

MERIT BADGES

Earning Merit Badges allows you to explore many fields, helps you round out your skills and introduces you to subjects that will perhaps become lifelong interests or a rewarding career.

There are more than 100 merit badges for you to choose from. You may earn any merit badge at any time, with Scoutmaster approval. Do not wait for someone to tell you when and which merit badge to work on. You do not need to reach a certain rank in order to be eligible. However you should concentrate on achieving the rank of First Class before devoting a lot of time to working on merit badges.

Don't overwhelm yourself by trying to complete too many badges at one time. We recommend that you actively work on no more than two at one time until you reach the rank of First Class, and no more than five at one time thereafter.

You can find information about merit badge requirements in the appropriate merit badge pamphlets and in the current year's Boy Scout Requirements book. Some of these should be available in our Troop library and sometimes at the local library. Be careful when using a pamphlet, that it is the most current version. All merit badge pamphlets are available from our Council Scout Store and local stores that sell scouting supplies. When you are finished with the merit badge pamphlet that you have purchased we would encourage you to donate it to the Troop library.

Here are the steps to earning a Merit Badge:

1. Get a blue merit badge card from the Scoutmaster, fill in your name, address, name of the merit badge and ask the Scoutmaster to sign the card. Then get the name and phone number of a qualified counselor from the Scoutmaster. We suggest that you e-mail the Scoutmaster or give him a note at the meeting to request a blue card, remembering that a scout is "courteous".
2. Call the counselor and set up an appointment. This can be any place that is suitable to both of you. Along with a buddy, (another scout, family member or a friend) meet with the counselor. The counselor will explain the requirements for the merit badge and help you get started. Generally it is acceptable to meet with the counselor in the time prior to scheduled Troop meetings, but such meeting cannot take place during the Troop meeting.
3. Work on the merit badge requirements until you complete them, meeting with the counselor (along with your buddy) whenever necessary. You must complete the stated requirements and satisfy the standards of each merit badge. The merit badge counselor may encourage you to do more than the requirements state but he or she cannot require it. YOU, not the counselor, Scoutmaster or Advancement Chairman should keep the merit badge card until you have completed all the requirements and the counselor has signed the card. If you lose this card, you will have to start the merit badge over unless the counselor is willing and able to vouch for what you have already completed. It is important that you bring your card to all sessions with the counselor so that requirements can be signed off as they are completed.
4. If you change counselors for any reason, it is up to the new counselor whether or not he or she will accept the work you did with the previous counselor. Normally the new counselor will ask you a few questions, and if the counselor is satisfied that you actually did the work that was signed off, he or she will accept it.

5. After you complete the merit badge and the counselor signs the blue card, he or she will keep the counselors section and return the rest of the card to you. You will then bring the rest of the card to the Scoutmaster to sign, prior to turning it in to the Advancement Chairman. The Troop copy will be kept in the Troop records and your copy will be given to you at the next Court of Honor, along with your merit badge wallet certificate.

RECORD KEEPING

Your advancement records are kept in three places – your Council office, the Troop Advancement Chairman and yourself. The Council office keeps records supplied to them by the Troop Advancement Chairman who also keeps copies of these records for the Troop. We also maintain advancement information on computers. You will receive three kinds of documents that you need to **KEEP IN A SAFE PLACE UNTIL AFTER YOU TURN 18** (or until after you receive your Eagle Scout Award). These documents are; your Scout Handbook with requirements signed off, your portion of the completed blue merit badge card and the wallet sized certificate card for rank advancements and merit badges earned. Make sure all of them are signed or initialed by the appropriate Scout Leader. All of the cards are the same size and can be safely kept in plastic protector pages which are designed for baseball and other sport cards. **IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT YOU KEEP THESE DOCUMENTS IN A SAFE PLACE AND DO NOT LOSE THEM!** If it should happen that there is a discrepancy or missing records, your personal records are your most important ally in proving what you have completed and when.