

Troop 236 Advancement Overview

Advancement through ranks and recognition for achievement are two key parts of the Troop 236 program. Our goal is to provide each Scout the opportunity to learn the skills needed to advance. Each Scout must then take responsibility for applying those skills, having their requirements signed off, and taking the initiative to pursue their course of advancement. The ranks and requirements to advance are described in detail in the Boy Scout Handbook.

I. Requirements For All Ranks

There are certain requirements in every advancement rank.

A. Service Requirement

At most levels in Scouting, Scouts must give a certain number of hours in service to others. This is so that Scouts learn the importance of giving of our time and talents to benefit others. For the Eagle rank, the Scout must organize a service project. In general, the scout needs to keep track of his service hours. For some of the troop events, the attendees and their hours are recorded into Scoutbook. But the real responsibility lies with the Scout. He should keep track of what service he has done (perhaps with sticky notes in his book) and be prepared to discuss them as part of the Scoutmaster conference for rank advancement.

B. Participation Requirement

Scouts are required to be active in the troop and patrol. This means regular attendance at troop meetings and troop activities. It also means helping the patrol in patrol activities, on camping trips, and in district competitions. For the lower ranks, younger Scouts must participate in a specific number of activities.

For Star, Life and Eagle ranks, the requirements specify that the Scout be active in his Troop and Patrol. We take this requirement seriously and want to see the Scout participating in troop meetings, campouts, service projects, and other troop and patrol activities - helping younger Scouts learn the basic skills. A Scout's experience and leadership at this stage in his Scouting career is very important to the troop and younger Scouts and will also help the older Scout become a better leader.

C. Scout Spirit

All ranks after Scout rank include a requirement for Scout Spirit that the Scout fulfills by living according to the Scout Oath and Law. This requirement is discussed and signed off at the Scoutmaster conference.

Scout spirit is a very important part of advancement. It shows itself in the actions the boy demonstrates as a Scout, both as an individual and as part of a group. It requires each Scout to do his best to live by the Scout Oath and Law. Scout spirit is also demonstrated with enthusiastic, supportive participation in Troop activities.

At the Boards of Review for the leadership ranks, the Scout will be asked to describe in his own words what the Scout Oath and Law means to him. As he works towards Eagle and sits for Boards of Review, he will need to translate the Oath and the Law into meaningful terms that apply to him today and will grow with him into his future. During periodic meetings with the Scoutmaster and his Eagle advisor, he will be asked to talk about these terms and to reflect on his actions and his plans with them in mind.

D. Scoutmaster Conference

When the Scout has completed all of the requirements for a new rank, he must click on the link on the website to request a Scoutmaster's conference. The form that appears must be properly completed and when generated it will be automatically sent to the Scoutmaster who will then respond and confirm a conference. The Scout must wear his Class A uniform and bring his Boy Scout Handbook and completed merit badge cards, along with a print-out of his advancement record report from the troop website. Together the Scoutmaster and Scout look ahead to working on the next rank in the coming months, and discuss the goals which have been achieved.

E. Board of Review

After the Scout has passed his Scoutmaster's conference, he must click on the link on the website to request a board of review. Of note, no Scout may schedule a Scoutmaster's conference and Board of Review on the same day. The form that appears must be properly completed and when generated it will be automatically sent to the Board of Review Coordinator, who will then respond and confirm a Board of Review. The Board of Review Coordinator will schedule a meeting between the Scout and a group of adults from the Troop. The adults sit down with the Scout to talk about the Scout's experience in working on the rank. This friendly discussion gives the adults a good idea of whether or not the Scout has mastered the requirements for the rank. At the Board of Review, the Scout is not re-tested on his requirements, but he will be asked to talk about how he learned them, what was hard or easy about them, etc. If the Scout has completed all the requirements for the rank, has had a Scoutmaster Conference and a successful Board of Review, he will be informed that he has achieved the rank he is seeking.

Boards of Review are scheduled during many regular troop meetings. The Board of Review Coordinator typically announces opportunities to schedule a Board of Review in the announcement at troop meetings. The Scout is responsible to sign up with the coordinator. Each Scout attending a Board of Review must be in full Class A uniform and the Scout must

bring his Boy Scout Handbook and a printout of his own advancement record from Scoutbook to the meeting.

Sometimes, a boy leader from the Troop may be requested to sit on a Board of Review and will join in talking with the Scout about his development.

The requirements for the ranks Scout through First Class can be worked on at any time and in any order. However, after the First Class rank is earned, the Scout can only begin working on his next rank (excluding merit badges) as soon as he passes the last one. A Scout may also be requested to attend a Board of Review when no advancement has taken place for an extended period of time. The purpose is to inquire about problems the Scout may be having and to give encouragement.

F. Court of Honor

The Scout officially advances in rank at the completion of the Board of Review. He actually receives his badge and his certificate at a Court of Honor. The Court of Honor ceremony formally recognizes the achievement of all the members of the Troop who have advanced in rank, completed merit badges, won awards, or otherwise distinguished themselves. Courts of Honor are usually held three times a year – Fall in October, Winter in January & Spring in May.

II. The “Scouting Skills” Ranks

A. Scout—Tenderfoot—Second Class—First Class

These four ranks form the foundation of a Scout's success in the program. They offer the Scout a chance to learn and demonstrate proficiency in hiking, camping, first aid, nature, citizenship, knots, and personal fitness. The Scout earns a rank by completing a specific set of requirements.

We recommend that each Scout progress through these first four ranks during their first 12-24 months in Scouting. Research shows that Scouts who meet this goal are much more likely to continue in Scouting. We have also found that mastering the skills in these ranks makes the camp-outs and other outings more enjoyable. Our advancement program is designed to give new Scouts the opportunity to advance through these ranks in their first full year. Remember that the troop provides the opportunities—the Scout must take the initiative and make use of these opportunities. To do so, Scouts should work closely with Instructors and the ASPL of Scout Skills.

B. Fulfilling the Requirements

The Scout uses his Boy Scout Handbook to keep track of his progress through ranks. One section in the rear of the book lists requirements for each rank and references germane information in other sections of the book. Other sections contain discussions of the skills and knowledge needed to pass the requirement.

The Scout fulfills a requirement by:

- Learning the skill—this might occur at a troop meeting, a patrol meeting, a campout, or by studying at home.
- Practicing the skill—this ensures proficiency. He can do this at home, with his patrol, at troop meetings, or camp-outs.
- Demonstrating his proficiency to a Scout leader. Instructors, ASPL of Scout Skills, Star Scouts, the Scoutmaster and Assistant Scoutmasters can sign off requirements. Unlike the Cub Scout program, parents do not sign off requirements, even if they are an ASM.
- Scouts may work on requirements for any of these four ranks at any time. For example, if a Tenderfoot Scout completes the compass course requirement for First Class he can have that requirement signed off right away.

III. The Leadership Ranks

A. Star—Life—Eagle

Once the Scout completes the “Scouting skill” ranks, he turns to the ranks that focus on leadership and merit badges.

B. Merit Badge Requirement

Fourteen specific merit badges are required for Eagle, plus at least 7 others, for a total of 21. Each of the two lower ranks, Star and Life, require some portion of the 14 Eagle required merit badges to be completed. For instance, Star requires completion of 4 Eagle required merit badges and 2 other badges of the Scout's choosing, while Life requires completion of 7 Eagle-required merit badges and 4 others.

Eagle-required merit badges are:

- *Camping,*
- *Citizenship in the Community,*
- *Citizenship in the Nation,*
- *Citizenship in the World,*
- *Citizenship in Society*
- *Communications,*
- *Cooking*
- *Emergency Preparedness or Lifesaving,*
- *Environmental Science or Sustainability*
- *Family Life*

- *First Aid,*
- *Personal Fitness,*
- *Personal Management,*
- *Swimming or Hiking or Cycling*

C. Leadership requirement

Once the Scout has mastered basic Scouting skills by earning First Class rank, the troop and the young Scouts will look to him for leadership. The leadership requirement is the same for Star, Life, and Eagle except for the length of time the Scout must hold the leadership position (4 months for Star, 6 months for Life & Eagle). Some of the eligible leadership positions are:

- Senior Patrol Leader
- Assistant Senior Patrol Leader of:
 - Meetings
 - Service
 - Advancement
 - Recruitment
 - Outings
- Patrol Leader
- Webmaster
- Troop Guide
- Quartermaster
- Chaplain's Aide
- Librarian
- Scribe
- Bugler

Senior Patrol Leaders and Patrol Leaders are elected positions. The Senior Patrol Leader(s), with the approval of the Scoutmaster, appoint(s) all the others.

Leadership is a very important part of the trail to Eagle, and these positions require responsibility and initiative on the Scout's part. If he holds these positions in name only, he will not meet this requirement. He must work closely with the SPL and the Scoutmaster to be sure that his service as a leader goes smoothly and matches his skills and abilities.

IV. Eagle Requirements

Life Scouts working on their Eagle rank must fulfill a special requirement meant to test both their commitment to their community and their ability to plan and lead a significant project. Eagle project guidelines are included in the Eagle packet given to new Life Scouts. **A Scout**

must earn the rank of Eagle before his 18th birthday.

A. Participation Requirements

A Life Scout's decision to become a candidate for Eagle Rank is a **serious one with important commitments**. Eagle Scout candidates should expect to **actively participate in Troop activities** while working toward advancement. The Troop will gauge participation against a target of attending half the weekly meetings and attending 4 monthly outings (or 3 monthly outings and a summer camp/high adventure activity) during the 12 months immediately prior to his Troop Eagle BOR. **He should plan his journey on the trail to Eagle and participate fully all along the way.**

There are two main aims for continued Life Scout involvement in the Troop. The first is for the Life Scout to **further utilize and grow his leadership abilities** to those befitting an Eagle Scout. We ask him to begin spreading those Eagle wings and practice taking flight. The second is to give back to the Troop from which they've gained so much, and in so doing, learn the final secret that only the rarest top leaders know; that **the most effective leaders are servant leaders**.

We know high school academics, sports, and other activities place a big demand on a Scout's time. Should a Life Scout feel that he can not meet the above stated participation targets, Eagle candidate Life Scouts may work with the Scoutmaster **in advance** to set, agree, document and accept responsibility for alternate participation expectations through a Scoutmaster Conference.

Sometimes a Scout must miss activities or meetings for a period of time due to other commitments. In these cases, he may take a leave of absence from Scouting, and that period will not be counted toward the participation requirement. **This needs to be worked out with the Scoutmaster in advance.**

Progress toward Eagle Candidate goals, including participation, is tracked by an Eagle Mentor assigned to each Life Scout. A Life Scout missing or at risk of missing their participation goals would be flagged to the Scout, Scoutmaster, and Eagle Advancement Coordinator so that another Scoutmaster Conference can be held to learn what is happening, provide encouragement and adjust goals as needed.

B. Board of Review

Eagle Scout candidates (those having reached Life) have a special Board of Review. The troop and the Council take the Eagle rank seriously, and will not approve a Scout who is not ready or who has not met the requirements. There are two reviews.

- Troop Board of Review

This Board of Review examines the Scout's record carefully to verify that all of the requirements have been met in full. The Scoutmaster writes a confidential appraisal, and the Scout solicits five confidential reference letters from important adults in his life. The board of review reads these letters and interviews the Scout. They will ask him about the Scout Oath

and Law, and what they mean to him. They will be looking for signs of commitment, maturity, and understanding that mark that very special kind of Scout who is an Eagle.

- Council Board of Review

If the troop board passes the Eagle candidate, he then sits for a similar Board of Review organized by the Council. Occasionally the Eagle Board of Review turns down a Scout who has completed all of the objective requirements for Eagle. This is not a final rejection, but because of the age restriction, Scouts should plan enough time before age 18 to repeat the Board of Review process if necessary.

C. Eagle Court of Honor

Earning the rank of Eagle Scout is an achievement that lasts a lifetime. Our troop aims to accord each Eagle with a ceremony and the full support of the troop family befitting this very special occasion. There is a \$250 endowment made by the Troop towards the expenses incurred in presenting the National Eagle Court of Honor. Please see our Eagle Coordinator for further details and qualification for this endowment. Since no Eagle achieves this rank on his own, the Troop Committee has determined that each Eagle Scout Court of Honor be a command performance by all Scouts in Troop 236 to honor his fellow Scout on this special day. Likewise, parents and siblings are encouraged to honor the Eagle candidate with their presence.

V. Earning Merit Badges

The "Blue Card" Merit badges are also a tremendous opportunity for a Scout to broaden his horizons and learn new skills and ideas or to develop a hobby he already has. The Star, Life, and Eagle progress awards require the Scout to earn merit badges. Younger Scouts can also work on and earn merit badges at any time; the merit badges will count towards the higher ranks once the Scout reaches that point. About 130 merit badges are offered covering a variety of subjects. The process for earning a merit badge is as follows:

1. Scout gets a blue merit badge card from the ASPL Merit Badges
2. The Scoutmaster signs the card to let the merit badge counselor know that the Scout is eligible to work on the badge. (Please ask the Scout-master either before or after the troop meeting, on outings, or you may call to arrange a time.)
3. Scout selects a Merit Badge counselor from the Troop 236 list, available from the ASPL Merit Badges or on the Troop website. (There is also a District list if a counselor cannot be found in our troop. The District list can be found at the [BSA Merit Badge Counselor list page](#). The merit badge counselor helps guide the Scout through the requirements
4. Scout contacts the counselor to ask if he or she will counsel him for this particular

badge. Counselor goes over any specific items that he or she requires. Some counselors want an introductory meeting before work begins. Others want the Scout to make progress on the badge before meeting with them.

5. Scout purchases a copy of the merit badge pamphlet from the BSA Trading Post in Pleasant Hill or online, or borrows one from the troop's library collection. Study the pamphlet to introduce the subject and understand the requirements. Requirements and worksheets can be found on the [BSA Merit Badge website](#). Please note that requirements change periodically. While old MB pamphlets can be used for information, always work under the current requirements on the web, not the ones in the pamphlet!

6. As the Scout completes the requirements within the merit badge, the merit badge counselor signs off each requirement on the blue card. **THE SCOUT IS RESPONSIBLE FOR KEEPING TRACK OF THE BLUE CARD WHILE WORKING ON THE MERIT BADGE.**

7. Scout meets with a counselor when finished with the badge requirements (don't forget to ensure 2 deep adult leadership). The counselor may sign off all of the requirements on the blue card or ask the scout to work more on some area.

8. When all requirements are completed to the satisfaction of the counselor, he or she signs the blue card, keeps the counselor part of the card, and gives the other two parts back to the scout.

9. Scout gives the remaining two parts of the blue card to the Advancement Chairperson (or SM) who enters information into the records, and arranges for presentation of the badge at the next Court of Honor. IMPORTANT: The blue card needs to be kept in a SAFE place because it will be needed for Eagle Adv. (Clear baseball card protector sheets in a binder work well.) All Merit Badge Counselors must be registered with the District. To do this, a BSA Adult Leader Application with "42" as "position code" must be submitted. Registered adult leaders with Troop 236 will still need to register separately as a Merit Badge Counselor.

Note: A scout may NEVER use a parent as a counselor for an Eagle required merit badge. Under rare circumstances, the Scoutmaster may approve a parent as counselor for a non-Eagle required merit badge.