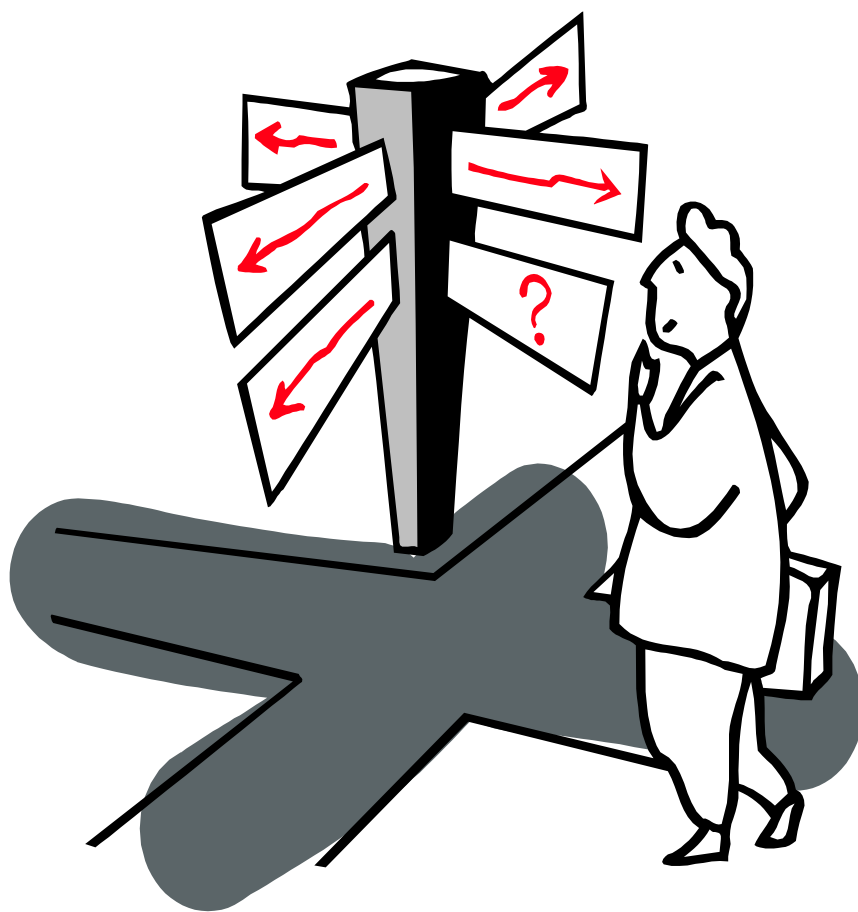


IDEAS
FOR
GROUP
LEADERS



Scouts Australia - NSW
Hunter & Coastal Region
2nd (revised) edition - 2004

IDEAS FOR GROUP LEADERS

Being a Group Leader can be the most rewarding and at the same time the most frustrating job in Scouting. The Group Leader is supposed to be the "Fountain of Knowledge" and Ideas and, especially to people who are new to the job, this can cause some problems.

This publication is not designed to be a complete guide on how to be Group Leader, nor is it designed to replace any existing publication. It is purely a collection of ideas from various people which may help you, as Group Leader, to do a better job and take some of the frustrating aspects from the job.

It is hoped that this publication will be reviewed each year to update it and to add to it.

Yours in Scouting

Barry Ableson

Honorary Commissioner – Hunter & Coastal Region
Editor

PLEASE CONTRIBUTE!

Extra ideas are always very welcome and will be a help to others. Please contact the Editor or Region Office at:

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Hunter & Coastal Region

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SECTION A - GROUP COMMITTEE IDEAS

A.1 Group Committee Check List

This checklist is designed for one purpose only and that is to assist the Group Committee to evaluate its performance, and help to build a strong, prosperous Scout Group.

1. Has the Committee a copy of (National) Policy and Rules and the relevant State Group Committee Rules or By-laws and have they annually adopted these rules at their AGM?
2. Are they aware that the important job of the Committee is to assist the GL?
3. Does the committee send a letter of welcome to the parents of new members?
4. Is the letter of welcome followed up with a personal visit to welcome them and discuss their part in the Group?
5. Has the Committee prepared a budget for anticipated expenditure based on Group Council priorities?
6. Has the Treasurer been authorised to make prompt payment of regular expenses?
7. Has the Group a development programme?
8. Has ALL necessary training equipment been provided?
9. Has the Group Committee a Quartermaster?
10. Does the Committee take a full and active part in Group activities?
11. Is the Group equipment insurance inventoried and its insured value realistic, considering present-day values?
12. Are they setting the example of progressive leadership?
13. Is the Group Headquarters a credit to the community?
14. Do we have adequate Group social activities?
15. Are their public relations such that the community is aware of the Group, and does it enable the Group to take a leading part in the community?
16. Has the Group a Publicity Officer?
17. Do they help in finding leaders?
18. Do they make enough use of sub-committees?
19. Does the Group Committee prevent internal upsets by promoting good relations within the Group?
20. Has the Committee (with GL / Section Leader approval) visited a Section?
21. Can the Committee give the lead with enthusiasm and optimism?

A.2 Advice to Group Treasurers

1. Don't rub out errors or use liquid paper.
2. Receipts are to be issued for all amounts no matter how small.
3. Pay all accounts and section leaders advances by cheque. NO CASH TRANSACTIONS.
4. Floats for any fundraising to be cashed by cheque and receipted and banked separate from proceeds.
5. No receipt is drawn for Bank interest.
6. ALL Group Committee payments are to be authorised by the Group Committee before being paid. The only exceptions are electricity or gas accounts where delay may result in having supply cut off and confirmation and authority for the amount will be given at the next Group Committee meeting.
7. If the Treasurer is unable to attend the Group Committee meeting, then a report MUST be given to either the Chairman, Secretary or Group Leader who will submit the report in the Treasurer's absence.
8. The Formation Cashbook must be signed each month at the Group Committee meeting by the Chairman and/or GL.
9. The Treasurer must close the books on 31st December each year and arrange for them to be audited as soon as possible. Leaving the audit to just before the AGM is not an option.

A.3 Section Funds

The Treasurer is the banker for the whole Group and will receive money from each section in the Group. Money to be receipted for Sectional subs or whatever and the amount recorded in their column in the Cash Book. Money in Section Funds does NOT BELONG TO THE GROUP

COMMITTEE. Section leaders may have advances for their running expenses, etc. They may nominate an amount which will meet their needs for either a week, fortnight or month or whatever. The Treasurer will draw a cheque for the amount. Reimbursement of advances should be made on production of receipts or docketts covering the disbursement of the previous advance. LEADERS MUST NOT SPEND THEIR SUBS BEFORE BANKING. Please note that Venturer Units are allowed to have their own bank account but should be held at the same bank branch as the Group's own account.

A.4 Organisation and Information Handbook

If a Group is unsure as to the regulations governing any activity in the Group then the personnel should refer to the books titled "Policy and Rules" and "Organisation and Information Handbook". As changes are periodically made to regulations it is the Group's responsibility to upgrade the handbook so the latest information is available. It is available on the internet at the Scouts NSW website.

A.5 Group Address

The Group should have an address for Group mail. This should be a reliable person or a mailbox at the local post office. If the address should change an extensive campaign should be started to let everyone know the new address.

A.6 Group Insurance

Group Insurance changes from year to year as the new policy is negotiated by State Office. A booklet that summarises all the conditions and procedures for Insurance is available each year with the annual (State) Census Papers and the latest copy should be held within the Group records.

A.7 Hall Inspections

Each Scout property needs to be inspected regularly by an Association approved person. If the property is let out, the inspections should be every six months, otherwise the inspections should be every twelve months. Your District Commissioner or Region Office can put you in contact with the right person.

A.8 GST Requirements

For a Group to comply with the GST requirements when asked for an ABN they have two choices.

- A. Fill out a "Statement by a Supplier" form available from the Post Office or a newsagent or
- B. Quote the Scouts State ABN which is 424 6043 4054

Groups must not charge (nor receive) GST on receipts. For specific examples and advice contact firstly your District Commissioner or (secondly) Regional Office.

A.9 Formation Cash Book

The Scout Formation Cash Book which is used by Group Treasurers is available free of charge in November/December each year for the following year. The book is also available as a Microsoft Excel computer programme from the Region Office upon request which some treasurers may find easier.

A.10 Monies Available to Groups.

Scouts NSW have a Development Fund which is available for Groups on a grant and loan system for Scouting development. This can include hall refurbishment or extensions as well as new buildings. There is also a fund for youth only called the Tony Balthasar Fund. This fund helps disadvantaged youth attend functions such as Jamborees. Details can be gained through Region Office.

A.11 Group Financial Audit

Auditors who work for free are increasingly hard to come by and there is a temptation to appoint a friend or someone else who may not have formal accounting qualifications. Before appointing an auditor, you must first have the approval of your District Commissioner to the proposal.

A.12 Group Awards

~~The Region has designated a system of Group Awards which are given to Groups that achieve their set goals for the year. Talk to your District Commissioner about the scheme. (Note: This Region scheme has been suspended whilst the NSW Quality Scouting Scheme is in operation.)~~

A.13 Group Annual General Meeting.

The Region Office has a couple of documents on how to run a successful AGM. These should be your first port of call followed by District Commissioner for advice. The main fundamental for a successful AGM is to know beforehand what is going to happen rather than turn up and hope it happens. Plan, Plan, Plan.

A.14 Phone Contact

Got a phone in your hall? Do you want a listing in your local White pages? You should place it (at your Group's expense) under *Scouts Australia - Group* entry in your local book. That is a single place where everyone can find you. If you don't want an entry, then Region Office continue to direct calls to the Group Leader / Leader in Charge, Secretary or Hall Hire contact as relevant.

A.15 Receipt Books

Need or want to use an official NSW Scout Receipt book? They are obtained only from the Scout Shop in Port Kembla phone 4274-1193 on Group account. (ie not by direct credit card payment). This is because of security issues.

SECTION B - SECTION IDEAS**B.1 Recruitment A**

Recruit adults. If the Group recruits the right adults and they in turn present a good programme the youth members will be recruited automatically.

B.2 Recruitment B

The Region has two booklets which outline different approaches to the topic of recruitment. These are available from the Region Office. Other books on recruitment are available in the (free) Leader Lending Library at the Region Office.

B.3 Starting a Joey Mob

The Region has produced a booklet which outlines the steps required to "Start a Joey Mob". Copies are available at the Region Office or by contacting the Regional Commissioner for Joey Scouts.

B.4 Incident/Accident Reporting

Serious accidents should be reported as stated in Rule 4.4 (State Organisation & Information Handbook). The Scouts NSW Incident / Accident Report Form (M6) should be held by the Group in a secure file. A copy of the form can be gained from Region Office or from the State website.

B.5 Recruiting Disabled Scouts - Para Scouts

Disabled youth are most welcome in Scouting. However there are many considerations to be made before a disabled member should be accepted. The Region has a guideline policy on this matter which is available from your District Commissioner. The Regional Commissioner (Disabilities) should be contacted for advice as to the most appropriate cause of action.

B.6 Activities with only one leader present

The duty of care, for which we are all responsible, means that we are bound by certain rules. The rule states "Adults in Scouting avoid unaccompanied and unobserved activities with youth members wherever possible". Group Leaders should ensure that this provision is adhered to. If it is not possible, then, the situation of only one leader being present must be communicated, in writing, to the parent well before the activity so that they can actively decide if the youth member should attend. Alternatively, with sufficient notice, the Sectional District Leader may be able to supply an extra leader for a "one off" situation.

B.7 Group Aims and Objectives

If a Group doesn't have any Aims and Objectives then it may never achieve anything. A Group just like people must have a goal to work towards. About November the Group Council and the Group Committee should each set out their Aims and Objectives for the following year. This then gives time to implement a plan to achieve these goals.

B.8 Youth Special Awards

The Region has guidelines written as to how a Group should acknowledge a youth member who achieves a special award (eg, Yellow Cord, Green Cord or Queens Scout). This does not have to be followed exactly but gives a guide as to what should be done. Of course local traditions should be used where appropriate.

B.9 Group Library

Groups buy or acquire a large amount of resource material each year. This material is usually lost or disappears when people leave the Group. If the Group has a Resource Library then all of the material can be housed there for use by all. As people leave they should be encouraged and expected to return the material to the library for use by others.

B.10 Section Programming Ideas

There are printed books of programmes for both the Cub Scout and Scout sections. The Joey Scouts in this Region have programming ideas in a publication called "From the Pouch". Back copies of "Scouting in NSW " and "Australian Scout" magazines are held in the Leader Library at Region Office. All of these are good sources of programming ideas. For more details contact the Region Office.

B.11 Scout Job Weeks

Organisation is the key to successful Scout Job Week returns. A sub-committee of the Group Committee should be organised at least three months before the event with a chairman who has this as his/her sole job. A system of collection of jobs and allocation to the youth members can then be devised and implemented.

B.12 Activity Policies

Scouts NSW has published a number of Policy documents to cover the requirements for various dangerous activities. Water activities, Rock Related activities and Bushwalking are some. The Group Leader should have a copy of each of these guidelines and should refer to them when any member of the Group wishes to undertake that activity or contact the Regional Commissioner (Activities) for advice. Your DC or Region Office can give you contact details.

B.13 Group Personnel Travelling Overseas.

If any member of the Group is planning to travel overseas and wishes to be involved in Scouting while abroad then that person needs approval. The Group Leader should contact the Regional Commissioner (International) for details. Region Office can give you contact details.

B.14 State and Region Calendar

A copy of the State Calendar is supplied with the Scouting in NSW Magazine each year and the Region Calendar is supplied with the Region Bulletin. Each one is available towards the end of each calendar year. Copies should be available for each Group to assist with planning.

B.15 Memorabilia

The Region has a Heritage Centre at Fassifern (Western Lake Macquarie) within walking distance from the train station. Visits by both youth and adults are very welcome. They can be contacted by enquiring at Region Office.

B.16 Defunct Group Equipment.

When a Group becomes defunct and it is felt that there is little chance of restarting the Group then the equipment can be given to another Group in need via a set procedure. If you feel you can be assisted by this programme then contact the Region Property Committee Chairman via the Region Office for details.

B.17 Camping at Glenrock.

To encourage youth members of Hunter and Coastal Region to use Glenrock, the Camp Management Committee have instituted a programme where registered members of this Region may camp at Glenrock free of charge.

B.18 Activity Zones

The Region is divided into four activity zones and each is overseen by a Zone Activity Coordinator (ZAC). If you have Group personnel going into any of these zones you should send the Activity Notification Form direct to the ZAC before the activity takes place. These ZACs and their Zones are periodically published in the Region Bulletin.

B.19 Group Badge

Each Group is permitted to design and wear on their scarf a Group Badge. The size and style is regulated. See the Organisation and Information Handbook or contact Region Office for details.

SECTION C - COMMUNITY RELATIONS**C.1 Parent Involvement A**

When a youth member begins with the Group the Parents are interviewed and it is explained to them their involvement with the running of the Group. Parents are expected to participate in Group affairs and their commitment is established at the interview.

C.2 Parent Involvement B

The Group should run at least one activity each year which is a full family activity eg. a family camp. This should be a social activity and give a chance for families to know the leaders and the leaders to know the families.

C.3 Parent Involvement C

At least twice a year Groups should hold a Family Night where parents can experience Scouting in action. It gives another chance to meet the parents in a relaxed atmosphere.

C.4 "In and Out" Book

~~The "IN" & "OUT" Book provides a means by which parents must come into the Hall and sign their children IN to the section in the "IN" column at the beginning of the meeting, and "OUT" at the end. Leaders actually see the parents every week — in fact, if the book is not out ready when the first parent arrives, he or she will invariably ask for it. This has been abolished on legal advice given to Warwick Bateman (State Commissioner for Member Support.) Please do NOT use one.~~

This simple idea has a number of benefits:

- A. Parents cannot sit outside in their cars waiting for their offspring to appear at meeting end – this is especially important on dark winter nights.
- B. Leaders are familiar with all parents and try to find time for a chat.
- C. Parents see presentations and hear instructions for coming events.
- D. There is a ready source of Examiners for Achievement Badges.

If some other person is to pick up a child, this is noted in the book as well as Leaders being told – probably the most important benefit.

So, if you suspect that your Youth Members are orphans or that their parents are invisible – try the “IN” & “OUT” Book – it is a simple, but effective remedy.

C.5 Community Profile

Have each section perform a community service each year. This should be publicised in the local paper with appropriate photos.

C.6 Group Magazine

Try a quarterly magazine as a starter. This usually can be run without too much trouble by one person specially appointed for the task. Have each section write a report telling about the things they have done and the things they are planning to do. Make sure you put in lots of names of youth members. Both the youth and the parents like to see their names in print.

Send copies to ex-members as well.

C.7 Press Publicity

Whilst press coverage in the national papers should be left to State Office, individual Groups can get valuable publicity through their local papers. These papers are always hungry for local news and are only too willing to publish material, but they need to have it presented to them in a suitable form. The following points are worth remembering:

1. Ascertain the latest date for delivery of copy and have it there in plenty of time.
2. Write copy on one side of paper only and preferably in double spaced typing. Provide a clear heading telling what the story is about. The name of an authority for the story should be given. This should be the Group Leader or Group Committee Chairman, give both the name and appointment. Use names, (these are news) as much as possible and don't forget first names.
3. Write your article in the style of a newspaper, that is, initial summary, then most important matter and the less important matter last.
4. Provide a name and daytime telephone number through which the paper may check the material if necessary.
5. Pictures are very useful, but remember they should be in the form of glossy prints, not smaller than 7.5 cm x 10 cm and preferably larger. Do not provide negatives. Always attach a brief caption to the photo. Do not rely on the story for a caption, as photo and story may easily become separated.
6. Send your publicity matter to the paper and mark it “for favour of publication”. It will not then be mistaken for an advertisement and charged to you.

C.8 Parent Visiting

All parents should be visited in their own home as soon as possible after the youth member has joined the Group. This gives an opportunity to get to know the parents and explain to them what this game of Scouting is all about.

You will find on the whole that parents are anxious to help in any way they can once they understand what it is all about, so do use them as much as possible.

C.9 Media Interviews

Leaders are cautioned against talking to the media. The media will often quote out of context which may distort what you meant to say. When approached by the media to comment about an incident always refer the matter to your District Commissioner, or Region Office or State Office.

C.10 Publicity Materials

There is a quantity of materials available to Groups who wish to hold a public display. State Office holds quite a deal of these and they are available at no cost except freight. Region has some equipment as well. Consumables are also available from State Office, some at cost and some free.

Enquiries should be made through Region Office or to the Regional Commissioner for Communications.

SECTION D - PAPERWORK

D.1 Census Membership Return (CMR)

This is issued four times per year and is posted directly to Group Leaders from State Office. When the Group Leader makes any changes to a Census Membership Return the Group Leader should make a photocopy of the amended return and record the date when it is posted back. Then it is possible to explain if the changes are not effected when the census is next returned.

Please note that:

1. Adult Transactions - Adults are never resigned nor transferred on a CMR. A proper Resignation / Transfer Form is required and is sent in via your District Commissioner.
2. Dates – Please show all dates in full (viz xx/xx/04).
3. Youth Member Resignations – If you resign youth members on a CMR, there is NO need to also complete a Youth Member Resignation Schedule (Y7) Form.

D.2 Checking Census

GLs / Leaders in Charge may, at any time request from Region Office a full membership summary report. This enables census action to be checked (eg. youth registration, transfers, advancements and resignations) independently of the quarterly Census Membership Return. Contact Region Office as the result can usually be faxed or posted (but not e-mailed) within 24 hours of the request.

D.3 Keeping Group Records

Group Records should not be kept at the Scout Hall. An archives box should be kept by one of the Group personnel with all the old youth record sheets in it plus old Group Committee minute books. The active records should be kept by the person in charge of that section of the Group. The last thing a Group wants is to lose all its records through vandalism or fire.

D.4 Group Inventory

It is essential that an up to date copy of the Group equipment and furniture inventory be held and maintained by the Group. A copy should be held at the Group Hall, another copy to be held off-site in the Group and a copy sent to the Region Office for safekeeping. This precaution is essential in case of a fire or break-in. An insurance claim may be refused if an up to date inventory is not produced.

D.5 Log Books

As a record of the History of the Mob, Pack, Troop, Unit, Crew or Group, a logbook is of great value. No one who has organised a reunion of Old Scouts, and watched the enthusiasm with which they examine the old log books, and recognise themselves and their friends as they were years ago, needs convincing about this. The problem is getting it started and keeping it up to date when started.

The project should be placed in the hands of someone close to the action. Examples include an ASL for the Scout Troop or a parent for the Group Committee. The youth members should be encouraged to do most of the work. Here is a chance for your artists and photographers to come to the fore. You are storing a mass of entertaining reminiscences for the youth now and in the years to come.

D.6 Where does it go?

The following paperwork should be sent directly to State Office in Sydney:

- Training Course Applications – Form L1 for all **advanced** level courses only.

Activity Notification Forms (Form A1) for activities held within the Region are sent directly to the Zone Activity Coordinator (ZAC) as shown periodically in the Region Bulletin and for those activities outside the Region, in the NSW O&I Handbook.

All other forms / paperwork go to Region Office (usually via your District Commissioner).

D.7 Adult Leader Transfers

1. **“Conditional” Status Leaders** – Leaders completing the training required under their conditional status do not require a Transfer form to “current” status. Once State Office accredits the training completed, a new Certificate of Adult Leadership issues automatically.

A Leader cannot be appointed (ie first “warranted”) conditionally. Conditional status only applies to transfer of already Appointed leaders.

2. **Trainee Leaders** – Do not require a Transfer Form (W3). All that is required is a written note from GL or District Commissioner to the Region Office stating that Fred Bloggs has “transferred” from Trainee Leader (Cub Scouts) to Trainee Leader (Scouts) at Woop Woop Group. This also applies to Trainees moving between Groups but your District Commissioner should then also be informed.

D.8 Communication Pattern

Several times each year State Office and Region Office write directly to Section Leaders (examples include Cuboree, Corroboree and Dragon Skin). These communications are posted to the Appointed Sectional Leader (ie JSL, CSL, SL or VSL) as appropriate. Where there is no Appointed Sectional Leader then the following practice is adopted:

1. An Appointed Assistant Sectional Leader is chosen at random.
2. Where there are no appointed Assistant Leaders, a Trainee Leader in the Section is chosen at random.
3. Where there are no leaders at all in the section but the Section is registered and has youth members, then the GL / Leader in Charge is chosen.

This procedure tries to ensure that the information concerned gets to the section promptly.

This system fails when Leader information is not kept up to date, particularly when a Leader is not active. For this reason it is important that Groups keep their Leader records up to date and Region Office advised of changes. If a Sectional Leader is not active then they should either be resigned or transferred to an assistant’s role. In every case there should be an active Leader appointed “In Charge” of every section in your Group.

D.9 Tracking Youth Member Advancement Dates

Here’s an easy method to administer your youth member advancement from one section up to the next. Get a book (or use your PC) and create a list of youth member names and their date of birth. Then have a series of columns labelled “To Cubs”, “To Scouts” and “To Venturers”. Put the relevant birthday date in each respective column. (eg the child’s 8th birthday date in the “To Cubs” column, the 11th birthday date in the “To Scouts” column etc). At each Group Council meeting ensure that each sectional Leader has access to this list. Everyone can then see at a glance, which youth members are soon to advance to the next section and so appropriate ceremonies can be planned in advance.

D.10 Prohibited Employment Declaration (PED) Forms

The Association is classed as an employer under NSW Government legislation and so PED collection procedures apply to Groups. ALL adults who may have at any time unsupervised access to children must be asked to sign a PED Form. (Scouts NSW Form M5.) Please note that you CANNOT insist that a Form be signed. All non-Leader PED Forms must be periodically sent by Groups to Region Office for filing. The Government says that you must not record who has / has not signed a PED Form. As a practical measure, you could ask your line leaders to request PED Forms from all parents first night back in February.

SECTION E - GROUP LEADER HELP**E.1 Getting Help**

Your District Commissioner should be the first person to contact if help is required. This person has many avenues to pursue depending on the nature of the problem.

E.2 Where to get Ideas

The Region has a Leader Library situated at Region Office. The library has over 400 books and magazines in stock full of ideas and technical information for leaders of all sections as well as Group Leaders and Group Committees. Registered members or appointed Committee members can borrow items free of charge. Postage if applicable however will be charged.

E.3 Groups and Districts

This Region has instituted a structure which uses the District as the main support structure for Groups. It is therefore essential that the Group support District meetings so that that support can be accessed.

E.4 Leader Reviews

Every leader (including each Advisor and Honorary Leader) has their "Certificate of Adult Leadership" reviewed a maximum of every three years. The person who does the review is the next person in the chain of command. For Sectional Leaders this is the Group leader and for Group Leaders this is the District Commissioner. Leader reviews should be done as soon as possible when they become due. This is in most cases not be a very formal affair but an opportunity to say thankyou for the work that person is doing and to gauge the intentions of the person for the future.

E.5 Saying "Thank You"

Being an organisation of volunteers everyone works for the good of the Group and for the self-satisfaction received. Despite this, everyone does like to be thanked from time to time. The Group should put aside some time each year when the people who make the Group work are thanked.

E.6 Group Awards

There is nothing sadder than to visit a Scout Hall to see pennants and certificates won by the Group pinned to the wall with rusty drawing pins and being eaten by silverfish. Each Group Hall should have a Trophy Cabinet where these can be displayed and kept in good condition.

E.7 Baden Powell Guild

This Region has four branches of the B-P Guild and these people may be willing to assist a Group with an activity if they are asked and are given plenty of notice. They may also be able to assist with financial help. Region Office has contact details.

E.8 Adult Recognition Awards

It is the responsibility of Group Leaders to nominate leaders and supporters from within the Group for awards. The Supporter awards titled "For Service" Award and "Thanks Badge" can be applied for at any time through your District Commissioner. Uniform leader and other supporter awards for World Scout Day (1st August) are called for about November in each year for the following August. A citation will need to be written for each nominee. See your District Commissioner for details.

end

Table of Changes		
Date	What	By
28 October 2003	Update terminology and procedures (A4, A12, A15)	ROM
9 July 2004	General revision	ROM