

The Merit Badge Program

The Merit Badge Program is an integral part of Scouts BSA and as such is important to any successful week at camp. The following are guidelines for planning your campers' program for the week.

For Experienced Scouts

- The merit badge program provides experienced Scouts with the opportunity to gain more skill in things they like to do and gives them a chance to try out new activities.
- Merit badges are part of the self-paced advancement system that allows Scouts to challenge themselves, rather than compete against others.
- Scouts should stay focused on these purposes and should be discouraged from competing with other Scouts for badges earned.

The Leaders Role

For each Scout to have a successful advancement experience, we encourage unit leaders to do the following:

- Review each Scout's advancement and help them decide which merit badges they want to schedule at camp.
- Some merit badges are more physically intense than others. Check your campers' selection to make sure it matches their abilities.
- Aquatics, Shooting Sports, and Climbing Merit Badges have minimum ages and are more difficult to complete. Waivers to prerequisites will only be made in advance by the camp director. You cannot sign up for the badge online until you have spoken with Rich at rich.howett@scouting.org.
- Prior to signing up for a merit badge be sure to read the Merit Badge Book. Prerequisites must be completed and come with your campers to their first class. The Merit Badge counselor has the right to review all the prerequisites required. ****A list of the Merit Badges is listed later in this document. Pre-requisites will be available March 1st.**
- Campers should bring either their Merit Badge book or the worksheet with them to their first class. Workbooks can be found at <http://usscouts.org/mb/worksheets/list.asp> Please also bring a 3-ring binder, paper and writing utensils.
- Some Merit Badges will have an extra cost due to program materials needed. These costs will be paid when you select your Merit Badge online.
- Merit Badge applications ("blue cards") should be completed on or before Sunday night and then turned-in by the camper at each Merit Badge session on Monday. Please make sure that all information is filled out correctly and that they are signed by the Scoutmaster.
- A Scout is always prepared. Campers who do not come prepared will most likely not finish their badge. They will get a partial completion. All merit badge work must be completed and turned in by 10 am on Friday. There are no exceptions.
- Be sure to take into consideration the location of merit badges at camp and help Scouts build a schedule that is convenient to travel. Please check the map in the Resource section.
- Some merit badges require 90-minute blocks and are highlighted on the schedule as Session A or B times. These badges run from Monday – Friday. (Regular merit badges run through Thursday.) Make sure you review their schedules, so they do not have conflicts.

Regarding Partial

- Partial Completions. If your camper receives a partial completion, it means they did not finish all the requirements for that badge. The partial completion will list the requirements completed. Your camper can return home and complete their badge. It is recommended they do it as soon as possible. The Merit Badge Counselor has the right to review any completed work before signing the merit badge. It is the responsibility of your camper to

keep you informed of their completion progress. Fridays are reserved time to finish any requirements you need to. Use this time wisely.

Merit Badges to be Offered

We offer core Merit Badges and other Merit Badges on a three-year rotational program. We believe strongly that this offers new opportunities to our Scouts every year.

We encourage leaders with special skills and backgrounds to help us to offer those specialized merit badges during your stay with us. We've been able to offer Public Speaking, Traffic Safety, Fingerprinting and Disabilities Awareness to name just a few. These badges are often taught during Open Program. Please keep this in mind when planning your time with us.

The Core Merit Badge/Special Program offerings are:

Aquatics

- BSA Lifeguard
- BSA Paddlecraft Safety (Canoeing and/or Kayaking)
- BSA Water Rescue
- Canoeing
- Kayaking (includes Kayaking BSA)
- Lifesaving
- Rowing
- Small Boat Sailing
- Stand up Paddleboard (no badge)
- Swimming

Shooting Sports

- Archery
- Rifle Shooting
- Shotgun Shooting

Handicraft

- Basketry
- Leatherwork
- Pottery
- Model Design
- Composite Materials
- Woodcarving

Ecology and Conservation

- Astronomy
- Environmental Science
- Insect Study
- Mammal Study
- Nature
- Oceanography
- Soil and Water Conservation
- Weather

Outdoor Skills/OA Program Areas

- Camping
- First Aid
- Fishing
- Fly Fishing
- Indian Lore
- Geocaching
- Orienteering

- Scouting Heritage
- Wilderness Survival

STEM

- Animation
- Aviation
- Chemistry
- Graphic Arts
- Photography
- Radio

Shop

- Automotive Maintenance
- Welding
- Woodworking

Scouts BSA Admin

- Citizenship in the World
- Communication

COPE and Climbing

- Climbing
- COPE
- Search and Rescue

Additional badges may be added as the composition of the camp staff, with their special skills and knowledge, is finalized. We are working on several options for pop-up merit badges offered throughout the week; as available, these will be announced on Sunday of each week. These Merit Badges lend themselves to instruction in 2 hours or less. Examples of our previous pop-up Merit Badges include Chess, Law and Traffic Safety.

The Merit Badge Schedule will be available later.

On-Line Program Registration

- Troops should plan to utilize our on-line registration program for Merit Badges, COPE course and other program sign-ups.
- After March 1st you may sign up for Merit badges as you add your campers to the list. The \$50 deposit per camper must be made before signing up for a Merit Badge.
- Leaders should be the ones signing up the merit badges for your Scouts.
- Changes can be made to your Troop's selections up to a week prior to your trip to camp.
- If Merit Badge changes need to be made at camp, we will work with you on that.

Pre-Requisites for Merit Badges

- **These will be available March 1st.**

Regarding "Notes" and Pre-requisite work for Merit Badges

- The practice of unit leaders or parents writing notes regarding a Scout's completion of merit badge requirements has become a difficult issue for the staff. In some cases, such as the camping requirement for Camping merit badge, certification from a unit leader or knowledgeable adult is appropriate. In other cases, however Hawk Mountain encourages any work completed prior to camp be brought to camp and demonstrated for the counselor.
- As with partial cards, each counselor may ask Scouts to show knowledge and skills of the requirements (such as a list of camping trips, or an explanation of how they built their rocket) even if a note from a unit leader is submitted.

- The pre-requisites listed are the absolute minimum that need to be done prior to camp to complete the badge, however, there are many other requirements that can be prepared in advance to lessen the time needed by Scouts in the evenings or other free times to complete requirements.
- Many badges also have work that needs to be completed outside of the scheduled daily hour of instruction.
- Encourage Scouts to review the requirements to see what additional items can be completed in advance of camp. Additionally, leaders are encouraged to stop by Program Areas during the week to check on a Scout's progress.

Merit Badge Applications "Blue Cards" and Online Options

- Blue cards are available for purchase in the camp Trading Post by Troop Leaders.
- The Unit Leader must sign the Scout's card before he/she may begin the badge.
- All cards and other advancements are returned to the Unit at check-out on Saturday.
- **Info will be available May 1st regarding online options for blue cards.

For use in advancement planning...

- Unless the camp makes contact, leaders may assume there were no significant problems with your merit badge registrations. Be aware of WL (wait list) indications and select alternatives.
- We will make every effort to accommodate Scouts' first choice if pre-registrations are made in a timely manner. Additional sessions may possibly be scheduled if staff is available.
- Many merit badges have capacity limits.
- Campers participating in COPE may have conflicts with merit badge sessions. This should not discourage them from signing up for those programs. Staff members are available during open program to help on requirements if asked.
- Unit Leaders should counsel Scouts to create a schedule with manageable balance of advancement sessions, special programs, and time for rest and informal activity.