Scouting America
Mount Baker Council

Arrow of Light to Scout



Transition Guide

Dear Unit Leaders,

The Arrow of Light (AOL) isn't just a final badge—it's the bridge to the future for Scouts BSA. To ensure a seamless transition, the journey from Pack to Troop should feel less like a jump and more like a promotion.

The secret to a strong "Bridge to Scouts BSA" is a year-round partnership between Pack leadership and Troop leadership. Think of it like the transition from elementary to middle school: it requires coordination, familiar faces, and a clear path forward.

A successful crossover isn't just a ceremony in the spring; it's the result of a relationship built throughout the year. Because an AOL Scout can choose any Troop, they need to know why yours is the right fit. Ask yourselves:

- What makes our Troop the ideal next step for an AOL Scout?
- How does our program stand out to both the Scout and their family?

Every Scout comes with a support system. Whether a parent is a veteran Cub Scout leader or a newcomer looking to help, engage them early. Finding a "home" for the parents is just as vital for retention as finding a spot for the Scout.

The lifeblood of our Troops is the Scouts who move up from our Packs. By prioritizing these relationships today, you ensure the success of your unit tomorrow.

Thank you for making the AOL to Scout transition a cornerstone of your Scouting year!

Yours in Scouting,

The Mount Baker Council Membership Team





Troop Responsibilities

The transition from an AOL Patrol to a Scouts BSA Troop is an important stage in the Scouting journey. It is crucial that Scout leaders do everything they can to make the process as seamless and inviting as possible for AOL's and their parents/guardian, including

- Select Scouts to serve as Den chiefs for each AOL Patrol and Cub Scout Den (Wolves and above). Arrange for Den chief training.
- Serve as a resource for overnight activities. The Troop can be of service to provide equipment, leadership, and logistics for AOL campouts.
- Conduct an orientation in the Webelos Scout Dens to explain how being a AOL Scout will help prepare them for joining Scouts BSA.
- AOL Patrol/Scout Troop campouts should show AOL Scouts and their parents/guardians what to expect when they move into the Troop. The Troop should cook and camp by patrol and use skills that the AOL Scouts can participate in.
- Note: AOL's (with their BALOO trained leaders) can camp with Troops, but unregistered AOL parents CANNOT camp with Troops unless it's a Council level activity. Unregistered adults cannot camp with Scouts BSA Troops.
- Arrange for AOL Patrols to visit a Troop meeting. This should be planned several weeks in advance.
- Provide each AOL Scout a copy of the Troop's activities for the upcoming year.
- Work with AOL Leaders to encourage them to move into the Troop with their AOL Scouts and to serve either as committee members or assistant Scoutmasters, to help create familiarity and a level of comfort for the AOL Scouts and their parents as they ease into the Troop.
- Conduct a Scoutmaster conference under the guidance of the Scoutmaster or the assistant designated by the Scoutmaster. This conference should cover the meaning of the Scout Oath and Law, the advancement program, Troop camping, the patrol method, summer camp, and personal equipment.
- Work with the Cubmaster in planning a meaningful crossover ceremony.
- To grow and develop, Troops must recruit new Scouts—primarily through the Cub Scout AOL program. This "bridging" provides older Scouts vital opportunities to mentor and build character. Troops should maintain active relationships with local Packs to ensure a smooth transition for AOL's crossing over.
- A Troop should send representatives to monthly district roundtables to tap into a wealth of experience. These meetings serve as vital resources for training, activities, advancement, and program planning.



Pack Responsibilities

It should be the goal of the Cubmaster and AOL Den leader to have each AOL continue their Scouting experience. Pack and Den Leaders can use these tips to help AOL's take the next step and crossover into a Scouts BSA Troop:

- Develop a working relationship with the leadership of a Scouts BSA Troop or Troops in the community. Most Troops should have either an assistant Scoutmaster or a committee member assigned to new Scouts. Any Commissioner can help put you in contact with Troop leaders.
- Compare calendars of Troop and Pack activities to coordinate. Community events can be done together, and planning can help prevent conflicts in use of equipment and facilities.
- Work with Troop leaders to secure Den chiefs for each AOL Patrol, and Webelos, Bear and Wolf Dens as well.
- Work with Troop leaders to plan and conduct AOL overnight activities. Note: Always insure that Pack members are aware that unregistered parents/guardian CANNOT camp with Scouts BSA Troops, unless it's a Council level activity. This could diminish attendance, as some AOL's may not feel comfortable being without their parent/guardian.
- Work with Troop leaders to plan visits to Troop meetings of multiple units. Never show up without first calling in advance.
- Invite the Scoutmaster and Troop youth leaders to special Pack activities. This will help create familiarity and a level of comfort for the AOL Scouts and their parents as they ease into the Troop.
- Plan a meaningful crossover ceremony. Insure that Troop leadership will be present to accept the AOL Scouts as they crossover.
- AOL leaders should be strongly encouraged to move into the Troop with their Scouts, either as assistant Scoutmasters or Troop committee members. This will give them a familiar face at Troop meetings and a connecting link.
- If a Troop does not exist in your community, discuss with the head of the Pack's chartered organization about the possibility of organizing a Troop. A graduating AOL Patrol can form the nucleus of a new Troop.
- A Pack should send representatives to monthly district roundtables to tap into a wealth of experience. These meetings serve as vital resources for training, activities, advancement, and program planning.

Scouting America
Mount Baker Council

Unit Commissioner Responsibilities



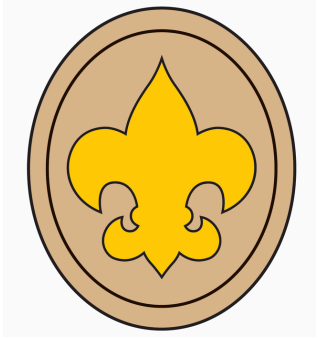
The Unit Commissioner is the connecting link in the chain between the Troop and the Pack. Often, the same Unit Commissioner will serve both a Pack and Troop in the same community, making them a great resource for assisting in the AOL to Scout transition. Unit Commissioners can use these tips to help AOL Scouts continue in Scouting:

- Be a catalyst in developing good relationships between Troop and Pack leaders.
- Promote communication by scheduling a meeting of key volunteers.
- Help plan an AOL Patrol visit to a Troop meeting and other joint activities.
- Keep the Pack and Troop on schedule as plans develop for the crossover ceremony.
- Attend the crossover ceremony.
- Insure that the Cubmaster transfers the new Scouts to their respective Troops using My.Scouting.org, that they have a copy of the Troop's activities, and that they know when and where the Troop meets.
- Work with the AOL Leader to follow up on youth who did not join a Troop. Make sure they are invited to join a Troop.
- Be sure AOL Scouts join a Troop in time to prepare for Scout summer camp.

Eligibility

Youth can join Scouts BSA if they are at least 10 years old, currently in the fifth grade and register on or after March 1st; OR have earned the Arrow of Light Award and are at least 10 years old, OR are age 11 but have not reached age 18.





Scouting America
Mount Baker Council

Timeline - AOL Crossovers for Packs and Troops

AOL crossover target: February - April, with a hard deadline of June 1.
Target for youth transfers in My.Scouting.org by April 15, with hard deadline of June 1.

References:

- Guide to Safe Scouting
- Youth Protection and Adult Leader
  https://www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/gss/gss01/
- Cub Scout Coordinated Camping
  https://www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/gss/gss03/#a
- Cub Scout Camping Locations
  https://mountbakerscouting.org/cub-camping-locations/
- Age Appropriate Guidelines
  https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/HealthSafety/pdf/680-685.pdf
- SAFE Project Tool Use
  https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/healthsafety/pdf/680-028.pdf
- AOL Handbook

June - August



- Get names, addresses, email and telephone numbers of the AOL Scouts, and record information from the Pack roster. New Member Coordinator, Den Leader, Cubmaster
- Plan a joint Troop and AOL Patrol camping trip for fall. Scoutmaster, Patrol Leaders Council, Senior Patrol Leader, Cubmaster, Den Leader
- Plan a calendar of upcoming events to present to an AOL Patrol meeting visit in September. Scoutmaster, Senior Patrol Leader, Patrol Leaders Council
- Find and train Den Chiefs. They must attend any required Council, District, or online training. A Den Chief typically must have achieved the rank of First Class (can be waived based on maturity). Online training: https://www.scouting.org/training/youth/Den-chief-training/ Scoutmaster
- Invite AOL Patrol to any AOL appropriate Troop activities through out the year. New Member Coordinator, Scoutmaster, Senior Patrol Leader

September

- Send an introduction from the Troop to the AOL Scouts to introduce them to the Troop, and invite them to a Troop meeting. New Member Coordinator, Scoutmaster, Senior Patrol Leader
- Put AOL Scouts on mailing list to receive relevant Troop communications. New Member Coordinator
- Continue planning the camping trip for fall. Aim to provide AOL Scouts with activities that are age appropriate. Scoutmaster, Patrol Leaders Council, Senior Patrol Leader, Cubmaster, Den Leader
- Attend an AOL Patrol meeting to teach the AOL Scouts how the Scout Troop works. Scoutmaster, Senior Patrol Leader

October

- Set a date for AOL Scouts and their parent/guardian to visit a Troop meeting in November. Scoutmaster, Senior Patrol Leader, Cubmaster, Den Leader
- Conduct the joint camping trip with the AOL Patrol in October or November. Scoutmaster, Senior Patrol Leader, Cubmaster, Den Leader
- Attend any District or Council sponsored AOL Skills Weekend. Scoutmaster, Senior Patrol Leader, Cubmaster, Den Leader



November

- Conduct the joint camping trip with the AOL Patrol in October or November. Scoutmaster, Senior Patrol Leader, Cubmaster, Den Leader
- Host AOL Patrol and their parent/guardian at a Troop meeting. Scoutmaster, Senior Patrol Leader, Committee Chair, New Member Coordinator

December

- Invite the AOL Patrol to the Troop Christmas party. Scoutmaster, Senior Patrol Leader

January

- Plan a Crossover Ceremony with Troops for February to April, to welcome newly crossed over AOL's to their new Troop. Scoutmaster, Cubmaster, Den Leader, Senior Patrol Leader

February - April

- Hold Crossover Ceremony in February to April. Scoutmaster, Senior Patrol Leader, Cubmaster, Den Leader
- Get new Scouts actively involved in Troop through Troop activities. Scoutmaster, Senior Patrol Leader, Troop Guide
- Recruit parents of new Scouts to be assistant Scoutmasters and committee members. Committee Chair, Scoutmaster
- Hold new parent/guardian meeting/welcoming orientation. Committee Chair, Scoutmaster, New Member Coordinator
- Plan program for new Scouts and assign them to a patrol(s). Patrol method, Scout requirements, Firem'n Chit, Totin Chip, etc. Scoutmaster, Patrol Leaders Council, Senior Patrol Leader, Troop Guide
- Work on, and plan, the rank advancement of the new Scouts. Scoutmaster, Senior Patrol Leader, Troop Guide, Patrol Leaders Council
- Conduct summer camp orientation to encourage Troop involvement, especially new Scouts. Scoutmaster

May

- Work closely with new Scouts and their parent/guardian during their transition to the Troop, ensuring that their needs are met, and their move from the Pack has been fun. New Member Coordinator, Committee Chair
- Endeavor to have all new Scouts earn the rank of Scout before the end of May. Scoutmaster, Senior Patrol Leader, Troop Guide

June

- Ensure that all new Scouts attend summer camp. New Scouts who attend summer camp are three-times more likely to re-register. Scoutmaster



Scouting America
Mount Baker Council

Important things for AOL's and their Parent/Guardian to look for in a Troop

- Fun – It's got to be fun! Most of the activities within the Troop have to be understood by the Scout as a fun, friendly, pleasurable, and rewarding experience. If a Troop is too strict and regimented the Scout will loose interest.
- Program – A well-run Troop depends on a PLC-planned annual program supported by the Troop Committee and a clear budget. To keep Scouts engaged, the calendar must be fresh and varied, balancing weekly meetings with monthly outings, weekend campouts, and annual summer camps.
- Adult Leadership – Every Scout deserves a trained leader. Training equips leadership with the advice and resources to run a high-quality program. To identify these qualified leaders, look for the "Trained" patch on their sleeve.
- Youth Leadership – Troops should hold regular elections, deliver Introduction to Leadership Skills for Troops (ILST) training, and encourage attendance at council National Youth Leadership Training (NYLT).
- Scout-Run Troop – Scouting's core philosophy is Youth Led. Scouts run the program while adults provide guidance and support. From weekly meetings to campouts, junior leaders should plan and execute all activities. When observing a Troop, the true measure of success is seeing the Scouts—not the adults—leading the way..
- Patrol Method – Troops should divide into patrols of up to eight Scouts to foster teamwork. Each patrol elects a leader, meets regularly, and works together during activities to sharpen skills and plan events. This structure is supported by a monthly Patrol Leaders' Council (PLC), where youth leaders collaborate to plan the Troop's program.
- Meetings – Weekly Troop meetings are the Scouting standard. To stay organized, a Troop should maintain an annual calendar with all meeting dates clearly established.
- Uniform – The field uniform is worn for formal functions like ceremonies and meetings, while the activity uniform—typically a Scouting T-shirt and shorts—is used for active events and camps. Troops should establish clear uniform requirements and conduct periodic inspections to maintain standards.
- Recruiting – To grow and develop, Troops must recruit new Scouts—primarily through the Cub Scout AOL program. This "bridging" provides older Scouts vital opportunities to mentor and build character. Troops should maintain active relationships with local Packs to ensure a smooth transition for crossing over AOL's.

Scouting America
Mount Baker Council

The Troop Visit

Visiting a Troop is crucial for AOL's to meet rank requirements and find the right fit. It's essential for AOL Scouts to explore multiple Troops, as each has its unique characteristics. We've compiled resources to help prepare for these visits. Given the time spent with the chosen Troop, it's important to take the visit seriously and ensure all questions are addressed. AOL's and their parents should select the Troop that best suits their needs, with the freedom to join any Troop they desire.

AOL's should ask:

- Is the Troop active? Do they do things I would enjoy?
- What size is the Troop? What size of Troop would I like?
- Are there other youth my age in the Troop?
- Does the Troop go to a summer camp? Which one(s)? Is it important to me where they go?
- Should I/could I go to summer camp?
- Does the Troop participate in any Honor Camper programs (i.e. Order of the Arrow)? Do they matter?
- How often does this Troop do outdoor activities (i.e. camping)?
- Will I have a say in decision making?
- Does the Troop have advanced programs for older Scouts?
- How often does the Troop meet?
- Will I have fun?

Parents should ask:

- What values/skills will my child learn?
- What are the other adult leaders like?
- Can I participate in leadership if I desire?
- Is the Troop youth led? Is that important?
- Where, when, and how often does the Troop meet? Is it convenient for transporting my child?
- What is the age ratio of the Scouts? Do the older Scouts help the younger Scouts?
- How much will it cost? Camping? Summer camp? Fundraisers?
- How often does the Troop camp? Do I have to camp with them?
- Does the Troop go to a summer camp? Which one(s)? Is it important to me where they go?
- Does the Troop participate in the Order of the Arrow?
- Is the Troop active? Do they do activities my child would enjoy?
- Will my child be encouraged/able to advance to Eagle in this Troop?
- Can parents participate? Go camping? Go to summer camp?
- Can this Troop provide a quality Scouting experience for my child and their friends?
- What is expected of the parents and family by the Troop?
- Will we have fun?