

Tips for Out of State Travel

Time Available

10 minutes.

Learning Objectives

At the conclusion of this session, participants will be able to:

- Review Guide to Safe Scouting related to driving to out-of-state outings.
- Understand about laws regulating cell phone use and texting while driving.
- Pledge to be a safe driver on all outings

Suggested Presenter(s)

No special experience is necessary. A police officer as presenter may add weight to the discussion

Presentation Method

- Begin with a review of applicable parts of the Guide to Safe Scouting.
- Discuss why caravanning is risky and to be avoided.
- Discuss state laws regulating cell phones and texting while driving.
- Provide suggestions on communicating while driving.
- Take the pledge to be a safe driver

BSA Reference Materials

- [Guide to Safe Scouting: Transportation](#)
- [Guide to Safe Scouting: Motor Vehicle and Driver Checklist](#)
- [Bryan on Scouting: Cell Phone and Texting](#)
- [Bryan on Scouting: Put Your Phone Down](#)
- [Bryan on Scouting: Safe Driver Course](#)
- <https://www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/training/drivers-pledge/>

Presentation Content

Introduce the Guide to Safe Scouting.

- Give the URL for the current Guide to Safe Scouting (GSS), [scouting.org/health-and-safety/gss/](https://www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/gss/). It contains the most up-to-date version of the GSS.
- **All participants in official Scouting activities should become familiar with the GSS**, applicable program literature or manuals, and be aware of state or local government regulations that supersede Boy Scouts of America practices, policies, and guidelines.
- Remind attendees that the GSS is updated quarterly so they should always check the on-line version quarterly. Printed copies should not be relied upon.
- The URL listed above contains a summary of recent changes and as well as the most up-to-date version of the GSS.

- Two parts of the Guide to Safe Scouting specifically address vehicle use on outings:
- The Transportation section, and the
- Motor Vehicle and Driver Checklist attachment.
- The remainder of the GSS is outside the scope of this topic, but all Scouters should be familiar with the entire GSS. Scouters should refer to it if there are any questions at all about a proposed activity.
- For purposes of this interest topic, focus on these parts of the “General Guidelines” of the Transportation section:
- Obey all laws, including the speed limit.
- Drivers must refrain from using hand-held cell phones while driving. Text messaging while driving is prohibited. Hands-free units are acceptable, but must be used sparingly while driving.
- Driving time is limited to a maximum of 10 hours in one 24-hour period regardless of the number of drivers available. Driving time must be interrupted by frequent rest, food, and/or recreation stops. The intention is to include sleep and thorough rest breaks while traveling long distances. Don’t drive while drowsy. Stop for rest and stretch breaks as needed. Fatigue is a major cause of highway accident fatalities.
- The drivers must be currently licensed and at least 18 years of age. **Scouting youth (under age 18) are not insured under the Boy Scouts of America commercial general liability policy.**

Cell phone use while driving:

- Talking on a handheld cell phone while driving is banned by the GSS in every state, regardless of any state law that may permit its use.
- Talking on a handheld cellphone while driving is unlawful in 14 states and the District of Columbia, and violation of those laws can result in substantial fines.
- A map showing those states is available in the Bryan on Scouting article on cell phone use listed above. In those states, a cell phone may be used only with a blue tooth hands free device, which is required by the GSS anyway.
- States change their laws frequently, so it is best to check the laws of the states through which you will travel.

Texting while driving:

- Texting while driving is banned by the GSS in every state, regardless of any state law that may permit its use.
- Texting on a handheld cellphone while driving is unlawful in 46 states and the District of Columbia, it’s against the law, and violation of those laws can result in substantial fines.
- A map showing those states is available in the Bryan on Scouting article on cell phone use listed above. In

those states, all texting while driving is banned, which is required by the GSS anyway.

- Since only 4 states currently allow texting while driving, and since states change their laws frequently, it is best to check the laws of all the states through which you will travel.

Take the pledge against distracted driving:

- I pledge to **Care** for those around me and put my phone down when I'm driving.
- I pledge to **Share** the message: distracted driving is never OK.
- I pledge to **Be Aware** that I'm never alone on the road.

How to communicate with others and checking on your route while driving:

- Since handheld cell phones and texting while driving are banned by the GSS in every state, how can drivers communicate with each other?
- The safest way is to have the passenger in the front seat do all the communicating with other drivers, so each driver can focus on safe driving.
- Likewise, the front seat passenger should serve as navigator, whether using a paper map or a GPS enabled phone app. The driver should not take his or her eyes off the road to check a map or check their GPS unit.
- Coordinating with the other drivers during a rest stop is also encouraged.

Obey the GSS limits on daily driving time:

- Driving time is limited to a maximum of 10 hours in one 24-hour period regardless of the number of drivers available.
- Don't drive while drowsy. 10 hours a day is the maximum, but if you feel tired after 6 or 8 hours, you must let another driver take over. Remember the age 18 age limit.
- Don't be tempted to exceed the speed limit to get a little farther in the 10 hour maximum. It is against the GSS as well as state law.
- Follow the posted speed limits for the road you are on at the moment. Smaller roads or city streets may not have posted speed limits. Consult the speed limit laws of all the states through which you will travel to learn the speed limit for each type of roadway. Doing this in advance is best, but it can be done by your navigator before you enter each new state.
- Driving time must be interrupted by frequent rest, food, and/or recreation stops. The intention is to include sleep and thorough rest breaks while traveling long distances.
- On long trips, it is essential to plan for the proper number of travel days required to cover the distance out and back safely, and in compliance with state speed limits and the GSS.
- Coordinating with the other drivers during a rest stop

is also encouraged.

- So, what's wrong with caravanning? The GSS doesn't say we can't.
- Caravanning is usually done when some drivers don't know the route to take, or to make sure everyone gets to the destination at about the same time.
- Caravanning often results in driving too closely to the vehicle in front, or passing other vehicles to keep sight of the lead vehicle. Both can lead to accidents.
- If everyone has the proper directions, as well as a navigator in the passenger seat, there is no need for caravanning to avoid getting lost.
- If everyone drives at the speed limit, everyone will arrive at the destination about the same time.
- Coordinating with the other drivers during a rest stop is encouraged, and reduces the temptation to follow the lead driver unsafely.

Take the safe driving course:

- The Hartford Driver Improvement Program, can be found on the BSA Learn Center, which is accessed through your my.scouting.org page. The course is free, requires no advance registration and can be completed online in about 35 minutes.
- From the BSA Learn Center, click on Expanded Learning and then on Program Safety.
- Take the Driver's Pledge, and read the Risk Zone attachments. The URL is in the GSS Motor Vehicle and Driver Checklist.
- Use the Motor Vehicle and Driver Checklist attached to the GSS before every trip. It contains useful safety measures to reduce the chance of problems while driving.