

Commissioner *in*FAQ

Infrequently Asked Questions about Commissioners

Q. What does a unit commissioner do?

A. Short answer - unit service, one of the four important functions of every local council (*the others are membership, finance, and program*).

Long answer - commissioners help make every resource of the district and council available to key leaders, such as cubmaster, scoutmaster, advisor, committee chair, and others.

Q. What kinds of commissioners are there?

A. There are three types:

Administrative commissioners have responsibilities that are primarily recruiting, training, guiding, and evaluating the commissioner staff. Administrative commissioners include council commissioners, assistant council commissioners, district commissioners and assistant district commissioners.

Unit commissioners are assigned to units, which they serve and counsel. Ideally each commissioner serves three units or less.

Roundtable commissioners provide resources such as program skills and other help for unit personnel at regularly scheduled roundtables.

Q. What does it take to be a unit commissioner?

A. Usually the right person is a people person. Being a good listener and a good communicator is important. A commissioner needs to be tactful and to have sound judgement. It helps to have a Scouting background (or the ability to learn quickly). The commissioner needs to be adaptive, persistent, and patient. Being enthusiastic is another important quality. A commissioner needs to be a willing part of a team. The commissioner should know and practice Scouting ideals and never make promises that cannot be kept. Oftentimes, the commissioner doesn't know the answer to a question but knows *where* to find the answer.

Q. Who can be a commissioner?

A. Any registered Scouter, except current unit leaders. When a Scouter becomes a commissioner, his or her primary registration and responsibilities should be commissioner service.

Q. Should a unit provide its own commissioner?

A. No. Commissioners should be objective and therefore should serve units outside their own.

Q. Can a commissioner be registered in a unit?

A. Yes. As long as the primary registration is with the commissioners, a commissioner may also be active with a unit (other than the unit he or she is serving as a commissioner).

Q. How often should a commissioner contact a unit?

A. At least once a month. The contact can be informal or at a scheduled meeting. The contact shouldn't be a surprise — the unit should know the commissioner intends to be at a youth meeting, committee meeting, or other formal setting. However, if the commissioner sees a unit leader at council office, for example, a short talk about the unit's health is appropriate and could be the contact that month. In fact, a good mix is a combination of the above.

Q. How do I find out who my unit commissioner is?

A. If you're a unit leader, such as a cubmaster or scoutmaster, you should know. Other adult leaders can ask the unit leader. If you haven't been visited or otherwise contacted by a unit commissioner, contact your district commissioner, district executive, roundtable commissioner, or council office. Let them know that you have had no commissioner contact and they should fix the problem.

Q. How do I know that our commissioner is successful?

A. If your unit is successful, that's the first measure. A commissioner who has units moving towards "quality unit" (Centennial Award?) status is another criteria.

Q. How does a commissioner help a unit?

A. The commissioner is a liaison between the unit and district/council but should *not* be running programs, promoting projects, being a judge, running Friends of Scouting campaigns, or doing other operations for the unit. Commissioners cooperate with other personnel related to specific programs, but should not be responsible for them. Their sole job is to help units succeed.

Q. How many units does a commissioner serve?

A. Ideally, each commissioner serves 3 or less units. A good commissioner staff also has an Assistant District Commissioner for every 5 unit commissioners, plus an adequate Roundtable Commissioner and staff.