INTRODUCTION TO
OUTDOOR LEADER SKILLS

BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA®
INTRODUCTION TO OUTDOOR LEADER SKILLS

BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA®
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Introduction

Welcome to Introduction to Outdoor Leader Skills training. This hands-on program gives adult leaders the practical outdoor skills they need to lead Scouts in the out-of-doors. Imagine having hands-on knowledge of setting up a campsite, pitching a tent, hiking, outdoor cooking—all the skills necessary to see the outdoor program of the Boy Scouts of America come to life.

The skills sessions presented in Introduction to Outdoor Leader Skills closely follow the Boy Scout Handbook and are meant to serve as an adult training outline. By using these skills sessions in conjunction with the Boy Scout Handbook, trainers can be sure new leaders are proficient in the basic outdoor skills through First Class rank. Each skills session references specific chapters in the handbook.

Hands-on participation makes the best learning tool, so participants should leave the training experience knowing they can show their Scouts how to accomplish outdoor skills while fulfilling rank requirements. Back home, we want leaders to feel comfortable working with and instructing their Scouts. From pitching a tent to starting a cooking fire, they should feel confident in helping their youth leaders plan and carry out their own unit campouts and exciting troop programs using these skills. With that comes great satisfaction.

Financing the Course

During the early planning stages, the course chair and professional staff adviser will prepare an estimated budget to include the cost of

- BSA insurance
- Administrative materials
- Course handouts
- Facility rental
• Food for course meals
• Refreshments for cracker barrels
• Equipment
• Refreshment items
• Any other items necessary for course success

It is assumed that many of the items on the course gear list (such as Dutch ovens) will be available from a council camp and/or troops, and perhaps staff members, and will not have to be purchased. Using the above criteria, the Scout executive, staff adviser, and course chair determine the course participant fee. The fee should be reasonable, based on the fact that new adult leaders are being recruited, and former Webelos leaders will not be accustomed to high training fees or purchasing lots of gear to attend a training course.

Scheduling the Course

This schedule of skills sessions and other events can be taught over a weekend, beginning on Friday evening, all day Saturday, and Sunday until 2:30 p.m., or a series of two one-day weekend sessions. This course also presents the opportunity to implement a mentor program using more experienced trainers to work one-on-one with new leaders at a time that may be more convenient for them, teaching one skills session at a time if necessary. The mentoring program can also be used to train all adult leaders of the same unit at one time, perhaps on a weekly basis that they all can schedule.

If this program is taught in modular units, be sure that appropriate records are maintained to ensure all participants are checked off for each item learned, until the checklist is completed.

AREAS OF FOCUS

Be aware that Introduction to Outdoor Leader Skills focuses on outdoor camping skills and does not cover all advancement requirements. The program does not encompass practical swimming skills, although it does briefly address Safe Swim Defense and Safety Afloat. These procedures should be covered in more detail separately and apart from this program by certified and/or professionally trained instructors as authorized or approved by the BSA.

In addition, unit leaders and troop committees are responsible for encouraging positive citizenship and physical fitness habits. In all cases, the Boy Scout Handbook, 11th edition, serves as the primary resource for the Introduction to Outdoor Leader Skills training.
Every Scout needs and deserves trained leaders. Leaders should understand their responsibilities, the aims of the program, and how to deliver it with enthusiasm and fun. In short, a Scout’s participation in the program should have a positive influence on his life. Introduction to Outdoor Leader Skills training helps leaders gain confidence in their ability—through hands-on, practical application of skills and proven methods—of influencing growth in positive ways to achieve the purposes of the Boy Scouts of America. As leaders help their Scouts grow physically, mentally, emotionally, and morally, they gain satisfaction in knowing their efforts are truly worthwhile.

The program structures participation much like a Boy Scout troop. From the buddy system (as explained in the Boy Scout Handbook) to the patrol method, the course uses familiar techniques to help convey the fun and fellowship of Scouting, to demonstrate the knowledge leaders need to fulfill their roles successfully, and to reinforce safety issues. Scouters delight in sharing their personal experiences, and each individual benefits from the interaction and group enthusiasm. Leaders feel reassured knowing that others have the same interests, needs, and concerns in delivering the best possible Scouting program to their units.

Leaders and trainers alike should understand that “training” is a process that will continue as long as you are active in Scouting. Trainers should also be aware that adult learning takes place from experience. Adults learn when there is a need to learn and when they see that there is an application to their learning effort. A leader’s motivation for learning stems from wanting to become good enough with “hands-on” practice to teach and set an example for Scouts.

This program works best when implemented by having participants pair off with a buddy to do each skill. Since skills training involves, among other things, memorization, the buddy system allows you to teach (with sufficient instructors to ensure learning and participation) and have each participant practice the task with enough repetition to learn the skill well. Adults have a fear of failure, so working with a buddy teaches with positive reinforcement and helps eliminate the possibility of nonparticipation or embarrassment in a large group.

The focus on learning by doing makes the buddy system approach the key difference between this course and merely showing how to accomplish a skill. Each participant must be able to complete and check each item from a task list, just like a Scout does. It eliminates superficial participation and truly builds confidence in leaders through accomplishment. Leaders should also encourage this method when instructing in their own units—let the Scouts work and learn together.
Course Structure

Depending on the expected number of participants, this course can be conducted by the council, district, multiple districts, or a group of experienced Scout leaders. Participants pair up with a “buddy” who may or may not be from the same troop. Four buddy pairs form a patrol for the course.

 Participating troop leadership should include the Scoutmaster, all assistant Scoutmasters, interested troop committee members, and new adult leaders from Webelos graduation and round-ups. Enlist one instructor for every four to eight participants, ensuring that each participant has a hands-on, small-group experience and actually learns how to accomplish the skill.

The delivery of this course is flexible enough to be offered as needed to new leaders who join existing units, and for newly organized troops on a regularly scheduled, year-round basis.

Comments and questions regarding Introduction to Outdoor Leader Skills are welcome and should be addressed to:

Director, Boy Scout Training
1325 West Walnut Hill Lane
P.O. Box 152079
Irving, TX 75015-2079
Course Organization

Weekend Program Schedule

This schedule encompasses a three-day weekend, beginning Friday evening, all day Saturday, and Sunday until 2:30 P.M. The participant schedule is as follows:

Friday Evening

6:00–7:00 P.M.  Participants arrive; orientation and check-in

7:15–7:45 P.M.  Staff introductions
                Explain the patrol method
                Conduct the opening flag ceremony
                Review how to display, raise, lower, and fold the U.S. flag.

7:45–9:00 P.M.  Campsite Selection
                Conduct a demonstration on how to set up camp, pitch a tent, make a camp bed.

9:00–9:30 P.M.  Leave No Trace

9:30–10:00 P.M.  Cracker barrel

Saturday

7:00–8:00 A.M.  Breakfast at campsites

8:00–9:30 A.M.  Ropes—Whipping, Tying, and Lashing
9:30–10:30 A.M.   Woods Tools—Knife, Camp Saw, and Ax
10:30–11:30 A.M.  Fire Site Preparation and Building
11:30 A.M.–12:30 P.M.   Cooking
12:30–1:00 P.M.  Lunch from cooking demonstrations
1:00–3:00 P.M.  First Aid
3:00–4:00 P.M.  Plant Identification
4:00–5:00 P.M.  Animal Identification
5:00–6:30 P.M.  Dinner at campsites
6:30–8:30 P.M.  Individual coaching on areas of interest or concern
8:30–9:30 P.M.  Campfire program
9:30–10:00 P.M.  Cracker barrel

Sunday

7:00–8:30 A.M.  Breakfast at campsites
8:30–9:00 A.M.  Interfaith worship
9:15–10:30 A.M.  Packing and Hiking Techniques
10:30 A.M.–noon  Finding Your Way—Map and Compass Reading
Noon–1:30 P.M.  Trail lunch
1:30–2:00 P.M.  Break camp, clean up
2:00–2:30 P.M.  Closing assembly
Schedule for Two One-Day Programs

This schedule divides the sessions into two one-day programs, preferably on Saturdays. The sessions may be conducted on two consecutive weekends or split to accommodate the council or district’s calendar.

First Saturday

8:00 A.M.   Participants arrive; orientation and check-in

8:15-8:45 A.M.   Staff introductions
                 Explain the patrol method
                 Conduct the opening flag ceremony
                 Review how to display, raise, lower, and fold the U.S. flag.

8:45-10:00 A.M.   Campsite Selection
                 Conduct a demonstration on how to set up camp, pitch a tent, make a camp bed.

10:00-11:30 A.M.   Ropes—Whipping, Tying, and Lashing

11:30 A.M.-1:00 P.M.   Lunch

1:00-2:00 P.M.   Woods Tools—Knife, Camp Saw, and Ax

2:00-3:00 P.M.   Fire Site Preparation and Building

3:00-4:00 P.M.   Cooking

4:00-5:30 P.M.   Dinner from cooking demonstrations

5:30-6:00 P.M.   Campfire program

6:00-7:00 P.M.   Break camp, clean up

Second Saturday

8:00 A.M.   Participants check in and set up camp

9:00-10:30 A.M.   Finding Your Way—Map and Compass Reading

10:30-11:30 A.M.   Plant Identification

11:30 A.M.-12:30 P.M.   Trail lunch

12:30-1:30 P.M.   Animal Identification

1:30-2:00 P.M.   Leave No Trace
2:00–4:00 P.M. First Aid

4:00–4:45 P.M. Individual coaching on areas of interest or concern

4:45–6:00 P.M. Packing and Hiking Techniques

6:00–7:00 P.M. Dinner

7:00–7:45 P.M. Break camp, clean up

7:45–8:15 P.M. Closing assembly

Course Site Selection and Physical Arrangements

This course requires an outdoor area, which could be the council camp facilities; a short-term camp area; state, national, or municipal park; or similar area. The location should be central and convenient to all districts.

Depending on the number of participants, more than one instructor may teach the same skill at the same time in a nearby area. Thus, you will need the capability to spread out a bit so as not to interfere with other groups. The size of individual learning areas should accommodate one instructor for every four to eight participants. Each participant will practice the skill being taught in each training session. (Remember the buddy system, as participants will be paired.) Each eight participants will form a patrol for the day or weekend course.

Your course campsite should be approved for ground fires, as several of the cooking sessions require building and extinguishing wood-burning campfires. Picnic tables work well for demonstrations such as camp stoves, first aid, map reading, etc.

The weekend course requires additional outdoor area for overnight camping and a campfire program. In conducting the two-day course, do not move instruction areas inside to a classroom setting. This defeats the purpose of the course in teaching leaders to feel comfortable with their skills in the outdoors.

Other necessary site considerations include parking, refrigeration and storage area for foods, a source for adequate potable drinking water, first-aid station, and if possible, toilet and bathhouse facilities.
Promoting the Course

The Introduction to Outdoor Leader Skills training needs to target specific individuals to attend. This can be achieved by using the suggested letter and through personal contact. It is not enough to schedule a course and advertise it in your council newsletter.
Personal Letter to Participants

This is a suggested letter to be mailed to registered Scoutmasters, Boy Scout leaders, second-year Webelos leaders, and troop committee members, as well as program and training committee chairs. This format can also be used as a flyer to distribute at roundtables and other program events.

(BSA local council letterhead)

(Date)

TO: Scoutmasters, Boy Scout Leaders, and Troop Committee Members

The ___________________ Council invites you to participate in Introduction to Outdoor Leader Skills, a fun-filled program of hands-on skills training in the outdoors, designed to help you master basic camp skills required for Tenderfoot to First Class. This course will be at ________________________ Camp, located in ____________________ (city), on ________________________ (dates).

Instructors will help you learn how to set up camp, cook, and work with woods tools, and about ropes, first aid, planning campfire programs, map reading and compass skills, hiking and packing techniques, nature identification, and Leave No Trace. Each outdoor session will bring to life the pages of the Boy Scout Handbook to help you deliver the promise of Scouting to yourself and the youth you serve. It will increase your comfort level and give you confidence as a trained, skilled leader. The program will also give you the opportunity to work with other Scout leaders from your area, meet new friends, and reinforce skill techniques with fellow unit leaders.

We look forward to hearing from and working with you in this unique and exciting program. Please complete the registration form below, then clip and return it to the local council office by ________________________ (date), along with your participation fee of $____________.

We will send you a map to the location, gear list, and any other information you will need to join us—and please pass the word to other Boy Scout leaders. We don’t want anyone to miss out on the fun!

Introduction to Outdoor Leader Skills

Participant Registration Form

Name ___________________________ Unit ___________________________

Address ___________________________

City ___________________________ State __________ Zip __________________

Home phone ___________________________ Work phone ___________________________

Please return this form along with the $____________ participation fee to

Local council

Address ___________________________

City/state/zip ___________________

For additional information, call ___________________________

Name ___________________________ Home phone ___________________________

Work phone ___________________________
Confirmation Letter to Registered Participants

This is a suggested follow-up letter to be mailed to registered participants 45 days prior to the course date. With this letter, return the What to Bring checklist, appropriate medical form, a map or directions to the course camp, and any other information you feel necessary.

(BSA local council letterhead)

(Date)

(Participant’s name)

(Address)

(City, state, zip)

RE: Introduction to Outdoor Leader Skills Training

Dear [Name]:

This letter is to confirm receipt of your registration and participation fee for the upcoming Introduction to Outdoor Leader Skills course. We are so glad you will be joining us for a fun-filled [weekend or day], and memorable outdoor learning experience.

Our [weekend or day] at [Camp name] Camp will begin at [time] on [day] and end at [time] on [day]. Please make arrangements to attend the entire course during this time frame. Our schedule is full and you won’t want to miss any of the activities.

We have enclosed a [map or directions] to help you find your way to the course camp; please park at [location] and check in at [location] when you arrive on [day]. You might want to check with other leaders from your area, encourage their attendance, and carpool or trade days on transporting.

At the morning check-in, please turn in a completed BSA Personal Health and Medical Record—Class 1 form, No. 34414.

The attached What to Bring checklist covers the equipment you will need to bring to camp. If you do not personally own any of the items listed, you may want to contact other troop leaders or friends to borrow them for the [weekend or day]. While we want you to be comfortable, we want to ensure you make the most of this training without shouldering too many expenses.

In addition, please let us know if you have any physical limitations or special dietary or medical needs so we can be prepared before the course begins. The staff looks forward to working with you and seeing you there!

Yours in Scouting,

[Name]

(Person’s title—training or course chair)
What to Bring

REFERENCE: Boy Scout Handbook, chapter 9, "Camping"

Overnight gear, outdoor essentials, and appropriate clothing are the heart of camping equipment. Carry a light load of only what you need to keep yourself safe and make a good camp; leave all unnecessary items at home. Use lightweight backpacking tents for two only—no wall or large recreation types.

PERSONAL OVERNIGHT CAMPING GEAR

☐ Boy Scout Handbook

☐ OUTDOOR ESSENTIALS
  ☐ Pocketknife
  ☐ First-aid kit
  ☐ Extra clothing
  ☐ Rain gear
  ☐ Water bottle filled with potable water
  ☐ Flashlight
  ☐ Matches and fire starters
  ☐ Sun protection
  ☐ Map and compass
  ☐ Clothing for the season (warm-weather or cold-weather)
  ☐ Backpack
  ☐ Rain cover for backpack
  ☐ Sleeping bag, or two or three blankets
  ☐ Sleeping pad
  ☐ Ground cloth

☐ EATING KIT
  ☐ Spoon
  ☐ Plate
  ☐ Bowl
  ☐ Cup

☐ CLEANUP KIT
  ☐ Soap
  ☐ Toothbrush
  ☐ Toothpaste
  ☐ Dental floss
  ☐ Comb
  ☐ Washcloth
  ☐ Towel

☐ PERSONAL EXTRAS (OPTIONAL)
  ☐ Watch
  ☐ Camera and film
  ☐ Notebook or paper
  ☐ Pencil or pen
  ☐ Sunglasses
  ☐ Small musical instrument
  ☐ Swimsuit
  ☐ Gloves
PATROL OR GROUP OVERNIGHT CAMPING GEAR

The following items can be borrowed from your troop gear box or other leaders:

☐ Two-person backpacking tent
  with poles, stakes, ground cloths, and lines
☐ Dining fly
☐ Nylon cord, 50 feet
☐ CLEANUP KIT
  ☐ Sponge or dishcloth
  ☐ Biodegradable soap
  ☐ Sanitizing rinse agent (bleach)
  ☐ Scouring pads (no-soap type)
  ☐ Plastic trash bags
  ☐ Toilet paper in plastic bag
☐ REPAIR KIT
  ☐ Thread
  ☐ Needles
  ☐ Safety pins

☐ GROUP EXTRAS (OPTIONAL)
  ☐ Hot-pot tongs
  ☐ Camp shovel
  ☐ Water container, one 1-gallon
    or two ½-gallon collapsible, plastic
  ☐ Washbasin
  ☐ Grill
  ☐ Pot rods
  ☐ Patrol flag
  ☐ Small U.S. flag
  ☐ Sheathed ax
  ☐ Camp saw