

## **Stop! Before You Post That Picture . . .**

In today's digital age, we all want to share the excitement and value of Scouting. Today's digital and social media allow us to spread the word far and wide. Unfortunately, social media also allows others to take advantage of our excitement, putting us and others in harm's way. Before you take, share, or post a picture or video of your latest activity/meeting, or put together that fundraising video, consider the following which outlines current BSA National guidelines:

1. It is a violation of BSA policy to share any personally identifying information about adult leaders, nonregistered visitors, or youth without express written consent. Personally identifying information includes name, location, email address, phone number and, yes, their photo or video image. In no case, will the full name of an individual be included with a photograph or video likeness. Note: "Tagging" someone in a photo is including their full name and therefore forbidden, regardless of whether they have opted in or opted out.
2. Information/images of a minor age youth must NOT be released without the written authorization of their parent or legal guardian. A youth may not grant permission for themselves.
3. Council and National events which require registration through the Council or National include (according to NCAC) an option for individuals to opt out of photos and video. This 'opt out' form is now included in the medical form and/or the Council online registration page for each event. This does NOT cover unit or district activities or meetings that do not require registration through the Council's online registration tool.
4. Many venues and sponsoring organizations have their own policies regarding taking and publishing photos or including other individuals on their premises. Scout leaders must educate themselves on the venue's requirements and follow them. If the venue's guidelines are stricter than the BSA guidelines, the venue guidelines must be adhered to.
5. Parents have the right and responsibility to control their child's personal information and digital footprint. There can be a wide variety of reasons that a parent may not want their child's image or other identifying information disclosed. Many of these reasons may impact a child's safety.
6. Likewise, adults may need to limit their exposure on social media. They may have professional, safety, or security reasons that their image or other information cannot be shared publicly and/or on social media.
7. Copyright concerns may arise from the use of photos or other information that may include copyrighted information, graphics or locations.
8. These guidelines apply to any publicly displayed photos, including your unit websites and/or social media platforms, emails, private social media outlets, news releases and websites.
9. In addition, be certain that you are adhering to the guidelines for each social media platform.
10. These guidelines apply to ALL possibly public displays or uses of any personally identifying information, including photographs, videos or identifiable images.
11. It is the unit leader's responsibility to know who's image can be used and who's cannot. All attendees at any event should be cautioned against publishing photos they may take at the event.
12. Attached please find the Opt In/Opt Out release form provided by National BSA. It can be used as an overall release for a one year period or modified for a single event. It may be best to have it completed with each adult's and youth's yearly registration. Remember, that other individuals attending events will need to complete the form before their image/information can be used.

As written in BSA policy statements, "As is true for participation in Scouting activities, all Scouts and adult leaders should abide by the guidelines outlined in the Scout Oath and Law when participating in social networking. As with any Scouting activity, safety and Youth Protection should be a key focus. Staying true to the commitment of the BSA to be an advocate for youth and to keep children and their privacy safe, both online and off, should always be at the forefront of any considerations where social media is concerned."