

THE MERIT BADGE PROGRAM

The Merit Badge program is part of the advancement plan of the BSA. It has guided the interests and energies of Boy Scouts for over 90 years and is one of the most unusual educational programs ever devised. A merit badge is an award presented to a Scout when he has completed the requirements for one of more than 115 subjects in a wide variety of areas.

This program cannot happen without the services of merit badge counselors, who are experts in a particular subject and interested in helping Scouts grow into men of character, ready to take their place in the world of work as participating citizens.

Your job is to satisfy yourself that each Scout who comes to you meets all the requirements for that merit badge. In a way, you are the examiner. Your larger role is in coaching/teaching and helping the Scout over the difficult hurdles of the requirements and making him aware of the deeper aspects of the subjects from your knowledge and experience.

The following are the steps that a Boy Scout takes to earn a merit badge, as outlined in the Official Boy Scout Handbook.

1. Get the merit badge book on his chosen subject. His troop may have one that he can borrow, and he can check the local library. He may choose to purchase one at the Northwest Suburban Scout Shop.
2. Learn and do the things that the pamphlet describes as being required for the badge.
3. Get a merit badge card signed by his Scoutmaster to give to his Merit Badge Counselor.
4. When the Scout is ready, he obtains the name and phone number of a merit badge counselor. He calls the counselor and makes an appointment. He brings all the things needed to meet the requirements of the badge, or proof of what was accomplished. Be sure to have another Scout, Sibling, or parent go with you.
5. Arrive at your appointment on time with your buddy. Satisfy the counselor that all requirements are met.
6. If all requirements are not met, DON'T GIVE UP. Make another appointment and complete the badge.
7. Obtain the counselor's signature on the card. Be sure the counselor signs and checks the card for completeness. The counselor should keep his/her 1/3 of the card.
8. Give the signed 2/3 of the merit badge card to the advancement chairman or the scoutmaster, who will record and purchase the badge and present it to you in front of your troop.

HOW MERIT BADGE COUNSELORS UPDATE THEIR INFORMATION OR BECOME A COUNSELOR.

New Merit Badge Counselor applicants fill out the Merit Badge Counselor Application form. If not registered with a Troop or Crew or Pack, the counselor needs to also fill out a Leader Application form. The forms are submitted to Council or the Advancement Chairman for the District that the prospective counselor is in. Once approved by the Advancement Chair, Council will add the counselor to the data bases and send a letter to the applicant informing that person of his/her acceptance. At that point the counselor may counsel Scouts in that merit badge.

To add or take away merit badges, a current counselor must fill out a Merit Badge Application form and submit it to Council or the Advancement Chairman for his/her particular District. This may be done one time during the year, and only at re-registration time in January. Once approved by the Advancement Chair, a letter is sent out and the records changed at Council.

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