

# Advancement Guidelines

We believe that a scout should receive recognition for his achievements.

Advancement sets a pattern of setting goals and reaching them throughout life. Even though it is not one of the primary aims of Scouting, advancement is a natural by product when your Scouting experience is acquainting you with the BSA ideals, the patrol method, the outdoors, association with adults, personal growth, leadership development and the Scout uniform. It is easy to advance by following these four basic steps:

1. Learning
2. Testing
3. Review
4. Recognition

## RANK ADVANCEMENT

The requirements for the ranks of Tenderfoot through First Class prepare you to take full advantage of all that Scouting has to offer. Star, Life and Eagle requirements focus on service to others and developing leadership skills.

Requirements for each rank are outlined in your Boy Scout Handbook. You can work on advancement requirements with your parents or other family members, with other scouts and with adult Scout Leaders. This can be done on your own, in patrol and Troop meetings and during other Troop functions such as campouts. A good rule of thumb is to try to complete one or two rank requirements at every Troop function.

As you complete each requirement you will be tested and signed off in the **BACK** section of your handbook (pp. 438-449) by the Scoutmaster or by someone he or she designates. This person may be an Assistant Scoutmaster, a Troop Committee Member, or another more experienced scout designated by the Scoutmaster. In Boy Scouts, 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 scouts. Infrequent exceptions may be made in the case of a leader who is teaching skills to several scouts at once at a troop meeting or other scouting function, but every effort should be made to have another leader sign off the instructing leader's son if possible.

It is up to you to take advantage of the advancement opportunities available to you and to take the initiative to ask for someone to test you when you are ready. You are responsible for keeping your own personal advancement record in your handbook. You should also record your service hours, campouts, troop activities and leadership positions in your handbook.

You must earn the ranks in order, but you may complete any requirement for Tenderfoot through First Class at any time. (For example, you may complete a First Class requirement before finishing your Tenderfoot, but you must earn Tenderfoot rank before you are awarded Second Class and First Class ranks.)

You will be meeting regularly with the Scoutmaster to discuss your activity in the Troop and your understanding and implementation of the ideals of scouting. This Scoutmaster Conference is also used to discuss your goals and accomplishments and is required prior to each rank advancement.

You do not have to wait until you have completed the requirements for a rank in order to ask for a Scoutmaster Conference. You may talk with the Scoutmaster at any time that it is convenient to both of you. However, for a Scoutmaster Conference to count toward rank advancement it must take place after all other requirements are complete and before the Board of Review. At this required conference the Scoutmaster will also help you determine whether or not you are ready to go before the Board of Review.

Following this Scoutmaster Conference, you should arrange for a Board of Review with the Advancement Chairman. Boards of Review are normally held during Troop meetings the week following your Scoutmaster Conference. The Board is usually comprised of 3 – 6 Troop Committee Members and may not include the Scoutmaster, Assistant Scoutmaster or family members. Eagle Board of Reviews are arranged through the District Advancement Committee and can utilize other leaders.

The purpose of a Board of Review is not to retest you but rather to ensure that you have completed all the requirements, to determine the quality of your Troop experience and to encourage you to advance to the next rank. Sometimes you will have a Board of Review even if you are not ready to advance to the next rank, in order to check your progress and to see how things are going for you in the Troop and in your Patrol. The Troop Advancement Chairman may schedule you for such a Board of Review when he or she feels that an extended period has passed since your last Board of Review.

You need to have your Boy Scout Handbook and must be in your full Class A uniform before you appear for a Scoutmaster Conference or before a Board of Review. At the beginning of your review you will be brought into the room and introduced to the members of the Board and asked to be seated. During the review the Board will discuss your development along the Trail to Eagle, ask you questions about skills that were required for your particular rank, evaluate you in terms of Troop activities and assess your readiness for your next rank. It is also a time for you to ask questions you might have and to give feedback to the Troop Committee about Troop activities and your Scouting experience in your Troop and Patrol. At the end of the review you will be asked to leave the room while the Board discusses your qualifications. The Board will then call you back into the room and inform you either that you have been approved for the next rank or what additional actions you must take to qualify.

After passing the Board of Review, you will be recognized in front of the Troop as soon as possible and receive your new rank patch, many times the same evening that you pass your Board. You will be formally recognized for your rank advancements and merit badges in front of family and friends during a ceremony at a Court of Honor. At this time you will be presented with your wallet sized certificate, a mother's pin and a pin for you. Court's of Honor are scheduled three times per year and are held in April, August and December. Your parents, other family members and friend are invited to attend all Court's of Honor.

After reaching the rank of Life Scout, you will meet with the Scoutmaster of Advancement Chairman. At this meeting you will receive your Life to Eagle packet and discuss ideas and suggestions for your eagle service project. This project must conform to special guidelines that have been outlined by the Boy Scouts of America. Your Scoutmaster, Troop Committee and District Advancement Committee, as well as the benefiting organization, must approve your project before you begin to carry it out.