

Advancement

First Class - First Year

It is Troop 8's goal to help each new Scout earn First Class rank in his first year with the Troop. Informal studies and review of Troop records indicate that 80% of all new Scouts quit the Troop by the end of their second year if they do not make it to the First Class plateau by the end of their first year. That number jumps to 90% by the end of the third year and practically 100% after the fourth year.

This program is not intended to force a Scout to advance against his will but rather to ensure that he sees everything that Scouting has to offer. Boys are still free to earn merit badges and other awards at their own pace.

As was previously mentioned, advancement meetings are mandatory for all Scouts who have not yet reached First Class. Preparation is essential, from time to time we will have guest speakers whose knowledge and experience makes them better suited to teach the material than anyone in the Troop. Also, several second year Scouts who achieved First Class in their first year will be serving as instructors. These young men have demonstrated the same enthusiasm we hope to instill in the current group of first year Scouts.

Questions about the First Class - First Year program should be directed to the First Year Scout Coordinator or the Senior/Junior Program Coordinator.

Life to Eagle

The Troop has an Eagle Scout Advisor who is responsible for guiding Life Scouts through the process of becoming an Eagle Scout. Completing the Eagle Rank requirements can be a long and arduous task. There are a number of rules and procedures not used in the lower ranks. Each new Life Scout will be given a "Life to Eagle Packet" with a copy of the Eagle Scout Application, Service Project Workbook, a letter detailing procedures, and a parent's letter.

Life Scouts are encouraged to meet with the Eagle Scout Advisor as often as necessary throughout the process to ensure that all requirements are met properly.

Work Done in Webelos/Outside the Troop

All requirements are to be met while the Scout is a registered member of Troop 8 participating in a Troop or Patrol activity. No work done as part of a Cub Scouting program or individually (family camping, etc.) will be accepted unless specifically stated in the rank requirements in the latest edition of the *Official Boy Scout Handbook*.

The purpose of only accepting work done while registered as a member of Troop 8 is twofold. First, it allows the Troop's adult and junior leaders to get to know the new Scouts. Second guarantees that each Scout is tested on the requirement as thoroughly as possible.

Signatures

Rank requirements may only be signed by a registered leader of Troop 8. This leader may be an adult (the Scoutmaster and his assistants) or a member of the junior leadership (Senior Patrol leader, Assistant Senior Patrol Leader, Instructor, Troop Guide, or Patrol Leader). No parental signatures will be accepted unless the requirement in question indicates otherwise.

Merit Badges

Merit badges are the heart of the Scouting advancement program. Once a Scout has earned First Class rank he is free to work on any of the more than 100 merit badges that interest him. Some merit badges are offered as part of an organized class but most of them are taught on an independent study basis. The Troop has an extensive library of merit badge pamphlets available for loan before regular Troop meetings. If a book is not available in the library current copies can be purchased at the Chief Cornplanter Council Scout Shop. Many Scouts choose to donate the book to the Troop library once they have earned the badge.

When a Scout wishes to work on a merit badge he should begin by borrowing a copy of the merit badge book from the Troop library or purchasing one from the Chief Cornplanter Council Scout Shop. After having read the book and familiarized himself with the requirements the Scout should ask a uniformed adult leader for the name and phone number of a counselor for the merit badge. At this time the Scout should also get a blue merit badge application from the Advancement Chairman, fill it out and have the Scoutmaster sign it. There are usually several counselors in our area for any one-merit badge. It is up to each Scout to initiate contact with a counselor and make as many appointments as necessary to meet the requirements. When a Scout has successfully met all the requirements and secured the signature of his counselor he should turn the card in to the Advancement Chairman. Generally the badge will be available at the next regular Troop meeting. One of the purposes of the merit badge program is to teach a Scout to make and keep appointments and other commitments with adults he would not otherwise deal with in a "real world" setting. To that end **no Scout may earn more than 5 merit badges from any one counselor.**

Service Projects

Service projects will be accepted only if they have been approved in advance. For the Eagle badge this approval must come from the District Advancement Committee. For all other ranks this approval comes from the Scoutmaster. Scouts may not use a project already being counted for some other purpose (confirmation, etc.). Fund-raisers such as the quarterly highway cleanup may not be counted as service projects. Scouts may count time spent helping a Life Scout with his Eagle Scout Service project.

Scout Spirit

Showing Scout spirit means many things. The most obvious aspect of this requirement is a Scout's ability to explain how he applies the principles of the Scout Oath, Promise, Motto, and Slogan to his life in and out of Scouting. The other aspect of this is a little more easily measured. Correctly wearing the uniform, attending meetings and campouts regularly, participating in fundraisers and helping with service projects are all ways a boy can demonstrate his Scout spirit. The Scout spirit requirement is usually part of the discussion held in a Scoutmaster Conference.

Scoutmaster Conferences

Scoutmaster Conferences are held by appointment before and after regular Troop meetings. These are sometimes referred to as personal growth conferences due to the goal-setting nature of these one-on-one conversations. Scoutmaster conferences are to be the last requirement a Scout meets in order to allow some time to pass for the Scout to grow both physically and mentally. If the Scoutmaster is not available an Assistant Scoutmaster may perform the conference in an emergency. It should be noted that procrastination is not considered an emergency.

Board of Review

Boards of Review (BOR) are required for each rank advanced. BOR for all ranks except Eagle are held at the Troop level. They are held six times annually during advancement meetings. A typical Board of Review consists of 3 to 6 members of the Troop committee or other adults.

The names of Scouts up for review will be posted at the regular Troop meeting prior to the BOR date. If a Scout has reason to believe he is up for review but is not on the list he must see the Advancement Chairman immediately. Failure to do so will delay a Scout's advancement by at least 2 months.

These reviews are not intended to re-test Scouts on the skills they have mastered. Rather they are a chance to gauge the Scout's growth in the Scouting program. They also help a Scout grow accustomed to speaking with a group of people in an interview setting. Boards of Review are complete uniform events. Merit badge sashes are encouraged, however please remember that this is not an Order of the Arrow event and OA sashes should therefore not be worn. Failure to appear in uniform, bring ones *Official Boy Scout Handbook* or incomplete requirements are all cause for postponement of a Board of Review.