

Safeguarding Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Sex-Based Personal Space Protections with Privacy-Based Accommodations Standard

Purpose and Scope

1. Why is Scouting America issuing this standard?

This standard clarifies and formalizes existing safeguarding practices related to restrooms, showers, changing areas, and sleeping accommodations to ensure consistent, objective, and enforceable abuse-prevention safeguards.

2. Is this a new policy?

No. This standard reflects long-standing practices already embedded in Scouting America's Barriers to Abuse, Guide to Safe Scouting, and Safeguarding Youth Training.

3. Is this about culture, politics, or identity debates?

No. This standard is solely about safeguarding and abuse prevention in environments involving privacy and vulnerability.

4. What if I have seen other guidance or materials that say something different?

Scouting America has issued various materials over time to help explain safeguarding expectations. Safeguarding requirements, however, are established by published national policy, mandatory Safeguarding Youth Training, and the Guide to Safe Scouting.

If any guidance, FAQ, or other explanatory material appears inconsistent with published national policy, Safeguarding Youth Training, or the Guide to Safe Scouting, those authoritative sources control and must be followed.

Facilities and Sleeping Arrangements

5. How are communal restrooms, showers, and changing areas assigned?

Communal personal facilities are assigned based on biological sex, consistent with Scouting America's Barriers to Abuse.

6. What if a youth needs additional privacy?

When there is a legitimate need for additional privacy, as determined through consultation with the youth's parent or legal guardian and unit leadership, an appropriate privacy-based accommodation will be provided. Examples may include private facilities, scheduled access, or separate private sleeping arrangements.

7. Can a youth be denied participation in Scouting because of this standard?

No. Privacy-based accommodations are intended to enable participation while maintaining safeguarding boundaries.

Registration and Attestation

8. How is sex recorded during registration?

The membership application includes two sex designations: male and female. For safeguarding purposes, these refer to biological sex at birth.

9. Who determines the sex designation for a youth?

The parent or legal guardian indicates the youth's sex designation during registration.

10. Does Scouting America check birth certificates or medical records?

No. Scouting America does not require, request, or verify such documentation for purposes of this standard.

11. Can councils or units ask families for documentation?

No. Units and councils are not authorized to request or verify documentation beyond the parent or guardian's indication.

Governance and Dignity

12. Can councils or units create their own accommodation rules?

No. National safeguarding standards must be followed consistently.

13. Does this standard stigmatize youth?

No. The standard emphasizes dignity, respect, privacy, and participation for all youth.

14. Does this standard prevent youth from joining a particular unit?

No. A youth has the right to participate in the unit which best fits the youth's needs, subject to approval by the youth's parents or legal guardian and the unit's leadership, and consistent with Scouting America's policies.

Bottom Line

15. What is the simplest way to explain this standard?

Scouting America separates boys and girls in communal personal spaces for safeguarding purposes, provides privacy-based accommodations when needed, relies on parent attestation, does not verify documents, and applies the standard consistently and respectfully.