

QUALITY CHAPTER MEETING

Number 18—Conference Call

Background: Communication is an integral characteristic of effective leading. Sometimes, circumstances don't lend themselves to a face-to-face meeting. It may make more sense to conduct the meeting by conference call, instead.

Meeting resources: A conference-call meeting requires participants to have nothing but a phone. As a leader, develop and circulate an agenda ahead of time by email. Try to circulate it at least a week in advance to participants can review it and begin to think about the discussion topics. Stick to the agenda! Use <http://www.freeconferencecall.com/> or a similar service to eliminate costs.

Meeting Content: There are a number of times when a conference call might be the most appropriate method of conducting a meeting:

- ♦ When developing a small chapter with only a few active members
- ♦ When meeting with officers only, not the general membership
- ♦ When a chief lives far away, is on vacation, or works at scout camp
- ♦ When calling a special meeting at the last minute
- ♦ When holding a meeting with only one item of business and no other activities planned

There are costs and benefits to this practice. For example, although it eliminates travel time, a conference-call meeting doesn't permit interaction among participants. Also, although participants can quickly discuss items from different locations, they will feel more comfortable leaving the conversation or not participating. Don't use this method very frequently at all; only consider it in a pinch!