

COUNSELOR'S COMPASS

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Things To Do

Prepare for New Boy Scout Rank Requirements

Boy Scout ranks and merit badges are separate challenges for Scouts. But sometimes, completing a rank requirement is a prerequisite to earning a badge.

Take Lifesaving, one of the 13 merit badges required to attain the Eagle Scout rank. Nine Second and First Class rank requirements must first be completed in order to continue working on the badge. That's why Merit Badge Maintenance Task Force volunteers recently updated the Lifesaving merit badge in an effort to make it consistent with rank requirement changes that go into effect January, 2016.

The *2016 Boy Scout Requirements* book will include these changes which must be used by any Scout just starting work on the Lifesaving merit badge beginning January 1:

*"1a. Before doing requirements 2 through 17:
Complete Second Class rank requirements 5a through 5d and First Class rank requirements 6a through 6e."*

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New First Class Aquatic rank requirements will soon read:

- 6a.** Successfully complete the BSA swimmer test.
- 6b.** Tell what precautions must be taken for a safe trip afloat.
- 6c.** Identify the basic parts of a canoe, kayak, or other boat. Identify the parts of a paddle or an oar
- 6d.** Describe proper body positioning in a watercraft, depending on the type and size of the vessel. Explain the importance of proper body position in the boat.
- 6e.** With a helper and a practice victim, show a line rescue both as tender and as rescuer. (The practice victim should be approximately 30 feet from shore in deep water.)



As one looks closely, not a whole lot is changing with the Second Class Aquatics requirements as the following suggests:

- Reference to the BSA beginner's test is identified in the second part of the requirement
- 8c was divided into two requirements, bringing the total to four

First Class Aquatics requirements, on the other hand, has more updates:

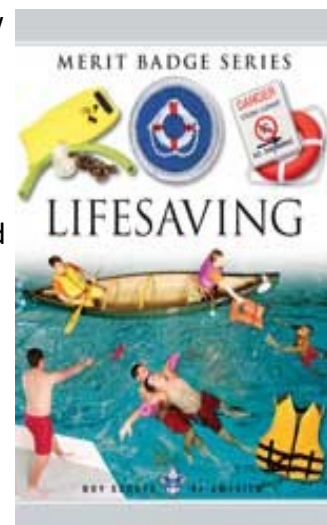
- Completion of the BSA swimmer test is the first requirement
- Two new watercraft requirements have been added
- Total of five requirements versus the previous three

However, counselors should note that if a Scout has already started working on a badge when a new edition of the pamphlet is introduced, he may continue using the same merit badge pamphlet and fulfill the requirements therein to earn the badge. He need not start over again with a new pamphlet and possibly revised requirements.

Therefore, counselors must often remain aware of both old and new requirements. Paying attention to such changes is especially important in the case of a partially-completed merit badge, with work reflected on a Scout's "blue card."

Besides Lifesaving, counselors who instruct Pioneering, First Aid, and the other aquatics merit badges should become familiar with the new Boy Scouting requirements. These can be accessed by visiting: http://www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/2016BoyScoutRequirements_8.14.2015.pdf.

When in doubt, consult with unit and district leaders.



News You Can Use

Merit Badge Updates for 2016

The *Boy Scout Requirements* book contains the official requirements in effect for each calendar year. Any Scout just beginning work on a merit badge must use the current requirements listed in the book. Knowing which badge updates will appear in the 2016 edition will give counselors a planning edge for next year.

Merit badges with major requirement revisions will include:

Cooking — Lifesaving — and Photography.



Badges with updates not as extensive will include:



Archery	Emergency Preparedness	Mining and Society
Camping	Environmental Science	Personal Management
Citizenship in the Community	First Aid	Railroading
Citizenship in the World	Mammal Study	Water Sports



Exploration will be a new merit badge rolled-out at the beginning of the year.

Counselors are encouraged to pick up their own copy of the *2016 Boy Scout Requirements* book at their local Scout shop. The book may also be purchased through www.scoutstuff.org/ or by calling the National Distribution Center toll-free at: 800-323-0732.

Glad You Asked

Merit Badge Myths: Fact vs. Fiction

In forthcoming issues, we'll review topics that have generated much discussion among Scouters over the years, and provide answers supported by the *Guide to Advancement*. Let's begin with the first merit badge myth:

Myth 1: A Scout started working on a merit badge offered at summer camp and was unable to complete all of the requirements. He is issued a partial and decides to resume his work in the fall. At the start of the new year, the latest *Boy Scout Requirements* book publishes requirements that have been completely revised for that badge. His new counselor insists he must start all over using the latest requirements.

Fact: According to topic 7.0.4.3 "What to Do When Requirements Change" in the *Guide to Advancement*, unless it is otherwise stated in the merit badge pamphlet, Boy Scout Requirements, or official communications from the National Council, if a Scout chooses to use the old merit badge requirements and pamphlet, he may continue using them until he has completed the badge.

Myth 2: Counselors can require Scouts to use merit badge worksheets downloaded from an unofficial BSA source because they make effective learning aids while working on requirements and is written evidence the Scout completed all the work to earn the badge.

Fact: According to topic 7.0.4.8 "Unofficial Worksheets and Learning Aids" in the *Guide to Advancement*, Scouts cannot be required to use unofficial learning aids in order to complete a merit badge.



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About Counselor's Compass

Counselor's Compass is the official e-letter of the Boy Scouts of America's National Advancement Task Force and Content Management Team. Its intent is to provide volunteers with practical counseling advice through a concise, informative approach in order to communicate advancement procedures more efficiently. Therefore, districts and councils may reprint articles from this publication. Our plan is to distribute *Counselor's Compass* quarterly, but special editions may go out whenever there is important information to share. Feedback, suggestions, and letters to the editor are welcome at merit.badge@scouting.org.

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Myth 3: There is no training available in Spanish for merit badge counselors.

Fact: The *Essentials of Merit Badge Counseling*, an educational presentation, was translated in Spanish in 2013, and is titled, “*Esenciales para Los Consejeros de Insignias de Mérito.*” It is accessible at: <http://www.scouting.org/filestore/boyscouts/ppt/Esenciales.ppt>.

“No council, committee, district, unit, or individual has the authority to add to, or subtract from, advancement requirements. There are limited exceptions relating only to youth members with disabilities.” – Guide to Advancement.



Steps for Success

Requirements: More Than Mere Words

Merit badge requirements must be completed as written, no more, no less. But there’s another side to requirements that counselors should consider prior to, during, and even after badge instruction. One should ask, “How does this merit badge support Scouting’s aims: character development, citizenship, and mental and physical fitness?”

In our 2014 Fall inaugural issue, the article entitled, “Completing Requirements as Stated Matters,” discusses how Camping merit badge requirement 9a can be easily misinterpreted. To refresh our memory, the requirement states:

“Camp a total of at least 20 nights at designated Scouting activities or events.* One long-term camping experience of up to six consecutive nights may be applied towards this requirement. Sleep each night under the sky or in a tent you have pitched. If the camp provides a tent that has already been pitched, you need not pitch your own tent.

*All campouts since becoming a Boy Scout or Varsity Scout may count toward this requirement.”

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There's a good reason why the Scout is required to camp at designated Scouting activities or events, and not at family camping, church retreats, or any other camping experience not supported by the Scout troop or Varsity team. Let's consider the first aim: character development. When camping with his patrol, a Scout sharpens his leadership and planning skills because his fellow Scouts depend on his ability to think ahead and consider the unexpected realities of Murphy's Law. After several troop campouts, he gains self-confidence too because he realizes through team-work, his fellow Scouts have his back, and he has theirs'.

"Why is the Scout allowed only one long-term camping experience?" By limiting the number to no more than six nights while attending summer camp, the Scout experiences a variety of outdoor adventures, i.e., troop campouts, hiking overnights with his patrol, or attending a district camporee. Besides building camaraderie with fellow Scouts, important to his emotional well-being, the young man gets good exercise—constantly walking, moving his muscles while pitching a tent, or rappelling down a mountain. This personal fitness Scouting aim is especially important with today's ever-increasing incidence of teenage Type II Diabetes.

This is not to say the week spent at summer camp isn't important. It is! Scouts gain a sense of civic duty when saluting the flag as it goes up each morning prior to breakfast in the dining hall, or taking it down and properly folding it during flag ceremony just before dinner. Attending church service on Sunday also enables Scouts to grow spiritually in their faith, further enhancing their Duty to God. Becoming a responsible citizen as a youth often carries over into adulthood as a contributing member of society.

So merit badges are in many ways a young man's moral compass towards a fulfilled and meaningful life. Scouting recognizes that counselors are the cornerstone to the merit badge program. By offering one's time, experience, and knowledge to guide youth in one or more subjects, these volunteers do indeed help shape the future of our communities.



Helpful Resources

Access to merit badge requirements:

www.scouting.org/meritbadges

Guide to Advancement:

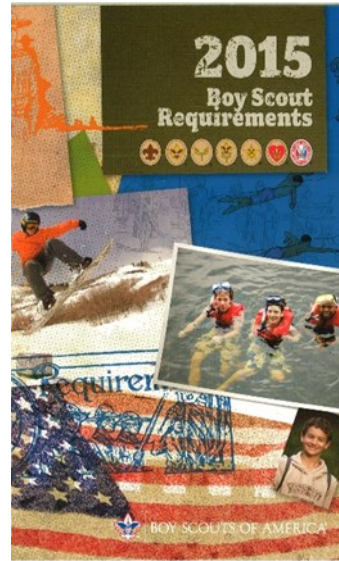
www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/33088.pdf

Guide to Safe Scouting:

www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/34416.pdf

The Essentials of Merit Badge Counseling:

www.scouting.org/Home/BoyScouts/Resources/advancement_presentations.aspx



Merit badge pamphlet series

Boy Scout Requirements book, No. 33216



Application for Merit Badge, No. 34124

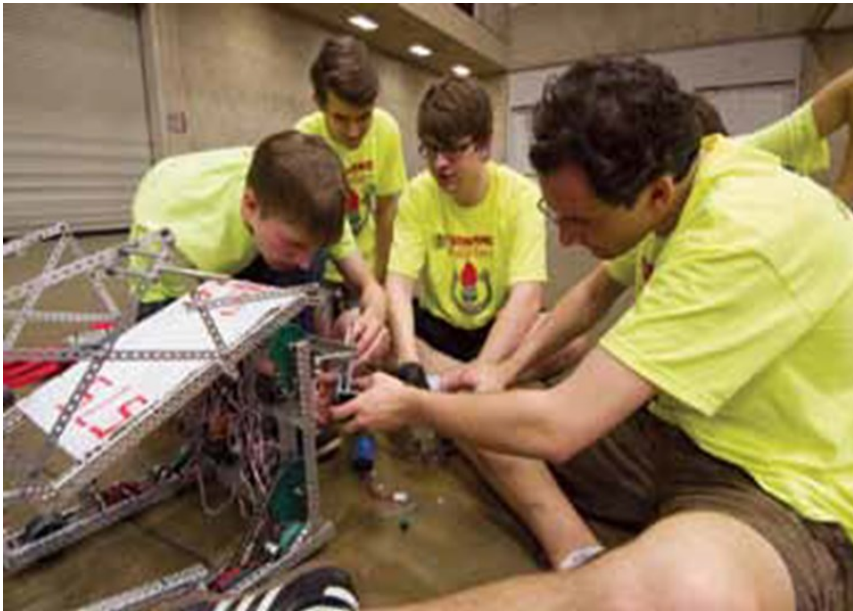
A Guide for Merit Badge Counseling, No. 34532

Boy Scout Handbook, No. 34554

Merit Badge Counselor Information, No. 34405

www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/34405.pdf





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