

The Two Scouter Rule and Section Ratios: Supervision for Scouting Programs

The Two Scouter Rule:

The Two Scouter Rule is the requirement for two registered Scouters to be with youth at all times. Notwithstanding Section ratios, two Scouters must always be within the field of view and within earshot of one another when with youth. The Two Scouter rule is an integral part of the Code of Conduct that applies to all Scouts Canada Volunteers and staff.

Section Ratio:

The Scout Method places emphasis on using Patrols (teams) comprised of six to eight youth of various ages as the primary unit in which Scouting takes place. Each Patrol or small team should have a designated Scouter to provide support, mentorship and a safe and respectful environment in which the team can work.

For each Section, there are required ratios for Scouter to youth members. It is important that these be maintained for all Scouting activities, whether in the meeting hall, at a camp or visiting another facility. If the ratio cannot be met for a particular meeting or outing, speak with your Group Commissioner to recruit other Scouters to assist for that meeting or outing. Only Scouters who have completed Wood Badge I count towards the Scouter to youth ratio.

Section Ratios are as follows:

- Colonies, Packs and Troops must have one Scouter per small team with a minimum of one Scouter per eight youth (1:8).
- Companies and Crews must have enough Scouters to facilitate and support the Patrol (Team) Method.
- While Scouter supervision is not always required for Scouts and Venturer Scouts, when Scouters are present there must be two.
- Risk management for certain types of activities may require additional Scouters to be present to ensure a safe experience for everyone.

Supplementary Resources:

[Scouts Canada's New Scouter Welcome Kit](#)

[The Code of Conduct](#)

[Scouts Canada's Screening Policy](#)

[The Scouter Manual](#)

Important information:

By signing our Code of Conduct, Scouters, Rover Scouts and parents agree to respect our safety guidelines and procedures, to ensure great, safe Scouting for all participants, young and old. This includes The Two Scouter Rule. In exceptional circumstances, where one or more Scouters are unable to attend a meeting/ activity, another registered Scouter should be recruited to take his/her place. If the Scouter in charge is to be replaced, the following rules apply:

- Beaver/Cub/Scout Section - an adult Scouter, who is 18 years of age or older;
- Venturer Section - an adult who is 21 years of age or older.

Scouters under the age of 18 and the Two Scouter Rule

Youth under the age of 18 that are appointed to positions of responsibility, such as Activity Leaders or Youth Commissioners, are considered to be adult Scouters for the purposes of the Two Scouter Rule as long as they have completed the screening and training requirements expected of Scouts Canada Volunteers.

Youth in leadership roles within their own Section or in support of another Section, such as Cub Scouts helping at Colony activities, are not considered Scouters. These are leadership opportunities that all youth should have and are part of the Scouting program.

Scouts Canada acknowledges that youth in responsible positions under the age of 18, while acting in their capacity as Volunteers, will by necessity have private one-on-one conversations with people over the age of 18. These conversations are not seen as harmful or suspicious in other circumstances outside of Scouts. With that said, we must ensure that young Scouters and their parents are aware that it is inappropriate for an adult Scouter to repeatedly seek out opportunities to be alone with them or to display undue attention or affection towards them.

Scouts Canada believes these young Volunteers are responsible enough to take care of youth, hold confidential information, deal with sensitive situations, and are capable of having private conversations and interactions with adults without creating risk and liability. Therefore, Volunteers are not bound to the Two Scouter Rule when interacting with members under the age of 18 who are acting in a Volunteer capacity.

Rover Scouts and Section Supervision

Our responsibility as Scouters to protect young people in the Scouting program does not stop when they turn 18 years old. While Rover Scouts are considered adult members of Scouting, Crew Scouters hold a position of trust and have a duty of care for youth in the Crew defined by the Scouts Canada Code of Conduct. It will sometimes be necessary, and indeed normal, for Crew Scouters to have one-on-one conversations with Rover Scouts. These conversations are not seen as harmful or suspicious in other circumstances outside of Scouts. With that said, it is inappropriate for a Crew Scouter to repeatedly seek out opportunities to be alone with Rover Scouts or to display undue attention or affection towards them.

Rover Scouts must be aware that they are adult members of Scouting and must follow the Two Scouter Rule when working with youth in other Sections. This may not be intuitive for younger Rover Scouts who recently considered Venturer Scouts as peers. In this case, it will be necessary to remind Rover Scouts of their responsibilities and duty of care outlined in the Scouts Canada Code of Conduct.

Scouts.ca Frequently Asked Questions:

Q: What is the difference between Section ratios and the Two Scouter rule? (Eight youth to one Scouter)

A: Section ratios are provided as guidelines for optimal Scout programming in accordance with the Scout Method. Section ratios allow for Patrol (team) activities, where all youth members can contribute equally. The Scout Method is unique to the Scouting Movement, and makes each individual the agent of his or her development as a self-reliant, supportive, responsible and committed person. Regardless of Section ratios, the Two Scouter Rule must be followed at all times.

Q: What should I do if I arrive early to a meeting and other Scouters are not present? Am I to remain alone with the youth?

A: Here are some options to consider if this happens to you:

- Stay outside in plain view;
- Ask parent to accompany you into hall with youth and wait with you until another Scouter arrives;
- Keep meeting room door locked until you have another Scouter with you;
- At the beginning of the Scouting Year, inform parents about our procedures and processes to make sure everyone has a safe Scouting experience; this will help them understand how they can help in a situation like this.
- Please note: Your meeting place should always be ready to receive the youth. If you need to prepare an activity or clear gym equipment to make the space safe and ready, do so before the youth arrive. For your hall to be ready, this means you also have to have a second Scouter with you.

Q: What about the "Two Scouter Rule" during canoe trips?

A: Two Scouters are not required to be with one youth in a canoe. As long as Scouters are within earshot and sight of one another, they are still abiding by the Two Scouter rule.

Q: What do I do if we are on a hike and one of our youth gets sick and has to turn around?

A: The Two Scouter Rule applies to every situation. Two Scouters would have to accompany the youth turning back. If there are minimum of two additional Scouters, the rest of the group may continue on their hike. Please note: ratio must also be considered for this situation.

Q: If our storage cupboard is out of sight of our main meeting space, can I open it with the youth?

A: Remember that two Scouters have to be within eyesight of each other. In this case, why not have one Scouter unlock the cupboard and then return to the meeting area; afterwards send pairs of youth to retrieve the materials as needed.

Q: We have two boys and fifteen girls in our Pack. Does The Two Scouter Rule have to include one male and one female in every duo?

A: No, as long as you respect your Sections ratio, the number of female Scouters vs male Scouters is irrelevant. However, it is highly recommended to at least have one male and female in each Section.

Q: Do Scouters under the age of 18 count towards ratio?

A: Yes, youth aged Scouters that have completed their Wood Badge Part I are Scouter Ready and count towards ratio. These youth are to be encouraged to work with, and be part of the Beaver, Cub and Scout Scouter teams.

Q: For fundraising, like door-to-door Scout Popcorn sales, do we have to have two Scouters in a car when driving youth to their route?

A: Not necessarily. Parents can help drive the youth around to their routes but they must be screened as per the Volunteer Screening process for non-members of Scouts Canada (for day activities). Additionally, there should be at least two adults per car, even if they are non-members. Having two adults per car can help speed up the process; one outside watching the youth and another driving the car to help collecting become faster.

Keep a detailed list of which youth is traveling with which adult, cell phone numbers, car make and licence plate. The drivers should also have the Scouters contact information, in case of emergency. Drivers should also have an itinerary of what streets should be covered and set some check in times.

Case Studies:

Case Study #1:

Scouter Jack and Scouter Jill take an eight person Scout Troop on a nature hike. Four Scouts want to take one path and four want to take another. The Scouts beg Scouters Jack and Jill to let them split up; Jack with one group, Jill the other. Jack and Jill, though feeling pressured, realize that splitting up is not an option as it is not keeping with the Two Scouter Rule. Jack and Jill explain to the Troop that both of them need to be with the Scouts at all times. They work together with the Troop to plan a route for the hike that keeps all Scouts happy.

Case Study #2:

A Scout Troop is on a camping trip. Scouter Jack and Scouter Jill take their eight Scouts on a hike, while Scouter John stays behind to prepare for the evening's campfire. While Scouter John is at the campsite, a parent, Mr. Smith, arrives at camp with Scout Jimmy. Mr. Smith explains that Jimmy had been feeling ill, but was now feeling better and wanted to go to camp. Mr. Smith notes he cannot stay long as he has to pick up his other children from another activity. Scouter John realizes that he cannot stay alone with Jimmy to wait for the Troop to come back as it would not be keeping with the Two-Scouter rule. Scouter John explains to Mr. Smith that he cannot leave Jimmy with him. He asks Mr. Smith to wait until Scouters Jack and Jill return with the rest of the Troop before leaving. Scouter John explains The Two Scouter Rule to Mr. Smith and how it is Scouts Canada's policy. Mr. Smith then tells Scouter John that he is fine with Jimmy being alone with him until the others come back, after all Mr. Smith knows Scouter John well and trusts that everything will be fine.

Scouter John is clear to Mr. Smith that he cannot agree to that arrangement. Scouter John further explains to that the rule promotes a safe environment for youth. Scouter John points out to Mr. Smith that if anything were to happen to him, Jimmy would be alone and may not know how to get help. Mr. Smith was

more understanding when Scouter John put it that way, and after making a few phone calls, agreed to stay until Scouters Jack and Jill returned with the troop.

Other suggestions for how Scouter John could have handled this scenario while keeping with the Two Scouter rule:

- Scouter John could have contacted Scouters Jack and Jill by phone (or radio) and asked them to return to camp as soon as possible.
- Scouter John could have contacted Scouters Jack and Jill by phone (or radio) to see where they were. If they were in an appropriate area, Scouter John could arrange for Mr. Smith to drop Jimmy off with the rest of the Troop.

Case Study #3:

At a Scout meeting one night a Scout named Sam asks to speak to Scouter Jill in private. Sam appears upset; he is fidgeting a lot and it is clear he is holding back tears. Scouter Jill wants to encourage Sam to tell her what is on his mind, but also realizes that she cannot talk to him in full privacy as it is not keeping with the Two Scouter rule. Scouter Jill takes Sam to the back of the hall where she can see Scouter Jack and the rest of the Troop at the meeting. Scouter Jill listens to Sam as he says he does not feel well. She calls Sam's mother, Mrs. Singh, who comes to pick him up from the meeting early.