

Troop 3 Parents' Guide

115 Wolfe Street
Winchester, VA 22601
Shenandoah Area Council
Shawnee District

About our Troop

Troop 3 was established in 1928 and is one of the oldest troops in Winchester. We are chartered by Braddock Street United Methodist Church.

Our troop is considered scout-led, which means the scouts make most of the decisions about activities. The scouts are strongly encouraged to assist each other in advancement, when possible, and to teach each other the requisite skills associated with scouting. The adults provide additional mentoring and safety checks, while providing reasonable boundaries for activities.

Troop 3 is a unit within the Shenandoah Area Council (<https://www.sac-bsa.org>), which has three districts:

- Potomac
- Shawnee
- Shenrapawa

Troop 3 is part of the Shawnee District.

Like all scouting units, our troop is sponsored by a Charter Organization. Our Charter Organization is Braddock Street United Methodist Church. Charter Organizations can include parent-school organizations, religious organizations, service clubs, and other organizations interested in youth. Charter Organizations approve leadership of the troop, help secure a meeting place, and help keep the troop within the sponsor's and Scouts BSA guidelines and policies. Charter Organizations also select a Charter Representative (a liaison between our troop and the sponsor organization) to aid in building an effective relationship between the organization and troop.

Meeting Times and Locations

Troop 3 usually meets at Braddock Street United Methodist Church, on the corner of Braddock and Wolfe streets. The church has provided a dedicated meeting room, which we share with Pack 3 (which meets on a different night). Inside the room, we have a separate closet that contains all of the troop/pack gear.

Meeting times are 7:00pm to approximately 8:30pm on Thursdays, unless otherwise noted.

Parents may park on the street, under the parking overhang, or in the BSUMC parking lot (you need a code to enter the parking lot). Parents may also drop off their scouts, if needed.

Joining Troop 3

Scouts who wish to join our troop must register with the council. Scouts who were part of a Cub Scout pack or another troop must still complete an application. This application informs the council that the scout is changing units. Applications can be obtained from either the troop or the council. Once the scout is officially transferred into the troop, a new account will be added to Scoutbook (see Scoutbook section below).

There are annual dues to participate. These dues include council and national fees. Below are recent fees paid, as an example.

Annual dues: \$72/scout; \$45/adult

Insurance: \$2/scout

Subscription to Scout Life magazine (optional): \$12

The troop will collect all dues each fall, during the rechartering process. (Rechartering is the process of enrolling or un-enrolling scouts and leaders and paying all applicable fees.) A scout must have at least a zero balance in his/her scout account to recharter. That means all applicable fees from previous events must be paid, as well as the annual recharter fees. See Scout Account Balance section below.

Crossover

Scouts who are currently in Cub Scouts will participate in a Crossover ceremony with Troop 3. Troop 3 conducts one Crossover ceremony each spring. Troop 3 will set up the Crossover, and parents may come and watch the scouts ceremoniously cross over into Troop 3.

Scoutbook

Troop 3 uses an online program, called Scoutbook, to maintain all scout records. It is strongly recommended that you and your scout become familiar with this online system. Once a scout is officially transferred into the troop, we will have access to his/her online records.

Emails

We strongly recommend that each scout have, and monitor, an email address. (We do recognize that this is a parent/guardian decision.) Almost all troop communication will be through Scoutbook, and emails will either go directly to the scout and/or the parent/guardian. If a

scout does not have an active email account entered into Scoutbook, all emails will go to the parent/guardian, who is then responsible for informing the scout. Otherwise, both parents/guardians and scouts will receive all relevant emails.

Note that—due to strict BSA regulations—Scoutbook does not permit an adult to email or text a scout without copying a parent/guardian.

Syncing your Calendar

We also strongly recommend that you subscribe to the troop calendar. Scoutbook can sync the troop calendar of events to your smartphone and/or iCal. For directions on subscribing to the troop calendar, follow the link below and look for the instructions:

<https://help.scoutbook.scouting.org/knowledge-base/using-scoutbook-calendars/#viewing-and-sharing-your-calendar>

Scout Account Balance

Each scout will have an account balance within Scoutbook. This account is used to pay for events, dues, and summer camp. You can view your scout's account balance within Scoutbook at any time. We ask that you maintain a positive balance at all times. At recharter, all scouts must have at least a zero balance to be eligible to recharter, which means that all prior events must be paid for at the time of recharter.

Troop 3 Policies about Scoutbook

As mentioned, Troop 3 uses Scoutbook to maintain all scouting records. These records are synced with the council and are used to monitor advancement.

Unlike Cub Scouts, parents are not allowed to enter and/or approve of any advancement unless they are a registered adult leader. We strongly discourage registered leaders from entering/approving advancements for their own children. We also discourage individual scouts from entering their advancements into Scoutbook on their own. Either a registered adult leader or the Advancement Coordinator should be the ones entering these records. If you believe your scout's records are incomplete, please discuss with a registered adult leader or the Advancement Coordinator.

Meetings

Meetings will take place at BSUMC unless otherwise noted.

Scouts should be in Class A uniform (shirt, pants/shorts, belt, socks, shoes) unless we are in the summer months. During the summer months—at the Scoutmaster's discretion, Class B uniforms may be authorized. Class B uniforms include t-shirts that are BSA-themed (e.g., a Troop 3 shirt or a t-shirt from a previous summer camp). Class C refers to regular clothes and

may be appropriate when we are doing exercises or games (e.g., Personal Fitness merit badge).

Meetings begin with an opening ceremony. Scouts line up in their patrols. The Senior Patrol Leader (SPL) will ask someone to lead the troop in the Pledge of Allegiance, Scout Oath, Scout Law, and Outdoor Code.

The Patrol Leaders Council (PLC) sets the meeting agendas every month during a separate meeting (generally first Tuesday each month). When possible, meeting themes, locations, and times are posted on Scoutbook.

Meetings are closed with a “circle-up” and the Lord’s Prayer.

Advancement

Ranks

Scouts who are First Class or above in rank are qualified to sign-off on younger scouts’ advancements. Generally, a scout who is working on some rank advancement may approach a First Class (or above) scout and ask him/her to approve the requirement. The scout must properly demonstrate the requirement, as stated, and the older scout will initial and date the requirement within the younger scout’s handbook. Once the scout has all of the requirements initialed (with the exception of the Board of Review), the scout may ask the Advancement Coordinator to ensure the records are up-to-date in Scoutbook.

The scout may also approach a registered adult leader to obtain sign-off on some requirements. Generally, we encourage scouts to work together and teach each other the skills necessary for rank advancement. However, this is not always possible or practical.

Generally, there are two requirements that are met last for each rank. First, the scout must ask the Scoutmaster for a Scoutmaster Conference. Second, the scouts must request a Board of Review from the Advancement Coordinator. The Advancement Coordinator will convene a small group of registered adult leaders to conduct the Board of Review with the scout. The scout will sit in front of the Board and answer a set of questions. Scouts must attend the Board of Review in full Class A uniform.

Merit Badges

Most merit badges are earned during summer camp. We highly recommend that scouts attend summer camp for this reason. However, the troop will often work on merit badges throughout the year as a group, but this rarely results in a completed merit badge. Scouts then must work on their own to complete the requirements.

Scouts may also work on merit badges individually.

In either case, the scout must obtain a merit badge counselor. Often, this person will be a registered adult leader within the troop. However, if a scout is requesting to work on a merit badge in which we do not have a registered counselor, he should contact the Advancement Coordinator to help find a registered counselor for that merit badge.

As with rank advancements, parents should not be the ones approving merit badge requirements for their scouts within Scoutbook. Nor should scouts enter their own advancement. This is the duty of the merit badge counselor only (or the Advancement Coordinator).

Once a scout has completed a merit badge, the counselor will provide a final approval. Additional approvals are made at the troop and scoutmaster levels. After all approvals are met, the scout has earned the merit badge and will be awarded the badge at the next Court of Honor.

Participating in Events

Troop 3 will have many events throughout the year. These events include camping trips, hikes, district camporees, summer camp, and others.

We understand that scouts sometimes have other commitments. However, we strongly encourage scouts to attend as many events as possible in order to rank up and obtain merit badges. Many requirements can be completed at these events, especially at summer camp.

When an event is created, it will be added to the Scoutbook calendar. In most cases, an invitation to RSVP for the event will be sent out via Scoutbook. We ask that scouts RSVP as soon as possible, since there is usually a lot of planning that needs to occur and the number of attending scouts is pertinent information. A sign-up sheet is also often available in the scout room.

For most events, there is an associated cost. For example, when scouts go on a campout, the cost of food (and sometimes other costs) will be distributed evenly amongst all the scouts *who registered for the event*. If your scout registered for the event but did not attend without prior notification, then you will be charged for the event. For some events such as camporees, there are registration fees. Again, if your scout signed up for the event but did not attend (without adequate prior notice) then your scout will be charged. The troop cannot afford to absorb these costs.

Summer Camp

Troop 3 attends summer camp every year. Each fall, the Patrol Leaders Council will research different camps and provide a list of potential camps for the troop to vote on. This list may or may not include Camp Rock Enon. Generally, the troop goes out of the council for summer camp. Traveling to different camps provides variety and enthusiasm amongst the scouts.

New scouts are strongly encouraged to attend their first summer camp with the troop. Usually, new scouts can obtain many rank requirements at this first camp, as there are first-year programs that they will attend.

New scout parents do not usually attend summer camp unless they are registered adult leaders within the troop.

Fundraising

Troop 3 has traditionally only had one fundraiser each year. That fundraiser is selling chairs for the Apple Blossom Fireman's Parade and Grand Feature Parade. Scouts will help set up chairs on Thursday of that week. Then they will work both parades by attending a set of chairs and collecting money for chairs sold (most chairs are sold online and are prepaid). After the Grand Feature Parade, the scouts will assist with collecting the chairs. Note: all scouts are expected to participate in this event since it is the only fundraiser of the year.

A portion of the fundraiser goes to the troop and another portion goes to each scout who worked the parades.

Troop 3 Committee

Each troop has a committee. The committee usually comprises parents and other troop leaders. The committee meets once a month to discuss the overall business of the troop, to obtain updates from the Scoutmaster, to discuss Eagle projects, financials, etc. All committee members must be registered adult leaders and are committed to at least one year of service (during the annual chartering).

If you are interested in participating on the committee, please see the Committee Chair or Scoutmaster.

Other Adult Leadership Roles

If you are interested in helping the troop, please consider registering as an Assistant Scoutmaster (ASM), merit badge counselor, or other committee member. The troop can exist only if it maintains the adult volunteers to help run it.

All adult leaders must be registered with the council and pass a background check. Applications are available via the troop or council.

Please note that no adult is allowed to have one-on-one contact with any scout, unless it is his/her own child. This rule includes working with merit badge counselors. This is a strict BSA rule that protects both the scouts and the leaders. Adult leaders must complete, pass, and

maintain the BSA Youth Protection Certification online course, which is renewed every two years. Scouts should always utilize the buddy system as well.

Equipping Your Scout

Uniform

There are two different kinds of uniforms for scouts. One is a Class A uniform, the other is a Class B uniform. Class A uniforms can be obtained either online or from the SAC Scout Shop (see below). At Crossover, each new scout will receive a number 3, two green epaulets, a troop 3 hat, a troop 3 neckerchief and slide, a Class B shirt, and a new handbook. All other uniform components are obtained individually.

The Scout Shop

If you have any questions about uniforms or handbooks just ask your Patrol Leader (or one of the Scout Shop staff), and he or she will be happy to help you. The nearest Scout Shop is located at the Youth Development Center, on Shawnee Avenue, across the street from the Trex plant. The address is 107 Youth Development Court, Winchester, VA, 22602, telephone: 540-662-2551.

If cost is a major issue for a family, used uniforms and components are often available on auction websites such as eBay for a fraction of retail prices. Our troop also maintains a Uniform Closet containing some previously worn uniform elements that might fit your scout and are available at no cost.

Some additional supplies and equipment may be needed for certain activities such as camping trips. The troop has a limited supply of extra tents, backpacks, sleeping bags/pads, etc. If your scout needs any equipment for a trip, he or she should consult with the Scoutmaster and/or Quartermaster.

We also note here that Mountain Trails offers a 10% discount for all scouts. You must mention you are a scout to obtain the discount.