

# Troop 467 Advancement Guidelines

## ADVANCEMENT PRINCIPLES

- A Scout's personal growth is the prime consideration in the advancement program.
- A Scout learns by doing.
- Each Scout advances at his own rate.  
*Advancement is not a competition among scouts, but is an expression of their interest and participation in the program. Parents, guardians and leaders must encourage and guide each Scout to advance steadily and set his own goals.*
- A badge is recognition of what a Scout is able to do, not merely a reward for what he has done.
- Advancement encourages Scouting ideals.

## ADVANCEMENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The Four Steps of Advancement are:

- 1) The Boy Scout learns.
- 2) The Boy Scout is tested.
- 3) The Boy Scout is reviewed.
- 4) The Boy Scout is recognized.

The four steps are implemented by earning:

- 1) Rank advancement and
- 2) Merit badges.

## Rank Advancement

### Learning

- The ranks of Tenderfoot, Second Class and First Class focus on learning fundamental scouting and life skills. The Star, Life and Eagle requirements focus on learning and earning merit badges, service to others and developing leadership skills.
- Requirements for each rank are outlined in the Boy Scout Handbook.
- You can work on advancement requirements with your parents or other family members, with other Scouts and with adult leaders.
- The weekly Tuesday meetings and the monthly outdoor activities will be the primary troop sponsored program for rank advancement whereas summer camp, weekend clinics and individual merit badge counselors will provide the primary programs for merit badges.
- Scout skills cannot be mastered by performing them just once. You will have many opportunities to practice each skill and will be thoroughly tested on each requirement before it is "signed off." Expect to practice each skill, even after it has been signed off. As you progress, you will have opportunities to teach these skills to less experienced Scouts, which will further reinforce your knowledge and skill.

### Testing

- As you complete each requirement, you will be tested and the requirement “signed off” in the **BACK** section of your handbook (pp. 438 - 449) by the Scoutmaster, an Assistant Scoutmaster, or a more experienced Scout designated by the Scoutmaster. Use the requirements list in the front to keep track of requirements you are ready to get tested on.
- In Boy Scouts, troop leaders, rather than parents sign off advancement requirements. In order to avoid the appearance of impropriety, troop leaders will not sign off rank requirements for their own sons.
- It is up to you to take advantage of the advancement opportunities available to you, and to take initiative to ask for someone to test you when you are ready. You are also responsible for keeping your own personal advancement record in your handbook. You should also record your service hours, campouts, troop activities, and leadership positions in your handbook and/or an advancement notebook (*see Record-keeping discussion below*).
- You must earn the ranks in order, but you may complete any requirement for Tenderfoot through First Class at any time. For example, you may complete a First Class requirement before finishing your Tenderfoot requirements, but you must earn (complete all of the requirements for) Tenderfoot before you are awarded Second Class and First Class.

### Reviewing - the Scoutmaster Conference

- Upon completion of all requirements for a rank you should ask for a Scoutmaster conference. The purpose of this conference is to discuss your activity in the troop and your understanding and practice of the ideals of Scouting. You will also discuss your goals and accomplishments. If it is for rank advancement, the Scoutmaster will also help you determine whether or not you are ready to go before the Board of Review.
- The Scoutmaster will *always* ask you to talk about how you have demonstrated Scout spirit by living the Scout Oath and Scout Law in your *everyday* life. Be prepared!
- You do not have to wait until you have completed the requirements for a rank to request a Scoutmaster conference. However, for a Scoutmaster conference to count toward rank advancement it must occur after all the other rank requirements are complete and at least one week before the Board of Review.
- We recommend that you schedule your Scoutmaster conference prior to the time and day you would like to have it. This will ensure that the Scoutmaster has time to meet with you when you want to meet. You may schedule the conference in person, by phone or by e-mail. You will schedule your Scoutmaster conference with your Scoutmaster or other adult leaders designated by the Scoutmaster to hold Scoutmaster Conferences. Start with your Scoutmaster ('Goldwasser).

### Reviewing - the Board of Review

- After the Scoutmaster conference, you should contact the Advancement Coordinator (Midyette) and request a Board of Review (“BOR”). The BOR is comprised of at least three and not more than six adults who are not the SM, ASMs or your family members, i.e., not adult leaders who sign off on requirements.

- At the present time, Troop 467 schedules a BOR one week prior to each of three annual Courts of Honor ("COH"). Thus BORs are held in September, January and May. The Troop Committee is also considering offering additional BOR's in November and March in order to provide a BOR every other month. This change will be implemented next season. We believe that this schedule will provide an opportunity for you to more proactively plan your advancement progress.
- The purpose of the BOR is not to retest you, but rather to ensure that you have completed all the requirements, to determine the quality of your troop experience, and to encourage you to advance toward the next rank.
- You should bring your Boy Scout Handbook (and advancement notebook discussed in the *Recordkeeping* section below if you have one) when you appear before the BOR. You are required to present yourself in Class A uniform, which includes an official uniform shirt (tucked in), uniform shorts or pants, a Scout belt, a neckerchief and slide, Scout socks and your merit badge sash, if you have earned any merit badges. When the BOR is ready to see you, you will be invited into the room and asked to introduce yourself. Before you sit down, you will be asked to recite both the Scout Oath and Scout Law. Be prepared!
- During the review, the board will discuss your development along your trail to Eagle, ask you questions about skills that were learned for your particular rank, and evaluate you in terms of troop activities and readiness for the next rank.
- It is also a time for you to ask questions you might have and to give feedback to the BOR about your Scouting experience.
- At the end of the review, you will be asked to step outside the meeting room while the board discusses your qualifications. The board will then call you back into the room and inform you either that you have been approved for the next rank or what additional actions you must take to qualify.
- The completion date for any rank advancement is the date of the BOR.

#### Recognition - Court of Honor

- After passing the BOR, you will be recognized at the next scheduled COH. Troop 467 holds three COH per year - in September, January and May.

#### Life to Eagle -

- After achieving the rank of Life Scout, you will schedule a meeting with the troop Eagle Advisor, who is currently Mr. Underwood. At this meeting he will present you with a copy of the *Life to Eagle Guidebook* and discuss ideas and suggestions for your Eagle Service Project, as well as develop a schedule for you to complete any merit badges. The Eagle project must conform to special guidelines outlined by the Boy Scouts of America, which are set forth in the *Guidebook*. Your advisor will provide you with counsel and help you navigate the process for identifying, planning and carrying out your Eagle Service Project. **You must complete ALL requirements for the Eagle rank before your 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.**
- Please note that you cannot, however, begin carrying out your project until it is approved by your Scoutmaster (Goldwasser), troop Advancement Coordinator (Midyette), the District Advancement

Committee (Jimmy Moore) and the benefiting organization. Each of these individuals must indicate their respective approval by signing your proposal in the designated signature block.

### Service Projects -

You are required to participate in a service project or projects "approved by your Scoutmaster" for Second Class (one hour), Star and Life (six hours each). This means that you must get approval for the project BEFORE you participate from either the Scoutmaster (Goldwasser) or Advancement Coordinator (Midyette). Since many projects occur outside the troop, it is not possible for the adult leader who signs off the requirement to directly observe your participation. If you participate in a project which is not a troop activity please obtain documentation of your participation from the project sponsor or benefiting organization. This will enable an adult leader to sign off the requirement.

The pancake breakfast is an example of a troop activity. Service hours earned in helping another Scout carry out his Eagle Service Project also count for the service hours requirements.

The guidelines for the Eagle Scout Service Project are set forth separately in the *Life to Eagle Guidebook* you will receive when you earn you Life rank.

### Position of Responsibility -

The Star, Life and Eagle ranks each require you to **ACTIVELY** hold one (or more) of the listed positions of responsibility for a specified period of time. The qualifying positions are listed in the rank requirements. For Star, the required time period is four months. For Life and Eagle, it is six months for each rank. Active means that you must actually fulfill the responsibilities of the position. You cannot begin counting the time requirement for the next rank until you complete your Board of Review for the preceding rank.

## **Merit Badges**

### Why merit badges?

Earning merit badges is intended to give you the kind of self-confidence that comes from overcoming obstacles to achieve a goal. Through the merit badge program, you also enhance your outdoor and life skills, learn career skills, develop socially, and may develop physical skills and hobbies that give you a lifetime of healthful recreation. Working with a merit badge counselor gives you contact with an adult with whom you might not be acquainted. This is a valuable experience and is one of Scouting's basic character-developing tools.

To the fullest extent possible, the merit badge counseling arrangement is a counselor-Scout arrangement in which you are not only judged on your performance of the requirements, but receive maximum benefit from the knowledge, skill, character, and personal interest of your counselor. Group instruction and orientation are encouraged where special facilities and expert personnel make this most practical, or when Scouts are dependent on only a few counselors for assistance. However, this group experience should be followed by attention to each individual candidate's projects and his ability to fulfill all requirements.

There are more than 100 merit badges to choose from. You may begin work on and earn any merit badge at any time with prior Scoutmaster Approval. This means that you must ask your Scoutmaster or the Advancement Coordinator first. You may begin working on merit badges as soon as you become a Scout although earning merit badges is not a rank requirement until you begin working on the Star rank. You can find information about merit badge requirements in the respective merit badge pamphlets available for loan in the troop library or for purchase at the Scout Shop, the Boy Scout Requirements book or at [www.meritbadge.com](http://www.meritbadge.com). The website also suggests other internet accessible resources for helping you complete the merit badge requirements.

Beginning with the Star rank, you are required to earn merit badges in order to advance. For Star you are required to earn six merit badges, four of which must be from the required list for Eagle.

For Life you must earn five more merit badges (total of 11), including any three more from the required list for Eagle (total of seven Eagle required).

For Eagle you must earn a total of 21 merit badges which is an additional ten more than you are required to have for Life. Twelve of the 21 must be from the required list for Eagle.

The list of merit badges required for Eagle includes:

- 1) First Aid
- 2) Citizenship in the Community
- 3) Citizenship in the Nation
- 4) Citizenship in the World
- 5) Communications
- 6) Personal Fitness
- 7) Emergency Preparedness **OR** Lifesaving
- 8) Environmental Science
- 9) Personal Management
- 10) Swimming **OR** Hiking **OR** Cycling
- 11) Camping
- 12) Family Life

#### Steps to Earn a Merit Badge -

- Pick a merit badge of interest.
- Read and understand the requirements. You can find the requirements in the merit badge pamphlet (see troop library), the Boy Scout Requirements book which list the requirements for all 100+ MBs, or [www.meritbadge.com](http://www.meritbadge.com). These are also useful sources for selecting which MBs to earn.
- Get a blue merit badge card from the SM (Goldwasser) or Advancement Coordinator (Midyette). "*Blue cards*" are three part cards used to record your progress on completing the requirements for a merit badge. Upon completion one part is retained by the counselor; one part is retained by the troop; and the third is returned to you. Fill in your name, address, and the name of the MB. Ask the SM or AC to sign it. The SM or AC may ask you to discuss your plan for earning the MB, i.e., who?, what?, how?, when?, where?

**YOU** and not the counselor, Scoutmaster, or Advancement Coordinator keep the merit badge blue card until you have completed all of the requirements and the counselor has signed the card. If you lose this card, you will have to start the badge over unless the counselor is willing and able to vouch for what you already completed.

- If you are participating in group instruction such as a clinic or a class, you should identify the name of the clinic and counselor to the SM or AC when you ask him to sign your blue card. If the clinic counselor requests that certain requirements be completed prior to attending the clinic, you should complete the prerequisites to facilitate your completion of the remaining requirements.
- If you are not participating in group instruction such as a clinic or class, ask your SM or AC to help you identify a qualified counselor.

The Troop 467 AC is working on developing a list of qualified counselors and will focus first on identifying and registering counselors for the fifteen Eagle-required merit badges list above. Currently our database lists registered counselors only for Camping, Hiking and Personal Management.

You can work on any merit badge you want at any time you want. Some merit badges, however, are difficult for younger Scouts to successfully complete. Other merit badges are more effectively earned at summer camp. The SM or AC may therefore counsel you to defer your choice until a later time, but he will not prohibit you from working on the MB you have selected.

- **Buddy System** - If you are working individually with a counselor, you will contact the counselor and make an appointment. You cannot meet with a counselor unless you have another person with you at each meeting with the counselor. That person can be another Scout, your parents or guardian, a brother or sister, a relative, or a friend.
- When you know what is expected for the MB, start to learn and do the activities required. Ask your counselor to help you learn the things you need to know or do. S/he can refer you to appropriate resources. You can find additional resources for the MB in the pamphlet and at [www.meritbadge.com](http://www.meritbadge.com), as well as other websites. You and your buddy meet as appropriate with the counselor until you complete the requirements.
- When you are ready to show your stuff, schedule an appointment to meet with the counselor to meet the requirements. Take the things you have made, written, and/or done to meet the requirements. If an item is too big take a picture to show the counselor. The counselor will ask you to do each requirement to make sure you know your stuff and have done or can do all the activities required.
- When the counselor is satisfied that you have met the requirements, S/he will sign the blue card. You will give the blue card to your SM or AC.
- You are expected to meet the requirements as 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 is not enough. The same thing holds true for such words as "make," "list," "in the field," "collect," "identify," and "label."
- A merit badge cannot be taken away or retested once it has been earned, provided the counselor is a registered counselor for the merit badge.

**Note:** *There is NO DEADLINE for earning MBs, except your 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. Once you have started working on a MB, i.e., obtained signed blue card from SM and started working on the requirements, you may continue using those requirements until you complete the badge or turn 18.*

*If the requirements change while you are working on the badge, you may continue to use the OLD requirements until you complete the work, or you may use the new requirements. It is YOUR choice and yours alone*

### Merit Badges and Boy Scout Summer Camp

Each year Troop 467 attends a one-week BSA summer camp as a troop. These camps are generally camps sponsored by a local Boy Scout Council. The troop has attended summer camps in Georgia, Tennessee and Utah and will in 2008 attend Camp Daniel Boone located near Ashville, North Carolina. Summer camp is a very important venue for learning and earning merit badges. You are encouraged to attend a Boy Scout camp each summer while you are working on advancement.

### **Record-Keeping**

Your advancement records are kept by three parties - by the Atlanta Area Council, by the troop Advancement Coordinator using *TroopMaster* software, and by YOU, the Scout.

You will receive three kinds of documents that you will need to KEEP IN A SAFE PLACE UNTIL AFTER YOU TURN 18 or receive your Eagle Scout award, whichever is later. These documents are:

- 1) Your Boy Scout Handbook with requirements signed off *in the back signoff section*,
- 2) Your portion of the completed and signed blue MB cards; and
- 3) The wallet-sized certificate cards for rank advancement and merit badge completion, which you receive at the COH.

Make sure all cards are dated and signed or initialed by the appropriate Scout leader. Rank advancement cards should reflect the date of the Board of Review. Merit badge cards should reflect the date the MB was completed - not the date awarded. All of the cards are the same size and can be safely kept in the plastic protector pages designed for baseball cards. I recommend that you keep them in a loose-leaf 3-ring binder. You can include other important information such as camping activities and itineraries, summer camp info, high adventure info, service project participation, positions of responsibility you have held, etc.

IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT YOU KEEP THESE DOCUMENTS IN A SAFE PLACE AND DO NOT LOSE THEM! If there is a discrepancy in your records maintained by the Council or Troop or missing records, your personal records are critical for proving what you completed and when.