

The Patrol Leader

within the Patrol System



0845 300 1818

Scouting helps young people to develop by encouraging them to make decisions for themselves. A basic principle of the Patrol System is that the Patrol Leaders themselves, in consultation with their Patrol members should make the decisions about Patrol and Troop activities - it's their Troop. The success of the Troop can be measured by the extent to which the Scout Leaders enable their Patrol Leaders and older Scouts to accept the responsibilities of the job and respond to them.

The Patrol System is beginning to work successfully if the Patrol Leaders are able to do the things that they and the members of their Patrols wish to do. The Patrol Leaders' Council must also be meeting regularly to co-ordinate the different Patrols plans. To do this effectively, the Scout Leader and the Patrol Leaders need to fully understand the job of the Patrol Leader and ensure that training is given to Patrol Leaders so that the job can be done well.

A list prepared by Patrol Leaders is given below. You might like to add to it or change it as you think fit - but this is best done in consultation with your own Patrol Leaders who may have very different ideas!

A Patrol Leader.

1. Trains the Patrol
2. Runs Troop and Patrol meetings
3. Feeds ideas to the Patrol and the Patrol Leaders' Council
4. Sets an example
5. Organises activities
6. Gets trained
7. Helps solve problems
8. Attends the Patrol Leaders' Council
- 9.
- 10.
- 11.
- 12.

Not every Patrol Leader will be able to take on the same level of responsibility as this will depend upon the age, maturity, training and experience of each individual.

The Patrol System is used to ensure that every Scout feels involved in the running of the Troop and has a say in the activities that it does and what activities they undertake for their own personal development.

This can only happen if the Patrol Leaders' Council works effectively and this relies on the Patrol Leaders fully understanding and being able to do their job. This will often depend on how well a Leader can train them and how much real responsibility is given to the Scouts. It is the responsibility of the Scout Leader to train the Patrol Leaders how to run the Troop rather than for the Patrol Leaders, as it so often seems, to prove to the Scout Leader that they can do it against all odds. It is essential then that a Scout Leader understands what skills training and support the Patrol Leader needs. The starter questions listed below may help you think this through.

1. What does a Patrol Leader need to know and understand?

- > The job of a Patrol Leader
- > The responsibilities of a Patrol Leader
- > Their Patrol as individuals
- > The Promise and Law
- > The structure and operation of the programme
- > The purpose and responsibilities of the Patrol Leaders' Council
- > -
- > -
- > -

2. Who does the Patrol Leader work with?

- > The members of their Patrol
- > Their Assistant Patrol Leaders
- > The Leaders and Assistant Leaders

- > The members of the Patrol Leaders' Council
- > Instructors/Helpers
- > -
- > -
- > -

3. What skills does a Patrol Leader need?

(This will depend on the age and experience of the Patrol Leader)

- > Basic Scouting and camping skills
- > How to instruct
- > How to take part in meetings
- > -
- > -
- > -

4. What planning skills does a Patrol Leader need?

- > How to plan Patrol and Troop activities
- > How to plan Patrol camps
- > How to prepare for Patrol Leaders' Council meetings
- > How to help various Patrol members through their Awards
- > -
- > -
- > -

5. What skills does a Patrol Leader need to put these skills into action?

- > How to instruct
- > To understand how a Committee works
- > To know where to find ideas
- > -
- > -
- > -

It may well be that you can also think of other questions and skills that a Patrol Leader will need. Having established this general list, far greater detail can be found in the Patrol Leaders' Handbook and Ruff Guide, the best approach to take is to make a copy of these questions for each of your Patrol Leaders. The Patrol Leaders will undoubtedly be of different ages and skills and therefore need different support. Training can then be given in a number of different ways, for example:

1. Informal opportunities

- > During Patrol Leaders' Council meetings
- > After Troop meetings
- > During chats over coffee

- > After a meeting
- > At camp or at particular activities run for the older Scouts

2. Personal support

- > By giving praise and encouragement during Patrol and Troop meetings
- > By creating opportunities for Patrol Leader to share ideas and problems with you
- > By helping Patrol Leaders to make decisions, solve problems for themselves and being responsible for their decisions

3. Patrol Leader Training

- > As part of Patrol Leaders' Council meetings by the Scout Leader
- > At courses offered by County/Area and District
- > By attending a Troop Leadership Course
- > By attending courses run by other organisations

4. Providing resources

- > Making available Scouting Handbooks, the Patrol Leaders' Handbook, Ruff Guide, SCOUTING Magazine, details of events at District, County and national level
- > Information about events from other organisations and providing contact with others that may help, such as the Assistant District Commissioner (Scouts) or the Assistant District Commissioner (international)

Being a Patrol Leader is an extremely difficult job. If all the responsibilities are taken on fully, it is unquestionably more difficult than being a Scout Leader because they are doing many of the same jobs without the age, maturity and experience that you have to bring to bear.

It is however the best development that we can offer any young person and although it is difficult, we should always be looking to develop Patrol Leaders to the utmost.

This will not happen by chance - it needs careful planning, specifically targeted at your Patrol Leaders at the moment. Now is that best opportunity you will ever have to formulate a training plan. The factsheet 'Patrol Leader Training' will help you identify the skills that each of your Patrol Leaders need.