

FACT SHEET

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Who is the BPSA?

The BP Service Association (BPSA) within Canada is a group of individual associations that run traditional scouting groups in their respective provinces. Each association, or council, is independent of the others and typically operates under its own set of bylaws. Currently there are councils operating in Alberta, British Columbia, New Brunswick and Ontario. To avoid duplication of effort some functions, such as the obtaining of insurance, is handled by a single council on behalf of the others.

2. OK - so you have insurance?

Absolutely! We have a very cost-effective insurance general liability insurance package, with coverage for land and water activities for anywhere in Canada. Each group is provided with a copy of the insurance certificate and groups that have their own meeting halls can also request to have them covered as well. The policy also offers directors and officers coverage for the association's executives.

3. Executives??? You have people working for you?

No way! The executives of each association, along with all group leaders and anyone else are all volunteers. There is no paid staff of any kind in any of the BPSA councils. This allows us to keep our registration costs extremely low and reduces a barrier that may prevent some people from participating.

4. Sounds fine so far but what exactly is traditional scouting and how is it different?

That's a great question! Lord Robert Baden-Powell introduced the world to scouting way back in 1907. His methods and programs were so popular and exciting the movement spread quickly around the world as youth just felt a natural desire to be a part of it. Over the years many scout associations made fundamental changes to how scouting operated in their countries. We feel that Baden-Powell's methods were good enough as they were and didn't need changing so the BPSA uses the traditional methods and programs that our founder used. That said, the movement was introduced over a century ago and some things have changed but we preserve Baden-Powell's original ideas in our programs and methods while progressing with the times and keeping up to date with the latest technology, child protection legislation, first aid standards, and outdoor education safety.

5. Can anyone join?

The BPSA is fully inclusive to all. The local group, in conjunction with their sponsor, can choose to have groups or sections that are all male, all female, or co-ed.



6. Do you go camping?

Boy do we ever! Camping, canoeing, hiking, snowshoeing - the outdoors is our classroom and we spend a lot of time there. Each section in the BPSA uses the outdoors in an age appropriate manner. Our six year olds may go on 2-3 camps a year while our older youth may go on a weekend camp ever month and a longer adventure in the summer.

7. Hmmm - this sounds suspiciously great. Let-s get back to the money. You said you keep your registration costs low but what about all the other things that typically come up?

Well, we try to be frugal there as well! Here are some examples:

- Uniforms and badges: we have an online store operated by volunteers that sells these type of things for just enough to meet costs. We have a policy (yes, a policy!) that the store is to make no profit from the items we sell.
- Books and manuals: we issue these in electronic format and you can print them only if you feel it is needed.
- Training: As a volunteer you're helping the organization and we won't charge you for it. Training materials are also provided in electronic format with any new amendments or adjustments provided in the same manner.
- Camps: Each group is different and goes on as many outings or adventures as they deem desirable. Groups will typically charge a reasonable event fee to cover food and transportation costs if fundraising hasn't raised enough.

8. Aha! Fundraising. I knew it! Do I or my kids have to sell something?

That is entirely up to the local group only. Our associations are based on local autonomy and local initiative. It is the responsibility of the Group Auxiliary to raise enough community support to make sure that their children can participate in exciting programs. Field trips and camps do cost money but ALL the funds raised by a group in their community stay in the group to support the operations of the group.

9. Wow! This all sounds like a sweet deal! How can I find out more?

The first place you may want to go to is our web site - www.bpsa-canada.org. There you will find information (like these Frequently Asked Questions!) that will assist you. There is additional detail about the various programs for our youth members, what is required to be a leader of youth, how you can get involved if you don't want to be a youth leader, and most of all you will find links to each of our independent provincial associations so you can find the nearest group. And if there isn't a group near you we'll even help you with information on how you can start one and get your kids or yourself involved in absolutely awesome adventures!

Wow to you for reading to the end of this Fact Sheet! Want to have some more fun? We purposely spelled a word incorrectly somewhere on this sheet - can you find it? By the way, if you're sitting in a presentation about this topic - you should probably listen to the speaker instead of trying to find a spelling mistake!