

# Commissioners—In the Boy Scouts of America

*Commissioners are district and council leaders who help Scout units succeed. They coach and consult with adult leaders of Cub Scout packs, Boy Scout troops, and Venturing crews. Commissioners help maintain the standards of the Boy Scouts of America. They also oversee the unit charter renewal plan so that each unit reregisters on time with an optimum number of youth and adult members.*



## Roles the Commissioner Plays

A commissioner plays several roles, including friend, representative, unit "doctor," teacher, and counselor.

The commissioner is a **friend** of the unit. Of all their roles, this one is the most important. It springs from the attitude, "I care, I am here to help, what can I do for you?" Caring is the ingredient that makes commissioner service successful. He or she is an advocate of unit needs. A commissioner who makes themselves known and accepted now will be called on in future times of trouble.



The commissioner is a **representative**. The average unit leader is totally occupied in working with kids. Some have little if any contact with the Boy Scouts of America other than a commissioner's visit to their meeting. To them, the commissioner may be the BSA. The commissioner helps represent the ideals, the principles, and the policies of the Scouting movement.



The commissioner is a unit **"doctor."** In their role as "doctor," they know that prevention is better than a cure, so they try to see that their units make good "health practices" a way of life. When problems arise, and they will even in the best unit, they act quickly. They observe symptoms, diagnose the real ailment, prescribe a remedy, and follow up on the patient.



The commissioner is a **teacher**. As a commissioner, they will have a wonderful opportunity to participate in the growth of unit leaders by sharing knowledge with them. They teach not just in an academic environment, but where it counts most—as an immediate response to a need to know. That is the best adult learning situation since the lesson is instantly reinforced by practical application of the new knowledge.

The commissioner is a **counselor**. As a Scouting counselor, they will help units solve their own problems. Counseling is the best role when unit leaders don't recognize a problem and where solutions are not clear-cut. Everyone needs counseling from time to time, even experienced leaders.

## How are commissioners selected?

Selection process and criteria vary depending on the position.

A **Council Commissioner** is elected at the annual meeting of the local council after selection by the council nominating committee.

The council commissioner should—

- Have the ability and proven experience to lead and meet objectives through a large structure of other people
- Become a role model of exceptional Scouting service to units throughout the council
- Be a person with a vision of how a good unit program helps youth stay in the program long enough to learn Scouting values
- Have the ability to develop a good working relationship with the Scout executive and professional staff advisor, characterized by mutual trust, mutual respect, and mutual recognition of each other's role and competence

**Assistant Council Commissioners** are appointed by the council commissioner with the approval of the council executive board.

Assistant council commissioners should have some of the criteria for district commissioners and/or council commissioners.

**Unit Commissioners** are appointed by the district commissioner with the approval of the council executive board.

Unit commissioners should—

- Have excellent people skills
- Have a Scouting background or be fast-track learners
- Know and practice Scouting ideals

**Roundtable Commissioners** are appointed by the district commissioner with the approval of the council executive board.

Roundtable commissioners should—

- Be congenial and enthusiastic performers
- Have the ability to recruit a roundtable staff
- Have a good Scouting program background in the program for which they will run roundtables
- Be a good planner

Commissioners must not be registered simultaneously as unit leaders. Some commissioners may be registered on a unit committee because they have a son in the unit or because of previous personal history in the unit, but their principle Scouting obligation should be with commissioner responsibilities. Commissioners may be currently registered in only one commissioner position.