

### TO DO List

- Complete MBC orientation Take YPT
- Submit BSA application ✓ Submit MBC info form

  - Meet council standards for the merit badge

# Merit Badge Counselor Orientation

Crossroads of America Council

### Objectives

As a result of this training, a Merit Badge Counselor should be able to

- state the purpose of the merit badge program for Scouts.
- explain the role of the merit badge counselor.
- list some methods of counseling and coaching.
- o follow youth protection rules for counseling.



## Why do we have merit badges?

- O The merit badge program is one of Scouting's basic character-developing tools.
- Earning merit badges gives Scouts the kind of selfconfidence that comes only from overcoming difficult obstacles to achieve a goal.
- O Through the merit badge program, Scouts learn career skills that may help them choose their life work.
- Working with a merit badge counselor gives Scouts a contract with an adult with whom they might not be acquainted.

### Youth Protection



- OBSA prohibits one-on-one contact between an adult and a youth – in person, online, via text, phone, email, chat, instant messaging, social media, videoconferencing, or any other communication. Another registered adult or the youth's parent must be included in any conversation.
- O Two registered adult leaders 21 years of age or over are required at all Scouting activities.
- A registered female leader 21 years of age or over must be present for any activity involving female youth.
- A Scouts BSA youth may not attend an opposite gender troop activity, even with his/her parent.

### **Buddy System**

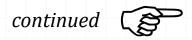


- Notwithstanding the requirement for two-deep registered adult leadership, a Scout is encouraged to have a buddy.
- The buddy could be another Scout or a friend.
- O Buddy pairs may not be co-ed. The Scouts BSA program requires single gender units and single gender buddy pairs.
- If two or more Scouts work at the same time on a badge, they are judged on their own performance of the requirements and should receive the maximum benefit from the knowledge, skill, character, and personal interest of the counselor.

### Merit Badge Process

- 1. A Scout initiates the merit badge process by obtaining a signed Application for Merit Badge ("blue card") from the Scoutmaster and getting the name of a Merit Badge Counselor.
- 2. The Scout sets up a first appointment with the Merit Badge Counselor.
- 3. At this first meeting, the counselor explains what is expected for the Scout to start meeting the requirements.

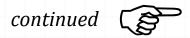






### Merit Badge Process

- 4. Once a Scout knows what is expected, work can begin to learn and do the things required. The counselor helps a Scout understand what is acceptable.
- 5. When the Scout is ready, the counselor should be contacted to meet again and review what has been accomplished.
- 6. The counselor will ask the Scout to do or show each requirement to make sure it was properly understood and completed.



### Merit Badge Process

- 7. A Scout must meet the requirements no less, no more. When the counselor is satisfied that the requirements have been met, the Application for Merit Badge ("blue card") is signed complete.
- 8. The counselor keeps the third section of the card, and returns the first two sections to the Scout.
- 9. The Scout meets with the Scoutmaster for a final signature, then submits the completed card to the troop advancement coordinator.
- 10. The Scout is recognized with the patch at a troop meeting, and with the merit badge award certificate card at the next troop court of honor.

### Who may work on a badge?

- Any registered youth in Scouts BSA\*, regardless of rank, may work on a badge.
- A few badges have age or knowledge prerequisites to ensure the Scout is prepared to safely tackle the work.
- O There is no time limit for completing a merit badge other than the fact that it must be completed before the Scout's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.
- O Requirements to be met by Scouts are *usually* those in place when they begin work on the badge. As long as they maintain active progress, they are not required to switch to an updated set of requirements in most cases.

\* A properly registered Venturer who previously reached First Class rank may also continue advancement, including merit badges.

## Who is a Merit Badge Counselor?

- O A council-approved/registered adult for a specific badge
- Over age 18 (or age 21 in CAC for come badges)
- Qualified by
  - o formal education in the field
  - work experience applying the subject area knowledge, or
  - experience as a hobbyist in the topic
- O Counselor lists are not distributed. This is because the list is dynamic, with new counselors added and others dropped or suspended on a daily basis if their Youth Protection training or other certification or approval lapses.

### Scoutbook



- O Scoutbook is where the official Merit Badge Counselor list can now be found by Scoutmasters and their designees in a troop.
- Lists of Merit Badge Counselors are not published or circulated, and are not provided to Scouts. A Scout obtains a counselor recommendation from the Scoutmaster.
- O Progress on a merit badge may be documented in Scoutbook rather than on a paper 'blue card', but BSA recommends continued use of blue cards even if Scoutbook has been adopted.

### Merit Badge Events



- A counselor may not offer a merit badge session in person or online to Scouts from multiple units without prior consent from the council.
- OBefore granting permission for the event, the council will confirm that the counselor is properly and currently registered and trained, and that the proposed event is consistent with the BSA standards of youth protection and program integrity.

### Higher Risk Activities

- Some activities have higher inherent risk, and require special training for instructors, supervisors, or counselors.
- Each council establishes its own standards, which must be at least as stringent as those laid out in the Guide to Safe Scouting, the Shooting Sports Manual, and other activityspecific policy documents.



### Higher Risk Activities

(SEE THE COMPLETE LIST FOR DETAILS)

#### In the Crossroads of America council:

#### **Shooting Sports**

- Current NRA certification is required for Rifle Shooting and Shotgun Shooting counselors.
- USA Archery certification is required for Archery counselors.

#### **Aquatics**

Swimming, Lifesaving, SCUBA, Canoeing, Kayaking, Motorboating, Rowing, Small Boat Sailing, Water Sports, and Whitewater counselors must be approved by the council Aquatics committee.

#### **Climbing**

O Climbing activities must be supervised and led by a certified climbing instructor.

### Who Can Make Changes?

- An adult volunteer may request to be added or dropped from the Merit Badge Counselor list, or to change assigned badges by filling out the proper forms and submitting them to the council registrar:
  - BSA adult application for position code 42
  - Merit Badge Counselor Information Form
- O Some badges require additional training or certification.
- Applications for badges with higher inherent risk will be held pending approval by the appropriate council risk committee.
- Only the council registrar can process an adult application or associate a specific merit badge with a counselor.

# Troubleshooting

If you believe you are a counselor for a badge but you don't show up in Scoutbook ...

- Your registration may have lapsed at some point due to expired YPT, out-of-date background check authorization, missing training, or other reason. Check your Scoutbook profile to see if Merit Badge Counselor is listed as a current registered position.
- Your YPT may be expired.
- You may need to submit a Merit Badge Counselor Information Form requesting approval for the badge.
- Your own Scoutbook profile settings may show that you are unavailable or prefer not to serve in this role.

# Counseling Techniques

- For Scouts to get the most benefit from a counseling session, they must feel welcome and relaxed. The counselor can put Scouts at ease by asking simple open-ended questions about their interests and time in Scouting.
- A counselor can show a Scout his/her own work, collection, or other evidence of achievement in the field.
- O The Scout can demonstrate mastery of simple skills first, and build up to more challenging requirements.

## Understanding Requirements

A counselor must require no more and no less than the requirement as it is written. The verbs are key:

o describe

o collect

o demonstrate o visit

o make

o research

o list

o show



The requirements are found in the current merit badge pamphlet or on the national BSA website https://www.scouting.org/programs/scouts-bsa/advancement-and-awards/merit-badges/

### Proper Protocol

- O The idea and effort to work on a badge should be initiated by the Scout, not the adult.
- Adults may work with their own son, daughter, or close relative on a badge, but BSA urges that they only do so if the youth is part of a group of Scouts working on it.
  - For instance, a parent should not become a counselor and just work with the Scout at home to complete a badge, as it deprives their child of the chance to meet and work with other adults.
- OBSA discourages the use of the merit badge 'workbooks' prepared and shared online by volunteers, as they encourage a fill-in-the-blanks approach vs. a full exploration and discussion of the material with the counselor. Use of a workbook cannot be required.

### Who Can Sign?

- Once a Scout starts work on a merit badge, the requirements may be signed off by
  - the original merit badge counselor (if currently registered)
  - another counselor for the same badge
  - a camp director authorized by the council as a seasonal counselor for the specific badge
- Requirements cannot be signed off by
  - a parent
  - a Scoutmaster (who is not a counselor for the badge)
  - another adult leader who is not a counselor for the badge

### Citizenship in Society

#### Information for Scouts:

- O The Citizenship in Society merit badge became available in November 2021.
- O The new badge is required for all Eagle Scout rank applications submitted to the council after July 1, 2022.
- There is no merit badge pamphlet. Requirements may be found on the BSA website.
- The badge is worked on by a single Scout or a small group within 2 years of age in the same troop.
- A Scout has completed a requirement when the counselor determines they have given a response based on good faith and rooted in the Scout Oath and Law.

### Citizenship in Society M

#### Information for Counselors:

- O This badge is not offered in other groups -- in camps, at merit badge workshops, or online with a distant counselor.
- O Counselors must complete Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) training and review the counselor guide specific to this badge.
- O Counselors are facilitators and listeners, not subject matter experts.
- O Counselors do not advocate a particular point of view or share their own opinions or biases.
- O Counselors do not create or distribute supplemental worksheets or other materials.

## Health Care Professions

- O The Health Care Professions merit badge became available in December 2021. As of January 2022, Scouts may not begin work on the Medicine merit badge.
- O This new merit badge is an update/replacement for the Medicine merit badge, so it is not intended that a Scout earn both badges, or count both as elective merit badges for Eagle rank.

#### **Merit Badges**

American Business American Cultures American Heritage American Labor Animal Science Animation Archaeology Archery Architecture Art Astronomy Athletics Auto Maintenance Aviation	Cit – Nation Cit – Society Cit – World Climbing Coin Collecting Collections Communications Composite Matls Cooking Crime Prevention Cycling Dentistry Digital Technology Disabilities Aware	Exploration Family Life Farm Mechanics Fingerprinting Fire Safety First Aid Fish & Wildlife Fishing Fly Fishing Forestry Game Design Gardening Genealogy Geocaching	Inventing Journalism Kayaking Landscape Arch. Law Leatherwork Lifesaving Mammal Study Metalwork Mining in Society Model Design Motorboating Moviemaking Music	Pioneering Plant Science Plumbing Pottery Programming Public Health Public Speaking Pulp and Paper Radio Railroading Reading Reptile/Amphibian Rifle Shooting Robotics	Signs,Signals,Codes Skating Small Boat Sailing Snow Sports Soil/Water Conserv Space Exploration Sports Stamp Collecting Surveying Sustainability Swimming Textile Theater Traffic Safety
Art	Crime Prevention	Forestry	Mining in Society	Railroading	Sustainability
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Athletics	Dentistry	Gardening	Motorboating	Reptile/Amphibian	Textile
Auto Maintenance	Digital Technology	Genealogy	Moviemaking	· · · ·	Theater
Aviation	Disabilities Aware	Geocaching	Music	Robotics	Traffic Safety
Backpacking	Dog Care	Geology	Nature	Rowing	Truck Transport
Basketry	Drafting	Golf	Nuclear Science	Safety	Vet Medicine
Bird Study	Electricity	Graphic Arts	Oceanography	Salesmanship	Water Sports
Bugling	Electronics	Health Care Prof.	Orienteering	Scholarship	Weather
Camping	Emergency Prep	Hiking	Painting	Scouting Heritage	Welding
Canoeing	Energy	Home Repairs	Personal Fitness	SCUBA Diving	Whitewater
Chemistry	Engineering	Horsemanship	Personal Mgmt	Sculpture	Wilderness Surv
Chess	Entrepreneurship	Indian Lore	Pets	Search & Rescue	Wood Carving
Cit - Community	Environmental Sci	Insect Study	Photography	Shotgun Shooting	Woodwork

### Questions?

CLICK TO RECORD COMPLETION OF THIS TRAINING

Thank you for serving Scouts in this important role!







