

May 6, 2015

New Baltimore Area Council Youth Protection Training (YPT) policy effective when units re-charter this year.

Five of our leading Council-Level volunteers (Council Commissioner, Council VP for Risk Management, Council VP for Program, Council Training Chair, and Council YPT Chair) sent a letter to all Unit Committee Chairs and Scoutmasters, Packmasters, and Venturing Advisors discussing a new policy for YPT training.

The new policy is that Youth Protection Training (YPT) for leaders must be current throughout the entire 12 months of the charter period in order to reregister. This new policy will require all leaders to renew their Youth Protection Training annually.

Several unit leaders have raised questions about this policy. As the incoming District Commissioner, I wanted share the answers to those questions with you.

QUESTION 1: How can Baltimore Area Council set standards different from National on YPT? If the National standard for YPT training is once every two years, how can Baltimore Area Council (BAC) require us to take the training annually instead?

We all know that the Boy Scouts are a national organization and that we are expected to follow national standards in our program. This allows a Scout from Maryland to move to California, find a new Troop, transfer his records and fit in. Local Councils cannot modify the youth program, but they are empowered to set requirements more stringent than the National ones in two areas; camp safety policies and adult training.

QUESTION 2: Why do it? Why does BAC feel it needs a more stringent YPT policy? National is putting two requirements on BAC that are hard to reconcile. The first is a two year periodicity on YPT, and the other is that it is NEVER acceptable for any adult leader to have a lapsed YPT.

Previously, units ensured everyone was trained at re-charter but a percent of Scouters each year would go out of periodicity between re-charters. If, on the other hand, we now check everyone will remain certified in YPT for the entire re-charter year, then no one can go out of periodicity.

The online training systems now make those YPT lapses immediately visible to all levels of BSA leadership. I do not have the print out in front of me for the entire council, but I believe right now about 20% of BAC Scouters are delinquent. I have no doubt that this could and would be portrayed as an ineffective training program if, god forbid, we had an abuse case in the Council--simple proof that BSA is not following its own policy.

There are reasons for 20% delinquent, reasons that also point toward the new policy as a solution. For example, we do not de-register adults who move away in the middle of charter year and whose YPT subsequently expires. To reach and maintain 100% YPT certification without resorting to annual training, we would have to do this.

By requesting we do the short, on-line training every year BAC we eliminate adults going out of periodicity during the charter year as a less onerous option to quarterly or even monthly audits and questions fired at Commissioners, Scoutmasters, and Committee Chairs.

QUESTION 3: I looked at the on-line adult training records, and I find my local records are more up to date. Why do I care about the on-line records? The on-line records are the legal records on adult training that would be subject to subpoena in child abuse cases, requiring record owners/maintainers to testify. That burden needs to fall on BSA professionals/Council volunteers rather than volunteers in all the individual units if we relied on local paper copies. (Subpoenas would probably go beyond the involved unit to the entire Council YPT records).

This new policy will ensure on-line YPT records are always up to date because we will have to fix them at registration. Adult YPT records can be updated by Unit Key 3 and Commissioners using my.scouting.org (training manager application). Contact me if you need help with this application. In a pinch, you can e-mail me names and dates the YPT was taken and I can enter it for you.

More important that the legal risk argument above is actual youth protection. We want YPT delinquencies eliminated to ensure youth are protected. We want accurate records to allow District and Council to review records to ensure Units do not miss anyone.

QUESTION 4: If this is a good idea, why doesn't National just mandate it? Why is BAC alone in this idea? We aren't alone, and this may be far more widespread in a few years. There are 273 Councils in the BSA. As near as I can tell, we are the fourth to adopt this policy and several more will probably follow before the end of the year. Nearby Chester County Council adopted the policy one year ago.

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If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact me.

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