

National BSA Policies Related To Rank Advancement

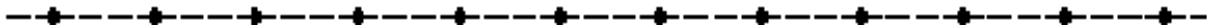


Boy Scout Advancement

Clause 5. Basis for Advancement. The Boy Scout requirements for ranks shall be the basis for the Scout's advancement. There shall be four steps in Boy Scout advancement procedure: learning, testing, reviewing, and recognition.

Clause 6. Ranks. There shall be the following ranks in Boy Scouting: Tenderfoot, Second Class, First Class, Star, Life, and Eagle. The requirements shall be authorized by the Executive Board and set forth in official Scouting publications. Eagle Palms may also be awarded on the basis of requirements authorized by the Executive Board and set forth in official Scouting publications.

Clause 7. Responsibility of the Troop Committee. It shall be the responsibility of the troop committee, under the leadership and guidance of the local council, to make sure that the program of the the troop is conducted in such a way that Scouts have an opportunity to advance on the basis of the four steps outlined in clause 5.



Boy Scout Advancement

The Boy Scout advancement program is subtle. It places a series of challenges in front of a Scout in a manner that is fun and educational. As Scouts meet these challenges, they achieve the aims of Boy Scouting.

The Scout advances and grows in the Boy Scout phase of the program in the same way a plant grows by receiving nourishment in the right environment. The job with adults concerned with advancement is to provide the right environment.

One of the greatest needs of young men is confidence. There are three kinds of confidence that young men need: in themselves, in peers, and in leaders.

Educators and counselors agree that the best way to build confidence is through measurement. *Self-confidence* is developed by measuring up to a challenge or a standard. *Peer confidence* develops when the same measuring system is used for everyone -- when all must meet the same challenge to receive equal recognition. *Confidence in leaders* comes about when there is consistency in measuring -- when leaders use a single standard of fairness.

No council, district, unit, or individual has the authority to add to or subtract from any advancement requirement. A Boy Scout badge recognizes what a young man is able to do; it is not a reward for what he has done.

Standards for joining a Boy Scout troop and for advancement are listed in the latest printing of the *Boy Scout Handbook* and in the current *Boy Scout Requirements* book.

Advancement accommodates the three aims of Scouting: citizenship, growth in moral strength and character, and mental and physical development.

The advancement program is designed to provide the Boy Scout with a chance to achieve the aims of Scouting. As a Scout advances he is measured and grows in confidence and self-reliance.

When a badge and certificate are awarded to a Boy Scout to recognize that he has achieved a rank, they represent that a young man has:

- ✳️ Been an active participant in his troop and patrol.
- ✳️ Demonstrated living the Scout Oath (Promise) and Law in his daily life.
- ✳️ Met the other requirements and/or earned the merit badges for the rank.
- ✳️ Participated in a Scoutmaster conference.
- ✳️ Satisfactorily appeared before a board of review.

In the advanced ranks (Star, Life, and Eagle), the badge represents that the young man has also:

- ✳️ Served in a position of responsibility in the troop.
- ✳️ Performed service to others.

Four Steps of Advancement. A Boy Scout advances from Tenderfoot to Eagle by doing things with his patrol and his troop, with his leaders, and on his own. It's easy for him to advance, if the following four opportunities are provided for him.

1. *The Boy Scout learns.* A Scout learns by doing. As he learns, he grows in ability to do his part as a member of the patrol and the troop. As he develops knowledge and skill, he is asked to teach others; and in this way he begins to develop leadership.
2. *The Boy Scout is tested.* A Scout may be tested on rank requirements by his patrol leader, Scoutmaster, assistant Scoutmaster, a troop committee member, or a member of his troop. The Scoutmaster maintains a list of those qualified to give tests and pass candidates. The Scout's merit badge counselor teaches and tests on the requirements for merit badges.
3. *The Boy Scout is reviewed.* After a Scout has completed all requirements for a rank, he has a board of review. For Tenderfoot, Second Class, First Class, Star, Life, and Eagle Palms, the review is conducted by members of the troop committee. The Eagle Scout board of review is conducted in accordance with local council procedures.
4. *The Boy Scout is recognized.* When the board of review has certified a boy's advancement, he deserves to receive recognition as soon as possible. This should be done at a ceremony at the next troop meeting. The certificate for his new rank may be presented later at a formal court of honor.

Age Requirements. Boy Scout awards are for young men not yet 18 years old. Merit badges, badges of rank, and Eagle palms are for registered Boy Scouts, Varsity Scouts, or qualified Venturers. Any registered Boy Scout or Varsity Scout may earn these awards until his 18th birthday. Any Venturer who achieves the First Class rank as a Boy Scout or Varsity Scout in a troop or team may continue working for the Star, Life, and Eagle Scout ranks and Eagle Palms while registered as an Venturer up to his 18th birthday.

Youth members with special needs may work towards rank advancement after they are 18. (See section titled "[Advancement for Youth Members with Special Needs](#)")

Time Extensions. If a Scout or a Venturer foresees that he will be unable to complete the requirements for the Eagle rank prior to his 18th birthday, he may file a petition in writing with the

National Boy Scout Committee **through the local council** for special permission to continue to work toward the award after reaching 18. The petition also may be filed by the unit leader or unit committee. The petition must show good and sufficient evidence and detail the extenuating circumstances that prevented the Scout from completing the requirements prior to his 18th birthday. **Extenuating circumstances are defined as conditions or situations that are totally beyond the control of the Scout or Venturer.**

If circumstances should also prevent a Scout or an Venturer from requesting the extension before he is 18, it is still permissible to ask for the extension, detailing the extenuating circumstances that prevented him from completing the requirements and from requesting the extension before age 18.

Troop Advancement Goals. The Scoutmaster must be in charge of advancement in the troop. It is necessary that the Scoutmaster understand the purpose of the advancement program and the importance it has in the development of the Scouts in the troop. The troop's program must provide advancement opportunities. By participating in the troop program, the Scout will meet requirements for rank advancement.

The troop's unit commissioner and the district advancement committee can play an important part in explaining advancement and helping the Scoutmaster utilize the advancement program in the troop program, making it exciting to the Scouts in the troop.

It is important that the troop committee and the Scoutmaster set an advancement goal for the year. A basic goal should be for each Scout to advance a rank during the year. New Scouts should earn their First Class rank during their first year in the troop. By doing so, these new Scouts become net contributors to the troop and are able to care for themselves and others. When reviewed monthly by the troop committee, Scouts will recognize the importance of Scout advancement. Troops should conduct boards of review for Scouts who are not advancing. A minimum of four formal courts of honor a year (one every three months) should be held to formally recognize the Scouts in the troop.

Presentation of merit badges and rank badges should not await these courts of honor; awards and badges should be presented at the next meeting after they have been earned. Scouts are recognized again at a formal court of honor.

Scoutmaster Conferences. One of the most enjoyable experiences of being a Scoutmaster is the opportunity for a Scout and his leader to sit down and visit together.

In large troops, Scoutmasters occasionally assign this responsibility to assistant Scoutmasters or members of the troop committee; but this is unfortunate, because most Scoutmasters feel that this is truly the opportunity to get to know the Scout and help him chart his course in life.

A good conference should be unhurried. It helps the Scout evaluate his accomplishments and to set new goals with his Scoutmaster. This can be accomplished at a troop meeting, camping trip, or in the Scout's home.

Goal setting by the Scout makes it possible for the Scoutmaster to help the Scout with his weaknesses and encourage him to use his strengths.

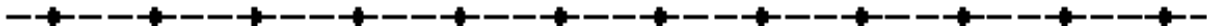
The Scout (joining) conference is probably one of the most important associations a Scout will have in his Scouting career. It is at this conference that the Scoutmaster illustrates to him the adult-youth relationship that is unique to Scouting.

All through the ranks, it is rewarding for the Scoutmaster to observe the Scout grow in responsibility and maturity. It is through this association and example that a young man grows and matures, and the Scoutmaster conference accomplishes that aim. (See *Scoutmaster Handbook*, chapter 8.)

Record Keeping. Each troop is responsible for keeping its own records and reporting advancement to the local council service center. This is done on an Advancement Report form. One copy is kept by the troop and two are sent to the council with an order for badges and awards. It is best that this form be submitted at least monthly so that troop records remain current and Scouts are able to receive their awards quickly after earning them. Awards cannot be purchased or awarded until the Advancement Report has been filed with the council office. A *Troop/Team Record Book*, maintained by the troop scribe, is available.

At the discretion of the local council, computer-generated Advancement Reports may be used. If used, **two** copies of the computer-generated report must be submitted to the council service center.

Training. A unit of training, *Boy Scout Advancement*, is available for instruction in how to carry out the advancement program.



Varsity Scout Advancement

Any young man from 14 to 18 years old may participate in this program for older Boy Scouts. Varsity Scouting offers five program fields of emphasis: Advancement, High Adventure, Personal Development, Service, and Special Programs and Events. Each of these programs is led by a member of the team called a program manager, who receives assistance from a member of the team committee.

Position of responsibility requirements for Star and Life ranks may be met by a Varsity Scout serving as a team captain, cocaptain, program manager, squad leader, or other leadership roles assigned by the Coach. The acceptable positions of responsibility for the Eagle Scout rank are listed on the Eagle Scout Rank Application.

The Varsity Scout Coach will conduct a Coach conference. (See "[Scoutmaster Conferences](#)" above.)

As the Varsity Scout meets the requirements for each rank, a board of review is conducted by the team committee member responsible for advancement, the advancement program manager, and the Varsity Scout Coach for all ranks except Eagle Scout. The Eagle Scout board of review follows the procedure established by the local council.



Venturing Advancement

Any male Venturer who has achieved the First Class Rank as a Boy Scout in a troop or Varsity Scout in a team may continue working toward the Star, Life, and Eagle Scout ranks up to his 18th birthday. He must meet the requirements as prescribed in the *Boy Scout Handbook* and the current *Boy Scout Requirements* book.

Position of responsibility requirements may be met by the Venturer serving as president, vice president, secretary, or treasurer in his crew, or as boatswain, boatswain's mate, yeoman, purser, or storekeeper in his ship.

The Scoutmaster conference will be conducted by the Advisor or Skipper.

As the Venturer meets the requirements for the Star and Life ranks, a board of review is conducted by the crew or ship committee. The Eagle board of review follows the procedure established by the local council.

Sea Scout advancements are approved by the ship's quarterdeck. In the case of the Quartermaster Award, the application is reviewed by the ship's committee with a member of the district advancement committee as chairman. Since the Quartermaster award is a Venturing recognition, it may be earned by any young man or young woman registered as a Venturer up to his or her 21st birthday.

Venturers may earn the Bronze, Gold, or Silver awards. Criteria for these awards can be found in the Venturing *Silver Award Guidebook*. Venturers may earn any or all of the five different Bronze awards; however, only one is required for the Gold Award. The Gold and Silver awards require a crew review process.

Venturers may also earn the Ranger Award. This award requires no crew review.

All work on all Venturing advancement must be completed prior to the young person's 21st birthday.