



**AN
INTRODUCTION
TO
MERIT
BADGES:
A TROOP 20 GUIDE**

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

You may earn any merit badge at any time, with Scoutmaster approval. Don't wait for someone to tell you when and which merit badge to work on. But at the same time, don't overwhelm yourself by trying to complete too many badges at one time. **You should concentrate on achieving the rank of First Class before devoting a lot of time to working on merit badges.** You can find information about merit badge requirements in the appropriate merit badge books (available through the Troop library at Mr. Fritts' store or the Council Store), online at www.meritbadge.org, and in the current year's Boy Scout Requirements book.

You can earn as many merit badges as you wish. However, to achieve the rank of Eagle, you must earn a minimum of 21 merit badges. This is made up of the 13 Eagle-Required Merit Badges and 8 others of your choosing.

The BSA has over 130 merit badges to offer a Scout, so those eight may be hard to choose!

There are three things you will need to keep well organized. They are: your Scout Handbook with requirements signed off, your portion of completed blue merit badge cards, and the wallet-sized certificate cards for rank advancement and merit badge completion. Make sure all of them are signed or initialed by the appropriate Scout leader. All of the cards are the same size and can be safely kept in plastic protector pages which are designed for baseball and other sports cards. **IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT YOU KEEP THESE DOCUMENTS IN A SAFE PLACE AND DO NOT LOSE THEM!!!** If it should happen that there is a discrepancy or missing records, your personal records are your most important ally in proving what you completed and when.

***BUDDY SYSTEM:** You **MUST** have another person with you at each meeting with the merit badge counselor. This person can be another Scout, your parents or guardian, a brother or sister, a relative, or a friend.*

STEPS TO EARNING A MERIT BADGE

1. Get a blue card from the Scoutmaster.
2. Get the name and contact information of an approved Merit Badge Counselor from the Advancement Chair or Scoutmaster.
3. Contact the Counselor and obtain the merit badge book and worksheets. Worksheets can be downloaded and printed from www.meritbadge.org. Booklets can be borrowed from the Troop library at Mr. Fritts' store or purchased at the Council office. Introduce yourself to the counselor and explain that you are interested in earning a specific merit badge for which he/she is an approved counselor. You and a buddy will meet with the counselor in a public place at a time that is suitable for everyone. The counselor will explain the requirements for the badge and help you get started. For requirements requiring Counselor **pre-approval**, make sure the approval is obtained **IN ADVANCE** before proceeding with completion of the requirement
4. Work on the merit badge requirements until they are completed. There is no "retro" fitting for the requirements. All requirements MUST be completed from the time you begin the badge. You are encouraged to contact the merit badge counselor as often as necessary if you need assistance. If you change counselors for any reason, it is up to the new counselor if he/she will accept the work you did with the previous counselor.
5. Contact the merit badge counselor when you are finished working on the merit badge requirements. Set up a meeting with the counselor to review the work you and your buddy did. The counselor will sign the blue card in the appropriate spaces and keep the "counselor's record" portion.
6. Turn in the "Application for Merit Badge" portion to the Advancement Chair. You keep the portion labeled "Applicant's Record." You will receive the merit badge at the next Court of Honor.

A note on partially completed merit badges: Sometimes a Scout may earn partial completion of a merit badge. This can happen at any time, but usually at camp or a merit badge seminar. If you receive a partial, follow the steps above. When contacting a counselor, explain that you have earned partial credit on the merit badge. Arrange with the counselor to meet so he/she can review what you have already done and discuss what needs to be done to complete the work for the badge. If you have a blue card that has some requirements already signed off, bring that with as well.

DEFINITIONS

Blue Card - “Application for Merit Badge”, Better known as the "blue card," is a blue wallet-sized card shows that the Scout has permission to start working on a particular merit badge, records his progress, and, when completed, provides a separate record for the Scout, the counselor, and the unit. Blue cards are obtained from the Scoutmaster and turned into the Advancement Chair for recording.

Merit Badge Counselor - An adult leader who is responsible for assisting the Scout as he plans the assigned projects and activities to meet the merit badge requirements; coaching Scouts through interviews and demonstrations on how to do the required skills of the craft, business, or hobby; and approving the Scout’s work by signing off on the blue card. Troop 20 maintains a list of current approved Merit Badge Counselors on its website: www.winnetkatroop20.org. If you do not see a counselor for a merit badge you are interested in, please contact the Advancement Chair.

Eagle-Required Merit Badge - The 13 required merit badges that represent the heart of the Scouting program. The Eagle required merit badges are: First Aid, Citizenship in the Community, Citizenship in the Nation, Citizenship in the World, Communication, Personal Fitness, Emergency Preparedness or Lifesaving, Environmental Science or Sustainability, Personal Management, Swimming or Hiking or Cycling or Mountain Biking, Camping, Family Life, and Cooking.

Non-Eagle Required Merit Badges - Any other of the over 130 merit badges not listed above.