

Navigating “Scouts BSA” – A Parent’s Guide

Beginning **February 2019**, the Boy Scout program name will change to “**Scouts BSA**” and will begin serving girls, as well as boys.

Before, during, and after that *program* name change, the overall *organization* name will continue to be Boy Scouts of America.

Both male and female participants in the Scouts BSA program will be referred to as “Scouts,” just as boys now in the Boy Scout program are often referred to as “Scouts.”

The Scout Handbook– Both scouts and parents should become familiar with the contents of the official Scout Handbook, as it will provide answers to many questions. Descriptions of the requirements for each Scout rank, Scout Skill Awards and several key merit badges are covered in the book. As your son advances in rank, Instructors or Scout Leaders will sign off on the completion of each requirement in the handbook. Over time this book will become a valuable record of your son’s achievements. First year Scouts should bring their book to each weekly meeting. Encourage your son to take good care of his book as he will need it for a long time.

Scout Ranks - The first four ranks (Scout, Tenderfoot, Second Class and First Class) must be obtained in sequence, but can be worked on simultaneously. A detailed list for each rank is listed in the handbook. The scouts will have many opportunities to learn basic skills as they advance through the first four ranks. They will also learn to work together which is often more essential than rank advancement.

Signing Off Requirements- To have the requirements signed off, the Scout needs to ask someone to sign it. Older Scouts with First Class and above are authorized to sign the requirements for Scout, Tenderfoot, and Second Class. If an older scout is unavailable to test and sign off for the requirement; then an adult leader may sign for the Scout. An adult leader may be an Assistant Scoutmaster. (In Scouting, troop leaders, rather than parents, sign off advancement requirements. In order to avoid the appearance of impropriety, in most troops, troop leaders will not normally sign off rank requirements for their own sons... Your son will be introduced to the adult and scout leaders during his first months in the Troop.

Scout Spirit- In addition to the skills and Merit Badges required for each rank, Scouts must also show *Scout Spirit*. Scout Spirit includes a number of elements such as participation, contribution, leadership and maturity relative to rank. It also includes making effort to live by the Scout Law in their daily lives.



Scoutmaster Conference- At the completion of each rank, the Scout is required to schedule a Scoutmaster conference and these are often held during the regular troop meetings. The Scout has the responsibility to request a conference and then the Scoutmaster or an Assistant Scoutmaster will meet with the scout to talk over and check that the Scout has fulfilled all rank requirements and also measure the Scout's readiness for advancement. Scouts should dress neatly in uniform for their conferences.

Board of Review- Boards of Review are also a part of rank advancement. Committee members interview Scouts who have passed their Scoutmaster conferences to both formalize their achievements and to obtain feedback about the troop and the Scouts experience in it. The Board of Review is an opportunity to engage in conversation. It is not intended to be an examination or a retesting.

Court of Honor- The purpose of a Court of Honor is to recognize the accomplishments of the Scouts. It is to acknowledge and appreciate the ranks, Merit Badges and leadership roles earned by the Scouts since the last Court of Honor. They are usually held quarterly in the church sanctuary.

[AGE REQUIREMENT ELIGIBILITY](#)

Merit badges, badges of rank, and Eagle Palms may be earned by a registered Scout. He may earn these awards until his 18th birthday. Any Scout who has achieved the First Class rank as a Scout may continue working up to his 18th birthday toward the Star, Life, and Eagle Scout ranks and Eagle Palms. An Eagle Scout board of review may occur, without special approval, within three months after the 18th birthday. Local councils must preapprove those held three to six months afterward. To initiate approval, the candidate, his parent or guardian, the unit leader, or a unit committee member attaches to the application a statement explaining the delay.

Record-Keeping

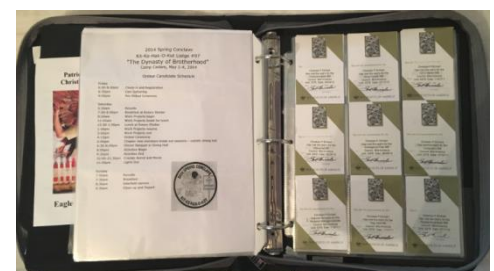
The advancement records are kept by the troop Advancement Chair, the Council office, and most importantly by the Scout. The Council office keeps records supplied to them by the troop Advancement Chair, who also keeps copies of these records for the troop in a software program.

It is also recommended that the Scout create a [binder](#) (Mead PRO Platinum Zipper Binder - \$20 on Amazon) to contain all their scout history records. A well maintained history would include:

- completed and signed blue merit badge cards
 - wallet-sized certificate cards for rank advancement
- Organize these in transparent [Trading Card Binder Pages](#).
- Scout participation log: include dates and title of the scouting event, number of camping nights, and miles hiked any certificates or special awards earned.
 - All Eagle Scout Project Information (This will be brought to your Eagle Scout Review Board)



Make sure all history items are signed or initialed by the appropriate Scout leader. It is advised to make copies of signed rank requirement pages in the scout handbook in case



the book is lost during an outing. It is also suggested organize the binder by keeping blue cards and rank certificates in plastic protector pages which are designed for baseball and other sports cards.

Please keep all scouting records in a safe place. If it should happen that there is a discrepancy or missed record, your personal records are your most important ally in proving what you completed and when.

Merit Badges

(Over 130 available): 21 merit badges must be earned to qualify for Eagle Scout.

Of this group, 13 badges are required, including:

- First Aid
- Citizenship in the Community
- Citizenship in the Nation
- Citizenship in the World
- Communications
- Cooking
- Environmental Science
- Personal Fitness
- Personal Management
- Camping
- Family Life.

In addition, a Scout has a choice between

- Emergency Preparedness and Lifesaving

and a choice among

- Cycling, Hiking, and Swimming

Merit Badge Opportunities:

Camp Cedars Merit Badges:

Each year at [Camp Cedars](#) summer camp, your scout can earn 5 or more merit badges during the week.

This is a sample of available merit badges and classes from 2018:

<http://www.mac-bsa.org/Post/sections/85/Files/Merit%20Badges%20List%202018.pdf>

The Mid-America Council web site has a calendar of Merit badge opportunities.

http://www.mac-bsa.org/bs_advancement_opportunities.aspx

BH: Merit Badge Clinics:

(Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints)

Offers over 20 merit badge opportunities each year (4 sessions)

You can register for 1 merit badge each session.

<https://scoutingevent.com/326-BHMeritBadgeClinics>

TB: SW Iowa Merit Badge College

They offer over 2 dozen merit badges over an 8hr period on one Saturday in November. Your scout can earn 2 Merit Badges in one day.

<https://scoutingevent.com/326-15001>

Overland Trails Council offers a Merit Badge College:

Overland Trails Council offers a Merit Badge College in Kearney in July each year

<http://www.overlandtrailsCouncil.org/mbu>

There are a number of excellent resources on-line to aid in achieving merit badges and rank advancements. I have included tips and highlights for each rank and links to helpful on-line resources. Every scout is an individual and should work at their own pace with your encouragement.

To help your son navigate and better enjoy his scouting experience there are a few websites you should familiarize yourself with:

The first is [Mid-America Council](#)

We are in the [Iron Horse District](#)

On the Mid-America site you can update or start you own training and get access to most current medical forms etc.

My.Scouting.org - go here to create an account or sign in to take or update your adult youth protection training. <https://my.scouting.org/>

You can get your membership number from our advancement coordinator [Mr. Tom Gensichen](#)

Scout Early Rank Advancement Videos

To get you started, BSA has put together a series of great videos that go through each of the requirements for the following ranks.

- Tenderfoot
- Second Class
- First Class

<http://www.boyscouttrail.com/videodownload.asp>

Trail to Eagle

In summary, some of the most demanding requirements on the road to Eagle are the actual Eagle Scout project, 21 merit badges (13 Eagle Required) and 20 nights camping.

One week of summer at Camp Cedars counts towards 5 nights camping (1 time). Fourteen more nights camping can easily be earned over the 7 semesters after joining in grade school by camping at least one weekend each semester.

If you attend summer camp each summer after joining you can easily get 17 merit badges at Camp Cedars over 4 summers (click on link to see list).

1st year summer camp (5th -6th grade): Kit Fox – earn **2 eagle required merit badges** and many requirements towards advancement in 1st 4 ranks.

Kit Fox – Swimming and First Aid merit badges.

Requirement that Kit Fox Scouts work on at camp are:

Scout Rank: 1e, 4a, 4b, 5

Tenderfoot Rank: 3a, 3b, 3c, 3d, 4a, 4b, 4c, 4d, 5a, 5b, 5c, 7b

Second Class Rank: 1b, 2b, 2c2f, 2g, 3a, 3d, 4, 5a, 5b (if blue swimmer) 5c, 5d, 6a, 6b, 6c, 6d, 6e

First Class Rank: 1b, 3a, 3b, 3c, 3d, 4a, 5a, 6a, (blue swimmer) 6e, 7a, 7b, 7c, 7d, 7e

2nd year summer camp (6th -7th grade) – **5 merit badges**

3rd year summer camp (7th - 8th grade) – **5 merit badges**

4th year summer camp (8th - 9th grade) – **5 merit badges**

By the end of your summer after 7th grade you should have earned 12 merit badges (at camp alone) and 15 night camping.

That means that you need to have 9 merit badges from sources other than camp.

The attached spreadsheet is an overview of the Rank process with highlights and milestones from Scout to Eagle.

As an example to achieve the first 4 ranks:

Tenderfoot: you need to have camped 1 night and assisted in cooking and have 1 hour of service.

Second Class: you need to have camped a total of 3 times and cooked a meal and have worked 2 hours on service projects and attended 5 Troop Activities (at least 3 camping) since joining.

First Class: you need to have camped 6 times and met swimming requirements and have worked 3 additional hours on service projects and attended 10 Troop Activities (at least 6 camping) since joining.

Star Rank: Serve in a position of responsibility, earned 6 merit badges (4 Eagle Required) and 6 additional hours of service and be active in troop for 6 months.

I have prepared a spreadsheet below showing a possible path to eagle over a four to five year period. This is by no means a required pace. The scout is only limited by his 18th Birthday.

There is a lot of debate on the age to get eagle – here are some interesting perspectives:









<http://blog.scoutingmagazine.org/2016/05/20/eagle-scout-at-17/>

In my case, my older brother, who is an eagle scout and my sons God Father, encouraged me and my son to get as much accomplished in Scouting before high school as possible. His oldest son was very active in scouts in grade school. After starting high school, his son never participated much in scouts and consequently did not Eagle. He took a different tack with his youngest son and he got his Eagle by the start of High school.

I would be glad to receive any feedback or helpful information.

Mark Ehrhart

February 20, 2019

Scout-> Eagle Highlights 	5th - 8th Grade					8th - 12th Grade or 18 Years of Age	
	Scout Rank	Tenderfoot Rank	Second Class	First Class	Star Rank	Life Rank	Eagle Scout Rank
							
	1st Year	2nd Year		3rd Year		4th Year	5th Year On
		Camp Out - Assist Cooking	Night Camping - Cook Meal Aquatics	Serve as Patrol Cook- Swimming Test	Position of Responsibility- Service	Leadership Position	Eagle Project
Feb-May 5th Grade	Aug-Dec 6th Grade	Jan-May 6th Grade	Aug-Dec 7th Grade	Jan-May 7th Grade	Aug-May 8th Grade	Summer - > High School	
Camping Requirements *		1 Night minimum	2 more Nights minimum	3 more Nights minimum		20 Night Total	
Total Troop Activities Since Joining			5 Troop Activities (2 Camping)	10 Activities 6 Overnight Activities (3 Camping)			
Merit Badges					6 Badges Total (4 Eagle Required)	11 Badges Total (3 more Eagle) Total of 7 Eagle, 4 Regular	21 Badges Total (6 more Eagle) Total of 13 Eagle, 8 Regular
Service Project Hours		1 Hours of Service	2 Hours of Service Projects	3 Additional Hours of Service Projects	6 additional hours Service Projects	6 hours Service Projects as Star Scout	Eagle Project
Be Active in Troop					4 Month as 1st Class Scout	6 months as Star Scout	6 months as Life Scout
Position of Responsibility					Responsibility As 1st Class	6 months Leadership Position as Star	6 months Leadership Position as Life

Guide to Advancement 2019
<https://www.scouting.org/resources/guide-to-advancement/>

Scout Rank Videos (Watch Videos of each Rank Requirement)
<http://www.boyscouttrail.com/videodownload.asp>

Merit Badge Workbooks (List and PDF of each Merit Badge)
http://meritbadge.org/wiki/index.php/Scouts_BSA_Portal

Path to Eagle App (iTunes App - Rank and Merit Badge Checklists)
<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/path-to-eagle-scout/id656979577?mt=8>

2018 Rank Advancement Changes
<http://usscouts.org/advance/changes/advchanges18.asp>

Note: Summer Camp is best opportunity for Swimming Merit Badge

Note: Some Merit Badges will fulfill many of the requirements for Rank Advancement: First Aid, Swimming, Personal Fitness etc.

Requirement that **Kit Fox Scouts** will work on are as follows:
 Scout Rank: 1e, 4a, 4b, 5
 Tenderfoot Rank: 3a, 3b, 3c, 3d, 4a, 4b, 4c, 4d, 5a, 5b, 5c, 7b
 Second Class Rank: 1b, 2b, 2c2f, 2g, 3a, 3d, 4, 5a, 5b (if blue swimmer) 5c, 5d, 6a, 6b, 6c, 6d, 6e
 First Class Rank: 1b, 3a, 3b, 3c, 3d, 4a, 5a, 6a, (blue swimmer) 6e, 7a, 7b, 7c, 7d, 7e

Boy Scout Early Rank Advancement Videos
<http://www.boyscouttrail.com/videodownload.asp>

* Camping is an Eagle required Merit Badge.
 Camp a total of at least 20 days and 20 nights. Sleep each night under the sky or in a tent you have pitched. The 20 days and 20 nights must be at a designated Scouting activity or event. You may use a week of long-term camp toward this requirement. If the camp provides a tent that has already been pitched, you need not pitch your own tent. All campouts since becoming a Boy Scout may count toward this requirement. On any of these camping experiences, you must do TWO of the following, only with proper preparation and under qualified supervision:

1. Hike up a mountain, gaining at least 1,000 vertical feet.
2. Backpack, snowshoe, or cross-country ski for at least 4 miles.
3. Take a bike trip of at least 15 miles or at least four hours.
4. Take a nonmotorized trip on the water of at least four hours or 5 miles.
5. Plan and carry out an overnight snow camping experience.
6. Rappel down a rappel route of 30 feet or more.