

Troop 1011

Advancement Procedures

Everything you want to know about moving from the Rank of Scout to the Rank of Eagle, earning Merit Badges, and other Scouting Awards





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Introduction

This guide is designed to serve as a resource for outlining the advancement expectations and process for earning ranks and awards within Troop 1011.

Advancement is generally considered any activity that moves a scout moving through BSA's ranks, beginning with the rank of Scout and culminating with the rank of Eagle. The full list of Scouting ranks, in order, are:

- Scout
- Tenderfoot
- 2nd Class
- 1st Class
- Star
- Life
- Eagle

Troop 1011 has many adult volunteers within the troop who assist with advancement. The volunteers include:

- Troop Scoutmaster
- Assistant Scoutmasters
- Advancement Chairperson

A Note about Responsibility

The scout law includes 12 characteristics that a scout should strive to exhibit in his life. If there was a 13th point of the scout law – we would nominate Responsible. As young scouts grow and mature, Troop 1011 wants to foster the characteristic of Responsibility. Advancement is one example where scouts can learn and exercise responsibility for their progress and achievement within the troop.

Advancement should not be a parent driven activity and scouts should not rely on their parents for the answers to all questions about their progress.

At Troop 1011, scouts should:

- Understand the requirements and expectations for their advancement opportunities
- Have access to their advancement records
- Initiate conversations with troop leaders regarding questions and progress towards advancement ranks, merit badges, etc.



Encouraging and enabling scouts in these activities fosters responsibility and empowers scouts to act on their own behalf. This guide will offer steps to enable this responsibility in each section.

Communicating with Troop Leaders

Scouts may frequently communicate with troop leaders via email, phone, or text regarding many topics, for instance: questions about meetings and troop outings, planning activities, or general questions.

BSA and Troop 1011 policy for all scout and adult communications includes:

- In every communication between a scout and troop leader, two adults should be included in the communication. For instance:
 - Email communications: If a scout is sending an email to an adult – a second adult (a parent/guardian or another troop leader) must be copied.
 - Text Communications: Same rule as email – a second adult must be copied
 - Phone Conversations: phone conversations between a scout and troop leader should only take place when a parent/guardian is present with the scout – or if a 2nd troop leader is included.

Troop leaders have these same requirements and should only be contacting scouts within the guidelines above.

These guidelines are established throughout scouting for the safety and protection of scouts. Parents: please help monitor and reinforce these communication habits with your scouts.

Take aways from this Section:

1. Scouts should be responsible for understanding the advancement process and initiating conversations and activities regarding advancement.
 - Scouts: Read this guide to understand how the advancement process works and how to take responsibility for your progress.
 - Parents – help enable your scouts to learn this responsibility.
2. Be aware of Safe Scouting Guidelines for Scout and Troop Leader communications.
 - Two adults (parent/guardian or troop leader) must be copied on every scout email and text – and involved in every scout/adult phone call.

Record Keeping: the BSA Handbook and Scoutbook

The BSA Handbook

Every scout should have their own BSA Handbook. The handbook includes a great deal of information for a scout including advancement requirements and skills needed to meet those requirements.

The BSA Handbook also serves as a written record for the requirements completed for each rank. As a scout completes a rank requirement, a scoutmaster or assistant scoutmaster will initial and date the requirement. This serves as the written record for completed requirements.

Suggestions for maintaining records in the BSA handbook:

1. Scouts – write your name in your BSA Handbook – with a Sharpie!
2. Periodically make a copy (or take a picture) of completed pages in the handbook, in case it is lost or misplaced.

Scoutbook – Online Record Keeping

Scoutbook is the online, electronic record keeping system for Troop 1011. This system is the final and official record keeping system for the troop and for BSA.

Access to Scoutbook

Scouts and their parents should each, individually, have their own access to Scoutbook. The steps to gain access to Scoutbook include:

1. Parents are initially granted access to Scoutbook by the troop, through the troop chairperson or appointed committee member. The parent creates a username and password for their account
2. After the parent gains access to Scoutbook, Parents then grant access to the scouts in their family. Often families stop at the parent access step. Troop 1011 requests, and strongly suggests, that each scout has their own login to Scoutbook. The troop wants scouts to grow into the responsibility of monitoring and accessing their own individual advancement through Scoutbook. Additionally, email communications are often sent through Scoutbook. If a Scout does not have a login – they will not receive these troop emails.

Who Updates Scoutbook

There are several ways a scout's record can be updated in Scoutbook. Updates to Scoutbook are entered and approved by troop volunteers. (Parents should not make updates within Scoutbook.)



Rank Advancement Updates in Scoutbook

As a scout completes rank requirements and has the requirements signed off in his Handbook, the scout should take a photo – or make a copy of the handbook pages – and submit to the Troop Advancement Chairperson. The troop advancement chairperson will make the updates to Scoutbook. Copies can be sent via email or submitted to the scout office during Monday night meetings. To view Rank advancement progress, go to your scout’s Scoutbook page and find the Advancement tab.

Activity Updates in Scoutbook

Scoutbook captures and tracks activities completed such as camping nights, hiking miles, and service projects hours. Troop leaders responsible for these activities submit the completed activities to the Troop Advancement Chairperson. As an example, following each campout, the troop leader responsible for organizing the campout will submit a roster of scouts and their accomplished activities – camping nights, hiking miles, etc. To the Activity Record, go to your scout’s Scoutbook page and find the Activity Logs.

Merit Badge Updates in Scoutbook

The troop advancement chairperson is also responsible for updating completed merit badge requirements. While this will be covered in the Merit Badge section of this guide, blue cards and summer camp records are two examples of documents provided to the troop that enable the update of Scoutbook. To view Merit Badge progress, go to your scout’s Scoutbook page and find the Advancement tab.

Questions about Scoutbook Records

A scout’s records should be reviewed frequently in Scoutbook, including rank advancement, merit badge progress, and activity logs. If a scout has a question about his Scoutbook records, the scout (who is responsible) should send an email to the Troop Advancement Chairperson (copying another parent/guardian or adult) stating their question about the Scoutbook record. If another troop leader is involved with the advancement activity – that troop leader should be copied as well.

Everyone involved should maintain the perspective that we are part of a volunteer organization and occasionally there are delays in updates.

Take-aways from this Section:

1. Scouts: Keep track of your BSA Handbook:
 - a. Put your name in your Handbook
 - b. Periodically take pictures or make copies of your advancement pages
 - c. Ask your parents to grant you access in Scoutbook
 - d. Take responsibility for checking Scoutbook and knowing where you stand in your advancement process
2. Parents:
 - a. Sign up for Scoutbook – and grant your scout access to Scoutbook
3. Scouts and Parents: Learn who is the Troop Advancement Chairperson



Rank Advancement – Scout, Tenderfoot, 2nd Class, and 1st Class

Overview

The first four ranks that a scout encounters have much in common and will be addressed together in this section of the guide.

The first four scouting ranks place a great deal of attention on scouting skills; cooking, knots, camping, water safety, and First Aid are good examples. Please note that requirements for these ranks can be completed independent of the scout's current rank. For instance, a tenderfoot scout can complete a 1st Class Requirement.

Let's begin with an overview of the Rank Advancement Process.

The Rank Advancement Process

- Step 1: A scout completes the skill requirements as outlined for each individual rank.
- Step 2: When all skill requirements are complete, the scout sends an email to the Troop Advancement chairperson alerting him/her of the completed requirements
- Step 3: The troop advancement chairperson confirms that all requirements are met and communicates with the Troop ASM responsible for Skills Review.
- Step 4: A Skills Review meeting is scheduled between a Troop Instructor and the scout to demonstrate skills completed for the rank.
- Step 5: After a Skills Review is complete – A Scoutmaster Review is scheduled between the scout and an Assistant Scoutmaster or Scoutmaster
- Step 6: A Board of Review is held between the scout and 3 troop parents
- Step 7: Scout is recognized at a troop meeting and at next Troop Court of Honor



Completing Requirements

Requirements for the Scout through 1st Class Rank can be completed in a variety of ways.

First Year Program

As new scouts join Troop 1011, they spend the first several months in the First Year program which is designed to get them oriented to the troop, quickly earn the Scout rank, and begin progressing rapidly to Tenderfoot.

As scouts complete requirements through the first year program, the Assistant Scoutmasters (ASM's) leading the first year scouts will sign off on the scouts requirements in their handbooks. These ASM's will also assist in steering the scouts through the advancement process for the Scout and Tenderfoot ranks.

Summer Camp

First year scouts are strongly encouraged to attend Boy Scout summer camp with Troop 1011. The summer camp program includes a program for first year scouts that focuses on many of the requirements for Tenderfoot, 2nd Class, and 1st Class ranks. Attending summer camp will accelerate the completion of many skills requirements for these first several ranks. Scouts who attend summer camp nearly always progress more quickly through the early ranks versus scouts who do not attend summer camp.

Requirements completed at Summer Camp are compiled in a report from the camp. This report is given to the Scoutmaster and forwarded to the Troop Advancement Chairperson for entry into Scoutbook. After returning from summer camp, scouts should meet with an Assistant Scoutmaster to review what has been completed and to ensure their Handbook is signed and accurately reflects the summer camp completed requirements.

Troop Meetings, Patrol Meetings, and Troop Activities

These events often offer opportunities for completing rank advancement requirements. Scouts who want to work on an advancement requirement should proactively contact Assistant Scoutmasters and ask what upcoming events will offer opportunities to complete requirements – or request that upcoming activities and meetings include a specific activity related to advancement. This is another example of scouts taking responsibility to identify or request opportunities to complete advancement requirements.

The Scoutmaster and Assistant Scoutmasters can sign off requirements completed at troop or patrol events.

Can Parents sign-off Rank Requirements

The question often arises “Can a parent sign off on a requirement if they witness the activity or successful completion of a rank requirement?”. Parents may not sign off on the completion of



requirements. Scouts should contact a Scoutmaster or Assistant Scoutmaster to demonstrate and/or sign off on the completion of a rank requirement

A note about Cooking

Please be aware that cooking skills are built into many of these early ranks. For Tenderfoot, 2nd Class, and 1st Class, scouts are expected to lead cooking activities, usually while camping. Cooking generally involves the planning, grocery shopping, cooking while in camp, and clean-up. Please anticipate these cooking requirements and plan for camping events and the opportunity while on camping events to fulfill these cooking requirements. The cost of groceries for these cooking requirements are reimbursed by the troop – when the event includes a group of scouts.

What is a Skills Review

Upon completing all of the skill requirements for a rank, each scout is asked to complete a skills review. The skills review provides an opportunity for the scout to demonstrate that they have successfully learned the skills inclusive to the rank. Each rank has its own list of skills that must be demonstrated. Example of these skills include: tying specific knots and lashings, demonstrating or discussing First Aid procedures, and explaining water safety concepts. A list of the skills reviewed for each rank is available from the Troop Advancement Chairperson. Scouts are encouraged to review this list and prepare in advance of a skills review. Scouts should plan two hours of preparation prior to a Skills review.

Skills reviews are conducted by scout with the troop position of Instructor. Scouts in the Instructor role are typically older scouts who have demonstrated their knowledge and ability to teach the basic scout skills.

What is a Scoutmaster's Conference

A Scoutmaster Conference is an opportunity for the Scoutmaster or an Assistant Scoutmaster to meet with a scout and talk generally about the scout's experience. Topics that are often addressed include:

- What have you learned while earning this rank?
- What other activities are you involved with in addition to scouting?
- What are you enjoying about your experience in scouting and with the troop?
- What aspects of the troop could be improved upon?
- Are there any scouting interactions that have not been constructive?
- What are your goals in scouting? How can the troop support you in earning the next rank or achieving other scouting goals?



What is a Board of Review

The final step in each scout rank is the Board of Review (BoR). A BoR consists of three parents meeting with the scout. The spirit of this meeting is similar to the Scoutmaster Conference however from the perspective of three parents. The topics discussed are similar to those of a Scoutmaster's Conference.

Take-aways from this Section:

1. Ranks up to 1st Class involve the completion of many basis scout skills. Scouts should proactively seek opportunities to complete these skills at meetings, camping trips, and other events.
2. Summer Camp is a great opportunity for First Year scouts to complete requirements for the Tenderfoot, 2nd Class, and 1st Class ranks.
3. When all skill requirements are complete for a rank, the scout should email the Troop Advancement Chairperson to schedule a Skills Review.
4. Scouts should prepare for a Skills Review by reviewing the list of skills and practicing the skills that will be demonstrated (knots, lashings, first aid knowledge, etc.)

Rank Advancement – Star, Life, and Eagle

As scouts move past 1st Class, the advanced ranks of Star, Life, and Eagle focus on merit badges, service to others, and leadership development.

Scouts who begin working towards these ranks should begin by reviewing the requirements for each. Each rank has the following in common :

- Completion of a required number of Eagle required merit badges
- Service hours
- A Leadership role within the troop actively held for four month (Star) or six months (Life and Eagle)

Service Hours

Service hours represent time that a scout spends serving his local community. Service hours requirements can be earned serving the community or local non-profit organizations. Examples include:

- Participating in another scout's Eagle Service Project. This can be with a scout from Troop 1011 or any other troop
- Participating in troop projects such as laying wreathes at the Canton Cemetery, Placing Flags on Memorial Day, and work days at McFarlane Park.
- Working with non-profit organizations such as Must Ministries or other non-profit

Scouts should communicate with the Scoutmaster or Assistant Scoutmasters to clarify whether service to an organization fulfills the scouting service hours

Time spent on service projects that benefit the troop – generally do not count as service hours for rank advancement. The Scoutmaster can make an exception in some cases – but this is uncommon. BSA strongly encourages service hours to benefit the community.

Conservation Service Hours

The Life Rank requires six total hours of service, three of which are to be conservation related. Conservation is broadly defined as a service project benefiting wildlife, trail building and maintenance, or outdoor recreation improvement. Opportunities and examples for this type of service include:

- Hiking trail clean-up, maintenance, or construction. A local opportunity for this is available at Kennesaw National Battlefield. One Saturday a month, the Kennesaw Mountain Trail Club, leads a trail maintenance project somewhere within the park. Scouts can participate and earn conservation hours.
- Some troop campouts may offer opportunities for conservation hours through outdoor clean-up, trail maintenance, or other activities.
- Work at MacFarlane Park or Chattahoochee Nature Center



Submitting Service Hours to Advancement Chairperson

Service hours earned as part of a troop activity or Eagle Service Project will be added by the troop to Scoutbook.

To submit hours earned from other events, a scout should complete the Troop 1011 Service Hour Form and submit it to the Troop Advancement Chairperson. This form can be found on the Troop 1011 website.

Leadership Responsibilities

The Star, Life, and Eagle rank requirements each require serving in a troop leadership position. Each rank lists the troop positions that qualify for the requirement. Scouts are encouraged to have a conversation with the Scoutmaster to confirm that their leadership role will fulfill the rank requirement.

Once a role is identified for the scout, active participation in that leadership role is necessary to fulfill the requirement. Troop 1011's rule of thumb is that a scout must attend 75% of the troop meetings during the leadership tenure to demonstrate leadership.

Scouts may occasionally confront conflicts to meeting the leadership requirement for a rank. These scouts are encouraged to have a conversation with the Scoutmaster to discuss how this requirement can be fulfilled despite other conflicts.

The Eagle Scout Rank

Troop 1011 has a separate document that outlines expectations relating to Eagle Scout service projects and the process of completing the Eagle Rank. The troop also has an Assistant Scoutmaster in the role of Eagle Scout Coach who will guide a scout through the process for identifying an Eagle Scout project and completing the other requirements.

Scout who achieve the Life rank should identify the Eagle Scout Coach and have a conversation about the process, expectations, and requirements for achieving Eagle.

Skills Reviews, Scoutmaster Conferences, and Boards of Review

These steps are also required for the final three scout ranks. Scouts should be prepared to demonstrate their mastery of scouting skills during the Skills Review for Star and Life. (The Eagle rank does not require a Skills Review.)

For the Scoutmaster Conference and Boards of Review, scouts are expected to have candid conversations about their goals and talk about their scouting experiences, including what the scout has learned through their leadership responsibilities, what constructive ideas the scout may have for the troop, and the scout's goals within scouting and life.

Take-aways from this Section:

1. Scouts should have proactive conversations with troop leaders about opportunities about how to fulfill leadership and service requirements for Star, Life and Eagle
2. The Life Rank requires three of the six service hours to be conservation related
3. Scouts should talk to the troop's Assistant Scoutmaster who serves as Eagle Scout Coach BEFORE beginning to work through requirements for the Eagle Scout Project.

Merit Badges

Overview

Merit Badges allow scouts to learn about a topic and earn a 'badge' as a result of completing requirements related to the given topic. There are 137 different merit badges that can be earned. To earn the Eagle Scout rank, scouts must earn eleven 'required' merit badges plus ten other merit badges of their choosing. The section reviews the process and other details related to earning a merit badge.

Process for Earning a Merit Badge

- Step 1: A scout selects a merit badge to earn
- Step 2: The scout informs the scoutmaster and requests a signed Blue Card for the merit badge
- Step 3: The scout identifies a Merit Badge Counselor and asks the counselor to work with him on the merit badge.
- Step 4: Scout prints the Merit Badge Workbook
- Step 5: Scout completes requirements. The Merit Badge Counselor signs off on the work completed on the scout's Blue Card.
- Step 6: The scout submits the Blue Card to the troop Advancement Chairperson. Scoutbook is updated to reflect the completed requirements.
- Step 7: Upon completion of the Merit Badge, the scout is awarded the merit badge at a troop Court of Honor.

Selecting a Merit Badge

Scouts can earn any merit badge that interests them. Indeed the 'big idea' behind merit badges is for scouts to learn more about skills and areas of interest out in the world. Merit badges are designed to move a scout from knowing nothing about a topic and moving that scout to an overall understand and competence within the subject area.

For scouts pursuing the Eagle Rank, there are eleven merit badges that must be earned. Many of these are earned through the rank advancement process with several being required at each upper rank (Star, Life, and Eagle).

Information on available merit badges and their related requirements are easily found online.



What is a Blue Card

A Blue Card is a form printed on blue card stock. There are two purposes for the blue card:

1. Troop 1011 uses the blue card to monitor which merit badges a scout is working on.
2. The Blue Card provides a record of the requirements completed for each merit badge.

As soon as a scout decides to begin working on a merit badge, the scout should approach an Assistant Scoutmaster or Scoutmaster and request a signed blue card. The Scoutmaster may ask a few questions and then sign a blue card for the scout.

The Blue Card is now used as a record keeping form to track requirements completed. A merit badge counselor will make notes on a specific part of the card to track progress.

The Merit Badge Counselor

Once a Scout has chosen a merit badge and received a blue card, a Merit Badge Counselor should be identified. The Merit Badge Counselor is an individual approved by the Troop or Atlanta Area Council as a person with sufficient experience and knowledge about a merit badge to coach a scout through the requirements. A list of Merit Badge counselor can be found in Scoutbook or on the Troop 1011 website.

A scout must identify, and ask a Merit Badge Counselor to assist him, before beginning to complete merit badge requirements.

This is a step that many scouts skip over. Do not complete merit badge requirements without first speaking to a Merit Badge Counselor.

Merit Badge counselors can set expectations, answer questions, approve activities for requirements, and serve as a source of advice.

Print a Merit Badge Worksheet

A Merit Badge Worksheet is a BSA created document that lists all requirements for a merit badge and provides the opportunity to complete and document the scout's work on the merit badge. Nearly every merit badge counselor, and merit badge event, will request that the scout have a merit badge worksheet.

Merit Badge workbooks can be found online by searching: 'Merit Badge Name' worksheet

Opportunities to Earn a Merit Badge

- **Earning a Merit Badge Independently**
Get a Blue Card, Identify a MB Counselor, and begin working through the requirements.
- **Earning a Merit Badge as a Patrol**
Often patrols will work together to complete a merit badge. The patrol needs to identify a merit badge and MB Counselor. The patrol can then work together to complete the requirements as a group and individually.
- **Summer Camp**
This is a great opportunity to work through multiple merit badges in a single week. Three to six merit badges in a single week is a reasonable expectation based on age and choice of merit badges. Blue Cards are typically not required for summer camp merit badges.
- **Merit Badge Clinic / Merit Badge University**
Local troops often sponsor a Merit Badge clinic where a group of merit badges are offered by merit badge counselors. The requirements covered at a clinic tend to be classroom activities and may or may not complete 100% of the Merit Badge requirements.

Blue cards are generally required for a Merit Badge clinic. It is critical that a scout who attends a merit badge clinic have the blue card filled out at the clinic and return that blue card to the Troop Advancement Chairperson so that Scoutbook can be updated.

Merit Badge clinics are a great way to get started on merit badges and scouts are encouraged to participate. The Atlanta Area Council and Foothills District also offer opportunities throughout the year, including an event know as Merit Badge University.

- **Council or District Sponsored Event**
The Atlanta Area Council and our own Foothills district occasionally offer merit badge events. Often these events are focused on a single merit badge or a group of merit badges. Examples of these events include: Automotive Maintenance at the Porsche Headquarters building near the airport – and – Aviation Merit Badge offered at a Delta Airlines facility. These events are typically advertised via Atlanta Area Council online newsletters and emails. Blue Cards are required for these events.
- **Allatoona Aquatics Base**
The Atlanta Area Council operates an Aquatics Base at Lake Allatoona. This base offers many water-related merit badges on weekends through the summer months. Merit Badges include Swimming, Small Boat Sailing, Rowing, and Motorboating. A complete

list of merit badges, dates offered, and reservations can be found on its website. Blue Cards are required to complete these merit badges.

- **Finding Merit Badge Opportunities**
Conducting web searches, monitoring council newsletters, and being aware of troop announcements are all great ways to find merit badge opportunities. Troop leaders and the Troop Advancement Chairpersons are also great resources to find opportunities and discuss merit badge options.

What is a Partial Merit Badge and How to Complete a Partial Merit Badge

When a scout completes some requirements, but not all requirements, for a merit badge, the award is referred to as a 'Partial' or 'Partial Merit Badge'. For instance, when a scout attends summer camp or a merit badge clinic and does not complete all requirements at the event, the scout has a partial merit badge.

To complete a partial merit badge, follow the same procedures as starting a new merit badge. Contact a counselor and print out a merit badge workbook so that work on outstanding requirements can be documented.

Merit Badges with Time Requirements

Several merit badges require scouts to complete a project over a 90 day period. The Personal Management, Family Life, and Physical Fitness merit badges all include a requirement that includes a project to be completed over 90 consecutive days. The examples listed here are also Eagle required merit badges.

Scouts are encouraged to complete these merit badges prior to earning the Life rank.

Take-aways from this Section:

1. Scouts should obtain a Blue Card, identify a Merit Badge Counselor, and print a Merit Badge Worksheet before beginning work on a Merit Badge
2. Many opportunities exist to work on and earn merit badges
3. Merit Badges are designed to teach scouts about various topics.
4. Earning merit badges are a great way to learn, to advance in scouting, and to have fun!



Other Awards and Recognition

Scouting offers a wide variety of additional awards that can be earned through a scout's time in the program. Many of these are activity based, such as earning the 50-Miler Award for hiking, biking, or canoeing 50 miles in one single trip – or – the Kayaking Award, for, well, completing several kayaking activities.

Information on all of these awards can be found in Scoutbook. From the Scout's record in Scoutbook, go to the Awards tab. This tab provides a complete list of all available awards and their requirements.

The Awards section of Scoutbook also records a scout's progress towards Totem Chip and the Cyber Chip – both requirements during the Scout through First Class ranks.



Questions to discuss:

1. Does scout ALWAYS get a blue card from SM prior to starting work?