



# Troop 21 Advancement Handbook

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## Boy Scouts of America Mission Statement:

The mission of the Boy Scouts of America is to prepare young people to make ethical and moral choices over their lifetimes by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Law.

## Scout Oath:

On my honor I will do my best  
To do my duty to God and my country and to obey the Scout Law;  
To help other people at all times;  
To keep myself physically strong, mentally awake, and morally straight

## Scout Law:

A Scout is Trustworthy, Loyal, Helpful, Friendly, Courteous, Kind, Obedient, Cheerful, Thrifty, Clean, Brave, and Reverent.

## AIMS and Methods of Scouting:

- Growth in moral strength and character
- Participating citizenship
- Development in physical, mental, and emotional fitness

## How is all of this accomplished?

- **Advancement**
  - Self-Reliance-Ability to Help Others-Challenge
- **Ideals**
  - Oath - Law - Motto- Slogan
- **Patrols**
  - Peer Groups - Elected Representation - Activities
- **Outdoors**
  - All Outdoors Programs
- **Adult Association**
  - Image - Role Model-Example
- **Personal Growth**
  - Good Turn - Service Projects - Religious Emblems
- **Leadership Development**
  - Leadership Skills and Practice - Citizenship
- **Uniform**
  - Commitment to Aims-Identity



## Key Words in Boy Scouts:

- **Court of Honor:** Typically Troop 21 holds four Court of Honor ceremonies each year. The purpose of these ceremonies is to acknowledge the advancement of each Scout and of the Troop. It is hoped that the Scout's family will attend the ceremony to help the Scout celebrate his accomplishments.
- **Merit Badges:** There are [137 merit badges](#) a Scout can earn. One of the requirements to earn Eagle rank, is to earn 21 merit badges. Out of the 137, there are 13 Eagle required merit badges. They are: First Aid, Citizenship in the Community, Citizenship in the Nation, Citizenship in the World, Communication, Cooking, Personal Fitness, Emergency Preparedness OR Lifesaving, Environmental Science OR Sustainability, Personal Management, Swimming OR Hiking OR Cycling, Camping, and Family Life. (More details on earning merit badges is below.)
- **Ranks:** There are six ranks in Boy Scouts that are earned sequentially no matter what age a boy joins the program. Tenderfoot - Second Class - First Class - Star - Life - Eagle (More detail on rank advancement is below.)
- **Unit Leader:** The Scoutmaster, Tom Coscia.

## Advancement in Scouting:

Everything done to advance - earning ranks, merit badges, and all other recognitions - are designed to expand horizons. Experiential learning is key. Rushing a Scout through requirements to obtain a badge is not the goal. Earning a rank or badge is not the end of the learning process. After a requirement has been passed, the Scout is placed in practical situations that build knowledge retention through repeated use of skills.

Advancement at the Boy Scout level presents a Scout with a series of challenges in a fun and educational manner. As he completes the requirements, he achieves the three aims of Scouting: growth in moral strength and character, to train in the responsibilities of citizenship, and to develop physical and mental fitness.

Advancement is about what a young man is able to learn, to do, and how he has grown. Retention of new skills and knowledge is developed by participating in the unit program. For example, instructing others and using skills on the troop's outdoor experiences. Advancement is not meant to be a reward, but about the journey.

Advancement requirements must be passed as written. If, for example, a requirement uses words like "show", "demonstrate", or "discuss", then that is what the Scout must do. Both adult and youth leaders approve Boy Scout advancement. Parents are involved at home encouraging, mentoring, and supporting, but they do not sign rank advancement requirements unless they serve as leaders in Troop 21.



## Rank Advancement:

Soon after joining Troop 21, the Scout will complete the joining requirements (found on page 17 of the Boy Scout Handbook), thus earning the **Scout** badge and achieving Scout Rank.



The first three ranks (**Tenderfoot, Second Class, and First Class**) are oriented toward learning and practicing skills that will help the Scout develop confidence and fitness, challenge his thought process, introduce him to his responsibilities as a citizen, and prepare him for an exciting and successful Scouting experience. They are focused on the Scout as an individual and teach self-sufficiency. These first three ranks can be earned at any time after the Scout Badge has been earned. It should be a goal for the Scout to earn the first three ranks within the first 12-18 months after joining. The requirements for these ranks are on pages 432-437 of the Boy Scout Handbook.



The requirements for the last three ranks (**Star, Life, and Eagle**), except for those related to merit badges, must be fulfilled after the successful completion of the Board of Review for the previous rank. The requirements for these ranks develop the Scout's leadership and citizenship. The requirements for these ranks can be found on pages 438-441 of the Boy Scout Handbook.





## The Four Steps to Rank Advancement:

1. **The Scout Learns:** During meetings and outings, the Scout learns skills by doing. He is taught the rank requirements by adults and other Scouts. When a skill is mastered, he is then expected to teach other Scouts during both meetings and camping trips. As you read through the rank requirements the following information may be helpful:
  - a. **Scout Spirit:** This requirement is signed off by Tom, during the Scoutmaster Conference. The Scout completes this by living the Scout Oath and Law, day-to-day.
  - b. **Service Hours:** Earning service hours must be approved by Tom prior to beginning the service.
  - c. **Position of Responsibility:** If a Scout needs to hold a position of responsibility, he must talk to Tom, who will assign him an appropriate position of responsibility. Do not assume that a position qualifies for this requirement; there are national guidelines that have to be followed and Tom is the final word on what qualifies for this requirement.
2. **The Scout is Tested:** The unit leader, Tom, authorizes who may test and pass the scout on rank requirements. Testers include registered adult leaders and Scouts who have been authorized to sign off on requirements. **It is the Scout's responsibility** to get the requirements in BSA Handbook signed by a Troop 21 authorized tester.
3. **The Scout is Reviewed:** After completion of requirements for a rank advancement, the Scout needs to:
  - a. Contact Tom and setup a Scoutmaster Conference. This is time for Tom to visit with the Scout and see how the Scout's journey towards Eagle is going. The Scout must be in full uniform.
  - b. Schedule a Board of Review using [this](#) link. This will be a meeting with the Scout and three registered adults. The Scout must be in full uniform. There is paperwork involved, so a Scout must request a Board of Review ahead of time.
4. **The Scout is Recognized:** When the Board of Review has approved the Scouts advancement, he can begin working towards the next rank. His rank will be acknowledged at the Court of Honor.



## The Four Steps to Earning Merit Badges:

Merit Badges are not required for rank advancement until a Scout is working towards his Star rank. There are 137 merit badges a Scout can earn. One of the requirements to earn Eagle is to earn 21 merit badges. Out of the 137, there are currently 13 Eagle required merit badges. They are: First Aid, Citizenship in the Community, Citizenship in the Nation, Citizenship in the World, Communication, Cooking, Personal Fitness, Emergency Preparedness OR Lifesaving, Environmental Science OR Sustainability, Personal Management, Swimming OR Hiking OR Cycling, Camping, and Family Life.

The steps for Earning merit badges are:

1. Find a merit badge that the Scout is interested in.
2. Contact a Merit Badge counselor prior to beginning work on the merit badge. All merit badge counselors can be found at this [link](#).
3. After completion of the work, the merit badge counselor will sign a merit badge card, showing completion of the requirements for the merit badge. Give this signed merit badge card to Tom or the current Advancement Chair.
4. The merit badge will be presented to the Scout at the Court of Honor. When the merit badge is given to the Scout, the merit badge card will be returned to him.  
**MERIT BADGE CARDS MUST BE KEPT AND TURNED IN WITH THE EAGLE APPLICATION.**

Please do not hesitate to contact Tom with any questions that you have about Troop 21 Advancement.