

# Patrol Leader Advice

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A patrol leader is responsible for the management of his patrol. His role includes a great deal of responsibility and requires training and ongoing support from the scoutmaster, troop guide, and assistant scoutmaster assigned to his patrol.

Here is some information to help train and guide the newly elected patrol leader.

Patrols work well when:

1. Everyone has ideas
2. Everyone helps plan
3. Everyone does his part
4. Everyone follows the Scout Oath and Law

A good patrol leader is prepared:

- He has pencil and paper handy at all times
- He brings a troop calendar to meetings
- He prepares a written agenda for each Patrol meeting

A good patrol leader is fair:

- He treats each individual the way she would wish to be treated
- He never shows favoritism

A good patrol leader is considerate:

- He listens to those in his patrol and presents everybody's ideas
- He is never judgmental of others

A good patrol leader sets a good example:

- He keeps his patrol on task
- He is on time
- He demonstrates the Oath and Law
- He speaks for his patrol and not for himself at meetings

A patrol meeting will be successful if:

- Everyone can see and hear everyone else
- Everyone is focused on the patrol leader and the topic at hand
- Everyone is included in the topic being discussed
- The patrol leader, not the patrol, runs the patrol meeting

So, ...

- There can be no private conversations, until the meeting is concluded
- The topics discussed must pertain to everyone and individual questions to the patrol leader should be addressed later
- Individuals cannot be allowed to steer the meeting away from its purpose
- Discussion is kept short and to the point
- Distractions are not allowed to get out of hand

## Good Patrol Meeting Format

- **Opening** – Recite the scout oath or law or pledge of allegiance.
- **Attendance** - APL should do it and turn it in to the scribe, without group discussion
- **Review** - Discuss the previous patrol meeting and what happened.  
Patrol members report progress on assignments they had.  
Discuss other unfinished business.  
Patrol leader updates notes in his binder.
- **Upcoming duties** - Remind your patrol of upcoming service or program duties  
Make plans to fulfill the duties.  
Assign tasks to individual members and include a completion date.  
Record the assignments in patrol leader's binder.
- **Advancement** - Make sure your patrol is advancing  
Have everyone set advancement goals for a 2-4 week period, or longer for older scouts earning merit badges.  
Mark goals on patrol advancement chart or in patrol leader binder.  
Hold scouts accountable to their goals and review them every week.
- **PLC Issues** - Ask scouts if they have issues to bring up in the PLC  
Also ask for program ideas and suggestions for any other things the PLC is discussing such as summer outings, projects, or service.  
Record their issues in patrol leader's binder for next PLC meeting.
- **Patrol Work** –  
Work on tasks given your patrol by the troop leaders. This could be preparing to teach skills, planning a troop game, or flag ceremony.  
Learn skills for advancement. Have a troop guide, instructor, scoutmaster, or expert at your meeting to teach you.  
Practice skits, songs, activities, skills for an upcoming outing.
- **Have Fun** – try out a new scouting-oriented game or activity, or do an old favorite
- **Closing** – everyone cleans up and thanks the host before leaving

## How to Plan a Meeting

For a Patrol Meeting to flow smoothly, the Patrol Leader needs to plan the meeting. He should include his assistant patrol leader in the planning.

1. The Patrol Leader needs a binder just for patrol business. All notes taken by the Patrol Leader at troop, PLC, and patrol meetings need to be kept there so they can be easily found.
2. Make a list of those items that need action. A big star or color highlight helps.
3. The Patrol Leader prioritizes the items on his list and places similar topics together. More important items should be at the top of the list.
4. Estimate how long each item should take to accomplish and write it by each item.
5. Gather supplies for the meeting – materials for skills, game equipment, snacks.
6. Make sure your SPL and Scoutmaster know when and where you are meeting.
7. Prepare a written agenda to distribute and follow the agenda. When items take more time than estimated, a decision will need to be made as to whether to move on or to cut something else from the agenda in order to make room for the longer topic. Stay focused.

## Brainstorming Guidelines

Brainstorming is a technique to gather many ideas in a short amount of time. A scribe records the items on paper or whiteboard. The Patrol Leader acts as moderator. Once the topic is chosen to brainstorm (such as ideas of places to go), the moderator asks for ideas. Following are some guidelines:

- One person speaks at a time
- All ideas are included and written down
- No judgmental statements are made about any ideas.
- Everyone has a chance to contribute one or more ideas.
- After all ideas have been offered, ideas are evaluated for their feasibility (such as, 'We don't have enough money in our troop treasury at this time to go to Hawaii') but they are not judged ('That's a stupid idea!')
- After unfeasible suggestions are disqualified, a vote is taken on what is left.

During patrol meetings, the Patrol Leader should:

1. Set the tone of the meeting
  - Meetings are affected by the physical comfort of participants and by the preparation of the leader; agenda and materials ready.
2. Present the material
  - Follow the agenda
  - Outline questions to be answered in discussion
  - Present material in a clear and interesting manner
3. Lead discussions
  - Get opinions from all members by asking them what they think.
  - List all opinions in binder
  - Refrain from monopolizing the discussion
  - Interrupt only to clarify a point or ask a question
  - Ask how the patrol wants to make the decision
  - Call for a vote if needed
4. Know how to pick up on and develop ideas
  - Tie an idea to a merit badge or troop goal or recognition
5. Keep records
  - Record attendance, dues, assignment tasks
6. Delegate tasks
  - Make sure everyone gets a job to do and that the jobs rotate
  - Patrol Leader does not do everything, he leads and delegates

## Patrol Meeting Agenda

Place: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Opening** - Hold a brief ceremony if this is outside of a Troop Meeting

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**Business** – Read the patrol log of the last patrol meeting. Collect dues, uniform inspection, any new items of business are discussed and decisions are recorded. Campout planning is done by getting a count of who is going, making a menu, creating a duty roster, and checking equipment needs. Patrol grubmaster is assigned to purchase food. Advancement of Patrol Members is discussed and recorded.

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**Skill Activity** - Scouting skills are practiced, possibly for advancement or for teaching others in the troop. Perhaps a camp gadget, designing a flag, a patrol presentation, or practicing for patrol competitions.

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**Game** - This should be a Scouting activity. You can play ball any time. Check [www.boyscouttrail.com](http://www.boyscouttrail.com) or come up with one that uses your scouting skills. Try new activities to use at troop meetings.

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**Closing** - This should be short and dignified. Perhaps a practice for a ceremony that can be used for opening or closing at a troop meeting.

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**Attendance** - List scouts at meeting:

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