Catalina Council Advancement

presents

Merit Badge Counselor Orientation

The Path to a Quality Program in Scouting Lies in Training our Adult Leaders

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Adapted from training developed by, Northwest District







- 1. Discuss the BSA Advancement Program
 - ✓ Aims & Methods, the 4-steps, Mentoring
- 2. The Role of the Merit Badge Counselor
 - ✓ How it Works
 - ✓ Individual vs. Group Counseling
- 3. Before Beginning to Counsel
 - ✓ Qualifications, Applications, Youth Protection Training, Planning
- 4. The Process
 - ✓ Roles of Scout, Scoutmaster, Counselor
 - ✓ Completing Merit Badge Card
 - ✓ "Partial" Merit Badge
- 5. Troubleshooting
- **6. Special Needs Scouts**
- 7. Unit "To Do's"
- 8. Merit Badge Myths

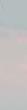
















1a. The Purpose of the Program

Merit Badges are an educational tool unique to Scouting...

...Designed to help youth tackle new subjects with the help of mentors.

Each new topic creates new experiences...

...Which help them grow into adults and citizens of good character.



1b. Aims & Methods of Scouting



- **AIMS** (what the BSA hopes to accomplish)
- ➤ Growth in moral strength and character
- Learning and participating in citizenship
- ➤ "Fitness" growth and development: physical, mental, and moral







1b. Aims & Methods of Scouting

METHODS (the process of growing into leaders)



> Advancement



> Patrols





> Adult Association



- > Personal Growth
- > Leadership Development
- > Uniform









4 Steps

Learning - Testing - Reviewing - Recognition

- Provides a unique, non-classroom-based educational tool that helps young men grow into adults of character.
- Allows the Scout to progress at his own rate.
- Accepting the challenge encourages Scouts.
- > Shows that there are recognition and rewards for perseverance.
- Encourages Scouting ideals: the Oath, Law, Motto, and Slogan.



1d. Counselors Mentor Scouts to...



- Develop character and self-confidence
- Learn and practice communication skills
- Overcome obstacles
- Meet and work with new people
- Research possible future careers
- Develop physical fitness
- Have fun (the best way to learn!)
- Discover a lifetime of hobbies and interests







2a. Counselor & Scout Meet

The Scout (*not an adult*) will contact you to schedule a meeting.



At the meeting

- Introduce yourself. Tell why you counsel this Badge!
- > Determine:
 - ✓ Preparedness: Signed Merit Badge Card?
 - ✓ Did he read the Merit Badge pamphlet?
 - ✓ What does he already know about the subject?
 - ✓ Has he been researching possible projects?
 - ✓ Discuss requirements.
 - ✓ Set short- and long-term goals.
 - ✓ Scouts may use school assignments if they 'fit' well.
- Set the next meeting date.







2b. The Counselor's "Helps"

Merit Badge Worksheets are optional

- > They are unofficial but may aid in learning.
- > Some think they are too much like school... Others love them.
- Worksheets may be used to meet "writing" requirements.
- Worksheets are not a substitute for "telling", "showing", or "demonstrating", etc.
- > Scouts can not be required to use them.
- If your Badge could benefit from a Worksheet, make your own, or ask the Scout to download one.

One Resource:

✓ <u>www.meritbadge.com</u> There are great 'Resources' at the end of these Worksheets.









2c. Mentoring

During the time you are working with the Scout on the Badge:

- > Teach the skills!
- Scouts learn best by practicing, then teaching someone else.
- Scouts must meet the <u>all</u> requirements as written "No More, No Less" !!!
- Scout must do what is asked in the requirements:
 * make * list * collect * identify * label * in the field...*
- Expect "no more, no less."
- If Scout wants to do more than is required, great!
- Date and initial each requirement when complete.
- > Follow-up on goals
- When done, congratulate Scout!
- Keep "Counselor's Record"







2d. Buddies and Groups

Buddies



- -Give <u>individual attention</u> to each Scout during the badge.
- -The Counselor <u>must ensure that each Scout</u> <u>individually</u> completes all requirements.
 - Youth Protection guidelines always apply.
- -Never meet alone with a Scout.
- Another scout, parent, or leader should be present or within clear view.
- Two adult counselors meeting with one scout is not appropriate.

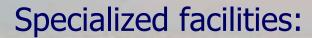




2d. Buddies and Groups

Group Counseling





- > to work on appropriate equipment
- > to tour businesses specializing in subject matter
- to meet with expert personnel
- to give Scouts in rural areas access to Counselors and Badges









3a. Are You Qualified?

- Counselors must be 18 and registered with BSA.
- Counselors must be approved by District and vetted by Council before beginning
- > Must Complete and keep current Youth Protection Training
- Should enjoy working with youth!
- > Have interest, skill, and perhaps education, in your subjects
- > No restriction on number of Badges you may Counsel
- > No limit on number of Badges earned from one Counselor
- Counselors may work with any Scout, including sons and relatives.
- Scouts may do Badges with Counselors anywhere in the U.S.A







Special Certifications and Trainings

Specific training is required for some BSA activities, including merit badges.







A counselor *must* hold the specific certification or work with someone who does.





3b. Are You Current?

For New Counselors or to Add New Badges:



➤ BSA Adult
Application
Position code 42
(BSA #524-501)



- "Merit Badge Counselor Application (BSA #34405WEB)
- http://www.scouting.org /scoutsource/BoyScouts/ AdvancementandAwards /Resources.aspx
- No Unit Leaders need to sign
- > No fee

- Before Counseling, submit Applications
- Merit badge counselors who are reregistering need not complete a new application
- Follow BSA Policies
- "Youth Protection" required for ALL
- Register yearly
- Notify District when you 'retire' from Counseling
- Merit badge counselor" is a council or district position
- Approval of merit badge counselors is the responsibility of the council advancement committee, not the unit





3c. Are You Ready?

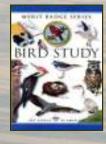
Be Prepared!





Keep a recent "Boy Scout Requirements" booklet (BSA #33215) on hand. Printed yearly. Most Troops have one. This is the governing document, when there is a difference in requirements, what is in this years requirements pamphlet is what is required!!





Merit Badge Pamphlets (do <u>not</u> use © 2000 and older)

- Prepare projects
- Gather materials and references
- Search out and plan for appropriate off-site events



4a. The Process Begins

- > The Scout selects Badge, talks with Scoutmaster
- > The Scoutmaster gives the Scout a Blue Card
- > The Scout fills in data
- > The Scoutmaster
 - ✓ Scoutmaster talks about the badge with the scout.
 - ✓ Signs front of Card, affirming that you have met. Approval is not a requirement.
 - ✓ Provides names of Counselors (MBC)
 - ✓ Asks Scout to wear uniform and take a buddy
- Ideally, the **Scout** will study the Merit Badge pamphlet and other resources before meeting with MBC.







4c. The Process Continues



- Scout selects Counselor, calls to schedule meeting.
- Counselor asks Scout to bring:
 - √ Signed Merit Badge card
 - ✓ Merit Badge Pamphlet (optional)
 - ✓ Projects in progress, samples of school projects, ideas for requirements...







4c. The Process Continues

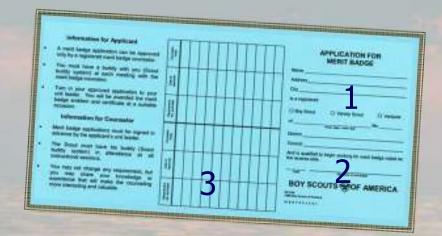
- Scout and Counselor discuss requirements, projects, goals.
- The Scout does work on own or with other Scouts; with guidance from Counselor, this may require several work days.
- > Counselor tests each Scout individually
- > Counselor records completed requirements







4b. Filling out The Card



- 1) The **Scout** fills out the personal data on *both* sides of card
- 2) The **Scoutmaster** signs front of card <u>before</u> Scout begins to work on badge



3) The **Counselor** writes in the req. number, date, and initials whenever the Scout completes a requirement

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4d. Processing the Card



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The **Counselor**

- 1. Fills in personal data
- 2. Signs and dates requirements as Scout completes them
- 3. Signs card when complete, or (after event is over, returns partially-completed card to Scout)
- 4. Keeps "Counselor Record;" gives card to Scout.



4e. Completing the Card





- The **Scout** gives his completed card to the Scoutmaster
- 2) The **Scoutmaster** signs card, gives to Advancement Chair
- 3) Advancement Chair amends records, buys badge, files card
- 4) **Scout** keeps center portion





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Scout receives Badge at a Unit Meeting, and will be recognized again at the next Court of Honor.



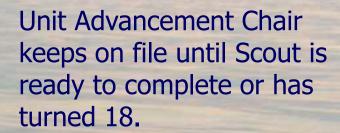
4f. A "Partial" Card



Summer Camps, Merit Badge events, Camporees...



"Partials" never expire, but do get lost.





Suggestion: Use plastic baseball card sleeves Place in 3-ring binder.



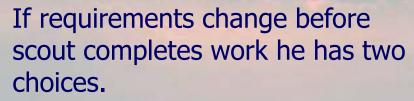
This Scout has two requirements to complete.

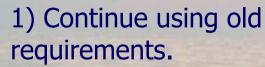






Scouts have until 18th birthday to complete a badge.





2) Switch to new requirements.

No mixing of requirements is allowed, i.e. all old, or all new

**Choice may be superseded by BSA National such as with Cooking MB, only new req. starting 1/1/15.











5. Problems

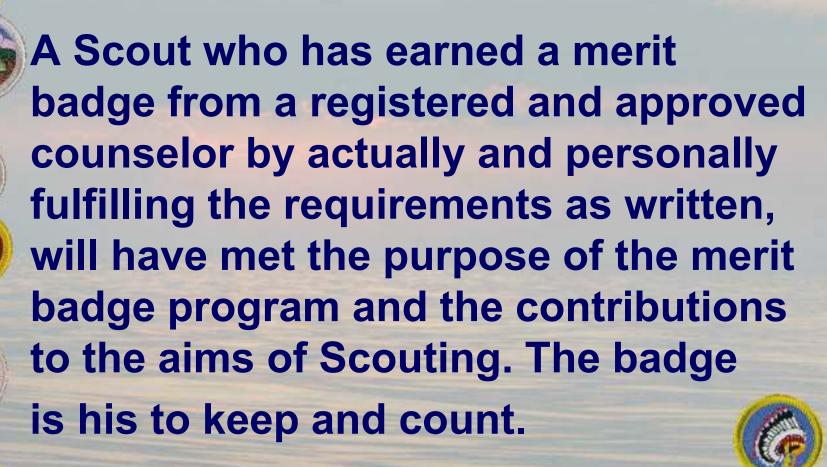
A Counselor Should Stop Work on a Badge if

- > A Scout has no Blue Card
- ➤ Card not signed by Scoutmaster
- > The Scout comes to the meeting alone (no buddy)
- ➤ The Scout is "winging it." Sign only completed requirements.
- ➤ Summer Camp Partials...if...
 - > Age 18 vs. the 3-month badges... (no time to complete)
 - Scout has made up charts, lists, or logs...
 - > Parent is doing the work

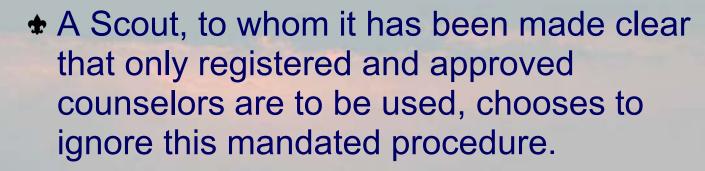


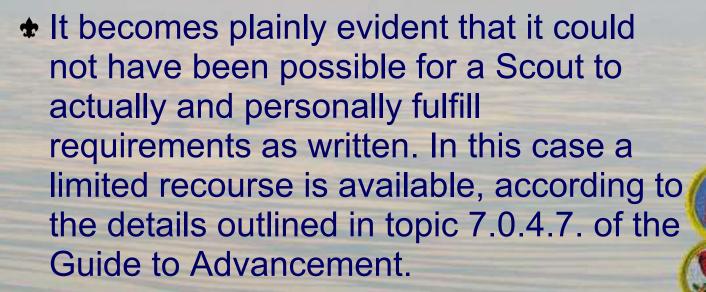


Once It's Earned, It's Earned



A Second Counselor Review May Be Warranted If...







6. Special Needs Scouts



- **≻**Orally
- ➤ By Taking Photos
- ➤ By Demonstration or Drawing
- **▶**By Recording
- ▶By Dictating his answers to helper







6. Special Needs Scouts



Scout may do Alternate "Eagle Required" badges



- ➤ "Application for Alternate Eagle Scout Award Merit Badges"
- > Doctor's statement of disability



➤ Alternates are ONLY for badges he cannot complete



➤ Record of Alternate Badges submitted with Eagle Application









7. Unit "To Do's"

Unit Advancement Chairs

- Maintain Merit Badge Counselor List, get a current list for your district from the District Advancement Chair or Scouting Professional.
- Work with *Troop Librarian* to maintain a library of Merit badge books
- Training the Unit's MB Counselors:
 - ✓ Ensure all counselors are trained.
 - ✓ Every MBC must have Youth Protection Training every 2 years.
 - ✓ Registration every year.





1. At what age or rank may Boy Scouts work on merit badges? There is no minimum age limit for any merit badge if registered as a Scout.



2. What is the maximum number of merit badges a Scout may work on at the same time? There is no limit.



3. Is a Scout allowed to begin work on a merit badge without his unit leader's approval? Approval to begin work is not required; signed blue card is approval to contact the merit badge counselor.

4. If a Scout has too many unfinished merit badges, may the unit leader limit how many others he may begin? During the discussion of a new merit badge, the unit leader should provide counseling on what to do.

5. Is it appropriate to tell a Scout he must earn all or most of his Eagle-required badges before he earns any others? A unit leader could only suggest this. This may actually slow a scouts progress toward Eagle.



6. Is the unit leader is permitted to serve as a unit merit badge counselor for merit badges such as Camping or Hiking?

This is permitted *only* if the unit leader is registered and approved as a counselor.

7. What is the maximum number of badges a youth may earn from one counselor?

There is no BSA limit. A unit leader may set a limit, but it must apply to al Scouts in the unit.







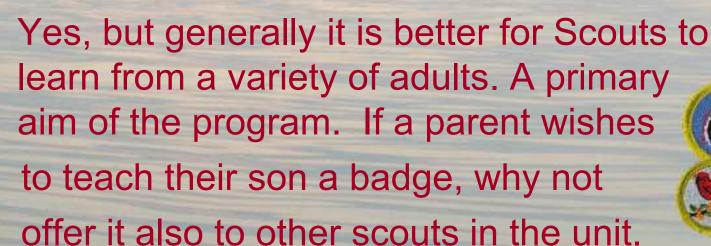




8. How many badges may one counselor be approved to counsel?

National places no limit on this. Councils may do so, within reason. Qualification rules, Vocation, Avocation, Special Training apply

9. May you counsel your own son?





10. May you counsel in other units, districts, or councils?

Yes. Any registered counselor can council and sign off a badge for any scout.

11. Due to tight schedules, is a camp staff member allowed to make minor adjustments so requirements can be finished at camp?

Absolutely not. No additions or deletion are permitted. Fundamental Rule is: "Scout Meets the requirements as written, no more, no less"















12.Once you are registered and approved as a counselor, at what point must you re-register and become reapproved?

Annually. Some councils/districts may have different methods to handle reregistration of counselors.

13. When does a "partial" expire?

When the youth is no longer eligible to register as a Boy Scout, Age 18 normally, no limit if Registered beyond the age of Eligibility.

14. Due to the BSA policies related to Youth Protection and two-deep leadership, a merit badge counselor must have another adult present during all merit badge counseling sessions. There must always be a third person present, but it may be any other adult familiar to the Scout, a Scout's parent, or a Scout's "buddy." Common sense dictates that two adult counselors alone with only one Scout should be avoided.





15. A merit badge counselor who works only with a single unit needs only the

unit committee's approval before being approved by the Scout executive.

