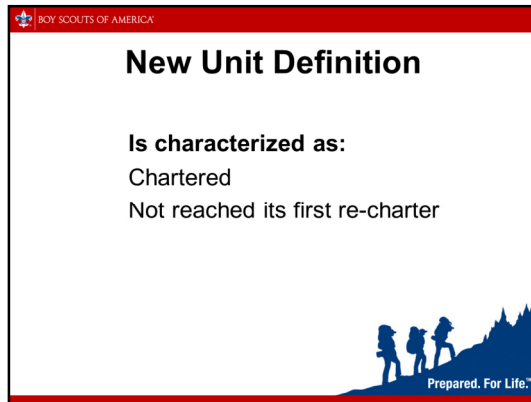




## **MCS 321**

### **Service to New Units**





## **Traditionally a new unit is characterized as:**

Chartered

Not reached its first re-charter

Additionally they can often be described as novice at the Scouting game

A unit that has been dropped and restarted can also be described as “new”

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## Cold Hard Facts

Nationally  
In 2006 BSA chartered **13,833** new units  
At the end of September 2009 only **4,817**  
of those units were still chartered



As you can see only one out of every 3 new units makes it to their 3<sup>rd</sup> re-charter.

Imagine running water into a bathtub. We've got the facet turned on full, but we haven't put the stopper in the drain. Units are coming in, but they are also going out as fast if not faster that we can start them. So the plan is to:

Involve Commissioner Corps earlier in the process

Give New Units extra attention

"Flag" New Units as a new unit on reports



The new unit-commissioner holds a special place in the formation of a new unit. The new unit-commissioner's role begins at the very beginning of the new-unit organization process (step 1) by working closely with the district executive, supporting the new unit-organizer, and becoming a familiar and consistent liaison between the chartered organization representative and the district. At the beginning of the organizational process, the new unit-commissioner will need to put in place a functional succession plan of leadership while providing support to the newly recruited key leaders. The New Unit-Commissioner will be the go-to person serving as a coach, mentor, and consultant by laying a strong foundation around which the new unit can form and, it is hoped, continue for a long time. Being a new unit-commissioner is a worthwhile long-term volunteer commitment that will generally last at least three years. The new unit-commissioner will need to serve longer than most other volunteer district leaders (with at least two years' tenure). The reason is the new unit will need careful watching, support, guidance, mentoring, and assistance through several re-chartering cycles to ensure unit sustainability.

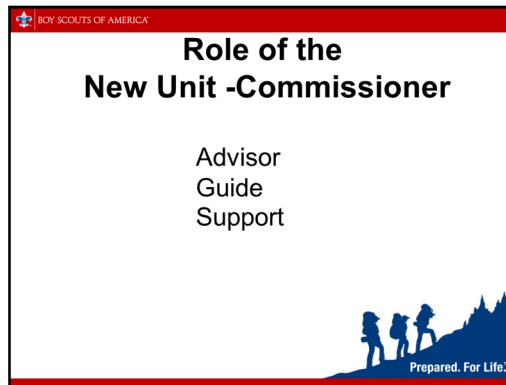


While it is typical and acceptable for most unit commissioners to be assigned several units and have a longer tenure, the length and intensity of service given by the new-unit commissioner adds to the importance of this position. **They are also asked to be assigned to only one unit.** With this in mind, what motivates a volunteer to become a new unit-commissioner and serve only one unit for two or three full years? Because they truly believe that when a new unit is organized, the BSA made a promise to those families that their sons (or daughters in Venturing) would have a real Scouting experience. It is a promise that really needs to be kept.

Experienced unit commissioners often say it would be much more exciting to “raise a unit in the way it should go” than to monitor an existing unit.

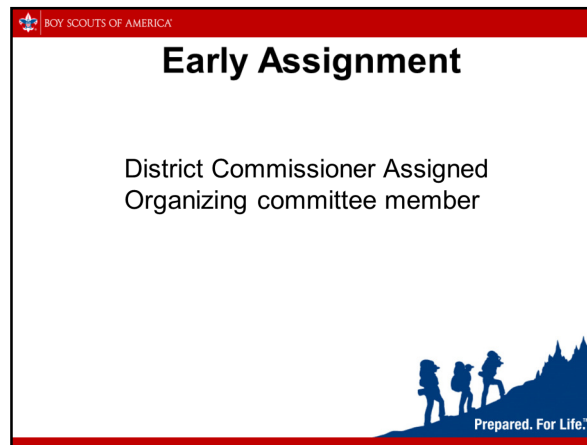
New unit-commissioners may derive even greater satisfaction from their new role than other unit commissioners simply because they can take pride in the creation process and watch the unit grow and be sustained over many years. Care should be taken to ensure that the unit leadership is making the decisions and running the unit while the New Unit-Commissioner is an advisor.

The best practice is to have one New Unit to one New Unit-Commissioner each year. When the New Unit-Commissioner’s first unit has reached 12 months tenure, he/she might be able to handle a second brand new unit. By the time the first New Unit reaches 24 months tenure, the New Unit-Commissioner is usually ready for a second unit.



The role of the unit commissioner with the unit Key 3 is to serve as an adviser. He/she serves as a representative of the district to the unit, linking district resources to the unit as needed. It is appropriate for the new unit-commissioner to begin meeting monthly with the unit Key 3. As the unit becomes more of a high-performing unit, the unit commissioner will attend as needed.

The role the new unit-commissioner plays is much like that of troop guide—not a member of the unit but a mentor who helps the unit leadership become a high-performing team. The new unit-commissioner will need to give this unit extra service in addition to the unit service plan.



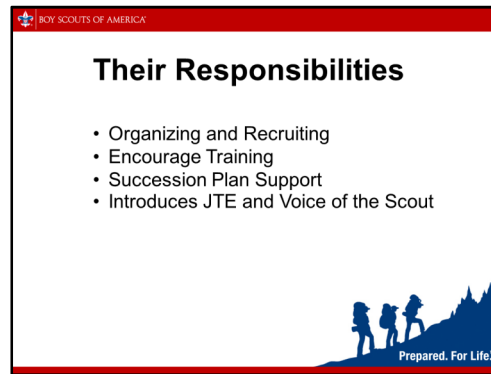
During formation of a new unit, the new unit-commissioner's role is to support the new-unit organizer, become a familiar and consistent link between the chartered organization and the district, and provide support to the new key leaders. He or she can harness the resources of the entire district by being in communication with the subject-matter experts on the district committee (for example, calling on the advancement, training, camping, or finance chair when needed to support the unit). It really does take a district to serve a unit, not just a commissioner. In many cases, the new unit-commissioner will be the face of consistency and the strong foundation around which the new unit can form. New unit-commissioners likely derive even greater satisfaction from their role than other unit commissioners because they can take pride in the creation process.



The new-unit organizer works closely with the institutional head or executive officer of the chartered organization to put together an organizing team.

The new unit-commissioner supports that effort and strives to become a familiar face to that group, taking the lead in helping the team complete some aspects of its responsibilities.





The responsibilities of the new-unit organizer and the new unit-commissioner are as follows:

While organizing and running the recruitment effort is the membership team's responsibility, the new unit-commissioner will support the idea that at least 10 youth and five adults are recruited for membership in the unit.

The new unit-commissioner encourages the unit to participate in training both during this organization phase and into the future. The new-unit organizer will coordinate with the district training chair to provide initial training and Youth Protection training on an agreed-upon date. The new-unit leadership takes Youth Protection training, This Is Scouting, and position-specific training.

The new unit-commissioner supports a leadership succession plan to be in place prior to the first charter.

The new unit-commissioner introduces the organizing team to the Journey to Excellence and helps them write a vision statement and set goals for the unit. The new unit-commissioner will also introduce the organizing team to Voice of the Scout.


- The new-unit organizer helps them plan the details for their first meeting and introduces the team to the national first month meeting plan.
- The new unit-commissioner familiarizes the unit with the district/council calendar and encourages roundtable attendance.
- The new unit-commissioner schedules an annual program planning meeting led by an experienced district representative.
- Together, the new-unit organizer and new unit-commissioner will present the charter at a full meeting of the chartered organization.
- The new-unit organizer and the new unit-commissioner attend the first meeting. From this point on, the new unit-commissioner takes the leading role in mentoring the unit for the next 36 months.
- The new-unit organizer and the new unit-commissioner ensure that unit leaders and parents are added to council and district email lists so that they receive current event and training information.



The New Unit-Commissioner will need to contact the New Unit more than once a month. The Unit Key 3 meeting counts as one contact but the New Unit-Commissioner will need to contact at other times as well.


The combining of the New Unit Service Plan, and Charter Renewal schedule will help the New Unit-Commissioner provide good service to the New Unit as well as help him/her “lead the target”. The best practice is to take a calendar and mark significant dates like the unit’s re-charter deadline, JTE, etc. on it and fill in around it with the other activities outlined in all three of those documents. A calendar that is tailored for each unit served is needed.

Frequently a New Unit needs additional help. While “This is Scouting” is great training, in reality there is just too much information to take in at once. The New Unit-Commissioner may see that the leadership needs a refresher training in the area of Finance or Membership Growth (recruitment), Advancement or additional Leader Training. The New Unit-Commissioner should make these needs known to the District by contacting his/her ADC or DC who will pass it along to the District Committee. Remember, the New Unit-Commissioner is an advocate for that new unit with the district. While the New Unit-Commissioner could probably provide this training, it is important that the District fulfill those functions. The interaction between the unit and the district will strengthen both the unit and the district.

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## Conclusion

Utilizing the Unit Performance Guide, the commissioner plays an integral role in the formation and growth of the new unit.



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- Questions?
- Comments?

  
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