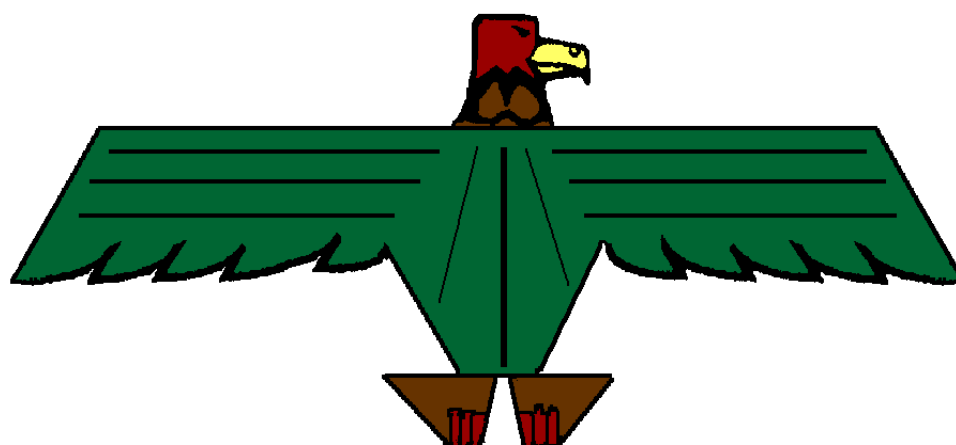


Troop 268



Advancement Policies and Procedures

2008

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Aims and Methods of the Scouting Program

The Scouting program has three specific objectives, commonly referred to as the "Aims of Scouting." They are character development, citizenship training, and physical fitness.

The methods by which the aims are achieved are listed below in random order to emphasize the equal importance of each.

Ideals

The ideals of Boy Scouting are spelled out in the Scout Oath, the Scout Law, the Scout Motto, and the Scout Slogan. The Boy Scout measures himself against these ideals and continually tries to improve. The goals are high and, as he reaches for them, he has some control over what and who he becomes.

Patrols

The patrol method gives Boy Scouts an experience in group living and participating citizenship. It places responsibility on young shoulders and teaches boys how to accept it. The patrol method allows Scouts to interact in small groups where members can easily relate to each other. These small groups determine troop activities through elected representatives.

Outdoor Programs

Boy Scouting is designed to take place outdoors. It is in the outdoor setting that Scouts share responsibilities and learn to live with one another. In the outdoors the skills and activities practiced at troop meetings come alive with purpose. Being close to nature helps Boy Scouts gain an appreciation for the beauty of the world around us. The outdoors is the laboratory in which Boy Scouts learn ecology and practice conservation of nature's resources.

Advancement

Boy Scouting provides a series of surmountable obstacles and steps in overcoming them through the advancement method. The Boy Scout plans his advancement and progresses at his own pace as he meets each challenge. The Boy Scout is rewarded for each achievement, which helps him gain self-confidence. The steps in the advancement system help a Boy Scout grow in self-reliance and in the ability to help others.

Associations with Adults

Boys learn a great deal by watching how adults conduct themselves. Scout leaders can be positive role models for the members of the troop. In many cases a Scoutmaster who is willing to listen to boys, encourage them, and take a sincere interest in them can make a profound difference in their lives.

Personal Growth

As Boy Scouts plan their activities and progress toward their goals, they experience personal growth. The Good Turn concept is a major part of the personal growth method of Boy Scouting. Boys grow as they participate in community service projects and do Good Turns for others. Probably no device is as successful in developing a basis for personal growth as the daily Good Turn. The religious emblems program also is a large part of the personal growth method. Frequent personal conferences with his Scoutmaster help each Boy Scout to determine his growth toward Scouting's aims.

Leadership Development

The Boy Scout program encourages boys to learn and practice leadership skills. Every Boy Scout has the opportunity to participate in both shared and total leadership situations. Understanding the

concepts of leadership helps a boy accept the leadership role of others and guides him toward the citizenship aim of Scouting.

Uniform

The uniform makes the Boy Scout troop visible as a force for good and creates a positive youth image in the community. Boy Scouting is an action program, and correctly wearing the uniform is an action that shows each Boy Scout's commitment to the aims and purposes of Scouting. The uniform gives the Boy Scout identity in a world brotherhood of youth that believe in the same ideals. The uniform is practical attire for Boy Scout activities and provides a way for Boy Scouts to wear the badges that show what they have accomplished.

From "What is Boy Scouting" BSA Fact Sheet <http://www.Scouting.org>

Advancement in Troop 268

Troop 268 follows BSA Publication #33088 "Advancement Committee Guide: Policies and Procedures," as well as BSA Publication #33009C "The Scoutmaster Handbook," for all of its advancement procedures. BSA Publication #33215 "Boy Scout Requirements" is the guiding document for current rank and merit badge requirements.

Advancement is not only a method of achieving the aims of Scouting but it also supports and is part of all of the other methods as well. For example, Scout Spirit is a requirement on each rank advancement; it is the ideal of Scouting. Activity requirements in the Second and First Class ranks support the outdoor programs. Leadership requirements come in at Star, Life, and Eagle ranks.

The Boy Scout advancement program is subtle. It places a series of challenges in front of a Scout in a manner that is educational and fun. As Scouts meet these challenges, they achieve the three aims of Scouting. The advancement program is designed to provide the Scout with a chance to achieve these aims. As a Scout advances, he is measured and grows in confidence and self-reliance.

When a badge and certificate are awarded to a Scout to recognize a rank he has achieved, they represent that he has:

- Been an active participant in his troop and patrol.
- Demonstrated living the Scout Oath and Law in his daily life.
- Met the requirements for the rank and merit badges.
- Participated in a Scoutmaster Conference.
- Satisfactorily appeared before a Board of Review.
- In the advanced ranks of Star, Life, and Eagle, the rank badge represents that he has also:
- Served in a position of responsibility in the troop.
- Performed service to others.

Order of Advancement

A Scout may work on rank requirements for Scout, Tenderfoot, Second Class, and First Class simultaneously and in any order. A Scout may also work on merit badges at any time. However, the Scout **MUST** advance through the ranks in order. He must be a Scout, then a Tenderfoot, then a Second Class, then a First Class, then a Star, then a Life, and then an Eagle. Even if a Scout has completed all requirements for a higher rank, he can not be awarded that higher rank until he has progressed through all of the lower ranks in order.

Requirements

It is BSA policy that all current requirements for advancement (ranks, merit badges, or Eagle Palms) *must actually be met* by the candidate. There are no substitutions or alternatives permitted except those that are specifically stated in the requirement. No council, district, unit nor individual has the authority to add to, or subtract from, any advancement requirements. The Scout is expected to meet the requirements as stated – no more and no less. If it says, “show or demonstrate,” that is what he must do. Just telling about it isn’t enough. The same thing holds true for such words as “make,” “list,” “in the field,” and “collect, identify and label”.

The requirements (except for merit badges) for Star, Life and Eagle will state “While xxx rank ...” The Scout needs to pay close attention to this stipulation. For example, the leadership requirement for Life is: “While a Star Scout, serve 6 months in a position of responsibility.” If a Scout is serving in a leadership role and earns the Star rank two months into his six-month term, he will only have four months applied to the requirement for Life. The Scout will need to serve another leadership term in order to finish the requirement.

Scout Spirit

The Scout Oath, Scout Law, Scout Motto, Scout Slogan, and the Outdoor Code are collectively known as Scout Spirit. Only the Scoutmaster is allowed to sign-off the Scout Spirit requirement.

Alternative Requirements

A Scout who has permanent physical or mental disability and is unable to complete all of the requirements for Tenderfoot, Second Class, or First Class may submit a request to the council advancement committee to complete alternative requirements. See BSA Publication #33088 for steps and procedures. This request must come from the Scout and his parents. No unit leader or merit badge counselor is allowed to make this decision for the Scout regardless of how obvious the need may be for alternative requirements. No alternative requirements may be utilized until the requirements have been reviewed and approved by the local council advancement committee.

Advancement Opportunities

Troop 268 provides many opportunities through its programs and activities for a Scout to meet the advancement requirements. It is the responsibility of the Scout to take advantage of these opportunities. It is not the responsibility of the troop to make sure that a Scout advances. The troop is not obligated to provide “make-up” opportunities outside of its scheduled program and activities for a Scout who was unable to attend an event. Advancement is the sole responsibility of the Scout — not Troop 268 nor its leaders.

Steps to Advancement

Meet the requirements

A Scout learns by doing. As he learns, he grows in ability to do his part as a member of a patrol and the troop. As he develops knowledge and skill, he is asked to teach others; in this way he begins to develop leadership. This is the reason for the policy that a Scout meets the requirement. Anyone who allows a Scout to do less is doing a great disservice to that Scout. The focus should be on learning skills and gaining knowledge, not collecting sign-offs.

Testing

The Scoutmaster, Assistant Scoutmasters, Troop Committee Members, or members of the troop designated by the Scoutmaster may test a Scout on rank requirements. The Scout’s merit badge counselor teaches and tests on the requirements for merit badges.

Scoutmaster Conference

For each rank, the last requirement to be met before the Board of Review is the Scoutmaster Conference. The Scout should have all requirements except Scout Spirit, Scoutmaster Conference and Board of Review completed and validated via “TroopMaster” if necessary before requesting a Scoutmaster Conference. The Scout needs to schedule this conference with the Scoutmaster. Do not expect the Scoutmaster to drop everything he is doing with no notice in order to have a conference. . The Scoutmaster will normally schedule the Scoutmaster conference for the next scheduled regular meeting. The Scoutmaster Conference is not the last requirement for a rank and therefore is not the deciding factor on whether or not a Scout has achieved the rank —that requirement is the Board of Review.

Board of Review

After the Scout passes his Scoutmaster Conference, the he may register for a Board of Review with the Advancement Chair. See “Board of Review” for specific procedures. The Board members are the ones who decide if a Scout has earned his rank. The review has three purposes: 1) to ensure that the work has been learned and completed, 2) to see what kind of experience the Scout is having in the unit, and 3) to encourage him to advance to the next rank.

Recognition

When the Board of Review has certified a Scout’s advancement, he is recognized at the next scheduled troop meeting. The certificate for his new rank is presented later at a formal Court of Honor. This certificate or presentation card is important and should be kept in a safe place. There is a fee to replace lost or missing presentation cards.

Advancement Policies Specific to Troop 268

The following advancement policies are specific to Troop 268. These policies do not violate or suspend any policy stated in BSA Publication #33088.

Service Hours

A Scout must participate (a minimum of 2 hours) in another Scout’s Eagle Project as part of his service hours for Star and Life ranks. In this way, the Scout gets experience on how an Eagle Project is accomplished and has an advantage when it comes time to do his own Eagle Project.

Currency on Dues

A Scout must be current on his dues in order to receive his rank, merit badges, or certificates. If he is not current, he will receive a notice from the treasurer with a request to rectify his accounts. Once a Scout is current, he will be presented with his achievements.

Scoutmaster Conference

A Scoutmaster Conference and a Board of Review will not be held on the same night for the same Scout.

Board of Review

A Scout may only have one Board of Review at a time. A Scout may not schedule multiple rank advancement boards of review for the same meeting.

The members of a Board of Review are selected by the Advancement Chairman from available Troop committee members who wear the adult uniform and have an understanding of the Board of Review procedures.

An Eagle candidate may submit a list of people that he would like to be members of his Eagle Board of Review following the guidelines listed under the section titled “From Life to Eagle.”

Rank Tenure

For Scout, Tenderfoot, Second Class and First Class, a Scout must hold the rank for at least one week before requesting a Scoutmaster Conference for the next rank. Star, Life and Eagle ranks have a specified tenure for each rank stated in the Scout Handbook.

Timing Sequence

Taking the above policies into consideration, the most accelerated timing sequence would be:

Week 1 – Schedule Scoutmaster Conference

Week 2 – Scoutmaster Conference and register for Board of Review

Week 3 – Board of Review

Week 4 – Recognition and presentation of Rank badge. Schedule next Scoutmaster Conference

Week 5 – Scoutmaster Conference

Board of Review

Purpose

A periodic review of the progress of a Scout is vital in the evaluation of the effectiveness of the Scouting program in the troop. The objective of the Board of Review is:

- To make sure that the Scout has done what he was supposed to do for the rank and that the work was learned and completed.
- To check what kind of experience the Scout is having with his patrol and the troop.
- To encourage the Scout to progress further and to advance to the next rank.

A Board of Review is required for every rank except Scout. The decision of all boards of review is arrived at through discussion and **must be unanimous**.

A Board of Review may be called for reasons other than rank advancement. A board may be convened to review a Scout who has shown no progress in advancement for several months, as well as for disciplinary or behavioral issues that negatively impact the troop or the safety and well-being of any troop member.

Members

The Board of Review for Tenderfoot through Life and Eagle Palms is composed of at least 3 and no more than 6 Troop 268 Committee members. One member will serve as the chairman of the Board of Review. The Scoutmaster, Assistant Scoutmasters, relatives or guardians of an individual Scout may not sit on a Board of Review.

Procedure

Register for a Board of Review


After a Scout has had his Scoutmaster Conference, he should register for a Board of Review with the Advancement Chairman. A Scoutmaster Conference does not automatically register a Scout for a Board of Review. The board will take place at the next scheduled regular troop meeting. Stated another way, the Scout must register for a Board of Review a minimum of one week in advance. When the Scout registers for a board, he will be given a Board of Review

Registration Form. This form indicates the date of the Scout's Board of Review and gives instructions on appropriate uniform and Board of Review procedures. The Scout also needs to hand his Scout Handbook in to the Advancement Chairman in order to have his records updated. The reports that are then printed for his Board of Review will reflect current and accurate information.

The last Board of Review, before a formal court of honor, will take place two Scout meetings before the date of the court of honor. With the required one-week registration, the last opportunity to schedule a Board of Review and have that rank recognized at the court of honor is 3 weeks before the date of the court of honor.

Appearance before the Board

A Scout who is registered for a Board of Review will present himself to the Advancement Chairman on the scheduled date at the very beginning of the meeting. The Scout shall be in uniform that will include, at a minimum:

- 
- Neckerchief and slide.
- Merit badge sash (if the rank required merit badges) with presented merit badges attached to the sash. The sash is to be worn from the right shoulder to the left hip – never on the belt. The OA sash is not worn for Boy Scout Boards of Review.
- Correct insignia. Current rank, current leadership position patch, etc. All insignia will be in the correct location on the shirt. If necessary, request a uniform inspection guide for correct placement.
- Pants. Preferrably official BSA pants or shorts. Optional long pants or shorts of a plain neutral color (not plaid) with no advertising or team logos. Absolutely no athletic/team type shorts or pants.

The Scout will hand his Scout Handbook over to the Advancement Chairman at the very beginning of the meeting. The presentation of the book is how the board members know the Scout is here and ready. It will be added to the Board of Review package and sent in to the board. The book will be returned to the Scout by the end of the meeting.

If a Scout is not scheduled for a Board of Review for that meeting, he should not request a Board of Review for that night – it won't happen.

The Advancement Chairman, or a board member, will call each Scout in turn for his Board of Review. The members of the Board of Review will ascertain that the Scout has done what he was supposed to do for the rank and that the work has been learned and completed. The members will inquire about the kind of experience the Scout is having with his patrol and the troop, and encourage the Scout to progress further and advance to the next rank.

At the conclusion of the review, the board should know whether a Scout is qualified for the rank or palm. The Scout is asked to leave the room while the board members discuss his achievements. The decision of the Board of Review is arrived at through discussion and **must be unanimous**. If members are satisfied that the Scout is ready to advance, he is called in, congratulated, notified as to when he will receive his recognition, and encouraged to continue his advancement.

If the board decides that the Scout is not ready to advance, the candidate should be informed and told what he has not done satisfactorily. The members of the board should specify what must be done to rework the candidate's weaknesses and schedule another Board of Review. A follow-

up letter must be sent to a Scout who is turned down for rank advancement, confirming the agreements reached on the action(s) necessary for advancement. Should the Scout disagree with the decision, the appeal procedures should be explained to him.

After the Board of Review

After the Board of Review is completed, the Scoutmaster is informed of all of the decisions that were made by the Board of Review. A Scout cannot be recognized until the action is reported to the council service center on an Advancement Report. Badges of rank, merit badges, and Eagle Palms are restricted items. These items may not be sold or distributed unless the Advancement Report has been properly filled out and has been submitted to the local council office. To do otherwise will jeopardize the individual Scout's record of achievement.

Appealing a Decision

Two sets of circumstances may lead to the appeal of a decision. First, if the Scoutmaster or troop committee does not recommend the Scout for a Board of Review, or if the Scoutmaster or troop committee does not sign the Eagle Scout application. The Scout or other interested party may appeal the decision at the next level.

Second, if the appropriate Board of Review does not recommend the candidate for the rank advancement, the decision may be appealed to the next higher level. The Scout, his leader, or his parents may appeal the decision. With all appeals applications, the final decision rests with the national Boy Scout Committee. In ascending order, levels of appeal are:

1. Troop 268 Committee Chairman,
2. Frontier District Advancement Committee,
3. Pikes Peak Council, and
4. National Boy Scout Committee.

On receipt of an appeal, the district or council committee responsible for advancement will provide for a prompt review to determine the facts. All parties must be interviewed either individually or as a group, but a confrontation should be avoided. A written report with all details must be prepared for the committee responsible for a decision or for forwarding to the national Boy Scout Committee if necessary.

All appeals to the national Boy Scout Committee must be processed through the Scout's local council. There is no direct appeal to the national level. A copy of the Scout's Eagle Scout Rank Application must be included when petitioning at the national level.

Eagle Scout

From Life to Eagle

In order to advance to the rank of Eagle, a candidate must complete *all* requirements of tenure, Scout Spirit, merit badges, and positions of responsibility. While a Life Scout, the candidate must plan, develop, and provide leadership to others in a service project; finally, the Scout must participate in a Scoutmaster Conference.

Using the *Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook*, the candidate must select his Eagle service project and have the project concept approved by his Scoutmaster, the troop committee, and the benefactor of the project. It then must be reviewed and approved by the council or district advancement committee. The *Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook* No. 18-927D must be used in meeting this requirement. The Eagle Scout service project is an individual matter; therefore, two or more Eagle Scout candidates may not receive credit for working the same project.

For a service project to qualify as an Eagle Scout service project, the Scout must plan, develop, and give leadership to others in a service project benefiting any religious institution, school, or community. Work involving council property or other BSA activities is not acceptable for an Eagle Scout service project. The service project also may not be performed for a business, or be of a commercial nature, or be a fund-raiser. Fund-raising is permitted only for securing materials or supplies needed to carry out the project.

Routine labor, a job or service normally rendered should not be considered. There is no minimum number of hours that must be spent on carrying out the project. The project provides the opportunity for the Eagle Scout candidate to demonstrate the leadership skills he has learned in Scouting. Thus the amount of time spent must be sufficient for the Scout to demonstrate his leadership skills.

It is imperative that *all* requirements for the Eagle rank *except* the Board of Review be completed prior to the candidate's 18th birthday. When all requirements except the board or review for the rank of Eagle (including the service project) have been completed, the Eagle Scout Rank Application must be promptly filled out and sent to the council service center. (See the section "Time Extensions".)

The Scoutmaster should sign the application at the proper place. The troop committee reviews and approves the record of the Eagle candidate before the application is submitted to the local council. If the Scoutmaster or Committee Chairman fails to sign or otherwise approve an application, the Eagle candidate may still be granted a Board of Review. The failure of a Scoutmaster or committee chairman to sign an application may be considered by the Board of Review in determining the qualification of the Eagle candidate.

When the completed application is received at the local council, its contents will be verified and the references contacted. The council advancement committee or its designee contacts the persons listed as a reference on the Eagle Scout Rank Application either by letter, form, or telephone checklist. The council determines the method or methods used. The candidate should have contacted those individuals listed as references before including their names on the application. The candidates should not be involved personally in transmitting any correspondence between persons listed as references and the council service center. The Pikes Peak Council has the Eagle candidate mail form letters to the individuals listed as references; however, the letters must be transmitted directly from the individual to Pikes Peak Council. The completed reference forms may not be transmitted to the Eagle candidate.

The Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook, properly filled out, must be submitted with the application.

After the contents of an application have been verified and appropriately signed, the application, *Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook*, and references will be returned from the council service center to the chairman of the Eagle Board of Review so that a board of review may be scheduled. Under no circumstances should a Board of Review be scheduled until the application is returned to the chairman of the Eagle Board of Review. Reference checks that are forwarded with the application are confidential, and their contents are not to be disclosed to any person who is not a member of the Board of Review.

An Eagle Board of Review is composed of no less than three and no more than six members. One member will be a representative appointed by the Pikes Peak Council. The other members do not have to be registered in Scouting but must be at least 21 years of age and have an understanding of the importance and purpose of the Eagle Board of Review. These members can not be the troop's Scoutmaster or Assistant Scoutmaster, a relative or guardian of the Scout, or a beneficiary of the Scout's Eagle Project. The Board of Review members should convene at least 30 minutes before the candidate appears in order to review the application, reference checks, and service project report.

The candidate's Scoutmaster introduces him to the members of the Board of Review. The Scoutmaster may remain in the room, but does not participate in the Board of Review. The Scoutmaster may be called on to clarify a point in question. In no case should a relative or guardian of the candidate attend a review, even as a unit leader. There is no standard set of questions that an Eagle candidate should be asked. However, the board should be assured of the candidate's participation in the program. This is the highest award a Scout may achieve and, consequently, a thorough discussion of his successes and experiences in Scouting should be considered. After the review, the candidate and his Scoutmaster leave the room while the board members discuss the acceptability of the candidate as an Eagle Scout. **The decision must be unanimous.**

If the candidate meets the requirements, he will be asked to return and is informed that he will receive the board's recommendation for the Eagle Scout rank. If the candidate does not meet the requirements, he is asked to return and told the reasons for his failure to qualify. A discussion should be held with him to identify how he may meet the requirements within a given period. Should the applicant disagree with the decision, the appeals procedures should be explained to him. A follow-up letter must be sent to the Scout confirming the agreements reached on the action(s) necessary for advancement. If the Scout chooses to appeal, provide the name and address of the person he is to contact. (See "Appealing a Decision.")

Immediately after the Board of Review and after the application has been appropriately signed, the application and a properly completed Advancement Report are returned to the council service center. The references are confidential and may not be given to the Scout without the express permission of the individual who wrote the reference. The *Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook* may be returned to the Scout after council approval.

When the application arrives at the council service center, the Scout executive signs it to certify that the proper procedure has been followed and that the Board of Review has recommended the candidate for the Eagle Scout rank. Only the Eagle Scout Rank Application is forwarded to the national Eagle Scout Service.

The Eagle Scout Service screens the application to ascertain information such as proper signatures, position of responsibility, tenure between ranks, and age of the candidate. Any item not meeting national standards will cause the application to be returned for more information. If the application is in order, the Scout is then certified as an Eagle Scout by the Eagle Scout Service on behalf of the National Council. Notice of the approval is given by sending the Eagle Scout certificate to the local council. The date used on the certificate will be the date of the Board of Review. The Eagle Scout Award will not be sold or given to any unit until after the certificate is received by the council service center. The Eagle Scout court of honor should not be scheduled until the local council receives the Eagle certificate. (See section titled "Courts of Honor" for discussion on Eagle Courts of Honor.)

Time Extensions

Scouts who have completed all requirements for a rank prior to their 18th birthday should submit their application and be reviewed and recognized *within* three months after that date. The Scout's *Board of Review* is to take place no later than *three* months after his 18th birthday. Boards of review conducted *between* three and six months after the candidate's birthday **MUST** be pre-approved by the local council. A statement by an adult explaining the reason for the delay must be attached to the Eagle Scout Rank Application when it is submitted to the Eagle Scout Service.

If an Eagle Scout board of review will be held *after* six months following the candidate's 18th birthday, the candidate must petition the national Boy Scout Committee for an extension on time to hold the Board of Review. The petition must be processed through the local council, detailing the extenuating circumstances that prevented the Board of Review from being held within the six-month

period following the candidate's 18th birthday, and be accompanied with a copy of the Eagle Scout Rank Application.

If a Scout foresees that he will be unable to complete the requirements for the Eagle rank prior to his 18th birthday, he may file a petition in writing with the national-level Boy Scout Committee through the local council for special permission to continue to work toward the award after reaching age 18. The unit leader or unit committee may also file the petition. The petition must show good and sufficient evidence and detail the extenuating circumstances that prevented the Scout from completing the requirements prior to his 18th birthday. Extenuating circumstances are defined as conditions or situations that are totally beyond the control of the Scout.

If circumstances should also prevent a Scout from requesting the extension before he is 18, it is still permissible to ask for the extension, detailing the extenuating circumstances that prevented him from completing the requirements and from requesting the extension before age 18.

Venture Crew

Earning Boy Scout Ranks as a Venturer

Any male Venturer who has achieved the First Class rank as a Boy Scout in a troop may continue working toward the the Star, Life and Eagle Scout ranks up to his 18th birthday. He must meet the requirements as prescribed in the Boy Scout Handbook and the current Boy Scout Requirements book.

The Venturer may meet the position of responsibility requirements by serving as president, vice president, secretary or treasurer of his crew. The Venture crew Advisor will conduct the scoutmaster conferences. As the Venturer meets the requirements for the Star and Life ranks, the boards of review are conducted by the Venture Crew committee members. The Eagle board of review follows the procedures established by the Pikes Peak Council.

A Boy Scout that is dual registered may not use his Venture crew position of responsibility or his Venture crew time to meet the requirements for his Boy Scout rank advancement. The rank must be earned with either all Boy Scout or all Venture crew requirements. All requirements, with the exception of merit badges, must be earned through either all Boy Scout achievements or all Venture crew achievements, never a mixture of the two.

Activities and awards earned by a Venturer are entered in the Venture Crew records. These activities and awards can not be transferred to his Boy Scout records to be applied to awards or programs in which Venturing does not participate.

Merit Badge Program

Background and Purpose

As chartered by the Congress of the United States, the Boy Scouts of America is a movement dedicated to supplementing and enlarging the education of youth. The merit badge program, which provides opportunities for youth to explore more than 100 fields of skill and knowledge, plays a key role in the fulfillment of this educational commitment.

A vital part of the BSA's advancement plan, the merit badge program is one of Scouting's basic character-building tools. Through participation in the program (which may begin immediately upon registration in a troop or team), a Scout acquires the kind of self-confidence that comes only from overcoming obstacles to achieve a goal. Instruction is offered in everything from animal science and public speaking to swimming and communications, providing a young man with invaluable career, physical, and interpersonal skills.

Merit Badge Pamphlets

Each merit badge subject is outlined and explained in a pamphlet that contains short, introductory information written for Boy Scouts/Varsity Scouts by recognized authorities. More than a million pamphlets are sold yearly, and many are used as approved reference texts in libraries and school curricula. The merit badge pamphlet can be obtained by checking it out from the troop library, borrowing it from another Scout or purchasing it. Be sure that the merit badge pamphlet is the current version as they are updated and changed periodically.

Counselors

People who are knowledgeable about the various merit badge subjects are selected, approved, and trained by council and district advancement committees to serve as merit badge counselors. For example, a dentist might be asked to serve as a counselor for the Dentistry merit badge. A counselor must not only possess the necessary technical knowledge, but also have a solid understanding of the needs, interests, and abilities of Scouts. A counselor must also be a registered adult with the BSA.

Eagle Required Badges

To qualify for the Eagle Scout Award, Scouting's highest rank, a Scout must — along with meeting five other requirements — earn a total of 21 merit badges including 12 specifically required merit badges. Merit badges required for the Eagle Scout Rank include Camping, Citizenship in the Community, Citizenship in the Nation, Citizenship in the World, Communications, Family Life, First Aid, Emergency Preparedness OR Lifesaving, Environmental Science, Personal Fitness, Personal Management, and Swimming OR Hiking OR Cycling.

Procedure

Choose Merit Badge

The Scout determines which merit badge he wishes to earn. There may be a group merit badge class being offered by a merit badge counselor or he may decide to work on his own. Not all merit badges are offered in a group class and there is no schedule for those that are; the Scout should not wait for classes to be offered for a merit badge. If the Scout is working individually with a counselor, the Scout will schedule appointments with the counselor. The Scout is expected to keep these appointments and to notify the counselor well in advance if the Scout will be unable to meet. If the Scout is signed up for a merit badge class, he will make every effort to attend each session. It will be the Scout's responsibility to make-up any material missed due to non-attendance.

Obtain Merit Badge Application

The Scout requests a merit badge application (blue card). The Scout must first obtain an application before any merit badge work is started. He checks the troop Merit Badge Counselor List in order to choose a merit badge counselor. If the merit badge does not have a counselor listed from the troop, the Scout may choose a counselor from the list maintained by council. The Scout talks to the counselor and attains the counselor's agreement to work with him on the merit badge. The Scout then fills out the merit badge application and gains the signatures of the Scoutmaster and the merit badge counselor indicating permission to begin work on the chosen merit badge.

Merit Badge Requirements

The Scout will acquire materials needed for the merit badge. He should obtain the merit badge pamphlet and download the merit badge worksheet from the Internet. A recommended site is Scoutmaster.org as they keep the merit badge worksheets up-to-date better than most sites, including the official BSA site. The Scout and the merit badge counselor will go over the

requirements and decide how the Scout should accomplish the requirements. The Scout will come prepared to all merit badge sessions (group classes or individual meetings with the counselor) and with the assigned requirements already completed. The role of the merit badge counselor is not necessarily to teach the merit badge material; some counselors do teach but many do not. Learning the material is the responsibility of the Scout. The Scout will keep detailed records on how each requirement was accomplished and when it was completed; the merit badge worksheet is ideal for this purpose. As each requirement is completed, the Scout requests the counselor to sign off the requirement on the merit badge application card. The merit badge counselor certifies completion of the merit badge when all of the requirements are completed. The Scout then obtains the Scoutmaster's signature on the Scout's section of the merit badge application. There is no time limit for completion of a merit badge other than age 18.

Completed Application

The Scout turns the completed merit badge application (all 3 sections) into the Advancement Chair. The Advancement Chair will initial and date all sections and enter the merit badge into the Scout's records. The Advancement Chair will return the counselor's section to the merit badge counselor. The Chair will also complete all council required paperwork, turn in the unit section of the application with the Advancement Report, and purchase the merit badge. When council returns the unit section, the Advancement Chair will annotate the date of the Court of Honor when the Scout receives the presentation card and will retain the unit section for seven years.

Recognition

The Scout will receive the merit badge and the Scout's section of the merit badge application at the beginning of the next troop meeting. The Merit Badge Presentation card will be presented to the Scout at the next scheduled Court of Honor. The Scout must keep the Presentation Card and the Scout's section of the merit badge card for his records. These two cards will be required documentation in the Scout's Eagle Project book. The merit badge application card can not be replaced, as it is nearly impossible to recover all of the dates and initials on the individual requirements. There is a replacement fee for lost or missing Merit Badge Presentation Cards.

Courts of Honor

Each time a Scout advances in rank or earns a merit badge, he should be recognized on two occasions. The first should occur as soon as possible after the Scout has been approved by a Board of Review or has submitted a completed merit badge application and the Advancement Report has been filed with the council office and the award has been purchased. This ceremony should be dignified but simple, involving not much more than presenting the Scout with his new achievement.

The second occasion is a formal court of honor — a public ceremony to recognize Scouts for successful achievement and to describe the importance of the program. The main purposes of the court of honor are to furnish formal recognition for achievement and to provide incentive for other Scouts to advance.

Formal courts of honor are held twice per year, in the Spring and Fall. All Scouts who have advanced since the previous court of honor are honored. Their parents, relatives and friends should be invited to attend the ceremony. The Scouts will receive their presentation cards and certificates for their achievements. These are important documents that will be needed for the Scout's Eagle Project book.

When a Scout has earned the Eagle Scout rank, he deserves special recognition. The Eagle ceremony may not be conducted until the action of the Board of Review has been approved by the national Eagle Scout Service. Procedures for conducting an Eagle Scout court of honor are described in *Troop Program*

Resources, No. 33588A and *The Eagle Court of Honor Book*, No. 30540. A Scout's Eagle Court of Honor is put on by the Scout's family and is tailored specifically for that Scout.

All Courts of Honor are formal ceremonies and every Scout should wear his Boy Scout uniform with his merit badge sash worn from his right shoulder to his left hip. Wearing the merit badge sash on the belt is not approved and it is specifically stated in the Insignia Guide that it is never to be worn in such a manner. The Order of the Arrow sash may be worn by members of the OA ceremony and/or dance team who are participants of the OA portion of the ceremony/dance and in accordance with any OA policy regarding the OA sash with ceremonial regalia. Scouts should wear either official BSA pants or pants of a plain, neutral color. Plain color means no plaid, no camouflage, no designs, and no advertising or team logos. It is a formal ceremony, shorts and/or sweat pants are not appropriate attire.

Literature Resources

Advancement Committee Guide Policies and Procedures, No. 33088, 2006 Printing

The Scoutmaster Handbook, No. 33009C, 2007 Printing

Boy Scout Requirements 2008, No. 33215, 2008 Printing

Troop Committee Guidebook, No. 34505B, 2006 Printing

Insignia Guide, No. 33066, 2008 Printing

Board of Review Training, <http://www.Scouting.org/boyScouts/trainingmodules>, 5 April 2008

Scoutmaster Conference Training, <http://www.Scouting.org/boyScouts/trainingmodules>, 5 April 2008

"What is Boy Scouting" BSA Fact Sheet <http://www.Scouting.org>

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