

# Troop 103 Cell Phone Policy

Scouts have never known life without cell phones; they have grown up with them.

Scouts need to understand under which circumstances it is appropriate and inappropriate to use cell phones. They can be very useful as a tool and resource containing an infinite volume of information. They can also be very distracting to the user and those around them.

## TROOP MEETINGS [and other Day Activities]

Appropriate use:

- To look up something Scout-related and specific to the activity at hand such as recipes for meal planning
- To take meeting specific notes in lieu of paper
- To use apps specific to the activity at hand such as timer, compass, calculator, animated knots, etc
- To take pictures of the Troop activities
- At end of meetings to text/call parent for pick-up

Inappropriate use:

- To look at or post on social media
- To check text messages or phone calls/voice mail
- To play games or watch videos or listen to music
- To look up anything non-Scout related or not related to the Troop meeting Activities

## CAMPOUTS [Overnight activities]

Appropriate use:

- Same as at Troop meetings
- Can be used in tent after turning in for the night as long as it is not distracting to other campers: must use headphones, minimize glow of screen
- In car ride to and from events if okay with driver and is not distracting to the driver
- In the car on the way home to notify parents of estimated pickup time

Inappropriate use:

- When not in tent for the night, inappropriate use is the same as at Troop meetings
- Turning in early or “hiding out” in tent just to use phone
- To call/text parents when homesick, cold, unhappy, sick etc on an outing\*\*

*\*\*If Scouts are having a difficult time on a campout/outing or there is any kind of emergency, Troop leadership cannot stress strongly enough that the Scout must first go to a Troop Leader. Scouts should not bypass Troop leadership by texting/calling parents. Imagine the confusion if Scouts call in emergency help or call parents to pick them up before the Scoutmaster knows what is happening.*

Any cell phones brought to a Troop meeting/activity/event is solely the responsibility of the Scout or Adult. The Troop is NOT responsible or liable for loss, damage, usage charges or any other issues that may arise relative to the cell phone.

Scoutmasters and the Senior Patrol Leader will ask Scouts who are using their phones inappropriately to put them away. If there is ongoing issue with a particular Scout and inappropriate phone use, frequently being asked to put the phone away, then Troop Leadership will talk to the Scout and parent(s) on how to resolve the situation (e.g., not allowing the Scout to have a phone at Scouting activities).

Texting with parents and/or friends while on a campout could foster homesickness as well as distract the Scout from the activities. A large part of the outdoor Scout experience is to get away from it all, for Scouts to become independent and build confidence in themselves. Scouts have a tremendous opportunity for experiences that so many of their peers don't. Let's take advantage of it to the greatest extent.

