

Technology Guidelines and the Scout Law

A phone is a handy tool for Scouting, it enables communication and access to useful applications such as cookbooks, GPS, and star maps. Any tool, such as a knife, hatchet, or stove, has guidelines for proper use, and so does a phone. Because the capability of phones is evolving so quickly, phones will have capabilities in a few years that we may not be able to imagine today so it makes sense to base the guidelines around the Scout Law.

General guidelines:

These guidelines apply to all members of our troop:

Do use the technology to build relationships with the troop, find useful information, communicate, and share excitement about the program. Updates to social sites using appropriate, (non-embarrassing), photos or clips can share and build excitement about Scouting activities.

Don't detract from the outdoor experience, the program experience, or the Scouting experience for the Scout, the troop or the patrol.

A Scout is Trustworthy

- A Scout is truthful with others online, and is careful of the information shared. He does the right thing when sharing and makes sure to have permission to share the words or pictures of others.

A Scout is Loyal

- A Scout uses his phone or device in a way that adds to his troop or patrol.
- A loyal Scout is careful to post only appropriate photos or clips, and would never want to embarrass others with his updates or communication.
- A loyal Scout would not use a phone to exclude some Scouts from the conversation, for example with secret messages.
- A Scout needs to keep track of his device so that he is not making the troop wait for him while he locates it.

A Scout is Helpful

- A Scout may use a phone to take appropriate photos of events or situations for the Troop or for personal memories.
- A Scout could use applications that can add to the outdoor experience, such as a star-map, first aid, or GPS.
- A Scout should alert others to scams, cheats, and suspicious sites and instead point them to reliable sources of information. Encourage people to report bad online behavior.

A Scout is Friendly

- A Scout could use his phone to assist someone else with information or access to communication.
- A Scout could use his phone to invite others to join Scouting or to remind his fellow Scouts of important events and activities.

A Scout is Courteous

A phone should not detract from the outdoors or the program experience.

- Ringers and alert messages should be muted -- beeps, rings, and recorded music take away from the outdoor experience.
- A Scout may want to post appropriate updates of exciting activities on social sites to share Scouting excitement with others.
- A device should not be a distraction, Scouts should pay attention to the program and fellow Scouts. In a program or troop situation, a Scout should avoid checking his phone for incoming messages or emails, unless messages related to the program are expected. Consider using "airplane mode," and wait to check at designated free times.
- A courteous Scout does not interrupt a conversation with others to stop and check for inbound messages. The courteous Scout focuses his attention on his personal interactions, such as conversations in which he is engaged.
- A phone should not be used to insulate a Scout from the outdoors or others. For example, a Scout should not use headphones during a Scouting activity.
- During a Scout outing a phone should not be used for entertainment such as playing solo electronic games, idle web surfing, shopping, etc.
- A phone should not be used to play music or videos "for others to enjoy" at an outdoor experience. Phone music at a campfire may take away from the outdoor experience for others.

A Scout is Kind

- Not everyone can afford a smartphone. A Scout needs to be sensitive to others and avoid using his phone in a way that looks like boasting, and makes other Scouts disappointed that they cannot afford such a device. This is no different from any other piece of gear.
- A Scout always treats people with respect while on social networks, playing games, talking, texting, or in other digital activities.

A Scout is Obedient

- When using digital devices, a Scout follows the rules and example set by parents/guardians, teachers, and Scout leaders. Abide by the rules on sites, services, devices, and games.

A Scout is Cheerful

- A Scout uses games, messaging tools, and social forums to build relationships with others while having fun.

A Scout is Thrifty

- A Scout recognizes that his phone may run out of power, and learns to take measures to conserve power in his device such as by turning it off when not in use or by switching to “airplane mode” to conserve his battery.
- A Scout should not become overly reliant on his device. For example, a Scout should be ready with his map and compass rather than rely on his smartphone GPS.
- A Scout needs to take responsibility and take care of his device against damage from dirt, drops, water or other hazards. He may want to keep it in a zip-loc bag carefully packed away against damage.
- Just as spending time with a paperback book is good at the right times, a Scout may want to use his phone or e-reader to read an electronic book at appropriate times. The phone is more portable than a collection of books.
- A Scout is a smart consumer. He knows his voice, text, and data plans and uses them wisely, careful not to run up charges on apps and sites.

A Scout is Brave

Part of the Scouting experience is to be independent.

- The Scout should not normally be calling home, or sending text messages back and forth with home. If the Scout thinks there is an urgent need to contact home, he should consult an adult leader first.
- Parents need to understand and agree that they are normally not to send messages or call their Scout while he is out with the program. Communication from home should be routed through an adult leader.
- Stand up for what is right. Do not participate in mocking or bullying others, even if others are doing it. Report suspected abuse to a trusted adult, like a parent or leader or call 911 as appropriate.

A Scout is Clean

- A Scout uses clean language and only discusses appropriate topics when using digital devices to communicate with others.
- He keeps his gear in good working order.

A Scout is Reverent

- A Scout respects the feelings of other people and would never use digital devices to spread irreverent ideas.