

Nights Away Permit Scheme - Applicants' Guide



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Introduction

This factsheet provides a guide to applicants wishing to gain a nights away permit. It should be read in conjunction with Policy, Organisation and Rules (POR) of The Scout Association. More detailed information on the scheme, for Nights Away Advisers and for Commissioners can be found in separate factsheets.

The Nights Away Permit Scheme

A nights away permit allows you to lead nights away events for young people within Scouting. It shows people in Scouting, the young people and their parents that you have the necessary skills and experience to be able to lead these important events.

The Nights Away Permit Scheme is a national scheme, so when you have a permit it will allow you to lead nights away events for young people from any District or County. Each permit can be tailored to the level of your skills, experience and requirements, meaning that restrictions may be placed on such matters as areas, venues or group sizes. This ensures that you can lead events at the right level.

What Will Be Assessed?

To gain a permit you will be assessed in four areas:

- 1 Technical Competence
- 2 Knowledge of Scout Association Rules for Nights Away
- 3 Child Protection
- 4 Personal Suitability

The last two will be checked by your responsible Commissioner (see FS120803 Nights Away Permit Scheme - Commissioners' Guide), Rule Knowledge will be checked by the responsible Commissioner or a Nights Away Adviser, and Technical Competence by a Nights Away Adviser (see FS120804 Nights Away Permit Scheme – Nights Away Advisers).

During your Technical Competence assessment you will be assessed for your skills, knowledge and experience. This is likely to be through a practical assessment, except where you are renewing an identical permit, and you have recent on-going experience. This assessment is not supposed to trick you or catch you out. It is to assess your level of technical competence, and your Nights Away Adviser should also be able to support and provide advice to you throughout the process of planning, running and evaluating an event, as well as assessing you. Full details of the syllabus you will be assessed against can be found in the Nights Away Assessment Checklist. If you are unsure about anything to do with the assessment or how it will be run, please talk to your Nights Away Adviser beforehand.

If the Nights Away Adviser or responsible Commissioner recommends certain restrictions on your permit they should let you know why this is. They should also be able to tell you what further experience or skills you require to gain a permit with fewer restrictions.

Training And Support

There is no compulsory training course that you need to complete before going forward for an assessment. The important aspect is being able to prove you have the skills during the assessment,

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not where you got them from. However there are a number of places that you can find training and support.

The most obvious and recommended place to learn skills is through Module 16 (Nights Away) of The Scout Association's adult training scheme. In addition to this, valuable experience can be gained by attending or helping on the leadership team for residential events being run by someone else who holds a nights away permit.

Using Your Permit

Once you have gained your permit you can use it to run the activity up to the level permitted by any restrictions placed on it. Please remember that although there is no requirement to hold a first aid qualification to gain a nights away permit, and that your permit will remain valid whether you hold a first aid qualification or not, you are required to have a first aid holder present at every nights away event.

Having a permit does not override the need for all activities to have the (usually informal) approval of the responsible Commissioner, and in the case of nights away events this is done through the Nights Away Notification Form (NAN). Before any nights away event takes place you need to send all the details that can be found on Form NAN to your Commissioner, whether this is through email, hard copy, text message, phone call – whatever system works most efficiently within your District. It is the Commissioner that gives approval for events to take place, not campsite wardens or managers. In addition when you visit other Districts for a nights away event you will need to send this information to the host DC unless you are staying at a Scout owned site.

Passports

To encourage young people led residential events, such as patrol camps or Explorer Scout expeditions, when you hold a nights away permit you can grant a nights away passport to an under 18 year old. It will allow the young person to lead a residential event with no Leaders present and will last for a single event.

Before granting a permit you will need to check that you are happy that the young person has the skills to lead that event safely and successfully, as you remain responsible for the event. The young person given the passport will be leading the event, so it can not be given if there will be Leaders present running the event who are looking for a way around the Rules as they do not have permits.

You can get hold of passports through the Scout Information Centre or download them from ScoutBase UK.

Applying For A Permit

To get a permit you should apply directly to a Nights Away Adviser. Nights Away Advisers are appointed by Districts (and occasionally Counties) so if you are not sure who they are your District Commissioner should be able to let you know. You can find an application form on the nights away pages or factsheet library of ScoutBase UK, that can either be printed off and filled in, or filled in online to enable emailing. Although there is no requirement to get approval from anyone in applying for a permit, it is good practice to let your GSL and responsible Commissioner know of your intentions beforehand. They can often provide valuable guidance and support.

Once you have been assessed by the Nights Away Adviser, they will fill in a recommendation for the level of permit they believe your skills and experience are capable of fulfilling. This recommendation is not a permit on its own. You must take this recommendation to your responsible Commissioner who will deal with the other areas to be checked before granting you your permit. This should ensure that recommendations are not lost in the post leaving you waiting without a permit. When your permit is granted you will be given a permit card and your permit will be recorded on the Membership Services database.

All permits last for a maximum of five years, so when your permit expires you will no longer be able to lead nights away events for young people within Scouting. To renew your permit you will

need to apply for a permit in the same way as your initial application, although if you have ongoing experience there is less likely to be the need for a full practical assessment.

Useful Links

[FS120800](#) Nights Away Permit Scheme