

Questions and Answers Regarding the Ineligible Volunteer Files
Quivira Council BSA
October 22, 2012

1. What are these files?

A: These are records collected nationwide since the early days of Scouting (1920's) of individuals who have been dismissed from Scouting, and kept as a barrier to their re-entry. The files predate the technology available for databases today. The keeping of such information is a best practice as defined by the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in their 2007 report on youth protection.

2. Why were they confidential?

A: The files were confidential to encourage prompt reporting and protect the identity of any victims. To be proactive in protecting children, Scouting dismisses volunteers immediately at the allegation of misconduct, rather than waiting for proof of guilt. The files may contain names of individuals who were wrongly accused. If crimes are prosecutable, the criminal records are then made public.

3. Why were they released now?

A: Files from 1965 to 1985 were introduced into evidence in a State of Oregon Court case. Subsequently, media successfully sued for their release. The attorneys for those suing the Boy Scouts in the Oregon Case released the files, posting them on their website following a press conference on October 18.

4. Has law enforcement been involved in all of these cases?

A: BSA policies have always required Scouting to follow state laws in reporting abuse. In 2010, the policy was updated to require all abuse to be reported to authorities, superseding state reporting requirements. A professional third-party review of the files found that police were involved in at least two-thirds of the cases. Using today's standards, the BSA is acting to ensure that all old cases are now being retroactively reported.

5. What is different today?

A: Contemporary Scouting and society as a whole treat abuse much differently. Public attitude has shifted – yesterday the community tolerated and sometimes participated in keeping abuses private. Today all reports of abuse are immediately conveyed to law enforcement, even if victims or their families wished that such reports be kept confidential. Scouting's policies, procedures and programs have all been updated to reflect best practices in prevention and detection, including teaching young people themselves to recognize, resist and report abuse, and we will continue to do so.

6. What are some specifics of the youth protection policies and procedures?

A: Here are some specifics. A complete list can be found at:

<http://www.scouting.org/scoutsourc/HealthandSafety/GSS/gss01.aspx>

www.scouting.org/bsayouthprotection

Prospective leaders go through a thorough screening process by parents and organizations which charter/sponsor the Scouting groups

All volunteers also go through a criminal background check

*Youth protection training is required for all volunteers and must be renewed every 24 months
One of the first requirements for all new youth members is that they have a face to face discussion with their parents about abuse prevention*

Training is provided for youth members using video scenarios and discussions to teach them to the three “R’s” of youth protection – to “Recognize, Resist, and Report” any kind of abuse

Operational barriers to abuse are put in place including requirements that two adults are always present and that there are separate sleeping, changing and showering facilities.

Scouting volunteers are also prohibited from one on one contact with a Scout (who is not a family member) outside of official Scouting events

Parents are provided with reporting procedures and contacts.

All aspects of the Scouting Program are open to observation by parents and leaders

7. What would you say about safety to a parent who is considering signing up their child for Scouting?

A: We become partners with parents in the safety of their children. Scouting is a safe place for young people, with policies and procedures in place to prevent detect and deter any kind of abuse. Leadership involvement, parent engagement, youth and adult training, and conversations on abuse prevention facilitated between parents and their children all help to create a community that is safer for young people.

This is an example of Scouting teaching young people the skills they need to be prepared for a range of challenges and opportunities that lie ahead throughout their lifetime.

This Q and A on the IV Files and a letter to parents can be found on the Quivira Council website at www.quivira.org

You are encouraged to share these communications with any parents, leaders or interested persons