



A Troop 512 How-to Guide

HOW TO EARN A MERIT BADGE IN 10 EASY STEPS

VERSION 1.0

A World of Knowledge

Merit badges are available in many areas of interest. You can learn about sports, crafts, science, trades, business and future careers as you earn merit badges – there are more than 130. Some merit badges are required for the Eagle rank while others are electives, based on your interests.

Merit badges can be a great experience as you explore your world. You may earn a merit badge at any time. Take advantage of learning opportunities and earn as many as you can!

Overview

Earning a merit badge begins when you get a signed merit badge application that verifies that you are registered and eligible to earn the badge. To finish, you must complete all of the requirements to the satisfaction of a merit badge counselor. Once approved, your achievement will be entered into his advancement record by the Troop's Advancement Chair.

Here is what you will do to earn a merit badge:

1. Pick a subject

You will decide what merit badge you would like to work on. You'll need to talk to the Scoutmaster or Advancement Chair about your interest. You should first review the requirements of the merit badge to determine if you will be able to complete them at your age and abilities. Your parents can assist with this.

2. Get a Blue Card

Once you choose a merit badge, your Scoutmaster or Advancement Chair will give you a signed merit badge application (the 'Blue Card') and the name and contact information of a counselor for the merit badge you've chosen. Merit badge counselors have special knowledge in their subjects.

You will fill out the rest of the Blue Card and turn it over to the merit badge counselor when you meet him or her.

3. Contact your counselor

Merit badge counselors come from all walks of life and have applied to be a counselor with the Cradle of Liberty Council. Your Scoutmaster has a list of merit badge counselors in the area, many of whom are in Troop 512. You should call or email the counselor when you are ready to start the merit badge and set up an appointment to talk or meet. The counselor may ask to meet you to explain what is expected and to start helping you complete the

requirements. You should discuss work that you have already started or possibly completed.

Oftentimes a counselor holds a merit badge class to work with a number of Scouts at the same time.

Additionally, the Troop participates in the Cradle of Liberty's annual Merit Badge College. Summer camp is another opportunity for you to earn a number of merit badges. The more of these merit badge events you can attend, the more merit badges you can earn. So watch for these opportunities.

4. Use the buddy system

While all merit badge counselors have passed a background check and taken BSA's Youth Protection Training, you should meet with the counselor only in groups of two or more. This keeps everyone within the guidelines and makes sure it is a safe experience for all concerned. Ensure that in each meeting with the merit badge counselor you have another person with you. This person can be another Scout, a family member or a friend.

5. Begin work on the merit badge

Unless otherwise specified, work for a requirement can be started at any time. If you're having any difficulties, your counselor to help you learn the things you need to know or show you what to do.

Tip: Get the merit badge pamphlet. The Boy Scouts of America has prepared a booklet for each merit badge that offers pretty much everything you need to know to earn the badge. Troop 512 has a library of pamphlets so check with our librarian first before you buy one. Be aware that from time to time the requirements change and new books are published.

6. Complete the requirements

You are expected to meet the requirements as they are stated – no more and no less. He 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."

7. Show your work

When you are ready, contact the counselor again to make an appointment. When you meet, take along the things you 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. In some cases, requirements have to be done in the presence of a counselor, so prepare for those.

Meet as many times as necessary to get the requirements signed off. The counselor will test you on each requirement to make sure you know your stuff and has done or can do the things required.

Tip: Download a merit badge worksheet. One of the best Scouting resources on the web is at www.meritbadge.org. Here you'll find worksheets for each merit badge in downloadable formats. You'll also find links to information which will help to complete the requirements. Download and print out the merit badge worksheet so you understand the requirements. Use the worksheet to show proof of work to your merit badge counselor.

8. Take your Blue Card

When all requirements are met, the counselor will sign off on the Blue Card and detach his third of the card for his records, returning the remaining parts to you. You must remember to take this with you.

Return both remaining parts of the Blue Card to the Troop's Advancement Chair. The Chair will keep one portion and give you the remaining part. You should keep it as a backup record. The Advancement Chair will record this achievement in your advancement record.

If you can't complete all the requirements at the time, the counselor will return all three parts of the card so that you can complete the remaining requirements at a later date, possibly with a different counselor.

To reiterate, the Blue Card separates into three sections once the merit badge requirements are complete. One is kept by the counselor, one is kept by the Troop and one is kept by the Scout (see graphic on next page). Always keep your copy in a safe place.

9. Get the merit badge

You will receive your merit badge emblem during a Court of Honor. Be sure to have it sewn on your merit badge sash so that you can show off all that you have accomplished. Sashes are worn during ceremonial events like Courts of Honor.

If you borrowed a pamphlet from the Troop library please return it. If you no longer want to keep a pamphlet that you purchased then you may wish to donate it to our library so that other Scouts may benefit from it.

10. Celebrate the accomplishment

After you have earned the merit badge, find a way to celebrate with your family. Maybe a special meal, a good dessert or a homemade milkshake might be in order!

HOW TO USE A Blue Card to earn a merit badge

Information for Applicant

- A merit badge application may be approved only by a registered merit badge counselor.
- You must have a buddy with you (Scout buddy system) at each meeting with the merit badge counselor.
- Turn in your approved application to your unit leader. You will be entered into the merit badge database at a suitable occasion.

Information for Counselor

- Merit badge applications must be signed in advance by the applicant's unit leader.
- This Scout must have the Scout Buddy system maintained on all advancement records.
- You may not change any information. Advise me when your knowledge of a requirement that will make the counseling more interesting is available.

Front

APPLICATION FOR MERIT BADGE

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

Is a registered Boy Scout Varsity Scout Volunteer of _____

of _____ No. _____

District _____

Council _____

I have obtained this merit badge with the Scout and supervised at least one merit badge counselor.

Date _____ Signature of unit leader _____

BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA

Back

The applicant has personally approved before me and supervised by my application that he has met all requirements for the (please print) _____

Name _____ Unit badge _____

Address of Counselor _____

City _____ State _____

Zip _____

Telephone (include area code) _____

Signature of Unit Leader _____

Signature of Counselor _____

Signature of Unit Leader _____

Date _____

Applicant will bring in this portion to his unit leader for record keeping.

APPLICANT'S RECORD

Name _____

Unit badge _____

Completed on _____

Signature of Unit Leader _____

Signature of Counselor _____

Signature of Unit Leader _____

NOTE TO BOY SCOUT, VARSITY SCOUT, OR VOLUNTEER: Retain this copy for your permanent records.

STEP ONE

STEP TWO

APPLICATION FOR MERIT BADGE

Name John Scout

Address 12 Evergreen Terrace

City Springfield

Is a registered Boy Scout Varsity Scout Volunteer of _____

of Troop No. 24

District Jebadiah Springfield

Council Monorail Center

I have obtained this merit badge with the Scout and supervised at least one merit badge counselor.

Date 12/12/13 Signature of unit leader N. Flanders

BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA

A few merit badges have prerequisites, but any registered Scout may work on any of them at any time (after his unit leader has signed the blue card acknowledging that the Scout is registered, has discussed the merit badge with his unit leader and has secured a registered counselor.) Scouts are free to choose any registered counselor (including their parents or other family members).

The Scout calls the counselor and arranges to meet them. Meetings may happen at the counselor's office, work site, or home. They may begin discussing what the Scout already knows followed with coaching, guidance, and additional meetings. The Guide to Safe Scouting, and the "Sweet 16 of BSA Safety" must be followed. Scouts *must not meet one-on-one with adults*. Meetings must take place where others can view the interaction, or the Scout must have a buddy: a friend, parent, —or better yet, another Scout working on the same badge. The Scout should bring any required projects or evidence, such as photographs or certification.

Merit Badge	Scout	Counselor	Date
Camping	John Scout	Dr. Julius Hibbert	12/12/13

The counselor records and initials the completed requirements and gives the Scout the whole blue card so he has a record of work completed to date.

When the Scout completes all the requirements with another registered counselor, or the same one he began working with, then he follows the directions at the right.

Scouts need not pass all requirements with one counselor. A subsequent counselor may choose not to accept partial work, but this should be rare. A Scout who believes he is being treated unfairly may work with his Scoutmaster to find another counselor. Partials have no expiration except the 18th birthday.

Once It Is Earned, It's Earned
Once a registered and approved counselor has passed a Scout on requirements for a merit badge, it cannot be taken away. Unit leadership does not have the authority to retract approval, or take the badge away. If a merit badge counselor were found to be improperly documented, it would be a rare occasion when a Scout would be penalized for the mistake of an adult volunteer.

STEP FOUR

The center panel is given to the advancement chairman who records the achievement and indicate they have done so by initialing and dating the card.

When the badge and certificate are presented the date is noted here.

1

COUNSELORS RECORD

The **COUNSELORS RECORD** panel is filled out. The counselor removes this part of the blue card and keeps it.

2

When complete

The center panel is filled out and the counselor signs it.

3

APPLICANTS RECORD

The **APPLICANTS RECORD** panel is filled out and the counselor signs it.

4

The Scout takes the blue card troop

The center panel is given to the advancement chairman who records the achievement and indicate they have done so by initialing and dating the card.

ScoutmasterCG.com

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