUR SHIP IS NEW —HOW DO I GET STARTED?

The first few months of a new ship are exciting. Moreover, the first two or three meetings could determine the future of the ship. Therefore, carefully consider the following steps that have been used by successful ships around the country.

1. With other adults from your ship committee and chartered organization, set up a 3-month program of exciting things that new Sea Scouts can do. This program should start with an open house program and include hands-on meetings and activities. Remember that the youth want to be doers, not watchers.

The open house program shows the prospective Sea Scouts what the ship can do. You should invite about three times as many prospective new members as you want, particularly if the names were obtained from a career interest survey or school source. Young adults may have moved, or changed interest, or have school or job conflicts. Prospective members should leave the open house knowing: (a) the purpose of the ship, (b) who the leaders are, (c) the schedule and location for the next three or four meetings, (d) that the program is real and not a promise, (e) that Sea Scouting is part of the Boy Scouts of America, and (f) that the members run the program.

2. At the open house, set up a youth steering committee to organize the ship program. Set up elections and start generating the ship bylaws. If you have prospects from several schools, make sure each school is represented on this steering committee. This group of youth can serve as temporary officers until a regular election is held.
3. Determine the interests of the members right away. This is done through the ship's elected officers or steering committee and by a Venturing interest survey. (A sample may be found in the Venturing Leader Manual.) The program of the ship must be planned to meet the interest of its members or membership will decline. Using the results of the survey, have the officers select and schedule activities and meetings. This schedule should be approved by both the Sea Scouts and the adults involved in the ship.
4. Next, have the Sea Scouts plan and run the program with some help and guidance from you and the other adults. Remember that the youth want to work with adults, not for them. The Sea Scouts will want the program to include activities that are not in the ship's specialty.
5. Finally, see that the ship elects youth officers as soon as possible. After they are elected, hold an officers' briefing to explain the basic duties and invite the new officers to an officers' seminar (quarterdeck training). At an officers' seminar, make sure the youth understand their job duties and how to operate the ship.

The method of Sea Scouting is to bring youth into meaningful contact with adults who can expand their horizons and influence their future. You start Sea Scouts on the road to self-reliance. Results do not happen overnight. As ship members and officers develop in skill and ability, increase their responsibility in operating their ship. The first few meetings should be uncomplicated and fun-filled, allowing for members' input and participation at a level they can accomplish.

I'M A SKIPPER — NOW WHAT?

A Sea Scout skipper is an advisor — one who trains, guides, and coaches with a minimum of directing, ordering, or preaching. So think of yourself as the team coach, and think of the ship boatswain (president) as the team captain. The coach's role is to train the captain to call the plays on the field and lead the team to success.

Working with youth is a unique and challenging adventure that can be most rewarding. Some of the time you deal with them as equals, some of the time as a coach or counselor. The most effective way to balance these roles is simply to be yourself. It isn't necessary to be "one of the gang." They may challenge you, disagree with you, or seem to reject your values, but your stand for what is right and good will have a profound effect on

their future. You were asked to become a Sea Scout skipper because your character and citizenship would be a positive example for youth.

Key items to consider when becoming a skipper to an existing unit include the following:

1. Work with the ship committee chairman and the elected officers to determine the scheduled ship program and its status. Some activities proceed as scheduled, others do not. When a new skipper joins the ship, he might discover that the youth officers need to be trained, or that they need more adult help, or that they need to help members become more enthusiastic. Discuss the status of the ship with the youth officers and have them identify their concerns and problems. Remember that you are probably unknown to the youth officers; give them time to get acquainted.
2. As soon as possible, hold an officers' briefing (or full seminar if the youth never were involved in one). This will permit both you and the youth officers to get to know each other and decide how the ship is going to be managed. It will also give you the chance to reinforce your support for the officers. More information on the officers' seminar may be found in the Venturing Leader Manual and the Sea Scout Manual.
3. Often, a newly selected skipper might find that the ship lacks adult support. You should make an effort to involve other adults in the ships program. The ship committee and parents can easily become involved in the program as consultants, meeting speakers, etc. Many ships failed because the operation became a "one man show." It is recommended that each ship have at least two mates (associate advisors), one for program and one for administration. This will give you some backup.
4. When you have gained the confidence of the youth, take a look at the ship program. Does it contain activities with a broad spectrum of experiences? Do youth have a voice in its content? Are the Sea Scouts planning and running the activities with adult guidance? Is the program outlined in accordance with the organizations desires for the ship? If you find problems in this area, work with the youth officers and adult committee to improve the situation. Refer to the Venturing Leaders' Manual and Sea Scout Manual for more help on program planning and execution.

Remember that there is always more than one way to accomplish a task. Sea Scouting is an experience in shared leadership between the adults involved in the program and the Sea Scouts. You, by your willingness to accept the job of being a ship skipper, have shown your interest. Ability comes with experience. Don't be worried if the group decides that the program needs changing, this is normal, even in other outstanding ships around the country.

YOU, THE SKIPPER

You were selected as skipper and approved by the ship committee because of your interest in young adults. It is your responsibility to coordinate the efforts of the adult and youth leaders so that the ship's program works the way it should. By making the commitment to serve as a skipper. You have accepted the following responsibilities:

- To train youth to plan and operate your ship's program
- To encourage support for Sea Scouting from the chartered organization, ship committee, and parents

- To uphold standards and policies of the chartered organization and the Boy Scouts of America
- To have fun

Your unit commissioner, or Scout executive will be glad to explain any of the responsibilities you do not understand.

WHAT DO YOU INVEST IN SEA SCOUTING?

- Typically, two-four evenings a month for ship meetings
- One meeting a month for your officers' meeting
- One activity per month outside the ship meetings
- One meeting a month with the ship committee
- Seven hours of basic training sessions
- Cost of participating in ship activities
- Cost of your ship's uniform
- The registration fee

This is a small investment compared to the dividends you will receive. Of course, the more you invest, the more fun you can expect in return.

WHAT DO YOU RECEIVE IN RETURN?

- Several evenings a month of fun and fellowship with the Sea Scouts
- The privilege of helping young adults to stand on their "own two feet"
- An opportunity to share your talents with the Sea Scouts and adults involved in the program
- A growing admiration for youth and their growing respect for you as their skipper and friend
- A chance to help young adults learn good citizenship and a chance to help them become more responsible citizens who have strength of character and are sensitive to the needs of others
- A code to live by - one that will set a worthwhile example for today's youth
- The satisfaction of being a member of a worldwide movement and pride in being publicly identified as a part of this organization
- The opportunity to have fun participating in your ship's activities

RESOURCES

Your unit commissioner or district executive will help you fill out the following information:

Ship No. _____

Chartered Organization _____

_____ District, Sam Houston Area Council

Ship meetings are held at _____
on _____

Fleet meetings are held at the Scout Service Center, North Loop 610 and East T. C. Jester at 7:30 on the third Wednesday of each month (except December).

District Venturing roundtables are held at _____ on _____

Ship Skipper _____ Phone _____

Ship Committee Chairman _____ Phone _____

Ship Boatswain _____ Phone _____

Unit Commissioner _____ Phone _____

District Executive _____ Phone 713-756-3_____

The next Venturing Leaders Specific Training session is:

Date _____ Time _____

Location _____

The next Sea Scout Officer Specialized Training session is:

Date _____ Time _____

Location _____