

Great News About Forms!



by Julian Celms

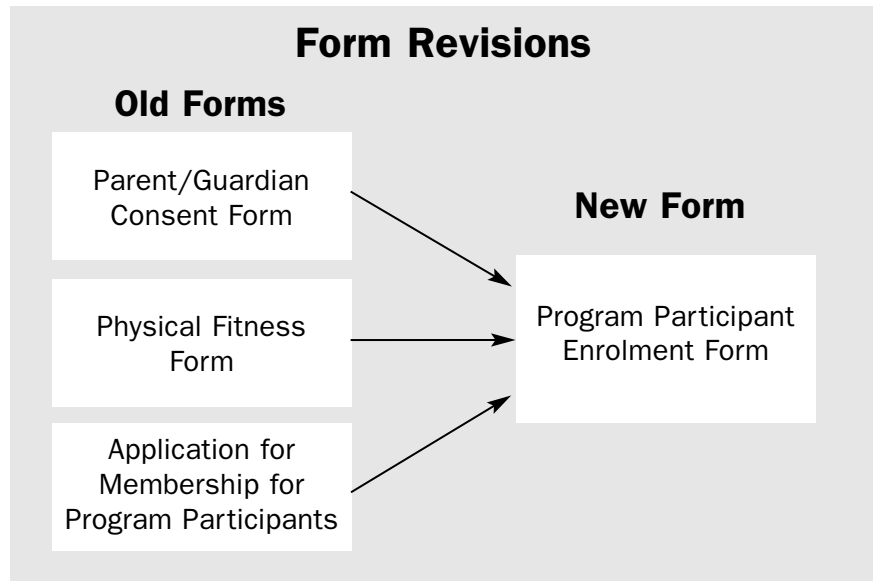
Let's talk about forms! Yes, the forms we use when we join Scouting, and the forms that are used in support of BP&P section 10,000. As you may have heard, Scouts Canada has made changes to the way we use some of the forms.

If your group was involved in pre-registration this year, you will have noticed that the youth and adult forms for registering members have changed. In an effort to reduce the paperwork at the section level, these changes are the first step in a number of changes to the way we approach forms.

Why Are Forms Necessary?

Allow me to explain what is happening from a broad perspective, and then I will detail the changes to the individual forms. First and foremost, our forms are a component of a broad risk management process that is designed to help and support all levels of Scouting. Having said that, we also recognize that forms and the effort related to forms can take a lot of a Scouter's time. It's easy to wish that no forms or processes exist, but these are necessary to provide for the safety and integrity of our volunteers, those involved in our programs, and Scouts Canada's assets (such as tents, canoes and property across Canada). The challenge with the use of forms is to try to craft a balance between the needs of Scouting and the effort to administer the process through a form.

We recognize that the largest volume of forms Scouters deal with are consent forms for youth to participate in an activity – the Parent/Guardian Consent Form and the Tours, Visits & Fundraisers Form. In an effort to significantly reduce these as much as possible, we started by focusing on the form that parents see at the beginning of the year – the Member Enrolment Form. By adding the consent elements to this form (see chart), this allows us, at the beginning of the year, to gain a broader consent for leaders. In doing this, we have eliminated the Tours, Visits and Fundraisers form, and reduced the use of the Parent/Guardian Consent form.



More Detail Explained

Now let's look at these changes to the forms in detail.

Program Participant Enrolment Form – (previously known as the Application for Membership for Program Participants). This is a merge between the Youth Registration Form, Physical Fitness Form and Parent/Guardian Consent Form. When the parent has completed the form, a copy needs to be made. The group registrar takes the original (to be forwarded to the local council), and the leader keeps a copy on-hand. At the end of the year, please send all the section's copies to your council office. We also added a section for parents to indicate where they may be willing

to assist, emergency contact information, and a place for parents/guardians to update the form as their child's needs changes. A detailed explanation of the sections for parents can be found at: <http://www.scouts.ca/inside.asp?cmPageID=647>.

Application for Membership and Appointment of Volunteers – (previously known as the Adult Registration Form). Like the form above, we included the Physical Fitness Form portion to this.

Parent/Guardian Consent Form for Tours, Visits & Fundraisers – The use of this form has been eliminated at the end of the 2005-2006 Scouting year.

A Letter from the CEO

Read Executive Commissioner and C.E.O. Robert Stewart's letter explaining the changes to the forms and how it affects Scouting. Check out Scouts Canada web page for the letter and a F.A.Q. answering some of your frequent questions. <http://www.scouts.ca/inside.asp?cmPageID=200>.

Parent/Guardian Consent Form

The use of this form has changed. This form is now used for Category 3 (high risk) activities or camps of three nights or longer, and for international travel. Here are some examples: a Category 2 camp over two nights no longer requires this form to be com-

pleted by parents. Taking your Scouts rock climbing for a day would require parents/guardians to give their specific consent. Taking youth across the border to the United States for a day trip requires this form. (Categories 1, 2 and 3 are defined in the beginning of *BP&P* Section 10000.) See sidebar.

Physical Fitness Certificate – The use of this form will end for members at the end of the 2005-2006 Scouting year as it has been included in the Application for Membership and Appointment of Volunteers as well as the Program Participant Enrolment Form.

It's All About Parent/Guardian Communication!

One thing I must emphasize: these changes rely on frequent and effective parent/guardian communication. Yes, we reduced and in some cases eliminated some of the forms parents need to fill out and sign. However, leaders need to communicate to parents frequently about what their children will be doing in the programs and where they will be going. Parents need to understand what type of activity their child is involved in.

Communication Flow

As a leader, you can best determine with your parents the easiest way for communication to flow. The style and method of communication will be unique to your section. Will a

phone call on some matters be more appropriate? Perhaps e-mail may be the perfect medium for your section. How you communicate is a responsibility shared between the parent and leader. Work out how you will communicate, and your parents will know what to expect, when and how. The smiles on their children's faces will be yours and their reward.

The First Step









The beginning of the year is the perfect time to start your communication with parents. To assist you, we have developed a great tool to help you communicate with parents/guardians. **The Parent Info Sheet** is a Word document you can download

and then adjust to your section's needs. You can add to it, dress it up with your emblem or crest, and jazz it up to suit your purposes. This is a great template for you to talk about your section, who the leaders are, what you plan to do and where the meeting location is. We also suggest that you print off a copy of the Program Standards (you can find them online at: www.scouts.ca/inside.asp?cmPageID=131). Your section may already have a guide for parents, but you still might find a few new ideas to put into your guide.

Parent Info Sheets are available for Colony, Pack, Troop, and Company. You can find them on Scouts Canada's web site under For Leaders, Resources.

A QUICK CHECK

Here are some examples of when to use the Parent/Guardian Consent Form.

	Description	Parent/Guardian Consent Form required
	One day hike near local pond	No
	Overnight hike	No
	Scouts go rock climbing for an afternoon (Category 3 activity)	Yes
	Two day camp	No
	Three evening camp over long weekend (Category 3 activity)	Yes
	Two day white water canoeing trip – Venturers (Category 3 activity)	Yes
	1 week Jamboree	Yes
	Two day road trip to USA	Yes

INTRODUCING P.A.C.T. (Parent Activity Communication Template)

When successfully used, effective communication helps spur parent participation and support of your program. Ensuring effective and active communication with parents is a priority that when you invest in it, you reap the rewards.

The Parent Activity Communication Template was designed as a sample to help leaders provide details of activities for parents. Consider using this as a starting point or guide when communicating about an upcoming activity. The level of detail is determined by the type of activity, equipment and preparation required. Parents **want** to provide the right equipment and preparation for their child to reap the most benefit from the program activity. They **need** to know **where** and **when** the activity is, **who** is leading the activity, and **what** the activity involves. Your goal is to provide enough information so a parent can say, "I understand Johnny is going to the local Scout camp and he's canoeing and participating in evening wide games. He needs to bring these specific items for his safety and enjoyment".

**This
'template'
can be
found on
the Scouts
Canada
web site
at: For
Leaders,
Resources.**

Dear Parents of 23rd Scout Group

As a group, we are going camping the weekend of January xx-xx-xx, 2007. We have planned an exciting program of snowshoeing and building snowshelters. All Scouts will be sleeping in the shelters they are making. Here is some more detail:

Date:

Main events of the activity: (Elaborate on the activities the group will do. Keep in mind the parent's need to understand 'what' their child is doing so they can ensure their child is prepared.)

Location:

Leader in Charge:

The emergency phone number: (if available)

Cost: (payable by xx date)

Please find attached:

Equipment List (Check out for an equipment list you can cut and paste into your communication).

Special preparation required:

Map to the camp location (please ensure your child is at camp by 7:00 p.m. and has already had supper).

Brief schedule of events:

How parents can help:

If you have any concerns, please contact (Leader in Charge) so we can discuss your concerns prior to the event.

In Conclusion

We've made these changes to the forms and provided templates for communication for you. Please continue to let us know how we can assist you by contacting your Council Commissioner. Good Scouting! \/\

– Julian Celms is the Program Director for Beavers, Cubs and the Outdoors.

Linking to Strategic Direction #7.

How do I store these forms? What do I do with them at the end of the year?

As Scouters, we have a responsibility to respect the purpose of the information we collect. Keep in mind that Parents/Guardians share/provide information in trust. While in our possession, we have a responsibility to maintain the information in the strictness of confidence, and only share information on a 'need to know' basis.

At the end of the Scouting year, the Program Participant Enrolment Forms and Application for Membership and Ap-

pointment of Volunteers are to be forwarded to the council. Please note any updates to these forms throughout the year must be forwarded as well.

Your council will also have a process in place for sections and groups to forward the Camping and Outdoor Activity Application and any Parent/Guardian Consent Forms for storage following the completion of each activity.

SUMMARY OF SCOUTS CANADA'S NEW FORM: The Program Participant Enrolment Form

- ✦ We have developed a new Parent/Guardian information template that leaders can use to provide Parents/Guardians with essential information about their child/youth's involvement in our program.
- ✦ With this in place, we can eliminate the Parent/Guardian Consent Forms for Tours, Visits and Fundraisers, as well as the Parent/Guardian Consent Form for Camping and Outdoor Activities for Category 1 and 2 activities.
- ✦ We still require Parent/Guardian Consent for Category 3 (high risk) activities and for Out of Country Travel. We have made a slight revision: changing category 3, long-term overnight activities from four nights or longer to three nights or longer. To accomplish this, we have developed a new form called Parent/Guardian Consent Form For Category 3 Activities and Out of Country Travel.
- ✦ We have combined the former Physical Fitness Form, the Registration form and elements of the Parent/Guardian Consent form into a new form: the Program Participant Enrolment Form. We have adjusted the Application for Membership and Appointment of Volunteers form in the same manner.