

# Merit Badge Procedures

**IT IS THE SCOUT WHO MUST CONTACT THE ADVANCEMENT CHAIR, MERIT BADGE COUNSELOR AND SCOUT MASTER, NOT THE PARENT/GUARDIAN**

A Scout may earn merit badges any time they wish to, although first year Scouts are encouraged to concentrate on rank advancement more than merit badges. A Scout should select badges that are suitable for their age and interest, with an eye towards “Eagle Required” badges once they achieve the rank of First Class. Scouts can obtain information about any merit badges from the troop Merit Badge Counselor Coordinator, as well as from the National BSA site: [www.scouting.org/meritbadges](http://www.scouting.org/meritbadges). Before starting on any merit badge, a Scout must obtain a blue card from either the Scoutmaster (SM) or the Advancement Coordinator (AC), or request they open a ‘digital blue card’ in Scoutbook. This gives us an opportunity to discuss the badge and help them find a counselor. The Scout then needs to contact the Merit Badge Counselor (MBC) prior to starting the requirements to ask them if they are available and willing to be their counselor. After this initial contact, the Scout reports back to the AC so they can connect the MBC to the Scout on Scoutbook, or provide the Scout with a blue card if the MBC does not use Scoutbook.

We have many counselors in our Troop and there are many more in our area. Scouts are encouraged to use different counselors, including adults that may be from outside our troop. Even though you do not know the person, they are known to scouting and can greatly enrich your experience. Scouts can borrow MB books from the troop library and should verify current requirements before proceeding as many have recently changed. The MB book is still good reference material that can be used.

**We REMIND YOU THAT IT IS THE SCOUT, NOT THE PARENT, WHO IS TO CONTACT THE MB COUNSELOR.** Try to find a buddy or small group to work on the same badge with you, to maximize the counselor’s time, and to follow the buddy system. You should never be in a place alone with an adult, unless it is in a public place such as the library where other people are present.

When you have completed the merit badge, the MBC will enter your completion directly into Scoutbook. If you used a blue card, you’ll receive the completed card back (the counselor keeps one part). It is up to the **Scout** to give the other parts to the Advancement Coordinator. You will be awarded your merit badge and the card at the next Court of Honor.

We suggest all scouts have a ½ “ring binder with “baseball card” plastic sheets. Here they can collect all their rank advancement cards, merit badge cards (must be retained for Eagle) and any awards they have earned.