



## Student Conservation Association

# Community Crew Member and Parent/Guardian Handbook & Guide

Congratulations! You are about to embark on a life-changing experience. This handbook is full of important information to help you get ready to make the most of it. Please read it carefully with your parent or guardian.

### SCA's Mission:

SCA's mission is to build the next generation of conservation leaders and inspire lifelong stewardship of our environment and communities by engaging young people in hands-on service to the land.



## SCA'S BEGINNINGS



In 1955 a student at Vassar College read an article in Harper's Magazine that described the deplorable condition of America's national parks: under-staffed, under-resourced, and increasingly being "loved to death" by post-World War II visitors.

In response, this budding conservationist, [Elizabeth \(Cushman\) Titus Putnam](#), developed an idea for a modern-day Civilian Conservation Corps that would mobilize young people to perform natural resource conservation work on public lands.



Launching an American conservation movement powered exclusively by young people would be ambitious today, but considering that Liz conceived of the idea in 1953, a woman in her early twenties in a world dominated by older men, makes it all the more remarkable.



Two years later, a concept that started as a senior thesis became a reality when the young Liz, aided by colleague and fellow Vassar alumna Martha Hayne Talbot, secured the interest and support of officials in the National Park Service and [the first SCA volunteers](#) arrived at Grand Teton and Olympic National Parks.

Liz turned her vision into action for the greater good. At SCA we believe in the potential of all young people to find that spark that ignites their passion.

***“I was brought up to believe that land is a trust and that we are all responsible for taking care of this earth. I was also taught that life itself is a privilege and that we must always give something back. As my father said, ‘If something needs to be done, pitch in and help out.’ I believe we all can make a positive difference with our lives.”***

—Liz Putnam, Founder, SCA

## WHO WE ARE TODAY



### Who We Are

SCA is the national leader in youth service and stewardship. Since 1957, we've put more than 75,000 young people to work in America's parks and public lands.

### Where We Work



### Our Members

- Youth and Young Adults age 15-25+
- 160,000 new recruits annually
- 4,228 placements in 2014
- Nearly 1 in 2 self-identify as a person of color



### Our Partners

- 600+ Project Sites Nationwide
- State and City Parks
- US Forest and Wildlife Refuges
- BLM Sites
- Federal, State, Municipal public land agencies and non-profits
- 700+ Colleges and Universities
- Leading Corporations and Foundations



## COMPLETE YOUR ENROLLMENT FORMS



**2 weeks – 1 month:** The amount of time you have to complete your forms once you receive them. Please check with your Program Manager to verify if you will be completing any of these forms at Program Orientation.

**1-3 hours:** Estimated time needed to complete your enrollment forms.

**Email:** The best way to get messages from SCA. It is important to check your email regularly for important information from SCA. Don't forget to check your spam folder.

**The Field Readiness Tab in your MySCA portal:** Best place to find your enrollment status.

**Field Approved:** Your enrollment status when all of your paperwork is complete.

**If you fail to complete your enrollment paperwork, you may forfeit your crew position.** If you have extenuating circumstances that may prevent you from completing your forms in time, please let us know right away.

**HR Hotline: 1-603-505-3215**

**HR Email – [HRDocs@thesca.org](mailto:HRDocs@thesca.org)**

**<https://www.thesca.org/community>**

### **Forms to be completed in your portal:**

*The following forms can be found in your MySCA account under “Alerts” when you log in.*

#### **Form I-9/Employment Verification**

This form must be completed electronically before you begin your position. You will need to provide a government issued photo ID (school ID, state ID, driver's license, passport) and a social security card or birth certificate as part of the process.

If you have questions about this process please contact SCA's Human Resources department at [HRDocs@thesca.org](mailto:HRDocs@thesca.org).

#### **Conditions of Acceptance Form**

*Emailed to member/parent/guardian and accessible in MySCA portal*

#### **Member Handbook Acknowledgement**

*Emailed to member/parent/guardian and accessible in MySCA portal*

#### **Medical Form**

- Initial forms located in MySCA portal.
- Follow-up forms if further information is needed will be sent via email.
- Final signature form sent via email and accessible in MySCA portal.

#### **Background Check Form**

*Required for crew members who will be age 18 or older when their crew begins*

Emailed to member from: easybackgrounds.com.  
Take note: Email frequently ends up in people's spam.



## DRESS CODE



**You must wear appropriate work attire, or you will not be permitted to work.**

- Unaltered SCA T-shirt (provided) if required by Program or unaltered non-SCA t-shirt
- Heavy pants to your ankle (jeans, Dickies, work pants)
- Sturdy boots (ankle bone or higher)
- Safety gear (provided)

*Please let SCA staff know if you need assistance in obtaining any of the above gear*

**What Not to Wear to Work:**

- Offensive language or images on clothing
- Obstructive jewelry (ex. large hoop earrings, long necklaces, etc.)
- Sneakers or sandals

**Boots Must:**

- Be sturdy
- Cover the ankle
- Be tied securely at all times

**Recommended Items to Bring Each Day:**

- SCA T-shirt
- Layers & rain jacket
- Water Bottle & Lunch
- Sun Block & Bug Spray
- Tank tops, bare midriffs, jeggings/leggings, sweat pants, yoga pants, jeans with rips or holes, or shorts
- Anything that poses a safety concern. SCA Crew Leader will speak with you.

## MEMBER EXPECTATIONS



Committing to an SCA community crew experience involves a responsibility as well as an opportunity. As a community crew member, you will have the opportunity to broaden your life experience, build new life and job skills, and contribute to an important conservation service project. You will also have the responsibility to behave in ways that support the safety and wellbeing of yourself and your crew.

To be sure that you will be ready to fulfill this responsibility, please review the information in this section. By committing to your SCA position, you are agreeing to live and work by these expectations.

### MEMBER EXPECTATIONS

- Build a positive community by being inclusive and respectful of other members, leaders, other SCA staff, and SCA partners
- Participate actively, stay on task, and work within the schedule of the group
- Wear required personal protective equipment
- Abstain from forming any exclusive relationships & cliques
- Follow all SCA policies and procedures as laid out by your leader(s)
- Stay substance free
- Be open to giving and receiving feedback, working to resolve group conflict, setting goals, and reflecting on progress

- Balance personal needs with the needs of the group
- Practice self-care by eating well, drinking enough water, using sunscreen, communicating needs and issues, etc.

## **ATTENDANCE**

Punctuality and attendance are important to the success of our community crews. Tardy arrivals and unexcused absences will be subject to disciplinary action including warning, suspension and finally termination.

Excused absences will be granted at the discretion of SCA staff. Students must call their crew leader to inform them of any absences or notify them ahead of time. Excused absences may include: family emergency (proof required), illness verified with doctor's note, etc.

Crew members are permitted a maximum of three unexcused absences during the summer. Unexcused absences will be treated as a no call/no show absence.

## **BEHAVIORS THAT WILL NOT BE TOLERATED**

- Violence or threatening behavior during work and/or outside work time
- Bullying (including online) during work and/or outside work time
- Possession of a firearm or other dangerous weapon
- Alcohol or drug use of any kind
- Use of electronic devices during paid work time
- Blatant or intentionally unsafe behavior that endangers the health of one's self or others
- Racist, sexist or homophobic behavior or language
- Harassment – of any kind
- Disrespect – for other members, staff, partners, visitors, and/or the public
- Damage incurred while handling tools in an unsafe manner or for any purposes not authorized by SCA staff
- Cursing and/or using profanity
- Leaving work at an undesignated time without informing SCA staff

## **PERFORMANCE PLAN**

Many situations/behaviors should be able to be resolved through verbal counseling or discussion with the member; however, some incidents may be severe enough to merit a formal written warning, suspension (without pay), final warning or termination.

In the event that a member breaks the Crew Commitment (agreed upon group rules) or SCA policy with words or actions, the Crew Leaders may engage in the following steps.

### **Step #1: Verbal Warning**

As the first step in progressive discipline, the purpose of a verbal warning is to clarify policies and expectations. Member will be informed that they are being issued a verbal warning.

### **Step #2: Written Warning**

If the conduct addressed by a verbal warning is repeated or additional problems occur after the issuance of a verbal warning, the Leader will follow up with a written warning. Member will be asked to sign and date a written warning form.

### Step #3: Creation of a Performance Plan

This is a formal written plan between the Leader and the member to modify recurring behaviors and/or performance issues that have continued after the issuance of both a verbal and written warning. This plan will be written in collaboration with the member and will be signed by both the Leader and the member.

### Step #4: Breaching of the Performance Plan

SCA Leader will discuss the breach of the performance plan with SCA Staff. They will determine if a new Performance Plan needs to be created to address new/different behavior. Once a decision is made the member (and if minor, their parent/guardian) will be notified.

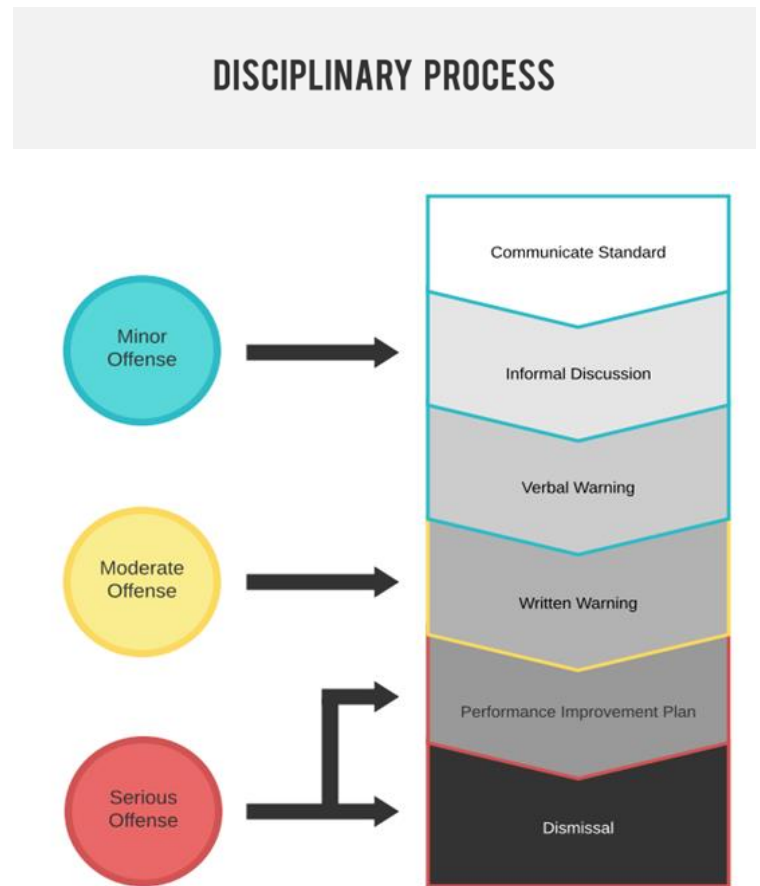
### Step #5: Member Dismissal

If the Performance Plan has been breached by the member, dismissal from the program may be warranted, as decided by SCA in its sole discretion. Parents/guardians will be informed of the dismissal.

In addition, there are instances where certain behaviors and actions by a member will lead to immediate dismissal from the program.

Crew Members may be dismissed for any of the reasons listed below. This is NOT an all-inclusive list.

- Compromising the physical or emotional safety of another individual or group
- Bullying behaviors, both in person and online
- Endangering self or others through disregard of established policies and procedures
- Engaging in illegal acts including the possession and/or use of alcohol or drugs
- Breaching behavioral contracts
- Having an undisclosed medical/mental health condition and/or medication





While we strive to mitigate risks, we cannot eliminate them or guarantee the safety of SCA participants.

### **SETTING THE STAGE**

SCA begins preparing for member safety long before community crew members arrive at their program sites. Leaders take part in trainings to prepare for their positions, including driver and vehicle safety, safe tool usage, and proper body mechanics. All crew leaders are trained in first aid. Before the crew begins, leaders work with agency partners to identify any hazards associated with the work or the location. The crew leaders use this information to develop mitigation strategies to reduce the risks associated with the identified hazards.

### **IN THE FIELD**

Once in the field, the crew utilizes a variety of resources to maintain the safety of the group. Members are trained to “Take 5 for Safety.” Using this tool, members and leaders pause to assess hazards and plan for safety any time that the crew begins a new project or experiences a change in the work environment (such as a change in weather or location). Members receive training in tool use, body mechanics and the proper use of personal protective equipment.

All crews carry an Emergency Response Plan (ERP) that outlines the steps to take in case of an emergency. The ERP includes contact information for park staff, directions to the nearest medical facility, SCA’s emergency response number and immediate action steps.

Crew leaders carry the communication devices most appropriate to the crew location. If cell service is good, they may carry a cell phone. If not, they may carry park-radios or emergency locator beacons.

SCA provides a 24-hour emergency hotline: 1-800-YO-SOGGY (1-800-967-6449) for leaders to use for support in any emergency.

### **EMOTIONAL SAFETY**

The SCA is committed to fostering an inclusive environment where all participants feel safe. All SCA participants deserve the right to be treated with respect and not be subject to discrimination on account of race, religious creed, religion, color, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin, ancestry, ethnicity, age, and physical or mental ability.

### **PERSONAL PROPERTY**

Any personal property that you bring to work is your responsibility, including phones, iPods, money and purses. SCA strongly advises you to leave valuable items at home or secure them on your person in a manner that will not impact your ability to work. SCA will not accept responsibility for any personal items that are stolen, broken or lost at work.

### **PREVENTION OF TICK-BORNE ILLNESSES**

Since ticks are a common hazard in many areas where SCA crew members serve, SCA has developed the following guidelines to help prevent the spread of tick-borne illnesses.

1. In high tick prone areas, participants should wear long-sleeve shirts, long pants, and

often gaiters to prevent ticks from reaching bare skin, and to keep ticks outside of clothing where they can be seen and brushed off.

2. Participants should practice a twice-daily tick check (visual inspections) to find and remove any present ticks.
3. Participants may apply Picaridin or DEET directly to skin to repel ticks at the point where they would bite.
4. Participants may treat clothing and equipment (hats, gaiters, boots, etc.) with Permethrin to repel and disable ticks (optional, but strongly recommended).

Permethrin is an insecticide that is extremely effective in preventing ticks from travelling over skin and clothing.

5. Participants should remove ticks.
6. Removed ticks should be reported to leader immediately.
7. Participants and staff monitor for signs and symptoms (some common signs and symptoms include: bull's eye red circle anywhere on the body, fever, nausea, muscle soreness, and lethargy) of tick-borne illnesses and seek medical attention as needed.

## HEALTH AND WELLNESS



### CHANGES TO YOUR MEDICAL

#### CONDITION PRIOR TO YOUR CREW

If anything about your medical condition changes between the time that you complete your medical form and the beginning of your crew, you must update your medical form before you arrive for your crew. Some examples of changes in medical condition include sustaining an injury, changes to mental health or services used, changing a medication or dosage, being diagnosed with new allergies, having your wisdom teeth pulled, etc. **All changes in medical condition need to be reported via an updated medical form to SCA before the start date of the position.**

Contact SCA at [SCAmedical@thesca.org](mailto:SCAmedical@thesca.org) to make updates to your medical form.

If you arrive at your position with an undisclosed medical condition, you will no longer be medically cleared to participate. SCA must conduct a new full review of your medical form to determine your continued eligibility for participation. Depending on the nature of the undisclosed condition, it may not

be possible for you to be medically cleared, and you may be dismissed from the program.

### MEDICATION MANAGEMENT ON THE CREW

All prescription and non-prescription medications that you will bring to the program need to be listed on your medical form. If you will be bringing any medications that are not currently listed on your medical form, you must notify SCA before your position begins.

Contact SCA at [SCAmedical@thesca.org](mailto:SCAmedical@thesca.org) to notify SCA of any medications that you will be bringing that are not on your medical form.

Crew leaders will conduct a medication check with you when you arrive at the crew meetup location. If you arrive without two sets of all prescribed medications, including Epi-pens and inhalers, the crew leaders will call your parents/guardians right away to put in a new prescription.



If you arrive at your position with a medication not listed on your medical form, you are no longer medically cleared to participate. As a result, at SCA's sole discretion, you may be suspended from participating in the program (including being required to return home) while you update the medical form and while SCA conducts a full review of your revised medical form to determine your continued eligibility for participation. Depending on the nature of the medication and the condition that it is used to treat, it may not be possible for you to be medically cleared, and you may be dismissed from the program.

All medications that you bring on your crew should be in their original containers with your name and the prescribed dosage and intake schedule. You should bring two sets of all prescribed medications to avoid a break in treatment if any of the medication is lost or damaged.

SCA leaders will gather and keep all medications safe and secure, will know the prescribed intake schedule and will make meds available at the appropriate times. You will be required to administer/take your own medication and SCA Leaders will record observed medication intake in the Field Log.

## **EPIPENS AND INHALERS**

If you have a history of allergic reactions or asthma, you are required by SCA to bring TWO epinephrine devices or inhalers each day to the program. SCA staff will ensure that required medications are present at all times. One EpiPen/inhaler will be placed in the crew First Aid Kit and the other will be carried by you at all times.

## **ASTHMA TREATMENT ON THE CREW**

If you have a prescribed emergency inhaler, you will carry it with you at all times. SCA leaders will carry

your second inhaler in the crew first aid kit at all times. SCA staff will use the Field Log to keep track of the number of times you use your inhaler.

Leaders will seek professional medical attention if your condition does not improve after using a rescue inhaler. SCA staff and your parent/guardian will be notified as soon as possible if this occurs.

If you leave the field due to asthma, you will need to be cleared by your doctor and SCA staff before re-entering the field.

## **USE OF EPIPENS IN THE FIELD**

If you have a prescribed EpiPen, you will carry the EpiPen with you at all times. SCA leaders will carry your second EpiPen in the crew first aid kit at all times. If you exhibit signs of a severe allergic reaction, the SCA crew leaders will observe your use of the EpiPen as prescribed.

In the event that a member uses an EpiPen, they will be taken to a medical facility for professional medical support. SCA staff and the member's parent/guardian will be notified as soon as possible. The member must be cleared by their doctor and SCA before re-entering the field.

## **FIRST AID KIT MANAGEMENT**

All SCA crews will have in their possession a first aid kit. The leaders will dispense first aid supplies, over the counter medications, and prescription medications as indicated by written directions on the product. Members are not permitted access to the first aid kits without first speaking to SCA leaders.

## **VISITS TO MEDICAL FACILITIES**

If a member experiences an injury or illness in the field that necessitates professional medical help,

the crew leaders will bring them to the nearest available medical facility. SCA staff and the member's parent/guardian will be notified of the visit as soon as possible.

After a member has been treated at a hospital or clinic they will obtain a doctor's note and will need to be cleared by SCA before returning to crew activities.

### **MANDATORY REPORTING**

All states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands have statutes identifying persons who are required to report suspected child maltreatment to an

appropriate agency, such as child protective services, a law enforcement agency, or a state's toll-free child abuse reporting hotline. All employees of SCA (including Crew Leaders) are considered mandatory reporters; therefore, any disclosure of maltreatment, abuse or neglect while actively involved with SCA will be reported immediately with full compliance in accordance with state and federal laws.

### **CONTACT SCA**

<b>Urgent</b>	<b>1-800-YO-SOGGY</b> <b>1-800-967-6449</b>
<b>Non-Urgent</b>	<b>1-888-722-9675 x1496</b>

## **CREW LEADERS**



SCA leaders are caring and dedicated outdoor professionals who have experience conducting youth programs and outdoor activities. They come from a wide range of backgrounds. Some are attending graduate school, while others are school teachers or year-round outdoor leaders. They are all 21 years of age or older and hold current first aid certifications.

SCA Crew Leaders are hired from March to mid-May, and go through crew leader training in either May or June. Once they are assigned to your crew, you will be able to find their contact information in the Prepare for Service tab in your MySCA portal. Until then, all crew questions can be directed to your local Program Manager.

## **EVALUATIONS**



Members of SCA crews will receive an end of program performance evaluation from their crew Leaders. Leaders will review and discuss these evaluations with members in the field, and electronic copies will be kept on file with SCA.

Members will also have regular weekly check-ins with their leaders. Additionally, members will evaluate their leaders and their SCA experience through an email survey after they complete their crew.

## GET READY FOR YOUR CREW



Take time between now and your crew start date to get yourself ready for success. Serving on a community crew is a major challenge. For some the challenge will be physical, for others, emotional or even social. Now is the time to start preparing your body and mind to take on this task.

### UNPLUG

During your crew, you'll be outdoors nearly every day, and will have limited access to electronic devices or social media. Your leaders will share with you more information on when and how you will be able to use your phone during work hours. You can take some simple steps now to start getting mentally prepared to go the day with limited internet, cell phone, and other things that you might be used to. For example: spend time outside; leave your phone at home for a day; talk to a friend face to face instead of sending a text...you get the idea.

### TURN ON YOUR BRAIN

Your crew isn't just about getting things done (though you'll do a lot of that!). It's also about learning more about conservation, ecology, and the unique ecosystem where you'll be working. Be ready to engage in hands-on, interactive, and reflective environmental education activities with your crew leaders and SCA staff.

### MOVE YOUR BODY

Get your body ready for hard work by exercising at least 3 times a week for 30 minutes at a time. Have fun with it: run, dance, play basketball, Frisbee, soccer, etc. The goal is to get your muscles moving

and your heart beating faster. If you haven't done any physical activity for a while, be sure to start slowly and work your way up to more strenuous activities.

### OPEN YOUR MIND

You are about to become part of a close-knit, hard-working, community team. You'll be working with your teammates and leaders for long days conserving the planet. It can be pretty great! But it also means that you need to be prepared to do the hard work of building community. Be ready to learn from people who are different from you, to ask for help when you need it and offer help when you can, and to acknowledge when you're in the wrong and take steps to make things right.

### COMMIT TO SUBSTANCE FREE

By joining a crew, you are committing to abstain from drugs and alcohol. These substances interfere with the health and safety of crew members, and with the dynamics of the team as a whole. Using alcohol or illicit drugs are grounds for dismissal from the program.

### CONSIDER COPING

All crew members will experience challenge and stress at various points during their SCA service. Take time to reflect on how you currently handle stressful situations and consider what strategies you use to cope. Some people reach out for support, others write in a journal, while others practice mindfulness or take time out to be alone. What are ways that you can plan to cope with some of the challenges you will face during your time with your team?

## THE CREW EXPERIENCE



The crew experience can be life changing. Community crew members work hard to complete important service work on public lands, learn about career paths, explore new eco-systems, build important life skills, and meet other members with diverse life experiences and a shared interest in conservation.

### LEARN MORE AND CONNECT

Visit the webpages to learn more about the incredible impact that these experiences can have on participants, explore the day to day experience

of life on a crew, or connect with crew alum on Twitter (@the\_sca) or Instagram (@the\_sca).



@the\_sca



@the\_sca

### SCA's Impact on Youth:

<https://www.thesca.org/about/impact-on-youth#graphic>

### The Crew Experience:

<https://www.thesca.org/community>