

# Safeguarding & Privacy: What Unit Leaders Need to Know

*For Scoutmasters, Cubmasters, Den Leaders, Committee Chairs, and Assistant Scoutmasters*

Scouting's first responsibility is safeguarding youth—especially in places where privacy and vulnerability are highest (restrooms, showers, changing areas, and sleeping accommodations). This guidance exists to give unit leaders clear, consistent direction so you do not have to guess or improvise.

## The Three Rules to Remember

- **Safeguarding comes first:** Clear, consistent boundaries prevent harm before it occurs and protect both youth and volunteers.
- **Privacy is the accommodation:** When a youth needs additional privacy, use privacy-based accommodations such as single-user facilities, scheduled private access, or private sleeping arrangements. Do not change communal boundaries.
- **Parents are partners:** Unit leaders do not make decisions alone. Conversations about privacy or accommodations always involve parents or guardians and the council when needed.

## What Unit Leaders SHOULD Do

- Use the FAQs as your script. Stick to the written guidance—do not speculate or editorialize.
- Apply rules consistently to all youth. Privacy accommodations are normal safeguarding tools available to any youth who needs them.
- Keep conversations short and factual. Refer complex questions to the council.
- Elevate complex or sensitive situations early to the Scout Executive or council staff.

## What Unit Leaders Must NOT Do

- Do not create unit-level rules or exceptions for bathrooms, showers, or sleeping arrangements.
- Do not ask for documentation such as birth certificates or medical records. Units are not authorized to request or collect proof.
- Do not debate identity, beliefs, or intent. Your role is to apply safeguarding guidance, not resolve social or philosophical questions.
- Do not promise outcomes or attempt to resolve complex situations locally.

## Bottom Line for Unit Leaders

Your role is not to solve every sensitive issue. Your role is to follow the guidance as written, use privacy-based accommodations when needed, partner with parents, and involve the council early when situations are complex. That is how we protect youth, protect volunteers, and deliver Scouting as intended.