



# HOW TO ORGANIZE A SEA SCOUT SHIP

## Welcome to Sea Scouts

Sea Scouting is a division of the Boy Scouts of America for young men and women aged 14 through 20. Its purpose is to bring a character building, citizenship training, and fitness program to the youth of America. Sea Scout Ships are organized by churches, civic clubs, schools, maritime organizations, businesses, unions, and other community organizations that provide adult volunteer leaders, program resources, and meeting facilities. These Ships plan programs related to maritime careers, seamanship, and service.

Today's Sea Scouting started in 1912 and has a long and colorful tradition. Thousands of young men and women have had the opportunity to follow the traditions of the sea while learning what the future holds for a career related to the sea or a lifelong hobby of recreational boating. Many Sea Scout Ships maintain sail or power vessels; follow a challenging rank advancement program; and have nautical uniforming, customs, and ceremonies.

## What Does a Sea Scout Ship Do?

The program of a Sea Scout Ship is based on matching the interests of the members with the skills, equipment, and resources of the chartered organization. Most Ships follow the traditional advancement program found in the *Sea Scout Manual*. The Ship's program follows the customs and traditions of the sea and encourages members to earn the ranks of Apprentice, Ordinary, Able, and Quartermaster (equivalent to the BSA Eagle rank).

Sea Scouting advancement includes uniforms, safety, customs, swimming, boating, marlinpike seamanship, piloting, signaling, drill, cruising, galley, sailing, boats, tackle, first aid, navigation, boat maintenance, engines, sea history, lifesaving, equipment, weather, radio, customs, and ideals.

Some Sea Scout Ships prefer to plan their program around some specialty such as sailing, careers, scuba diving, or an aquatic sport. They may not utilize Sea Scout uniforms and advancement but offer a flexible program to those young adults having a specific career or hobby interest.



## Steps to Organize

### Step One

When an appropriate organization is selected to charter a Sea Scout Ship, the BSA council assigns an organizer to guide the following steps. This organization may be a church, civic club, school, labor union, maritime association or business, or other community group.

### Step Two

The organizer and a council staff member visit the top person in the organization (pastor, president, CEO, etc.). They review the purpose and program of Sea Scouting and the responsibilities of the organization in chartering a Ship. The top person agrees to:

- Commit the organization to support a Sea Scout Ship.
- Inform the key leaders of the organization about Sea Scouting.
- Recruit the adult Ship leaders.
- Provide program resources and a meeting location.

### Step Three

The organizer meets with the organization's key leaders. This may be an executive committee, church board, department heads, etc. The purpose and program of Sea Scouting are reviewed. The top person asks the key leaders to:

- Support their Sea Scout Ship.
- Help secure program resources and equipment.

- Identify prospective adult leaders. These are men and women over 21 years of age who are of good character and have the ability to lead a quality Sea Scout program for youth.

### Step Four

The top person and the key leaders invite these prospective adult leaders to an organizational meeting. The purpose, program, and leadership of a Sea Scout Ship are reviewed using the *Sea Scout Manual*. Sea Scout leaders specialized training, found in *Sea Scout Officers Specialized Training Instructor' Guide*, is conducted. After this training is completed, the organizer guides these prospective leaders to select a Skipper, two or more mates, and the Ship Committee. The organization's top person is involved in this selection. The job descriptions for these positions are found in the *Sea Scout Manual* and the *Handbook for Skippers*.

### Step Five

The Sea Scout Ship program capability inventory is completed. This is a list of adults in the organization who can help with instruction, resources, and equipment for Ship meetings, activities, and cruises. The Ship Committee secures the use of watercraft, as needed, for the Ship program, keeping in mind that the cost of operating and maintaining a large vessel may be prohibitive for a new Ship.



### Step Six

The first 3 months of meetings and activities are planned and scheduled. These would include weekly Ship meetings, Saturday or weekend activities or cruises, and monthly Ship Committee meetings. The program for the first few Ship meetings might include the following:

- Introduction to the Sea Scout program

- Instruction related to Sea Scout advancement, particularly Apprentice
- Discussion of Ship uniforms
- Election of officers
- Boating safety - Swim checks
- Basic nautical skill instruction

### Step Seven

Young adults are recruited to join the Ship. Names from the council career interest survey may be used. Announcements and publicity are developed. Prospective members could be recruited through schools, churches, and community organizations. Sons and daughters of members of the chartered organization can be invited.

The first Ship meeting (called a firstnighter) is carefully planned to provide an exciting program to attract prospects to join. "Hands on" maritime activities could be featured. The Ship leaders review the schedule of meetings and activities along with the structure, activities, and advancement opportunities in Sea Scouting. Leaders and members from nearby Ships may be invited to help. All new Ship members should purchase a *Sea Scout Manual*. Sea Scouts must be 14 years



of age and have graduated from the eighth grade and be under 21 years of age. The chartered organization determines if its membership is coed, all-female, or all-male.

### Step Nine

The new Ship members elect youth leaders (called *petty officers*) as soon as possible. The Skipper may appoint temporary petty officers until the Ship members know each other well enough to elect.

### Step Ten

The Skipper trains the new petty officers using the *Sea Scout Manual* and *Handbook for Skippers*. A year's schedule of meetings and activities should be developed avoiding any conflict with school, church, or community events.

### For Further Information

Full details of Sea Scout ship organization, training, and Sea Scouting are found in the following publications available from the BSA council service center.

For new Sea Scouts and adult leaders:

*Sea Scout Manual*, No. 33239A

For Ship adult leaders:

*Handbook for Skippers*

For council organizers and trainers:

*Sea Scout Officers Specialized Training Instructor's Guide*

Quite a bit of program support for Sea Scouting may also be found on the Internet. For those with access to the World Wide Web, point your browser to < <http://www.seascout.org> > to consult the national Sea Scouting web site. Additional questions about the program may be sent via e-mail to < [info@seascout.org](mailto:info@seascout.org) > .

## First Ship Meeting

### "Firstnighter"

#### Sample Agenda

1. Greetings and welcome (Greet the young people at the door, welcome them, hand out name tags.) *Ship Committee members*
2. Introductions and welcome *Ship Committee Chair*
3. Greetings from the host (Express the chartered organization's interest in youth and enthusiasm for Sea Scouting. It is important to coach this individual in the use of proper Sea Scouting terms.) *Head of chartered organization*
4. What is Sea Scouting? (Have youth speak to youth about Sea Scouting—the best way to get across the meaning of the program.)  
*Council Boatswain or representative*
5. Ship Committee support (Explain how the Ship Committee supports the Ship program.)  
*Ship Committee Chair*
6. Description of the program and activities planned for the next six meetings (Give out copies of the program outline; explain how officers will be elected from membership. Briefly describe the duties of officers.) *Skipper*
7. A hands-on activity in which everyone can participate *All*
8. Question and answer session (Divide young adults into groups of 8 or 10. Assign each group an adult Committee member who is prepared to answer questions about Sea Scouting and the chartered organization.)*Ship Committee*
9. Reassemble small groups. Explain the national registration fee which includes participation in local and national Sea Scouting activities. Have copies of the *Sea Scout Manual* for display or purchase. *Skipper*
10. Invitation to join (Hand each person a membership application; collect fees from those wishing to join tonight; ask others to bring application and fee to next meeting.)  
  
Closing comments (Be sure everyone knows date, place, time, and program for next Ship

meeting.)

*Ship Committee Chair*

11. Refreshments and fellowship *All*

**NOTE:** If a number of parents attend, a Ship Committee member might take them aside, explain the purpose and program of the Ship, and the tie to the BSA. Parents might be included in the program capability inventory and enlisted to provide transportation, chaperons, and support for Ship activities.

## Second Ship Meeting

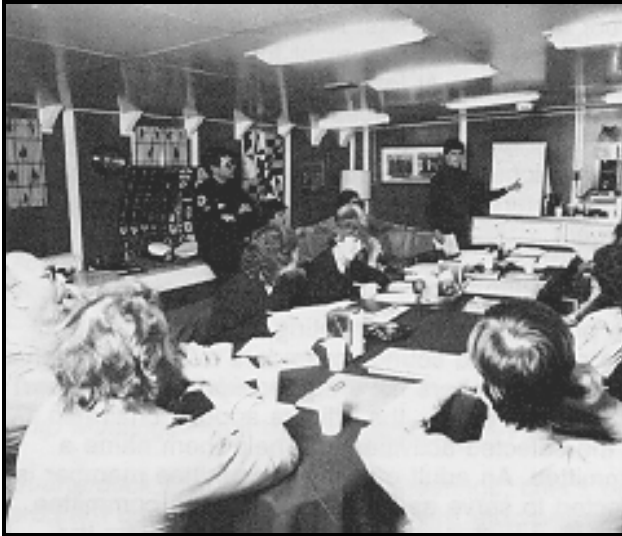
This meeting should be a high-powered one centered around the Sea Scout program. Plan to get Sea Scouts involved; get them doing things in their area of interest.

#### Sample Agenda

(Greet members at the door and hand each a name tag.)

1. Welcome and introduction of those not at previous meeting *Temporary Boatswain or Skipper*
2. Business meeting (keep brief) *Temporary Boatswain or Skipper*
  - a. Complete collection of registration fees and membership applications.
  - b. Announce plans to elect officers.
  - c. (*Optional*) Divide members into groups by school. Each group elects a representative to serve as temporary officers and plans car pools to future Ship meetings.
  - d. Other business. (Might include ideas on transportation to meetings – car pools, mass transit, etc., and a discussion of Ship uniforms.)
3. Introduction of program for the evening  
*Temporary Boatswain or Skipper*
4. Program-tour, demonstration, informative presentation, "hands-on" experience (This is the major portion of this meeting.) *All*
5. Announcement of date, place, and time of next meeting *Temporary Boatswain or Skipper*
6. Skipper's comments *Skipper*
7. Closing
8. Refreshments and fellowship *All*

*After Ship meeting:* The Skipper and temporary officers (or school representatives) meet to plan the election of officers and the program for the next meeting. Complete the registration materials and forward application forms and fees to the council service center.



### Third Ship Meeting

(Temporary officers arrive early and greet others.)

1. Introductions, if necessary  
*Temporary Boatswain*
2. Business meeting (keep brief) *Temporary Boatswain*
  - a. Yeoman reads minutes of previous meeting
  - b. Purser collects any additional fees and membership applications.
  - c. Other business
3. Election of petty officers (Established Ships usually elect officers for a 1-year term in January. New Ships may want to adjust the term of office for their first-year petty officers.)  
*Nominating Committee Chair*
  - a. Report of nominating committee on petty officers to be elected:  
Boatswain  
Boatswain's Mate - Administration  
Boatswain's Mate - Program  
Yeoman  
Purser

- Other petty officers as desired
- b. Election
- c. Congratulations and challenge to new officers  
*Skipper*
- d. Installation of new officers and presentation of books of office  
*Ship Committee Chair*
4. Continuation of meeting *New Boatswain*
  - a. Accepts position.
  - b. Discusses plans for term of office.
  - c. Review upcoming Ship programs. Members are asked to write down and turn in their interests and ideas for Ship activities.  
*Boatswain's Mate - Program*
  - d. Coordinates final selection of Ship uniform.
5. Evening's program related to Sea Scouting (informative presentation, demonstration, etc.)  
*All*
6. Announcement of date, place, and time of next meeting  
*Boatswain*
7. Skippers comments  
*Skipper*
8. Closing *Boatswain's Mate - Administration*
9. Refreshments and fellowship  
*All*



*After Ship meeting:* Skipper conducts petty officers' briefing following outline in the *Handbook for Skippers*.

### **Suggested Program for a New Sea Scout Ship**

#### **Meetings**

Ship meetings can be held as frequently as the time of the leaders and members will permit. Many Ships meet an average of once a week, not always on the same day and not always formally. For instance, one week the members may gather at the harbor to work on boats. Another week they may get together on a Friday night to go to a show, skating, bowling, etc. At least once every 3 months a business meeting is necessary to elect officers, plan the Ship's next 3-month program in detail, make assignments, and transact other business. (See chapters 2 and 4 in the *Sea Scout Manual*.)

### **Program Planning**

At a program planning meeting, it is essential to have school and council calendars available. When the Ship's members have agreed upon the program content they desire, the officers appoint chairs for the selected activities and help them name a committee. An adult officer or Committee member is selected to serve as an adviser to each committee. These committees have the responsibility for the complete planning, promotion, and conduct of the activity in their charge. (See chapter 2 in the *Sea Scout Manual*.)

### **Program Content**

The following program outline has been developed as a suggestion for a new Ship just getting underway. It is based on two meetings a month of the entire Ship (weekly will be normal when your Ship is more experienced), a petty officer's meeting (Quarterdeck), plus an activity or field trip. It can be modified or adapted to fit the needs and interests of members and leaders. It is also assumed that May is the first month. Modify the program accordingly for beginning in other months.

In some locations, council and/or area Sea Scout events are conducted. These dates should be included in the Ship's calendar.

### **Program Outline**

(For chapter and page references see the *Sea Scout Manual*.)

#### **First Month (May)**

*Ship Meetings* - "Firstnighter" to recruit new members (pg. 2-20). Cover the basic organization of the Ship, election of petty officers, orientation on Sea Scouting, and the planned program for the

first 3 months (Chapter 1). Ship members and leaders should make uniform arrangements (pg. 3-15).

*Quarterdeck Meeting* - Review duties of the petty officers; acquaint all with calendar, training courses, etc.; prepare for next month's Ship meetings and activity (Chapter 2).

*Activity* - Visit another Sea Scout Ship or conduct a boating safety program.

#### **Second Month (June)**

*Ship Meetings* - Safe Boating Course, three 2-hour sessions (pg. 3-11); hold orientation sessions on Ship organization and duties of the commissioned and petty officers; practice "coming aboard" and a few simple ceremonies (Chapter 2); start learning the language of the sea (Glossary of sea terms, pg. G-1).

*Quarterdeck Meeting* - Review Ship's meetings and their effectiveness; plan outlines of "formal" and "informal" Ship's meetings; check on arrangements for planned activity; prepare for next month's Ship meetings.

*Activity* - Schedule a session at a swimming pool; check the swimming ability of every member; practice simple safety and rescue techniques; review safe swim defense (pg. 5-88).

#### **Third Month (July)**

*Ship Meetings* - Construct a landship (pg. 2-17); conduct classes in water safety and rescue methods-rescue lines, rope work, cardiopulmonary respiration; hold several skill-teaching contests; plan next 3 months of meetings, assignments, etc. (pg. 4-2).

*Quarterdeck Meeting* - Critique meetings; check on programs, activity, etc.; prepare for next month's Ship meetings.

*Activity* - Weekend trip to camp, lake, etc. Practice boating and aquatic skills.



### **Fourth Month (August)**

*Ship Meetings* - Continue work on landship; review customs and courtesies of the sea; practice ceremonies; review advancement program and schedule classes; conduct uniform inspection; hold skill-teaching contests.

*Quarterdeck Meeting* - Critique meetings; check on program committees, coming activity, etc.; prepare for next month's Ship meetings.

*Activity* - Long cruise or superactivity (pg. 4-32).

### **Fifth Month (September)**

*Ship Meetings* - Orientation on boats and boat handling; practice session on water if possible, learn boat etiquette (pg. 2-18).

*Quarterdeck Meeting* - Critique meetings; check on program committees, coming activity, etc.; prepare for next month's Ship meetings.

*Activity* - Participate in district or council activity, or plan one for Ship.

### **Sixth Month (October)**

*Ship Meetings* - Orientation in marlinspike seamanship (ropework, pg. 5-1); practice sessions in knots and knot tying; classes in advancement subjects; contests in knot tying; plan next 3 months' program, make assignments, etc. (pg. 4-26).

*Quarterdeck Meeting* - Critique meetings; check on program committees, coming activity, etc.; prepare for next month's Ship meetings.

*Activity* - Small-boat sailing or Halloween party.

### **Seventh Month (November)**

*Ship Meetings* - Continue marlinspike seamanship; instruction in splicing, practice sessions (pg. 5-6); classes in advancement subjects;

skill-teaching contests; practice session at swimming pool.

*Quarterdeck Meeting* - Critique meetings; check on program committees, coming activity, etc.; prepare for next month's Ship meetings.

*Activity* - Plan a swim meet.

### **Eighth Month (December)**

*Ship Meetings* - Continue marlinspike seamanship; instruction in special knots, clinches, straps, lashings, seizings, worming, parcelling, servings, whipping; practice sessions; preparation for parents' night and bridge of honor (pp. 2-16, 3-2).

*Quarterdeck Meeting* - Critique meetings; check on program committees, coming activity, etc.; prepare for next month's Ship meetings.

*Activity* - Holiday party, parents' night and bridge of honor.

### **Ninth Month (January)**

*Ship Meetings* - Continue marlinspike seamanship; instruction in tackles, purchase, and blocks (pg. 5-11); practice sessions; skill-teaching contests; plan next 3 months' program, make assignments, etc.

*Quarterdeck Meeting* - Critique meetings; check on program committees, coming activity, etc.; prepare for next month's Ship meetings.

*Activity* - Winter weekend: tobogganing, skiing, ice skating, ice fishing, etc.

### **Tenth Month (February)**

*Ship Meetings* - Sail training plan (pp. A-1 to A-22).

*Quarterdeck Meeting* - Critique meetings; check on program committees, coming activity, etc.; prepare for next month's Ship meetings.

*Activity* - Sailing instruction, Valentine's Day party, or Ship banquet.

### **Eleventh Month (March)**

*Ship Meetings* - Sail training plan continued, skill teaching contests.

*Quarterdeck Meeting* - Critique meetings; check on program committees, coming activity, etc.; prepare for next month's Ship meetings.

*Activity* - Service project for chartered organization.

## **Twelfth Month (April)**

*Ship Meetings* - Sail training plan continued, piloting (pp. 5-58); skill-teaching contests; Ship inspection and drill (pp. 4-16); plan 3 months' program, make assignments, etc. (pg. 4-26).

*Quarterdeck Meeting* - Critique meetings; check on program committees, coming activity, etc.; prepare for next month's Ship meetings.

*Activity* - Participate in council/region activity if available.

## **Suggested Subjects and Activities for Second Year**

### **First Month (May)**

Advanced seamanship course, eight 2-hour sessions (pg. 3-11). Continue orientation on sailing (subject: "Navigation").

*Activity* - Predicted log contest (pg. 4-6).

### **Second Month (June)**

Complete advanced seamanship course. Prepare for council or area regatta if available.

*Activity* - Participate in council or area regatta.

### **Third Month (July)**

Continue orientation on bridge and quarterdeck (subject: "Signaling-International Morse Code"). Build blinker and buzzer sets (pg. 5-67). Plan 3 months' program.

*Activity* - Beach party or cruise.

### **Fourth Month (August)**

Continue orientation on bridge and quarterdeck (subject: "Signaling-Semaphore") also flag signals and bell signals (pg. 5-68).

*Activity* - Long cruise or superactivity.

## **Fifth Month (September)**

Conduct Firstnighter to recruit new members (pg. 2-20). Continue orientation on bridge and quarterdeck (subject: "Weather Lore and Weather Forecasting, pg. 5-80).

*Activity* - Weekend cruise.

## **Sixth Month (October)**

Provide orientation for new members. Continue orientation on bridge and quarterdeck (subject: "Types of Vessels," pg. 4-14. Plan 3 months' program.

*Activity* - Weekend cruise.

## **Seventh Month (November)**

Orientation on boat maintenance, safety equipment, and procedures.

*Activity* - Swim meet.

## **Eighth Month (December)**

Orientation on cruising (pg. 4-35).

*Activity* - Christmas party, parents' night.

## **Ninth Month (January)**

Orientation on safety (pg. 5-84). Plan 3 months' program.

*Activity* - Winter weekend or ski trip.

## **Tenth Month (February)**

Open House: demonstrations and recruiting (pg. 2-20).

*Activity* - Ship banquet.

## **Eleventh Month (March)**

inspections: drill and uniform (pg. 3-16). Discuss construction of sailboats and sails.

*Activity* - Service project for chartered organization.

## **Twelfth Month (April)**

Plan the long cruise (pg. 4-36). Begin construction of sailboats. Plan 3 months' program.

*Activity* - Council/region bridge of honor and dance.

The home of Sea Scouting on the Internet is <<http://www.seascout.org>>. There is also a free Sea Scouting discussion group on the Internet called *Seascout-Net*. To subscribe, send the following e-mail message to <[listserv@seascout.org](mailto:listserv@seascout.org)>: `subscribe seascout-net yourfirstname yourlastname` substituting your name in the appropriate spots. Additional information about *Seascout-Net* may be found at <<http://www.seascout.org/seascout-net/index.html>>.

National Sea Scout Committee  
**Boy Scouts of America**  
2000 Revision  
No. 25-352