

FAQ for Scouting Units

Changes to State or County phases/stages may occur at any given period. Keep informed!

“Scouting” in the Pennsylvania Phases and New Jersey Stages.

- Use the Chartering Organization physical address to determine the County and State.
- Consult first with the Chartering Organization to determine unit indoor/outdoor operations.
- Follow any and all restrictions the Chartering Organization has established.
- Follow any and all guidelines set forth by the State.

Guidelines for In-Person Unit Meetings During PA Phases and NJ Stages

- Utilize the PA Phase or NJ Stage to determine indoor group sizes. In the attendance count include: Scouts, leaders, parents, and family members.
- If the attendance group is greater than the PA Phase or NJ Stage. Consider not meeting as a whole and consider certain (patrol) (Den) meetings on different nights or breaking the unit into smaller groups to stay within the recommended guidelines.
- All PA Phases and NJ Stages: Disinfect/sanitize the meeting area before and after unit functions, including tables, chairs, doorknobs, restrooms, and other surfaces. Make sure you coordinate with your Chartered Organization or the meeting host location to follow all appropriate cleaning procedures established.
- All PA Phases and NJ Stages: Require anyone who has or thinks they have any symptoms to forgo the meeting.
- All PA Phases and NJ Stages: Question everyone before they enter the meeting location regarding fever, chills, or other COVID-19 symptoms.
- All PA Phases and NJ Stages: Do not allow anyone with these symptoms to enter.
- All PA Phases and NJ Stages: Maintain social distancing (minimum of 6 feet).
- All PA Phases and NJ Stages: All attendees must wear face masks at any gathering.
- Hand washing facilities, such as restrooms, must be readily available for participants at a Scouting event or meeting. If hand washing facilities are unavailable, hand sanitizer should be readily available.

The PA and NJ Department of Health and CDC recommend holding meetings outside if possible. It is easier to sanitize because there are fewer surfaces for the virus to live on. Social distancing and the use of masks is still required in the outdoors.

- **Unit camping is permitted in the green phase of the reopening of Pennsylvania or Stage 3 in New Jersey.**

There is guidance from both in Gov. Wolf’s and Gov. Murphy announcement on summer camps in the FAQ’s.

PA Department of Health – [Summer Recreation, Camps and Pools](#)

New Jersey Department of Health – [Summer Youth Camps](#)

Everyone must be made aware that even by following the above items, you cannot remove the potential for exposure to COVID-19 or any other illness while attending any unit activity. Some people with

COVID-19 show no signs or symptoms of illness but can still spread the virus, and people may be contagious before their symptoms occur.

Q: Should we hold in-person Scouting meetings, outings, or activities?

A: With safety in mind and based on guidance from state and national health officials, units may resume in-person Scouting meetings, outings, and activities in counties that are in at least the “yellow” phase of the PA governor’s plan and for NJ governor’s Stage 2 plan. All Scout gatherings must comply with the guidelines in their State. Units do not have to resume in-person activities or events just because the stay-at-home restriction in their community has been lifted. The plan encourages continued use of telecommuting for businesses, and we would also recommend the use of virtual meetings during the Pennsylvania “yellow” phase and New Jersey “Stage 2”.

Q: We are in the “PA Yellow” phase or NJ “Stage 2”, but my Chartered Organization will not let us meet in-person. What can we do?

A: The Chartered Organization “owns” the unit and annually signs a Charter Agreement with the Minsi Trails Council. If a Chartered Organization is not comfortable with a unit resuming in-person Scouting activities even after moving to the “PA yellow” phase or the “PA green” phase, or “NJ Stage 2, or “NJ Stage 3” then the unit must follow the guidance of the Chartered Organization. This applies to meetings, service projects, fundraising, camping, trips, and any other Scouting activities and events whether they take place physically at the chartered organization or not. Similarly, as per the agreement, if a Chartered Organization wishes to allow a unit to reopen before the “yellow” phase, the unit must follow the council restriction and not hold in-person meetings or activities.

Q: If meeting locations are open, can units meet or do other in-person activities?

A: Unit in-person activities may resume under the PA and NJ Department of Health Guidelines and or Center for Disease control. If in-person activities take Scouts out of their immediate communities, unit leaders need to consider both the regulations of their county and regulations for wherever they intend to travel. For example, a unit in a “red” phase county is under a “stay at home” order. That unit should not hold in-person Scouting events or activities even if the event or activity is in a county with lesser restrictions. Conversely, a unit in a “yellow” or “green” phase should not participate in events or activities in counties that are still in the “red” phase. New Jersey identifies the entire state in Stages vs County restrictions.

Q: What do we do about Scouts’ fundraising activities?

A: Fundraising activities may be held if those activities are conducted within the guidelines from the States Department of Health and or Center for Disease Control. Before units decide to do in-person fundraisers, please be mindful that there may be traditional locations that have changed their usual fundraising policies due to COVID-19. Always consult the Charter partner first.

Q: When will the Minsi Trails Council Office and Scout shop be open to the public?

A: Updates will be made at Minsitrails.org/update page.

Q: If my summer camp is canceled, can my unit get together with other units and have our own camp?

A: No. Chartering organizations play an essential role in the program and activities for their chartered units. Chartering organizations promote a well-planned unit program for the units they charter and encourage their units to have active outdoor unit programs. Chartering organizations are not authorized to plan and deliver programs for units outside of their charter. It is the role of the council to plan summer camps and the role of councils or districts to plan camporees and other outings during the year that give youth an opportunity to test their knowledge and skills in competitive events with other troops and/or patrols. When units with different chartered organizations do activities together, this becomes a district or council event and requires council approval. In fact, some states require such activities to be licensed. Should your troop or crew decide to do a long-term summer camping program for their own unit (Cub Scouts units are prohibited from this activity) please note that the Scouter Code of Conduct and relevant program safety and training requirements are still in place, e.g., Safe Swim Defense, Hazardous Weather, Wilderness First Aid, etc.

Q: How do I know as a Unit Leader what are the BSA guidelines and policies on Outdoor Programs?

A: All units must follow the [Guide to Safe Scouting](#).

Q: What if I have other questions that have not been addressed here?

A: Unit Meetings or Charter Org Relationships

A: [Minsi Trails Staff Contacts](#) – visit Minsitrails.org under the about us dropdown.