

PIONEER VALLEY COUNCIL

Boy Scouts of America

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TO: Unit Leadership
FROM: Risk Management Committee and Larry Bystran, Scout Executive

SUBJECT: Tour Permit Policy Statement

While the process of gathering information and submitting properly completed tour permits may seem like a hassle, and appear as undo management “red-tape”, tour permits are designed to help ensure that our Scouting programs are well planned, safe, and fun for our Scouts, leaders and their families. They also serve as a liability protection for EVERYONE. Since many questions regarding tour permits have been brought to the attention of the council’s Risk Management Committee, it is hoped that the following information will help clarify our councils tour permit policy, and reinforce the BSA’s risk management and youth protection policies.

Please take the time to review this document and share it with your leaders, committee and parents—particularly those responsible for preparing and submitting tour permits. Additionally, each unit should have a copy of the *Guide to Safe Scouting*. This booklet can be purchased at the council’s service center or downloaded from the Pioneer Valley Council website (www.pvcbsa.org). This guide should be reviewed before each unit activity to ensure that all activities conform to approved BSA guidelines and policies.

Tour permits may be obtained from the Council Service Center or from the Council web site (www.pvcbsa.org)

Tour permits in the Pioneer Valley Council are required for all activities conducted outside the Pioneer Valley Council, B.S.A. boundaries. Additionally, tour permits are required for all overnight programs, and for all activities requiring specialized (and B.S.A. guidelines compliant) trained supervision.

These include:

- 1. Aquatics activities such as swimming or boating**
- 2. Shooting Sports activities such as BB gun or rifle shooting, black powder, or Archery**
- 3. Climbing activities such as rock climbing or rappelling (on either natural rock face, or on commercial climbing walls.**
- 4. Others...as specified in the *Guide to Safe Scouting and Health and Safety Guide*.**

Tour permits are not needed for:

- 1. District/Council conducted activities.**
- 2. Officially registered/scheduled activities conducted on Council owned property.**
- 3. Activities/overnight programs conducted on properties exempted (on an annual basis) by the Councils Risk Management Committee, and that comply with all B.S.A. trained supervision, youth protection, and health and safety guidelines.**
- 4. Short duration (1-3 hr) in-Council excursions/tours/outings that are not restricted above.**

WHY TOUR PERMITS?

- A properly submitted tour permit, that’s been filed with the Pioneer Valley Council B.S.A., registers that activity as an official Scouting event. **Since the BSA’s insurance coverage only applies to official Scouting activities, liability and accident insurance coverage may be in jeopardy if a tour permit is not on file at the council office.**
- Tour permits provide the Council with information regarding unit outings and trips that helps everyone know "what is going on". They help provide information necessary to locate a Unit if an emergency arises, and also lets the council know a point of contact, when an emergency situation develops.
- Since the single highest number of injuries and fatalities in the United States and Scouting are caused by motor vehicle accidents, tour permits help protect everyone by reinforcing driver requirements, ensuring proper motor vehicle insurance requirements, and encouraging routine maintenance checks on vehicles prior to a Units planned outing.
- Tour permits reinforce leader requirements, especially in regards to Youth Protection, transportation, and higher risk activities such as climbing and aquatics.
- **Tour permits reinforce planning, safety, and two-deep leadership.**

WHAT ACTIVITIES REQUIRE A NATIONAL TOUR PERMIT APPLICATION?

- For tours or trips 500 miles or over one way, a National tour permit application is required.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO FILE THE TOUR PERMIT TWO WEEKS IN ADVANCE?

- The two-week (in advance) filing requirement helps ensure that trips are well planned. Because of the large number of tour permits filed, late filings that need to be rushed can cause delays for those Units that filed their applications promptly.
- If there are concerns with a tour permit, the two-week filing requirement allows time for correction. Incomplete applications cannot be approved.

TOUR PERMIT GUIDELINES

To ensure that your tour permit is approved, please make sure that ALL the information requested on the form is complete, including the transportation section on the reverse side of the permit.

Please note that at least one registered adult trained in BSA Youth Protection **MUST** be present at all events and activities that require a tour permit.

Please take time to read and abide by the information located on the back of the permit entitled: OUR PLEDGE OF PERFORMANCE.

It is also highly recommended that Units obtain Informed Consent Authorizations (permission slips) from parents.

Special Notes:

- 1. In order to officially register an activity as a unit event, it is recommended that units submit a tour permit to the Council Office for any activity it conducts outside its normal meeting place.**
- 2. Whether a local tour permit is required by the Council or not, Units must abide by its auto insurance, driver, and vehicle safety requirements, Leadership standards, *Guide to Safe Scouting* policies, and age appropriate guidelines, for ALL of its activities/events.**

SAMPLE QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. Do I need a local tour permit if my Unit wants to camp overnight on its own Chartering organizations property?

Answer: Yes.

Since this is an overnight activity not conducted by the Council or one of its Districts a local tour permit is required.

2. Our Unit is sponsored by and meets on property owned by a local sportsman club and our patrols have decided to work on their Archery merit badge. We will be conducting this activity at our own Units normal meeting area (sportsman club) and using qualified instructors. Is a local tour permit still necessary?

Answer: Yes.

In order to be recognized (for insurance purposes) as an official scouting activity, and in order to protect your unit from liability claims, it is important that "higher risk" activities such as Archery be registered as an official unit activity. Filing a local tour permit helps protect your unit, its leaders, scouts and families by officially registering this planned activity as a unit event.

3. Our Pack is planning on going to the local Springfield Science museum for the day, do we need to fill in a local tour permit?

Answer: No.

Since your unit is not staying overnight and this activity is taking place within the boundaries of the Pioneer Valley Council, B.S.A, the filing of a tour permit is not necessary. However, the leader for this event may decide to do so anyways in order to officially register this planned unit activity with the Council. (see highlighted special notes above)

4. Our Troop is planning on attending a Pioneer Valley Council District camporee; do we need to file a local tour permit?

Answer: No.

Since this is a local event organized and run by the District, a tour permit is not required... However, Districts may require under certain circumstances to make it a part of its official registration process i.e. When a camporee is held on out-of-Council property.

FILING A LOCAL TOUR PERMIT

The following information will help you avoid some common errors.

Tour permits may be obtained from the Council Service Center or from the Council web site (www.pvcbsa.org)

- Indicate when the trip begins and when it ends (the dates).
- Indicate the name of the destination, route description, and itinerary (for tours)
- If the unit will be in or near water, there must be an adult in attendance that has had the Safe Swim Defense training and the CPR training. Please complete the boxes with the information.
- If the unit will be using watercraft, there must be an adult in attendance that has had both Safe Swim Defense and Safety Afloat training and CPR training. Please complete the boxes with the information.
- If climbing/rappelling is included there must be an adult in attendance that has had both Climb on Safely and CPR training. Please complete the boxes with the information.
- The bottom portion of the permit (Units copy) must be completed with the same information as the top of the permit (Councils copy).
- The number of youth and adults attending must match the number of passengers on the transportation page in order to be sure that there are enough seatbelts for all.
- If parents' approval has been secured, please write the word YES where the form asks.
- Two-deep adult leadership (meaning anyone over 21 years of age) is required for all Scouting activities. An assistant leader and all required information must be included on the permit.
- The tour leader must provide a signature attesting that he/she has read and currently has a copy of the Guide to Safe Scouting. (Visit www.pvcbsa.org for a current version)
- A member of the unit committee, AND the tour leader must provide signatures in the spaces provided, to authorize the permit. These signatures attest to the correctness of the information submitted, that registration policies are being followed, and that National safety and insurance requirements are being met.
- If you are attaching a separate driver's list to the permit, the transportation section of the tour permit is still required. You may do this by writing "See Attached" across the transportation section of the page, and then attaching your Units driver's list to the permit.
- If parents are driving their own children (and ONLY their own children), please write, "Parents are driving their own children" on the transportation page.
- If a vehicle being used is designed to carry more than 15 persons (including driver), the driver must have a commercial driver's license. Please write drivers name and license expiration date in appropriate spot on the bottom half of the permit.
- If the Pack or Troop plans to be in a parade there are very specific rules regarding riding on a float and/or in the back of a truck or trailer. Please review the Guide to Safe Scouting or contact the council service center for further information before submitting the tour permit.
- If a Pack is planning an overnight camping trip, one of the adults attending must have BALOO training. Please write the name of the adult attending that has received the training.
* Packs may only attend Council approved locations for overnight trips.
- If a troop is planning an outing at a shooting range, additional information is required. Please refer to the Guide to Safe Scouting and be sure to follow all instructions.

At least one registered adult who has completed BSA Youth Protection MUST be present at all events and activities that require a tour permit.
