

MERIT BADGES

The BSA has 121 merit badges available, that allow Scouts to examine subjects to determine if they would like to further pursue them as a career or hobby. Scouts will have opportunities to earn merit badges at summer camp, in classes offered in group settings, or on an individual basis throughout the year. Earning merit badges provides an opportunity to set and achieve goals, and to work closely with a variety of people.

Required Merit Badges: A Boy Scout can begin taking merit badges as soon as he joins a troop, but no merit badges are required for advancement until he receives his First Class rank. Advancement to Star, Life, and Eagle all require completion of merit badges, service, and leadership. To reach Eagle rank, a Scout must complete a total of at least 21 merit badges, 12 of which come from the Eagle-required badge list.

Merit Badge Pamphlets: An official Boy Scout merit badge pamphlet has been created for the BSA by authorities for each topic. These pamphlets contain requirements, introductory information, and supplemental reference text. A Scout can purchase pamphlets from BSA, find them in our troop library, or often-times check them out from a public library. The Scouts elect a Troop Librarian to maintain Troop 55's library of merit badge pamphlets, current BSA requirements, and other publications. Requirements and pamphlets are revised periodically, so Scouts and merit badge counselors should be sure they are using the most recent versions.

Merit Badge Counselors: Merit badge counselors are adult volunteers that have been approved by council or district advancement committees. They are knowledgeable in the topic and understand the goals of Scouting and the Boy Scout merit badge program. Mr. Clark is responsible for recruiting merit badge counselors for Troop 55, and submitting their applications to council for approval. Chester County Council then provides Mr. Benyo with a list of all merit badge counselors who are allowed to work with Scouts from Troop 55.

Merit Badge Process:

- 1) A Scout decides he would like to earn a specific merit badge, and identifies another Scout that will be his partner to attend meetings with the counselor to follow safe scouting guidelines. If no other Scout wants to work on that merit badge, a parent or other family member can serve as the Scout's "buddy".
- 2) The Scout(s) must obtain approval from the Scoutmaster to begin the merit badge. The Scoutmaster identifies a merit badge counselor, and gives the Scout(s) a merit badge application ("blue card"). If Mr. Benyo is not available, Mr. Baumann or Mr. Clark can provide this approval on his behalf.
- 3) The Scout(s) then contact the counselor to begin work on the merit badge, and give the "blue card(s)" to them. The counselor reviews the requirements with the Scout(s), they decide which projects to complete, and determine a timetable for completing the requirements. The counselor provides expertise, advice, and guidance as needed until the Scouts have completed the requirements. The merit badge counselor certifies completion of requirements, keeps the Counselor's Record portion of the "blue card", and returns the rest of the card to the Scout.
NOTE: Counselors must follow the requirements of the merit badge, making no deletions or additions, ensuring that the advancement standards are fair and uniform for all Scouts.
- 4) The Scout(s) then must obtain the Scoutmaster's signature on the "blue card" again, indicating his final approval of the completed merit badge.
- 5) The Scout(s) then must give the "blue card" to our Advancement Co-Coordinator, Mrs. Benyo. She will record the merit badge in the Scout(s)' official records in the troop and at council, Mrs. Satenstein will keep the Troop's Record portion, and the Applicant's Record will be returned to the Scout(s) when the merit badges are presented at the next court of honor. If Mrs. Benyo is not available when "blue cards" are completed, Mr. Benyo can deliver them to her.
- 6) Scouts must keep their portion of all "blue cards" in a safe place, in case any of their advancement records are lost. In addition, if a Scout loses their "blue card" before a merit badge has been recorded in the Scout's official records, they might have to earn the merit badge again. Plastic sheets used to store collector cards are a great way to keep your "blue cards" and other advancement records safe.