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## BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA

National Office  
1325 Walnut Hill Lane  
P.O. Box 152079, Irving, Texas 75015-2079  
214-580-2000

October 5, 1988

MOST REV. Edmond L. Browning  
Presiding Bishop  
Episcopal Church Center  
215 Second Avenue  
New York, NY 10017

Dear Bishop Browning:

Enclosed please find a certificate of insurance which details the liability coverage provided for your national organization and local affiliates by the Boy Scouts of America. This is primary coverage. Whereas this insurance has been in force since 1984, there remains confusion in regard to this matter at the local level. Dissemination of this information to your constituency would be appreciated.

We have observed that concerns over the question of liability have been linked in some areas of the country to the new adult registration form. The new adult registration form was sent to you several weeks ago (additional copy attached). Please be assured that the new form has been designed for the express purpose of maintaining high standards of leadership and protecting youth. We feel chartered organizations expect this from us and our experiences in many local councils so far have confirmed that. Your letters of support for this new form would be appreciated.

Sincerely,

Tony Booth, Director  
Protestant Relationships

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Encls.

cc: Rev. Sheryl Kujawa

## CHARTERED ORGANIZATION RELATIONSHIP QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

The questions and answers below are an attempt to clarify in a succinct form several issues related to the Boy Scouts of America and its relationship to community organizations. We hope they will help you respond to inquiries from your membership.

### 1. ISSUE: A CHARTERED ORGANIZATION

Q: What exactly is a "charter" from BSA?

A: A BSA Charter is an opportunity to use the Scouting program for one year. At the end of the charter year, representatives from both the organization and BSA meet to evaluate the effectiveness of the program; define problems; and to develop action plans for leadership and program. If both the organization and BSA are in agreement, the charter is renewed for another year.

Q: What must an organization agree to do in order to receive a charter from BSA?

A: Any organization must do three things to obtain a charter: 1) Approve leadership; 2) provide a meeting place; and 3) agree to carry out the Scouting program as described in BSA literature.

These three things have not changed in the 78 year history of the BSA. However, prior to February 1988, the head of the chartered organization approved the Scouting Coordinator (institutional representative) and the Scouting Coordinator approved all other unit personnel. Since February, 1988 the head of the chartered organization approves all adult leadership, working through the Scouting Unit Committee and the Scouting Coordinator.

Q: What can an organization expect from BSA in this chartered relationship?

A: The BSA through its local council agrees to provide the following: 1) the Scouting program; 2) assistance in selecting leaders; 3) training for leaders; 4) camping and outdoor facilities; 5) professional service and consultation to ensure the success of the organizations Scouting program; and 6) liability insurance for the organization and officers.

Q: What benefits can an organization derive from affiliation with BSA?

A: The use of the Scouting program by an organization helps in the achievement of that organization's objectives such as promoting the welfare of children and youth and raising the standards of home life. Scouting attracts new parents to the organization and provides an educational resource and community outreach which reinforces and supplements the organization's mission.

2. ISSUE: NEW BSA ADULT REGISTRATION FORM

Q: Why has BSA introduced a new adult registration form?

A: A quality Scouting experience for youth depends upon the proper selection of adult leadership. The new form is simply a tool to identify quality leaders and to assist chartered organizations in selecting their adults to work with young people.

Q: Is the head of the organization expected to check the references of new leader applicants?

A: No. This task should be done by the Scouting Unit Committee and Scouting Coordinator.

Q: What does the head of the organization's signature of approval mean?

A: It simply means that to the best of his or her knowledge the applicant is qualified to serve and was selected according to the process prescribed by BSA.

Q: Are there any legal problems involved with the detailed personal questions on the new form?

A: No. All of these questions have been reviewed and approved by legal counsel.

3. ISSUE: LEADERSHIP SELECTION AND APPROVAL

Q: Why should the organization be required to select and approve leaders for BSA units?

A: Experience over 75 years has shown that leaders selected from among persons well known by parents and organizational leadership provide the most effective leadership. The unit and its leadership belongs to the organization, not to the BSA.

Q: You say the unit belongs to the organization. Exactly what does that mean?

A: BSA provides the Scouting program and makes it available as a resource to community-based organizations to use under their own leadership to achieve their own objectives with their own children.

Q: What is the prescribed leader selection process?

A: It is known as the 6 Sure Steps and is detailed in official BSA literature and in a videotape known as Ventures III, which is available from any BSA local council office.

Q: Why would an organization be unfamiliar with this process for selection and approval of leaders? Is it new?

A: It is not a new process. It has been in place for many years, but because personnel change, sometimes a lack of information and understanding occurs. However, the annual charter renewal process is intended to ensure the continuity of information and understanding.

#### 4. ISSUE: LIABILITY INSURANCE

Q: Does BSA provide liability insurance for organizations?

A: Yes, BSA provides full general liability insurance for all chartered organizations. Certificates of insurance are available upon request from the local BSA council office.

Q: Can organizations be sued?

A: Yes, organizations can be sued for any of their activities of any nature. But in the unlikely event this should happen with Scouting activities, BSA will defend the organization and its officers and provide liability insurance.

#### 5. ISSUE: FINANCIAL SUPPORT OF BSA

Q: Is an organization required by BSA to provide financial support for Scout units?

A: No. Financial support for Scouting activities is not required; but may be given at the discretion of the organization's leadership.

Q: Is an organization required to support the local Scout council annual SME (fund raising) program?

A: No. SME support is encouraged but it is optional.

Q: What is the annual "charter fee" and is an organization required to pay it?

A: The annual "charter fee", currently set at \$20.00 for each unit, was instituted in January, 1987 as a way to help defray the cost of liability insurance premiums. The remaining cost of premiums is subsidized by the BSA. It is expected to be paid by Scouting unit committees out of their treasury and not necessarily by the organization.

## INSURANCE FOR ORGANIZATIONS

### HOLDING BSA CHARTERS

We have been asked whether an organization holding a BSA pack, troop, or post charter can be sued for BSA activities.

As with any of your organization's activities, your organization or its officers may be named in a lawsuit, and only a court can determine liability. However, to protect you against this potential liability, the Boy Scouts of America provides full general liability coverage for all Boy Scouts of America activities involving every organization holding a BSA charter. (Vehicles owned by the chartered organization and loaned to the unit are covered by BSA on an excess basis, i. e., secondary to their insurance coverage). In the event of a lawsuit, BSA will defend the organization and its leadership and provide this insurance coverage. BSA began this unique protection in January 1984, and we believe that our insurance program provides the most extensive coverage afforded by a youth-serving organization in the country.

A certificate of insurance for individual chartered organizations is available upon request from your local council.

Questions about the BSA insurance program should be addressed to Risk Management Service, Boy Scouts of America, 1325 Walnut Hill Lane, P. O. Box 152079, Irving, Texas 75015-2079.

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