



Assistant County / Area Commissioners for Scouts
County and Area Commissioners
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Dear Colleague

You will recall that I wrote to you in March, notifying you of changes to POR rule 3.7 – 3.9. These rules deal principally with the management of the Beaver, Cub and Scout Sections, and the required ratios of adults to young people. The changes followed a general review of the supervision of young people within Scout Groups and brings our ratios more closely inline with the latest Government guidelines.

The majority of the changes were welcomed and well received as sensible and timely amendments. However the changes to rule 3.9f affected the Scout Section specifically and for the first time, required at a residential event, an adult / Scout ratio of 1:12, plus the permit holder in charge.

In March, I invited leaders to let me know if the change to this rule had created any special difficulties and many leaders running troops of a certain size have contacted me to outline the problems they now face in arranging residential events.

As a result of this correspondence, the Programme and Development sub-Committee have considered a further paper on the subject and after due consideration has agreed an amendment to the ratio requirements in 3.9f.

- 3.9f For a nights away event, led by a Nights Away permit holder, the recommended minimum ratio is 1 adult to 12. However, a Troop's warranted Leader must plan to ensure that as a minimum, at least two adults are present overnight. Only in the event of an emergency should an adult be alone overnight with young people on a residential experience.
- 3.9g For all Scouting activities, Leaders should carry out a risk assessment as stated in Rule 9.4. This risk assessment cannot override the minimum requirements stated in 3.9c and 3.9f or those required by the activity rules in chapter 9.

The Scout Association

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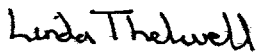
The minimum ratio of 1:12 is now regarded as a *recommendation* rather than an absolute, so leaders do have a little more flexibility when organising residential events. The requirement that the permit holder is in addition to the 1:12 ratio has been dropped but rule 3.9f now clearly states that as a minimum there must always be at least two adults present overnight at a residential event. Only in an emergency should an adult be alone overnight with young people in a camp or similar environment.

A new rule 3.9g stresses the need for risk assessments for all Scout Activities to determine amongst other things, the number of adults required to safely supervise the activity. However the rule asserts that such a risk assessment cannot be used to overrule rule 3.9c (the need for at least two adults at a Troop meeting) or rule 3.9f (the need for at least two adults present overnight at a residential experience) nor any of the other ratios required by the activity rules in chapter 9.

The amendments take immediate effect and will be incorporated into the next edition of POR that is scheduled for publication in autumn 2006.

ACC/AACs are asked to pass this information on locally via County / Area and District web sites and newsletters. We are writing to District Commissioners to advise them of the changes and will be using Scouting Plus to draw these changes to the attention of as many leaders possible.

Yours sincerely



Linda Thelwell
National Commissioner for Scouts