

SOUTH AFRICAN SCOUT ASSOCIATION

Star Awards Guidelines 2012

The “Star Awards” is an evaluation system used to recognise Troops and Patrols who are meeting the aims of the association. The Scout methods used are the tools that make scouting different from any other youth organization. The “Star Awards” also serve as an essential tool for Scouters, Commissioners, Provincial and National Staff to identify weak areas so that appropriate corrective action can be taken.

Star Awards evaluate activities completed between 1 October and 30 September every year.

Star Awards Timetable:

March/April	ADC or DC visits each Troop and completes first evaluation. Patrol Leaders and the Troop Scouter are guided on how to improve and overcome any weaknesses in order to achieve the gold star. These results are entered into the first column on the evaluation form.
May/June	Requirements discussed by DC with Troop Scouters at District Meeting
October/November	The second evaluation is carried out. Results are entered in the second column with comments and venues of hikes’ etc. in the “comments and details” column.
15 November	Deadline for completed forms to be received by the Assistant Provincial Commissioner for Scout Programme. The APC checks the forms and records the results for his/her strategic planning for the next year.
15 December	Deadline for completed forms along with comments to be received by the National Commissioner for Scout Programme at National Headquarters.

Additional Information:

- 1) Every Troop and Patrol must be evaluated and the relevant forms completed. The Chief Scout has indicated that this evaluation is vital for the development of the Scout Programme and has recommended that should there be any reluctance from a Troop to be inspected, the reason for this should be investigated by the DC and APC Scout Programme.
- 2) The D.C. or A.D.C (Scout Programme) should carry out the two evaluations as part of their quarterly troop visits.
- 3) It is recommended that the same evaluator should carry out both evaluations.
- 4) The Troop Scouter may not carry out an evaluation of his own Troop.
- 5) The evaluation form should be used as a guide for ongoing discussion between the Patrol Leaders, Troop Scouters, the District and the APC Scout Programme.
- 6) The comment column must be used for details of successes and shortcomings, which should be discussed in detail with the Patrol Leaders and Troop Scouter.

Purpose and overview of the Star Award program is to:

- Review of the implementation scout programme within the Troop and its Patrols
- Review of the methods for the implementation of the program
- Review of the requirements and interpretation of the award at each level:
 - o Patrol
 - o Troop
- Review of the recognition plan for the award

How do we support the earning of this award at the Troop and Patrol level?

1. Assistant District Commissioners (Scout Programme) ADC set an action planning meeting with each troop. If an ADC is unavailable, use the resources of a District Commissioner DC or other key district staff or provincial member to ensure that every troop has this meeting.
2. At the Troop action-planning meeting, use the Star Award evaluations form and the Troop self-assessment tool as a guide in developing goals for the Troop to achieve in the year ahead.
3. Have the commissioner or a designated volunteer turn in the completed form by the determined deadline for every Troop & Patrol.
4. Each district should compile a list of action items that are needed to assist its Troops. Develop the list as work plans for the district team in the months ahead. Review monthly, at district Scouters councils and commissioner staff meetings, the actions needed to provide support to the Troops.
5. The goal should be to improve the quality of the program and help every Troop in the district to qualify each year for the Award.

Purpose of meeting (Use as the agenda for the meeting):

1. To evaluate the Troop's progress toward achieving a Star Troop Award
2. To review the Troop's goals, successes, and vision for the coming year
3. To identify any areas of improvement—leadership, program, and membership
4. To determine any specific actions needed to assist with Troop improvements and determine who will follow up on those actions
5. To schedule any necessary follow-up to monitor progress

When to conduct meeting:

1. After the ADC / DC has visited the Troop for the first time
2. Annually to review strengths and areas of improvement to help provide direction for needed support, preferably after the final review prior to you annual planning for the year ahead.
3. As needed when a problem may arise

How should the arrangements for this meeting be set up?

1. The ADC/commissioner speaks to the Troop Scouter during the first Troop visit to schedule the meeting date, time, and location.
2. The dialog should include approaching the Troop Scouter after the meeting and requesting that a second meeting be set up with the Troop Scouter and the Troop's Patrol Leaders.
3. Setting the meeting, preferably at the Troop meeting place.
4. Asking them to complete the Troop self-assessment tool prior to the meeting
5. Letting them know the visit will include a discussion of the self-assessment tool and how the goals and vision of their Troop's program can be supported

Why should only the ADC / commissioner, Troop Scouters Attend?

- It provides a small group to analyze the program, their Troop's needs, and steps to be taken to help resolve any issues.
- It helps create a dialog between the Troop and the district. Once they meet and determine what needs to be done, others can be involved in helping to determine in which direction to go and any potential improvements that can be identified.

What preparation should be made prior to the action planning meeting?

Review the statistics of the Troop available from the district and the district team, especially to review:

- Star Award Status from previous year
- Outdoor program participation
- Advancement reports
- Trained leadership status
- Child Protection training
- Participation in district and provincial events
- Attendance register
- Complete the Troop self-assessment tool during the visit to determine areas that "need improvement" and those the Troop felt that they "need help" with as you support the Troop during the year in the achievement of their goals.

Frequently Asked Questions about the Star Awards

Question 1— when will the star award forms be available to troops?

Answer— Troop forms will be available from you provincial headquarters by the end of September. They are also available to download from the national Web site, www.scouting.org.za

Question 2— how does a Troop start the evaluation for the Award?

Answer— Troop leadership will meet with their assigned commissioner or a district-level volunteer to review the Troop's program and establish program objectives. This should be done prior to the start of the new scout year (1st October).

Question 3— when will Troops & Patrols be able to qualify to earn the award?

Answer— When all requirements are completed beginning no earlier than 30 September. Provinces have until 15 December to post the Troop's achievement in to SAHQ. Certificates will be available from the end of January.

Question 4— how will the criteria for the award be distributed and explained to all provinces, districts, and Troop leadership?

Answer— National will establish an implementation schedule. The program details include commitment forms for Troops, districts, and provinces; training agendas; and Troop action planning meeting support.

Question 5— are there other ways to learn about the Star Award program?

Answer— The program explanation can be found on the Web site www.scouting.org; or in most scout literature.

Question 6— when will the recognition items be available?

Answer— All recognition items for each year will be available starting in 1st February the following year.

Question 7— does a Patrol or Troop have to meet all of the award criteria to earn the Gold award?

Answer— Yes, for the Troop Award they do have to qualify for all criteria in order to achieve the gold award. Patrol Award has one option item. Either item 14 or 15 must be completed.

Question 8— on the Troop Records section, must all section be yes to get gold award?

Answer— Yes. But only two sections are required for Bronze (3 for Silver).

Question 9— can I obtain an electronic version of the Star Awards form?

Answer— Yes you can download it from www.scouting.org.za

Question 12— what qualifies as an outdoor program or activity per month?

Answer— Each Troop establishes a goal at the beginning of the year on the number of outdoor events or other activities. Normal Troop meetings cannot be counted as "outdoor activities", even if they are held outdoors. For this section of the Star Awards, the term "Outdoor Activity" refers to activities held away from the usual meeting place, and which are not run as usual meetings. They could include hiking, treasure hunts, wide games, etc.

Question 13— how is recruitment of new adults defined?

Answer— Commitment and involvement by more registered adults is the overall goal. The training provided to them is critical in engaging them in better support of the program. Each Troop should provide an annual orientation for all parents. As a part of the National Parent Initiative, a suggested list of specific tasks has been developed to involve more parents and adults in the program.

Question 14— what happens if a new Patrol Leader takes over just before the inspection?

Answer— The Star Awards is based on the Patrol / Troop in it's current state. For example, when looking at the PL's Advancement, one cannot aggregate between 2 PL's over the year. This implies that special planning needs to take place at the beginning of the scout year to ensure successful succession in Patrols.

Question 15— how do I count scouts as some have left, and some have joined

Answer— For the Star Awards, you need to work on the current scouts who are in the Troop at the date of the inspection. When counting Advancements or Interest Badges earned, one can use add the number of badges earned that year divided by the number scout and get an average.

GUIDELINES FOR COMPLETING THE FORMS:

Star Troop

1. **Outdoors:** - an outdoor adventure is an exciting, challenging experience, which is characterised by uncertainty of outcome and perceived risk. List under comments. Examples could be a hike into new territory or a wide game away from the hall. These activities are not usual scout meetings, and are held away from the usual meeting place.
2. **Patrol System:** - Fundamental to Scouting. Every patrol to be evaluated for a patrol star. Each Patrol should be able to achieve a Bronze award, while the Gold Award should be the goal.
3. **Troop Camping:** - The nights do not have to be consecutive. More than 50% of the troop should have attended. Overnight Troop hikes may be included if not used under the outdoor section. The evaluator must comment on the variety of venues.
4. **Advancement:** - Advanced this year to a new level; Membership, Pathfinder, Adventurer, First Class, Explorer or Springbok.
5. **Interest Badges:** - Earned this year, this includes Scoutcraft badges.
6. **Participation:** -The troop must be represented by at least a patrol-sized group at events.
7. **Retention:** - Members lost through reasons beyond the control of the troop do not count against the troop. (e.g. Transfers out of the district or becoming 18 years old)
8. **Recruitment:** this may include cubs coming up and new recruits during the year.
9. **Number of Scouts:** - total number of registered scouts at the last day of September. Compare with census figures (there should not be a vast difference). Should be the same no. as top of evaluation sheet.
10. **Number of Scouters:** - 1 Warranted Scouter per 18 scouts. (e.g. If 19 scouts then 2 Scouters if 37 then 3 Scouters) Counted at last day of September.
11. **Scouter Advancement:** Each Scouter must complete some form of formal (recognised) training. This can be within the Scout Movement, or at University, Work, School, Private Tuition, etc.
12. **Troop Records:** - records to be simple and up to date. All must be *available* for a "Yes"
13. **Communication:** - a simple display and printed newsletter used to publicise achievements and promote events. As well as up to date notice of time of meeting for public to see. Email communication can be counted, provided that the evaluation can see proof of the regular emails.

Star Patrol Notes

Creating Teams That Win

Successful teams are based on a number of essential group member behaviours. One of the key to a group's success is its size. In Scouting, we learned much from the founder of Scouting.

Robert Baden-Powell. In 1888, he wrote:

The formation of the boys into Patrols of from six to eight and training them as separate units each under its own responsible leader is the key to a good Troop.

How you know your team is NOT working

Individual attendance is spotty or inconsistent. Meetings are irregularly held and sometimes consist of extended periods of games or goofing off interspersed with something resembling a meeting. There's no youth in charge, but perhaps a single individual who tries to rally the group into doing something constructive. The adults are frequently telling the youth what to do, or are disciplining youth who are out of line. Teams are organized haphazardly, by age group, or without consideration to a mix of senior and junior members. The older youth are inadequately prepared to train the younger members. The older

youth have not attended any junior leader training in more than a couple of years. The adults leaders have not attended adult leader training.

We have borrowed heavily on Baden-Powell's playbook, because he found something intrinsically true to youth. They love to form gangs, or groups with a common affinity and interest. This team of teams, led by youth, is the "patrol method."

What the Patrol Method is

The patrol method is working when the adult acts as a guide, mentor, and counsellor to the youth, helping them by word and example to lead one another, to influence one another, to encourage competition and excitement so that the boys grow as a group and as individuals.

In 1920, Baden-Powell consolidated notes he had assembled on the training of boys through Scouting and published them as [Aids to Scoutmastership](#). He wrote,

Baden-Powell said: *"When you want a thing done, 'Don't Do It Yourself' is a good motto for Leaders."*

The Patrol System

The Patrol System is the one essential feature in which Scout training differs from that of all other organisations, and where the System is properly applied, it is absolutely bound to bring success. It cannot help itself!

The formation of the boys/girls into Patrols of from six to eight and training them as separate units each under its own responsible leader is the key to a good Troop.

The Patrol is the unit of Scouting always, whether for work or for play, for discipline or for duty. An invaluable step in character training is to put responsibility on to the individual. This is immediately gained in appointing a Patrol Leader to responsible command of their Patrol. It is up to them to take hold of and to develop the qualities of each boy/girl in their Patrol. It sounds a big order, but in practice it works. Then, through emulation and competition between Patrols, you produce a Patrol spirit which is eminently satisfactory, since it raises the tone among the youth and develops a higher standard of efficiency all round. Each boy/girl in the Patrol realises that he/she is in himself/herself a responsible unit and that the honour of their group depends in some degree on their own ability in playing the game.

Enthusiasm is contagious

In patrols that are working, you see enthusiasm among the youth—and adults. If the youth are enthusiastic, they care which team they belong to. (Just try to switch them to another team!) They have yells, their meetings start on time, and everyone is excited about being there. Uniform, if part of the group, is consistent and neat. There is pride in belonging. Participation is consistent and high.

We foster patrol commitment by encouraging a high-spirited experience. We reward patrol for coming up with a patrol flag and yell, and many gatherings are preceded by a feverish competition where each time loudly proclaims what makes them unique.

When you come right down to it, patrol spirit and the small team method are joined at the hip. The patrol method *does not work* without the invigorating tonic of team spirit. As Baden-Powell pointed out, the way to create team spirit is through "emulation and competition."

The adult leaders' most important job is to create an environment that fosters youth's natural desire to compete and in the process, better themselves.

"The Patrol System is not one method in which Scouting can be carried on. It is the only method"

Lord Baden-Powell, Founder of the Scout Movement

KINDS OF PATROLS

There are ideally three kinds of Patrols:

New Scout patrols, Regular patrols and Older members. Troops decide on their own strategy, and what works best for them.

- 1) New Scout patrols are for those who recently joined and live in a similar area. So as to help with patrol activities outside normal scouting.
- 2) Gender orientated all boys or girls patrol.
- 3) Scout may be the same age.

"It is up to the Patrol Leader to take hold of and to develop the qualities of each Scout in his patrol. It sounds like a big order, but in practice it works."

Lord Baden-Powell, Founder

WHAT IS A PATROL

A Patrol is a group of Scouts who belong to a Troop, may be similar in age, development and interests. The Patrol system allows Scouts to interact in a small group outside the larger Troop, working together as a team, and sharing the responsibility of making their Patrol a success. Patrol size depends on a Troop's membership, the ideal being a maximum of eight Scouts.

PATROL SPIRIT

Patrol spirit is the glue that holds the patrol together and keeps it going. Building patrol spirit takes time, because it is shaped by the patrol's experiences - good or bad. Often misadventures, like getting lost on a night hike, will contribute much in pulling a patrol together. The weekend it rained and flooded your camp is the one you will never forget. Some patrols build up traditions, and these help build each patrol member's sense of belonging.

YOUR DUTIES AS A PATROL LEADER

When you accept the position of a Patrol Leader, you agree to provide service and leadership to your patrol and the Troop. Take this responsibility seriously, but you will also find it fun and rewarding. As a Patrol Leader you are expected to do the following:

"In planning and carrying out the Scout programme by patrols, your Scouts get valuable practice in group discussions and group debates."

First handbook for Patrol Leaders

PATROL MEETINGS

Patrol meetings may be held at any time and place, but not too often. Many patrols set aside a portion of some evening meetings for its patrol to sit together and talk. Others encourage patrols to meet on a different evening, possibly at the home of a patrol member. Meetings should be well planned and businesslike. Assistant patrol leaders bring the meeting to order and the PL reports on the issues discussed at the Court of Honour.

1. Decisions reached at these meetings should be brought to the attention of the Troop Scouter, whose responsibility it is, together with Assistants and PLs to make up a suitable programme. Plan and lead some patrol meeting and activities.
2. Keep your patrol members informed.
3. Give each member some specific task whenever possible.
4. Represent your patrol at Court of Honour, or District/Provincial Patrol Leaders'.
5. Prepare the patrol to participate in all Troop activities.
6. Work with other Leaders to make your troop run well.
7. Know the abilities of each of your members.
8. Set a good example.
9. Wear the Scout Uniform correctly.
10. Be guided by the Scout Promise & Law.

"An invaluable step in character training is to put responsibility on the individual."

Lord Baden-Powell, Founder

Tips for Being a Good Patrol Leader

1. **Keep your word.** Don't make promises you cannot keep.
2. **Be Fair to All.** A good leader shows no favourites. Do not allow friendships to keep you from being fair to all members of your patrol. Find out who likes to do what, and assign duties to patrol members by what they like to do best.
3. **Be a Good Communicator.** You do not need a loud voice to be a good leader, but you must be willing to step out in front with an effective 'Let's go for it!' A good leader knows how to get and give information so that everyone understands what is going on. No-one can read your mind.
4. **Be Flexible.** Not everything goes as planned. Be prepared to shift to 'Plan B' when 'Plan A' doesn't work.
5. **Be Organised.** The time you spend planning will be repaid many times over. Take notes; keep records.
6. **Delegate.** Some leaders assume that a job will not get done if they don't do it themselves. Wrong! Most people like to be challenged with a new task. Get your patrol to try things they have never done before. Do not try to do everything yourself. Sharing jobs and fun is a much more rewarding way.
7. **Set an Example.** The most important thing you can do is 'Lead by Example'. Whatever you do, your patrol members are likely to do the same. A cheerful attitude can keep everyone's spirits up. "Laugh, and the world laughs with you...."

8. **Be Consistent.** Nothing is more confusing to a young Scout than a leader who stands on his/her feet one day, and on his/her head the next. If your patrol knows what to expect from you, they will be more likely to respond positively to your leadership.
9. **Give Praise.** The best way to get credit is to give it away. Often a "Nice job" remark is all the praise necessary to make a Scout feel he/she is contribution to the efforts of the patrol.
10. **Ask for Help.** Never be embarrassed to ask for help. You have many resources at your disposal. When confronted with a situation you don't know how to handle, ask someone with more experience for some advice and guidance. They too will learn much from you.

Star Patrol Guidelines

1. **Patrol Jobs:** - Jobs must be realistic, understood and functional and carried out during the year.
2. **Patrol Corners:** - Where permanent dens or corners not possible, a portable display is satisfactory
3. **Attendance Register:** - simple, up to date & on hand for both inspections.
4. **Attendance:** - must be recorded in the patrol register
5. **Visual Progress Chart:** - simple, up to date, on display
6. **Patrol Logbook:** - simple up to date and containing at least items for sections 1 to 3, as well as sections 12 - 14.
7. **Patrol Leader:** - must have passed the required badge by the end of September.
8. **Assistant Patrol leader:** - must have passed the required badge by the end of September.
9. **Numbers 3 & 4:** - must have passed the Pathfinder Badge by the end of September
10. **Number of scouts:** 6 or over for the year (average may be used)
11. **Court Of Honour:** - record of attendance to be kept in COH minute book.
12. **Patrol Activities:** - must be recorded in logbook. PL was in charge. Defined as a gathering of a patrol to carry out an activity as a patrol. Does not include activities credited in sections 1 & 2.
13. **Patrol Hikes:** - must be recorded in logbook. PL was in charge. Not necessary overnight but at least 4 hours on the actual hike. Be defined as a gathering of a patrol.
14. **Patrol Camps or overnight hikes:** - must be recorded in logbook. PL was in sole charge. At least overnight. If patrol exceeds 2 overnight hikes then the extra ones may be credited to section 13. Be defined as a gathering of a patrol.
15. **Patrol Community Service:** - must be recorded in logbook. At least 75% of the Patrol must have been involved in the project over the required period. Although the period is defined by number of months, the service should be carried out at regular intervals and be meaningful to the community. A Springbok service project can count as a Bronze level.

** Minimum patrol attendance at activities to qualify, must be either 4 scout out of a patrol of 6, 5 of 7 or 6 of 8*