

Travel Guide for Parents of Troop 935

Selected sections from BSA's Guide to Safe Scouting:

Automobiles:

1. Seat belts are required for all occupants and are to be used at all times.
2. All drivers must have a valid driver's license that has not been suspended or revoked for any reason.
3. An adult leader (at least 21 years of age) must be in charge and accompany the group.
4. The driver must be currently licensed and at least 18 years of age, AND parental permission has been granted to the leader, driver, and riders.
5. Trucks may not be used for transporting passengers except in the cab.
6. All vehicles must be covered by automobile liability insurance with limits that meet or exceed requirements by the State of Ohio (Ohio law requires the following minimum amounts of liability insurance: Bodily injury coverage: \$12,500 per person; \$25,000 per accident; & property damage coverage: \$7,500 per accident).
7. Do not exceed the speed limit.
8. Do not travel in convoy. During transportation to and from planned Scout outings,
 - a. Meet for departure at a designated area.
 - b. Prearrange a schedule for periodic checkpoint stops as a group.
 - c. Plan a daily destination point.
9. If you cannot provide two adults for each vehicle, the minimum required is one adult and two or more youth members—*never one on one*.

Trailers and Trucks:

The beds of trucks or trailers must never be used for carrying passengers. Use caution in towing trailers or campers, as a vehicle's performance, steering, and braking abilities will be altered. Follow these safety requirements:

1. Use the correct size ball hitch for both your vehicle and the trailer. Lock and secure the ball hitch and attach the safety chains to the vehicle's frame.
2. Connect the driving and brake lights with the proper three-plug connector. Before departure, check to make sure all braking, driving, and turn signals are operating properly.
3. Make sure the wheels are safely chocked and the trailer is parked securely on level and solid ground prior to opening doors to load or unload.

Frequently Asked Questions:

What requirements do I have to have before I can drive boys in the Troop to functions?

There are two: be a licensed driver over the age of 21 and have provided your license plate information and insurance levels to the Troop Transportation Committee. They must have your information recorded before you can drive boys to a Troop function. The reason being that if an accident should happen and you have your information recorded, BSA insurance will be in place. If we do not have your information recorded any damages will not be covered by BSA's insurance policy. As a routine, whenever you get a new vehicle or new license plates, please inform the Troop Transportation Committee of your new information so that we can get it

updated. We also request that your vehicle be in reasonably safe operating condition and is reliable. Having a vehicle full of boys and gear breaking down in a remote area is not a very good situation.

How often will I need to drive?

We all should do our share to contribute to the transportation needs of the Troop. We do not intend to keep track of who drives and how much. But it is not reasonable to expect the same parents to drive to and from each activity. As they say, 'Many hands lighten the load', so please be willing to help out and drive as needed. If this approach doesn't work, more strict policies will need to be put in place.

Can my son drive other boys or can my son ride with older boys in the Troop?

BSA prohibits any boy to ride with a driver under the age of 21 to or from a Scout function. If an accident should occur, BSA insurance coverage will not be in place. If the driver is over 21 and the license information is recorded, coverage applies in the case of an accident, just like with any other adult.

How many boys can ride in my vehicle?

BSA coverage requires that there be a working seat belt for every passenger in the vehicle. That means that riding in the back of pickup trucks, trailers, sitting on laps, riding in a trunk, etc... is prohibited.

Why shouldn't we caravan to events?

It is not a safe driving practice to caravan anywhere, and against BSA policy. To avoid that, the activity permission slip should have clear directions and maps included that each driver should have a copy of prior to departure. Before departure review current cell phone number of other drivers just in case they are needed. If a driver is not clear on where they are going, they should ask another driver to allow them to follow at a safe distance, and at least stay in eye-sight distance to keep from getting lost (and *never* follow Mr. Smith...).

What about getting gas, or stopping for bathroom breaks or lunch?

When we leave for an event we like to get there as soon as possible. Unless it has been specifically planned, please make sure you have filled up your gas tank, taken care of bathroom needs, and eaten before leaving. Often our destinations are in remote areas, so don't count on coming across gas stations along the way. If we are making long trips, BSA policies require us to make periodic stops and are specified in the Guide to Safe Scouting. These stops will be part of the transportation plan and clearly explained in the activity permission slip and reviewed with drivers before departing.

When we return from an activity, unless otherwise specified, we are returning to the Church. Upon arriving at the Church, both troop and personal gear must be unloaded from the trailer and vehicles, some gear needs to be taken home by Scouts, and carpooling riders may need to be swapped. We all must participate in this task, it is not a fun one, but we all must do our share. Please return directly and as quickly as possible to the Church to assist in this task so that a few people don't have to unload everything while others make stops or detours back to the Church. That way we all can get back to our homes that much faster. If you are not driving to that

activity and are planning on picking up your son at the church, please be prompt to the determined pick up time. If we are returning early for some reason, Troop leaders will have the boys call ahead to notify their parents of the modified situation. Arrangements will be made to make sure the boy is left with a responsible adult until he can get home. He will not be left at the Church waiting by himself.

Will we always meet at the Church?

Typically, yes. When we go anywhere as a Troop, meeting at one location and going to another, BSA requires we fill out and file at Council a 'Tour Permit'. This is our routine procedure for camping weekends. However, to save time on local trips we may simply meet at the location. For example, when we go swimming on a meeting night, we will notify everyone just to meet at the identified pool. This means everyone is responsible to get his own ride to and from the event. Carpooling is encouraged of course, and if anyone has a hard time finding a ride contact a family that lives nearby. If that doesn't work, contact one of the leaders for help.

What have I got to do to pull the troop trailer?

Get a hitch! You need to check with your vehicle's manufacture specifications to determine if your vehicle is capable of pulling the weight from the trailer, and also need to make sure the light connector will work with that on the trailer. The trailer cannot be pulled without working driving and brake lights, regardless of day or night.