

Troop Information Program Survey

Welcome to Boy Scouts!

TIPS was created to allow people new to Boy Scouts to ask intelligent questions about a Troop and their program.

TIPS is divided into sections for quick access to questions that should be considered.

Please do not use this document as a way to interrogate an adult leader but as a way to help determine if a particular troop fits your family's needs.

A TIP is something to consider and will be in a format like this.

1. Meetings



1.1. When and where does the Troop meet? Will this work with your family's schedule?

TIP: If it doesn't, you should probably look at another Troop.

1.2. What are typical activities at the meeting? Do they play a game every meeting? Is it the same game every meeting? Was the meeting fun?

TIP: Scouting is fun. They should be playing a game every meeting.

1.3. How often do they work on rank advancement? Do they work on merit badges at meetings? If so, how often does this occur?

TIP: Once a month is probably adequate. More than that can make the older Scouts bored or make the meeting seem like school.

1.4. Who is in charge of the meeting? Boys or adults? Did the meeting seem organized or was it just chaos?

TIP: Boys should be in charge of the meetings with guidance from the adults. The meetings are supposed to be run by the boys so a little chaos is to be expected.

1.5. Is there a good mix of boy ages at the meeting? Did boys of different ages seem to enjoy being together?

TIP: If it is all younger boys, this could mean that the Troop is just starting out (which is OK) or it could mean that the older boys don't find the program interesting and drop out.

1.6. Were the Scouts and adults friendly to your boy and you?

2. Troop Background



2.1. How many boys and adults in the Troop?

TIP: Will your boy thrive in that environment? FYI, the average Boy Scout troop has 14 Scouts.

2.2. How many boys dropped out last year?

TIP: If it is bigger than 10%, this could be indicative of a Scouting program that isn't fun.

2.3. Do you or your son know anyone in the Troop? If so, what do they think of the Troop?

TIP: If you don't know anyone, don't worry. You and your son will make good friends in just a short time.

2.4. How many boys and adults attended the last weekend campout?

2.5. How often does the Troop do service projects?

TIP: If it is every month that can be excessive. Most troops do 6 or less a year.

2.6. What is the Troop's philosophy for how to integrate Scouting with other extra activities that your boy may be involved in (like Church, sports, music, hobbies, etc.)?

TIP: Troops should be accommodating and not expect that Scouting is the only focus of a boy. Balance is an important part of life and should be observed in Scouting as well.

2.7. Are there any special requirements for joining the Troop?

TIP: There cannot be any special requirements. Example: Have to be a member of a specific religious group.

3. Troop Organization



3.1. How are the boys organized in the Troop?

TIP: The boys should be organized into patrols.

3.2. Are the patrols by age or is there a good variety of ages in each of the patrols?

3.3. How are new boys integrated into the patrols? Is there a 'new scout' patrol or are they integrated into the regular patrols?

3.4. What does the Troop's calendar look like? Does it look like fun?

3.5. Does the Troop have some sort of recruiting handout/flyer that they can give you?

TIP: Well organized Troops will have one.

3.6. Are the Scouts and the adult leaders trained?

TIP: You can tell they are trained because there will be a Trained patch on their left uniform sleeve.

3.7. Has the Troop earned the Quality Unit Award or Journey to Excellence award?

TIP: Units that have earned these awards have met specific performance criteria from the Boy Scouts of America.

4. Outdoor program



- 4.1. Does the Troop go camping every month? If they don't, why not?

TIP: A Troop should be doing some outdoor activity every month with limited exceptions.

- 4.2. Where does the Troop go camping?
4.3. Where does the Troop go to summer camp?
4.4. What type of camping does the Troop do? Car camping? Hike in camping?
4.5. Do they have any advice for what kind of gear a new Scout should get?
4.6. Will the Troop allow you and your son to go on a campout as a test?

TIP: As long as there isn't a safety restriction, most troops will be happy for you to attend.

- 4.7. Does the Troop have a program that is interesting to the older Scouts? Are there high adventure activities for the older Scouts? Does the Troop have a venture patrol?

TIP: Keep in mind that your Scout may be too young right now but in a few years they will be considered an older Scout.

- 4.8. Does the Troop have a campout or activity where families are welcome?

TIP: Scouting is fun and sometimes it is fun to share the experience with families.

5. Finances & Fundraising



- 5.1. Does the Troop have dues? Are they monthly or annual? If so, how much are they?
- 5.2. Is the Troop financially stable?
- 5.3. How often do they create a budget?

TIP: Annual is the correct answer.

- 5.4. Roughly, how much will it cost you to be a member of the Troop?
 - 5.4.1. Monthly outings: _____
 - 5.4.2. Summer Camp: _____
 - 5.4.3. Troop gear (like Troop specific hats and shirts): _____
 - 5.4.4. Troop Dues: _____
 - 5.4.5. Initial Uniform _____
- 5.5. What does the Troop do for fundraisers?
- 5.6. How often do the fundraisers occur?

TIP: If there is a fundraiser nearly every month, that can become tiresome.

- 5.7. Where does the money for a fundraiser go to? Does it go all to the Troop? All to the boy? Or somewhere in the middle?

6. Advancement



6.1. Does the Troop have other requirements above and beyond what the official Boy Scout requirements are?

TIP: If so, this is a red flag because no one can add or subtract from the official Boy Scout requirements.

6.2. Who in the Troop can sign off on rank requirements?

TIP: This can really vary and there probably isn't a right or wrong answer. This just allows you to get a feel for how boys advance.

7. Parent participation expectations



7.1. As a parent, how much are you expected to participate in the Troop's activities?

7.2. How does the Troop get parents into leadership support roles?

TIP: There should be an election each year where the adults vote on other adults to take on positions to support the Troop.

7.3. What can parents do to help the Troop?

TIP: Scouting can be just as much fun for adults as the boys. Do not be afraid to become active with the Troop.

Your Notes:

Troop Number: