



Plan to improve unit service to Venturing Crews



In order to improve the support your Crew receives from the District and Council, we ask you to help us better understand your needs by describing your Crew to us. While most Crews have close affiliations with Troops and are best served by conventional Boy Scout Commissioners, some Crews have very distinctive programs which need Unit Commissioners with specific training.

Please review this material and determine the Crew category which you believe will serve you best: “Core” or “Extension”. You may change your designation at any time by submitting another “Crew Declaration Form”.

To help provide quality unit service, the Council Venturing Committee and Commissioners are implementing the following plan:

- Ask Crews to self-define themselves as “Core” or “Extension” Crews.
- Provide Core Crews with Venturing trained Unit Commissioners. Extension Crews could be served by Boy Scout trained Unit Commissioners.
- Encourage Core Crews to participate in Venturing specific activities, training opportunities, and communication tools.
- Assist Core Crews with new membership recruitment efforts.
- Provide all Crews with the opportunity to re-self-define themselves at anytime.

Q: How should I decide whether we’re a Core or Extension Crew?

A: Core Crews will generally be characterized as having a predominantly Venturing specific program, often independent of any Troop. If you have some of these qualities, you’ll probably elect to be a Core Crew: Scouting meetings held separately from a Troop, a uniform other than the Boy Scout tan shirt, youth members over age 18, female youth members, members earning Venturing advancement, and/or activities restricted to Venturing. Extension Crews will generally be characterized as being a supplemental program to an existing Boy Scout Troop for its older boys.

Q: Why would a Crew choose to define itself as an Extension Crew?

A: A large number of the chartered Crews in our Council exist for administrative purposes consistent with the Chartering Organizations’ aims, and not for the purpose of implementing the new Venturing Program (i.e. almost every LDS Team and Crew fits in this category). These units typically continue to operate the Boy Scout program for their members. This is a legitimate use of the Crew’s charter! Many Crews also exist solely as a supplemental program opportunity for older members of a Troop that provides some additional options not available to the Venture Patrol.

Q: What are “Venturing specific activities”?

A: Just as Boy Scouts go to Resident Camp and Camp-o-rees, and Cub Scouts go to Day Camp and Cub-ons, Venturers can go to Venturing specific camps and events. However, most Crews don’t know that these activities exist. That’s because, since Venturing membership is so small, there’s only one event in every few Councils, instead of one in every single District. Crews usually don’t learn about out-of-Council events except by word of mouth.

Q: If Core Crews are few and far between, how will we communicate with them?

A: That is a challenge we have wrestled with for several years. Packs and Troops usually receive notices and announcements through their Districts, and Districts are sized so that they can have meaningful Roundtables and training events. However, even a District with forty Troops will probably have fewer than four Core Crews, which makes successful Roundtables almost impossible. Therefore, until our Venturing membership grows to be a large fraction of our Scouting membership, we’ll have a Council-wide Venturing Roundtable. That Roundtable will meet in a central location on a night that does not conflict with any District Roundtables. We’ve also formed a Venturing Officers’ Association (VOA), which will have representative members from every Crew to involve the youth leaders in the communication process. And, we’ll use modern communication methods for broadcasting information to all interested Scouters.

Q: If a Crew is partnered with a Troop, does that mean it's an Extension Crew?

A: No! The designation of "Core" or "Extension" is solely up to the Crew, we just want to provide appropriate service to each type. Many excellent Crews with vibrant Venturing programs have close partnerships with Boy Scout Troops, just as Troops often have partnerships with Packs.

Q: How does a Crew declare its designation?

A: Attached to this document is a Crew declaration sheet. Please fill that out and present it to your Unit Commissioner. If you don't know who that is, take it to your District Commissioner or District Executive (you should see them at District Roundtables). You should follow that up by notifying the Council Venturing Chairman (contact info below). If you opt to be an Extension Crew, you'll most likely receive Commissioner service from your Troop's Commissioner. If you opt to be a Core Crew, you may have a change in Commissioners, or your existing Commissioner may become Venturing trained.

Q: What do we do once we're designated?

A: If you've opted to be an Extension Crew, do what your Troop does – attend your District Roundtable and participate in the Boy Scout breakout session! You are also encouraged to check out Venturing Training and activities in case you decide to change your designation later. If you've opted to be a Core Crew, start sending an officer and an advisor to the VOA meeting and Venturing Roundtable (held on first Tuesday's at 7:30pm at the Council Service Center; February, May, and October are special VOA meetings, all other months are regular Roundtables), and send your Officers and Advisors to the next Venturing Training opportunity (held thrice annually). You'll then get signed up to our communication network and hear about those great Venturing activities! In either case, we'll informally ask each Crew if they wish to change their designation around re-charter time each year.

Q: If we're a Core Crew, can we skip District roundtables?

A: Ideally, yes (unless you want to attend them). However, there will be some transition time while Commissioners retrain and Council committees get used to serving an extra roundtable. It would be wise to continue to send one Crew representative to the "announcements" portion of the District Roundtable to take notes and pick up promotional documents.

Q: Who needs to be involved in this process?

A: Each Crew needs to make its own decision. Theoretically, it will be the Crew Committee and Chartering Organization that decide. Due to the nature of Venturing, it is recommended that the Committee consult with both the Advisors and members of the Crew in this decision. Of course, the commissioner staff (including the District and Roundtable Commissioners) are also involved: not in making any decisions, but in preparing to provide qualified Unit service to Core Crews. Finally, the Council Venturing Committee will provide the needed training and advising opportunities to Crews and Commissioners.

Q: What's a Commissioner, and what kind of services do they provide?

A: If you're asking this question, we really want to hear from you! A Commissioner is an experienced Scouter (often a "retired" Cubmaster/Scoutmaster/Crew Advisor) who comes from the District to assist and monitor a Unit. Ideally, each Commissioner will serve about three Units. They typically contact the Unit every month (perhaps by meeting the Scoutmaster at Roundtables, by telephone, or by email) just to check in, and visit a Unit or Committee meeting periodically through the year. They provide a continuous resource for advice, assist with the annual rechartering process, and proactively bring help to Units that are in danger of failing. Commissioners should have received all of the training necessary to serve as the Unit leader of the Units they commission.

Q: Can we choose to be an Extension Crew now, but still get Venturing news?

A: Yes! Contact the Venturing Committee (below) and you may participate in the Venturing electronic communications. You'll hear about Venturing meetings, trainings, and events. You are welcome to attend the Venturing Roundtables!

Q: How can I ask more questions about this?

A: Ask your commissioner staff, or contact the Venturing Committee (chaired by Ken Bower, ken@bower.name, 650-723-4049)



Crew Declaration Form



Crew number _____ elects to designate itself as a:

_____ CORE Crew. We'd like to develop our Venturing programs, participate in the Venturing Roundtable and Venturing Officers' Association, learn about and participate in special activities for Venturers, and attend Venturing specific trainings.

_____ EXTENSION Crew. Our primary focus will be the Boy Scout programs. We'll continue to participate in District Roundtables and Boy Scout trainings and activities.

Crew Contact information:

Crew Advisor (name, address, phone, email) _____

Crew President (name, address, phone, email) [optional] _____

Crew alternate contact (name, position, address, phone, email) [optional] _____

Crew Chartering Organization _____

Crew meeting location and time [optional] _____

Crew theme (i.e. outdoor, sports, religious, etc.) and/or primary activities [optional] _____

Please tell us what kind of Commissioner services your Crew would like to receive (i.e. roundtable notices/minutes, unit leader training, recruitment or fundraising assistance, help with meeting programs, etc.) [optional] _____

Please submit this form to your Unit Commissioner, and also email the information to the Venturing Committee (chaired by Ken Bower – ken@bower.name).