

National Capital Area Council Policy
on
Group Merit Badge Instruction

The following policy regarding merit badge group instruction is established by the council advancement and recognition committee.

This policy shall apply to all Group Merit Badge Instruction events occurring within the geographic boundaries of the NCAC and employing NCAC registered and approved Merit Badge Counselors. All merit badge instruction within the Council must comply with BSA Youth Protection, the Guide to Safe Scouting and the Guide to Advancement.

- A troop, crew or ship can use group instruction of merit badges within their unit without seeking approval from the council or district.
- Citizenship in Society merit badge counselors may accept Scouts from outside their unit without obtaining district approval if doing so will promote discussion. Consideration should be given to having participating Scouts within 2 years of age.
- With the exception of units sponsored by NCAC, units with the same chartering organization may offer group merit badge instruction solely to the members of the linked units. Units sponsored by NCAC will need to seek district or council approval to offer group merit badge instruction to youth outside their unit.
- If a unit decides to sponsor a merit badge event featuring multiple merit badges and solicits Scouts from outside their unit to participate, or an individual counselor solicits scouts from multiple units, or the district sponsors such an event, they must get district advancement committee approval to conduct the event. This affords the district advancement committee the opportunity to ensure compliance with the Guide To Advancement guidance on group instruction.
- Council level groups such as Aquatics, Shooting Sports, any religious committee, and STEM must get approval from either the Council Advancement Chair, Council Merit Badge Dean, or NCAC Advancement Committee Staff Advisor.
- Outside organizations to the BSA must always receive council approval from one of the aforementioned positions.
- To expedite council/district advancement committee approval of an event, sponsoring organizations should submit, at a minimum, the information described in Appendix A 30 days prior to the event. Districts, with the approval of their Key Three, may request additional information if they choose.



Matthew Burns
Chair, NCAC Advancement and
Recognition Committee



David Astle
NCAC Merit Badge Dean



Kelly Wratkowski
NCAC Advancement
Committee Staff Advisor

Appendix A

Group Merit Badge Instruction Plan

1. Provide the names of participating counselors along with the badges they propose to counsel to the district merit badge dean. This allows the district to ensure the counselors are currently registered, approved to counsel the badge they propose to counsel and have current Youth Protection Training.
2. Describe how the sponsoring organization will comply with the Guide to Advancement, BSA Youth Protection and the Guide to Safe Scouting. If there will be Co-ed classes, the sponsor should describe how it will comply with BSA requirements in this area.
3. Group Merit Badge events providing Aquatics or Shooting Sports merit badges must explain how the event will deal with safety concerns related to these activities.
4. Confirm the sponsoring organization informed Scouts, parents, and leaders that an event with limited time frequently results in a partial merit badge.
5. The sponsoring organization must tell scouts, parents and leaders how to report concerns about merit badge counseling issues.

Effective August 15, 2023, in addition to the above five requirements for a group merit badge instruction plan, group merit badge events that are offered to Scouts from more than one district by a unit or an organization that does not have a current letter of agreement with NCAC and where the sponsor charges more than \$30.00 per person for the event, must adhere to the following:

- The sponsor must obtain approval in advance from the Council Advancement Chair, Merit Badge Dean or Council Staff Advisor, similar to a Council level group.
- The sponsor must have submitted a budget using the NCAC-mandated form and had the budget approved by a professional NCAC Scouter.
- The sponsor must use NCAC's Black Pug registration site to register participants and all fees must be collected in advance via credit card using the Black Pug site.
- For reimbursement, sponsors will need to submit receipts to a professional NCAC Scouter for approval.