

BOY SCOUT ADVANCEMENT

The biggest reward of participating in Scouting comes from the fun you have and the skills you learn. But you can also receive more concrete recognition of your accomplishments, including rank awards and merit badges. The Awards and Advancement chapter of this handbook will help guide you through them.

RANKS

In Boy Scouting, there are seven ranks:

The **Scout** rank covers the basic information you need to know to be a good Scout. You should earn it soon after joining a troop.

The ranks of **Tenderfoot**, **Second Class**, and **First Class** cover skills in camping, hiking, cooking, first aid, nature, fitness, aquatics, citizenship, and leadership. Once you become a First Class Scout, which will probably take a year to 18 months, you will be a well-rounded Scout. You can work on requirements from all three ranks at the same time, but you must complete the ranks in order.

The ranks of **Star**, **Life**, and **Eagle** (Boy Scouting's highest rank) focus on active participation, community service, leadership, and merit badges. Each of these ranks will take several months (or even a year or more) to complete, but that's OK, because you can keep working on Boy Scout advancement until you reach your 18th birthday.



Scout



Tenderfoot



Second Class



First Class



Star



Life



Eagle



Receiving your Eagle Scout medal at a special court of honor ceremony can be one of the most memorable moments of your life.

MERIT BADGES

Merit badges are awarded to Scouts who have put special emphasis on learning specific topics. There are about 135 merit badges you can choose from, and they cover everything from camping and first aid to robotics and game design.



Art



Inventing



Welding



Fly-Fishing



Chess



Emergency Preparedness



To become an Eagle Scout, you must earn at least 21 merit badges, including 13 from a list of Eagle-required merit badges. (You can spot these badges because they have a silver border instead of a green border.) If you earn more than 21 merit badges—and complete some other requirements—you can earn Eagle Palms, which are pins that go on the Eagle Scout medal or patch.

A NOTE ABOUT SAFE SCOUTING

Scouting's top priority is keeping you safe. When you go camping, your leaders follow the guidelines in the *Guide to Safe Scouting*, a book that explains how to make sure that even the most adventurous activities are conducted safely. They make sure there are always two adults on hand and that the people leading activities have the right training.

Two simple tools Scouts can use to help stay safe are creating safety checklists and using the Safety PAUSE program. Like a packing checklist to remind you what to bring on a campout, you can use a safety checklist to help remind you what you need for a safe campout or event, like training, fire extinguishers, emergency plans, or the location of the nearest hospital. Use the checklist to talk about safety with your patrol and adult leaders.