**Web Policy**

**Standards and Guidelines for Circle Ten District Web Sites**

Guidelines - adapted from BSA National guidelines for Council websites

* **Rules and Regulations**
Districts are a primary means of delivering the Scouting program to our volunteers and the general public. Much of this takes the form of publishing or advertising. Just as in other publishing and advertising, districts are free to develop their own applications of Internet and Web technology, as long as they observe the rules and regulations of the Boy Scouts of America, as required by their charters. The Rules and Regulations of the Boy Scouts of America, No. 57-492, and the Charter and Bylaws of the Boy Scouts of America, No. 57-491, are primary resources for these policies and procedures. Other guidelines, such as this document, are issued by the Circle Ten Council to provide more specific and detailed guidance.
* **Representation**
While the Circle Ten Council provides guidelines by which it will acknowledge local districts' sites and refer others to them, each of these sites is the product and possession of the local district, however these sites represent the Circle Ten Council as well as the district that maintains it.
* **Circle Ten Council Standards**
The Circle Ten Council will not acknowledge or provide links to any district site that does not meet these eight guidelines. The guidelines may be altered or amended to provide updated information, and districts will be notified when that happens. The guidelines that are posted on the web will be deemed as the most current and will supersede any previously posted versions or any printouts of these guidelines.
* **Approval Guidelines**
1. The district must have direct control over the content of its official Web site.
2. The content of the district site must be appropriate to the Scouting movement.
3. The district site cannot contain links to any sites that contain material that is not appropriate to the Scouting movement.
4. The district site cannot contain any advertisements or commercial endorsements.
5. The district site cannot engage in the electronic sale of BSA Supply Division merchandise or competing products.
6. The district site cannot replicate any BSA publication currently for sale through the Supply Division.
7. District sites must abide by all laws regarding copyrights, trademarks, and other intellectual property, and by those pertaining to the Internet.
8. District sites must consider the safety and privacy of their members and participants by obtaining the necessary permissions to release information about or images of any individual.
* **Advice for personal and unit Web sites**
* To assist local councils in providing guidance to individuals who wish to operate Web sites on behalf of their Scouting units, the National Council is providing the information below, which addresses a few key items pertaining to personal Web sites. While this is not a comprehensive guide, it covers some of the most important concerns. Councils should review their own guidelines for unit Web sites to ensure these key topics are addressed.
* This information should not be construed as an authorization for private individuals to operate Web sites of behalf of the Boy Scouts of America. It does not indicate councils are required to link to unit sites, nor does it supercede any guidelines or policies that any local council has developed for its own units.
* **NOTE:** *Unit Webmasters should contact their local councils for policies and procedures pertaining to the use of the Internet for promoting and supporting Scouting units.*
* While units and members act as private individuals when communicating with the public, the National Council provides the following advice for those who use the Internet to promote and support their units or to communicate to the public about Scouting:
* **Decorum**
* Scouters should exercise propriety and good taste. Remember that the Internet (including Web sites, chat rooms, bulletin boards, and even e-mail messages) is a public medium. Your conduct reflects not only on yourself and your unit, but also on the entire Scouting movement whenever the audience knows you are a Scouter.
* **Personal Safety**
* While most Internet users are honest, there is a criminal element that seeks information as a way to gain access to victims. For that reason, be especially careful about providing any personal information—names, e-mail addresses, phone numbers, etc. Always get written permission before posting personal information about adult volunteers, and never publish personal information about youth members. If you display or post images of adult and youth members invoived in Scouting activities on your Web site, you should first obtain written permissions from the adults and the parents or guardians of any youth members.

**Obtaining Permission to Use Personal Information**

Here are some sample releases you can use to obtain permission to use personal information on your Web site:

**For Adults (over age 18)**

I am an adult over the age of 18 years. I authroize the Boy Scouts of America, its Councils, and units to use my name and [specify any other personal information] and display my image and likeness on [identify council's or unit's] web site. This authorization shall remain in effect until revoked by me in writing.

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| Signature | Date |

**For Children (under age 18)**

I am an adult over the age of 18 years and I am the parent or legal guardian of [name], a minor ("child"). I have full authority and do authorize the Boy Scouts of America, its councils, and units, to display my child's image and likeness on [identify council's or unit's] web site. This authorization shall remain in effect until revoked by me or my child in writing.

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| Signature | Date |

* **Legal Issues**
* Myriad federal and state laws govern publishing in any medium, including the Internet—copyright infringement, privacy of information, defamation, etc. You should familiarize yourself with these laws so you can ensure that the information you publish doesn't create any legal problems for you or your chartered organization. Key among these legal issues are that (1) you should never collect personal information about youth members over the Internet, and (2) you should never reproduce or display on your Web sites content from some other source without written permission.
* **BSA Policies and Procedures**
* All policies and procedures that apply to any activity are still in effect when that activity is conducted on the Internet. For example, any online recruiting must be done in accordance with policies and procedures that govern offline recruiting.
* In addition to these general guidelines, local councils may develop their own more detailed guidelines for unit Web sites. Local councils may require units to meet council guidelines for their sites to be recognized (linked) from the local council's own Web site.