Commissioners - In the Boy Scouts of America

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 himself 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.

Resources for Commissioners

- Products for Commissioner Identity
- Basic Commissioner Manuals
- Other Commissioner Resources
- *The Commissioner*—A newsletter for the council commissioner, the council Scout executive, and council professional advisor to commissioners
- Commissioners at the Philmont Training Center
- National Meeting Presentations

How are commissioners selected?

Selection process and criteria vary depending on the position.

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

Assistant District Commissioners are appointed by the district commissioner with the approval of the council executive board.

Assistant district commissioners should—

- Be able to recruit and work through a team of unit commissioners.
- Have excellent people skills
- Have a broad 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

District Commissioners are approved and appointed by the council executive board, with the concurrence of the Scout executive, on the recommendation of the district nominating committee.

District commissioners should—

- Be widely respected in the community
- Be an enthusiastic leader of adults

- Have the ability to recruit a complete team of commissioners for their districts
- Have the ability to guide and motivate commissioners to visit units regularly, identify unit needs, and help unit adults to meet needs
- Be a role model of Scouting ideals

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.

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 competency

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.

See the Commissioner Fieldbook and Commissioner Administration> for more details on commissioner criteria and responsibilities.