

Troop 957 Equipment Coordinator Desk Instructions

Position Theory:

According to the Troop Committee Guidebook, the duties of the Troop Equipment Coordinator are to:

- Supervise and help the troop procure camping equipment
- Work with the quartermaster on inventory and proper storage and maintenance of all troop equipment
- Make periodic safety checks on all troop camping gear, and encourage troops in the safe use of all outdoor equipment
- Report to the troop committee at each meeting

So much for the theory. The reality is different.

Position Duties As Practiced:

Troop 957 is a new troop, having come into being in March 2002. As such, we had no equipment. The Scoutmaster, an extremely hands-on individual, rapidly sought to remedy this lack. It took two years, but we are now fully outfitted with the camping gear required for a troop of about 25 to 30 boys. During this time, it was the Scoutmaster that bought the gear, designed the grub boxes for it, set up the work parties that got those boxes built, verified equipment condition in the trailer, and brought the trailer back and forth from the campouts, including cleaning everything post-campout. With setup now complete, the appropriate person to perform those duties is the Equipment Coordinator.

Taking all of the above into account, here are the detailed procedures, such as they are:

1. At least one week prior to any troop campout, conduct an inspection of the troop trailer, grub boxes, water coolers etc. that will be used to verify that they are a) present and b) functional. Ideally, the troop's quartermaster should participate in this.
2. As soon as possible after any troop campout, repeat step 1. Experience has shown that this check and balance approach is necessary; it is amazing how troop gear manages to migrate between events. Also, as you pull into a campground 4 hours away is not the time to find out that 3 of the tents the Scoutmaster was counting on were never returned from the last campout.
3. Make a list of any missing items. At this point the fun begins, as you will have to talk to the boys and Scoutmasters to try and find out what happened to them. If it looks like a boy or parent took something home, then it is your job to politely pester through e-mail, phone calls and in person visits until the item is returned.
4. Take a realistic approach to replacing broken or lost items. The grub boxes and trailer were designed for certain sizes and configurations of gear. Take the time to understand the rationale that went into that and from that get the true equipment requirements. Spending the troop's money buying things that do not fit in their assigned space or that the boys will break within a campout or two is counterproductive. On the flip side, scoring a really good deal through an in kind donation to the troop, a federal surplus program or a garage sale brings the thrill of victory. See the Scoutmaster for details. He has gotten quite good at it.

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5. Get with the Scoutmaster Corps prior to a) major events such as summer camps and b) the March Webelos infusion to see if they have identified any equipment needs.
6. If they have, go buy what is required, keeping the lessons of step 4 in mind.
7. Prior to the February and August PLC elections, get with the quartermaster and conduct a detailed inventory of all troop equipment. This includes trailer contents and anything else stored at the church, plus things such as the canoe behind the Scoutmaster's house. When you have the inventory, give a copy to the current quartermaster so that he can turn it over to the new quartermaster. Also get a copy to the Troop Committee Treasurer for use in determining the troop's asset status.
8. Bottom line, if it has anything to do with equipment, whether it is buying, repairing or even cleaning, it is your responsibility to see that it is taken care of. Calling other parents, setting up parent work parties, getting with the Scoutmasters to set up a special troop meeting—all are acceptable means to this end.
9. Give an equipment status at each Committee meeting (what is missing/broken, what needs to be bought, expected cost etc.).