



TROOP 63 COBRAS

ADVANCEMENT AND MERIT BADGE INFORMATION



Parents, please review this page with your scouts. The “you” referenced below, is directed towards the scout, not the parent. He is finished with Cub Scouts. He is now a Boy Scout and it is his turn to shine and be a part of the ‘boy led’ program.

RANK ADVANCEMENT

The requirements for the ranks of Tenderfoot through First Class prepare you to take full advantage of all that Scouting has to offer. Star, Life, and Eagle requirements focus on service to others and developing leadership skills.

Requirements for each rank are outlined in the Boy Scout Handbook which can be purchased from the Scout Shop. Each Scout is required to have his own handbook. **Please note that Boy Scout rank requirements were updated for 2016. If you purchased a 2015 edition handbook, there is an insert available.**

Scout skills cannot be mastered by performing them just once. You will have many opportunities to practice each skill, and you will be thoroughly tested on each requirement before it is "signed off. In addition, expect to practice each skill repeatedly, even after it has been signed off. As you progress, you will also have opportunities to teach these skills to less experienced Scouts, which will further reinforce your knowledge and skill.

As you complete each requirement, you will be tested and signed off in the BACK section of your handbook by the Scoutmaster. Your Assistant Scoutmasters and Senior Patrol leaders can also sign off on requirements. It's up to **YOU** to take advantage of the advancement opportunities available to you, and to take initiative to ask for someone to test you when you are ready. **YOU** are responsible for keeping your own personal advancement record in your handbook. **YOU** should also record your service hours, campouts, troop activities, and leadership positions in your handbook.

You must earn the ranks in order, but you may complete any requirement for Tenderfoot through First Class at any time. (For example, you may complete a First Class requirement before finishing your Tenderfoot requirements, but you must earn Tenderfoot rank before you are awarded Second Class and First Class ranks.)

The Scoutmaster conference is used to discuss your goals and accomplishments and is required for each rank advancement. You do not have to wait until you have completed the requirements for a rank in order to ask for a Scoutmaster conference. You may talk with the Scoutmaster at any time that is convenient to both of you. However, for a Scoutmaster conference to count toward rank advancement it must take place after all other requirements are complete and before

the Board of Review. At this required conference the Scoutmaster will also help you determine whether or not you are ready to go before the Board of Review.

After this Scoutmaster conference, **you** should arrange for your Board of Review following the procedures your troop has established. Boards of Review for all ranks except Eagle Scout, are held once a month, and are composed of three registered members of the troop committee. The Board of Review may not include the Scoutmaster, Assistant Scoutmasters, or your family members.

The purpose of the Board of Review is not to retest you but rather to ensure that you have completed all of the requirements, to determine the quality of your troop experience, and to encourage you to advance toward the next rank.

You need to have your Boy Scout Handbook and should be in your uniform when you appear before a Board of Review. During the review the board will discuss your development along your trail to Eagle, ask you questions about skills that were required for your particular rank, and evaluate you in terms of troop activities and readiness for the next rank. It is also a time for you to ask any questions you might have and to give feedback to the troop committee about activities and your Scouting experience in your troop and in your patrol.

After passing the Board of Review you will be formally recognized for your rank advancements and merit badges in front of family and friends during a ceremony at a Court of Honor. At this time you will be presented with your wallet-sized certificate card and rank emblem. Our troop schedules two Courts of Honor each year. After reaching the rank of Life Scout you will receive your Life to Eagle packet and discuss ideas and suggestions for your Eagle Service Project. This project must conform to special guidelines that have been outlined by the Boy Scouts of America. Your Scoutmaster, Troop Advancement Chairman, and a representative of your District Advancement Committee, as well as the benefiting organization, must approve your project before you begin carrying it out.

MERIT BADGES

Earning merit badges allows you to explore many fields, helps you round out your skills, and introduces you to subjects that will perhaps become lifelong interests or a rewarding career.

There are more than 100 merit badges for you to choose from. **You** may earn any merit badge at any time, with Scoutmaster approval. **Don't wait for someone to tell you when and which merit badge to work on.** You don't need to reach a certain rank in order to be eligible. However, you should concentrate on achieving the rank of First Class before devoting a lot of time to working on merit badges.

You can find information about merit badge requirements in the appropriate merit badge pamphlets and in the current year's Boy Scout Requirements book. Some of these should be available in your troop library. All of them are available from your Scout Shop. If you are finished using merit badge pamphlets that you own, many troops encourage you to donate them to the troop library.

Here are the steps to earning a merit badge:

1. Get a blue merit badge card from the Advancement Chairman, fill in your name, address, and the name of the badge, and ask the Scoutmaster to sign it. Then get the name and phone number of a qualified counselor from the Scoutmaster.
2. Call the counselor and set up an appointment. This can be at any place that is suitable to both of you. You will need a buddy (another Scout, a family member, or a friend) to meet with the counselor. The counselor will explain the requirements for the merit badge and help you get started.
3. Work on the badge requirements until you complete them, meeting with the counselor (along with your buddy) whenever necessary. You must complete the stated requirements and satisfy the standards of each merit badge. **YOU** (not the counselor, Scoutmaster, or Advancement Chairman) keep the merit badge card until you have completed the requirements and the counselor has signed the card.
4. After you complete the merit badge and the counselor signs your merit badge card, he or she will keep the counselor's section and return the rest of the card to you. Bring the rest of the card to the Advancement Chairman, who will keep the troop section and return the Scout section to you. You will receive your merit badge and wallet sized certificate along with your part of the blue card at the next Court of Honor.

RECORD KEEPING

Your advancement records are kept in three places - your Council office, the troop Advancement Chairman, and yourself. The Council office keeps records supplied to them by the troop Advancement Chairman, who also keeps copies of these records for the troop.

You will receive three kinds of documents that you need to **KEEP IN A SAFE PLACE UNTIL AFTER YOU TURN 18** or receive your Eagle Scout Award, whichever is later! These documents are:

1. Your Scout Handbook with requirements signed off
2. Your portion of completed blue merit badge cards
3. The wallet-sized certificate cards for rank advancement and merit badge completion.

Make sure all of them are signed or initialed by the appropriate Scout leader. All of the cards are the same size and can be safely kept in plastic protector pages (available at Wal-Mart, etc.) which are designed for baseball and other sports cards. **IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT YOU KEEP THESE DOCUMENTS IN A SAFE PLACE AND DO NOT LOSE THEM!** If it should happen that there is a discrepancy or missing records, your personal records are your most important ally in proving what you completed and when.

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