Theodore Roosevelt Council, Boy Scouts of America places the greatest importance on creating the most secure environment possible for our youth members. Sustained vigilance is required to maintain such an environment. The BSA has continued to develop and enhance our youth protection efforts to combat the growing dangers and challenges facing youth today.

Our current multi-tiered approach focuses on a four part strategy:

1. Rigorous leadership selection and screening policies
2. Mandatory and supplemental abuse prevention training and educational resources for parents, leaders and Scouts
3. Implementation of procedural Barriers to Abuse in all Scouting programs and
4. Mandated prompt reporting of all suspected abuse or violations to the Barriers to Abuse to the appropriate authorities.
1 Leadership Selection and Screening

The Boy Scouts of America takes great pride in the quality of our adult leadership. Being a leader in the BSA is a privilege, not a right. The quality of the program and the safety of our youth members call for high-quality adult leaders. We work closely with our chartered organizations to help recruit the best possible leaders for their units.

The adult application requests background information and references that are checked by the unit committee or the chartered organization before accepting an applicant for unit leadership. While no current screening techniques exist that can identify every potential child molester, we can reduce the risk of accepting a child molester by learning all we can about an applicant for a leadership position—his or her experience with children, why he or she wants to be a Scout leader, and what discipline techniques he or she would use.

Upon receiving an adult volunteer application from a unit, the Boy Scouts of America conducts further screening utilizing a state-of-the-art Internet-based criminal background checking system through LexisNexis. This system provides local councils of the BSA with the capability of checking new volunteer applicants against state and national databases.

The applications are also screened against an in-house “Ineligible Volunteer” file. As stated above, being a leader in the BSA is a privilege, not a right. While the list contains the names of people both in and out of Scouting who have been convicted of crimes, it also contains the names of people who have not been convicted of any crime but whose behavior does not meet our high standards. As such, it is a supplement to the criminal background checks, providing another layer of screening.

This multi-level review and screening process is just the first step in ensuring the safety of our Scouts.
2 Abuse Prevention Training & Educational Resources

In order to ensure the safety of our Scouts, a comprehensive training and education plan has been implemented for all of our Scouts, parents and leaders. This plan includes both mandatory and supplemental training. The BSA has developed a number of multi-media resources to support this plan.

Leader Required Training

Youth Protection training is required for all BSA registered volunteers upon joining and must be renewed every two years. Volunteers are not allowed to reregister if their Youth Protection training expires during the registration period.

Youth Protection Training can be completed on-line or in group sessions. The program covers types of abuse, how to identify abuse, Scouting’s Barriers to Abuse, what to do if abuse is suspected and how to report suspected cases of abuse.

Scout/Parent Required Training

A pamphlet is included in the front of every youth handbook entitled, “How to Protect Your Children from Child Abuse: A Parent’s Guide.” The pamphlet includes a section for parents that covers how to identify signs of abuse, how to help prevent abuse and how to talk to their children about abuse. There is a second section that the parent and Scout complete together that covers the three R’s to child abuse prevention: Recognize, Resist and Report. It also covers some abusive situations and has discussion questions. This pamphlet must be reviewed by the parent and child in order to earn their first badge.

Supplemental Scout Training

Though not required, all Scout units are encouraged to periodically provide Child Abuse Prevention training for all of their Scouts. Videos and Facilitator Guides are available for Cub Scouts (6-10 year-old boys) entitled “It Happened to Me,” Boy Scouts (11-17 year-old boys “A Time to Tell” and Venturers (14-20 year-old boys and girls) “Personal Safety Awareness.” Each of the programs reviews the three R’s to child abuse prevention and covers age-appropriate situations with questions and answers.

A series of comic books, “Power Pals” is available for our Cub Scouts that cover topics such as personal safety, bullying and internet safety.

Boy Scouts also address internet safety, bullying, media privacy and social networking.
3  Scouting’s Barriers to Abuse

The BSA has adopted the following policies to provide additional security for our members. These policies are primarily for the protection of our youth members; however, they also serve to protect our adult leaders from false accusations of abuse.

Minimum two-deep leadership on all outings required. Two registered adult leaders or one registered leader and a parent of a participant, or other adult, one of whom must be 21 years of age or older, are required on all trips and outings. Appropriate adult leadership must be present for all overnight Scouting activities; coed overnight activities—even those including parent and child—require male and female adult leaders, both of whom must be 21 years of age or older, and one of whom must be a registered member of the BSA.

One-on-one contact between adults and youth members is prohibited. In any situation requiring a personal meeting, such as a Scoutmaster’s conference, the meeting is to be conducted in view of other adults and youths.

Separate accommodations for adults and Scouts required. When camping, no youth is permitted to sleep in the tent of an adult other than his or her own parent or guardian. Councils are strongly encouraged to have separate shower and latrine facilities for females. When separate facilities are not available, separate times for male and female use should be scheduled and posted for showers. Likewise, youth and adults must shower at different times.

Privacy of youth respected. Adult leaders must respect the privacy of youth members in situations such as changing clothes and taking showers at camp, and intrude only to the extent that health and safety require. Adults must protect their own privacy in similar situations.

Inappropriate use of cameras, imaging, and digital devices prohibited. While most campers and leaders use cameras and other imaging devices responsibly, it has become very easy to invade the privacy of individuals. It is inappropriate to use any device capable of recording or transmitting visual images in shower houses, restrooms, or other areas where privacy is expected by participants.

No secret organizations. The Boy Scouts of America does not recognize any secret organizations as part of its program. All aspects of the Scouting program are open to observation by parents and leaders.

No hazing. Physical hazing and initiations are prohibited and may not be included as part of any Scouting activity.

No bullying. Verbal, physical, and cyber bullying are prohibited in Scouting.

Youth leadership monitored by adult leaders. Adult leaders must monitor and guide the leadership techniques used by youth leaders and ensure that BSA policies are followed.

Discipline must be constructive. Discipline used in Scouting should be constructive and reflect Scouting’s values. Corporal punishment is never permitted.

Appropriate attire for all activities. Proper clothing for activities is required. For example, skinny-dipping or revealing bathing suits are not appropriate in Scouting.

Members are responsible to act according to Scout Oath and Law. All members of the Boy Scouts of America are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the principles set forth in the Scout Oath and Scout Law. Physical violence, theft, verbal insults, drugs, and alcohol have no place in the Scouting program and may result in the revocation of a Scout’s membership.
3) Scouting’s Barriers to Abuse (continued)

Units are responsible to enforce Youth Protection Policies. The head of the chartered organization or chartered organization representative and the local council must approve the registration of the unit's adult leader. Adult leaders of Scouting units are responsible for monitoring the behavior of youth members and interceding when necessary. The parents of youth members who misbehave should be informed and asked for assistance.

Mandatory reporting of child abuse. All involved in Scouting are personally responsible to immediately report to law enforcement any belief or good faith suspicion that any child is or has been abused or exploited or endangered in any way. No person may abdicate this reporting responsibility to any other person.

Social media guidelines. The policy of two-deep leadership extends into cyberspace. Another adult leader should be copied on any electronic communication between adult and youth member.

Alcohol is prohibited. Leaders are not allowed to consume alcohol on any Scouting property or at any Scouting event or assume a leadership role while under the influence of alcohol. Of course, illegal instances of underage drinking, smoking and the use of controlled substances are also prohibited.
4 Mandatory Reporting

Mandatory Report of Child Abuse

All persons involved in Scouting must report to local authorities any good-faith suspicion or belief that any child is or has been physically or sexually abused, physically or emotionally neglected, exposed to any form of violence or threat, exposed to any form of sexual exploitation, including the possession, manufacture, or distribution of child pornography, online solicitation, enticement, or showing of obscene material. This reporting responsibility may not be abdicated to any other person.

Steps to Reporting Child Abuse

1. Ensure the child is in a safe environment.
2. In cases of child abuse or medical emergencies, call 911 immediately. In addition, if the suspected abuse is in the Scout's home or family, you are required to contact the local child abuse hotline.
3. Notify the Scout executive or his/her designee.

Reporting Violations of BSA Youth Protection Policies

All persons involved in Scouting shall report to the Scout Executive all non-criminal violations of the BSA's Youth Protection policies, including those described within Scouting's Barriers to Abuse. The unit and council will determine the appropriate course of action for the safety of the Scouts. Repeat violations will result in removing the person from Scouting.

We are committed to consistently strengthening and enhancing our Youth Protection measures, and in recent decades, have expanded our programs significantly as more information and new techniques and technologies have become available to us. Recently, experts in youth safety and the media have acknowledged the strength of our Youth Protection programs in place today:

“The Boy Scouts of America is one group advocates say has gone farthest to institute such measures to safeguard kids.” (MSNBC, November 2011)

“The Scouts’ current prevention policies are considered state of the art and several independent child-protection experts told The Associated Press that the Scouts—though buffeted in the past by many abuse-related lawsuits—are now considered a leader in combating sexual abuse. ‘The Boy Scouts have the most advanced policies and training,’ said Victor Vieth, a former prosecutor who heads the National Child Protection Training Center in Minnesota.” (Associated Press, January 2012)

The Executive Board and Staff of the Theodore Roosevelt Council, BSA are honored by the faith in Scouting that the parents of more than 10,000 boys and girls exhibit annually by entrusting their children to us. Our top priority is to meet and exceed their expectations for the safety of their children while delivering outstanding adventures and life changing programs that instill a set of values and skills that will equip our young people to be the leaders of tomorrow.

We are blessed each year with more than 3,900 adults who volunteer their time and energy for the children of their community through Scouting. By rigorous screening and mandatory training we strive to ensure that only the best are approved for leadership and that they are fully aware of our procedures to prevent child abuse and the correct actions to follow if they feel a child’s safety is in danger.

For additional information on Scouting’s child abuse prevention, to take the online “Youth Protection” training or to view some of the educational resources, visit www.scouting.org and click on the Youth Protection tab at the top of the page.
YOUTH PROTECTION of the Boy Scouts of America

Youth protection requires sustained vigilance. That is why the BSA has continued to develop and enhance its youth protection efforts as everyone continues to learn more about the dangers and challenges facing youth. The BSA has established a multi-tiered youth protection approach focused on volunteer screening, education, and training for everyone in the program, and clear policies to protect youth.

This is how it works:

ADULT VOLUNTEERS

STEP 1
Chartered Organizations Reference Check

STEP 2
Application

STEP 3
Criminal Background Check

STEP 4
Ineligible Volunteer File Check

STEP 5
Adult Leader Youth Protection Training

THE BSA LAYERS OF PROTECTION

YOUTH PROTECTION DIRECTOR

ONLINE PROGRAM

PORTFOLIO OF YOUTH AND ADULT MEASURES

TWO-DEEP* LEADERSHIP

MANDATORY REPORTING

PARENTS AND SCOUTS

STEP 1
Parental and Scout Youth Protection Education

STEP 2
Parental Policy Notification

STEP 3
Empowerment of Scouts

*Defined as youth and adult leaders who have been through the Comprehensive Youth Protection Training (CYP) in their positions and have the authority to regulate the daily conduct of the youth in the unit.
Youth Protection Begins With You™

Educate Scouting professionals, volunteers, parents, and youth members to aid in the detection and prevention of child abuse.

Support chartered organizations in their leader selection to defend against suspected or alleged abusers entering BSA leadership ranks.

Strengthen policies that create barriers to child abuse within the Scouting program.

Encourage the immediate reporting of improper behavior or violations of BSA policy.

Identify and swiftly remove suspected or alleged abusers.