

Merit Badge Process in Troops – Instructions for Scouts

You can learn about sports, crafts, science, trades, business, and future careers as you earn merit badges. There are more than 130 merit badges. Any Boy Scout may earn a merit badge at any time. You don't need to have had rank advancement to be eligible; and you don't have to wait for a class. Remember, in Boy Scouts your advancement is your responsibility, not your parents, and not the Merit Badge Councilor's so you need to be on top of this process. This is not school (yay!).

Pick a Subject: Talk to your Scoutmaster about your interest in earning a merit badge. Read the requirements of the merit badges you think might interest you. Choose one to earn. Your Scoutmaster will give you a signed merit badge application (the "blue card") and the name and contact information of a merit badge counselor. These individuals have special knowledge in their merit badge subjects and are interested in helping you.

Use the Scout 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 or other relative, or a friend.

Call the Merit Badge Counselor. Get in touch with the merit badge counselor and tell them that you want to earn the merit badge. The counselor may ask to meet you to explain what is expected and to start helping you complete the requirements. You should also discuss work that you have already started or possibly completed.

Unless otherwise specified, work for a requirement can be started at any time: Ask your counselor to help you learn the things you need to know or do. You should obtain and read the merit badge pamphlet on the subject.

Show Your Stuff: When you are ready, call the counselor again to make an appointment. When you go take along the things you have made to meet the requirements. If they are too big to move, take pictures or have an adult tell in writing what you have done. The counselor will test you on each requirement to make sure you know your stuff and have done or can do the things required.

Get the Badge: When the counselor is satisfied that you have met each requirement, they will sign your application (the "blue card"). Give the signed application to your Scoutmaster so that your merit badge emblem can be secured for you. The Scoutmaster will sign your copy of the blue card marked "Applicant's Record" and return that portion to you as proof that you handed in a completed merit badge application. It is very important that you keep this copy it proves that you have completed the badge.

Requirements: You are expected to meet the requirements as they are stated—no more and no less. You must do exactly what is stated in the requirements. If it says "show or demonstrate," that is what you must do. Just telling about it isn't enough. The same thing holds true for such words as "make," "list," "in the field," and "collect," "identify," and "label."

The requirements listed at the link below are the official requirements of the Boy Scouts of America. However, the requirements presented here might not match those in the *Boy Scout Handbook* and the merit badge pamphlets, because these publications are updated only when the *Boy Scout Requirements* book is updated.

If you have already started working on a merit badge when a new edition of the pamphlet is introduced, *you may continue to use the same merit badge pamphlet and fulfill the requirements therein to earn the badge.* You do not need to start all over again with the new pamphlet and revised requirements.

<http://www.scouting.org/MeritBadges.aspx>

Partial Completions: You don't have to pass all the requirements of one merit badge with the same counselor. It may be that due to timing or location issues, etc., you must meet with a different counselor to finish the badge. The Application for Merit Badge (blue card) has a place to record what has been finished—a "partial." In the center section on the reverse of the blue card, the counselor initials for each requirement passed. In the case of a partial completion, the counselor does not retain his or her portion of the card. A subsequent counselor may choose not to accept partial work, but this should be rare. A Scout, if he believes he is being treated unfairly, may work with his Scoutmaster to find another counselor. An example for the use of a signed partial would be to take it to camp as proof of prerequisites. Partials have no expiration except the Scout's 18th birthday.

Unofficial Worksheets and Learning Aids: Worksheets and other materials that may be of assistance in earning merit badges are available from a variety of places including unofficial sources on the Internet and even troop libraries. Use of these aids is permissible as long as the materials match with the current requirements that Scouts must fulfill. Completing "worksheets" may suffice where a requirement calls for something in writing, but this would not work for a requirement where the Scout must discuss, tell, show, or demonstrate, etc. Note that Scouts shall not be required to use these learning aids in order to complete a merit badge.

Source: <http://www.scouting.org/GuideToAdvancement>

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