

Boy Scout Advancement

If you were in Cub Scouts, each year you set your sights on earning a different badge. In Boy Scouts, all the boys, regardless of their age or grade, work on the same set of badges.

Scout Badge. All Scouts when joining a troop must pass the joining requirements listed on page 4 of the Scout Handbook for the Scout Badge. Scouts who have just crossed over from Cub Scouts will recognize these requirements – they are very similar to the requirements for the Arrow of Light.

Tenderfoot, Second Class, First Class. The first set of ranks - Tenderfoot, Second Class, and First Class - is designed to teach the camping, first aid, and safety skills needed to go camping to new Scouts. Some Scouts can do all of the requirements in less than a year, some will take longer.

You may pass any of the requirements for Tenderfoot, Second Class, and First Class at any time. For example, if you fulfill a First Class requirement before you are a Second Class Scout, you may get the First Class requirement signed off. You may not receive a rank, however, until you have earned the one before it.

Rank requirements are signed off by your fellow Scouts. A Scout who is two ranks above the rank you are working on is allowed to sign off. For example, a First Class Scout (or above) can sign off on all Tenderfoot requirements. For an online primer to rank advancement, check out the National Council video primers at www.scouting.org. Click on any of the rank badges and then choose a requirement to see a short clip about the requirement.

Scoutmaster Conference. One requirement that Boy Scouts have for rank advancement is that whenever you complete the requirements for a rank you need to have a Scoutmaster Conference. At this meeting the Scoutmaster will review the requirements with you to make sure that they have been learned correctly, he will help you to set up the goals for the next advancement, and he will have you share your ideas about the troop (how its going from your viewpoint, what you would like the troop to do more of, problems you see occurring...)

Board of Review. All rank advancements, except for the Scout badge, require a Board of Review. The members of a Board of Review are adult leaders in the troop except for the Scoutmaster or any of his Assistant Scoutmasters. The main purpose of the Board of Review is not to retest the skills a Scout has learned, but to see what the Scout's spirit is and how the troop is doing is helping the Scout along and meeting Boy Scout objectives.

Court of Honor. When you complete a rank advancement you will usually be given the badge at the next troop meeting. About three or four times a year, the troop will hold a special meeting called a Court of Honor. This is a formal ceremony to recognize

you and your fellow Scouts for rank advancement and other Scouting achievements. This event is held with an audience of family, friends, chartered organization officials, and troop leaders.

The Path to Eagle. Once a Scout has reached First Class and learned the basic skills of Scouting, he is ready for the challenge of becoming an Eagle Scout. The Path to Eagle has three ranks, Star Scout, Life Scout, and Eagle Scout. Here the requirements for advancement consist of earning merit badges, doing service projects to help the community, showing that you can lead other Scouts as a patrol leader or some other leadership position, and demonstrating to others that you have Scout spirit.

Merit Badges. A merit badge is an invitation to explore an exciting subject. With more than a hundred to choose from, some merit badges encourage you to increase your skill in subjects you already like, while others challenge you to learn about new areas of knowledge. Many of the merit badges are designed to help you increase your ability to be of service to others, to take part in outdoor adventures, to better understand the environment, and to play a valuable role in your family and community. Earning a merit badge can even lead you toward a lifelong hobby or set you on the way to a rewarding career. Look for more information about merit badges on our Advancement page, or visit the National Council website and check out their merit badge primer at www.scouting.org.

Other Awards. There are two other Scout awards that are usually of interest to new Scouts: the **Totin' Chip** and the **Fireman's Chit**.

When a Scout demonstrates that he knows how to handle wood tools (knife, axe, saw) he may be granted totin' rights. Until a Scout has earned his Totin' Chit he is not allowed to carry a pocketknife. If a scout is found handling wood tools incorrectly, a corner of the Totin' Chip card is often cut off. When all four corners are gone, so are the Scout's totin' rights.

The owner of a Firemen Chit has demonstrated knowledge of safety rules in building, maintaining, and putting out camp and cooking fires. Until a Scout has earned his Fireman Chit, he is not allowed to carry matches.