



WINTERFEST 2026 Advisor Guide

February 6-8, 2026 | Gatlinburg, TN

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Included in this packet is much of the information needed for your unit to have a great experience at Winterfest. Please take a few minutes to review the guide as many questions will be answered here. In addition, there will be supplemental information that will be published as it becomes available.

In addition to this handbook, you will find complete event information such as event guides, schedules, discounted hotel reservation system, ticketing and more at bsawinterfest.org.

We look forward to seeing you in Gatlinburg in 2026 for our 50th Anniversary!



Key Information

Date: February 6 – 8, 2026

Location: Gatlinburg, Tennessee

- Rocky Top Sports World will be the home base of the event on Saturday with events taking place on campus at the main building, the Boys & Girls Club and the Community Center.
- There are a variety of hotels located in Gatlinburg with which we have negotiated special rates. Be sure to check our website for our **Accommodations** link to take advantage of the best rates. Cabin rentals are also a great option for large groups - they fill fast so don't wait!

Who Can Attend?

- Winterfest is open to all currently registered Venturers, Explorers, Sea Scouts, and Scouts of Venturing age (14 yrs old OR completed the eighth grade to 21). Youth not meeting the aforementioned age requirement will NOT be allowed to participate. **ALL participants over the age of 18 MUST have a current S.A.F.E. Guarding Youth (YPT) certificate and may be asked by Staff at any time to present it. Please keep a digital copy handy on your mobile device and have your Units all hold copies for each member.**
- *All participants, adult advisors, unit leaders, and visitors are required to have a wristband for entry to all events and activities.* Wristbands will be provided at check-in for all who registered in advance of the event. They will also be available for purchase throughout the weekend. Please make sure all parents, relatives and visitors attending understand they will need a Visitor wristband to spectate.



What is Winterfest?

Winterfest is an exciting, fun-filled, and competitive event for older youth registered in Scout programs (ages 14+) – Explorers, Venturers, Sea Scouts, and Scouts BSA.

There is a lot to do at Winterfest. Some of the events your youth will find are:

- Competition Events for Explorers related to various career fields (fire service, law enforcement, and emergency medical services)
- Aquatic Events
- STEM Activities
- Climbing/caving/bouldering
- SIRT Range (pistol, rifle)
- 5K Winterfest Run (*open to all - adults included*)
- Exhibits & Expos
- Training & MORE

Participants can also enjoy on their own snow skiing, shopping, and sightseeing in the beautiful Great Smoky Mountains of Eastern Tennessee.

Where can I get more information?

Event information, registration, scheduling and ticketing information is posted at bsawinterfest.org and is updated regularly.

Questions may be addressed to:

Northeast Georgia Council

info@bsawinterfest.org

706-693-2446 Ext. 109





REGISTRATION DATES & TICKETING

Fees	Advance Tickets	AFTER 1/5/2026	Door Price
Participants (age 14-21 only)	\$70	\$75	\$80
Advisor/Unit Leaders (Min of 2 per registered unit, 21+ yrs.)	\$25	\$30	\$35
Spectators Tickets will be available at the door - All non-participant, family, friends, etc. ONLY! No charge for spectators under 8 yrs. Spectators will have limited viewing access ONLY to events, and may not work with participants during events. If you are a registered Adult leader wishing to be part of your participating Unit, please REGISTER and purchase an Advisor/Unit Leader Ticket to have full access. ALL registered participants over the age of 18 yrs MUST have a current S.A.F.E. Guarding Youth Protection Training (YPT) certificate in order to participate.			

Ticketing & Registration

Registration will be online at bsawinterfest.org and will open on **November 14, 2025**. We will also make an announcement through Facebook and Instagram when registration opens. Our website will be updated up until the event, so be sure to check back for the latest updates. Make sure to **SUBSCRIBE to our website** to get all the important info in your inbox. Once you have purchased tickets and are registered, you will also be receiving regular updates via email.

All participants must register. Discounted registration will end at 11:59 p.m. on Friday, January 5, 2026. Please note that **Spectators will not be allowed to participate in events.** Spectator fees only allows entry to spectate. All participants and spectators **MUST** obtain and display a wristband specific to the ticket type purchased for entry into the event areas.

All Winterfest fees are non-refundable.

Event Registration

Check the website Events tab OR the [2026 Event Guide](#) (PDF available for download on website) for important details regarding event registration.

Aquatics Events:

A **\$25 activity fee** (purchased at time of registration) will be assessed for the **Discover SCUBA** event and **\$10 movie ticket** for the **Friday Night Dive-In Movie**. Space for these events is very limited, so get your tickets EARLY.

- **All participants who will be participating in pool-based events (Cardboard Boat Regatta, Friday Night Dive-In Movie, Discover SCUBA, etc) will need to present proof of a **current BSA Swim test** OR pass a BSA swim test prior to participating in the event. BSA Swim Test requirements and form can be found [HERE](#).**
- Cardboard Boat Regatta participants will be provided with cardboard and duck tape. Teams must provide their own materials for decorations, etc. Rules for the Cardboard Boat Regatta can be found in the [2026 Event Guide](#).

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GATLINBURG, TN

Health & Safety

Scouting America® (BSA) – Health Forms

The Scouting America® national policy states that anyone participating in scouting activities must provide a completed and signed health form. Unit leadership should collect and maintain the health forms for all participants (adults included) in their units during the event. Only Parts A and B are required for the event. If your unit's planned activities for Winterfest exceed 72 hours, then Part C is required.

NOTE: Included in each health form is a release the parent will sign providing permission to treat their child in the event of illness or injury. This may include, but is not limited to, examination and routine treatment by medical personnel at the event, transport to a hospital, X-ray examination, anesthesia, medical or surgical diagnostic procedures, or treatment that is considered necessary in the best judgment of the attending physician and performed by or under the supervision of a member of the medical staff of the hospital furnishing medical services. In the event of serious illness or injury, all reasonable efforts to reach the parent will be attempted.

Health forms for Explorers, Crews, Troops & Ships can be found [HERE](#)

Scouting America® (BSA) – S.A.F.E. Guarding Youth (YPT) training policy

The Scouting America national policy states that anyone participating in activities over 18 must complete youth protection training. Legacy "YPT" training is acceptable if current through February 6, 2026. **See page 8 for more in the Code of Conduct.**

Participants must be able to provide proof of **CURRENT** YPT certification and may be asked to produce either physical or digital proof. *Those who cannot provide proof will be ejected from the event with no refund.*

The **S.A.F.E. Guarding Youth (YPT)** online training can be found [HERE](#) (or by clicking on the logo).



Aquatics Events – Scouting America (BSA) Swim Tests

Anyone (youth and adult) participating in Aquatic Events must have proof of "Swimmer" classification on the Scouting America swim test. More information can be found [HERE](#).

Traveling to Gatlinburg & Getting Around Town

Gatlinburg is next to Great Smoky Mountains National Park and has miles of hiking trails in the mountains and tons of dining, attractions, shopping, and arts and crafts in town. Make Gatlinburg your basecamp for adventure. Your youth will have a blast!

Most units will travel by personal vehicle to Winterfest, but be sure to check into alternative means of transportation. You may be able to save money by working with other units in your area to charter a bus.

Event parking at the Rocky Top Sports World is FREE. If you plan to drive your car to downtown Gatlinburg, expect to pay for parking. Parking in Gatlinburg can cost from \$10 to \$20 for the day. Some restaurants and attractions advertise that they have free parking (which is awesome), but they tend to be outside of the most congested part of the city center.

Downtown Gatlinburg is eminently walkable, as are the nearby park trails accessible from the city. If your feet get tired, take the inexpensive trolley to explore locally.

Visit gatlinburg.com for more information on the location.



Lodging

It is each unit's responsibility to make their own hotel reservations. Hotels will fill up fast. Winterfest has secured discounted hotel pricing. Be sure to view the list of hotel discounts to assist you in making your plans. A link for reservations for discounted lodging can be found on bsawinterfest.org.

Event Check-In

Once you arrive in Gatlinburg you will need to check-in to receive your materials.

Where: **Rocky Top Sports World**
1870 Sports World Blvd,
Gatlinburg, TN 37738

When: Check-In will be on the following days/times:

Friday 1:00 PM – 10:00 PM

Saturday 8:00 AM – 11:00 AM

List of items to bring to Check-in:

- Your copy of ALL Registration Materials

What you will receive at check-in:

- Wristbands for all pre-registered youth and adults
- Ripley's and/or WonderWorks tickets (if pre-ordered)

Please send only **ONE (1)** Unit Advisor and **ONE (1)** Youth Representative to check your unit in.

Additional wristbands will be available for sale but they will be sold at the walk-up price listed in the fee table on *page 3*. Wristbands are required for all youth, adults, and spectators to obtain entry into all events and areas.

Winterfest Agenda

The final agenda will be posted on bsawinterfest.org prior to the event. We will also post locations for all events.

FRIDAY	
Morning	On your own, tour the city.
1:00pm – 10:00pm	Check-in
2:00pm – 8:00pm	Friday Events OPEN
6:30pm	Winterfest Official Opening (Rocky Top Sports World)
7:00pm - 9:00pm	Winterfest Talent Show is BACK! - Friday Night Auditions (Rocky Top Sports World)
9:00pm	Advisor's Briefing and New Unit Orientation - (Rocky Top Sports World)
9:30pm	Law Enforcement & Fire Service Events Briefing (1 adult/1 youth only per Post)
1:00am	Everyone in their own room – curfew
SATURDAY	
6:00am - 8:00am	5K Winterfest Fun Run
8:00am – 11:00am	Late Check-in (Rocky Top Sports World)
8:00am – 6:00pm	ALL Winterfest Events OPEN
8:00pm - 10:00pm	Awards Presentations & Talent Show
10:00pm	50th Anniversary Dance Party
1:00am	Everyone in their own room – curfew
SUNDAY	
All day	Tour the city, visit the event partners, and safe travels home

Food & Concessions

All meals at Winterfest are "on your own." **NO OUTSIDE FOOD IS ALLOWED IN THE SPORTS CENTER.** The center offers a snack bar and a local vendors and food trucks will be onsite Friday and Saturday. Specifics on food options will be announced closed to the event. Don't forget to bring a refillable water bottle!

Gatlinburg Discounted Attraction Partners: Ripley's & WonderWorks

Discount tickets will be available for Ripley's and WonderWorks. Details on these event partners will be in the [2026 Event Guide](#) and at bsawinterfest.org. Tickets can be purchased online at the time of registering for Ripley's and WonderWorks. These discounted tickets are available to anyone attending, including visitors. Tickets can be used throughout the weekend, but each partner is offering special hours on Friday night to accommodate Winterfest participants.

If you plan to visit **WonderWorks or Ripley's** and have purchased tickets during registration, you will pick up your tickets when you check-in to the event.

If your unit plans to take advantage of discounted attraction tickets before registration opens on Friday, please contact the Northeast GA Service Center to arrange alternate ticket pickup times (see page 2 for contact info).

All waivers can be found on bsawinterfest.org/waivers.

Event Medical Services

There is a team of trained medical responders during the entirety of the event. Our medical staff is onsite at each facility to assist with any and all medical situations that may arise. **The medical team would like to encourage everyone to follow appropriate safety protocols and stay hydrated throughout the entire event to reduce the need for medical services.**



LISTENING EAR:

This year **Listening Ear (LE)** has joined the medical team. LE is mental health first aid. If you or someone in your Unit is struggling with anything that might be related to mental wellbeing during our event, please call **716-325-0094**.

Adults (18+) – do you want to serve the Scouting Community at the Scouting America® National Jamboree July 22-31, 2026?

Consider joining Listening Ear and scan this QR code or come talk to us at this event.



FAQs

- Two-deep adult leadership is required. **ALL units MUST have at LEAST 2 Adult registered leaders over the age of 21 present at the event. One adult female over the age of 21 is required if you have a co-ed group.** Adult leadership is responsible for the conduct of their youth during the event, including compliance with the designated curfews.
- Winterfest has an active Facebook & Instagram page. Make sure you are following these profiles for updates. We use Facebook, Instagram and direct emailing as our primary forms of communication to update attendees prior to the event. Our event app will be the main form of communication during the event, please make sure all your participants download the app prior to the event.
- Transportation, meals, hotels, and the extra activities are your responsibility.
- Winterfest is staffed with trained medical personnel to assist your unit as needed. If medical assistance is needed, please ask for assistance from any staff member with a walkie-talkie and help will be summoned. Our medical personnel are first responders and coordinate with Gatlinburg EMS as needed. If you need immediate emergency assistance, dial 911.
- The event staff will enforce the **Winterfest Code of Conduct** that was accepted at the time of registration. It is also at the end of this document. Behavior and discipline are the responsibilities of the Unit Leaders. Serious discipline breaches are subject to review by the Winterfest Executive Staff, who reserves the right to take appropriate action, including but not limited to asking the involved persons to leave all Winterfest events.
- Damages to hotel rooms or any Winterfest event facilities are the responsibility of the youth and their unit.
- Advisors/Leaders for each unit are responsible for checking their units into their selected hotels.
- In the event of an emergency, it is necessary to be able to track down your unit. An emergency contact will be required at registration.
- If you need to get a Tennessee Tax-Exempt Status Certificate to avoid the State Sales Tax go to bsawinterfest.org/waivers.
- There are a variety of worship options available for you and your youth. Be sure to use the Gatlinburg Chamber of Commerce to find the church/synagogue of your choice [HERE](#).

Social Media

Winterfest Facebook



Winterfest Instagram



Official App:

Download the official Winterfest App on both the Google Play and the Apple app stores.



PLEASE NOTE:

We will be using the BSA Winterfest app and email as our primary communication to update attendees prior to and during the event. Make sure to download the BSA Winterfest app from the Google Play and Apple App stores (links above). You will also be able to check in with your digital tickets and see your schedules on your mobile device with this app. **ONLY the email used during registration can see the Unit tickets and schedule in the app, so choose your registration email accordingly.** Important messages will be pushed through the app during the event as well - so keep notifications turned on. The full event schedule and any location or time changes will also be in the app.

WINTERFEST OFFICIAL POLICIES

Code of Conduct & Regulations:

The general welfare of any group depends on the conduct of its individual members. This **Code of Conduct** is designed to ensure the success of Winterfest and provide maximum enjoyment and safety for all participants.

1. The group leader (adult advisor) shall, with the full cooperation of the Explorers, Venturers, Sea Scouts, and Scouts BSA responsible for maintaining discipline, security, and the standards outlined in this **Code of Conduct**.
2. All Scouting America Advisors & Participants MUST be currently registered with Scouting America and hold a current **S.A.F.E. Guarding Youth** training certificate (valid through February 8, 2026) and have a current medical form on file with their Unit Leader. Unit Leaders are required to have a binder with physical copies of all participant and advisor medical forms that must be current through February 8, 2026. YOU MAY AT ANY TIME BE ASKED TO PRESENT PROOF (digital or physical is acceptable) OF YOUR **S.A.F.E. Guarding Youth (YPT)**. FAILURE TO PRODUCE THAT PROOF WILL RESULT IN YOUR IMMEDIATE EJECTION FROM THE EVENT.
3. All participants are expected to set a good example by always being properly dressed and presentable.
4. In consideration of others, all youth are expected to be in their own rooms and quiet by 1 AM. They are not to leave their rooms again before 6 AM.
5. Each Unit or Participant is personally responsible for breakage, damage, or loss of property. Explorer Posts, Venturing Crews, Sea Scout Ships, and Scouts BSA Troops, or non-Scouting groups will be charged for damage not covered by individual members. Loss of personal articles is not the responsibility of the hotel, Winterfest staff, Scouting America, or their agents or representatives.
6. No participant will allow unregistered persons to occupy their room or visit in same (including local area residents).
7. All participants will respect Scouting America's Scout Oath & Law, all **S.A.F.E. Guarding Youth** rules & regulations, and all digital safety & online rules. For more information, refer to scouting.org.
8. Each Explorer, Venturer, Sea Scout, Scouts BSA or other attendee understands that the purchase, possession, or consumption of alcoholic beverages or illegal drugs at Winterfest will not be allowed. This standard shall apply to all registrants - youth and adults.
9. Fireworks of any type are strictly prohibited.
10. The Winterfest Volunteer Chair shall assemble and serve on a review panel for any serious violation of the Code of Conduct. Winterfest staff reserves the right to send any youth or adult attendee or Staff home for violation of this Code of Conduct. Any decision of the review panel is final.
11. Everyone is expected to always act appropriately. Serious discipline breaches are subject to review by the Winterfest Executive Staff, who reserve the right to take appropriate action, including but not limited to asking the involved persons to leave Winterfest.

WINTERFEST OFFICIAL POLICIES

Safety Requirements:

YOUTH PROTECTION TRAINING:

According to Scouting America, anyone participating in Winterfest OVER THE AGE OF 18 MUST COMPLETE THE **S.A.F.E. Guarding Youth** course and it must be active through February 8, 2026. If you need to update or complete the course, please visit [HERE](#).

SCOUTING AMERICA HEALTH FORMS:

Per Scouting America policies, a health form is required for each participant. Unit leadership should collect and maintain the health forms during the event. Only **Parts A and B** are required for the event. *If your unit's planned activities for Winterfest exceed 72 hours, then Part C is required.* Health forms can be found here:

For **Explorers**: [CLICK HERE](#)

For **Crews, Troops, & Ships** or other attendees: [CLICK HERE](#)

Included in each health form is a release the parent will sign providing permission to treat their child in the event of illness or injury. This may include, but is not limited to, examination and routine treatment by medical personnel at the event, transport to a hospital, X-ray examination, anesthesia, medical or surgical diagnostic procedures, or treatment that is considered necessary in the best judgment of the attending physician and performed by or under the supervision of a member of the medical staff of the hospital furnishing medical services. In the event of serious illness or injury, all reasonable efforts to reach the parent will be attempted.

Refund Policy:

Non-Refundable. All fees are non-refundable.