



A STEP-BY-STEP RETURN TO SCOUTING

New adventures await

The data and feedback are in and it is now time to share our framework for a step-by-step return to in-person Scouting activities this fall.

Over the last month, Scouts Canada has reviewed more than 3,000 comments about our proposed Standards for running safe Scout meetings. Those comments, along with the results from our focus groups and survey, a recent SickKids report and numerous provincial guidelines have shaped our plan to provide our community with a safe yet fun way to get outdoors and back to Scouting in September.

The step-by-step framework is an approach that is consistent with ministries of education from numerous provinces, and aligns with our guiding principle of acting prudently, waiting 2–4 weeks after the return to school to assess the situation and decide if it is safe to move to the next stage in Scouting. Our goal is to ensure we are doing our part to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19 among our youth, Scouters, parents, volunteers and others while providing a fun and engaging Scouting experience for our youth.

The framework

Scouts Canada is as eager as the majority of our community to get our youth outdoors and participating in Scouting while mitigating the risks associated with the current COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, we have developed various Scouting stages that are guided by provincial ministries of education recommendations and follow the same step by step approach school boards are planning for the return to school. Each stage will be accompanied by standards and program resources that will help all involved have a great, but modified Scouting experience this fall.

Although we are currently operating under **Stage 1**, Scouts Canada anticipates that all of the provinces will be able to move to **Stage 2** on September 1. We will review the pandemic situation in August and will make a formal announcement then. With the various stages already developed and in keeping with our principle of acting prudently, not moving first but learning from others before we proceed, Scouts Canada will consult with Councils to progress a province to the next stage (Stage 3), 2–4 weeks after the start of school and in concert with ministries of education recommendations. We will take our cue from the school boards and may progress certain provinces ahead of others.



RETURN TO SCOUTING STAGES



STAGE 1 (Current State)

- **Virtual Scouting Only**
- Size of gatherings: online—unconstrained
- 2-Scouter Rule to be observed

STAGE 2 (Proposed September)

- **Outdoor & Virtual Scouting only**
- Size of gatherings: 16 youth maximum
- Cohorts: 8 youth maximum (Patrol)
- Sharing of equipment: limited—within Cohorts only
- Camping: Individual tent only for senior sections. No camping for Beavers. Only exceptionally for Cubs.



STAGE 3

- **Outdoor & Virtual Scouting only**
- Size of gatherings: 50 persons total
- Cohorts: 8 youth maximum (Patrol)
- Sharing of equipment: limited—within Cohorts only
- Camping: Allowed for all Sections. Cohorts can share tent and equipment.

STAGE 4

- **Outdoor & Indoor & Virtual Scouting**
- Size of gatherings: 50 persons total
- Cohorts: 8 youth maximum (Patrol)
- Sharing of equipment: limited within Cohorts recommended
- Camping: Allowed for all Sections. Sharing of equipment limited within Cohorts recommended.



STAGE 5

- **Outdoor & Indoor & Virtual Scouting**
- Size of gathering: tbd
- Cohorts: unlimited
- Sharing of equipment: unlimited
- Camping: Allowed for all Sections. No restrictions.

What will Scouting look like in September

SCOUTING UNDER STAGE 2

We have heard your concerns and incorporated your feedback into our stages. The majority of the feedback was positive and reflects public opinion and our survey results. Most (60%) parents and Scouters have some concerns but are leaning towards coming back to Scouting this fall, as long as we implement the safety procedures we have shared, especially an initial request for smaller meeting sizes (57%) and a phased return to Scouting. Additionally, 75% of parents asked for more outdoor meetings and many have expressed their trust in the ability of our Scouters to deliver a safe and enjoyable Scouting experience this fall. For more information about the feedback, consult the [research findings](#) page on Scouts.ca.



Feedback ranges from positive and cautious optimism to negative with the majority landing slightly more on the positive side.

"I agree with all the work you are putting in to make each Scout Section safe and enjoyable for children. I trust in your judgement and our family is very happy that Scouting will continue safely."

"I really appreciate everything you did for the previous year and the planning for the ongoing year. I trust your justification and all the cautions."

"It looks like a sensible plan overall: interprets public health recommendations for the Scouting context and, presents procedures plainly and clearly for Scouters and parents."

"Overnight camping should NOT be allowed. It is an unacceptable risk to youth and leaders. Day camps only for all sections."

"I hate to be all doom and gloom on this but until we are past COVID-19 and that is not in the year 2020 something like Scouts will not be able to function anywhere near the capacity it needs too which is very similar to the many sports that have been cancelled and remain cancelled."

We believe that youth should come back to Scouting when they and their parents feel comfortable. Participation is voluntary. As a result, we are offering **free** extended membership to all current members from September 1 to December 31, 2020. We hope a majority will come back and also encourage friends to try Scouting through our **FREE MEMBERSHIP TRIAL**, but we understand that each family faces its own challenges during these unprecedented times.

COHORT: minimizes the number of youth and Scouters (or parents) any individual comes in contact with. The goal is to maintain consistency in those contacts as much as possible, yet allow more interaction within the cohort.

PATROL: is a general Scouting term for a small team, typically 6 to 8 youth that embodies the **Scout Method—Patrol System**. Specifically, this refers to Lodges (Colony: Beavers), Lairs (Pack: Cubs), Patrols (Troop: Scouts) and Expedition Teams (Company: Venturers).

In Stage 2, in-person Scouting is allowed, but only outdoor. All Scouting in-person activities will be limited to a maximum of 16 youth per meeting split into two or more small teams (Patrols) of eight or fewer youth per patrol. In addition to the 16-youth maximum, all Scouting in-person activities must be limited to 50 people total, including parents, Scouters, youth, helpers, activity providers and other persons in the Group. This includes persons who are not actively participating in the activity but remain with the Group—typically parents or grandparents of the youth.

These numbers fit well within our Scouter to youth ratio of 1:8. When you run an outdoor meeting, you can have each cohort occupy a different part of the area (making sure that the cohorts are within line of sight and earshot of each other to satisfy the Two-Scouter Rule), and run your fun, outdoor activity.

On the basis of extensive feedback, camping will be allowed for older Sections, but not for Beavers at this time and only exceptionally for Cubs. Each youth and Scouter must occupy their own, individual tent, a protocol we have changed at the request of the majority of the members that provided feedback on our draft documents. For more information—please consult the [Stage 2 Standard](#).

The cohort concept is being adopted by school boards and provinces because it allows individuals who cannot maintain physical distance to interact with each other—as long as they stay within the same cohort. In most schools, it is the teacher that will maintain distance and move from classroom to classroom. In Scouts, it will be the Scouter who will maintain physical distance and can participate with different cohorts—although this should be limited as much as possible. The youth will be able to interact with each other within their cohort.

We encourage Scouters, parents and volunteers to read the [Stage 2 Standard](#) carefully to prepare for the return of Scouting in September. Scouts Canada is preparing numerous resources that will support Scouters to provide fun and engaging activities while adhering to these important standards to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 transmission.

Resources for the safe return to Scouting

- Over 12 weeks of outdoor meeting templates—complete with suggested activities that meet Scouts Canada’s Standards for Colonies, Packs and Troops.
- Over eight weeks of online meeting templates—complete with suggested activities that meet Scouts Canada’s Standards for Colonies and Packs.
- Guidance and tools on implementing the Pandemic Programming Standards in the Section:
 - Cleaning & Hand Washing
 - Screening youth and Scouters for COVID-19
 - Attendance Form
 - Drop-off/Pick-up
 - Camping
 - Updates to Outdoor Adventure Form

Scouts Canada will be offering a “Welcome Back to Scouting 2020” learning series hosted in the David Huestis Learning Centre. This series will include live webinars for Group Commissioners and Scouters to review the relevant tools that will help our members enjoy the outdoors together in a safe manner when Scouting resumes in the fall. We will learn fast from school boards and we will be ready to adapt to the changing situation with our various stages.

We are extremely proud of the resilience of the Scouting community in adapting to a new normal. We are also very excited to welcome our youth back and create fun, new adventures. We recognize the extraordinary commitment and passion of our volunteers and we are confident that, together, despite these modifications—we will provide a **SAFE** quality Scouting program that will enable youth to stay active and engaged during these unprecedented times.