

## **Pacific Skyline Council Tour Plan Policy and Q&A's** (rev. March 24, 2011)

### **Pacific Skyline Council Policy for Tour Plans:**

Based on a recommendation from the Pacific Skyline Council's Risk Management Committee, the Executive Committee and full Board has adopted the following Tour Plan requirements as formal Council policy:

1. The Pacific Skyline Council shall adopt and utilize the Tour Plan documents and process as set forth and defined by Boy Scouts of America, and supplemented by this policy statement.
2. Each chartered unit within the Council will be expected to file a properly completed BSA Tour Plan document with the Council offices, for *each and every outing* that unit undertakes. This requirement supplements the thresholds established by BSA for when a Tour Plan must be filed. Current BSA policy suggests Tour Plan submission at least 21 days prior to the unit outing, or as early as possible. Late filing may prevent the Council from being able to approve the Tour Plan in time for outing.
3. As used in this policy, "Outings" mean any organized activity which does not take place at the unit's normal meeting place.
4. The submission by electronic mail of a Tour Plan document is recommended and preferred, to the email address of [tourplans@pacsky.org](mailto:tourplans@pacsky.org) . Upon receipt by the Council of each Tour Plan, the Council will promptly review, approve or reject, and return the Tour Plan (with any comments) to the submitting unit by return email.
5. Tour Plans with typed "signatures" from the Committee Chair or chartered organization representative and Adult Leader (entered at the bottom of Page 1 of the Tour Plan) shall be accepted between the unit and Council as a valid signature by the Council, and shall commit each unit in the same manner as a physical signature.
6. The Council will continue to evaluate its implementation of this policy and process. Council will continuously attempt to streamline and simplify the submission and review of Tour Plans, to make the process easier, faster, and more efficient, for both units and the Council.

### **Rationale for Council Policy:**

The new "Tour Plan" was introduced by the BSA in January 2011, replacing the previous "Tour Permit" and process. The Tour Plan became the official tour planning tool for use across the Scouting movement in March 2011, superseding and replacing all similar national and local versions of the Tour Permit.\*\*

A key tenet of scouting has always been "Preparedness." Nowhere is that more important than when a Scouting unit is heading out for an adventure, whether that is a Cub Scout den outing to the local historical museum, or a Venture Crew headed out for a deep snow backpacking trip! The Pacific Skyline Council actively supports the Boy Scouts of America's guidelines for use of planning tools for all Scouting related outings, to maximize preparation, prudence, and everyone's safety when a unit is engaged in an outing. As part of that support, Pacific Skyline Council requests the immediate transition

## **Pacific Skyline Council Tour Plan Policy and Q&A's** (rev. March 24, 2011)

from the prior "Tour Permit" to the new "Tour Plan" tool, as a critical step in assuring each outing has been fully considered and prepared for.

BSA policies and guidelines, like the Guide to Safe Scouting and the BSA Sweet 16 of Safety, were established because of the real need to protect our councils, units, members, and guests from known hazards that have been identified through more than a century of scouting experience. The Council leadership believes that always completing the Tour Plan (and each step required to complete a plan) is neither a hurdle nor bureaucratic exercise, but represents a valuable stepping-stone toward a safe and enjoyable adventure for everyone involved. It is therefore the Council's expectation that units and their leaders will fully utilize the Tour Plan process to the fullest of their good faith abilities, starting immediately. Non-use at the unit level falls below that expectation, and will be viewed similarly to any other compliance failure or disregard of BSA policies, procedures, or requirements.

The proper filing of Tour Plans also performs a lesser, but increasingly important function. Tour Plans are the single best reporting tools informing the Council of the activities of each of its chartered units. As part of the current BSA "Journey to Excellence" program, each unit, as well as the Council, will be tracking and reporting the number, type, duration, and participants for its outings. Without Tour Plans, there may be inadequate reporting to the Council, and neither the Unit nor Council will have an accurate record of their activities. Accurate records and reporting are crucial to planning, assessing, and improving the programs offered throughout Scouting and our Council.


*\*\* Note: Currently the Tour Plan document is available only as a "fillable PDF" document. To facilitate those units who have come to rely upon the online Tour Permit tool in filing their permits, the Boy Scouts of America National Office has recently decided that the online tool will remain available for individual unit use until a similar tool is available for Tour Plans. While the Pacific Skyline Council would prefer units immediately begin using the new Tour Plan document, it will continue to accept online Tour Permits until BSA changes its policy or has discontinued the availability of that tool. The Council believes that the Tour Plan is the better planning vehicle when a choice is available. Use of the online Tour Permit tool does not affect or remove the filing requirements for each unit outing, even if a Tour Permit was not required previously. All units are still expected to file Tour Permits or Plans for each outing as defined in this policy statement.)*

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(rev. March 24, 2011)

## Pacific Skyline Council Q's & A's regarding Tour Plans

### **Q. Why should I complete a [Tour Plan](#) ?**

**A.** Because the Council requires use of the [Tour Plan](#)  as a checklist for best practices in being prepared for a safe and fun adventure. Completing the Tour Plan may not address all possible challenges but can help ensure that appropriate planning has been conducted, that qualified and trained leadership is in place, and that the right equipment is available for the adventure.

In addition, the Tour Plan helps to organize safe and appropriate transportation to and from an event, and defines driver qualifications and minimum limits of insurance coverage for drivers and vehicles used to transport participants. Simply put, everyone in Scouting has a primary interest in the safety of our youth and adult participants, and the Tour Plan is an invaluable step in protecting that interest.

Consistent with BSA guidelines, Tour Plans should be completed and submitted at least 21 days in advance of the outing or as early as possible. 21 days will ensure that the Council has enough time to review and approve the plan, or assist you in updating the plan should it be found defective. When the review is complete, the second half of the plan is returned to you to carry on your travels. As we all become more familiar with using this new process, we anticipate that the 21-day requirement can be shortened significantly.

### **Q. When do I need to complete a [Tour Plan](#) ?**

**A.** Always. The Council expects a [Tour Plan](#) to be completed and submitted for each and every outing which a unit undertakes, other than events held at its usual meeting place. This approach is simpler, more consistent, and more comprehensive than the BSA "minimum" requirements for outings where a Tour Plan is required to be submitted for Council review. The following list includes BSA's verbatim mandatory requirements and general recommendations for when a Tour Plan should be filed by a unit. The Council's policy fully reflects BSA's recommendation, as well as the authority granted to individual Councils to have more comprehensive standards about filing Tour Plans.

BSA Requirements for Submitting a Tour Plan (from national's website and the Tour Plan document itself):

- Trips of 500 miles or more
- Trips outside of council borders not to a council-owned property
- Trips to any national high-adventure base, national Scout jamboree, National Order of the Arrow Conference, or regionally sponsored event
- When conducting the following activities outside of council or district events:
  - Aquatics activities (swimming, boating, floating, scuba, etc.)
  - Climbing and rappelling
  - Orientation flights (process flying plan)
  - Shooting sports
- Any activities involving motorized vehicles as part of the program (snowmobiles, boating, etc.)
- At a councils request

## Pacific Skyline Council Tour Plan Policy and Q&A's (rev. March 24, 2011)

Regardless, the tour plan is an excellent tool that should be included in preparation for all activities, even those not requiring it. It guides a tour leader through itineraries, travel arrangement, two-deep leadership, qualifications of supervision, and transportation.

### **Q. Why are the Council's requirements *more* extensive than those set forth by National? Shouldn't we follow only their standards?**

**A.** The Council requirements simply reflect and implement what is already recommended by BSA. Our goal is to have simple and consistent procedures, which maximize safety and preparedness for all scouting activities and outings – whether held near or far. Every outing requires planning, and each should be reported to the Council for record keeping purposes. Over time, the completion and submission of a Tour Plan will become a natural and routine procedural step for every unit outing. In the meantime, the Council asks for your full support and best efforts to implement this Tour Plan policy.

### **Q. What if I cannot file 21-days in advance, or our plans change?**

**A.** Complete and submit your Tour Plan as soon as you possibly can in those rare occasions where you truly do not have 21-days advance notice of the outing. Filing on shortened notice, however, means that the Council may not be able to process your Plan in time to give you valuable feedback – diminishing an important aspect of the Tour Plan process. If your plans change at the last minute, due to weather or other unexpected developments, so should your Tour Plan! When that happens, simply update your planning process and Tour Plan, then submit an *amended* Tour Plan to the individual at the Council who reviewed the original Tour Plan and provided comments or approval.

### **Q. What is different on the [Tour Plan](#) vs. the Tour Permit?**

**A.** Several items:

- Council is the reviewer of all Tour Plans; no regional review is required.
- The Tour Plan consists of a tour planning worksheet that is completed by the unit/contingent. After processing, the Council retains the tour planning worksheet and returns the Tour Plan to the unit.
- The plan can be printed on standard 8 ½-by-11-inch paper for carrying with the unit (though the Council requests submission by email).
- 21- vs. 14-day advance notice requested for units to submit the plan for Council review.
- A single point of contact (not on the tour) for Council use included.
- Defined reasons/times when a tour plan must be submitted for Council review. (Note however, that the Pacific Skyline Council simply requires the Tour Plan be submitted for all unit outings away from a unit's normal meeting place.)
- Updated Pledge of Performance.
- The Tour Plan is not yet available as an online tool, though such a tool is under development by the Boy Scouts of America at the National level.

### **Q. I am being told that my plan is defective; what does that mean?**

**A.** It means different things in different cases. You will need to review Council's comments, and if unclear, contact directly the individual providing the comments, questions, or rejection of the Tour Plan. That reviewer can best clarify any deficiencies in the Tour Plan for you to address. In many cases, it may just be that part of your plan was incomplete. Common reasons could include lack of two-deep leadership; leader training not completed, documented, or expired; excessive daily travel; inadequate driver info or insurance; or not including vehicles with the required capacity to carry the tour. Once defects are corrected, the Tour Plan can be resubmitted directly back to the person at the Council who provided notice of the problem, for a quick review and approval or further guidance.

## Pacific Skyline Council Tour Plan Policy and Q&A's

(rev. March 24, 2011)

### **Q. Is [planning and preparing for Hazardous Weather Training](#) required for all tours?**

A. Yes, it has been required for all tours, including local and national, Cub Scout, Boy Scout, and Venturing, since January 1, 2009. It should be repeated every two years and is appropriate for not only adults but Boy Scout aged youth as well. This training is available on-line at MyScouting.org, and a CD is available for use where internet access is not available. Search [www.scoutstuff.org](http://www.scoutstuff.org) for Item [610642](#).

### **Q. What should we use for permission from parents?**

A. The [Activity Consent Form and Approval by Parents or Guardian](#) is an appropriate resource. There may be rare occasions or outings for which additional or supplemental parental permissions are required or recommended, in which case you should consult with the Council (examples might include certain shooting sports or outings utilizing commercial guide services, etc.)

### **Q. Do I need anything else if we are going on a discovery flight?**

A. Yes, please complete the [Flying Plan Application](#) along with an [Activity Consent Form and Approval by Parents or Guardian](#) (for each participant).

### **Q. What if a Unit does not complete or submit a Tour Plan for that outing?**

A. The Unit, its leadership, and the Council may not have documentation that the expected preparation and planning for the outing was completed according to BSA standards. Preparation and planning are essential to the safe conduct of any scouting activity and outing, and the submission of a properly completed Tour Plan helps confirm they have taken place. Furthermore, absent Tour Plans, the Council may have inadequate information or records of the outing or activity. The Council will treat repeated compliance lapses the same as other failures to adhere to BSA or Council requirements.

### **Q. What about leaders or adults on outings for which no Tour Plan was prepared or submitted?**

A. BSA's general liability policy provides coverage for bodily injury or property damage that arises out of an official Scouting activity (as defined by the [Guide to Safe Scouting](#)). Volunteers, units, chartered organizations, and local councils engaging in unauthorized activities jeopardize their insurance coverage. They may risk personal liability for preventable problems or injuries attributable to a lack of preparation or failure to meet BSA guidelines set forth in the Tour Plan. Furthermore, they could find themselves lacking Council support in any ensuing legal proceedings. Why take easily avoidable risks? File a Tour Plan every time.

### **Q. What if I don't have all the info requested by the Tour Plan form?**

A. Do the best you can, and then update missing info as quickly as possible. You will need to gather all the required information eventually, to be compliant with Council and BSA requirements. The Tour Plan is simply a device to help you plan, gather, and record crucial information that should already be known to each unit and its leadership. Over time, the basic information regarding unit leaders, training, vehicles, insurance, and registered adults will be well known and easily included in subsequent Tour Plans.

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