

□ Merit Badge Counselor Training

Calumet Council

Thunderbird District

- Understanding the BSA advancement program.
 - The BSA advancement program is a education program based on
 - Learning
 - Testing
 - Reviewing
 - Recognition
 - The Scout attains/earns a series of Ranks which enforce the Scout Oath and Law
 - Basic Outdoor Skills
 - 1st Aid
 - Safety
 - Citizenship
 - Physical Fitness
 - Service to Others
 - Leadership
 - The Merit Badge program is one of the most unusual educational programs ever devised
 - Based on adults sharing knowledge, skills and talents with the Boy Scouts
 - Subject topics come in a wide variety of topics: art, craft, hobby, sport, trade, profession, agribusiness, service, self-improvement and more
 - Eagle Required vs. Elective
 - Star: 6 Merit Badges, 4 ER, 2 E
 - Life: 11 Merit Badges, 7 ER, 4 E
 - Eagle: 21 Merit Badges, 11 ER, 10 E
- What is a Merit Badge
 - An award based on completing a set of specific requirements
 - A small piece of khaki cloth with a colored design
 - The significant interest of an adult in helping a boy
 - A subject of interest to a Scout
 - A subject of interest to an adult
 - A subject required to reach the Eagle rank
 - A craft or hobby
 - An idea of service
 - A vocational field
- Role of the Merit Badge Counselor
 - Merit badge counselors are the key to success in the merit badge plan. They offer their time, experience, and knowledge to help guide Scouts in one or more of the merit badge subjects.
 - The counselor's responsibility is to

- Assist the Scout as he plans the assigned projects and activities to meet the merit badge requirements.
 - Coach Scouts through interviews and demonstrations on how to do the required skills of the craft, business, or hobby.
 - Certify the Scout after determining whether he is qualified for the merit badge.
 - Most local councils list merit badge counselors by district so that Scouts may call for appointments. Counselors schedule appointments at their convenience.
 - The Merit Badge Counselor's Responsibility:
 - Your task is to satisfy yourself that each Scout who comes to you meets all the requirements for the merit badge. In this sense you are an examiner, though your larger opportunity lies in coaching-helping the Scout meet the challenge of the requirements and making him aware of the deeper aspects of the subject through your knowledge and experience.
 - Follow the requirements of the merit badge, **making no deletions or additions**, ensuring that the advancement standards are fair and uniform for all Scouts.
 - Have a buddy present with each Scout at all instructional sessions.
 - Renew my registration as a merit badge counselor annually if I plan to continue serving as a merit badge counselor.
- Role of the Scout
 - Must have a desire to learn the subject matter for the Merit Badge
 - Must be willing to make the time to complete the requirements
 - Must be willing to work with an adult who may be unfamiliar.
 - Must have a buddy when meeting with the counselor.
 - Must have a merit badge application (blue card) signed by his scoutmaster prior to starting the merit badge.
 - Must have a copy of the most current Merit Badge requirements.
 - Must wear his Class A uniform to meetings unless specified not to by the counselor.
- Role of the Board of Review
 - Purpose of The Review
 - To make sure that the work has been learned and completed
 - To check to see what kind of experience the boy is having in his patrol and troop
 - To encourage the Scout to advance to the next level
 - The Review is not an Examination
 - Appropriate Questions
 - Where did he learn his skill
 - Who taught him
 - What value did he gain from earning this recognition
 - What the Board of Review learns about the Merit Badge Program
 - Did the Scout do what he was suppose to
 - What kind of experience is the Scout having
 - What changes need to be made in the program

- What are the Scout's ideals and goals
 - Is there a good Standard of Performance
 - Does the Scout recognize and understand the value of Scouting in his home, unit, school, and community.

- How to Become a Merit Badge Counselor
 - BSA Adult Leader Application
 - Upper Right Corner – “Council/District Position: Merit Badge Counselor”
 - Upper Right Corner- “District Name: Thunderbird”
 - Middle Left- “Position Code: 42”
 - Fill out the rest as needed.
 - All Merit Badge Counselors need to submit this application, even if they've already fill one out for a scouting position.
 - A background check will be done
 - Merit Badge Counselor Information
 - List of the Merit Badge/s you will be counselor for
 - Requests “qualifications” to be Counselor.

- Merit Badge Start to Finish (Individual w/ Buddy)
 - A Scout is guided to the requirements for a Merit Badge.
 - The Scout finds the requirements in:
 - **Boy Scout Requirements** (the book is updated yearly)
 - Merit Badge Pamphlet, at:
 - The Troop Library
 - The public library
 - A friend (peer)
 - A friend (adult)
 - A local store stocking Scout supplies
 - A Scout store or trading post
 - Internet
 - The Scout looks at the requirements and decides he wants to pursue the Merit Badge.
 - The Scout indicates his interest in a particular Merit Badge to his Scoutmaster, who:
 - Gives him an interview to determine interest, enthusiasm, and preparedness
 - Gives him a signed **Application for Merit Badge (Blue Card)**
 - The Scout should fill out all pertinent areas of the blue card 1st, before the Scoutmaster signature on the front side only. The 2nd Scoutmaster signature (on the back) is signed when the Scout finishes the merit badge after the counselor signs it off.
 - With the District Merit Badge Counselor List, helps the Scout locate the name and phone number of the district/council approved Merit Badge Counselor.
 - Encourages the Scout to wear his Class A uniform when he visits the counselor with his buddy
 - Bring the Merit Badge Pamphlet
 - Bring the Application for the Merit Badge

- Prepare by reading over the requirements and start working on some of the areas
 - Bring the work he has started or accomplished
 - Bring any other materials he may need
 - Bring any other documentation he may have
- The Merit Badge Counselor verifies the current requirements for the Merit Badge.
- The scout should make the call and talk to the counselor himself – the Counselor should insist on speaking to the scout and not the parent. The parent can be pulled into the planning for organizing where and how to meet.
- At the first meeting, the Merit Badge Counselor and the Scout decide upon:
 - Any projects that will be required (write these out)
 - A tentative schedule for completing the requirements both short-term and long-term, keeping the other obligations (Scout, school, church, etc.) in mind (write these completion date goals out)
 - Dates, times and location for future meetings
- The number of counseling sessions depends on the difficulty of the Merit Badge requirements and the preparation and ability of the Scout.
- The Scout is expected to meet the requirements for the Merit Badge as stated--no more and no less.
- The Scout is coached and encouraged with a buddy present. The Merit Badge Counselor may expand on the information in the Merit Badge Pamphlet based on his knowledge, experience and expertise in the subject. He is encouraged to tell about his own experiences that positively reinforce the subject matter of the Merit Badge requirements
- The Merit Badge Counselor assists the Scout to meet the requirements
- The Scout is always tested individually, but with a buddy present, and as each requirement is completed the Merit Badge Counselor marks it on the application.
- The Merit Badge Counselor certifies when the Scout has completed the requirements and hardily congratulates him on completing the requirements and signs off on the Merit Badge application. The Counselor removes the portion of the blue card for the counselor and keeps it with his records. If the scout or troop loses their blue card you can use your records to verify that the scout completed the merit badge. The two parts remaining are given back to the scout.
- The Scout then takes the application to his Scoutmaster who signs the back of the blue card and instructs the scout to turn in the card to the Troop's Advancement Chairperson. (Good idea for the scout to make a copy of both sides of the card)
- The scout is awarded the Merit Badge at a suitable ceremony, usually a Court of Honor.
- When possible, the Merit Badge Counselor attends the Court of Honor when the Scout receives public recognition of his accomplishment
- The Merit Badge Process – Group
 - Either the troop committee, the Patrol Leader Council (PLC) or the district (i.e., Merit Badge College) decides to offer a Merit Badge to the entire troop or a group of Scouts (avoid Merit Badge factories).

- A Merit Badge Counselor is selected using the District Merit Badge Counselor List and a tentative schedule is developed in mutual accord between the counselor and the troop or district leadership.
- The Merit Badge Counselor develops the presentations and a learning aid handout. Individual sessions should usually be limited to 30 minutes at Troop meetings. Games are useful in developing the knowledge, skills and enthusiasm for the Scouts and should be liberally used.
- Some or all testing may be accomplished by written tests. Remaining requirements must be done on an individual basis.
- Some sessions may utilize guest experts to add variety. Also visual and tactile aids help stimulate interest and attention.
- There should be a Merit Badge Application (Blue Card) for each scout participating in the program, which is filled out and signed by the scout's Scoutmaster.
- When the requirements are completed the Counselor should complete the Blue card, and follow the process for an individual scout. If necessary, the Counselor can finish completing the cards and return the Group's cards to the Scoutmaster directly. The scoutmaster can then forward the Group's cards to the Troop's Advancement Chairperson.
- The Merit Badge Process – Summer Camp
 - Summer camps should follow a similar process to the Group Process above.
 - Each Council will set up their own protocols for their merit badge program based on recommendations from National.
 - Some camps will use a computerized system to record the scout's merit badges. The Blue Cards are printed at the end of the week and returned to the scoutmaster before leaving camp.
 - Some camps will use a computerized system to record the scout's merit badges. No Blue Cards will be issued; instead a spreadsheet of the scout's progress – completed and partials are given. The Troop's advancement Chairperson can transfer the information to individual Blue Cards or print Blue Cards through "TroopMaster" for the scout's court of honor.
 - Contact the summer camp to determine which system they use and if Blue Cards are needed and bring them with you.
- Merit Badge Counselor Publications

28-501V, Adult Application, 2003 (4 pp)

Adult registration form used for Merit Badge Counselors and marked in upper right hand blocks "MERIT BADGE COUNSELOR" and "DISTRICT NAME" and marked with position code "42" about the middle of the page along with position "MERIT BADGE COUNSELOR" again. Consists of a cover sheet, an instruction and information sheet and a 3-copy registration form. Form was significantly revised in 2003 to accommodate criminal background screening. Required of all Merit Badge Counselors whether already a registered Scouter or not.

57-491, Charter & Bylaws of the Boy Scouts of America, 1976, 2003 Printing (21 pp)

The basic document of the BSA. The requirements for approving a MB counselor, the authority of the MB counselor, and the four steps in advancement all come from this document.

57-492, Rules & Regulations of the Boy Scouts of America, 1976, 2003 Printing (24 pp)
Many of the rules & regulations were removed from the Charter & Bylaws at least 30 years ago with a note and placed in this document. This printing changed the citizenship requirement.

4439, Work Sheet for Building a Merit Badge Counselor List, no edition, 1999 printing (6 pp)

Work sheet for building a Merit Badge Counselor List; primarily for use by the District or Council staff. Available on line as a PDF form from www.scouting.org/forms/4439.pdf.

33009B, Scoutmaster Handbook, 1998, Revised 2002, (188 pp)

The Scoutmaster's primary guide. Contains a section on the merit badge program, which states that the Scoutmaster will give the Scout the name of a MB Counselor when he signs the Application for Merit Badge ("the blue card").

33088D, Advancement Committee Policies and Procedures, 2002 (62 pp)

Handbook for Scouters responsible for advancement at the Council, District and Unit levels. Contains the current BSA policies, procedures, rules and regulations as well as other information. Major change was to add Tiger Cubs to the document and revise Bobcat. Emphasis added on Merit Badge Counselors being approved for each specific merit badge.

33105, The Boy Scout Handbook, 11th Edition, (472 pp)

The critical document for a Scout. Various printings contain slight differences. Provides the basic information for all facets of Scouting., including a chapter on the merit badge program. This chapter states that the Scout gets the name of a merit badge counselor from the SM, states that the MB counselor must be registered as a MB counselor, and a listing of the merit badges. MB requirements are no longer in the handbook. The handbook contains one error—it suggests that the latest requirements for a MB are in the current MB pamphlet.

33215F, Boy Scouts Requirements--2003, 2003 (216 pp)

Contains complete official requirements for each Merit Badge, advancement and special awards. Requirements in this publication may be more current than the Merit Badge Pamphlet; therefore, this publication takes precedence. It is updated yearly.

33414B, Merit Badge Pocket Certificate, no edition, (1 pp)

The Scout's official document that he has earned a merit badge. Usually presented to him at a Court of Honor.

34124A, Application for Merit Badge, 1999, 2001 Printing (6 pp)

Three panel, blue wallet-sized card that: (1) shows that the Scout has permission to start working on a particular Merit Badge; (2) records his progress; and (3), when completed, provides a separate panel record for the Scout, the Counselor and the Unit.

34403, Advancement Report, no edition, (3pp)

Formal document to report all advancement information and Board of Review results to the Council. Constitutes the Council's official record for advancement. Available on line as a PDF form from www.scouting.org/forms/34403.pdf as "Unit Advancement Report." Should be printed on three different colors of paper.

34405, Merit Badge Counselor Information, 2001 (1 p)

Form used to identify the Merit Badge Counselors, the Merit Badges they are willing to coach, and the necessary Counselor information; and by which the District secures the Counselor's agreement to follow the Merit Badge requirements and BSA policies. . Available on line as a PDF form from www.scouting.org/forms/34405.pdf as "Merit Badge Counselor Application."

34505B, Troop Committee Guidebook, 1998, 2002 Printing (46 pp)

Reduced in volume from its predecessor, #6505. Covers the Committee's duties and responsibilities. Contains specific guidelines on the Committee's responsibility in recruiting MB counselors and then submitting them to the District and Council Advancement Committees for approval.

34520, Merit Badge Counseling, 1995 (8 pp)

*Pocket size, valuable booklet for all counselors and should be made available to them by the unit, district or council advancement committee. **No longer being printed.***

34532A, A Guide for Recommending Merit Badge Counselors, 1995 (8 pp)

*Single legal sheet folded into 4 panels; provides basic information on Merit Badges and counselors as an aid for Scouters in recruiting Merit Badge Counselors; information very closely related to information contained in **Merit Badge Counseling** above.*

34542, Merit Badge Counselor Orientation, 1995 (2 pp)

An 8 1/2 x 11, pre-punched sheet of paper with the basic summary of the most critical areas of Merit Badge Counselor program and thus the Merit Badge Counselor Training. Best buy for a district to give their counselors.

34724A, Highlights for the District Advancement Committee...an Overview, 1989 (12 pp)

A brief pamphlet describing the basics of the advancement program in the Boy Scouts of America including definition of terms.

U4509C, The Merits of Scouting Poster, 2002 (1 pp)

Full color poster depicting each of the merit badges that Boy Scouts can earn (18" x 24").

Merit Badge Pamphlets

*The Merit Badge Pamphlets are written for Scout-age boys; they are not necessary for either the Scout or the Counselor. It is felt that a qualified Counselor can coach the Scout through the requirements as identified in the latest issue of **Boy Scout Requirements**. The information in the pamphlet will help the Counselor to know what the Scout may be studying and the level of learning expected by the Boy Scouts of America; and the pamphlets may also contain suggestions for project or demonstrations that may stimulate the Counselor's ideas. At times, the requirements in the Merit Badge Pamphlet may lag behind*

*the requirements in the **Boy Scout Requirements** due to editing and production delays in issuing the Merit Badge Pamphlet. The **Boy Scout Requirements** criteria take precedence. However, once a Scout has started working on a Merit Badge, he may stay with the requirements in effect when he started and shall not be required to meet newly introduced changes unless National places a time limit as was done for Physical Fitness.. The Boy Scouts of America started a program about three years ago of attempting to review each Merit Badge Pamphlet at least every five years and then updating and re-issuing them if required.*

➤ Online Resources

- <http://www.scoutmaster.org>
- <http://www.meritbadge.org>
- <http://www.meritbadge.com>
- <http://www.macscouter.com>
- <http://www.calumetcouncil.org>
- <http://www.scouting.org/>

Round Table Topic Evaluation Form Merit Badge Counselor Training

Please evaluate tonight's topic and presentation.

1. The program was relevant to my position in Scouting.

Strongly						Strongly
Agree	5	4	3	2	1	Disagree

2. I found the program to be helpful.

Strongly						Strongly
Agree	5	4	3	2	1	Disagree

3. The information presented to me made sense.

Strongly						Strongly
Agree	5	4	3	2	1	Disagree

4. The presenter was well prepared and knowledgeable.

Strongly						Strongly
Agree	5	4	3	2	1	Disagree

5. My questions/concerns about Merit Badge Counseling have been answered.

Strongly						Strongly
Agree	5	4	3	2	1	Disagree

6. Please use the space below to make any further suggestions for improving or changing the RoundTable Program.

