



**Cascade Pacific Council-Boy Scouts of America**  
**Merit Badge Counselor Syllabus**



*This syllabus for use in training individual Merit Badge Counselors. The trainer **must** have been trained at the District or Council level and utilize ALL PORTIONS of this syllabus.*

**Overview Statement:** {Ice breaker: Before beginning find out what kind of Scouting experience the trainees have had, if they have a family member in the Scouting program and how they came to learn about the MBC program.} The BSA offers a unique educational opportunity through its Merit Badge Program. Wide varieties of topics are available for individual and group study. The topics and techniques provide a tool for character development while giving the Scouts experience working with BSA registered adults who are new to them. This program also allows the Scout to learn hobby and career skills while providing the BSA registered and trained adult Counselors the opportunity to give back to the community by servicing youth. Cascade Pacific Council suggests that no youth complete more than five Merit Badges from any given Counselor so that he has the opportunity to experience a diversity of Counselors and experiences.



**Who Can Be A Merit Badge Counselor?**

Anyone who has reached the age of 18 can be a Merit Badge Counselor. There is no monetary cost associated with the application. Men, women, minorities along with non-Scout members of the community make the Scouting program stronger through diversity and allow for wider growth and learning experiences for the Scouts. Community organizations (YMCA, athletic clubs, churches, fraternal organizations, etc.) are also good sources for Counselors. The adult, through vocation or avocation must know the topic well enough to make it interesting for the young men he/she is teaching. The candidate must have the ability to work with young men between the ages of 11 and 17; must be willing to register and be re-certified yearly by their local Boy Scout Unit or District; and allow for a Federal background check. The adult must be trained in youth protection guidelines and use the requirements in the current edition of the Boy Scout Requirements book {Yes, there is a new one each year. Make sure to show a copy of the current year's book which is generally available by February of the current year. Note that the badges that have requirements changes are listed on the front inside cover} along with the Merit Badge Pamphlet(s) {have some pamphlets for demonstration, make notice of the fact that although the requirements change the pamphlets often take longer to reprint.}

for the Merit Badge(s) he/she chooses to counsel. The person who approaches the potential Merit Badge Counselor must use tact when explaining the requirements for becoming a Counselor. Registration and training are essential requirements for working with our youth.

### **How to find Merit Badge Counselors:**

There is a wonderful form in the Unit Committee Book entitled "Parent Survey"-utilize it {provide copies of the survey to your trainees}. The Chartering Organization usually has several good candidates hiding in their ranks, their leader will often help you locate them. The community in general is also a great place to find Counselors. Do not overlook women, retirees, minorities, physically disabled and the people you think have the least amount of time to give. This is truly the only job in Scouting that is less than 52 hours a year. (1 hour a week).

### **Be Registered:**

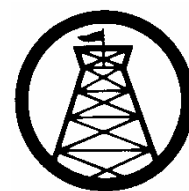
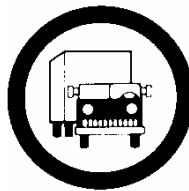
The Counselor must completely fill out the current Adult Application to join Boy Scouts of America. {These forms are free-freely hand them out!} The Cascade Pacific Council has a Federal background check done on every person who registers. A completed Merit Badge Counselor Information Form is also to be completed. {Go over the form, emphasize that all the lines must be filled in and that each question must be answered.}The Counselor is not to work with the youth until the background check is completed.

If there is a problem with the background check, the person will be notified by certified mail. Either the Troop or the District will be notified depending on the counselor's primary registration. For example, if the person is only a Merit Badge Counselor, the District Advancement Chair is notified; but if the person holds a position within the Unit, the Unit will be notified. This is why it is so important that the District Advancement Chair provide a new list to the Unit Advancement Chair each time the Unit list changes. Units recruit Counselors who will go on the Unit list. If the Counselor chooses, they can agree to help any Scout in the Council by marking "yes" on the question that asks if the Counselor is willing to help Scouts outside his/her unit. The District Advancement Chairman has the ability to keep the Counselor's information available only to the home unit or make it available to all of the District Units if the Counselor agrees. More people need to realize that not every unit can find enough Counselors for all 119 Merit Badges. The District list allows Scouts in smaller Units to work with more "safe" adults. The Cascade Pacific Council has completed a Council Merit Badge Counselor list of those people willing to work with any Scout in the Council. This will give the youth even more opportunities. This list is held by the Council Advancement Chairman and is distributed on an "as needed" basis. The line of contact should be first the Scouts own Unit followed by the District MBC list. Then, only if a Counselor can not be found using those two lists the Council Advancement Chair should be contacted.

The application process is:

- 1) The Adult Application and the Information Form are filled out by the applicant.
- 2) The forms are sent together to the Scout Office in Portland.
- 3) The paperwork is processed.
- 4) The District Advancement Chairman receives the paperwork back from Council.
- 5) The District Advancement Chairman adds the name and Merit Badges to the Unit's Merit Badge Counselor list.
- 6) The Unit receives their updated list at the next Round Table or in the way that the individual District has decided to distribute that information. The District must have a way in place for the safeguarding as well as the distribution of the Merit Badge Counselor information. With the Unit's permission, a Scout may utilize any BSA registered Merit Badge Counselor.

Merit Badge Counselors **MUST BE** registered yearly as part of the District Registration in May. The District Advancement Chairman is responsible for compiling a list to give to the District Executive who turns the roster in with the District Charter. New application and information forms do not have to be filled out yearly, however, the process of ensuring that the Counselors are still willing and able to serve is up to the individual District Advancement Chairman.



### **Be Trained:**

Counselors must have Adult Youth Protection Training **PRIOR TO WORKING WITH ANY YOUTH**. The training in Merit Badge process is to ensure that Merit Badges comply with the same quality and uniformity throughout the nation. Youth Protection Training is available on the Cascade Pacific Council Web page [www.cpcbsa.org](http://www.cpcbsa.org) click on “training” then on “youth protection”. The on-line class takes approximately 90 minutes. Youth protection is also available at the District Level ask your District Training Chairperson for dates, times and locations. Merit Badge Counselors must attend Youth Protection Classes offered by the District or Council every two years.

Youth protection training is one of the BSA’s tools to safeguard both the adult and youth from allegations of abuse. The training, combined with the Federal background check, allows the parent and Scoutmaster to know that the youth is being sent to a “safe” adult. The training in Counseling allows the program to fair and consistent throughout the entire nation. A person training Counseling on the Unit level needs to have been trained at a District or Council training. The District trainer needs to have taken Council Training. The Advancement Extravaganza is a Council Training.

## **Buddy System-Youth Protection (Adult Protection):**

The Boy Scouts of America, in order to protect every one involved mandates that a Scout must have a buddy with him at each meeting with a Merit Badge Counselor. This system protects the Scout from potential abuse, provides for a safe learning environment and protects the adult from accusations.

A Scout's buddy can be another Scout, or be a parent or guardian, brother or sister, relative or friend. The Counselor's spouse or child is not considered a "buddy" according to the National Boy Scout office. At no time should a Counselor be with a Scout one on one. Cancel the appointment and reschedule if you do not have a third person available for the learning experience. Do not meet one on one with a Scout under any circumstances-even in a highly public area.

## **How to Protect Unit Merit Badge Counselors**

It is very import to protect the Units Counselor's private information. A Committee Member needs to have all of the pertinent data, however, it is not to be given to everyone in the Unit. Only Merit Badge, Unit, Name, City and Phone number should be on the list given to the person responsible for delivering the information to the Scouts. Actual home address should not be given out. The Scout can contact the Counselor either at the meeting or by phone to arrange a meeting place.



## **Role of a Merit Badge Counselor:**

- Be registered as a Merit Badge Counselor
- Be trained as a Merit Badge Counselor
- Take Youth Protection training either in person or on line [www.cpcbsa.org](http://www.cpcbsa.org) click on "training"
- Assist Scout(s) as he plans the assigned projects/activities to meet the requirements
- Coach Scouts through interviews and demonstrations on how to do the required skills
- Certify the Scout(s) after he (they)has (have) met all qualifications
- Follow the requirements of the badge adding and/or subtracting NOTHING to ensure the advancement standards are fair and uniform for all
- Follow Youth Protection guidelines-NEVER counsel one on one
- Annually renew registration if you plan on continuing as a Merit Badge Counselor
- If teaching in a group, "test" each Scout individually
- Complete Counselor's portion of the Merit Badge card and retain if completed
- Complete a partial if requested



## Methods of Merit Badge Counseling:

- \*\* Make the Scout(s) feel welcome and at ease
- \*\* Share/show something related to the subject
- \*\* Involve the Scout(s) in the subject-hands on experience
- \*\* Show a genuine interest in the Scout(s) and the subject matter
- \*\* Review the Merit Badge requirements with the Scout(s) at the first meeting and be sure that you all understand the outcome expectations.  
(Everyone in the same book-on the same page).
- \*\* Provide the opportunity for the Scout(s) to fulfill the badge requirements.

## Process Guidelines:

### NATIONAL REQUIRES:

- Buddy system  
It is mandated that a Scout must have a buddy with him at each meeting
- By the Book  
Current Merit Badge Requirements are to be used – it is the Unit’s responsibility to ensure that when National changes the Merit Badge requirements that their Unit Leaders and Counselors are made aware of the changes.  
Latest edition of the Boy Scout Requirements Book is to be used. This text is published yearly.
- No More/No Less  
This guideline has two aspects:
  1. **Follow the verbs.** If the requirement says “attend a meeting,” then that is the requirement. A Scout should not be allowed to watch a meeting on TV or talk to someone who went to the meeting. He needs to “attend” the meeting in person. If the requirement says to show your bike and point out certain things, the Scout is required to do it with a bike, not a picture of a bike. The Scout should DO what the verb says to DO.
  2. **Numbers or amounts.** If the requirement says “collect and mount 50 different species” of insect, then the requirement should be signed off when the Scout reaches 50 species. If the essay is to contain 500 words, be sure it is a minimum of 500 words. Coach the Scout to add to it if needed; praise him for his achievement if it is longer.

Even if the Counselor feels a Scout is capable of much more than the badge requires, the requirement is done, when the required number is reached. The Counselor and Scout can go over and above what is required if they both wish to, building an enthusiasm in the Scout for a topic is one goal of the Counselor. But be very clear that you have signed that part of his badge when the requirement has been met.

- Coach/Counselor

*Counsel:*

- ~~ Interview the Scout with a buddy present to determine preparedness, knowledge and interest.
- ~~ Assist Scout(s) in setting goals
- ~~ Follow up to track progress
- ~~ Encourage Scout(s) to ask for help as needed
- ~~ Help the Scout(s) evaluate his progress



*Coach:*

- ~~ Teach the required skills
- ~~ Provide opportunity for the Scout(s) to practice skills under guidance.
  
- ~~ Takes a genuine interest in projects and encourages Scout(s) to complete task. It is permissible for a Counselor to set up field trips with the Scout and his buddy in order to help the Scout earn the badge. This is not babying the Scout. If the Scout has not contacted the Counselor in some time a coach acting as cheerleader can contact the Scout to see if he is ready to do more work on the badge.

- Register with Unit or District Yearly

- Counselor must be over 18 years old

- Badges can be earned from joining to age 18

A youth who begins a badge at age 11 has until his 18<sup>th</sup> birthday to complete it. The “current requirements” are used to determine if the badge has been “completed”. If a young man brings a partial to a Counselor to complete, the badge is not to be “started over”. Provided that the youth has the knowledge to continue with the badge it is within the Counselors realm to finish the badge with the youth. {Example: If Joe started a badge in 2000 but did not work on it again until 2004 he would use the requirements in the 2004 requirements book. If he still had not finished it and worked some more on the badge in 2006, he would need to use the 2006 requirements book. This sounds simple until the youth realizes that the requirements usually get harder rather than easier and it is best to have the youth finish the badge in a timely manner.}

- Group Instruction Policy:  
One may teach Scouts as a group, but individual “testing” is necessary to ensure the individual Scout meets all badge requirements. Testing refers to the Counselor knowing that the Scout has all of the skills required to fulfill the badge requirements. It does not mean written or multiple Choice exams.

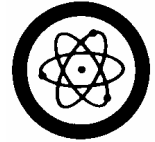


**CASCADE PACIFIC COUNCIL SUGGESTS:**

- The Scout asks for a signed Merit Badge card and Counselors’ names from the Unit Adult Scouter delegated to provide the information. The Unit Advancement Chair is responsible for creating and maintaining a Unit Merit Badge Counselor list. The District Advancement Chair provides an updated approved list of Counselors to the Unit Advancement Chair. It is very important that the youth are not given the complete list of Counselors at any time. We as a group must safeguard the personal information given to us by the adults willing to counsel the youth. The Unit Advancement Chairman is also responsible for letting the District know if a Counselor is no longer available so that the name can be taken off of the district list. The youth only need the Counselor’s name and phone number. Where the Scout, his buddy and the Counselor meet is negotiated between the Scout and the Counselor.
- No individual may counsel an individual Scout in excess of 5 Merit Badges without Cascade Pacific Council and individual District approval. This gives the youth the opportunity to experience a diversity of Counselors and experiences. Joe Scouter may register as a Counselor for 39 different Merit Badges; however, he may only serve as a Counselor 5 times for each individual Scout.
- Scout keeps Merit Badge card while he is working on the badge -- teaches responsibility and prevents the problem of the Counselor misplacing the card. This is a Council Suggestion and also falls under “Unit Decides”.
- The Unit should keep a Merit Badge Book library for the Scouts to use. This is a great use for the Troop Librarian leadership position as the youth can actually work with the Unit Advancement Chairman to keep the Counselors informed of changes to the badges, can work with the Unit Finance Chairman to keep the books updated and can work with his fellow Scouts by checking out the books and making sure they are returned in a timely manner.
- Courts of Honor should be held for group recognition, preferably quarterly.
- Unit provides training for counselors when they are new and on a yearly basis.

### **UNIT DECIDES:**

- Merit Badge process and training dates for the Unit
- Who has the blank Merit Badge cards
- Who holds the Merit Badge card while the Scout is working on it  
Counselor or Scout -- pros and cons to each method - Group Discussion
- Which badges the Counselor is qualified to teach.
- The Unit controls the quality of their Merit Badge program and should know each of the Counselors that their Unit is using.
- How the Scout gets a Merit Badge book: Unit library, Counselors have, Scout buys own.
- How Merit Badge cards are processed once the requirements are completed-  
Do one or two portions of the card go back to the Unit?  
Does the Scout keep a portion and the Unit keep the other?
- How instant and group recognition is handled: when and where the Scout receives his Merit Badges, the cards and rank advancements.



### **Merit Badge Policies:**

The Unit Committee, Adult Leaders, Senior Patrol Leaders and others that the Unit deems necessary are the ones to decide how youth in the Unit achieve their Merit Badge goals using the National, Cascade Pacific Council and Unit process guidelines. When the decisions have been made, it is necessary that the Unit communicates to the Adult Leaders, the Committee Members, the Merit Badge Counselors, Scouts, and the Parents, the Unit policies regarding Merit Badges. Put them in writing for all to see. The written policies will allow all to have equal and fair treatment while achieving their badges. The policies will help your Merit Badge Counselors to better serve the Youth. Most problems arise when Merit Badge policies are not in writing and individuals are not clear about them. Items to include in this policy would be which adult leader can hand out Merit Badge Cards, how many Merit Badges can be worked on at any given time, where the in-process Merit Badge Cards are kept (by the Counselor, Youth or Adult Leaders), how the Merit Badge pamphlets are obtained, how many badges each Counselor can sign up to teach and any other issues that the Unit Committee feels should be in writing.

### **The Merit Badge Application Form:**

The Merit Badge Application Form is not necessarily blue. {Show the card, if possible hand one to everyone in the class room or have a blown-up copy}. It is the color of tag board that is used by the Council when the Applications need to be re-produced. The card is 2 sided with 3 distinct portions. There is no true “front” or “back” side. When looked at from the side with the printing date the following information appears from left to right:

Information for Applicant: Re-enforces the requirement of having a registered counselor, the buddy system and that the Scout needs to return the finished card to his Unit Leader when he has completed the Badge.

Information for Counselor: Reinforces that the Unit Leader must sign the card before the Scout begins the badge, the buddy system, and that the Counselor MAY NOT change any requirement while sharing knowledge and experience with the Scout.

Record of Completed Requirements: The middle portion of the dated side of the card gives space for the Counselor to record the Scout's progress. If the Scout completes more than one requirement on a given date they can be recorded on the same line. For example: if the Scout completes the first 4 sub-requirements for a badge with 3 remaining sub-requirements the line could read 1a-d; 1/5/07; AAA. When all of the requirements have been completed the Counselor can write "Complete" across the whole section. Often Camp Counselors will write the partial completed with their signature across this area and the Scout will ask the new Counselor to complete the badge with him. You may not re-test or ask for skills/requirements already completed but you can ask enough questions to ensure his knowledge of the topic. A new Merit Badge Application Form can be stapled to the original if this section of the card is full for any reason. There are Badges that have many requirements and all may not fit on a single card. Another option would be to staple an index card to the Merit Badge Application and list the Requirement number, date and Counselors initials as the remaining requirements are completed. {As a reminder, partial is not a dental term. There are many situations where a Scout could have a partial badge that he wishes to complete. This is one aspect of Merit Badge Counseling}.

Application For Merit Badge: This is the right hand portion of the card. The Scout fills out the top section of this card with the requested information. If he has not done so, ask him to fill out more than his name. Remembering that Merit Badges are a form of mini-job to give experience with adults, part of real life is filling out applications. The word "Explorer" is still on the form. There are still "Explorer" Scouts, however, it may be crossed out and the word "Venture Scout" may be placed above. He should know his Unit Number, District and Council. The final line on this form is the Unit Leader's signature and a date. If this information is missing, send the Scout(s) back to their Unit Leader for this Signature. It is part of the process that the Unit Leader be aware that the Scout is doing the particular Merit Badge at this time. If the date is not current, that is not an issue, that it is there and that a Unit Leader signed for the Scout to do the Merit Badge is what is important.

*Turn the Merit Badge Application Card Over*  
The card will now be read from right to left.

Counselor's Record: The Scout should fill out his name, Unit, date, and the Merit Badge that he is asking the Counselor to coach him in. There is an area for Partial Completion. Any Counselor may fill that information in if the Scout *is not* going to complete the Badge with the same Counselor that he started with. {There are many reasons for changing Counselors the most common is that a badge is started at Summer Camp, another is that the Scout or Counselor moves}. The Counselor who finishes the Badge with the Scout **keeps** this portion of the card for their records. It is suggested that a small file box or baseball card holder be used for this purpose. The reason for the Counselor keeping a record is if questions are asked or if the Scout needs the information on the Counselor's record at another point in time. Keeping the card also helps if the Merit Badge Counselor is registered for more than 5 Merit Badges. It is Council Policy that no Counselor work with any one Scout for more than 5 Badges. The card should be kept by the Counselor until after the Scout turns 18 years old.

Applicant's Record: Once again the Scout should fill out his name and the name of the Merit Badge he is applying for. The approval date and signature of the Counselor lines *are not* filled in until all of the Merit Badge requirements have been successfully completed. The final line is where the Unit Leader signs *after* the Scout and the Counselor have completed and signed the Merit Badge Application form. When the Unit Leader has signed the completed form the Scout should receive recognition according to Unit policy.

Counselor's Information: The left hand side of the card is filled out by the Counselor. It includes the Merit Badge name, The Counselor's personal information, if the Counselor chooses a phone number only with no home address may be written in the space provided. The information allows the Scout to contact the Counselor about the badge while he is working on it. The Counselor *does not* sign or date this portion of the card *until* the Scout has completed **ALL** of the requirements necessary for the Badge. The final section of this portion of the card is for the Unit Leader responsible for recording Merit Badge information. It includes the date and signature of the recorder and when the Badge was presented. It is up to the Unit to state in their written policies what happens to the remaining two sections of the Merit Badge Application.

### **The Completed Merit Badge Application**

At this point, the Counselor has his/her section. The Unit can choose to keep both section in a file. The other option is to give the Applicant's Record section to the Scout to file with his "Merit Badge Card" and keep the Application For Merit Badge section in the Unit file. The decision should be in writing and consistent with emphasis on the importance of keeping the records and being able to locate them if necessary. No where is it stated that any part of the Merit Badge Application form goes to the District or the Council, nor is it turned in with the Advancement Report Form.

## Sample Steps for Earning Merit Badges:

1. The Scout asks for a signed Merit Badge card from the Scouter delegated to provide the cards.  
*Discussion of who this designated Scouter can be -up to committee. Scout master must still be aware of which boys are taking which badges and from whom.*
2. The delegated Scouter supplies the Scout with names and contact information for potential Merit Badge Counselors.
3. The Scout obtains a copy of the Merit Badge pamphlet on his chosen subject in the manner chosen by the Unit. The Unit is responsible for ensuring the Scouts and Counselors have the current requirements if the pamphlet does not contain the current requirements.
4. The Scout contacts the Merit Badge Counselor. The Counselor should have a notebook that includes information for the badge, have read the Merit Badge pamphlet for the badge, should know and be able to coach the Scout through the topic and activities involved with the badge, and have a plan for working with the Scout. This plan should be discussed during the first contact which is generally over the telephone. The Scout should have a clear and realistic expectation of what the badge entails.
5. With a buddy, the Scout meets with the Merit Badge Counselor. The Scouts and the Counselor should both be taking notes and make sure that the Scout understands what is necessary for them to accomplish before the next meeting. A date should be scheduled for the next meeting.
6. The Scout works with the Counselor and performs the tasks necessary in order to meet the badge requirements.



7. When the Counselor is satisfied that all requirements have been completed, the Merit Badge card is signed. No additional requirements may be added or subtracted. This goes back to the butterfly example used before. None of the Merit Badges can be added to or subtracted from - please do not require more or less than the requirements call for. Heap praise upon the Scouts for a job well done.

8. The Merit Badge Counselor keeps the portion of the Merit Badge card titled "Counselor's Record" and returns the other portions to the Scout. The "Counselor's Record" is a back-up for the Scout in case he, at any point, needs to prove that he has actually finished the badge. The "Counselor's Record" can be kept in the same notebook used for the badge information by utilizing baseball card protector sheets. The "Counselor's Record" has saved more than one Scout as records were missing when he went to apply for Eagle. Being able to go back to the Counselor is yet another way that the Counselor supports the Scouts. The cards should be kept until the Scout is at least 18 years old.
9. The Scout follows his Unit's procedures for turning in the "Applicant's Record" portion of the card.
10. The Troop's process for posting and recognizing the Scout's achievement is put in place.
11. The Scout has until his 18<sup>th</sup> birthday to complete work on a Merit Badge.
12. A Merit Badge stays on the Scout's permanent record after being awarded. Process & Review generally sides with the Scout in these matters.



### **Suggestions for Committee and Scoutmaster on the Merit Badge Process**

- \*Part of the Leader's job is to ensure quality control over the program.
- \* Have a written set of guidelines for your Units Merit Badge Process.
- \*Remember that a Scout is honest-if he produces a signed card and says he fulfilled the requirements-believe him.
- \*Look at the age and development level of the Scout before giving him a list of Counselors for a badge. Counsel the youth to work on badges he is ready for. EX: most 11 year old boys will not be able to complete Personal Finance or Citizenship in the World without a lot of coaching from an adult.
- \*Remind all Counselors that they are making a minimum one year commitment to the program for every boy in your Unit. They cannot sign up for a single event (such as a Merit Badge Fair) without approval from the Council Advancement Chairman. No one can sign up to help just a single boy.

- \*When there is a change in the Counselor's registration status mid-term (move, no longer available, ect..) it is the place of the Unit to inform the District Advancement Chairman so that the Counselor's name can be removed from the District Merit Badge List.
- \*Give each parent in your unit a Merit Badge application and ask them what they can do and feel comfortable doing. Let them know that by signing up they would be available to the whole troop and that all boys, or no boys, could ask for their help.
- \*Emphasize to the boys and their parents the need to keep their copy of the MB cards and keep good records so they have all the necessary dates when they complete their Eagle Application Form.
- \*Stress to everyone involved the importance of having the Scout choose a variety of Counselors. Merit Badges should be seen as mini-jobs, creating the opportunity for the Scout to work with many diverse adults in a safe learning environment.
- \*It is appropriate to go outside of your Unit to find a Counselor if there is not a Counselor available within your Unit for a given Badge. This is why the District and the Council have a list of approved Merit Badge Counselors that covers the whole Cascade Pacific Boy Scout area.

### **Scouts with Special Needs:**

There is a special committee within the Cascade Pacific Council to help Scouts with special needs work their way to Eagle Rank. The intent of this Committee is to provide assistance and facilitation in the area of Advancement for Scouts with disabilities, their families, Scoutmasters and Troop Committees. It is currently estimated that there are 43 million individuals in the United States with disabilities. It is the goal of the Scouts with Special Needs Committee to provide an avenue for all of our sons to share in the opportunity to experience the principles and pleasures provided through participation in the Boy Scouts of America. The Cascade Pacific Council Special Needs Committee is Chaired by Dr. Ken Ettinger 2505 SW 112<sup>th</sup> Place Portland OR 97225 503-526-0718



## Modification of Rank Requirements For Scouts with Special Needs

There are two basic principles to consider:

1) Rank Advancement from Tenderfoot to First Class

There is great flexibility to modify the early rank advancement criteria to enable a Scout with special needs to achieve his advancement goals. An “Individual Scout Achievement” is a tool that has been developed to help facilitate this end. It can be obtained through the Scout Office and has been incorporated into the Council Advancement Policies and Procedures Manual. Once completed, it should be submitted to the Advancement Committee for Scouts with Special Needs for review and approval.

2) Rank Advancement for Star, Life and Eagle Ranks

The Committee does not have the same flexibility to modify Merit Badge requirements. The National Regulations state that:

“No Council, District, Unit or Individual has the authority to add to, or subtract from, any Advancement Requirement.”

Yet, the Special Needs Committee has been very successful in developing avenues where the Scout has been able to obtain a given required Merit Badge, without alteration in the practice or principle of the badge requirements. For those who attempted a Merit Badge but were unable to complete its requirements, an “Alternative Merit Badge Program” is available. Through the principle of “reasonable accommodation” every effort is made by the Committee to provide the Scouting experience to all.

## Extensions Beyond Age 18 For Scouts With Special Needs:

National regulations have provided the opportunity for Scouts with Special Needs to continue in the pursuit of Advancement beyond the age of 18 years. Notification and proper medical documentation must be submitted to the Special Needs Committee for evaluation and approval.

How to proceed:

- 1) Contact the Cascade Pacific Council for the necessary forms to fill out “Application for Individual Scout Achievement Plan”
- 2) Follow the directions and fill out every line on the form
- 3) Send the form to the Special Needs Committee % Cascade Pacific Council Office
- 4) You will be contacted.



The Council provides training and resources for Adult Leaders and Merit Badge Counselors:

- ❖ Individual and Group Counselor training on both the Unit and District levels
- ❖ On-line Fast Start and Youth Protection (which are a wonderful way to introduce non-Scouters to what Scouting is all about)
- ❖ Round Table
- ❖ District Trainings
- ❖ Extravaganza
- ❖ Trainers Development Conference
- ❖ Outdoor Skills Institute
- ❖ Wood Badge
- ❖ many other Unit, District and Council events.

**Resources:**

BSA Program Helps

BSA Handbook

BSA Adult Application

BSA Application for Merit Badge Card

BSA Scoutmaster Handbook

CPC Advancement Committee

2005 Boy Scout Requirement Book

BSA Youth Protection Guidelines

New Merriam-Webster Dictionary

District Advancement Committees

CPC Extravaganza Notebook 2004

Merit Badge Counselor Reference Manual

Merit Badge Counselor Information Sheet

Advancement Policies and Procedures Manuals (National {33088C 1999}  
and CPC {revised 12/2000})

[www.cpcbbsa.org](http://www.cpcbbsa.org)

This syllabus was revised 2-1-05 by Catherine Harding [harding@oregonsbest.com](mailto:harding@oregonsbest.com)