

Summary

12/17/2024 9:31:33 AM

Compare Results



Old File:

33088 - 2021.pdf

96 pages (24.91 MB)
7/5/2021 10:00:56 AM

versus

New File:

33088 - 2025.pdf

101 pages (25.95 MB)
12/9/2024 1:08:15 PM

Total Changes

1965

Content

762

Replacements

369

Insertions

402

Deletions

Styling and
Annotations

329

Styling

103

Annotations

Replaced Bobcat and Lion patches with new Lion patch



Policy on Unauthorized Changes to Advancement Program

No council, committee, district, unit, or individual has the authority to add to, or subtract from, advancement requirements. There are limited exceptions relating only to members with special needs. For details see Section 10, "Advancement for Members With Special Needs."

Mandated Procedures and Recommended Practices

This publication clearly identifies mandated procedures with words such as "must" and "shall." Where such language is used, no council, committee, district, unit, or individual has the authority to deviate from the procedures covered without the written permission of the National Advancement Program Team. Recommended best practices are offered using words like "should," while other options and guidelines are indicated with terms such as "may" or "can." Refer questions on these to your local district or council advancement chairs or staff advisors. They, in turn, may request interpretations and assistance from the National Advancement Program Team.

The Guide to Safe Scouting Applies

Policies and procedures outlined in the Guide to Safe Scouting apply to all BSA activities, including those related to advancement and Eagle Scout, Summit, and Quartermaster service projects.

What Does "Unit Leader" Mean?

Throughout this publication the term "unit leader" refers only to a Cubmaster, Scoutmaster, Venturing ~~crew~~ Advisor, Sea Scout Skipper, or Lone Scout friend and counselor. "Unit leadership" and "leader" are used as generic references to any registered adult leader in a unit and as such would include the unit leader.

What Does "Scouts BSA Handbook" Mean?

Throughout this publication, the term Scouts BSA Handbook refers to both the Scouts BSA Handbook for Boys and the Scouts BSA Handbook for Girls.

How Is a "Month" Defined?

A month is a month regardless how many days it has. It is not defined as 30 days or four weeks. February 2 up to August 2, or August 31 up to February 28 (or 29th if leap year) are examples of six-month periods. Six months does not mean 180 days.

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General

- Changed “the Boy Scouts of” to “Scouting America”, including graphics
- Changed “BSA” to “Scouting America”
 - Exception – “BSA Lifeguard, Boardsailing BSA, Snorkeling BSA, Paddlecraft Safety, Kayaking BSA, Mile Swim BSA” were changed to “Boardsailing, Snorkeling, Paddlecraft Safety, Kayaking, Mile Swim”
- Changed “2021” to “2025”
- Removed all References to Advancement News, and National Advancement Program Team
- Changed all “Scoutbook” to “Scoutbook Plus”, not “Scoutbook Plus Internet Advancement”
- Removed “shall” from document and replaced with “must”
- Changed “belt loops” to “Adventure loops”
- Changes “National Advancement Program Team” to “National Program Committee or their designee”
 - Note – advancement.team@scouting.org is still a good email address!

Table of Contents

- Combined Lion, Tiger, Wolf and Bear sections into one section (4.1.1.0)
- Removed section on Adventure Pins (4.1.1.5)
- Changed 7.0.4.7 title by removing “Limited” from “recourse for Unearned Merit Badges”
- Added 7.0.4.12 on Online Merit Badge Classes
- Completely reorganized Section 10.0.0.0 – Advancement for Members with Special Needs

1.0.0.0 - Introduction

- Added - The policies and procedures specified in this document must be implemented by all units, districts and councils. Therefore, they must work for all units, districts and councils, no matter how large, small, geographically dense, economically diverse, etc. For this reason, policies have been designed to be firm enough to maintain the integrity of the Scouting program, while broad enough to allow councils and districts to match to their circumstances while retaining the intent.
- Deleted call out boxes at bottom of page regarding Online and PDF Versions – already covered in 1.0.0.0

1.0.3.0 – Significant Changes

- Revised information based on this revision as follows:
 - 4.2.1.2 “Once a Scout has been tested and signed off by someone approved to do so, the requirement has been met.” Added “and cannot be rescinded.”
 - 5.0.8.0 Added policy dealing with group/online instruction, and use of artificial intelligence
 - 7.0.4.12 Online Merit Badge Classes
 - 8.0.4.1 Added two-week time limit for council to document denial of advancement to the rank of Eagle Scout, and two months for Scout or parents to file appeal.
 - 9.0.1.7 Changed way Eagle Scout references are handled
 - 9.0.1.8 Added two-week time limit for council to document denial of advancement to the rank of Eagle Scout, and two months for Scout or parents to file appeal.
 - Section 10 Advancement for Members with Special Needs (completely reorganized and rewritten)

2.0.0.4 – Methods of Scouting

- Added – “den or” to “Throughout the Scouting program, we provide a place where the sense of belonging—as in a den or patrol—is an outcome of practicing skills, exploring interests, learning values, forming friendships, and enjoying adventure.”

3.0.0.0 – Guidelines for Advancement Committees

- Changed title by removing “**and Recognition**” and flipped whether council and district committees provide recognition
- Deleted the call out box before 3.0.0.1
- 3.0.0.1 – Revised last sentence, “A full, functioning council advancement committee should be organized to accomplish the following, **while always implementing and enforcing the policies in this *Guide to Advancement.***”
 9. Changed “advancement records are critical” to “advancement records **and backups** are critical”
 10. Changed “supporting **membership** recruitment” to “supporting recruitment”
 12. Added “**Summit**” to list of service projects for establishing review procedures
 - 17, 18, 19. Added “**If awards committee,**” to beginning of each
 21. Added “**Support protection of youth and Scouting America’s trademark by assisting the council in establishing written agreements, as described in 7.0.4.9, with non-Scouting organizations that conduct merit badge and other Scouting classes.**”

3.0.0.0 – Guidelines for Advancement Committees

- 3.0.0.2 – District Advancement Committee Responsibilities



Introduction – changed “**established**” to “**delegated**”, so it reads, “The following is a guide to the responsibilities that might be delegated.”

4. Revised as follows, “Maintain advancement records and share them with commissioners, trainers, and other district volunteers who serve units, **while respecting the privacy of Scouts.**”

9. Added “**...and backups...**”

10. Simplified as follows, “Follow national and local council procedures as prescribed regarding appeals; **references; project proposal approvals; board of review chair selection;** boards of review support; and time extensions.

11. Added the following, “**...STEM Nova awards (if your council supports these awards),** as well...”

12. Changed the following, “Recommend, according to council and district practices, recipients for the Award of Merit **and other recognitions, if a joint recognition committee.**”

14. Changed “**...consider the following:**” to “**consider adding:**”

14k. **Deleted – dealt with assembling lists for Venturing advancement**

3.0.0.0 – Guidelines for Advancement Committees

- 3.0.0.3 – Unit Advancement Responsibilities

Introduction – revised from having, “...the basic responsibility to support the **unit’s advancement and awards program...**” to “...the basic responsibility to support the **youth’s advancement...**”

2. Added “recognize successes” to list of examples

3. Changed “...courts of honor – **quarterly...**” to “...courts of **honor—every three to four months...**”

11. Deleted “**As needed to fill in, develop and maintain a list of unit merit badge counselors**”

- 3.0.0.5 – Building an Advancement Committee

2. Changed “**Volunteerism**” to “**Volunteer recruitment**”

8. Added “**Nova counselor**”

4.0.0.0 – The Mechanics of Advancement

- 4.0.0.1 – Changes to Requirements
 - Removed “**Cub Scout**” from paragraph on new or revised requirements and added the following: “In Cub Scouting, Cub Scouts work on the badge of rank and associated Adventures that are specific to their grade. Changes in Cub Scout badges of rank or Adventure requirements take effect at the start of the next program year unless otherwise stated.”
 - Removed “**or Palm**” from the Scouts option of which requirements they may continue to use when changes are introduced
 - Added the following: “If the member rejoining is a Cub Scout, they may continue on their rank only if rejoining while in the same grade, otherwise they must work on the rank appropriate for their current grade.”
- 4.0.0.2 – Reporting Advancement
 - Removed the * and the call out box regarding rank purchases and advancement reports and incorporated everything into a single paragraph
 - Revised the following: “Units should report advancement **at least** monthly”

4.1.0.0 – Mechanics of Advancement in Cub Scouting

- 4.1.0.1 – Delivering the Cub Scout Program
 - Added the following, “The Cub Scout program year officially begins and ends June 1 to coincide with the automatic grade rollover that happens in membership records when Scouts are advanced one grade level. For areas where school does not end by June 1, Cub Scouts may still work on advancement needed for their badge of rank until their school year ends.”
 - Removed reference to Den Leader Experience and revised the second paragraph as follows: “Den leader resources are at www.scouting.org. The requirements for all the required and elective Cub Scout Adventures also are available. Each Cub Scout Adventure has a list of requirements along with suggested activities that can be conducted to complete the requirement. Scoutbook Plus is the official record of the den and pack. A den leader may schedule out the program year...”
- 4.1.0.3 – Who Approves Cub Scout Advancement?
 - Removed reference to Scoutbook’s Den Leader Experience and revised the following, “A key responsibility for den leaders is to guide each Cub Scout toward completing their badge of rank by organizing meetings, activities, and working with the family of the Cub Scout to complete the requirements for the six required Adventures and at least two elective Adventures each year. For Lion through Webelos ranks,...”
 - Deleted reference to Webelos and revised the following, “For ~~Webelos and~~ Arrow of Light Adventures and rank, the den leader signs for approval of all requirements, unless they delegate this responsibility.”
- 4.1.0.4 – Do Your Best
 - Changed “a den meeting” to “the next den meeting”, so it reads, “If it is possible for the pack to report and purchase these awards quickly, they could be presented at the next den meeting, rather than waiting for a pack meeting.”
 - Changed “not” to “never”, so it reads, “Awards should never be withheld for group recognition.”

4.1.0.0 – Mechanics of Advancement in Cub Scouting

- 4.1.1.0 – Cub Scout Ranks
 - Section introduction revised for new Cub Scout program
 - Changed 7 ranks to 6
 - Removed reference to age-based
 - Removed reference to Bobcat rank
 - Tiger, Wolf, Bear, and Webelos ages reduced by one year
 - Arrow of Light changed from just 4th Grade to 4th grade or 10 years old.

Changed “**should**” to “**must**”, so it now reads, “In situations like those found in home-schooling or nontraditional education, where youth are working at grade levels that may not correspond to their ages, Cub Scouts **must** work on the rank that relates to their age, rather than their grade.”

Removed “**too long**” from sentence, so it reads, “When doing so, take the joining requirements for Scouts BSA into consideration to avoid completing the Arrow of **Light before** meeting the minimum age requirement for Scouts BSA.”

Removed exception for those who earned Webelos in 4th grade in last sentence, so it reads, “Likewise, Cub Scouts do not “move ahead” to work on the next rank until the completion of the current school year (or until their next birthday if they are transitioning by age).”

4.1.0.0 – Mechanics of Advancement in Cub Scouting

Consolidating Cub Scout Rank Information

- Added Lion Rank
- Revised Bobcat Rank to be the Bobcat Adventure
- Revised text for new Cub Scout Adventures program

4.1.1.1 **Lion, Tiger, Wolf, and Bear**

For Lion, Tiger, Wolf, and Bear ranks Cub Scouts complete six required Adventures and two elective Adventures. Cub Scout Adventures are collections of themed, multidisciplinary activities of engaging content. Required and elective Adventures may be earned in any order, with the exception that the Bobcat Adventure is designed to be earned as the first required adventure. As youth finish an Adventure, they are awarded a belt loop that is worn on the official Cub Scout belt. Belt loops should be presented as soon as possible. When the requirements for each rank are fulfilled, the rank badge is presented at the next pack meeting.

Note that although participation with a parent or other caring adult is required for all Lion and Tiger Adventures, recognition items are for the Cub Scouts only.



4.1.0.0 – Mechanics of Advancement in Cub Scouting

- Paragraph renumbered after combining 4.1.1.1 – 4.1.1.3
- Revised the first two paragraphs and graphics to reflect the new Cub Scout Adventure program
- Converts the Bobcat badge to an Adventure
- Arrow of Light Adventure pins are allowed on a Scout hat of their choosing
- Changed “bridging” to “crossing over”
- Deleted 4.1.1.5 – introduced Adventure pin counselor concept

4.1.1.2 Webelos and Arrow of Light

Just as with the previous ranks, Cub Scouts complete required and elective Adventures for each rank in any order, with the exception that the Bobcat Adventure is designed to be the first required Adventure earned.



An Adventure pin is awarded for each completed Adventure. The pins may be worn on the Adventures colors or on the front of the Webelos cap. Arrow of Light Scouts may wear their Adventure pins on a Scout hat of their choosing. Cub Scouts may work on required and elective Adventure pins at the same time. Adventure pins should be presented as soon as possible. When the requirements for the Webelos or Arrow of Light ranks are fulfilled, the rank badge is presented at the next pack meeting.

Arrow of Light is Cub Scouting’s final rank before joining Scouts BSA. Much of the experience gives a youth the chance to practice skills in preparation for becoming a Scout in Scouts BSA. Once completed, the rank should be presented during an impressive ceremony involving Scouts from a local Scout troop. Their involvement may encourage the eventual crossing over of recipients into the troop.

All youth who are in Webelos dens and are in the fifth grade shall ~~not~~ earn Arrow of Light requirements. They can earn the Arrow of Light rank without earning the Webelos rank.

4.1.0.0 – Mechanics of Advancement in Cub Scouting

2021 GTA – 4.1.1.5

The minimum age for a Cub Scout who has earned the Arrow of Light Award to join Scouts BSA is 10 years old. The requirements for joining Scouts BSA, as stated in the *Scouts BSA Handbook*, include the following: “Have completed the fifth grade and be at least 10 years old OR be at least 11 years old OR have earned the Arrow of Light Award and be at least 10 years old...”

2025 GTA – 4.1.1.2

The minimum age for a Cub Scout who has earned the Arrow of Light Award to join Scouts BSA is 10 years old. The requirements for joining Scouts BSA, as stated in the *Scouts BSA Handbook*, include the following: Be at least 10 years old, currently in the fifth grade, and register on or after March 1 OR at least 10 years old and have earned the Arrow of Light rank OR at least 11 years old (but not yet 18).

4.2.0.0 – Mechanics of Advancement in Scouts BSA

Revised the guidance for advancement requirement approval

Parents or guardians are involved at home encouraging, mentoring, and supporting, but do not sign for rank advancement requirements unless they are registered leaders and have been ~~designated~~ authorized by the unit leader to approve advancement or are Lone Scout friends and counselors (see “Lone Scouting,” 5.0.3.0). Even then, it is preferable for an authorized person other than the Scout’s own parent to certify their accomplishments.

4.2.1.2 – The Scout is Tested

- Major clarification on who can test and pass Scouts on rank requirements.
- Non-direct-contact leaders may not test or pass Scouts on rank requirements, for example:
 - Committee members
 - Committee Chair
 - Unit Scouter Reserves
- Authorized testers must verify requirements have actually and personally been completed

The Scout's unit leader authorizes those who may test and pass the Scout on rank requirements (primary unit leader if the Scout is registered in multiple units). They might include the patrol leader, the senior patrol leader, the unit leader, an assistant unit leader, or another Scout. Other non-direct-contact Leaders, such as committee members, committee chairs, unit scouter reserves, and college scouter reserves, may not test or pass Scouts on rank requirements. Merit badge counselors guide Scouts and verify requirements for merit badges. Authorized testers must verify that requirements have actually and personally completed by the Scout, exactly as written.

4.2.1.0 – Four Steps of Advancement

2021 GTA – 4.2.1.0 (Text Box)

Once a Scout has been tested and signed off by someone approved to do so, the requirement has been met. The unit leader is accountable for ensuring proper advancement procedures are followed. **A part of this responsibility** includes the careful selection and training of those who approve advancement. If a unit leader believes a Scout has not learned the subject matter for a requirement that has been signed off, **he or she should see that opportunities are made available for the Scout to practice or teach the requirement.** Thus Scouts may complete their learning and further develop the related skills without being retested.

2025 GTA – 4.2.1.0 (Text Box)

Once a Scout has been tested and signed off by someone approved to do so, the requirement has been met **and cannot be rescinded.** The unit leader is accountable for ensuring proper advancement procedures are followed. **This** includes the careful selection and training of those who approve advancement. If a unit leader believes a Scout has not learned the subject matter for a requirement that has been signed off, **the unit leader should have the Scout practice or teach the requirement.** Thus Scouts may complete their learning and further develop the related skills without being retested.

4.2.1.3 – Active Participation

- The three tests, including the alternative, have been revised:
 - Added “or suspended” to 2nd test
 - Unit’s established expectations for test #3 need to be documented and communicated in advance
 - Clarified the verbiage in the text box
 - Alternative to 3rd test changed significantly

2021

- If a Scout has fallen below the unit’s activity-oriented expectations, then the reason must be due to other positive endeavors—in or out of Scouting—or due to noteworthy circumstances that have prevented a higher level of participation.
- ~~A Scout in this case is still considered “active” if a board of review can agree that Scouting values have already taken hold and have been exhibited. This might be evidenced, for example, in how the Scout lives life and relates to others in the community, at school, in religious life, or in Scouting. It is also acceptable to consider and “count” positive activities outside Scouting when they, too, contribute to the Scout’s character, citizenship, leadership, or mental and physical fitness. Remember: It is not so much about what Scouts have done. It is about what they are able to do and how they have grown.~~

2025

- If a Scout has fallen below the unit’s activity-oriented expectations, the reason must be other positive endeavors—in or out of Scouting—or noteworthy circumstances that have prevented a higher level of participation.

4.2.1.3 – Active Participation

- Removed the following from the additional guidelines:

2021

Certainly, there are medical, educational, family, and other issues that for practical purposes prevent higher levels of participation. **These *must* be considered. Would the Scout have been more active if he or she could have? If so, for purposes of advancement, the Scout is deemed “active.”**

We must also recognize the many worthwhile opportunities beyond Scouting. Taking advantage of these opportunities and participating in them may be used to explain why *unit* participation falls short. Examples might include involvement in religious activities, school, sports, or clubs that also develop character, citizenship, leadership, or mental and physical fitness. The additional learning and growth experiences these provide can reinforce the lessons of Scouting and also give young people the opportunity to put them into practice in a different setting.

- Replaced it with this:

2025

Certainly, there are medical, educational, family, and other issues that for practical purposes prevent higher levels of participation **and are outside the control of the Scout.**

4.2.1.3 – Active Participation

- Removed the following from the additional guidelines:

2021

A board of review can accept an explanation if it can be reasonably sure there have been sufficient influences in the Scout's life that the Scout is meeting our aims. The board members must satisfy themselves that the Scout is the sort of person who, based on present behavior, will contribute to the Boy Scouts of America's mission. Consequently, the board can grant the rank regardless of the Scout's current or most recent level of activity in Scouting. Note that it may be more difficult, though not impossible, for a younger member to pass through the third-test alternative than for one more experienced in our lessons.

2025

- Replaced it with this:

The board can grant the rank regardless of the Scout's current or most recent level of activity in Scouting, as long as they were active for the required length of time (or combination of times) during their tenure at that rank.

4.2.3.2 – Demonstrate Scout Spirit

2021

Evaluating Scout spirit will always be a judgment call, but through getting to know a Scout and by asking probing questions, we can get a feel for it. We can say, however, that we do not measure Scout spirit by counting meetings and outings attended. It is indicated, instead, by the way the Scout lives daily life.

2025

Evaluating Scout spirit will always be a judgment call, but through getting to know a Scout and by asking probing questions, we can get a feel for it. We can say, however, that we do not measure Scout spirit by counting meetings and outings attended or by whether they wore a uniform. It is indicated, instead, by the way the Scout lives daily life.

It's a small change, but the BSA is further delineating what should and should not be considered when evaluating Scout Spirit.

4.2.3.3 – Service Projects

- Deleted the following: “They also may be approved for those assisting on Eagle Scout service projects.”
 - Removes a confusing sentence from the service project discussion required for other ranks
- Revised the following: “Time that Scouts spend assisting on Eagle service projects **should****must** be allowed in meeting these requirements.”
 - Changed the “should” to a “must” to remove ambiguity

4.2.3.4 – Positions of Responsibility

- Changed 4.2.3.4.3 (Meeting Unit Expectations) to include “documented”, so it now reads:

“If a unit has established [documented](#) expectations for positions of responsibility, and if, *within reason* (see the note under “Rank Requirements Overview,” 4.2.3.0), based on the Scout’s personal skill set, these expectations have been met, the Scout has fulfilled the requirement.”

- Changed 4.2.3.4.4 (Meeting the Requirement in the Absence of Unit Expectations) to include “documented” and “unwritten”, so they now read:

“It is best when a Scout’s leaders provide position descriptions, and then direction, coaching, and support. Where this occurs and is done well, the young person will likely succeed. When this support, for whatever reason, is unavailable or otherwise not provided—or when there are no clearly established [documented](#) expectations— then an adult leader or the Scout, or both, should work out the responsibilities to fulfill.”

“Even if the effort or results are not necessarily what the unit leader, members of a board of review, or others involved may want to see, the Scout must not be held to [unwritten](#), unestablished expectations.”

- Changed 4.2.3.4.5 (When Responsibilities Are Not Met) to include “documented”, so it now reads:

“If a unit has *clearly* established [documented](#) expectations for position(s) held, then—*within reason*—a Scout must meet them through the prescribed time.”

There is a pattern here!
- Document it before something happens -

4.2.3.4.5 – When Responsibilities Are Not Met

- Revised the sentence to provide clear action as follows:

“If it becomes clear that performance will not improve, then it is **acceptable****important** to remove the Scout from the position **immediately**. “

4.2.3.5 – Unit Leader (Scoutmaster) Conference

- Revised the following:

“While it makes sense to hold one after other requirements for a rank are met, and in fact part of the unit leader (Scoutmaster) conference can be to confirm that all requirements were met, it is not required that it be the last step before the board of review.”

2021

Last-minute work can sometimes make it impossible to fit the conference in before that time. Scheduling it earlier can **avoid unnecessary extension requests.**

2025

Last-minute work can sometimes make it impossible to fit the conference in before that time. Scheduling it earlier can **allow time for the individualized, personal conversation that is required.**

Made the emphasis on the conversation and not the paperwork!

4.2.3.5 – Unit Leader (Scoutmaster) Conference

- Revised the sentence adding additional qualifiers as follows:

“Some leaders hold more than one along the way, and the Scout must be allowed to count any of them toward the requirement, as long as it was a significant, substantial discussion.”

- Added the following:

“Furthermore, while Scoutmasters may conduct conferences with any member, including their own children, wards, or relatives, delegation to an assistant unit leader over the age of 21 in these cases is highly recommended for additional adult association.”

4.3.3.0 – Mechanics of Advancement in Venturing

- Revised the introductory paragraph with no change in context
- 4.3.1.3 – removed BSA Lifeguard from certification example in 2nd paragraph
- 4.3.1.4 – added “but advancement should be tracked through one unit” for Venturers who have multiple registrations
 - Additionally added that the crew Advisor should seek advise from the district advancement committee when tracking Scouts BSA advancement
 - Added similar clarification to 4.4.0.1 (Scouts BSA Advancement in Sea Scouts) for both items above
- 4.3.2.2 – changed “pulling weeds” to “picking up trash” as an example of a routine maintenance job

5.0.0.0 – Special Considerations

2021 – 5.0.3.2 (Lone Scouts and Merit Badges)

They can be recruited from **among** teachers, hobbyists, business leaders, members of various clubs, etc. **Before they serve, the council or district advancement committee, according to local practices, must approve them.**

2025 – 5.0.3.2 (Lone Scouts and Merit Badges)

They can be recruited from teachers, hobbyists, business leaders, members of various clubs, etc., and must register with the council as a merit badge counselors.

5.0.8.0 – Using Technology-Based Tools in Advancement

- Revised several parts
 - Flipped the focus of the last sentence in the first paragraph
 - Added context to the example in the 3rd bullet
- Added new guidance
 - In-person vs virtual attendance
 - Advance approval
 - Defines discuss, explain, and demonstrate
 - Use of generative AI and other tools

Added text to 5.0.8.0

When a requirement says to “attend a meeting,” in-person participation is strongly recommended. While virtual participation may be convenient, in-person attendance allows for a significantly richer experience, with more socialization and more focus. Virtual attendance should be extremely rare, when extenuating circumstances prevent in-person participation, and the merit badge counselor must approve the substitution **in advance**.

Digital technologies can enhance or hinder our interactions with the world around us. With that in mind, when working on Scouting America rank, merit badge, and other advancement activities, the following definitions should be used:

- **Discuss** requires a back and forth, interactive conversation between the Scout and the merit badge counselor. Exchanging a few text messages does not meet this standard, but a video conversation might.
- **Explain** can be accomplished in a written or oral format but must be a substantive description, more than just a few words.
- **Demonstrate** means to physically do the activity, ideally in the presence of the counselor. If this is not possible, a video of the Scout doing the activity can be used, provided both the video and the activity can be done in a safe manner. Video evidence must only be accepted if the Scout performs the skill correctly, and all essential aspects of the task can be clearly seen in the video.

Generative artificial intelligence and other tools (spell checkers, grammar checkers, autofill, etc.) may be used by a Scout to assist with written requirements, but their use must be fully disclosed to the person reviewing the work, and the final output must be the Scout’s own original work.

6.0.0.0 – Electronic Advancement Reporting

- Removed the following information regarding third party software:
 - (6.0.0.1) There are three methods for reporting advancement to the National BSA database: (1) enter data directly into Scoutbook (www.scoutbook.com); (2) upload data into Internet Advancement (scoutbook.scouting.org) from third-party advancement software, or (3) enter the data manually into Internet Advancement (scoutbook.scouting.org).
 - (6.0.0.2) Units may choose to use Internet Advancement (scoutbook.scouting.org) to either upload advancement files from many third-party advancement software programs or enter the information manually.

Appears to Only Be Deemphasizing the Use of Third Party Software

6.0.0.4 – Electronic Advancement Miscellany

- Scout Transfers - Rearranged sentences and corrected a typo in the last sentence of the 2nd paragraph
- Dual Registration – narrowed the need for maintaining a single advancement record for Scouts with multiple registrations from across councils to multiple units within the same council

7.0.0.2 – About the Application for Merit Badge

- Revised the section maintaining the need for the “blue card” and its support for the interaction between the Scout, unit leader, and counselor
- The GTA will continue to reference blue cards, but has pulled the “recommends them” verbiage
- Changed the acceptance between councils of alternate forms of documentation from a “should” to a “must” provided the necessary information and processes were followed
- When alternatives to blue cards are used, it is “required” vs “expected” of advancement administrators to maintain all elements of the merit badge process

(7.0.0.2) For decades, the “blue card” has been the nationally recognized merit badge record. Even though technological advances provide a number of benefits, blue cards can support the intended interaction between Scout, unit leader, and merit badge counselor, and provide a hard copy for evidence and reference. Councils are encouraged to take advantage of innovations such as Scouting America’s Scoutbook Plus system, spreadsheets, etc. Units and other councils must accept these alternative forms of documentation as long as it provides the information necessary to track and record the Scout’s progress and all steps of the merit badge process were followed.

Since blue cards support the merit badge process as it is intended to function, the Guide to Advancement continues to reference them. It is required that when alternatives to blue cards are used, advancement administrators at all levels will carry on the processes, adult interactions, documentation, and other nuances that make the merit badge process such a critical element in Scouting America mission achievement.

7.0.0.3 – The Scout, the Unit Leader, and the Merit Badge Counselor

- The unit leader meeting is now required before starting a merit badge
- Provides for the unit leader to delegate the meeting and signature
- Adds restriction which prevents units from adding rank and age requirements for merit badge work
- Scout participation in MB events must be discussed well in advance
- Adds a remedy for unit leaders when Scouts avoid or ignore their role in the process

Unit Leader Role

- However, before working with a counselor or attending a group or virtual merit badge opportunity, a Scout **must** meet with **their unit leader or their delegate**.
- It must be noted that this **meeting is a required part of the merit badge process**, and that it should be documented either by the unit leader's signature (**or their delegate's**) on the Application for Merit Badge (blue card) or in Scoutbook Plus or other method.

Units must not impose rank or age requirements for merit badge work.

The Scout may want to take advantage of opportunities at merit badge fairs or midways, or at rock-climbing gyms or whitewater rafting trips, etc. This is acceptable, but **must be discussed with the unit leader well before the event.**

A Scout who avoids or ignores the unit leader's role and completes a badge without first discussing it with the leader should be counseled about the proper way to start a merit badge, and the discussion should be documented. If the Scout (or the parents) continue to ignore the established process, merit badges will not be recorded as "earned" until the Scout has demonstrated, told, shown, etc. that they have met all the requirements to the satisfaction of a merit badge counselor acceptable to the unit leader.

7.0.0.3 – The Scout, the Unit Leader, and the Merit Badge Counselor

- Revised sentence to encourage Scouts to meet with the counselor first
- Added sentence to remove any district or council constraints
- Simplified the counselor's authority regarding prior work
- Added remedy for merit badge work which doesn't meet the requirement

To ensure they understand what needs to be done, Scouts may benefit from reviewing requirements with a merit badge counselor before getting to work

Scouts may work on any merit badge at any time, regardless of how many other merit badges they are working on, rank, age, or other circumstances.


It is the counselor's decision whether to accept prior work.

For example, nights already camped as a Scout in Scouts BSA or as a qualified Venturer or Sea Scout, or coins or stamps already collected, would count toward their respective badges, but work that did not meet the requirement as written must not be accepted. The Scout should be gently informed as to why the requirement was not met, and how they can rectify the issue (up to and including repeating the activity, if necessary).

A Scout's MB Work


7.0.0.3 – The Scout, the Unit Leader, and the Merit Badge Counselor

- Revised sentence to focus on the Method of Scouting - Adult Association
- Added sentence to describe the disadvantage of earning a large number of merit badges from a small number of counselors



Nevertheless, we often teach young people the importance of broadening horizons.

However, association with adults is one of the methods of Scouting, and working with family members and known adults can deprive Scouts of the opportunity to learn and grow.



Earning a large number of merit badges from a small number of counselors, or only from counselors known to the Scout, robs the Scout of the opportunity to learn and grow.

7.0.0.3 – The Scout, the Unit Leader, and the Merit Badge Counselor

Closing Text Box

*It is acceptable for a **counselor registered in one council to approve merit badges for Scouts in another**. This is an important consideration, especially in areas where counselors are scarce, when Scouts are away from home and want to continue advancing, or when merit badge experiences include **web-based components** provided by someone in another council.*

Closing Text Box

*It is acceptable for a **registered counselor to approve merit badges for Scouts in any council**. This is important in areas where counselors are scarce, when Scouts are away from home and want to continue advancing, or when merit badge experiences include **high-quality online components** provided in another council. However, they must still follow all procedures, including the conversation between Scout and unit leader prior to working with a counselor.*

7.0.1.1 – Supervisory Qualifications and Certifications

- Changed “specific requirements” to “specific safety requirements” when referring to merit badge counselor qualifications
- Broadened the first General Supervision Requirement from just swimming and watercraft activities, to all merit badge activities
 - Replaced Safe Swim Defense and Safety Afloat with Scouting America safety strategies
 - Changed Sweet Sixteen of BSA Safety with SAFE checklist
 - Changed 16 points to 4 points and updated web link

7.0.1.1 – Merit Badge Qualifications and Certifications

(New) Citizenship in Society. Completion of the DEI volunteer training is strongly recommended for all counselors; it includes integral information on key concepts the Scouts will be studying: training.scouting.org/courses/SCO_1800/.

Snow Sports. (Added) All counselors should have formal training in the knowledge and skills indicated by the requirements, experience in teaching such skills to youth, and experience in identifying and managing risks associated with the activities involved.

Added the following to the lead-in paragraph for all aquatics-related merit badges:

All counselors should have formal training in the knowledge and skills indicated by the requirements, experience in teaching such skills to youth, and experience in identifying and managing risks associated with the activities involved.

The following merit badges were all changed to a consistent format, with updated qualifications, relevant to the respective merit badge.

Canoeing	Scuba Diving
Kayaking	Small Boat Sailing
Lifesaving	Swimming
Motorboating	Water Sports
Rowing	Whitewater

A sentence was added to the end of each merit badge as follows:

The council advancement committee may approve counselors with similar experience and training in knowledge, skill, safety, and instruction.

7.0.1.1 – Merit Badge


Qualifications and Certifications

- All references to “Shooting Sports” have been changed to “Range and Target Activities” to include Guide to Safe Scouting, council committees, and policy/procedure manuals
- Qualifications for Archery, Rifle Shooting, and Shotgun Shooting have all been updated
 - The caveat from aquatics-related activities regarding council advancement committee approval was not included for these badges

7.0.0.0 – The Merit Badge Program

- 7.0.1.2 – changed “Approval” to “Registration” making it appropriate for the section’s content
- 7.0.1.3 – removed reference to “at no fee” and added “they must reregister annually”

7.0.1.4 – Approving Badges to be Counseled

- Added “training” and “safe” as criteria for merit badge counselors to be approved by a council advancement committee
- Added the following: “The intent is for Scouts to learn from those with an appropriate level of expertise and enthusiasm for the subject matter. Counselors are approved for specific merit badges, and may only sign off on those for which they have been approved by the Council Advancement Committee or their designee. A well-qualified and enthusiastic counselor....”
- Added the following in a text box, *“Anyone who is desires to serve as a merit badge counselor, whether currently unregistered or registered in another position, must complete an adult application.”*
- Revised Scoutmasters serving as merit badge counselors as follows, “Scoutmasters wishing to counsel and sign off on merit badges must qualify and register in the position of merit badge counselor and be approved according to council procedures just like any other adult leader.”
- Deleted the text box 

In approving counselors, the local council advancement committee has the authority to establish a higher minimum, reasonable level of skills and education for the counselors of a given merit badge than is indicated in “Supervisory Qualifications and Certifications,” 7.0.1.1. For example, NRA certification could be established as a council standard for approving counselors for the Rifle Shooting or Shotgun Shooting merit badges.

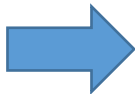
7.0.1.5 – Counselor Reregistration

- Completely revised the section highlighting the new registration process based on an individual's annual registration date
- Added sentence on addition and deletion of badges
- Removed invitational message content
- Removed the outdated text box on renewals

(Revised)

Merit badge counselors will receive an email from national around the annual anniversary of their registration date, reminding them to renew their membership for the next year. If they do not renew, they will be dropped from the roles and will no longer be approved to verify completion of requirements.

Addition and deletion of specific merit badges for individual merit badge counselors will be handled by the local council.



Volunteers who are properly registered as merit badge counselors can renew annually without completing a BSA adult application; their names will appear on the district roster for renewal. Anyone who is currently unregistered, or who is registered in another position but also desires to serve as a merit badge counselor, must complete an adult application.

7.0.2.0 – Merit Badge Counselor Lists

- 7.0.2.1 (Getting Started) – Changed “should” to “must”, so it reads, “The council or district counselor list or database is made available to troops, crews, and ships. Scouts must not have access.”
- 7.0.2.2 (Web-Based Counselor Lists) – Changed “should” to “must”, so it reads, “Limit access to those who have merit badge-related responsibilities, such as advancement committee members and chairs, or unit leaders and selected assistants. Scouts must not have access. Their interaction with the Scoutmaster in discussing work on a badge, and obtaining a counselor’s name and contact information, is an important part of the merit badge plan.”
- 7.0.2.3 (Unit Counselor Lists) – Changes “should” to “must”, so it reads, “Due to concerns about merit badge counselor privacy and since Scouts should receive the names and contact information from the Scoutmaster, unit counselor lists must not be made available to Scouts.”

7.0.3.0 – The Process of Counseling

- Changed “should” to “must”, so it reads, “Earning merit badges must be Scout-initiated, Scout researched, and Scout learned.”
- Changed “should” to “must”, so it reads, “Counseling must take place at a location conducive to the subject matter at hand that satisfies youth protection requirements.”
- Changed “should” to “must”, so it reads, “Counselors must first confirm with the Scout that they have discussed with the unit leader their interest in working on the merit badge.”
- Revised to following, “

7.0.3.0 – The Process of Counseling

- Revised to following, “The sort of hands-on interactive experience described here, with personal coaching and guidance, is hardly ever achieved in any setting except when one counselor works directly with one Scout ~~and the Scout’s buddy~~, or with a very small group, generally no more than three Scouts, and always following all current Youth Protection guidelines.”

7.0.3.0 – The Process of Counseling

- Changed the Title from a “Recommended” process to “The” process
- Expanded Step 6 on meeting with the counselor to include verifying work and meetings
- Modified Step 9 to include signing the blue card

The Merit Badge Process

1. The Scout develops an interest in a merit badge and may begin working on the requirements.
2. The Scout and unit leader discuss the Scout's interest in the merit badge.
3. The unit leader signs a blue card or otherwise documents the conversation and provides the Scout with at least one counselor contact.
4. The Scout contacts the counselor.
5. The counselor considers any work toward requirements completed prior to the initial discussion with the unit leader.
6. The Scout and the counselor meet, as many times as necessary. The counselor reviews work, to verify that the Scout has **actually and personally** completed each requirement exactly as written. For merit badge counselor meetings only, the Scout, parent or guardian, and counselor can meet. In a group setting with two or more Scouts, there must be at least two registered leaders present, in accordance with the [Guide to Safe Scouting](#).
7. Partial progress is recorded as requirements are completed.
8. The Scout finishes the requirements.
9. The counselor approves completion and signs the blue card or other documentation.
10. The Scout gives the blue card or other evidence of completion to the unit leader. The unit leader signs the applicant record section of the blue card or otherwise documents completion of the merit badge.
11. The unit leader gives the Scout the applicant record portion of the blue card or other hard copy record that the Scout may retain.
12. The unit reports completion of the merit badge.
13. The Scout receives the merit badge.

7.0.3.1 – Counseling Sessions and Certifying Completion

- Deleted the following in 1st paragraph – “Youth should be encouraged to bring a buddy, such as a friend, parent, guardian, brother, sister, other relative—or, better yet, another Scout working on the same badge.”
- Added the following in 2nd paragraph to complete the process, “The counselor and Scout then discuss what was done, and how.”

7.0.3.2 – Group Instruction

- Revised the 4th sentence, as follows, “Group instruction can also be attractive to “guest experts,” allowing them to reach more Scouts while assisting registered and approved counselors.
- Revised the 3rd bullet, as follows, “Counselors agree to sign off only requirements that the specific Scout has actually and personally completed.”
- Revised the 4th bullet as follows, “Counselors agree not to assume that stated prerequisites for an event have been completed without some level of evidence that the work has been done while the youth was a registered Scouts BSA or qualified Venturer or Sea Scout. Pictures, initialed partial blue cards from other counselors, and letters from other merit badge counselors or unit leaders are the best form of prerequisite documentation when the actual work done cannot be brought to the camp or site of the merit badge event.

7.0.4.0 – Merit Badge Miscellany

- 7.0.4.2 – Revised to state, “Requirements for each merit badge are reviewed at least every two years to improve relevance, consistency, and also requirement and content accuracy.”
- 7.0.4.3 – Revised and added the following, “Once new or revised requirements appear there, any Scout beginning work on a merit badge must use the new or revised requirement. Scouts who have started work on a merit badge under the old requirements may finish using the old requirements.”
- 7.0.4.3 – Deleted the following removing counselor subjectivity on which requirements to use, “**There is no time limit between starting and completing a badge, although a counselor may determine so much time has passed since any effort took place that the new requirements must be used.**”
- 7.0.4.7 – Deleted “**Limited**” from Recourse for Unearned Merit Badges
- 7.0.4.10 – Changed “should” to “must” for the following
 - “Council, district, and multiunit merit badge fairs have become increasingly popular over the past several years. While they provide a service to our Scouts, they must not be used as fundraisers.”
 - “Although charging fees for merit badge fairs, clinics, or similar events is not prohibited, any fees charged must be limited to recovering the direct costs related to presenting the opportunity.”
 - Using merit badge events as fundraisers, however, is prohibited, and councils must not approve them.

7.0.4.0 – Merit Badge Miscellany

- 7.0.4.4 (Discontinued Merit Badges) – added the following, “When Scouting America announces updated requirements for a merit badge, Scouts may continue working on the version they have started, unless the announcement specifically says otherwise (e.g. because of a safety concern). Merit badge versions that are no longer available for advancement recording on a digital application (i.e. Scoutbook Plus, Scouting App, etc.) will have to be tracked independently. When all requirements from that version have been completed, users may record a final completion date without recording work on individual requirements.”

7.0.4.10 – Charging Fees for Merit Badge Opportunities

- Changed “should” to “must” for the following plus other updates
 - “Council, district, and multiunit merit badge fairs have become increasingly popular over the past several years. While they provide a service to our Scouts, they must not be used as fundraisers.”
 - “Although charging fees for merit badge fairs, clinics, or similar events is not prohibited, any fees charged must be limited to recovering the direct costs related to presenting the opportunity.”
 - Using merit badge events as fundraisers, however, is prohibited, and councils must not approve them.
 - Scouting America is proud of its tradition of volunteer service. It does not allow merit badge opportunities where fees are paid directly to individuals, or to groups of individuals, especially if the individuals are looking to Scouting as a source of income that could be considered taxable.

7.0.4.12 – Online Merit Badge Classes (New)

Merit badges are meant to be a personal activity, involving real interaction between a Scout and an enthusiastic expert in the subject at hand. Group instruction, online meetings, etc., may, depending on the implementation, dilute the value of this experience. While some merit badges easily lend themselves to virtual interaction, others are better conducted in an in-person environment. While the lack of merit badge counselors in some areas and advances in technology have increased use of virtual platforms, care must be taken that this does not diminish the learning experience.

Councils may implement guidance for virtual options, with specific policies based on availability of counselors, Scout's medical conditions, and so on. The following guidance will help determine whether or not virtual options should be authorized. As discussed in 5.0.8.0, requirements to show, tell, discuss, explain, or demonstrate must not be substituted with checklists or forms under any circumstances.

- Just registering and being logged in is not sufficient. The Scout must be engaged, and must actually and personally complete all requirements exactly as written, just as they would for an in-person class.
- Chat options should be disabled, to prevent one-on-one contact with Scouts.
- Cameras should be on, and a parent or guardian present with the Scout. Requirements to show, tell, or demonstrate may not be substituted with checklists or forms under any circumstances.
- Any merit badge counselors not following all procedures and policies outlined by this document and local councils, including but not limited to all youth protection policies, must be reported to their local council advancement committee for investigation.

7.0.4.12 – Online Merit Badge Classes (New)

Online Merit Badge Class Guidelines At A Glance

	GOOD	CONCERNING	AVOID
Number in class	1 to 3 Scouts	4 to 8 Scouts	More than 8 Scouts
Counselor-to-Scout ratio	1:3 or lower	1:4 or higher	1:10 or higher
Sign-up	Scout initiated	Unclear	Parent initiated
Requirements covered	Expressly addressed	Not addressed or unclear	Altered or deleted requirements
Partials	Expressly addressed	Not addressed or unclear	Completion guaranteed
Cost	\$0 to minimal	Any unexplained amount	Amount clearly exceeds costs
Cost explanation	Clearly provided	Not clear	Refuse to provide

8.0.0.1 – Purpose and Timeliness of Boards of Review

- Added the following:
 - “The Board of Review should happen promptly and not be delayed for reasons unrelated to rank requirements.”
 - “While unit leaders and Eagle coaches should discuss the types of questions to be expected, conducting “practice boards of review” is not allowed at any level.”
 - “Unit leadership should be actively tracking advancement for all Scouts, and encouraging them to request boards as soon as all requirements are completed.”

8.0.0.2 - Boards of Review Must Be Granted When Requirements Are Met

- Refined text to provide more definitive guidance for unit and Scout responsibilities for a board of review
- Removed the text box

When a Scout believes that all the requirements for a rank have been completed, including a Scoutmaster conference, a board of review must be **granted**scheduled promptly. Unit leadership**Scoutmasters**—or councils or districts in the case of the Eagle Scout rank—for example, do not have authority to expect a Scout to **request** or organize one, or to “defer” the Scout, or to ask the Scout to perform beyond the requirements in order to be granted one. Neither can a board of review be denied or **postponed**delayed due to issues such as uniforming, payment of dues, participation in fundraising activities, etc.

Except in disputed circumstances as noted in “Initiating Eagle Scout Board of Review Under Disputed Circumstances,” 8.0.3.2, the Scout or the Scout’s parents or guardians shall not be responsible for requesting that a board take place.

8.0.1.0 – Conducting the Board of Review

“Asking “Tell us about when you learned how to tie a square knot” is appropriate, but “Here is a rope; tie a square knot” is not. Questions about specific rank requirements may only be about the rank under discussion; a Star or Life Scout should not be asked about Tenderfoot requirements.”

Added the three pieces to 8.0.1.2
– What Should Be Discussed

- Provide additional guidance on the types of questions
- What to do in a situation where answers are inconsistent with the Scout Oath and Scout Law
- Provides procedures for note taking

“If answers are inconsistent with the Scout Oath or Law, or demonstrate that the Scout failed to meet a requirement, then it is appropriate to suspend the board and reconvene at a later date, when the issue has been addressed. For example, in discussing the Scout’s favorite camping experience, it might come out that they never actually “planned and cooked a hot breakfast or lunch” on a campout. If so, the board can be adjourned, the Scout can complete the requirement on the next campout, and then the board can reconvene (as long as the Scout is still eligible). See also 8.0.1.5.”

“Taking notes during a Board of Review is acceptable, and even recommended for Eagle Scout Boards of Review, but recording, either voice or video, is prohibited. Notes should be destroyed after the Scout passes the board, or after final decision by national in case of appeal for the rank of Eagle Scout.”

8.0.2.0 – 8.0.3.0 - Particulars

- 8.0.2.0 #6 – Revised as follows, “Ranks must not be presented until it is submitted to the local council through Scoutbook Plus or on the official Advancement Report form.”
- 8.0.3.0 #3 – Changed “or” to “nor” – grammatical
- 8.0.3.0 #5 – Deleted “to avoid delaying a Scout’s opportunity to earn Eagle Palms” – reflects change in Palm requirements

8.0.3.1 Eagle Scout Board of Review Beyond the 18th Birthday

8.0.3.1 - 2021

It is possible for those who completed the requirements for the Eagle Scout rank in their youth, but never received it, to obtain credentials necessary for acquiring it. If a board of review was not held, and the individual met the **BSA** membership eligibility rules in effect at the time, then a board of review may be requested. **In any case, all requirements must have been completed before age 18.**

and

“Only when the application (*Belated Rank*) is well-documented and compelling **shall** credentials be released or permission granted for a board of review. Requirements in effect at the time of membership are used, **but regardless the practices of the day, all must have been completed before age 18.**”

8.0.3.1 – 2025

“It is possible for those who completed the requirements for the Eagle Scout rank in their youth, but never received it, to obtain credentials necessary for acquiring it. If a board of review was not held, and the individual met Scouting America membership eligibility rules and all Eagle Scout rank requirements in effect at the time, then a board of review may be requested.”

and

“Only when the application (*Belated Rank*) is well-documented and compelling will credentials be released or permission granted for a board of review. Requirements in effect at the time of membership are used.”

8.0.3.0 - Particulars for the Eagle Scout Rank

Added the following text to cover procedures regarding:

1. Purchase of Eagle Scout items in lieu of the official certificate
2. Procedures for not recommending an Eagle Scout candidate for advancement

11. The Eagle Scout medal or patch must not be sold or otherwise provided to any unit or to the Scout, nor should the court of honor be scheduled until after the Scout executive has signed the application, certifying proper procedures were followed, the rank has been entered into the system and filed locally, and the certificate is received at the council service center. A council-generated report from Registrar Tools in Scoutbook Plus may be used to purchase Eagle Scout items in lieu of the official certificate.

12. If the board of review does not recommend a candidate for advancement, a letter detailing the issues that caused the denial, advising any actions that could lead to advancement, and explaining appeal procedures should be sent to the Scout with a copy to the council's designated appeals coordinator within two weeks. In addition, the reference letters, Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook (if the project is at issue), the names of the board of review members and their notes (if any), and any other available documentation should be sent to the council advancement committee for use in case of an appeal to council or national. The documentation should be destroyed (or returned in the case of the workbook) after any appeals are finished or if the Scout and parents or guardians decide against filing an appeal.

8.0.4.1 – Filing and Processing an Appeal

- Added a two week suspense to communication from a board of review to the Scout regarding an adverse decision
- Added a two month suspense for a Scout or Scout's parents to initiate an appeal following an adverse decision letter

9.0.0.0 – The Eagle Scout Rank

- 9.0.1.0 – Nice update, “That is why an Eagle Scout IS an Eagle Scout—[never WAS an Eagle Scout](#).”
- 9.0.1.1 – Added “[However, it is to the Scout’s advantage to resolve any potential issues as early as possible.](#)”
- 9.0.1.2 – Update clarifies workbook use by the Scout to read, “The most current workbook [available at the time the Scout starts planning the project](#) must be used.”
- 9.0.1.3 – Update clarifies ESRA use by the Scout to read, “The Scout must complete the [current and](#) official Eagle Scout Rank Application.”
 - Text box at end of 9.0.1.3 also emphasizes this

9.0.1.3 – Complete the Application

2021

3. References: Must list all six (five if not employed). If not affiliated with an organized religion, then the parent or guardian provides this reference. There are no restrictions on who the Scout may list as the two other references. The candidate may list anyone, including parents or guardians not previously listed, other relatives, Scout leaders including those from the candidate's unit, or other Scouts and friends. There is no requirement that any of the references be 21 years of age or older.

2025

3. References: Must list names and contact information for four people who are willing to serve as references for the Eagle candidate. These may be Scout leaders, teachers, employers, coaches, other Scouts, etc. References do not need to be 21 or older. Parents and other relatives are strongly discouraged from serving as references. The current unit leader and committee chair are not eligible to serve as references; their signature on the application is their endorsement. See also Section 9.0.1.7.

9.0.0.0 – The Eagle Scout Rank

- 9.0.1.4 – Added the following, “If the unit leader or committee chair is also the Scout’s parent, it is recommended they delegate signing the Eagle Scout Rank Application to an assistant unit leader or committee member for additional adult-interaction opportunities for the Scout. The person signing is verifying that all proper procedures have been followed, so it should be someone who has knowledge of the Scout’s history, and has a discussion with the Scout about their advancement journey.”

Provides a process for when the unit leader or committee chair is also the Scout’s parent

9.0.0.0 – The Eagle Scout Rank

- 9.0.1.5 – Updates provides latitude for council service center to determine method(s) for Scout Package delivery removing preference in GTA.
- 9.0.1.6 – Added “or differs from the application” to include other potential ESRA problems
- 9.0.1.6 – Changes “and other items (such as reference letters received)” to “along with any attachments” to remove perception council receives reference letters
- 9.0.1.8 – Updates last sentence to reference new step in 8.0.3.0 for advancement denial

9.0.0.0 – The Eagle Scout Rank

- 9.0.1.9 – Changed section title to correctly reflect council processes the application
- 9.0.1.9 – Updated to reflect correct process for council processing of special cases, as follows:

2021

In special cases, such as those for Lone Scouts or Scouts more than six months past the 18th birthday, councils must submit applications via mail or email.

2025

In special cases, such as Lone Scouts or Scouts who have an alternative Eagle merit badge, councils must submit applications via email to advancement.team@scouting.org. The application must have the Scout executive's signature.

9.0.1.7 – References Contacted

2021

Council advancement committee members—or others designated—have the responsibility to secure recommendations from the references appearing under requirement 2 on the Eagle Scout Rank Application. This may be done by letter, form, or phone call. **For reasons of privacy and confidentiality, electronic submissions are discouraged.** It is acceptable to send or deliver to the references an addressed envelope with instructions, and perhaps a form to complete. Scouts may assist with this, but that is the limit of their participation. Scouts are not responsible for follow-through or any other aspect of the process.

It is up to the council's designated representatives to collect the responses. If after a reasonably diligent effort no response can be obtained from any references, the board of review must go on without them. It must not be postponed or denied for this reason, and the Scout shall not be asked to submit additional references or to provide replacements.

Completed reference responses of any kind are the property of the council and are confidential, and only review-board members and those officials with a specific need may see them.

2025

The Scout is responsible for requesting references from the four people listed on the application—this is a valuable life skill. Councils choose the method (letter, email, online form, etc.) and where submitted. **Electronic submissions are allowed only if confidentiality at all stages is guaranteed.** Requested references may be returned to the Scout in a sealed envelope, or sent to a designated unit, district, or council adult for safekeeping until the Eagle Board of Review. If after diligent effort four recommendations are not received, the board of review can go forward without them. If the Scout chooses to go forward, the board may ask about their efforts, but may not deny advancement based only on lack of references.

Completed reference responses of any kind are the property of the council and are confidential, and only review-board members and those officials with a specific need may see them **after the board.**

9.0.1.7 – References Contacted

- Summary of changes
 - The Scout is responsible for requesting references
 - Only four references are requested
 - Councils choose the method(s) of delivery and where to deliver the references
 - Electronic submissions are now allowed only if confidentiality is guaranteed
- References may be returned to the Scout in a sealed envelope
- The board can go forward without four references, but it is the Scout's choice
- The board may ask about the Scout's efforts when receiving less than four references

9.0.2.0 – The Eagle Scout Project

- 9.0.2.1(1) – Deleted reference to “parent” being present when proposal or project is being discussed, but kept “other adult”, so it reads, *“The Scout will be allowed, if desired, to have a unit leader or other adult present as an observer at any time the proposal or project is being discussed with someone who is reviewing it.”*

9.0.2.7 – Proposal Must Be Approved Before You Start

- Removed beneficiary representative from discussion when there is concern project will not meet requirements, so it reads:

It is acceptable for the coach or the advancement administrator responsible for approval—if he or she becomes concerned the project will not meet the requirements or it will not be completed to the satisfaction of the benefiting organization—to contact the Scout and the Scout’s parent or guardian, or unit leader.

- Added example for when it is not acceptable to withdraw approval, but leaves a question as to what an extreme circumstance would be if “the project has been changed substantially” doesn’t count, so it reads:

If it appears changes will cause results to fall below what is required, then cautionary advice is in order. Except under extreme circumstances, it is not acceptable for unit, or council or district, approval to be withdrawn, **for example, if the project has been changed substantially.**

9.0.2.13 – Evaluating the Project After Completion

- Rephrased the sentence so it reads, “Under no circumstances will project approval be withheld for reasons that have nothing to do with the project.”
- Removed text box, but existing text in section was made bold; no changes

9.0.2.14 – Risk Management and Eagle Scout Service Projects

- Revised text to remove reference to Sweet 16 of BSA Safety, so it reads, *“As with any Scouting activity, the Guide to Safe Scouting and all current Scouting America safety policies apply. See www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/guidelines-policies for current resources.”*
- Changed reference from “**Health and Safety Committee**” to “**Safe Scouting Support Committee**” in text box

9.0.3.0 – About Eagle Palms

- Added clarification which states the Eagle Scout Board of Review does not have to be completed before a Scout turns 18, unless they have been granted an extension
 - Eagle Palms can be earned during an extension period

9.0.4.0 – Time Extensions

- Added additional clarification regarding who and when a Scout can apply for and time extension, as follows:

“The application must be sufficiently detailed that it can be reviewed without any other information. These should be granted very rarely and are reserved only for Life Scouts working on Eagle. Under no circumstances are time extensions available to Scouts who have not earned the rank of Life Scout, thus only Life Scouts are eligible to apply.”

9.0.4.0 - Time Extensions

- **Applying the three tests** – added the National Program Committee as a resource for questions on applying the three tests
- **Definition of a month** – revised consistent with page 2
- **Extensions of more than six months** – revised from a denial by the local council to the local council is not permitted to approve the request, with the Scout needing to appeal to the National Council

9.0.4.0 – Time Extensions

2021 – Scouts with disabilities – extension or RBAOE

Cause for an extension requires an extraordinary circumstance uncommon to the Scout. Known circumstances, such as moderate learning disabilities or ADD/ADHD, that the Scout has faced over many years and has coped with in the past should not suddenly become an issue shortly before the Scout's 18th birthday. Council advancement committees, however, might consider exceptions and grant extensions to Scouts with significant disabilities that do not meet the level of severity or permanence required for registration beyond the age of eligibility, but are such that they essentially preclude advancement within the timeframe allowed. Scouts with permanent and severe disabilities such as those described in section 10, "Advancement for Members With Special Needs," have the opportunity to be registered beyond the age of eligibility. (See "Registering Qualified Members Beyond Age of Eligibility," 10.1.0.0.) They do not need to request an extension.

2025 – Scouts with disabilities – extension or RBAOE

To justify an extension, an extraordinary and unexpected circumstance is required. Known special needs or disabilities that the Scout has coped with for many years should not suddenly become an issue shortly before the Scout's 18th birthday. However, if the Scout's disabilities are not severe enough or permanent enough to qualify for registration beyond the age of eligibility (described in Section 10, "Advancement for Members With Special Needs"), council advancement committees might grant extensions to Scouts with significant disabilities that essentially preclude advancement within the time frame allowed. There is no restriction on the type, nature, or combination of disabilities that the council advancement committee may consider. Scouts registered beyond the age of eligibility do not need to request an extension.

9.0.4.0 – Time Extensions

Added text boxes for the following:

Test 2 – text box demonstrates how an accumulation of short events may qualify for an extension

Best Remedy – text box explains why RBAOE is a better solution for a Scout with a special need or disability which significantly slows progress

One consideration is whether the situation or condition prevented the Scout from attending school for a substantial amount of time. For example, an accumulation of hospital stays or quarantine periods for cancer treatment could qualify, even though any one short-term stay would not.

A time extension is rarely the best remedy for a Scout with a special need or disability. Nearly all barriers to advancement can be overcome by applying routine accommodations, or obtaining permission for modifications of rank requirements and alternative merit badges as explained in Section 10. For disabilities that significantly slow progress in general, registration beyond the age of eligibility (RBAE) is the better solution, as it allows work to continue on any rank and not just Eagle Scout rank.

9.0.4.1 – Process for Requesting and Reviewing a Time Extension

- Added the following in bold:

“Scouts who do not earn the rank of Life prior to their 18th birthday are not eligible for time extensions. There are no exceptions to this policy.”

10.0.0.0 – Advancement for Members with Special Needs

- Complete revision with the following changes:
 - Moved and revised 10.1.0.0 (Registering Qualified Members Beyond the Age of Eligibility) to 10.2.0.0
 - Includes rewritten subsections on possible criteria and how to register
 - 10.1.1.0 (Cub Scouts) – Minor changes except added the following, *“Decision-making authority rests at the pack (unit) level, as they are the ones most familiar with the situation.”*
 - 10.1.2.X (Scouts BSA) – Moved and rewrote a large portion adding explanatory text on:
 - Open-Minded Flexibility
 - Accommodations
 - Modifications
 - Using Alternative Requirements
 - How to Apply for Alternative Rank Requirements
 - Alternative Merit Badges for Eagle Scout Rank
 - Approval for Special Needs Eagle Candidates
 - 10.1.3.X (Venturers and Sea Scouts) – Moved and added additional material on requirement construction

10.1.0.0 – Advancement Flexibility Allowed

Added a table to demonstrate how accommodations and modifications are possible within a program, who approves them, and the required documentation

Added a statement about consulting the council advancement committee if there are accommodation concerns

	ACCOMMODATION	MODIFICATION (rare)
Definition	Change HOW Scouts are learning	Change WHAT Scouts are learning
Example	Offer extra time; take swim test at quieter time of day; allow assistive devices (glasses, hearing aids, augmentative and alternative communication devices, etc.)	Earn Pioneering merit badge instead of Camping merit badge
Who Can Approve	Unit-level decision, by Cubmaster, Scoutmaster, merit badge counselor	Council Advancement Committee
Documentation Required	None	Individual Scout Advancement Plan (rank) and/or Alternative Eagle Scout Rank Merit Badges Application