

# Advancement News

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Prepared. For Life.®

As programs and opportunities modify over time, your friends at *Advancement News* will continue to be here to share these changes with you and offer insights. *Advancement News* will be uploaded directly to the [Advancement Resources](#) page of Scouting.org. Each bimonthly edition will be found on the [Advancement News](#) page. Since advancement evolves and occasionally changes, please note that the most current information found in *Advancement News* and the online version of [Guide to Advancement](#) supersedes previous versions.

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## 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. To subscribe to the *Advancement News* announcements, click here: [Subscribe](#)

# Survey

## Survey Available for Your Feedback



*Advancement News* is a resource prepared bi-monthly to serve you, the Scouter, who is involved with advancement in your unit, district, or council. Please help us to support you even more by completing a very short survey to share your comments, needs, and suggestions.

The survey link was sent on February 21, 2023, to all Scouters who are registered through the subscription link with the return address of [Research.team@scouting.org](mailto:Research.team@scouting.org). It is now available. Please complete the survey by March 7 to have your responses included.

A sincere thank you for your feedback from your coordinator, editors, and many Scouting volunteers for *Advancement News*.

**Please complete the *Advancement News* Survey  
Prior to March 7, 2023**



## From the *Guide to Advancement*

### You Have an Unlimited Budget

We have some really good news for you. You have an unlimited budget for hiring assistants to help in your Scouting job. No matter what your job is, unit leader, district leader, or council leader. You can have as many assistants as you want. The hard part may be that you have to ask people to join and help you.

And why would you want to bring on assistants? Being a unit (district or council) leader can be overwhelming at times. There is a rumor that the job takes more than the one hour a week that you were promised. Furthermore, Murphy’s Law (What can go wrong, will go wrong!) has not been repealed. For example, what happens to your responsibilities when you have to go out of town unexpectedly for two weeks? You need to “Be Prepared” and have someone take your place. The more assistants that you have, the easier it will be to recruit others. People see a crowd of people involved and understand that the work will be shared. Finally, you need to be thinking about who might take your place when it’s time for you to move on.

How do you recruit assistants? It turns out that recruiting help is easy. Always be on the lookout for a possible recruit. Start by asking someone to do a small job. If they do that well, then give them something else. See how they do. Take them to the available training.

Don't forget Roundtables as a training event

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Introduce them to the various Scouting Handbooks. Make sure they understand the vast array of resources that Scouting has available. Show them how you keep up to date on the latest developments. *You do keep up to date on the latest developments, don't you?*

The *Advancement News* newsletter and the [Advancement Resources](#) page are helpful.

Adult Association is a method of Scouting

The key here is you have to ask people. Using this gradual process, the people you're recruiting will already be doing the job when you finally ask them to be registered as an assistant.

If you recruit helpers in this way, Scouting in your unit, district or council will be stronger. Our Scouts will have the adult leadership that they need, and we will fulfill our promise to our young people. Now, isn't that what we're all about?

[Guide to Advancement](#), Section 3 Guidelines for Advancement and Recognition Committees, provides the following topics:

- 3.0.0.1 Council Advancement Committee Responsibilities
- 3.0.0.2 District Advancement Committee Responsibilities
- 3.0.0.3 Unit Advancement Responsibilities
- 3.0.0.5 Building an Advancement Committee

Please note "The organization of advancement committees is a local council decision."

## On Increasing Advancement

### Positions of Responsibility—Webmaster

Most leadership experts tell us a skill of leadership, some say the most important skill of leadership, is effective, clear, frequent communication. We also know that a well-planned troop program, which is broadly communicated to Scouts, leaders, parents, and the community, is part of the "secret sauce" of the most successful troops.

In this series of articles, we have been sharing the linkage between the Scouting Aim of leadership development and the Scouting Method of advancement via youth positions of responsibility.

All the positions of responsibility listed in the requirements for Star, Life, and Eagle help a Scout to help others in various ways. The same is true for – The Webmaster.

Communication via the Internet has become essential in today's world. Knowing how to use it properly, safely, and effectively is an important skill for a Scout to learn.

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As we find in “Troop Leader Resources” on Scouting.org and in the *Scouts BSA Handbook*, troop webmasters are responsible for maintaining the troop’s website. They make sure that information posted on the website is correct and up to date and that the privacy of youth and adult troop members is protected. A member of the troop committee may assist them with their work.



### **Responsibilities**

- Works with various unit members on needed topics
- Ensures the website is as youth-run as possible
- Maintains the website as needed
- Sets a good example
- Correctly wears the Scout uniform
- Shows Scout Spirit

A troop website can be a stand-alone web page or can be part of a social media platform such as Facebook. The advantage of social media is the price (usually free), the ability to easily connect to council and National BSA social media pages, and on some platforms the ability to have both a public and a private presence. A disadvantage is the age restrictions on social media so only older Scouts, leaders, and parents can use it. (See the resources below for more on the social media topic.)

Regardless of the platform, web page content might include these items:

- A calendar of activities (with details such as leave and return time, carpooling info, equipment needs, etc.)
- Future meeting details (such as what happens at future patrol and troop meetings - working on knots, a merit badge, packing and hiking hints, preparing for camp, guest instructors, etc.)
- Opportunities for service (such as when Calvin will be doing his Eagle Scout project and the help he needs)
- Scholarship availability (like the National Eagle Scout Association scholarships)
- Information for Eagle Scout candidates on how to fill out the paperwork (many districts will present overview training)
- Upcoming troop, council, and national training opportunities for Scouts and adults

(You also might want to link your public web page to your ‘Be A Scout’ pin so potential new members can find your troop.)

As you can see, the Scout who carries out this role will learn or improve, skills that will be an asset in business, family, and life in general.

The troop’s leadership needs to understand that the Internet and social media can be both a wonderful and

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To review more information about Online Safety  
please visit BSA Scouting Safely:

[Digital Safety and Online  
Scouting Activities](#)

a treacherous place. The BSA has some resources to help the webmaster and their advisor keep it safe, as well as to make it great looking.

*Scouting Wire* is where one can find the BSA's [Brand Identity Guidelines](#) and "[Social Media Guidelines](#)" with topics on youth protection, Internet safety, and general considerations the webmaster should keep in mind.

The BSA Brand Center, found on Scouting.org (look on the "Resources" link and then "Recruitment") has a wealth of images that can be used and also the [Social Media Playbook](#) with tips on social media and resources for building a presence on social media. Some troops use the images on the Brand Center in place of their Scouts to protect the privacy of their own Scouts and leaders.

And of course, never forget the [Guide to Safe Scouting](#).

You can also find tips in *Scouting* magazine, such as [this article](#) from a couple of years ago about some of the best unit web pages, or [this one](#) that is older but still has good tips on improving your web page.

We encourage you to use this important position of responsibility to give your Scouts more leadership experience, to keep them engaged in the troop, to help them advance, and to strengthen your troop.

Take a look at <https://troopleader.scouting.org/webmaster/> for a brief orientation on the webmaster role.

## **About *Advancement News***

*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](mailto:advancement.team@scouting.org)

# Cub Scouts

## Welcoming Cub Scout families mid-year – Impact on Advancement



The exciting news is that Scouting is a year-round program. For some, the feasibility of having new Cub Scout families join mid-year is a concern. Many factors will help to make this a terrific experience for the new Cub Scouts and their dens and packs.

Where to start? Welcome them all with open arms. Be upfront with the structure and explain how the advancement program works, in detail. Highlight, of course, that immediate recognition happens continually for all things that the youth have completed, which includes belt loops/pins or award patches. Make sure that the new families are aware that recognition will be happening for Scouts who have been actively working on their advancement since the Fall, and to not be discouraged for their Scout.

If a Scout joins today – can they complete the rank by the end of the program year? Absolutely. Yes, it will take effort. So, it is suggested to follow their progress closely and use these ideas to keep them on track and moving forward:

- Lion to Bear: parents can go through the program in the handbook and sign off on advancement as they “do their best”.
- Webelos: the leader can designate the signing off to parents so work can be completed outside of den meetings.
- Scoutbook: Parents have access to Scoutbook or the Scouting app to see the progress of their Scout for advancement.
- Additionally, one option is to hold a make-up session for the new family and any other Scouts whom many have missed a particular meeting where key elements for an adventure were accomplished.

Be sure to give the family information about and orientation to Scoutbook, to help with all the benefits this tool provides to their Scouts.

Perhaps the family may not wish to focus on advancement, that’s their choice. They will still benefit from the Cub Scout experience of den and pack meeting activities and adventures galore! Once they find out how fun the advancement tracks are, they will most likely change their minds.



Remember that the pack is welcoming not just the Scout, but the families. Perhaps you have someone in your pack or den who can start them off on a good track and share the pack calendar and communication channels that make the connection between unit and family so smooth. Your New Member Coordinator will be key to their successful joining; don’t have one – recruit one now!




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One additional important thought is that these families should have a great welcoming experience, which will shape their future journey through the Scouting program. Plus, your unit may very well benefit from the addition of those adults who may be future den leaders and committee members.

Thus, the answer is enthusiastically **YES** – Cub Scouts should join mid-year and have the opportunity to receive the many values and benefits that the Cub Scout program delivers to Scouts and families.



### Cub Chat

Would you like to see a recording of a recent discussion of this topic? Click the link to the recorded Cub Chat Live which was held on February 3, 2023.

<https://www.facebook.com/scoutingmagazine/videos/1280227815864524>

or visit a site with many other discussions at [Cub Chat](#).

## Scouts BSA

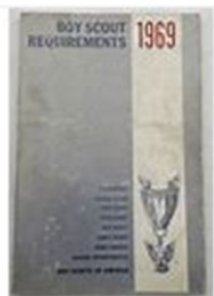
### The 2023 Scouts BSA Requirements Book

The 2023 edition of the Boy Scout Requirements books are in stores and Scout Shops. Pick up a copy of this small, highly useful volume that contains the requirements for the Scouts BSA ranks, merit badges, and special opportunities.

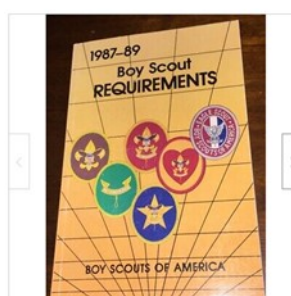
Requirements are updated frequently. This year there were minor updates to rank advancement requirements. 30 merit badges have revised requirements for 2023. The requirements book is an excellent resource for unit leaders; a new one is required each year-to give your Scouts accurate information. Visit your local Scout shop or go [online](#) and get yours today!



Over the years, the cover may change, and the requirements may change, but the material within is always valuable.



**1969**



**1987-89**



**2000**



**2019**

# Merit Badges

## Merit Badge Quiz—Test Yourself Today

"How well do you know your merit badge facts from myths? Take the following 12- question quiz and see just how well-informed you are. When you're done, feel free to use it as an activity at a district round table or other Scouter activity." Answers are found on page 13.

TRUE or FALSE:

- T F A merit badge counselor may be a counselor for only up to six merit badges.
- T F A merit badge counselor may not coach their child or close relative (i.e, niece or nephew) unless they are part of a group of Scouts all working on the same merit badge.
- T F A merit badge counselor who works only with a single unit needs only the unit committee's approval before being approved by the Scout Executive.
- T F Persons serving as merit badge counselors must be registered as a merit badge counselor with the Boy Scouts of America.
- T F A Scout may earn no more than five merit badges from the same merit badge counselor.
- T F Once a Scouter is approved as a merit badge counselor, they are approved for life and never have to be reapproved.
- T F A Scout must complete all the requirements for a merit badge within 12 months or they must start over.
- T F A merit badge counselor may require the Scout to work beyond the specific requirements of the merit badge so the Scout may discover more about the subject and continue the learning process.
- T F Due to the BSA policies related to Youth Protection and two-deep leadership, a merit badge counselor must have another adult present during all merit badge counseling sessions.
- T F If the weather, locale, or some other condition makes meeting all of the conditions of the merit badge requirements impractical, the merit badge counselor may substitute requirements for those stated for the merit badge.
- T F Merit badge counselors must be at least 18 years old.
- T F If the requirements for a merit badge differ between the merit badge pamphlet and the current edition of *Scouts BSA Requirements*, the requirements in the *Scouts BSA Requirements* book supersede all others.



# Scoutbook

## Leveraging Scoutbook at Jamboree

***Before utilizing Scoutbook to mark advancement completed, be sure to talk with your unit leader to make sure you are in sync with their advancement practices.***

Youth who are in units that are utilizing Scoutbook (desktop and mobile version) can mark advancement as completed by logging into their account clicking requirements as complete and providing documentation (picture, link to video, or written answer) in the “Notepad & Comments” section. This can be quite a valuable tool for the youth at the jamboree to mark and document progress on advancement. For merit badges, it is important for the youth to have met with their unit leader before starting a merit badge.

For instructions on how to create a youth account in Scoutbook, check out the following [video](#).

For marking advancement complete, check out the following training [video](#).

### [Guide To Advancement](#) 7.0.0.3:

“The Scout and the unit leader. Any registered Scout, or qualified Venturer, or Sea Scout, may work on the requirements for any merit badge at any time. However, before working with a counselor or attending a group or virtual merit badge opportunity, a Scout should meet with his or her unit leader. This is the leader’s opportunity to give guidance on the wisdom of pursuing a selected badge, and to advise the Scout on how work might be approached and what may be encountered along the way. It is also the time to provide the names and contact information of one or more approved counselors. The best outcome, however, is that a growth-oriented, positive dialog occurs that provides inspiration and direction in a Scout’s life and even leads to conversations about talents and interests, goal setting, and the concept of “challenge by choice.” The benefits can be much like those of a well-done Scoutmaster conference. It must be noted that this visit is sufficiently important that it should be documented either by the unit leader’s signature on the Application for Merit Badge (blue card) or by other means.

Even though a leader may voice concerns about a particular Scout pursuing a particular merit badge, it is the Scout’s decision whether or not to proceed.

The Scout may want to take advantage of opportunities at merit badge fairs or midways, or at rock-climbing gyms or whitewater rafting trips and so forth. This is acceptable, but should be a part of the discussion with the unit leader. Group instruction has both advantages and disadvantages (see “Group Instruction,” 7.0.3.2 and related topics 7.0.4.9 and 7.0.4.10). Another discussion with the unit leader should take place if a Scout wants to change counselors.”

# Sea Scouts



## Apprentice: The Ground Floor of Sea Scouts

Sea Scouts is probably the least-known of all the Boy Scouts of America units that youth can be a part of. So here is a way to start learning the way of water in the BSA's High Adventure section.

There are four ranks in Sea Scouts – Apprentice, Ordinary, Able, and Quartermaster. We will talk about the Apprentice rank here, as Apprentice is on the ground floor. What is accomplished here is applied not only in other advancements but also when Scouts go out on the water. Sea Scouts do not have merit badges, but many merit badge requirements are within the scope of Sea Scout advancements.

Sea Scouts originally took its ranks and advancements straight from the U.S. Navy. A lot of the Sea Scout requirements have been, ahem, watered down over the years. But multiple Navy recruits who were Sea Scouts and go through Boot Camp near Chicago say that the camp was easier for them than non-Sea Scouts -- because of their advancements and hands-on experience on the water. Plus, another important point is that Sea Scouts is the official youth group of the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary. Scouts who are Sea Scouts, can automatically go to Coast Guard trainings. That can make it easier if they want to join the Coast Guard as a career.

The [Apprentice rank](#) has requirements, some of which are:

1. Ideals – They have to memorize the Scout Oath, the Scout Law, and the Sea Promise. Plus they have to demonstrate proper procedure for boarding a vessel.
2. Active membership – They have to fulfill financial obligations. They must also obtain a Sea Scout uniform. Additionally, they also have to have proper active participation in their ship. Like Scouts BSA, some Sea Scouts cannot be as active in the autumn when there is band, football, volleyball, etc.
3. Leadership – A Sea Scout will have to know their ship's organization and ID insignia on youth and adult uniforms.
4. Swimming – Swimming is a must. They have to complete swimming requirements as well as discuss a BSA Safe Swim Defense plan.
5. Safety – Explain the uses of Coast Guard-approved life jackets, identify day and night distress signals, and demonstrate how to talk over a boat's radio to send certain VHF emergency messages.
6. Marlinspike - Learning seamanship to tie and explain the use of various knots.
7. Boat Handling – The Sea Scout will have to name the principal parts of a sailboat, describe identifying characteristics of sailboats, and know how to use a heaving line.
8. Service – Log at least eight hours of service or activities that are not their unit's regular ship meetings.

It is apparent that this rank is a base of knowledge from which the Sea Scout will be able to operate a small sailboat and paddle craft – and that can be for their private use, as well as a way to show friends how easy things can be in Sea Scouts. Another reason to work on this rank is that it proves that Sea Scouts is just another part of the BSA family, and a way to use the other things that are learned in all BSA units: first aid, swimming, safety, cooking, camping, knots, leadership development, friendship, service, and many other items.

# Worth Repeating

## Cub Scout Camping Opportunities



(April, 2013)

Even as “March came in like a lion,” council and district plans should be well underway for local Cub Scout day camps and Cub Scout resident camps before the month goes out like a lamb.” Summer—and even spring— camping opportunities for Scouts should be designed to give them the experience of group living in an outdoor environment under the supervision of trained leadership.

In addition, day camps and resident camps should give Scouts the chance to participate in supervised activities outside the confines of their dens and packs. These camps may offer opportunities for:

- Shooting sports (only available through organized district- and council-approved activities)
- Hikes
- Outdoor cooking
- Swimming
- Horseback riding
- Nature Awareness

While these activities should be planned to provide Cub Scouts with outdoor experiences, leaders should remember that advancement should come from the program—especially from fun and exciting experiences. For example, a Cub Scout day camp station where the activity calls for Scouts to learn about fishing will also provide opportunities for completing a ‘Bear Goes Fishing Bear Cub Scout Elective Adventure’. At the end of a camp session, many camps provide pack leaders with a listing of the achievements and electives that were a part of the program for each Cub Scout program level.

District advancement committees are encouraged to support outdoor programs of the district (see the *Guide to Advancement*, 3.0.0.2, No. 6). Cub Scouts in the district will be well served if a few of the advancement committee members support that planning process. They may know volunteers who would be available to provide experienced staffing for the day camp, or they may be able to suggest Scouts BSA merit badge counselors who have specific skills that would add value. Whatever support is given, it is the youth who will benefit from an introduction to the Scouting outdoor program.

### Editor’s Note

Editor Note: This article was written before girls were introduced into Scouting programs. Therefore, minor modifications to the original article have been made to reflect gender references. The terminology Scouts BSA has been substituted for all references to ‘Boy Scouts.’

Archaic Specific advancement requirements for Bear were removed from this article and replaced with current requirements.

See Bear Required Adventure: Bear Necessities, for references to Requirement 1 – attending a day camp or resident camp.

See Bear Elective Adventure: Bear Elective Adventure: A Bear Goes Fishing – learn about local fishing regulations and equipment.

## Helpful Links

The most current materials of interest for Scouters who are involved in the administration of advancement are located in one handy place, the Advancement Resources page at [www.scouting.org/Advancement](http://www.scouting.org/Advancement).

## Advancement Educational Presentations

### The Eagle Scout Service Project

How many of your Scouts BSA youth are starting to look with more excitement at the Eagle Scout Award on the horizon? Providing the BSA produced Power Point Presentation locally will give them the opportunity to be informed about what to expect. This presentation includes:

- Specific requirements are explained in detail
- Chapter references to the *Guide to Advancement*
- The FIVE tests of an acceptable Eagle Scout Service Project
- What is the Eagle Scout Service Project Coach?
- Fundraising procedures
- Risk Management application to the project
- Evaluation
- Recommendations on where to find more information

The “Eagle Scout Service Project” presentation is also available for use with unit leaders, advancement administrators, Scouts, and parents. This is an instructor-led resource that is designed to be a 45 to 60 minute presentation; more time may be required when adding in questions and answers.

To find the presentation, click on [Advancement Educational Presentations](#) at the Advancement resources site. Scroll down to the [Eagle Scout Service Project](#) link to download the presentation.

This presentation is designed to be conducted prior to January 31, 2015. Advancement program materials, the forms and information found in the *Guide to Advancement* supersedes all prior materials.

Please note that when downloading the [Eagle Scout Service Project Workbook](#), Scouts should be advised to verify the publication date to ensure it is version 2022a released 12/16/2022.



## Merit Badge Quiz Answers



1. **False.** A counselor may be approved for as many badges as he or she is qualified to offer. Note that the National Council does not limit the number of merit badges an individual may be approved to counsel. It is permissible, however, for councils to do so—as long as Scouts' choices, especially in small or remote units, are not so limited as to serve as a barrier to advancement. (*Guide to Advancement* (GTA) 7.0.1.4)
2. **False.** Counselors may work with and pass any member, including their own children, wards, or relatives. Nevertheless, we often teach young people the importance of broadening their horizons. Scouts meeting with counselors beyond their families and beyond even their units are doing that. They will benefit from the perspectives of many “teachers” and will learn more as a result. They should be encouraged to reach out. (GTA Section 7.0.0.3)
3. **False.** Scoutmasters, or anyone else, wishing to counsel and sign off on merit badges must also qualify and register in the position of merit badge counselor and be approved for the badges they counsel according to council procedures. (GTA 7.0.1.4)
4. **True.** Even volunteers who serve in multiple positions must fill out another form and show registration as a merit badge counselor. (GTA 7.0.1.4)
5. **False.** The National Council does not limit the number of merit badges a youth may earn from one counselor, though a unit leader is permitted to do so as long as the same limit applies to all Scouts in the unit. Ideally, Scouts should work with a variety of adults. (GTA 7.0.0.3)
6. **False.** Counselor approvals are for one year only. The council advancement committee annually coordinates counselor reregistration. (GTA 7.0.1.5)
7. **False.** Partials have no expiration except the Scout's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. (GTA 7.0.3.3)
8. **False.** No additions or deletions are permitted. The requirements are to be completed exactly as written. However, a counselor may share additional information or resources in the hope of encouraging the Scout to challenge themselves. (GTA 7.0.4.7)
9. **True.** However, the parent or legal guardian of the Scout may serve as the second adult. This parent or legal guardian does not have to be a registered leader.
10. **False.** No additions or deletions are permitted. The requirements are to be completed exactly as written. (GTA 7.0.4.7)
11. **True.** (GTA 7.0.1.3)
12. **True.** The *Scouts BSA Requirements book* is revised annually and reflects any changes that have been made, whereas the merit badge pamphlets are not revised annually and may be outdated.