



Troop Role in Webelos Scouts Retention

Webelos Scouts are historically the most important source of new Boy Scouts.

Webelos Scouts will want to join a Boy Scout troop that actively recruit them and makes it clear the troop WANTS them to join.

Webelos Scout retention, commonly referred to as Webelos-to-Scout transition, is not an event. It is a process that succeeds best when it occurs across several months. The process includes developing and working a plan of ongoing interactions between Webelos Scouts and the troop.

A key part of the plan is to support Webelos Scouts in their advancement. Webelos and Arrow of Light requirements include learning and demonstrating many Scout skills with which Boy Scouts are already familiar.

Scouts, preferably, but also adult troop leaders, can help Webelos Scouts learn those required Scout skills. Doing so has two positive outcomes:

- It can lessen the burden of Webelos den leaders.
- It shows the Webelos Scouts that the troop cares about them and should make them want to join the troop.

Webelos Requirements

Which Webelos and Arrow of Light requirements are suited for support by a troop, using Scout skills the Boy Scouts know?

- **Cast-Iron Chef**
 - Requirement 2: Using a camp stove, open campfire, or Dutch oven to cook part of a meal planned by the Webelos Scouts
 - Requirement 3: Using tinder, kindling, and fuel wood to demonstrate how to build a fire in an appropriate outdoor location, then extinguishing the fire properly
- **First Responder**
 - Requirements 1–5: Basic first-aid skills
 - Requirement 6: Putting together a basic first-aid kit, explain why each item is included and how to use it.
 - Requirement 8: Visiting a first responder or healthcare professional. Are any of the troop leaders or troop parents in those professions?
- **Webelos Walkabout**
 - Requirements 1, 2, and 4: Hike planning, first-aid kit preparation, taking a hike of 3 miles.
 - Requirement 5: Describing and identifying from photos any poisonous plants and dangerous animals or insects you might encounter on your hike or activity
- **Outdoorsman** (formerly Camping)
 - Requirements for either Option A or Option B involve basic camping skills like site selection and pitching a tent, plus weather hazards
- **Scouting Adventure**
 - Requirement 2: Visiting a troop meeting and learning about troop leadership, the four steps of Scout advancement, Boy Scout ranks and how they are earned, and merit badges and how they are earned
 - Requirement 3: The patrol method, how it works, types of patrols in a troop, and patrol spirit.
 - Requirement 4: Participating in a Boy Scout troop's campout or other outdoor activity, and using the patrol method while on the outing.
 - Requirement 5: Learning to tie a square knot, two half-hitches, and a taut line hitch, and telling what they are used for; showing how to whip and fuse the ends of a rope.
 - Requirement 6: Demonstrating pocket knife safety and earning the Whittling Chip

Webelos Electives

Which Webelos electives are suited for support by a troop, using Scout skills the Boy Scouts know?

- **Castaway**
 - Requirement 1: Lighting a fire without matches, cooking without pots and pans, making a shelter of downed tree limbs and branches which items should be in an outdoor survival kit that you can carry in a small bag, and why; showing how to remove impurities from water, what to do if you get lost in the woods, and how to signal for help
- **Engineer or Earth Rocks (geology)**
 - If an adult troop leader or a troop parent is in one of these professions, or has geology as a hobby, they could help Webelos Scouts complete these adventures, especially if the Webelos den parents do not have the necessary training and skills.

Building those Activities and Skills into the Annual Plan

It will take several den meetings and outdoor events to help the Webelos Scouts complete all those adventures and learn the necessary Scout skills. Some of those meetings might work best as joint den-troop meetings.

Plenty of opportunities to teach those skills and take Webelos Scouts hiking and camping should be included in BOTH the troop annual plan AND the Webelos den annual plan.

The troop's PLC and Scoutmaster or an assistant Scoutmaster tasked with Webelos Scout recruitment should meet with the Webelos den leader to make sure those opportunities are on both annual plans, and to make them happen according to the plan.

The troop should be prepared to provide or share needed equipment with the Webelos Scouts. This is especially the case if the pack and troop have the same chartered organization because that organization owns the equipment.

Who should help with these requirements?

Scouts need to teach Scout skills to others to earn First Class, so any Boy Scout working on First Class should learn the EDGE method by helping at least one Webelos Scout with at least one skill.

The troop's instructors could help teach the Webelos Scouts.

If the troop uses "new Scout" patrols, the prospective troop guide for the incoming Webelos Scouts should be engaged with them while they are still Webelos Scouts. They will learn to trust their troop guide, cementing a bond with the troop.

Adult troop leaders and/or troop parents with special skills and/or training can help fulfill certain requirements.

The Scoutmaster should give each Webelos Scout a Scoutmaster conference. This is not a requirement to earn the Webelos or Arrow of Light rank, but it does allow the Scoutmaster to get to know the boys before they join the troop.