

Application for a Nights Away Permit (until May 2008)



0845 300 1818

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This is one of a set of factsheets on the Nights Away Permit Scheme.

It provides the information required by an applicant who wishes to hold a Nights Away Permit needed to lead residential or camping experiences for all Scouts under the age of 18 years.

Further editions of this factsheet will be published in the light of experience. The publication of future editions will be notified in Talking Points and the Activities Newsletter.

Overview of the Nights Away Scheme

Spending nights away from home is a fundamental part of the Balanced Programme. The Nights Away Permit Scheme is key in ensuring that those leading such activities have the knowledge and experience to make them safe, exciting and fun.

The new Scheme introduces the following:

- A **Nights Away Permit** for adults leading camping or residential events for young people. (A Permit is not required for those leading Scout Network events, although notification is – see below).
- An **assessment procedure** for those seeking to hold a Permit.
- **The Event Passport** for young people under the age of 18 years wishing to lead camping or residential events (such as Patrol camps, Unit expeditions etc).
- A **Notification form** to inform the appropriate Commissioner of each nights away event. In the case of Scout Network Members, the County/Area Commissioner (or nominee) is notified.

- The appointment of local **Nights Away Advisers** to give support, make assessments and promote nights away events.

The Nights Away Permit

The Permit is credit card sized and gives authority for an adult to take Members under the age of 18 years on a Nights Away event in one or more of these three categories:

Indoor – for any Sleepover, indoor Pack Holiday, youth hostelling or similar overnight event.

Camp Site – camping on sites where there are toilets, water and waste disposal facilities.

Green Field – for camping where all facilities need to be provided by the leadership team – for example, a summer camp on a farmer's field.

Once an adult has gained a Permit, they are free to organise and run Nights Away events without seeking further approval of their District Commissioner, rather like a driver once they have passed their test, is free to drive on any public road. When introduced locally, this Scheme replaces the Form PC procedure.

An individual who gains a Green Field Permit is entitled to lead nights away events in the other two categories. Similarly, where an individual gains a Camp Site Permit, they may also lead Indoor events..

A Permit is not required where all members of the group taking part in the event are over 18 years, although notification is. However, the leader of the event would be expected to have first hand experience of nights away activities and be familiar with the appropriate Scout Association resources.

Permits are valid during the length of the current appointment, or for a maximum of five years.

The Scout Association

Gilwell Park Chingford London E4 7QW Tel + 44 (0)20 8433 7100 Fax + 44 (0)20 8433 7103 email scout.association@scout.org.uk www.scouts.org.uk

The Event Passport

The Event Passport facility aims to encourage nights away events led by young people under 18 years. Examples would be Patrol camps, Explorer Scout expeditions, or overnight hikes. The Event Passport is issued by a Permit Holder to a young person who has the knowledge and ability to lead the event and is valid for one event only. The required skills are based on the same eight core skills areas listed under *Practical Assessment*. The Passport is issued by an experienced Permit holder, typically the Scout's own Section Leader. In doing so, the Leader commits to providing the necessary level of support to the young person.

The Passport issued to a young person must not exceed the category of the Permit holder's Permit.

Event Passports are available from the Scout Information Centre.

Notification of a nights away event

The 'home' District Commissioner (or nominee) must be provided with basic information about all overnight activities involving Members under 18 years before a nights away event takes place. Similarly, the County/Area Commissioner (or nominee) is to be notified of Scout Network nights away events.

Notification should include all the information required on the Notification form although this may be conveyed by a method agreed locally, such as email, telephone or fax. Notification should be made by the event organiser.

In the case of Beaver Scout or Cub Scout events, at least seven days notice is required. Less notice is permitted for Scout, Explorer Scout or Scout Network events, but the aim should be to give at least one week's notice.

Where the nights away event is to take place using facilities *not* belonging to Scouting, *and* outside the 'home' District, then the 'host' District Commissioner must also be informed, ideally fourteen days before the event begins, using the Notification form.

Copies of the Notification form are available from the Scout Information Centre. Alternatively, they

can be downloaded in Microsoft Word and Adobe Acrobat (PDF) format from ScoutBase UK at www.scoutbase.org.uk.

Training for a Nights Away Permit

The knowledge necessary to lead camps, Sleepovers, Pack holidays etc can be gained through a Scout training course (including Module 16 *Nights Away*, or equivalent) or by playing a part in a team running such events with an experienced adult. Experience gained with another organisations such as Girlguiding UK, the Cadet Forces or the Duke of Edinburgh's Award may contribute, as will experience gained as a youth Member.

Assessment

1. Fast track Assessment

For adults who are well known for running high quality residential events, the Scheme does not require a practical assessment by the Nights Away Adviser. However, it should not be assumed that everyone with some experience should automatically receive a Permit, or that those who participated as a youth member are fitted for a role of leadership. For those with experience, a discussion with the Adviser to ensure that they understand the workings and conditions of the Permit Scheme will generally be sufficient. During this discussion, the Assessment Form will be completed and signed in order that a recommendation can be made for the issue of an appropriate Permit.

For others who are less well known, it will be necessary to discover what events have been run recently, where they took place, how many young people participated and details of the programme. Some past paperwork could be viewed or an event visited to see the adult in action before recommending the issue of a Permit.

2. Practical Assessment

If an adult's knowledge or ability are not clearly established, a practical assessment is required. The Nights Away Adviser will assess the knowledge and ability of the applicant against the eight core skills below:

1. Planning a nights away event
2. Ensuring the effective administration of an event
3. Preparing and co-ordinating a programme of activities
4. Choosing and preparing the event team
5. Choosing, organising and maintaining the right equipment
6. Ensuring the health, happiness and safety of self and others
7. Organising good catering
8. Making best use of the venue.

Assessment is likely to take place at three stages:

STAGE ONE: During planning of the event

STAGE TWO: During the event itself

STAGE THREE: After the event at the evaluation session

STAGE ONE: Assessment during planning

A pre-event planning meeting should take place, possibly a month or so beforehand, to which the Adviser is invited. Although the Adviser may want more information or meetings nearer the event, he/she will want to explore knowledge of the eight core skills listed above .

Set out below are topics likely to be covered at such a meeting. The example, supporting questions posed may provide useful pointers for discussion.

Core skill 1- Planning a nights away event

(see Nights Away, Chapter 2)

The Adviser will expect the applicant to know why the event is taking place. This helps to ensure the programme is relevant and balanced.

Applicants should be able to show that adequate attention has been given to budgeting, site or venue selection and booking, programme planning, parents'/carers' consent forms etc. Correspondence, including phone calls and emails, publicity information, and programme material should be made available to the Adviser.

The venue may be well known to the applicant but if unfamiliar they should be able to show that relevant information has been gathered, perhaps by seeking local knowledge.

The Adviser might also want to know about arrangements for transport to and from the event. What alternatives were considered? Does the event start at the Group's Headquarters or at the site?

Core skill 2 - Ensuring the effective administration of an event

(see Nights Away, Chapter 3)

The Nights Away Adviser will want to see that the camp fee will cover expenses and contingencies including transport, site fees, food, activity costs, etc.

How are receipt of camp fees recorded? How are miscellaneous expenses paid? What details have been given to parents/carers and how have medical and dietary needs been recorded?

The Adviser will need to be assured that the Home Contact procedure is organised and that Criminal Records Bureau checks on helpers with the event have been arranged.

Core skill 3 - Preparing and co-ordinating a programme of activities

(see Nights Away, Chapter 4)

The programme will need to show that it reflects the needs, capabilities and interests of all the young people involved. The programme should be balanced and realistic, with alternatives available for bad weather.

The Association's Rules for undertaking any adventurous activities planned must be known and steps taken to implement them. Does the planned programme take advantage of the venue? Is there sufficient flexibility and choice built into the programme to cope with changing circumstances?

Core skill 4 - Choosing and preparing the event team

(see Nights Away, Chapter 6)

The applicant should be able to show that sufficient adults are available throughout the event and that between them they have the expertise to cover the eight core skill areas. How have the team been briefed and been involved in the planning? Have you the appropriate ratio of staff to young people? Have you the right Authorisations within the team? Are you using the skills available in the team to the best advantage? Have people been identified for particular roles such as catering or First Aid? Do they clearly understand the role?

Core skill 5 - Choosing, organising and maintaining the right equipment

(see Nights Away, Chapter 7)

A list of equipment for use should be to hand. The Adviser may wish to know the process used to ensure that equipment is serviceable and safe. What procedures are in place for checking specialist equipment, such as ropes, canoes, cooking stoves and lifejackets? How will the equipment be stored during the event itself? How is the equipment insured?

Core skill 6 - Ensuring the health, happiness and safety of self and others

(see Nights Away, Chapter 8)

A number of things that can influence the happiness of young people away from home. Some, such as the weather, are outside the control of the team running the event and so contingencies are required. Fun activities, good food to eat, a warm, safe place to sleep and caring and enthusiastic adults are very important. Provision of all these lies within the control of the event leader. The young people need to be kept fully occupied throughout the day (except for rest periods) with a programme that is balanced and varied and appropriate to their age and ability. There should be free time but this needs to be managed.

Is the site reasonably secure? Have you thought out a range of spare time activities, suitable for rain or shine? How will you manage any young

people with challenging behaviour or home sickness?

STAGE TWO: Assessment during an event

The purpose of a visit an event run by an applicant is primarily to offer support and advice. In deciding if a Permit is to be recommended, the Adviser will need to talk to the event leader and team, as well as the young people.

A tour of the venue will be appropriate. Is everything as it should be? The Adviser will want to see that the catering is good and that the sleeping arrangements are warm, dry, clean and tidy.

The event leader should be able to show how the team manages the routine provision of any medication. Is a First Aid kit, properly equipped, available? Are records of any incidents, accidents or illness kept?

Please note that if the Adviser is not staying overnight at the event, it must be conducted under the supervision of a Permit holder who is. For example, an Assistant Cub Scout Leader looking to gain a Permit for Pack Holidays would work under the overnight supervision of a Permit-holding Cub Scout Leader who remains ultimately responsible for the event. The Adviser may visit the event for only part of the stay to carry out a practical assessment.

Core skill 7 - Organising good catering

(see Nights Away, Chapter 9)

The Adviser will need to see actual menus, look at food storage or preparation facilities and may even wish to join you for a meal!

Do your menus take account of any special dietary requirements? How will the food be purchased and transported? What are the arrangements for waste disposal? Are the fuel and water supplies adequate?

Core skill 8 - Making best use of the venue

(see Nights Away, Chapter 10)

Whether in a building or camping in a field, the Adviser will want to see that the site and

environment are being used to full potential and are suitable for the programme being run.

Is the programme right for the venue?

STAGE THREE: Assessment after the event

After the event it will be useful to meet with the Adviser both to pick up any outstanding issues and to discuss the event in general. This meeting might take place at the same time as the customary post event evaluation by the team.

Where they have not been discussed elsewhere, the Adviser might wish to pose these questions - Has all the equipment been returned clean and ready to use again? Have final accounts been prepared and all bills settled? Was the facility manager happy? Was the distance travelled and venue chosen justified?

What lessons have been learnt and what would be done differently next time? Did all the young people return home safe and happy? What was the feedback from parents/carers?

Recommendation for a Permit

The Adviser's recommendation to the appropriate Commissioner should be made taking into account all the three stages in the assessment. The ability to manage a team of adults successfully is an indication of likely continuation of success. The applicant should not be penalised for making minor errors in the planning or running of the event. Where candidates have learnt from mistakes, credit will be given.

In reaching a decision to issue a Permit, the Commissioner will also take into account the leadership skills and maturity of the applicant.

Recommending limits on Nights Away Permits

For good reasons, the Nights Away Adviser may recommend the Permit is restricted in particular ways. It is the responsibility of the District (or County/Area Commissioner) to consider any proposed restrictions. These could be to a specific geographical location or for a particular Section. Issue may be conditional on a number of further supporting visits by the Adviser.

Whatever the limit, reasons will be explained by the Adviser or appropriate Commissioner, and the steps which would be needed to widen use of the Permit set out.

Applying for a Nights Away Permit

In completing the attached Application Form, you are asked to honestly state your knowledge, experience and recent activity in as much detail as is relevant. Please use additional paper if you wish to add information not covered by the form.

In making your application, you must be familiar with the relevant chapters of *Nights Away*.

What happens next?

Once you have signed the form, it should be forwarded to the District Commissioner (or County/Area Commissioner in the case of Scout Network Members and other County/Area Appointments) or to the Nights Away Adviser, as agreed locally.

The Nights Away Adviser will then contact you to arrange a meeting.

Publications

The most up to date editions of these titles are available from the Scout Information Centre or downloadable from ScoutBase UK (www.scoutbase.org.uk).

- *Policy, Organisation and Rules*
- *Nights Away – An Adults' Guide to Camping, Holidays, Expeditions and Sleepovers*
- FS120431 *The Nights Away Permit Scheme – An introduction*
- FS120433 *The Role of the Nights Away Adviser*
- FS120434 *The Nights Away Permit Scheme – Guidelines for District and County/Area Commissioners*
- FS120078 *Home Contacts*
- FS129999 *Safety in Scouting – Safety Checks*
- FS315059 *Camping Standards*

Nights Away Permit Application Form



Please complete this form, adding any additional information on a separate sheet of paper. You will also require a passport size photo for the permit card.

PERSONAL DETAILS

First name(s)				Surname				
Title		Date of birth		Maiden name (if applicable)				
Address							Postcode	
	Contacts	Day			Evening			
	Mobile			Fax				
Email								

SCOUTING DETAILS

Current Scouting appointment (if applicable)							
Group							
District				County/Area			
Previous Scouting experience (if appropriate)							

EMERGENCY AID TRAINING

Please indicate if you have a current First Response Certificate or hold a First Aid Certificate.

Course/Certificate				Current until			
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NIGHTS AWAY PERMIT

Please indicate the category of Permit you are applying.

Indoor	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Campsite	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Green Field	<input type="checkbox"/>	

How many years relevant experience have you in this category?

Please list any relevant training Courses attended and/or nights away events you have participated in, stating your role on each occasion and giving appropriate supporting details. (Expand if necessary on another sheet.)

Date		Event		Role	
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Details:

Date		Event		Role	
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Details:

Date		Event		Role	
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Details:

Date		Event		Role	
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Details:

DECLARATION

I have read and understand Policy, Organisation and Rules relating to the Nights Away Permit Scheme and I am familiar with the Scout Association's *Nights Away* publication.

Applicant's signature		Date	
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