

Boy Scouts of America
Great Smoky Mountain Council
Tuckaleechee District
Troop 81

Most Frequently Asked Questions About...

MERIT BADGES

1. My son is a Tenderfoot Scout. Can he earn merit badges?
A: Yes. There are no rank restrictions for earning merit badges.
2. Can parents be merit badge counselors for their sons?
A: Yes, only if they're registered as a counselor and are willing to counsel other scouts besides their own son. **EXCEPTION:** Home Repairs merit badge - parents are allowed to be the exclusive counselor.
3. How can parents become registered merit badge counselors?
A: Simply contact the troop's Advancement Chairman for the necessary application. There is no fee required.
4. Where can requirements for specific merit badges be found?
A: Requirements for Eagle required badges can be found in the Boy Scout Handbook (pages 609-619). Requirements for *all* the merit badges are in the current edition of Boy Scout Requirements that is available at the Scout Office.
5. Is there a suggested order in earning merit badges?
A: Yes. Because some badges require prerequisites and other elements such as studious lessons, physical strength, and maturity, younger scouts are encouraged to first pursue the more easily earned badges. His Scoutmaster can offer guidance in this area.
6. What's an Eagle required merit badge?
A: A Scout must earn *twelve* specific badges from fifteen categories along with *nine* other elective badges to earn the Eagle rank.
7. With the recent addition of the Eagle required Family Life merit badge, will my son now have to earn 22 merit badges for Eagle?
A: No. With this new addition, one less merit badge from the elective list is needed, with the total remaining at 21 merit badges.
8. My son has earned two merit badges from the same category. Does he get credit for one or two Eagle required badges?
A: Only one badge is credited as Eagle required from a single category. Additional badges are credited as elective badges.
9. Where can I find merit badge pamphlets?
A: Many pamphlets are available for check-out from the troop's library. Check with the Librarian for availability. A full selection of pamphlets may be purchased at the Scout Office. **NOTE:** Make certain that the most recent edition pamphlet is used.

10. My son is interested in a particular merit badge. When can he begin working on the requirements?
A: Only after being assigned with a buddy to a registered counselor by the troop's Advancement Chairman.
11. Why must my son have a buddy in order to visit a counselor?
A: This is to satisfy the two-deep requirement which is National BSA policy. His "buddy" can be a friend, a parent, another scout, or even another adult not related to the counselor.
12. My son has completed all the requirements for a merit badge. How does he go about receiving the award?
A: The merit badge counselor will return to your son a blue, signed, and perforated card that validates the completion of the badge. The troop's part of this card is turned in to the Troop's Advancement Chairman and the necessary paperwork will be processed for the awarding of the badge. The remaining portion of the blue card is the scout's copy.
13. What should my son do with the card that accompanied his Merit Badge?
A: Save this card for historical reasons. An Eagle rank application requires dates of completion for all merit badges.
14. My son was unable to participate in a recent merit badge class. Does this mean he'll have to wait for another class to earn the badge?
A: No. Merit badge classes are formed when a large number of Scouts are interested in the same badge. Your son, with a buddy, may work individually with a counselor at any time to earn a badge.
15. How does my son enroll in summer camp merit badge classes?
A: His Scoutmaster will enroll him following an individual session to determine which badges he needs to earn.
16. My son didn't finish a merit badge during summer camp. Will he get credit for what he *did* complete?
A: Yes. Complete records of all badges earned and elements not completed are given to the Scoutmaster at the conclusion of the camp. It's your son's responsibility to finish the badge by contacting the Advancement Chairman and working with a qualified counselor.
17. After earning a badge, should my son keep together all his work material, such as written reports, journals, graphs, etc.?
A: Yes. Such material should be kept in a folder and kept ready to present at his next Board of Review.
18. My son lost his merit badge sash. Can I purchase replacement merit badges at the Scout Office?
A: No. Merit badges and rank patches are restricted purchase items allowed only by the Advancement Chairman with the necessary documentation. Contact the Advancement Chairman for assistance.

19. Can my son wear his merit badge sash with his Order of the Arrow sash?

A: No. Only one sash at a time is allowed.

20. Are merit badge sashes allowed to be worn folded over the belt?

A: No. The only acceptable way of displaying the sash is over the right shoulder.

21. Is there a way to identify Eagle required badges by simply looking at the merit badge?

A: Yes. Eagle required badges have a silver border ring while elective badges have a green ring.

22. When sewing badges on the sash, how can I determine the top of the badge?

A: All badges are displayed in the Scout Handbook on pages 599-608.