



MERIT BADGE COUNSELOR INFORMATION

Merit badges open doors to worlds that Scouts would never otherwise discover!

Whatever your area of expertise or interest, merit badge counselors can play a vital role in stirring a Scout's curiosity with their interests. By offering your time, experience, and knowledge to guide Scouts in your interests, a merit badge counselor can fire a Scout's imagination and influence their career choice.!

WHO CAN BE A MERIT BADGE COUNSELOR?

In order to meet the basic requirements to serve as a Merit Badge counselor, you must be:

- At least 18 years of age
- Of good moral character
- Have some education, background, expertise, or experience in the subject or subjects you choose to counsel
- Have the ability and desire to work with Scouts from 12 to 17 years of age

As a merit badge counselor, your mission is to join fun with learning. You are both a teacher and mentor to the Scout as they work on a merit badge and learn by doing.

HERE ARE THE SIX BASIC STEPS TO BECOME A MERIT BADGE COUNSELOR:

(1). Decide which badges you are qualified to counsel.

→ Read all the requirements for any badge that may interest you, or that you feel you are qualified to teach - through your own education, experience, or knowledge. Choose the ones that you would like to counsel from this link:

<https://www.scouting.org/programs/scouts-bsa/advancement-and-awards/merit-badges/>

→ Check out what is involved in counseling at this link:

<https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/512-065.pdf>

→ The Boy Scouts of America has three expectations from a merit badge counselor:

- a). You have 1 year to take the online merit badge counselor training. This training will be especially helpful if you are new to Scouting.
- b). You are expected to respond to inquiries from Scouts seeking a merit badge counselor if you set up your preference as "Available". These inquiries are usually in the form of emails, so you must check the email address you provided every few days.
- c). You are expected to reply to the required annual January email requesting you to say whether you wish to remain a merit badge counselor or not.

(2). Complete and sign an Adult Application to register with your district. Please use Position Code as #42, Merit Badge Counselor.

→ There is NO charge for counselors, and the form is found at this link:

https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/524-501.pdf?_gl=1*1fcddf* ga*MTYxMzgyNzk0Ny4xNjQ1NzE0ODE4* ga_20G0JHESG4* MTY0NTcxNDgxNy4xLjEuMTY0NTcxNTkzMC41

→ This application is available from your troop or Council office and needs only your signature on both the application and the Disclosure/Authorization Form.

(3). Complete the BSA Youth Protection Training from this link:

<https://www.scouting.org/training/youth-protection/>

→ The Boy Scouts of America seeks to create a safe environment for young people and adult leaders to enjoy the program and related activities. BSA Youth Protection Training helps preserve that environment.

→ After completing the training, be sure to print a copy in Adobe.PDF format of your BSA Youth Protection Training completion certificate - to create an electronic copy for your use. → You must have completed Youth Protection training within the past two years at the time of application.

→ For creating an account in my.scouting.org and taking YPT training see this link”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=64ZtPfOC71M>

(4). If you reside in Pennsylvania you will need the Act 153 clearances:

a). The PA State Police clearance (good for five years)

b). PA Department of Human Services Clearance (good for five years)

c). Either Act 114 fingerprints (if you have not lived in PA for 10 years)

OR the “Disclosure Statement Application for Volunteers” (both good for 5 years).

→ These three clearances can be obtained through the Five Rivers Council website link:

<https://fiveriversbsa.org/youth-protection/pennsylvania-act-153-background-checks-information/>

→ The (4)(c) Disclosure statement can be found at the link below:

<https://www.dhs.pa.gov/KeepKidsSafe/Resources/Documents/Disclosure%20Statement%20for%20Volunteers.pdf>

(5). Complete/sign the BSA Merit Badge Counselor Information Form at this link:

<https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/34405.pdf>

→ You may request up to 12 merit badges with no more than 3 Eagle-required. (The spirit of the program is to expose the Scout to a wide circle of adults to help broaden their perspectives).

→ Please justify on the form why you are qualified to counsel these badges in order to be approved by the Council. You can choose which Scouts you wish to counsel on the form but will later need to do this again through your Scoutbook merit badge counselor account.

→ There are specific requirements for counselors who desire to counsel merit badges for shooting sports (Archery, Rifle Shooting, Shotgun Shooting), waterfront sports

(Canoeing, Kayaking, Lifesaving, Rowing, Scuba Diving, Swimming, Whitewater), Climbing, or Snow Sports. Applicants for these badges should attach copies of their licenses or certifications to support their knowledge/training in the subject. Details on specific qualifications/certificates can be found in the 2021 Guide to Advancement, Section 7.0.1.1 at the link below:

<https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/33088.pdf>

(6). Return all your applicable forms only to your District Advancement Chair:

Andaste - Andrew Wales dr.andrewwales@gmail.com (570) 882-8734

Indian Waters - Michael MacDougall macdougall.m.iw.bsa@gmail.com (607) 378-9173

Thunderbird - Nancy Potter npotter50@stny.rr.com 607-698-4038

Williamson Road - Connie Cummings irrdesign@verizon.net 814-367-8093

→ Once the advancement chair has received merit badge application paperwork, it will be reviewed to assure it is complete. A common error is the failure to list the applicant's qualifications to counsel each particular merit badge. This is a critical factor in the application. Please take the time to list your detailed qualifications on this form or an additional sheet, as the form has very limited space. You will be contacted directly should there be any questions or missing data.

→ New Merit Badge counselors may not begin working with Scouts until approval is received from the District Advancement representative and also the BSA. You may begin counseling after you have been notified that your application has been processed and accepted by the BSA.

→ As your acceptance, you will receive an email from Scoutbook asking you to create an account. You must use the same name and password with Scoutbook that you used with my.scouting.org to take your YPT training. You will then be asked to fill out your preferences. You should then set up your profile in Scoutbook. Instructions can be found at this link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OUNU_URIT94

MERIT BADGE COUNSELOR TRAINING

This training is required within the first year for all counselors:

[Directions for taking Merit Badge Counselor Training through My.Scouting.org:](#)

BELOW ARE LINKS TO ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR COUNSELORS:

Guide to Safe Scouting:

<https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/34416.pdf>

Merit Badge Counselor Orientation:

<https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/18-125.pdf>

Merit Badge Counselor Group Instruction Guide:

https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/512-066_web.pdf