

Advancement News

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Prepared. For Life.®

Previous issues are available at www.scouting.org/scoutsource/BoyScouts/AdvancementandAwards/advancement_news.aspx

Opportunities for Advancement Administrators

Philmont Training Center: *Advancement Issues and Solutions*

For those looking for a conference to enhance their advancement skills, there is still time to take advantage of a great opportunity for enhanced learning. The *Advancement Issues and Solutions* conference is scheduled from July 31-August 6 at the Philmont Training Center.

This conference will explore in depth the types of issues regularly brought before the National Advancement Program Team. Those who attend will have a better understanding of the effective use of the *Guide to Advancement* and be better prepared to handle issues that arise in their home council related to advancement.

To get more information about this final opportunity of the summer at PTC, and to sign up for the conference—visit www.philmontscoutranch.org/PTC/ConferencesE.aspx



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Education Opportunities for Advancement Administrators

When preparing to educate unit, district, or council members on topics related to Scouting's method of advancement, look first on the national website, Scouting.org. There are a number of PowerPoint presentations available to help you.

Topics covered range from Cub Scout advancement to Internet advancement reporting, to Eagle Scout service project coaching. Other topics include effective troop advancement, merit badge counseling, internet advancement reporting, and other important issues. These sessions are of varying length and are suitable for personal review or use in instructor-led training.

To download these presentations, go to www.scouting.org/advancement, or simply type "advancement" in the search box. Click on Advancement Resources, then under General Resources click on Advancement Educational Presentations. To download a session, click on the box following the session's description.



Managing Subscriptions to *Advancement News*

Advancement News is designed for council and district advancement committees, advancement staff advisors, and Eagle processors. However, any Scouting volunteer or professional may subscribe.

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On Increasing Advancement

What Can You Do?

What can **you** do as the person responsible for advancement on your unit committee? A good place to start is by remembering that the important thing is to retain boys in the unit so that over time we may influence their character. A program that is rich in adventure is the key element. Advancement is a natural outgrowth of this rich adventure.

Next, you should make sure that you are familiar with the latest advancement requirements and the *Guide to Advancement* so that you will become the “go-to” source in the unit on all matters pertaining to advancement. Be sure that you understand the advancement procedures, especially those for Eagle Scout. Keep a current copy of the council merit badge counselor list, and work to recruit local merit badge counselors to support the unit’s program. Note that all merit badge counselors must be registered, completed Youth Protection Training (within the last two years) and approved by the council advancement committee.

You can work with youth leadership to make sure the unit has a library of current advancement literature, including an ample supply of up-to-date merit badge pamphlets. Work with the unit leaders to ensure that the program promotes a boy reaching First Class within 12 to 18 months of joining.

You can help by keeping accurate records. Become familiar with and use BSA’s internet advancement tools, including the Scoutbook Web-based application, to track and report individual accomplishments to the local council. You then will be able to regularly brief the unit leaders on the advancement needs of each boy. Schedule regular boards of review, at least monthly, but more often, if required. Be sure to include boards of review during summer camp. Should a boy appear to be having boards less often than his contemporaries, you will be able to alert others to his situation and help in considering what steps to take. For example, a friendly “non-advancement” board of review (GTA 8.0.1.3) may be all that is needed.

To be effective, advancement must be recognized. One way is to publically announce the results of a board of review as soon as possible after it concludes, e.g., if in camp, at that evening’s campfire. Hold timely courts of honor (three are required annually to achieve Journey to Excellence Gold) with the parents and even grandparents in attendance. Some units even hold an annual court of honor where all the troop’s achievements, including a recap of individual advancements, for the year are recognized. Developing an advancement display for rank advancement and helping to make sure that all courts of honor are held with an appropriate degree of ceremony should make the event memorable and help to reinforce the message that advancement is a result of program.

If you help in these ways, your unit will have a strong, supportive advancement program that will help retain Scouts. In this way we will maximize the time we have to influence a Scout’s character. Now isn’t that what we’re all about?



From the *Guide to Advancement*

The GTA: Your Best Advancement “Compass”

You have read your son’s handbook cover to cover. You have spoken with a number of folks in your unit and district. Yet, you still have more than a few questions: What is the difference between a “rank” and an “award”? What does “tenure” really mean? How do we manage the requirement that a Scout be “active”? You have these, and countless more questions to which everyone but you seem to know the answers.

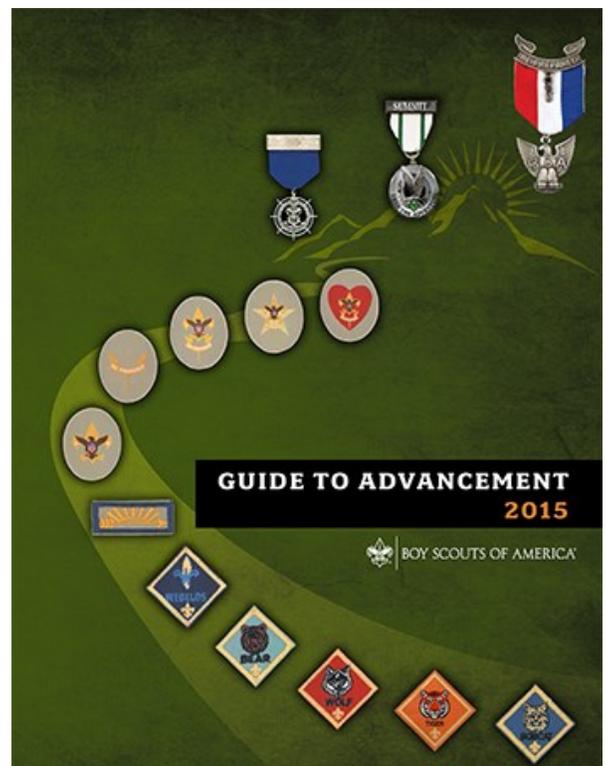
No one comes to Scouting knowing all of the answers. However, whether you are a new Scout parent, Scoutmaster, Cubmaster, Skipper, committee member or chair, or your unit’s advancement coordinator, and even a member of a district or council level advancement committee, the BSA’s *Guide To Advancement-2015* (or “GTA” for short) is the best place to look for them.

The *GTA* is indeed a guide. Yes, it does contain Scouting’s “rules” for advancement, across all youth programs, but it provides much more than that. For example, it provides insights into why the rules are as they are, as well as assistance about how to assess a youth’s correct completion of requirements.

The *GTA* is organized into 11 easy-to-find sections and includes an appendix of useful forms. The *GTA*’s contents cover all aspects of the advancement process, from “Advancement Defined” to “The Mechanics of Advancement” to “The Eagle Scout Rank” to “Advancement for Members with Special Needs.” To help you navigate the full spectrum of advancement related topics, each section is further subdivided by topic. For example, in Section 5—Special Considerations, you will find: Advancement in Camp Settings, Extended Absence from Scouting, Lone Scouting, Using Technology-Based Tools, and other topics.

Whether the *GTA* is an old friend or it is the first time you have opened its pages, be sure to start in Section 1 -Introduction. There, under topic 1.0.3.0: Significant Changes (page 7), you will find a summary of the latest changes in methods, mechanics, camp settings, reporting, the merit badge program, managing boards of review, Eagle-specific areas, members with special needs, etc.

Although the *GTA* is an advancement resource that is always at your fingertips online (www.scouting.org/advancement.aspx), an investment of \$11.99 for a hard copy of this book (SKU 620573) in which you can write your own notes, underline or highlight sections of text, or insert a fistful of “yellow stickies.” When it comes to finding the answers you are seeking, or when you are helping someone else, the purchase of your very own hard copy of the *GTA* from your local Scout shop or via www.scoutstuff.org may prove to be worth many times its purchase price.



The Cub Scout Angle

Summertime Activities: Never too Early to Put the Outing in Scouting



For every kid in school, summertime means warmer weather and a break from school. For Cub Scout packs, it also is a great time to look at the advancement requirements that will be most successful outdoors.

Outdoor skills and awareness is one of the desired outcomes of the Cub Scout program. Dens and packs should support advancement by having a year-round program that takes advantage of the outdoor activities in their communities. Visits to a nature center, zoo, community garden, wildlife refuge, fish hatchery, or aviary are great examples. Key elements to an outdoor summer program include campfire programs, camping and hiking skills, and learning the Outdoor Code and the Leave No Trace Principles for Kids. There is no time like the summer time to get Cub Scouts outside where they can have fun.

Tigers, Wolves, and Bears are specifically required to participate in an outdoor pack meeting or pack campout campfire through songs, skits, or run-ons depending on the Adventure. Similarly, Scouts working on their Arrow of Light rank are required to plan a campfire program including the other dens.

Each Cub Scout rank also has an outdoor skill component that involves camping and hiking skills. While some chartered organizations do not allow overnight camping, packs may substitute a family campout for a daylong outdoor activity, such as a council or district day camp. Thus, Cub Scouts can learn to identify plants and animals, learn to tie knots, and put together the Cub Scout Six Essentials for hikes and other outings. They can still learn about the best places to set up tents and how to be prepared for extreme weather conditions. They can even learn the basics of outdoor cooking and participate in service projects.

At these events, Wolf, Bear, and Webelos Scouts can be introduced to the Outdoor Code and the Leave No Trace Principles for Kids, which they will eventually need to recite from memory and to list how they have followed each during outdoor activities. Making notes in their handbooks during every summer outing now should make easy work of this requirement when the time comes.

Elective aquatics related adventures give packs and dens an opportunity to cool off and enjoy the water, and all Cub Scouts are now allowed, as a pack or den, to participate in paddle sports. However, aquatics activities require a tour and activity plan to be completed, and it is imperative to remember that Safe Swim Defense and Safety Afloat training must be completed by qualified leaders within the last two years and the leader must comply with all points of this training.

On the next page is a matrix of the Cub Scout requirements that can best be accomplished outdoors. Successful packs will be those whose boys are out there this summer living these exciting adventures, not those who packed their den flags away until September.

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	Tiger	Wolf	Bear	Webelos	Arrow of Light
Campfire Program	Tigers in the Wild	Call of the Wild Howling at the Moon	Bear Necessities Roaring Laughter		Camper
Hiking	Backyard Jungle Tigers in the Wild	Paws on the Path Finding Your Way	Fur, Feathers, and Ferns	Webelos Walkabout	
Outdoor Skills		Call of the Wild Paws on the Path Finding Your Way	Bear Necessities	Cast Iron Chef Castaway	Camper Castaway
Outdoor Code Leave No Trace		Call of the Wild Paws on the Path		Webelos Walkabout	Camper
Swimming		Spirit of the Water	Salmon Run	Aquanaut	Aquanaut

Lions in Your Neighborhood?

A new pilot program for kindergarten boys will begin in a few short months. If your council will be participating in the pilot, congratulations—your Lion Guides are now being actively recruited. September will bring boy and adult partner recruitment and the fun begins.

While the Lion program does not include advancement, it very importantly involves recognition. Boys will be recognized for their accomplishments. Significantly, the concepts of character development, leadership skills, personal fitness and citizenship are an integral part of Lion activities.

Lions will attend a limited number of pack meetings, so those pack meetings will be a prime opportunity for the pack to make these future Cub Scouts and their adult partners feel welcome and recognized. Pack leadership will want to ensure that age appropriate activities will be included in the evening’s fun. Advancement recognition for the pack youth will be a highlight that the Lions will enjoy witnessing and hopefully be inspired by when they see the ceremony and acknowledgement showered on these older boys.



Eagle Issues

Extension Requests and the Importance of Updating Advancement Records



Guide to Advancement topic 9.0.4.1 covers the process for submitting and evaluating requests for a time extension to earn the Eagle Scout rank, Summit Award, or the Quartermaster rank. When submitting an extension request it is critical that all advancement information be up-to-date before the extension request is submitted.

This will help ensure that the review team will have all the information necessary to promptly make an informed judgment.

At the national level, requests are frequently received asking for additional time to complete an Eagle Scout service project stating that all other requirements have been completed. However, a quick review of ScoutNET will show several required and sometimes even non-required merit badges as not complete, when in fact they really have been. These inconsistencies can result in significant delays in reviewing extension requests and in some cases might even have a negative impact on the final decision. That is why it is vitally important that the local council must confirm that the records are current before an extension request is submitted to the national office.

Although the primary problem area with extension requests is with merit badges, it is also very important that correct rank advancement dates be shown in ScoutNET. The latter is important because of the time requirements between First Class, Star, Life, and Eagle Scout ranks. A quick way to confirm what information is in ScoutNET is to request a "Person Listing" from your local council office then compare that information with troop records. If troop records show certain merit badges or ranks completed but ScoutNET does not, then immediate steps must be taken to update the council records.

The best way to keep the records up-to-date is to routinely (at least monthly) update all advancement via the Boy Scouts Internet advancement portal, either directly through Internet Advancement or uploading information from other software programs such as Scoutbook or Troopmaster. In some councils it is still possible to use a paper advancement report, although it is much better to do the reporting electronically.

Note for Advancement:

ScoutNET is currently the official place to maintain and access advancement information.

Merit Badges: Enhancing Our Youth's Competitive Edge

Merit Badge Group Instruction Guide

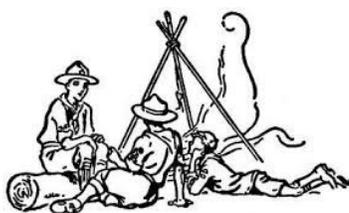
This new document was recently posted! *Merit Badge Group Instruction Guide* can now be found at the Advancement Resources web page: www.scouting.org/advancement. Located under the Merit Badge category, this document provides a review of *Guide to Advancement* Topic 7.0.3.2, with highlights on planning the event as well as evaluating the event. Review this document when your unit, district, or council is anticipating conducting a merit badge event where group instruction will take place.



Special Necessities

Communication and Teamwork for Great Summer Camps

At summer camp, active and successful participation by Scouts with special needs at summer camp should start with a meeting with the various program area directors at the beginning of the week. There, all participants can share information about which special needs Scouts would be signing up for the merit badges offered, how they can be helped, and explaining a little bit about each disability/ability. Another important element should be sharing something about each of them that will help the camp staff make an instant connection.



As we head in to the summer season, here are some helpful tips to make the most of each special need Scout's summer camp experience:

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About Advancement News

Follow the National Advancement Program Team on Twitter!

(BSA Advancement Team, @AdvBSA)

Advancement News is the official e-letter of the Boy Scouts of America National Advancement Program Team. Its intent is to provide and clarify procedures found in the *Guide to Advancement*, announce various changes and updates in advancement, and to assist advancement committees in making decisions that can help increase the rate of advancement. Therefore, districts and councils may reprint articles from this publication. Our plan is to distribute six issues of *Advancement News* annually, but special editions may go out whenever there is important information to share. Feedback, suggestions, and letters to the editor are welcome at

advancement.team@scouting.org.

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- Remember that most of the camp staff members are young adults and likely do not have much experience working with Scouts with special needs. Take the time to help the staff understand how they can work together with these Scouts and their leaders to help everyone have fun.
- Merit badges are tough and can eat up a Scout's entire week. Because of this, help Scouts set realistic goals so they can have a balance of working on advancement, but also enjoying the experience of learning new skills.
- Invite the staff to participate in activities in the campsite with the unit where they will have an opportunity to learn more about the unit and its Scouts—and vice versa.
- Try to partner one or more Scouts who are willing to help Scouts with special needs find their way to the dining hall or around camp. Sometimes those who need help just don't know how to ask for it.
- Celebrate the successes that each Scout accomplishes in camp. Whether it's catching a fish, swimming a lap, or even dressing themselves in their tent without assistance, find something that each Scout has accomplished during their time at camp and share that news with everyone!
- Most importantly, **have fun!!!** Some of the best days of the Scouting experience have been spent in camp, not just while earning badges, but by doing things that are not available at home. Plus, there's the always important – having fun with friends. Don't ever lose sight of the fact that people keep coming back because of the fun they had last time!

A little foresight and preparation for summer camp will provide a stellar experience for all Scouts of all abilities.

From the Archives

From the Guide To Advancement: What Is An Appeal?

(May 2013)

"A legal dictionary would define an "appeal" as a process for requesting a formal change to an official decision, pro or con. The BSA has a similar but more limited interpretation of the term.

"In Scouting programs, only adverse decisions made by boards of review pertaining to certain ranks can be appealed. An adverse decision for Star and Life may be appealed as far as the council advancement committee, while decisions for Eagle and Quartermaster ranks, and the Summit Award may be appealed through the local council to the National Council. Appeals are not permitted for other Boy Scouting ranks or for the Eagle Palms, the Cub Scouting ranks, or Venturing awards.

"When advancement is declined for the ranks of Star, Life, Eagle, Quartermaster, and the Summit Award, the procedures in the *Guide to Advancement* (topic 8.0.4.0) must be followed. First, advancement should only be declined if the member did not complete the requirements for the rank. Should that happen, the Scout must be given a document that explains the appeal procedure and outlines actions that could lead to advancement.

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A link to past issues of *Advancement News* may be found at the Advancement Resources web page:
www.scouting.org/advancement

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“The procedure should stipulate that all appeals— including those for boards of review under disputed circumstances—are first routed to the council advancement committee. From there a designated appeals coordinator should be responsible for coordinating the process through completion. Usually, the appeal of a *unit* board of review is assigned to a three- or five-member *district* appeal board. If the appeal board does not render a decision in favor of the Scout, then the decision may be appealed to the next level. For example, appeals from a district would be assigned to a council board. Remember, only the Eagle rank, Summit Award, and Quartermaster rank may be appealed to the National Council.

“Finally, above all, it is important to understand that an appeal board is not another board of review. It should focus only on the issues that brought about the negative decision and that were documented in the letter the Scout received after his initial review. However, unlike the original board, where a unanimous decision is required, only a majority vote by an appeal board is needed to approve advancement. See the *Guide to Advancement*, topic 8.0.4.2, for specific details and procedures.”

Hear It First on Twitter

If you want the news first, follow the National Program Team for advancement on Twitter. Topics cover the FAQs received at the national office, clarifications on policies and procedures, news on changes and new releases, and best practices in advancement.

If you already have a Twitter account, follow us at [@AdvBSA](#) or “**BSA Advancement Team.**” If you do not, it is time to take the plunge. Setting up an account is a quick and easy process at www.twitter.com. To limit incoming emails (“tweets”), you can select BSA National Advancement Team as the only account you want to follow.

Note: Advancement questions should be directed to advancement.team@scouting.org.

Did You Receive these Tweets?

April 26: Boys’ Life Essentials: A great resource for boys working on Tenderfoot through First Class rank requirements. www.boyslife.org/section/outdoors/bl-essentials

A Peek Ahead

Here is a glimpse of what we are working on for the next issue of *Advancement News*. As always, actual content may vary somewhat based on a number of considerations, especially to accommodate “late-breaking” news of immediate importance to our subscribers.

Topics Planned for August-September

Opportunities for Advancement Administrators: Philmont Training Center Notes

On Increasing Advancement: What can you do with the ‘Minute’

The Cub Scout Angle: The Campfire Program

Helpful Links

Here are some links to the most current materials of interest for Scouters who are involved in the administration of advancement. These and many more resources are available via the **Advancement Resources** web page at www.scouting.org/advancement.

**New* [Sea Scout Quartermaster Leadership Service Project Workbook](#)

**New* [Sea Scout Quartermaster Rank application](#)

Advancement Educational Presentations:

- Cub Scout Advancement: Delivering Adventure
- Getting the Most From Internet Advancement
- The Essentials of Merit Badge Counseling (English and Spanish)
- The Eagle Scout Service Project Coach (English and Spanish)
- Effective Troop Advancement (English and Spanish)
- Including Scouts With Disabilities
- Video-casts on *Guide to Advancement*, selected topics
 - ◇ Introduction to the Guide to Advancement
 - ◇ Judgment Calls
 - ◇ Boards of Review
 - ◇ Boards of Review Under Disputed Circumstances
 - ◇ Boards of Review Appeals
 - ◇ The Eagle Scout Application Process
 - ◇ Eagle Scout Boards of Review
- Videos
 - ◇ On Increasing Advancement
 - ◇ Why Advancement?
 - ◇ Guardian of the Gate

[Guide to Advancement 2015](#)

[Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook](#)

[Navigating the Eagle Scout Service Project: Information for Project Beneficiaries](#)

[Eagle Scout Service Project Coach Application](#)

[Eagle Scout Rank Application](#)

[Merit Badge Counselor Information](#)

[Merit Badge Group Instruction Guide](#)

[Reporting Merit Badge Concerns](#)

[Venturing Summit Award Service Project Workbook](#)

[Venturing Board of Review Guide](#)

[Individual Scout Achievement Plan](#)

[Lone Scout Friend and Counselor Guidebook](#)

