

Scouts BSA Safety Scenario #2: The Wrong-Way Convoy

For Scouts to Discuss (Scouts BSA)

Troop X is heading to Camp Minsi for a weekend trip. It is already dark when they leave their weekly meeting place, and several parents are driving Scouts in their personal vehicles. A few of the parents have never been to Camp Minsi before, so they decide they will simply follow the Scoutmaster, who is towing the troop trailer.

The group travels east on Interstate 80. As they approach the Blakeslee exit, traffic is forced off the highway because of a road closure. The Scoutmaster exits and turns left onto Route 115. Because it is a divided highway and visibility is limited at night, he mistakenly turns into the oncoming-traffic lane.

Since the parents are following closely behind, the next three vehicles repeat the same mistake and enter the wrong lane. Realizing the error, the Scoutmaster drives over the median to reach the correct side of the roadway. The other vehicles follow him across the median. The convoy then continues to Route 940 and arrives at Camp Minsi without further incident.

Discussion Questions for Scouts

- What made this situation unsafe?
 - Why did the other drivers follow the Scoutmaster into the wrong lane?
 - What could have happened if another vehicle had been approaching in that lane?
 - What do you think the **Guide to Safe Scouting** says about transportation planning, caravanning, and night driving?
 - Review the **Pre-Trip Transportation Inspection Checklist**:
 - Which checklist items might have prevented this situation?
 - What steps should the troop take before future trips to ensure every driver is prepared?
 - Should the Scouts or adults report this near miss? Why is reporting important even when no one is hurt?
 - How can the troop prevent this from happening on future outings?
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Leader's Guide: Scenario #2 — The Wrong-Way Convoy

Purpose of This Scenario

This scenario helps youth and adults understand:

- Why caravanning is discouraged in Scouting America
 - How unfamiliar routes and night driving increase risk
 - How near misses in transportation must be reported
 - The importance of pre-trip planning, navigation, and communication
 - How to use official Scouting America guidance — including the **Guide to Safe Scouting** and the **Pre-Trip Transportation Inspection Checklist**
 - How to empower Scouts to speak up when something feels unsafe
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Key Teaching Points for Leaders

1. This Was a Serious Transportation Near Miss

Even though no one was injured, this event clearly qualifies as a near miss because:

- Multiple vehicles entered an active oncoming-traffic lane
- The mistake was repeated by several drivers
- The correction required crossing a median
- A different timing or an oncoming vehicle could have resulted in a catastrophic crash

Scouting America expects **all incidents and near misses** to be reported so councils can identify patterns and prevent future harm.

2. Caravanning Is Discouraged — and This Scenario Shows Why

Scouting America (formerly BSA) does not explicitly ban caravanning in the current Guide to Safe Scouting, but it is **strongly discouraged** due to well-documented safety risks.

Individual Vehicle Responsibility

- Each driver must have their **own directions**, route plan, and awareness of the destination.
- Drivers should **not follow a lead vehicle blindly**.
- A **designated navigator** in the passenger seat helps prevent distraction and wrong turns.

Safety Risks of Convoys

Caravanning often leads to:

- Following too closely (“tailgating”)
- Speeding or running yellow lights to keep the lead vehicle in sight
- Repeating the lead driver’s mistakes — exactly what happened in this scenario

This incident demonstrates why Scouting America discourages convoy-style travel.

3. Use Designated Checkpoints Instead of Driving in a Line

Scouting America recommends:

- Meeting at a **common departure point**
- Prearranging **specific rest stops or checkpoints** for periodic coordination
- Planning a **final daily destination** where all vehicles regroup

These practices allow each driver to travel safely and independently while maintaining group coordination.

4. The Pre-Trip Transportation Inspection Checklist Could Have Prevented This

Relevant checklist items include:

- **Route planning:** ensuring every driver has directions, GPS pins, or maps
- **Driver readiness:** confirming drivers are alert, prepared, and familiar with the destination
- **Communication:** establishing what to do if vehicles become separated

- **Environmental considerations:** recognizing that night driving and unfamiliar roads increase risk

Had these steps been followed, the convoy would not have relied on “just follow the Scoutmaster.”

5. Safe Driving Limits and Required Rest

Scouting America transportation guidance includes:

- A maximum of **10 hours of driving in any 24-hour period**
- Frequent rest stops for food, hydration, and stretching
- Avoiding fatigue, especially when driving at night or after a long workweek

These limits help prevent the kinds of errors that occurred in this scenario.

6. Youth Protection Applies to All Transportation

All transportation must follow Scouting’s **Barriers to Abuse**, including:

- **Two-deep leadership**
- **No one-on-one contact** between an adult and a youth who is not their own child
- Proper supervision and accountability during all travel segments

Transportation is a youth protection environment, not just a logistics task.

7. What Leaders Should Do After an Incident Like This

- Document the event factually
- Submit the appropriate Scouting America incident/near-miss report
- Review transportation planning practices with all adults
- Provide clear written directions or GPS pins before departure
- Reinforce that caravanning is discouraged and unsafe
- Review the **Pre-Trip Transportation Inspection Checklist** at the next committee meeting

Suggested Leader Discussion Prompts

- “What pressures led the drivers to follow the Scoutmaster instead of navigating independently?”
- “What does the **Guide to Safe Scouting** say about transportation planning and why caravanning is discouraged?”
- “Looking at the **Pre-Trip Transportation Inspection Checklist**, which steps would have prevented this situation?”
- “How can we use checkpoints instead of driving in a line?”
- “What should a Scout do if they feel unsafe in a vehicle?”
- “How does reporting this help protect other units in the future?”

Takeaway Message for Scouts

Every driver must navigate safely and independently. Caravanning is discouraged because it leads to dangerous chain-reaction mistakes — and reporting near misses helps prevent the next one.