

Pointers for Completing Merit Badges

September 1, 2005 Courtesy of Troop 283

1. You can start merit badges at any time. There is no rank requirements.
2. Review the Boy Scout requirement merit badge handbook and learn what merit badges are available. This guide will tell you what is required or each merit badge and serve as a good reference to determine what you might be interested in.
3. Talk to your Scoutmaster. Your Scoutmaster will give you the signed blue card required to start a merit badge and provide the name of a counselor for you to get in contact with to begin.
4. Make contact with your merit badge counselor and tell them that you want to earn the merit badge. The counselor may want to meet with you to explain what he expects and to start helping you meet the requirements. You must meet with your counselor prior to completing a requirement to get credit for requirements completed. After the fact doesn't count!
5. Take advantage of group run merit badges offered at Scout meetings and prior to scout meetings. Many of the Eagle required merit badges are offered in a group setting and this is a great way to complete these requirements.
6. Leaders offering merit badges in group settings - Let the Committee Chair know when you will be meeting so this can be communicated in writing via email or put into the newsletter. Good communication will help with schedules and attendance.
7. For each merit badge counselor meeting outside the Troop meetings, you must have another scout or family member or adult leader present.
8. Read the merit badge pamphlet on the subject prior to meeting with your counselor. This is a requirement. Copies of the merit badge books can be purchased for \$3 at the Scout shop or checked out with the Troop Librarian. The troop has many of the merit badge books on file, including all Eagle required. These also can be checked out from the Ridgedale library.
9. When you are completed with a merit badge book, return it to the librarian and also donate books you have purchased for others to use.
10. When you are ready, call your counselor to set up an appointment to meet the requirements. Counselors like the requirements written out. You will be asked to demonstrate or explain a skill to be sure you know your stuff and have done what is required.
11. After the counselor is satisfied that you have met each requirement, they will sign your blue card. The scout must give the signed blue card to the Scoutmaster who in turn will make arrangements with the Advancement chair to get your merit badge emblem. Keep your copy of the blue card and put these in a folder with pockets for card collections. These records will become valuable for Eagle applications. Eagle merit badge completion records are needed for reference.
12. Scouts can work on multiple merit badges at one time. Be aware of the requirements so Troop activities can be incorporated into completion of a merit badge requirement. A little planning can save steps.
13. The scout must initiate! It is not the role of the merit badge counselor or the parent to follow up or be sure requirements are completed.
14. There is no time limit to work on a merit badge. Some of these may take a year or more.
15. If you are a registered counselor for a merit badge, you can be your son's counselor if there are 2 or more in a group.