

Troop 804

Guidance Regarding the Optional Use of Cell Phones

The leadership of Troop 804 has devoted much attention to the issue of possession and use of cell phones by Scouts during Scouting functions. Based on our considerable experience, we believe that cell phones are not needed by Scouts and are often likely to cause problems including distraction, excessive homesickness, and numerous discipline issues. The Troop is always prepared for emergency communications. As a result, it is the official policy of Troop 804 to strongly discourage the possession and use of cell phones by Scouts during Scouting functions.

However, the Troop does recognize that some families may have particular circumstances which may warrant a special approach to cell phone issues. A family which feels it necessary for their Scout to have access to a personal cell phone must contact the Scoutmaster or his/her designee in advance of an outing, and both the Scout and his parents must agree to the guidelines below regarding the use of such a cell phone.

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1. Cell phones are considered optional gear. As with all Scouting equipment, each Scout is responsible for his own gear, including cell phones.
 2. Cell phones must be turned off at all times and turned on only when the Scout needs to make an outgoing call during the permitted time.
 3. Cell phones with camera capability are not allowed.
 4. Incoming emergency calls are to be directed to and handled by the Troop Leader(s).
 5. Cell phones may only be used for the purpose of calling a parent or guardian during a designated 15 minute window of time which will be announced by the leader(s) after the troop's itinerary has been planned.
 6. Scouts should not call home to resolve miscommunications or disagreements with other scouts; instead, scouts are encouraged to resolve such matters on site and involve scout leaders if necessary.
 7. Inappropriate use. Scouts who demonstrate inappropriate use and irresponsibility will have their cell phone taken away. The scout's parent / guardian will be notified of such action. **Inappropriate** use of a cell phone includes:
 - a. text messaging;
 - b. gaming/downloading information to a cell phone, or accessing the Internet;
 - c. using a cell phone during ceremonies, campfires, or merit badge training, or outside of the permitted time etc.;
 - d. incoming phone calls to a scout cell phone are not allowed.

*** PARENTS, FAMILIARIZE YOUR SCOUTS WITH THESE RULES ***

Note: for some long distance trips, cell phone service may be unreliable; therefore, it is recommended that parents who choose to maintain a line of communication also send a pre-paid phone card as a backup method of communicating via land-line if one is available at camp. Information will be sent out in advance of trips regarding the availability of land phones/lines.