



VOLUNTEERS AND BACKGROUND CHECKS

Social Security Number Requirement

This communication pertains to traditional Scouting units only.

Why do we require Social Security numbers from volunteers?

All new adult volunteers must complete a BSA adult leader application. An adult leader application is also required when an individual changes Scouting positions.

While a Social Security number is required on the application, this number appears on the Local Council Copy only. Social Security numbers are blacked out on the chartered organization and unit copies of the application to protect this information. Units have no need for Social Security numbers. Also, the BSA does not identify adult volunteers by their Social Security numbers.

At the council service center, the registrar enters or scans the Social Security number into ScoutNET. When entered, the number cannot be seen by anyone who has not been specifically granted the role for the Private tab. Applications should be filed in a locked cabinet that registrars control. Access to these secured applications should be safeguarded.

Some volunteers believe that the Privacy Act of 1974 is the legal authority for an individual to refuse to provide their Social Security number as a condition for membership/leadership in the BSA. This is inaccurate. The Act applies only to government agencies and information systems maintained by those government agencies.

We currently use ChoicePoint as the provider for criminal background check services. Securing valid Social Security numbers is part of the process that helps ChoicePoint accurately identify persons submitted for background checks. Without this information, the criminal background check process might not be effective.

In order to protect the youth in our programs, we insist that the correct Social Security number be included on the adult leader application. Those who decline to provide their Social Security number will not be allowed to register as leaders in the BSA. Exceptions to this rule must be handled on a case-by-case basis by the local council Scout executive.

Volunteers without Social Security numbers

Adult volunteers in the BSA's traditional programs must provide their Social Security numbers to become registered leaders. Those who decline to provide their Social Security numbers will not be allowed to register as leaders in the Boy Scouts of America.

However, there are rare situations in which individuals applying to be adult volunteers either do not have a Social Security number or will not provide it because they have been victims of identity theft. These cases will be reviewed individually, and exceptions may be granted.

Volunteers who received a letter as part of the current CBC project and may be a candidate for a Social Security number exemption should not complete the authorization process on the CBC Web site. They should:

1. Contact the council Scout executive to request the exemption as outlined below.
2. If the Scout executive approves, the council then works with the Registration Service to perform a process to override the Social Security requirement.
3. Because those volunteers will not complete the CBC process on the Web site, their registrations will "naturally expire." Their names will not appear on recharter paperwork or on Internet Rechartering rosters.

Volunteers and Background Checks

Social Security Number Requirement, Continued

4. As part of rechartering/renewal for the unit/district/council position, adult volunteers must complete a new BSA adult leader application. If they are granted the Social Security exemption, they need not provide a Social Security number on the BSA adult application.

5. The council processes the application.

Requesting a Social Security exemption

To request a Social Security exemption:

- The council must verify the applicant's identity. The Scout executive determines an individual does not have a Social Security number or has been the victim of identity theft.
- The council ensures that the person has a record in ScoutNET and prints a person profile report for the individual.
- The Scout executive submits a written request for an exception, detailing the reasons for the request, to the director of Registration Service at the National Council. The person profile report and/or the member ID number must be included as an attachment to the request.
- The director of Registration Service will grant or reject the request based on information provided or additional information received. If the request is granted, Registration Service will mark the person record within ScoutNET as "SSN not required." This will allow the council to process the registration of this individual without a Social Security number.

Submitting a Social Security exemption

Send written requests to:

Registration Service, S218
Boy Scouts of America
1325 West Walnut Hill Lane
P.O. Box 152079
Irving, TX 75015-2079

Fax requests to 972-580-2416.

Questions?

Direct questions regarding this process to Registration Service at 800-888-4705 (BSA employees only).