

Brief Outline of Troop 268 Advancement Policies

(Please read Troop 268 Advancement Policies and Procedures Pamphlet for more details.)

The Scouting program has three specific objectives, commonly referred to as the "Aims of Scouting." They are character development, citizenship training, and physical fitness. Ranks and merit badges are the tools used to achieve these aims, not the goal themselves.

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.

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.

Steps to Advancement:

1. **Learn/Meet the requirements:** A scout learns by doing. 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.
2. **Testing:** The Scoutmaster, Assistant Scoutmasters, Troop Committee Members, or members of the troop designated by the Scoutmaster may test a Scout on rank requirements. Notice that they are 2 different steps. A scout should not be signed off on a requirement while he is learning it; he needs to pass the testing phase as well.
3. **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" 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.
4. **Board of Review:** After the Scout passes his Scoutmaster Conference, the he may register for a Board of Review with the Advancement Chair. 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 Board of Review will take place at the next scheduled regular meeting. 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.
5. **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

The Scout needs to request a Scoutmaster Conference. He will need to have his scout account and scout records checked, thus the scout will need to have his Scout Handbook checked as part of the scheduling process. A Scoutmaster Conference and a Board of Review will not be held on the same night for the same Scout.

Board of Review

After his Scoutmaster Conference is completed, a scout will need to schedule his 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.

Merit Badge Program

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), a Scout acquires the kind of self-confidence that comes only from overcoming obstacles to achieve a goal.

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. 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

The formal court of honor is 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 Troop 268 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. (There is a replacement fee for lost or missing presentation cards.)

When a Scout has earned the Eagle Scout rank, he deserves special recognition. The Eagle ceremony may not be conducted until the National Eagle Scout Service has approved the action of the Board of Review. 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 only 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.