Welcome
To the
Wonderful World
of the
Unit Commissioner
Scouting’s Front-Line
Diplomat

Theodore Roosevelt Council
2012
Unit Commissioner: Scouting's Front-Line Diplomat

As a new unit commissioner, you are one of the most important influences to ensure quality Scouting in the Scout units assigned to you (usually two or three). With your help, the units you serve will be prepared to provide an even better program to the boys and young adults they serve. Because of you, boys and young adults will stay in the Scouting program longer.

The Unit commissioner provides unit service; direct coaching and consultation to the unit leaders to help ensure the success of every Scouting unit.

“Sharing your Experience” involves several roles: friend, counselor, teacher, motivator, and unit doctor.

A Friend says, “I care, I am here to help, what I can do for you?” Caring makes Commissioner Service successful! A unit commissioner who makes him/herself a friend to the unit will be trusted.

A Counselor (or mentor) helps units solve their problems. He/she guides them with questions instead of giving advice or providing answers.

A Teacher helps unit leaders grow by sharing their experience and by directing them to resources. The unit commissioner promotes and ensures that unit leaders attend roundtables and other trainings.

A Motivator realizes his/her attitude impacts a unit’s success, by influencing its leaders. The unit commissioner’s positive attitude demonstrates how he/she feels about the Scouting program and the service the unit commissioner provides.

A Unit Doctor helps solve problems but also recognizes that prevention is better than a cure, and he/she will act quickly when a symptom is found.

The Unit Commissioner’s Role

The unit commissioner’s sole purpose is to be a friend and to help units achieve success. A commissioner’s role is to keep units alive, happy, healthy and re-registered on time.

Your units will likely face many problems. Your job is to assist the unit in finding the solution that is best for them. To a unit the unit commissioner is “The person we turn to when we need help.”

One of the unit commissioner's functions is to visit the meetings for the units they serve. Notice that they don’t disrupt the meetings, they stay on the sidelines. A unit commissioner is the sort of friend who is ready to help solve problems as soon as they appear.

An important point: The unit commissioner does not take ownership of a problem. Instead he helps people directly involved in the unit's operation to clearly see what needs attention and why, examine resources and other options, and to take action.

"A friend in need is a friend indeed."
Where Do I Begin?
The unit commissioners are appointed by the district commissioner

The unit commissioners should:
• Have excellent people skills
• Have a Scouting background or be fast-track learners
• Know and practice Scouting ideals

When accepting this important responsibility, a new unit commissioner usually takes these steps:

1. Meets and becomes acquainted with district commissioner and/or assistant district commissioner – discusses ways to learn the job
2. Arranges for an early orientation session with the district commissioner or assistant district commissioner and ask that he or she accompany you to visit assigned units
3. Studies the Commissioner Field Book for Unit Service, the Commissioner Helps for Packs, Troops, and Crews and other materials suggested by your assistant district commissioner
4. Puts important Scouting dates on calendar, including monthly meetings of the district commissioner staff, and the next commissioner basic training course

If you have done these four things, you are off to a great start

Congratulations on the contribution you will make to today's youth

How Will I Know I Did a Good Job?

You are successful when the units you serve are successful

• Unit commissioners measure progress by units that re-charter on time and meet the requirements for the national Journey to Excellence Award
• Unit commissioners meet with the unit Key3 on a periodic basis to review unit program, unit membership growth and retention, and assist with unit self assessment.
• Unit commissioners are successful when their assigned units' membership grows and when their units succeed in providing a quality program for youth
• Self-Evaluation for Unit Commissioners is a more detailed look at the success of a unit commissioner

These are measurable results for a good unit commissioner.
Less Measurable Qualities of a Good Unit Commissioner

The outstanding unit commissioner:

- Is an enthusiastic leader of adults
- Inspires confidence and builds morale in unit adults
- Has practical knowledge of Scouting or, more importantly, is a fast track learner
- Is diplomatic and can handle difficult unit situations while maintaining good relations with unit adults
- Strongly believes in Scouting and its ideals
- Respects cultural and socioeconomic differences
- Respects personality differences
- Adapts well to changing unit circumstances
- Is persistent, yet patient, with unit staff
- Stays focused on specific unit needs, and helps each assigned unit become more effective with its program and operation

*A unit commissioner is a person who sets high goals and standards - America's youth deserve no less!*

Unit Service

One of the best ways to help units is in a more relaxed setting: just you and the unit leader. You'll have the opportunity to learn more about the unit.

Remember the unit commissioner has many roles: friend, counselor, teacher, a doctor for sick units; your job is to do whatever it takes for success:

**JOURNEY TO EXCELLENCE**

- One way to measure success is to make sure each of you units earns the national Journey to Excellence Award – The criteria are the same solid goals that make for a healthy, active unit

**ON-TIME RECHARTERING**

- Make sure the unit has its charter renewed by the designated date for the council.
- You provide guidance to the unit to conduct an inventory of youth and adults and turning their charter in on time
- You'll have the special pleasure of presenting their charter to them in a special ceremony

**SUPPORTING LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE**

- Your job will take you not only to some of the unit meetings but also separate time with the unit Key 3 – the Scoutmaster, the Committee Chair, and the Chartered Organization Representative. When working with the unit Key 3, the unit commissioner should use good listening skills, give lots of encouragement and show respect for everyone's idea
By maintaining good communication with everyone, you'll be in an excellent position to monitor the health of each unit and to act quickly when a problem arises – That is when you become what is sometimes called - a Scouting paramedic.

- Another role you will have is mentoring the unit in the selection of new unit leaders – You'll make sure that successful techniques are followed using guidelines that have been designed to help units find quality leaders.

- Remember all leaders must be approved by the chartering organization and the Boy Scouts of America.

- Then, as new leaders are selected, part of your job is to make sure they are encouraged and directed to appropriate training provided by your district and council training volunteers.

- Just as a paramedic checks vital signs, a good commissioner watches the health of his units. These are situations, which can threaten the life of a unit. You have to go into action fast.
  ~ The unit commissioner works with the unit’s leaders, asking questions, making suggestions, but not taking over or assuming control.
  ~ Once you have appropriate info, you can consult with your assistant district commissioner or district commissioner for advice.
  ~ Working together with the Unit Leader and Chartered Organization representative, the unit commissioner moves them through the a process to clearly identify the source of the problem, designing a strategy to solve it involving the appropriate individuals, and outlining a course of action.

- The best way to deal with emergencies is, of course, to prevent them.

- Your Commissioner Field Book for Unit Service has a helpful warning checklist. When a warning sign appears, you become a lifesaving commissioner. Without prompt intensive care, a unit could become a terminal case.

Remember, dead units do not provide a program for kids. Make the commitment now to never lose a unit.

**When a unit has a life-threatening problem, the unit commissioner gives it top priority.**

**Next Steps**

You've taken the first step by taking this Fast Start training. The next step is learning about your two most valuable resources:

- The Commissioner Field Book for Unit Service and

- Your district commissioner, assistant district commissioner or whoever has been assigned as your coach.
They'll help you fill in your Commissioner Program Notebook and Council Calendar with key meeting dates.

- They'll give you unit field rosters and background information on your assigned units
- They'll connect you with adults involved in your units and take you to your first meeting
- They'll give you a kit of helpful materials to help you serve your units
- They'll also lay out a training path for you
- After you've completed your Commissioner Basic Training course, you'll receive a trained leader patch for your uniform

**Summary**

You've embarked on a challenging and rewarding leadership job. Your eyes, your ears, your efforts, your knowledge, and your willingness to learn will all contribute to a quality Scouting program.

From now on when you see a major unit event, a weak unit made healthy again, a national Journey to Excellence Award presented, or a new leader recruited, you will know that you contributed to their success.

*Hold those images close, for they are the symbols of a job well done. Welcome to the ranks of commissioner service!*

*The Scouting tradition is made stronger by your participation. Thanks!*

*The unit commissioner is the quality control officer who coaches unit adults toward success.*