

Merit Badge Counseling Procedure

This memo was prepared to outline BSA National’s requirements relative to procedures for earning merit badges. It is hoped that it will offer new leadership a snapshot of how merit badges (MB) are earned, and serve as a reminder to seasoned leaders.

The following summarizes the steps when a scout is considering a new MB:

1. The scout expresses interest in a particular MB;
2. The scout is counseled by the scoutmaster (SM) who provides at least one merit badge counselor’s name and contact information (MBC);
3. The SM provides the scout a current “Application for MB” (“blue card”), signing the front of the card indicating to the MBC that he has approved this scout. This step is also required for MB’s taken at summer camps. Note that all writing should be legible;
4. The scout contacts the MBC and makes arrangements to meet and establish goals and objectives. The scout must follow the requirements on the blue card;
5. The scout provides the MBC the signed blue card and the MBC confirms it has been signed off by the SM;
6. If the scout is unable to complete all requirements with that MBC (for whatever reason), the MBC should initial the satisfactorily completed requirements (thereby providing a “partial” blue card). The MBC gives the entire blue card (including the “Counselor’s Record” portion) to the scout;
7. When necessary, the SM assigns a second MBC to complete “partials”, such as partials from summer camp;
8. Upon completion of all requirements, the MBC provides final sign-off in two places and the SM signs-off under the “Applicant’s Record”. Then, the unit completes the advancement report (online, and using Scoutbook Lite once it is launched); and
9. Units should be aware of special requirements for MB Group Instruction Events, including the required application form for approval (refer to cnyscouts.org and click on Resources, then Advancement for the form and policy).

For further information, you are referred to the BSA Guide to Advancement (current edition), Chapter 7.

If you have any question, please contact either the Committee Staff Advisor at the Council offices, or me.

In Scouting,
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