

**LONGHOUSE COUNCIL POLICY**  
**GROUP MERIT BADGE INSTRUCTION EVENTS**

1. Merit Badge (MB) counseling shall comply with the latest edition of the BSA “Guide to Advancement” (see: <http://www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/33088.pdf>)
2. Sponsors holding a Group Instruction Event shall be well versed in the requirements of the “Guide to Advancement” Article “7.0.3.2 Group Instruction”.
3. All Scouts shall meet with their Unit Leader first, and obtain a leader-signed Blue Card to bring to the session. Blue cards shall be confirmed at the beginning of the Event. Scoutmasters should assure that Scouts bring the Blue Cards to the Event.
4. Only approved and registered Merit Badge Counselor’s (MBC’s) shall sign and/or initial Blue Cards.
5. MB partial completions may be given during a Group Event. “Partials” are **acceptable and expected** results. Note that Partials do not expire until the Scout turns 18.
6. Groups wishing to conduct MB Group Training Events shall first apply to Council for permission to conduct the session. Group instruction shall be for those scenarios where the benefits are compelling. Note that if MBC’s listed on the Application Form are not currently registered and approved, new MBC approval may take up to six weeks.
7. Units may conduct pre-merit badge classes with a group of Scouts for the purpose of informing the Scouts what the merit badge content is and what they may expect if they take the Merit Badge. It is intended this will be a Merit Badge content awareness class, which is distinguished from a Merit Badge instruction class.

Following the pre-MB class, each Scout may decide for himself whether the subject is of interest to him and, if so, discuss his interest to take this MB with his Scoutmaster.

8. Council policy includes the following for Group Events:
  - a. Worksheets are not acceptable where MB requirements indicate the Scout shall “show, demonstrate, or discuss”. Further, Worksheets cannot be required in any circumstance, but are an option for required written work;
  - b. Fees may not be charged beyond those required to recover presentation costs;
  - c. For MB work that requires use of the internet (*e.g.* Webinars), Scouts shall be instructed to follow BSA’s social media guidelines that are listed in the “Guide to Safe Scouting” protocol (see: <http://www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/34416.pdf>);
  - d. Special information related to “Group Events” include:
    - “Double-counting” a Scout’s achievement may be permissible where the requirements match exactly and have the same intent. Refer to the Guide to Advancement Article 4.2.3.6 for further clarification. (see GTA referenced in #1 above ), and
    - Holding of “Group Events” over multiple days can be considered a positive MB experience for Scouts.
9. Guest Expert definition: the Guest expert or guest speaker is a temporary function and they are not registered or an approved MBC; The Expert’s qualifications shall be specific to the MB subject matter, and will likely have special expertise by training, education, or vocation. They do not sign/initial Blue Cards.

10. A guide sheet or information sheet shall be distributed in advance of all events *to promote the acceptability of partials*, explain how merit badges can be finished after the event, lists merit badge pre-requisites, and provides other helpful information to establish realistic expectations for the number of merit badges that can be earned at an event. A DRAFT of this sheet shall be submitted with the Merit Badge Group Event Application.