

JUNE: UNIT EQUIPMENT SECURITY

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GINA: Welcome to *Scouting Magazine's* July 2019 ScoutCast. I'm Gina Circelli, the Digital Producer for *Boys' Life Magazine*, and I'm here along with *Scouting Magazine* blogger, Bryan Wendell.

BRYAN: Hey, Gina. OK, imagine this: Your troop or your crew is ready to depart for a big adventure, and all the Scouts and adult volunteers, they're there on time, the weather is perfect. Everything is ready and then you've realized you're missing something, and it's a big something. It's your troop trailer. All the gear inside, hundreds or even thousands of dollars of stuff, is gone, all gone.

GINA: Ew, that's a horrible feeling, I'm sure. So, after you call the police, you might be asking yourself, how can we make sure our stuff is secure?

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GINA: Whether it's our meeting place or on the trail, Richard Bourlon's mission in life is to keep Scouts, volunteers, and our gear safe and sound. Richard is the team lead for Health & Safety Services here at the National Service Center and will share with us some do's and don'ts and helpful tips to keep everyone and everything safe and secure. Welcome back to ScoutCast, Richard.

RICHARD: Thanks, Gina.

GINA: So, let's start with an easy question. What should we be thinking about in terms of security at our meeting place?

RICHARD: The first thing that comes to mind is access control. So, how do folks get into and out of your meeting place? Who's watching those entrances? Can you even see them? Do you have somebody there greeting everybody that walks in the door that identifies who they are and why they're there and welcomes folks to your meeting place?

GINA: Who makes a good greeter?

RICHARD: Probably an adult or an older youth, somebody who's got the ability to say, "Hi. How are you? Can I help you find the way there?" Access control into and out of your meeting place is probably the top thing that is something you need to think about before your next meeting.

BRYAN: That makes sense. So, a lot of times, you don't have someone there watching your stuff, people who store their gear in some type of storage closet or, in a lot of cases, in the actual trailer itself. So, how do we address security of that trailer that's in the church parking lot?

RICHARD: I'm a big fan of what's called Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design, CPTED. I don't know if you've ever come across that. It's basically how do you set up the environment, so it helps you deter crime? This could be something as simple as having appropriate lighting, parking the trailer under the light if there's nothing else. Maybe it's using fencing,

locks, monitoring. Maybe it's taking a wheel off the trailer so nobody can just come up and hook on and drive off. The other thing about Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design that every unit could do, and it makes a great meeting topic, is invite in the local law enforcement crime prevention officer. Almost every city has one. Most counties, the sheriff's department's gonna have somebody like that. It makes a great meeting topic, it's part of being prepared, and also while they're there, they can walk through and give you some other tips as well.

BRYAN: Because they see it all the time. And you also could probably get some requirements checked off for some merit badges too...

RICHARD: There's a few safety type things that could come in handy there. The other thing is just looking up the crime statistics in the area where your meeting place is or even in your neighborhood. you could look up "crime statistics near me" and you're gonna find out what was stolen, where the robberies were, etc.

BRYAN: Now, there's a debate about this next question which is should you paint your troop trailer or not? Because some people say yes because then it's easier to identify if it's stolen. Others say no because you're advertising to potential thieves that there's gear inside, valuable gear. Do you have an opinion or either expert or personal?

RICHARD: If it's a typical white trailer, it looks like every construction trailer that's on the road today, so it's not gonna be easy to recover if it is stolen. So, certainly painting your troop numbers on it, maybe even on the top so it's

visible from the air, Don't put your personal information or anything like that on it, but just something to set it apart from every other trailer on the road is probably a good idea, if it comes to recovery.

BRYAN: Okay.

RICHARD: Now, you have said several times, Bryan, that you keep the stuff in the trailer.

BRYAN: I was going to ask you that.

RICHARD: One of the things you might want to do is just not store your equipment in the trailer, actually making it harder for everything to go in one theft.

BRYAN: Okay, but then you've got to find somewhere else to store all that stuff. I guess that's the, the quartermaster's problem...

RICHARD: That's why you have quartermasters, and it gives the boys and our girls now in Scouts BSA the opportunity to load and unload efficiently.

GINA: But surely, no matter where you put it, everything can go right, you can be taking the precautions you need to, you could have a good relationship with the local authorities, and it still goes missing. Is there such a thing as gear insurance?

RICHARD: There is. It's an interesting topic that usually comes up because the unit actually doesn't own the gear. That's the chartered organization. So, we would always make sure that the unit leadership is working with their chartered organization to find out what kind of coverage they have. It's usually gonna be some type of property insurance that would apply to the meeting place, the facilities of the buildings, that's going to extend either to that trailer or to a Scout Hut where that equipment might be stored. It's not a given that that's an insured piece of property, and it's also subject to deductibles, which could be pretty high for a unit just getting started.

GINA: Quick question. Rewind for me, what's a Scout Hut?

RICHARD: There are chartered organizations that have built a storage shed out back, and that's where the Scouts get to store their stuff. When I was a Scout, that's what we called it.

GINA: Oh, OK.

BRYAN: I've seen some of those. So, do the same security rules apply there? I mean, you're not worried about someone stealing the physical hut itself but, are we talking locks, motion-activated lighting, cameras if you can afford that? Are those recommendations that you would make for a Scout Hut?

RICHARD: They all apply. I'd say that Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design: is it well lit; can people see who's coming in and out of it? Would it

be obvious if somebody backed a truck up and was loading it, that it was somebody who needed to be there? Lighting, motion lighting, fences, locks are all there to help prevent that theft.

BRYAN: What about if a Scout leader says, "Where we meet, the parking lot's kind of dark and, frankly, the church doesn't have the money to upgrade that. I'll offer to store the trailer in my driveway where I've got the lights, I've got the cameras." Is that allowed?

RICHARD: I wouldn't say it's not allowed. It might not be the best opportunity because then that Scout leader is taking on some responsibility. There may be other alternatives though to the meeting place. For instance, using a dedicated storage facility that has 24-hour access and the security features built in.

BRYAN: I remember one blog commenter said that they actually had such a good relationship with the local police department, that that's where they park their trailer, so perhaps that's an option too.

RICHARD: Those local relationships would help you with that.

GINA: It seems like security cameras so are much more affordable these days. Have you seen an uptick in the use of those? Are people attaching those even maybe to their trailers?

RICHARD: I haven't seen them attached to trailers. There are some products that are GPS tracking devices, but you really have a lot of exposure to justify the cost of something like that. But certainly, the game cameras are very inexpensive, if you have a fixed location where you can fix that camera. The challenge with that is, if it's not conspicuous and visible, it's not gonna be a deterrent. It's only going to help in the recovery efforts. So, visible security or a presence, motion-activated lights, or a visible camera is going to be far more of a deterrent to the crime than the actual response.

BRYAN: Because you may never get it back even if you have a clear picture of the person or persons who took it, right?

RICHARD: That's correct.

GINA: And it's always easier to avoid having it go missing and all that trouble in the first place. That's a good tip.

RICHARD: Prevention is the important part here.

GINA: So, we know our gear is going to be there when we leave for the trip. When we come back, we'll find out how to keep your gear secure on the trail.

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BRYAN: So, now that we're actually on the trip, once we get to the campsite, or trailhead, there's the potential for it to be left unattended there, right? You might have your GPS device that you used to get you there, that type of thing, in the vehicle or the trailer. At that point we don't have any cameras or motion-activated lighting. What do you recommend once you get to the place where you'll be enjoying your Scouting adventure?

RICHARD: That's a tough one. It's greatly dependent upon the area and how visible that area is, how busy that area might be. Certain trailheads may be dependent upon the time of the year, extremely busy, have a lot of people come in and out, or they could be very remote and isolated. So, the best tips there are make sure there's nothing in the vehicle that's visible. You talked about a GPS. If you've got that phone holder or the GPS holder sitting up on your dash, somebody might assume there's some other valuables in there, so even removing those from the vehicle so nothing of value is in sight. Park under a light. It's a really simple thing but you'd be surprised how people might choose a more convenient spot versus one which is actually more of a deterrent to crime.

GINA: In a situation like that, is it better to leave some gear in the trailer or should you be taking it to your site?

RICHARD: Maybe you only take what you need so you don't leave extra stuff. Have your quartermasters only bring with you what you need. If everybody can pack it in with their pack, maybe you don't need your trailer for this trip. There's another alternative and that is do you have somebody who can shuttle you back and forth so you don't have to leave a vehicle at the

trailhead too, or take the trailer with any excess equipment back to the location.

BRYAN: I imagine there are some bad people out there, so here's another scenario. You've got your campsite all set up with your tents that have your sleeping bags and headlamps and things inside of them, you've got all your cook gear sitting out, and then the troop wants to go on a day hike. This is a very common thing, right? And so, all that stuff's going to be there. Do we leave a leader back at camp, do we just hope that the code of camping lives on in 2019 and beyond; what's your recommendation?

RICHARD: Certainly, leaving somebody in camp as a watch person would be an option. I'd go back to don't bring any high-value gear. Don't bring gear that you can't possibly afford to lose, if that's the environment that you're gonna be operating in. And I also go back to a philosophy that locks keep honest people out. And so, if one of the leaders maybe has some high-value items like a locking footlocker or something like that that they brought along, there are some products out there, some mesh security products, that can go around soft gear like bags or even a backpack and you can chain your backpack to a tree. Most of our Scouting family is pretty trustworthy, and so they don't see that as a possibility, but it's something they should consider the next time they go out.

GINA: It sounds like packing light is in and glamping it out. So, these are very eye-opening tips for a lot of us. Is there a resource available where we can find more of these kinds of tips?

RICHARD: Your best resources are crime prevention officers in your area. You can Google “crime statistics near me” or near where you’re gonna be and look up and see what is going on in the area. There are some resources online like the National Crime Prevention Council. There are some security tips there on how to be aware of your surroundings and how to be careful when you’re out and about.

BRYAN: Hmm, that’s good. And is there anything else about security of your gear and your troop’s gear that you want to share with our ScoutCast listeners?

RICHARD: I’ve participated in several camping discussion forums in my role, and one of the recent discussions is that campers gear themselves, whether it’s at summer camp or even out on the trail. We have campers who are bringing very expensive equipment, very high-tech equipment, and a lot of it. Typically, that’s not gonna be something that a unit would insure. That’s going to be that those parents are taking a risk as their youth go out on the trail. It’s important that you have a discussion with the parents about the types of the gear that the kids are bringing with them to make sure that they know that’s not the unit’s responsibility. And last but not least the best crime prevention tip I have is just to be alert of your surroundings and be vigilant. If you’re texting on your phone, you may not be looking around to see who or what is around you, and that’s one of keys to managing this kind of thing.

GINA: You always have really good advice like this, Richard. I feel very empowered by this information, and I feel like there is a lot we can do now to keep our stuff safe. Thanks for sharing all this enlightening information and joining us on ScoutCast.

RICHARD: I appreciate being here. It's always fun.

BRYAN: We're going to take a short break now for a Safety Moment and then we'll be back with Reminders and Tips.

Safety Moment – High Adventure Risks

BRYAN: Okay, folks, here we go with this month's reminders. Now is that time your troop should be camping. It doesn't matter where or for how long - just go camping! After all, that's what Scouts BSA is all about.

GINA: And in case you forgot, there's still time to earn the William T. Hornaday Award. The Hornaday Award Program encourages learning about natural resources, conservation and the environment, and it's been referred to as a Gold Medal awarded by the Earth. More information about the award that can be found on scouting.org/awards/hornaday-awards.

BRYAN: In the May-June 2019 issue of *Scouting Magazine*, which you all should have on your nightstand or your coffee table, you can join former ScoutCast host and current Managing Editor of all three of the BSA's magazines, Paula Murphey, as she meets with some Scouts from Troop 6 of Bismarck, North Dakota, and spent four days in the historic town of Medora, North Dakota, where they performed a series of service projects in return for free camping and activities such as hiking, cycling and horseback riding.

GINA: OK, so over on the June *Boys' Life* issue, Scouts from Troop 211 from Sartell, Minnesota, are master robot builders and we've got the exclusive

on how they do it. Basically, you'll be a master robot builder after you read this.

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GINA: And, hey, you can check out those articles and more right now because we're at the end of our June ScoutCast. Thanks to our guest, Richard Bourlon, for joining us.

BRYAN: And thanks to you for listening. Now, we want to hear from you if you have an idea for something we can talk about here on ScoutCast, a future topic, so send us an email. That's Scoutcast@scouting.org, or you can tweet us. That's [@BSAScoutCast](https://twitter.com/BSAScoutCast). And, until next time, I'm Bryan Wendell.

GINA: And I'm Gina Circelli. We look forward to hearing from you!

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