

Using a Den Chief
Bill Smith, the Roundtable Guy

What is a Den Chief?

The Den Chief is an older Boy Scout, Varsity Scout or Venturer who works with a Cub Scout or Webelos den. He is selected by the Scoutmaster and the troop Senior Patrol Leader in cooperation with the Cubmaster. He may be of any age or rank, but he can be the greatest help if he is a former Cub Scout and if he is mature enough to assume this important responsibility. As a selected leader of younger boys, he has the opportunity to help them complete their Cub Scout or Webelos Scout advancement requirements and live up to Cub Scouting's ideals in their everyday lives.

The Den Chief is a member of a leadership team which also includes the den leader, assistant den leader, and the denner. The den chief is already what every Cub Scout and Webelos Scout would like to be - a Boy Scout. As far as the younger boys are concerned, he is the person they would most like to follow, and that makes him a natural leader for them. By directing this natural leader wisely, we can influence the den of boys under his leadership

Den Chiefs are gods.

Den Chiefs don't make your job much easier, but they do make the Cub Scout experience better. They require coaching and direction to be successful but when they succeed they bring a unique spark to a Cub Scout's life that no one else can. Most children today live in an age-stratified culture where there is little interaction between older and younger kids. Just having an older Boy Scout take an interest in a seven or eight year old is a big deal. When a Webelos Scout visits a troop and one of the older Scouts recognizes him and even knows his name, it's an even bigger deal. These relationships can play an important part in a boy's growth and the effects may be long lasting.

But don't expect a young teen-age lad to be a natural leader. He needs help: coaching, support and acceptance. He must feel that he is a true member of the leadership team. Include him in the planning of your program. Give him explicit responsibilities. As he gains confidence, he will surprise you with his abilities.

Who should be a Den Chief?

Any Boy Scout or Venturing Crew member may be selected to be a Den Chief. Some units and even councils add age or rank qualifications. It works best when there is a significant age difference between the Den Chief and his charges. Also it may be advantageous to graduating Webelos if his former Den Chief is still active in the troop he joins. Try to do what is best for both the den members and the Scout.

Since young women may be Venturing members, they also qualify to be Den Chiefs. I have used pronouns he and him throughout just because it was easier. So I apologize to all those wonderful female Den Chiefs for this slight.

Why would one want to be a Den Chief? In a very real sense, the service qualifies as a leadership position for advancement to certain ranks. Den Chief is an official Boy Scout office and Scouts selected for this job are recognized as troop leaders. At a personal level, the experience can be quite rewarding. Having six or ten rag-a-muffins treat you as some sort of living god once a week is good for the self-image thing. All you have to do is teach them the same games, skits and jokes that you remember doing when you were their age and WOW!!!!

When one of my own sons was a Den Chief, he formed a close relationship with the den leader and her husband. It seems that the husband worked for a lithograph works

that printed covers for albums (vinyl □| in those days) The walls of his room, his school text books and everything else were papered with Rolling Stones album covers. Very cool, back then.

Den Chief Responsibilities

- The Den Chief helps lead the weekly den meeting. He arrives on time, in proper uniform.
- He assists with assigned den activities at the monthly pack meetings.
- He shares responsibility with the den leaders in all den activities, looking to them for adult leadership and inspiration.
- He meets with the den leader to plan his part of the program for the den meetings. These meetings are held regularly, at least once each month, or more often, if needed.
- He sees that the den program does not include Boy Scout activities, since such activities should be saved for Boy Scouting.
- He recognizes the denner (a member of the den, chosen by his peers) as his right-hand man by giving him opportunities to serve.
- He takes part in all training opportunities so he may become a better leader.
- Den Chiefs should receive training at a [Den Chief's Training Conference](#) They also receive continuous and regular training from the den leader and Cubmaster.

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Helping At Den Meetings

- **Gathering Period** - Helps teach boys tricks, puzzles, games, while den leader is busy checking attendance and collecting dues. The activities he uses here could be related to the monthly theme.
- **Opening** - Helps den leader organize boys and get them ready for the more serious part of the den meeting. He could hold a uniform inspection during this time.
- **Business** - He will have some good ideas for theme activities, service projects, trips, etc. Give him a chance to voice his ideas.
- **Activities** - This is when the den chief can be the most help. He is the activities assistant, leading boys in games, songs, craft projects, etc.
- **Closing** - Helps restore order and quiet for closing ceremony. He can help make announcements.
- **After Meeting** - Be sure to include him in your planning for next week and assign him specific responsibilities.

(Note: The Webelos Den Chief helps a Webelos den similarly. In addition to the suggestions above, he helps Webelos Scouts learn Boy Scout requirements for the Webelos badge and Arrow of Light Award and helps with demonstrations and teaching of activity badges, as needed.

Helping at Pack Meetings

- The den chief should be included in the planning for monthly pack meetings. He can help with any of the following:
- Help den leader set up displays.
- Help get the boys organized and seated.
- Help den leader during stunts or skit time.
- Helps with applause stunts and audience participations.
- Helps with den yell or song - or Activity Badge demonstration.
- Helps den leader maintain good behavior from Cub Scouts.
- Helps remove displays at end of pack meeting.
- Helps return pack meeting room to order.

Den Chief Training is for Scouts who wish to become Den Chiefs for Cub and Webelos Dens. Den Chief is a leadership position in the Troop. This training works best when the Boy Scout and the Cub/Webelos den leader go through the training together so that they become familiar with what he learns there. The Cubmaster of the pack should also attend, as well as any troop leadership.

Den Chief Training Conference

This one day training experience is intended for those Boys Scouts who meet National Qualifications and would like to serve in a leadership position while giving service to brother Cub Scouts. Elements of this training include:

- Your Job As Den Chief
- How To Use and Lead Games
- How To Lead Songs
- Dual Contest and Tricks
- Working With Cub Scouts and Den Leaders
- Seven Parts of A Successful Cub Scout Den Meeting
- Five Parts of A Successful Webelos Den Meeting
- Den Chief/Webelos Den Chief Responsibilities

See Den Chief Training Pamphlet #34450C.

WAYS TO KEEP YOUR DEN CHIEF HAPPY

- Recognize him at the first pack meeting.
- Make sure he has a Den Chief Handbook (#33211). It's full of great ideas.
- See that he has training.
- Give him important jobs.
- BE PATIENT...he's just a boy.
- Understand his limitations and abilities.
- Help him feel that he is successful.
- DO NOT leave discipline problems up to him.
- Recognize him on his birthday or other special occasion.
- Congratulate him before the den and pack when he receives a Boy Scout Rank Advancement.
- Present his Den Chief cord or badge to him at a troop Court of Honor in front his peers.

Cub Scout Den Chief

Qualifications: Is an older Boy Scout, Varsity Scout, or Venturer. Selected by the senior patrol leader and Scoutmaster, Varsity Scout Coach, or Venturing Advisor at the request of the Cubmaster. Approved by the Cubmaster and pack committee for recommendation to the den leader. Registered as a youth member of a troop, team, or crew.

Responsibilities: The Cub Scout den chief's responsibilities are to

- Know the purposes of Cub Scouting.
- Help Cub Scouts achieve the purposes of Cub Scouting.
- Serve as the activities assistant at den meetings.
- Set a good example through attitude and uniforming.
- Be a friend to the boys in the den.
- Help lead weekly den meetings.
- Help the den in its part of the monthly pack meeting.
- Know the importance of the monthly theme and pack meeting plans.
- Meet regularly with the den leader to review den and pack meeting plans. Meet as needed with adult members of the den, pack, and troop.
- Receive training from the den leader (and Cubmaster or assistant Cubmaster) and attend Den Chief Training.
- Encourage Cub Scouts to become Webelos Scouts when they are eligible.
- Help the denner and assistant denner to be leaders.



Den Chief Uniform and Insignia

The Den Chief is a Boy Scout or Venture Scout, and wears the appropriate uniform for their respective program. (See the Boy & Venture Scout Handbooks.) In addition, he/she wears the following:

[Den Chief badge of office \(see above\)](#). Round green cloth badge embroidered in gold, worn on left uniform sleeve, directly below and touching unit numeral, while serving as a den chief

[Den Chief shoulder cord. \(click here\)](#) Double strand of blue and gold interwoven cord, worn suspended from the uniform epaulet on the left shoulder of the Boy Scout uniform with the cord passing under the armpit.

[Webelos Den Chief shoulder cord. \(click here\)](#) Double strand of blue, red, and gold interwoven cord worn in the same manner as the den chief shoulder cord.

[Den Chief Service Award. \(click here\)](#) A special recognition given to Den Chiefs who complete certain service and training requirements. Presented with approval by the Cubmaster and Scoutmaster. (See Den Chief Handbook for requirements and procedure.) A distinctive red, white, and blue shoulder

cord worn with the regular Den Chief or Webelos Den Chief cord, worn as described for the Den Chief shoulder cord. May be worn after Den Chief service is completed.