

## Guide to Merit Badges

You can learn about sports, crafts, science, trades, business, and future careers as you earn merit badges. There are more than 100 merit badges. Any Boy Scout may earn any merit badge at any time. You don't need to have had rank advancement to be eligible.

### In Troop 216, scouts earn merit badges in different ways:

**Summer Camp or other Council or District events.** The vast majority of merit badges are earned at summer camp. The troop also attends AdvanceCamp and shooting camps each year. Each camp has a different method for signing up for merit badges; some require signing up in advance and some have the scouts sign up for merit badges after they arrive at camp. The Camp Coordinator and the Advancement Chair provide info specific for each camp.

**Troop meetings or troop-planned events.** Sometimes we schedule merit badge sessions during troop meetings, usually for Eagle-required merit badges that a large proportion of the scouts in the troop still need to earn. We also schedule special sessions for other merit badges, on weekends or at campouts.

**On their own.** At any time, scouts may work on merit badges on their own with a merit badge counselor. However, scouts are never allowed to be alone with a merit badge counselor so they must either meet with the counselor with a buddy or a parent must be present.

### How to Get Started if Working on Your Own

**Pick a Subject.** Talk to your Scoutmasters, Assistant Scoutmasters, or the Advancement Chair about your interests. Read the requirements of the merit badges you think might interest you. Information about merit badges can be found at the websites listed below. Pick one to earn. Your Scoutmasters or Advancement Chair will give you the name of a person from a list of counselors, and there is also a merit badge counselor list posted on the Troop 216 website. These counselors have special knowledge in their merit badge subjects and are interested in helping you.

**Scout Buddy System.** *You must have another person with you at each meeting with the merit badge counselor.* This person can be another Scout, your parents or guardian, a brother or sister, a relative, or a friend.

**Get a blue card signed.** Get a blue card from your Advancement Chair, Andrea Bertke. Take it to Fred Hofstetter or Dan Lucht, the Scoutmasters, to discuss your interests and get the blue card signed to begin the merit badge.

**Get the booklet for the merit badge.** You should read the merit badge booklet on the subject. Our troop has a library with many of the booklets and you can contact our troop librarian, John Zouzounis, to see if we have the one that interests you. You may also purchase the merit badge booklet at the Council Scout Shop.

**Call or email the Counselor.** Get in touch with the merit badge counselor and tell him or her that you want to earn the merit badge. The counselor may ask to meet you to explain what is expected of you and to start helping you meet the requirements. You should also discuss work that you have already started or possibly completed. Ask your counselor to help you learn the things you need to know or do. Many counselors will require you to fill out the merit badge worksheet, which can be found at the websites listed below.

**Show Your Stuff.** When you are ready, call the counselor again to make an appointment to meet the requirements. When you go, take along the things you have made to meet the requirements. If they are too big to move, take pictures or have an adult tell in writing what you have done. The counselor will ask you to do each requirement to make sure that you know your stuff and have done or can do the things required. The counselor will also go over the merit badge worksheet.

**Get the Badge.** When the counselor is satisfied that you have met each requirement, he or she will sign your blue card and the counselor will keep one section of the card. Take the signed blue card to Fred Hofstetter or Dan Lucht for a final signature and then give the card to Andrea Berke so that your merit badge emblem can be secured for you. You *must* turn in the completed blue card to the Advancement Chair or it will not be reported. If you have partial work completed on a merit badge, you should provide that information to the Advancement Chair to record it, in case the partial blue card is misplaced. You should keep partial blue cards in a safe place so you do not have to begin again when you choose to complete the merit badge.

**Requirements.** You are expected to meet the requirements as they are stated -- no more and no less. You are expected to do exactly what is stated in the requirements. If it says "show or demonstrate," that is what you must do. Just telling about it isn't enough. The same thing holds true for such words as "make," "list," "in the field," and "collect," "identify," and "label."

If a Scout has already started working on a merit badge when a new edition of the booklet is introduced, he may continue to use the same merit badge booklet and fulfill the requirements therein to earn the badge. He need not start all over again with the new booklet and possibly revised requirements.

**Merit Badge Information and Worksheets can be found at:**

[http://meritbadge.org/wiki/index.php/Merit\\_Badge\\_Worksheets](http://meritbadge.org/wiki/index.php/Merit_Badge_Worksheets)

[http://www.scouting.org/scoutsource/BoyScouts/AdvancementandAwards/MeritBadges.a  
spx](http://www.scouting.org/scoutsource/BoyScouts/AdvancementandAwards/MeritBadges.aspx)

<http://usscouts.org/mb/worksheets/list.asp>