



# TRAIL LIFE USA®

Adventure › Character › Leadership

## THE ROLE OF THE TROOP COMMITTEE CHAIR

*The Committee Chairman must be a person of big picture vision, capable of involving and overseeing qualified people who lead subcommittees, yet willing to let them succeed (or fail) based on their efforts*

1. **How to Operate:** Use *Robert's Rules of Order*. This is widely accepted, easy to understand, and provides order from day one. Here's the version "for dummies": <http://www.dummies.com/how-to/content/roberts-rules-for-dummies-cheat-sheet.html>. Google *Robert's Rules of Order* for a more in-depth reference.
2. **Frequency of Meetings:** Initially, you may need a meeting every two weeks. Your early meetings will be all about big picture thinking, policy development and vision-setting. Once you get your policies and initial assignment issues ironed out, shift to meeting monthly (set a standing meeting that works for everyone, like the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday—and commit to keeping it then to avoid confusion or excuses). How quickly you get to needing only once-a-month meetings depends on the competence, independence, and reliability of your Subcommittee Chairmen. Much can be accomplished and communicated electronically between meetings—but these monthly meetings—everyone together in one room—is important. There is no substitute for group interaction.
3. **Order of Business:** Here are some common components:
  - a. **Opening** (call to order, Pledge of Allegiance, prayer, and devotional thought ... then on to the business items)
  - b. **Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes** (all) – these should be sent out ahead of time by the recording Secretary, for review by all Committee members.
  - c. **Financial Report** (Treasurer) – current reports should be sent out ahead of time for review.
  - d. **Reports of Subcommittee Chairs** – The following is not a comprehensive list—your Troop Committee may have additional positions—but the core elements are as follows. Each Subcommittee Chair reports on a specific area of responsibility on his own, working together with a subcommittee—a team of additional leaders (as needed) to assist with his task.
    - i. **Membership** (retention/recruiting) – A charismatic “salesman” personality who is on fire for growing TLUSA in your church and community, is needed; on his team will be people who are always looking for new ways to get the “Come Join our Troop!” message out and connect with new families—plus “retention-minded” folks who make sure we do all we can programmatically to **keep** the Trailmen who join.
    - ii. **Publicity/Communication** – Not everyone knows about Trail Life yet! Your publicity team can promote TLUSA through social media, and by establishing a Troop website; have flyers distributed through local churches, and in coordination with every other ministry of your church (i.e., through food pantry, Upward Basketball, classes, gift bags to visitors, etc.). They can post TLUSA signage on your property and throughout the community. Should work closely with the Membership team in promotions. Regular, *internal* communications to your families is also important. Make sure everyone knows what meetings and events are coming up months in advance!

- iii. Fundraising – What are the needs? What are the options to raise money? This team is not bean-counters (although they will make sure the Treasurer knows their plans, and what necessary paperwork will result). They are people of vision who listen to committee plans and establish ways to make it happen! They should be familiar with the fundraising opportunities being offered by Trail Life’s Home Office.
- iv. Camping team – We KNOW that a key reason why boys join programs like TLUSA is because they want the outdoor adventure. This team focuses on identifying places to camp, people they know who own property, firewood to burn, transporting the Troop to camp, and all the local area options for this type of activity.
- v. Training (internal development for leaders) – This person makes sure that all leaders (and even parents) have the information they need to understand their responsibilities and thrive in their roles. Beginning with *Troop FastStart* and progressing through tracks in *TrailLife Connect*, attending *EQUIP*, position-specific, or advanced training sessions, leaders need to stay current on everything available.
- vi. Advancement – A reliable record-keeper is needed to enter and track what your Trailmen earn. Beyond the record-keeping tasks, he/she keeps up with Boards of Review for rank advancement, as well as the Freedom Award Review Board – a process for handling this highest level of advancement consistently.
- vii. Activities planning (various events) – Provides support as needed for special meetings, gatherings, high adventure treks, youth training events, etc. Troops can expect additional activities planned at the Area and Regional level by Trail Life USA volunteers (so keep informed and have your Troop participate in those events), but for the most part, our Troop’s annual program is our own responsibility.
- viii. Community service – Reach out to neighborhood associations, parks, nursing homes, ministries in your church, food pantries. Make small repairs, pick up trash on roads or at area events – there is a long list of ways for Trailmen to become highly visible in the community while learning the value of serving others.
- ix. Equipment management – Do you have a Troop trailer? You’re going to want one. What about tents with all the poles? Lanterns and stoves that work? This person should help coordinate the efforts of your youth Quartermaster and also keep an eye on the bigger maintenance issues (van in good working order, axels that are greased, oil changed, etc.). He can take the lead in suggesting capital improvements for the Troop and identifying cost-effective resources. And yes, the Quartermaster can help in this (our goal is to be youth-led)!
- x. Risk assessment – Boys (and some adults) like to blow things up! A risk assessment team thinks about liability and age-appropriate participation in events planned by the Troop. They may also establish guidelines about how to receive and release children (especially younger ones) from unit activities. They make sure health forms are reviewed, a tour plan is on file with the church, a float plan is in place for water trips, that climbing standards are understood, and that fires, and use of tools and equipment, is all managed safely (and under adult supervision).
- xi. Nominating (to identify new and emerging Committee leaders). This team brings the list of potential volunteers to the committee for discussion and approval. This keeps you and your Troop’s COR from being the only one bringing new people aboard.

*This is not a complete list of the many positions that can exist within a Troop. Some add “Grubmaster”—an adult adept at planning meals and teaching cooking skills—so the boys can expand their vision beyond peanut butter and jelly! You might want to add a “Liaison to AHG”, or someone who focuses on coordinating TLUSA efforts with those of another church ministry (working with special needs kids, for instance). **IMPORTANT NOTE: Troop Committee volunteers should NOT be people who already lead youth each week—find other uninvolved parents for these roles!***

- e. **Old business:** Carry over discussion items continuing from last month.
  - f. **New Business/Calendar Issues:** Usually review a 3-month calendar; conduct regular updates once an initial 18 month plan is in place. These are typically new ideas that people are putting forth for consideration, calendar adjustments, and newly discovered date conflicts.
  - g. **Correspondence** (Troop Secretary reporting) – Any issues communicated in writing to the Troop committee, presented for committee action (for example, a discipline issue where a youth, parent or leader needs to be formally removed from the Troop).
  - h. **Chairman’s Remarks/Inspirational Thought** – Some roles cannot be delegated. Vision and inspiration are the province of the Committee Chairman. Your meetings will be characterized by others based on the efficiency and positive tone of the meeting, and on the proportion of time you spend discussing how to better mentor youth vs. the time spent counting dimes and dealing with minor issues. Consider telling a story of life *impact* (a past experience working with youth, or defining true heroism, or talking about the importance of integrity). Leave the group wanting to come back for more!
  - i. **Closing/prayer** (Troop Chaplain)
4. Orchestrating the meeting: Collect written reports from the Subcommittee Chairs in advance, and remind members that there should be NO surprises in the meetings. If there is an issue to come before the assembly, the Chairman should know about it in advance. This helps avoid volatile or time-consuming matters. *If an unforeseen topic or motion comes up in a meeting, it’s often best to “table it” assigning a subcommittee look at it first, and report back at the next meeting.*

One more thought: stay on time—cut it off any presenter whose topic is running too long. Have a strategy for training and encouraging your team, giving them the tools to really do their job well. Your devotional time at the beginning might focus on a brief portion of the handbook...and you might end your meetings with a reflection on that from a related Scripture. Building that into your meeting gives a higher purpose to routine business. That’s where a strong Committee Chairman shines.

NOTE: Troops are also assigned a **Direct Service Advisor** – He is not part of the Troop Committee, but rather an outside resource—a Coach/Mentor/Guide/Counselor sent from the Area Support Team. He can connect the adult leaders mentioned above to other Area volunteers who have “been there and done that.” He keeps Troops informed about national and regional news and resources, and communicates changes in national policy to your Troop. He stands ready to help your Troop establish and carry out a dynamic program.