



SCOUTS[®]
Creating a Better World

SCOUTING IN TIME OF COVID-19

RECOVERY GUIDANCE
FOR NATIONAL SCOUT
ORGANIZATIONS





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SCOUTING DEVELOPMENT
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Introduction:

In 1907, Baden-Powell, devised the Scout motto:

Be Prepared. *He published it in Scouting for Boys in 1908.*

In Scouting for Boys, Baden-Powell wrote that to Be Prepared means, "you are always in a state of readiness in mind and body to do your duty." Upon hearing the Scout motto, someone asked Baden-Powell the inevitable follow-up question.

"Prepared for what?"

"Why, for any old thing," he replied.

More than a century later, preparedness is still a cornerstone of Scouting. Through its fun, values-based programme, Scouting prepares young people for life.

In the late 1900s, Baden-Powell wanted young people equipped to react quickly to an emergency. The Great War loomed, and soon the Boy Scouts — not a military organization but a service-minded one — would be called upon to play their part.

His idea was that Scouts should prepare themselves to become productive citizens and strong leaders and to bring joy to other people. He wanted each Scout to be ready in mind and body and to meet with a strong heart whatever challenges await him.

Isn't that what we need now? To be prepared "for any old thing" as Baden-Powell said.

Failing to prepare, as we all know, is preparing to fail.

As our organisations navigate the ongoing COVID-19 crisis, there are a number of key issues that NSO leaders should take into consideration, as well as steps they can take to reshape the new reality and plan for recovery.

We have identified five priorities to consider:

1. Membership safety

- Ensuring the safety and wellbeing of our members is essential. People are looking to their leadership, community and government leaders for guidance. Addressing their concerns in an open and transparent manner will go a long way to engaging them and reassuring the business continuity.
- Establish policies for physical distancing and sanitizing. Physical distancing (also known as social distancing) means avoiding large gatherings and calls for people to maintain a distance of about 2 meters from each other when possible. Reduce activities that will require members to be in close contact with one another over a prolonged period of time. Promote the use of protection masks during activities. For sanitizing, make sure we promote policies that encourage frequent handwashing as well as cleaning of highly touched surfaces to reduce the risk of coming in contact with COVID-19.
- To help organisations to provide safe operating environments, some municipal governments are working with big data amassed by technology companies and mobile operators to develop a health QR code system that allows people to track their movements over the previous 14 days to prove that they haven't visited any high-risk areas.
- Seek advice from their local governments.

Resource Suggestion: See the "[Restart Scouting Checklist](#)" from the Boy Scouts of America

Resource Suggestion: [How to run a safe meeting during COVID pandemic](#) – Scouts Canada

Resource Suggestion: [How to safely run an in-person Scouts Canada Activity during COVID-19](#) – Scouts Canada

2. Continuous engagement and support

- Reimagining a business-as-usual environment that minimizes disruptions for the organization requires a fine balance. Where virtual activities or flexible activity arrangements aren't possible and organisations have members on site or in direct contact, it is important to provide infection protection measures.
- Align with current government and health authorities' policies to help members remain engaged, as they and the organisation navigate through the crisis.
- Never stop innovating how you can organise Scouting and engage your members. Send pre-prepared tools, schedule meetings, or set up a virtual camp. Scouting has shown that it can adapt fast and effectively.
- Consider actions to help and support the mental health of our members and adult volunteers. Sharing the facts about COVID-19 and [stopping the spread of rumours](#) can

help reduce stress and [stigma](#). Helping members understand their options can help them connect with others and make an outbreak less stressful.

- In cases where the communities are slowly moving into the new normal, we should always keep in mind that the new normal doesn't mean the same thing for every one of our diverse members. For example; individual priority and financial changes, health, psychological impact, confusion and confidence etc
- Consider the increased divisions and inequalities- it's important to establish new policies, but we must not forget on our existing policies, intersectionality, inclusion etc.

Resource Suggestion: [World Scouting's COVID -19 Support Centre](#)

3. Adapt your NSO Strategy / Operations

Most organisations are likely to experience significant disruption to their ongoing plans and will face underperformance in some areas throughout the duration of the COVID-19 crisis.

To help address these challenges, NSOs should:

- Identify your core products and services. What do your members need at the moment? What are the products or services you must continue to deliver in order to remain operational?
- Be prepared to change your business practices if needed to maintain delivery of your essential services or products.
- Plan and Evaluate short-term operation goals and see how they meet the new normal. Can some of the planned activities be implemented virtually? How can you achieve the same result through other type of activities? This is the time for discovery and finding creative solutions. Plan for the next year but be flexible and after a 3-month evaluation you may re-shape the plan for the upcoming period.
- Assess financial and operational risks and respond quickly. Organisations will need to monitor direct cost escalations and their impact on overall product margins, intervening and renegotiating, where necessary.
- Consider alternative funding sources. Determine how the COVID-19 crisis affects budgets and business plans. If the impact is significant and former budget assumptions and business plans are no longer relevant, organisations should revise them to remain agile. Consider minimum operating requirements and look for additional sources of funding. Many governments also established special support and aid for organisations and companies.
- Retention and recruitment. Set up a team to reflect on how to shape the recruitment of new members? Could the pandemic be an opportunity to for us to be seen and how important we are for the development of young people?

Resource Suggestion: [Recruiting from distance](#) – The Scout Association

4. Communicate with members and relevant stakeholders

Clear, structured, transparent and timely communications are necessary when creating a platform to reshape the way we do Scouting.

- Stay informed -- Seek information from your local health officials, government and other trusted sources for timely and accurate information. Identify at least one person or selected team members in the workplace who will be a focal point for COVID19.
- Consider to develop Crisis Communication plans to support the information flow.
- Organisations will want to keep members apprised of any impacts to the organisations and the expected activities. Send out a clear message as early as possible to allow members to plan ahead - this will give them certainty. Make sure to keep communicating, even if the communications are repeating and re-confirming the statements from the local/national authorities.
- Adult Staff and Volunteers -- For employees, communications plans should try to find the balance between caution and maintaining a business-as-usual mindset. For volunteers the communication plan should keep them informed of the NSO's decisions on how to move forward. It should allow volunteers to ask when things will begin again or what the plan is. The communication should outline to volunteers their role when restarting operations.
- Partners should be informed of our plans, activities and the challenges we are facing. Exchange ideas and practices with other partners, NGOs, youth organisations in your community and (when relevant) local governments and businesses to improve the overall response efforts and resilience of your community. This could also include strategic stakeholders such as parents and communities that contribute to the development of Scouting.
- Government and regulators are crucial because they are the ones that usually will define the framework for NSOs to operate. We need to ask guidance from them but also to provide them with inputs and suggestions. It is also useful to be prepared if there are any changes or new directions that the organisation needs to respond to appropriately. We should make choices that benefit our membership best.

Resource Suggestion: See the "[Communication Page for COVID-19](#)" from The Scouts Association (UK)

Resource Suggestion: See the "[Communication Page for COVID-19](#)" from Scouts Canada

Resource Suggestion: [Frequently Asked Questions](#) – Scouts Canada

5. Use the government/institutions and agencies' support policies

Central and local governments have released several financial, social insurance and tax-related policies to support companies and organisations.

- NSOs should monitor nation-wide government and organisational opportunities for support and how they may best serve the individual circumstances of their situation. It is important to note that government support may differ based on jurisdiction and

sector. NSOs will need to identify and understand each offer of support and determine which ones are best for their organisation.

Examples of support your government can offer:

- Exempting and refunding value added tax (VAT)
 - Offering a full corporate income tax (CIT) deduction
 - Providing an individual income tax (IIT) exemptions
 - Issuing other policies that encourage public-benefit donations.
- o Act in an organised manner with your local groups and the partner organisations in your country. Youth Councils can be a great tool for advocating on support measures.
 - o Many funding opportunities have been created specifically for civil society supporting their combat with COVID-19. Track these opportunities and use them.

6. Build resilience in preparation for the new normal

Once the COVID-19 outbreak is controlled, NSOs will want to review and renew operation continuity plans (OCP). They'll want to assess how existing OCPs are working.

If there are deficiencies, organisations will want to identify root causes, whether it's timeliness of action, lack of infrastructure, labour shortages, or external environment issues.

You will then want to consider putting new internal guidelines in place based on lessons learned, as well as solid contingency plans to build resilience and better respond to future crises.

Plan for recovery now, not later

The COVID-19 crisis was impossible to predict with conventional wisdom and forecasting tools. However, there are many lessons organisations can learn and carry forward once the crisis has passed and they've had a chance to analyse their response.

Recovery should not only focus on organisational recovery but should also focus on post-traumatic recovery of its members. NSOs should offer post-traumatic rehabilitation programme of its members when needed. Consider establishing partnerships with national organisations!

Resource Suggestion: [Youth Mental Health Resources](#)

Resource Suggestion: [Rapid assessment of Emergency and Protection needs](#)

In summary, organisations are encouraged to develop strategies to protect themselves (communication and emergency plans), sustain (continuity of operations plan) and recover/resume (continuity and disaster recovery plan) as needed.

"Be Prepared" ... the meaning of the motto is that a scout must prepare himself by previous thinking out and practicing how to act on any accident or emergency so that he is never taken by surprise. - Robert Baden-Powell





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