

Handbook

Troops

20 & 21

Revision 1.3 Jan 2019

The purpose of this handbook is to introduce new members to Troops 20&21 and the overwhelming amount of BSA resources that are available. It does not contain all of the answers; it points to them.

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Getting Started

Welcome

We're glad you've chosen to join this troop, and we hope this information will help you and your youth have the best possible Scout experience.

Troop goal. The major goal of Troops 20 & 21 is to provide superior Scouting programs. We emphasize the outdoor program by trying to have some type of outdoor activity every month. We also stress individual development, working with each Scout toward improving leadership skills and achieving the rank of Eagle. Since the ultimate objective of Scouting is to develop good citizens and tomorrow's leaders, we enforce personal and leadership skills by having the youth—not the adults—lead the troop.

Troop basics. Troop 20 was founded in 1955, and is part of the Toqua District and the Great Smoky Mountain Council. We are sponsored by First Cumberland Presbyterian Church, 6900 Nubbin Ridge Road, Knoxville. Troop 21 was founded in 2019, when girls were first permitted to join Scouts. These two troops share equipment and facilities. Each troop has its own Scoutmaster and are separate entities. They also have separate committees.

The Troops meet every Monday night at First Cumberland Presbyterian Church, 7:00-8:30 p.m. We generally follow the Knox County Schools' schedule: when school is canceled, we don't hold meetings.

The troops are each divided into patrols of about eight Scouts each. Each patrol elects its own leaders as well as troop leaders. These elected Scouts make up the Patrol Leaders' Council. The PLC plans the troop's programs, but each Scout—including yours—has input into this planning by communicating their ideas, interests, and desires to their elected peer leaders.

Annually, the Troops enjoy several special outings and projects. The Troops participate in the Toqua District Spring and Fall Camporees and attend summer camp at Camp Buck Toms in Rockwood, TN. When traveling, the Troops will have separate campsites.

To help the Scouts advance, the troop teaches Scout skills and merit badge classes during the fall and winter. The Scouts' individual advancements are recognized many times each year at Courts of Honor. The troops may share Courts of Honor.

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Scout Basics

Mission Statement. The mission of the BSA is to prepare young people to make ethical and moral choices over their lifetimes by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Law.

Scout Oath.

On my honor I will do my best To do my duty to God and my country and to obey the Scout Law; To help other people at all times; To keep myself physically strong, mentally awake

Scout Law.

A Scout is:

Trustworthy, Loyal, Helpful, Friendly, Courteous, Kind, Obedient, Cheerful, Thrifty, Brave, Clean, and Reverent.

Scout Motto. Be Prepared.

Scout Slogan. Do a Good Turn Daily.

The Transition into Scouts

From Cub Scouts. Youth may join the Troop as soon as they meet one of three criteria: 1. are 11 years old 2. have finished the fifth grade 3. 10 years old and have earned the Arrow of Light (even before the ceremony). In fact, as soon as you have signed up your youth for the troop and paid your dues, *start coming to meetings!* Most youth benefit from a seamless transition from Cub Scouts to Scouts, and we highly recommend that you not prolong their joining the troop and attending meetings solely for their Arrow of Light ceremony. Of course, the Arrow of Light is important, both as a Cub and as a Scout. The Arrow of Light patch is the only emblem that carries over from Cub Scouting into Scouting, and your Scout will wear it on their Scout uniform (and later as an adult).

As a first-time Scout. As soon as your youth has signed up for the Troop and you pay dues, *start coming to meetings!* The sooner your youth becomes involved, the better experience they will have and the sooner they will consider themselves “part of the group.” Soon afterwards, the troop will honor new Scouts during a joining ceremony, where the Scoutmaster will welcome them into the troop.

New Scouts are eligible for a discount on the summer camp fee.

What To Do First

Start coming to meetings. As soon as you sign up your youth for Troop 20 or 21 and pay dues, start taking them to meetings. By being involved immediately, your Scout will be more excited about joining and get the most out of every Scout opportunity.

Read the Introduction to the Scout Handbook –Adventure Ahead. It will answer many questions.

Fill out the BSA Youth Application. Along with your youth, fill out the application and return it to the Scoutmaster.

Fill out the BSA Health Form A/B. The BSA Health Form can be found here [BSA Health Form](#). Each person who goes on an outing (adult and scout) must have a health form with a copy of their insurance card attached. For short trips (under 72 hours) only parts A/B are required. For long trips or high adventure trips part C is also required. Part C must be signed by a health professional. Return it to the Scoutmaster or Committee Chair. *Please keep a copy of this form for your own records*

Get a Troopmaster account. Troopmaster tracks advancement, participation, and members' contact information. It can be used on a PC or mobile device. The app is a free download.

Fill out the Troop Resource Form that lets the troop know your talents and abilities. https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/512-116_WB.pdf

Buy a uniform. Troop 20/21 has two uniforms: Field, which is formal, and Activity, which is informal. You can buy these uniforms at the Scout Shop, or through the Scout Catalog. The following list describes each uniform and when it's worn. Used uniforms and insignia are sometimes available in the troop's storeroom. Scouts are encouraged to pass on uniform items that are no longer needed. The Troop provides a neckerchief, council patch, and troop numbers for each new Scout.

Official Field Uniform (sometimes called Class A)

Consists of

- Official Scout shirt.
- Troop 20/21 neckerchief (provided by the troop and worn for Courts of Honor or other formal occasions as announced).
- Proper patches (Scouting patch, troop number, GSMC shoulder patch, and any other earned patches; the *Scout Handbook pp22-23* describe where these patches should go on the Scout shirt).
- Reasonable shorts or pants, if Scout pants are not in your budget (a single, neutral color, such as blue jean or khaki but olive green is preferred). **No gym shorts.***
- Scout socks.
- Reasonable shoes. No open toed.
- As the Scout earns merit badges, a merit badge sash is also part of the Class A. It can be purchased at the Scout Shop.

Is worn for

Troop meetings.

Traveling to and from outings and camp.

Courts of Honor and all other ceremonies. (With neckerchief and merit badge sash.)

Other special events.

Activity Uniform (sometimes called Class B)

Consists of

- Troop or other Scout t-shirt (Camp Buck Toms, Jamboree, etc.).
- Reasonable shorts or pants (a single, neutral color, such as blue jean or khaki, olive green is preferred).
- Scout socks.
- Reasonable shoes. No open toed.

Is worn for

Outings

Work days

Many youth wear short-sleeved shirts all year and wear jeans in the winter and Scout shorts and socks in warmer weather. Official Scout pants are recommended but not required. They're very sturdy, dry quickly, and have zip off legs and cargo pockets. A Scout cap is also optional.

Checklist of Initial Requirements

We hope that this checklist of requirements will help simplify your and your youth's transition into Troop 20/21. Please feel free to check off each item as you finish it.

First

- _____ Sign up for Troop by completing a Youth Application.
- _____ Pay dues.
- _____ Start coming to meetings: troop meetings for your Scout and Troop Committee meetings for you.
- _____ Give your name and email address (and Scout's) to the Parent Unit Coordinator. (This will ensure that you're placed on the email distribution list.)
- _____ Fill out the *Troop Resources* form.
- _____ Fill out the *BSA Health Form*.
- _____ Return both forms to the Scoutmaster or Committee Chair.
- _____ Take Youth Protection Training (YPT). <https://My.Scouting.Org>

Next, buy

- _____ Official Scout shirt.

Buy or make sure you have

- _____ Great Smoky Mountain Council patch.
 - _____ Troop 20 or 21 shoulder number. (provided by the troop)
 - _____ Reasonable (single, solid-colored) pants or shorts.
 - _____ Reasonable (comfortable, durable) shoes and socks.
- (Neckerchief, Scout Handbook, and green shoulder loops will be presented during the joining ceremony. You don't have to buy them.)

You may (but don't have to) buy

- _____ Subscription to *Boys' Life*, the official Scout magazine.
- _____ Official Scout pants and/or shorts.
- _____ Official Scout socks.
- _____ BSA Requirements Book

Expectations for Your Scout

Each Scout is expected to be the best Scout they can be. In order for them to do so, and for them to get the most out of their Scout experience, they should always try to do the following:

Live by the Scout Oath. The Scout Oath provides a model for each Scout to strive to live by, doing their best to be dutiful to God and country, to be obedient to the Scout Law, to be helpful, strong, mentally awake, and morally straight. For additional information on the Scout codes, see Scout Basics.

Be active in the Troop. Each Scout is expected to attend meetings regularly, participate in required activities, and show interest in the troop.

Strive for advancement. One of our troop's goals is for every Scout to advance to the Eagle rank. We provide as many opportunities for advancement as possible, but it's ultimately each Scout's responsibility to work toward rank advancement. For additional information on advancement, please see the section on *Advancing*.

Take responsibility. Each Scout should be responsible. This includes keeping up with events and activities, taking charge of their own advancement, accepting responsibility for their own actions, and learning to participate in positions of leadership.

Expectations for You

As parents, you're no doubt excited—and nervous—about your youth joining Scouts! Remember, becoming acquainted with Scouting will take time, and no one expects you to be an expert. The best way to learn is to jump right in!

Encourage your youth. Perhaps the most important thing you can do to help your youth be a successful Scout is to encourage them. Of course, we ultimately want each Scout to take responsibility for their own citizenship in the troop, but your support—especially as they begin Scout life—is vital to their feeling at home in the troop.

Start coming to the Troop Committee meetings as soon as possible. We can't stress enough how important the Troop Committee is for both you and your Scout. We encourage you to start coming as soon as possible and enjoying all of its benefits. First, the committee provides parents with the company and support of other parents who are all experiencing the same thing! It's also a wonderful way to get to meet and work with troop leaders, including the Scoutmaster and the assistants. The Troop Committee lets you support the Troop and your Scout by volunteering for short-term, long-term, and even one-time help. Keep in mind that your help does much more than promote the troop; it shows support for your youth's Scouting endeavors!

Ask questions. For each of the many questions you have, there's someone in the troop who has the answer. If your question is one that your youth can find the answer to, encourage them to do so; learning to interact with others in the troop will accelerate their becoming comfortable in the troop. If your question is one that only *you* can get the answer to, please contact either the Troop Committee Chairperson, the Scoutmaster, or one of the assistants. For more information on who to contact when, see the *Contacts* section in this chapter.

Check your troop email. If you haven't done so already, give your name and email address to the Troop Committee Chairperson, who will place you on the troop email distribution list. Please check your email often for notices from the troop; we communicate upcoming activities, announcement, reminders, and other information via this list. The Troop newsletter is sent every Sunday.

Volunteer if you can. If you'd like to become more involved in the Troop, we have numerous offices, positions, and activities open for you. These volunteer positions are listed and explained in a later chapter of this handbook, *Volunteering Yourself*. If you're interested in any of these in particular, please contact the Troop Committee Chairperson.

Contacts

See the Troop web site for current contact info.

<https://tmweb.troopmaster.com/mysite/Troop20Knox>

For Scouts. Since we're a large and active troop, communication is very important! *Remember, though, keeping track of troop activities is ultimately your Scout's responsibility* and will help them take charge of their own scheduling. Encourage your Scout to contact one of their patrol or troop leaders, an Assistant Scoutmaster, or the Scoutmaster with any questions or problems. The basic "chain of command" is on page 24 of the Scout Handbook. Your Scout can get the names and numbers of these people from the troop web site.

Assistant Patrol Leader is a youth leader who can answer questions about patrol activities.

Patrol Leader is a youth leader who can answer questions about patrol activities. He's also your Scout's liaison to the Patrol Leaders' Council, which plans and conducts the troop's activities. As such, the patrol leader represents the Scout's interests to the PLC.

Quartermaster is a youth leader who can help with questions about patrol supplies and equipment.

Assistant Senior Patrol Leader is a youth leader who can deal with questions about troop activities.

Senior Patrol Leader is a youth leader who can also handle questions about troop activities.

Scout Parent Unit Coordinator is an adult leader who can inform you about troop activities.

For parents. As parents, your primary resource will be the Scout Parent Unit Coordinator. Troop Committee meetings are held once a month during the Troop meetings, and by attending them, you'll stay on top of the troop's activities. You will also get information about outings and activities via the troop web site and email distribution list. *Please contact the Scout Parent Unit Coordinator as soon as possible to have your name and email address added to the list, and remember to check these emails frequently!*

Resources

Of course, this handbook could never answer all of your questions about Scouting. Keep the following resources in mind as other places to turn to for answers to questions or just to learn more about the BSA and Scouting!

[Troop web site](#) includes calendar, advancement history, partial merit badge status, leader contact information, forms, documents, and information on the email distribution list. Ask a leader for the username and password.

The Scout Shop sells Scout items including uniforms, publications, and equipment.
1333 Old Weisgarber Rd, Knoxville, TN 37909 865-588-1940

The Scout Catalog lists and sells all available Scout paraphernalia and publications.
1-800-323-0732 www.scoutstuff.org

Campmor is an online catalog of camping equipment. www.campmor.com
Local camping stores offer discounts to Scouts, if you show the ID card.

Scout Handbook is the official guide that all Scouts should have and read. It is presented to available at the Scout Shop or through the Scout Catalog. (In this handbook, reference will be made to pages in the 13th edition of the SH.)

Boys' Life magazine is the national magazine for Scouts. This magazine is recommended but not required. Discount subscriptions are available to Scouts through the Troop. See the troop treasurer for more information. www.boyslife.org

Boy Scouts of America web site contains general information on Scouts, programs, purposes, organization, etc. www.scouting.org

Great Smoky Mountain Council web site has calendars and newsletters. <http://www.easttncscouts.org/>

U.S. Scouting Service Project is a site that indexes and provides explanations on almost every aspect of Scouting. www.usscouts.org

BSA Field Book is an advanced handbook for outdoor skills.

Information for volunteers and parents.

Scouting magazine is the official magazine for Scout volunteers. www.scoutingmagazine.org

Guide to Safe Scouting is a guide for volunteers and parents to safe Scouting activities. Link on Troop site.

Adult Training requirements and links to online courses are on the Troop site.

Scoutmaster Handbook is to adults what the BSA Handbook is to youth.

Passport to High Adventure is a manual for older Scouts and volunteers about high-adventure treks.

The MacScouter is another user-friendly site that indexes online Scouting information.
www.macscouter.com

Guide to a boy-led troop <http://scoutmaster.org/Boy%20Led%20Troop.pdf>

Information on advancement.

Scout Requirements is a book that gives guidelines for merit badges, rank advancement, and other awards.

Merit Badge pamphlets are available for each badge. The Troop library has many of them available for loan. Requirements and worksheets for each badge are also available at www.meritbadge.org.

Information on Scout leadership.

Patrol Leader Handbook & Senior Patrol Leader Handbook are essential for Scouts in those positions

Organization of Troops 20 & 21

Chartered Organization. The Boy Scouts of America requires every troop to have a chartering organization whose values and goals are like the Scouts'. Our chartering organization is First Cumberland Presbyterian Church, which lets us use its facilities and supports us in many other ways.

Chartered Organization Representative. The COR is an adult associated with the chartering organization that serves as a go-between for the organization and the troop. This individual helps the troop with issues about using the facilities and helps maintain and strengthen the relationship between the organization and the troop.

Patrols. Troop 20 & 21 are youth-led troops divided into patrols loosely based on the Scouts' ages. A patrol is a grouping of six to eight Scouts who work together, and each patrol has its own peer leaders. Each patrol has a patrol parent who mentors the Patrol Leader and Assistant Patrol Leader. After joining the troop, your Scout will become part of a patrol composed of other first-year Scouts. The first year Scouts will have an older Scout assigned as a Troop Guide to help them learn the basics. The general organization and leadership of the troop are as follows.

Patrol leaders. Patrol leaders are Scouts who are elected by their patrols to lead and to represent the patrols. Patrol Leaders give leadership to members of their patrol and represent them on the Patrol Leaders' Council.

Assistant Patrol Leaders fill in for the Patrol Leaders when the Patrol Leaders are absent. They also help lead their patrols.

Troop leaders. Troop leaders are Scouts who are elected by the troop to lead the troop, help plan activities, and be responsible for various troop activities.

- **Senior Patrol Leader** is the top youth leader in the troop. The SPL conducts the Patrol Leaders' Council and, in consultation with the adult leaders, guides the troop.
- **Assistant Senior Patrol Leader** helps the Senior Patrol Leader and fills in for them when they must be absent.
- **Quartermaster** is responsible for troop supplies and equipment.
- **Historian** collects and maintains troop memorabilia and information on former troop members.
- **Librarian** keeps troop books, pamphlets, magazines, and audiovisuals. All of these are available for use by any troop member.
- **Instructor** teaches one or more advancement skills to troop members.
- **Chaplain Aide** helps with troop religious services and promotes religious emblems program.
- **Scribe** is the troop secretary; they take attendance and help collect dues and fines.

The Patrol Leaders' Council. The Patrol Leaders' Council, *not the adult leaders*, is responsible for planning and conducting the troop's activities. The following voting members compose the Council: Senior Patrol Leader, Assistant Senior Patrol Leaders, and Patrol Leaders. At its monthly meetings, the Council organizes and assigns activity responsibilities for the weekly troop meetings. Also, the council plans troop activities every six months and then submits its plans to the Troop (Parents') Committee for approval. Org chart is on page 24 of the Handbook.

Adult leaders

The Scoutmaster is the adult leader responsible for the image and program of the troop. They are a registered volunteer who, along with the Assistant Scoutmasters, works directly with the Scouts by training and guiding them. The SM encourages other adult leaders to do the same. They conduct conferences with each Scout for all rank advancements, supervise elections, and aid in recruiting. To keep abreast of the newest developments in Scouting, they participate in council and district events, and is familiar with Scouting policies and literature. The SM also meets with the Patrol Leaders' Council and the Troop (Parents') Committee.

Assistant Scoutmasters are assigned specific program duties and report to the Scoutmaster.

The Troop Committee. The Troop Committee is the parents' committee for the Troop; it's a support group both for parents and leaders. Involvement in the committee is *extremely* important; it has three main purposes:

- To keep parents informed about troop activities.
- To encourage parental involvement in the troop.
- To provide the troop with the assets it needs to operate.

To keep yourself informed and to support your youth during their Scout experience, please make every effort to attend these meetings. They are held on the second Monday of each month during the regular troop meeting time (7:00-8:30 p.m.) at First Cumberland Presbyterian Church. Minutes from each meeting are distributed via email to all parents on the distribution list. (To have your name and email address added to the list, please contact the Troop Committee Chairperson.) Troop 20 is a success because of the support and participation of all of our parents and guardians. You may be available only for short or one-time commitments or you may want to become a regular volunteer leader; whatever your skills, interests, and available time, the *Troop needs you!*

Organizational Chart see Scout Handbook page 24

Annual Events

The Troops are proud to have several very exciting annual events that are not only fun but also provide service to the community and give each Scout the opportunity for advancement. *Activities marked with an asterisk are required for each Scout.* A short explanation of each event follows, but for more complete information on the camping activities, please see the chapter called *Enjoying Outings*.

Scout Sunday. Scout Sunday is a time for Troops 20 & 21 to show their support to Cumberland First Presbyterian Church. On this Sunday in February, Scouts and their parents are invited to First Cumberland's regular morning worship service. The church recognizes the Scouts, and the SPL talks about the troop's recent activities. Scout Sunday is a very important event; it's a chance for the church to recognize the value of Scouting and for our troops to show appreciation for the church's support.

Merit badge colleges Scouts may attend four merit badge colleges held on Saturdays in January, February, and March. Signups begin in October at troop meetings.

www.tntech.edu/mbu www.roanestate.edu/mbc

Scouting for Food Scouts work shifts at the entrance to local supermarkets on two Saturdays in January/February, collecting food for local food banks.

Fall and Spring Camporees. The Toqua district holds two camporees each year, in the spring and the fall. During these camporees, our Troops come together with other troops in our district to compete in games, help in service projects, and have fun.

Courts of Honor are usually scheduled for September, December, and May. Scouts are presented awards. (The actual date of an award is when the Scout completes a merit badge or passes a board of review.) Additional, more casual, COH may be held throughout the year.

Summer Camp. Each June, Troops 20 & 21 attend summer camp at Camp Buck Toms. This is much more than just an exciting experience. During camp, each Scout chooses classes that they take to earn particular merit badges, works toward advancement, and learns more about Scouts. The troops will be in different camp sites.

Winter Camp We spend the week between Christmas and New Years at Camp Pellissippi, having fun and taking merit badge classes.

Troop elections are held twice a year. The Senior Patrol Leader and Patrol Leaders are voted on by youth troop members. Other troop leaders are appointed.

A series of **bike rides** are held each fall. The rides are designed to fulfill the requirements for Cycling Merit Badge. Families are welcome.

WEBELOS visit day usually occurs in the fall. The Scouts invite nearby WEBELOS dens to visit the troop and see what Scouts do.

Popcorn sale takes place in the fall. Proceeds go to the council, troop, and the individual Scouts.

Enjoying Outings

Scouting is $\frac{3}{4}$ outing. Be prepared for outings.

Scout Handbook 13th edition has the answers.

The Scout Basic Essentials for any outing SH page 238-239

Clothing Check Lists for winter and summer SH pages 242-243

Camping Check List SH pages 263,268,269

Also see checklist on Troop web site

Outings are posted on the troop calendar, announced in troop meetings, and via email.

Summer Camp

Summer Camp is an extremely important event for the Troop. All Scouts—new and experienced alike—are encouraged to attend. Camp truly integrates each Scout into the troop and BSA. It also puts Scouts on the road to advancement, with merit badge classes and activities. Most importantly, though, it's a fun-filled week that your Scout will never forget!

Where. Camp Buck Toms on Watts Bar lake, near Rockwood. For directions to the camp, please see the Troop web site.

When. normally one week in June.

How much. Camp fees are approximately \$250. The price is higher after April 26. First year Scouts get a \$50 discount. Some merit badges have additional fees for materials.

How we keep informed. Parents are notified of camp each January. Actual registration starts in February. We also have a special meeting in the late spring that gives more information about camp. The Leaders' Guide contains good information

at <https://www.easttncscouts.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/2019-CBT-Leaders-Guide-Final.pdf>

How we get there. We carpool to and from Camp Buck Toms. Just before camp, volunteers sign up to provide transportation.

What parents' involvement is. To help supervise our Scouts, we must have parents at Camp Buck Toms during camp week. Usually, these volunteers choose to come to the camp in shifts. In other words, each volunteer will stay for a short time until another volunteer rotates in. To foster independence in each Scout, though, we try *not* to have every parent attend.

What they do. Camp Buck Toms offers a wide variety of activities for each Scout, regardless of age, rank, and abilities. From swimming to STEM to archery to hiking, there's something for everyone. Aside from the more traditional camping pastimes, each Scout chooses classes to take during the week that teach specific skills and help them work toward specific merit badges. The COPE and Mountain Man programs are challenging for older Scouts.

How they sign up for classes. In January, each Scout receives a list of badges that they can work toward during camp. Class selection is due along with registration forms and fees; the priority deadline is May 1.

Summer camp checklist is in the Leader's Guide

Buck Toms rules can be found in the Leader's Guide.

Camporees

The Toqua District holds two camporees each year, when Scouts from every troop in the district come together to camp, compete, and have fun!

Where. The camporees are generally held close to Knoxville, but the site varies each time.

When. Camporees are held each spring and fall. They will be posted on the Troop and Council calendars.

How we keep informed about it. A camporee booklet is posted a few weeks prior to the event.

How we get there. We carpool to and from camporee sites. Just prior to the outing, volunteers sign up to provide transportation.

Parents' involvement. As with most other outings, camporees require parents' help!

Dump Camps

Dump camps are overnight outings such as the camporees where the Scouts don't have to hike into camp. . Instead, volunteers drive tents and patrol boxes to the campsite. So, any troop camping activity that doesn't involve the Scouts' hiking to the site is considered a dump camp. For these outings, Scouts need only basic personal items, such as sleeping bags, rain gear, and clothing. Backpacks are not required. The patrol boxes include cooking gear, Coleman stoves, cooking utensils, etc. The troop trailer has tents.

Where. The locations for these camps vary, but they are always announced well before each outing.

When. Dump camps are held when weather permits, usually early fall and late spring.

How we get there. We carpool to and from campsites; just prior to the outing, volunteers sign up to provide transportation.

Parents' involvement. Prior to each outing, we recruit registered parents to go with us; sign-ups are held during troop meetings.

Backpacking Trips

When backpacking, Scouts carry a pack with their own sleeping bag and basic personal items, plus a portion of their patrol or crew food and tents. The Scouts break into groups of two to share tents and then pair up with another group for meals. Your Scout may need some specialized equipment for a backpacking trip, but please ask before you buy anything expensive; you may be able to borrow it! A sleeping bag and good, broken-in boots are necessities. Mummy style bags are warmest and can be compressed more compactly than others. Avoid cotton and down.

When to buy a tent. Owning a tent is not mandatory, although a lightweight backing tent is a nice gift. Still, there are enough tents in the troop that the Scouts can share. A personal tent should be equipped with a rain fly. If you're interested in purchasing one, check with an adult leader for suggestions.

When to buy a backpack. Although the troop has some extra packs that may be borrowed, most Scouts prefer to have their own for a comfortable fit. Borrow a troop backpack for a few outings before buying one.

Where. The locations for these camps vary, but they are always announced well before each outing.

When. Backpacking trips are held when weather permits, usually fall and spring.

How we get there. We carpool to the trail head and hike to the campsite.

Parents' involvement. Before each outing, we recruit parents go with us. Sign-ups are held during the Troop Meetings.

Advancing

Advancement Basics

Advancement is an important part of Scouts. As your Scout progresses, they will advance in two different ways: through merit badges and ranks. Merit badges are rewards that Scouts earn for mastering certain skills. Ranks are rewards for completing merit badges, being involved in the troop and in BSA, serving the community, and showing leadership ability. This chapter gives an overview of merit badge and rank advancement, but it doesn't explain every requirement for advancement, especially rank advancement. For more detailed information, please have your Scout check the *Scout Requirements* book and the chapter called "Rank Requirements" in the *Scout Handbook*.

Responsibility. It's up to each Scout to take advantage of advancement opportunities and to take the initiative for their own advancement. Each Scout is responsible for finding merit badges they want to work on, meeting all of the requirements for new merit badges and ranks, and keeping up with their own advancement (including service hours, campouts, troop activities, and leadership positions). The *Scout Handbook* has a section to record advancement information, starting on page 439. Please encourage your Scout to take responsibility for their advancement. When they are in charge, they'll take even more pride in each accomplishment!

Merit Badges. There are well over 100 merit badges that Scouts can choose from. Each one lets them explore a particular area, teaches them new skills, and introduces them to subjects that can become lifelong interests or careers. If a Scout is interested in a subject, they should take the badge. Scouts in the Troop can earn at least 10 badges a year, if they take advantage of all opportunities.

Merit Badge Advancement

How merit badges are earned. Scouts can earn merit badges two ways: through troop (or camp) classes or on their own. Throughout the year and at summer camp, Scouts take part in activities that let them earn particular badges. However, when an individual Scout finds a merit badge that interests them and that they want to pursue, they can work on that badge on their own. The steps for this process are described in this section in *Steps Toward Earning Merit Badges*.

When to start working on them. A Scout can start working on merit badges as soon as they wants to! They can choose any badge at any time; there are no rank prerequisites. Some are definitely harder than others, though, and the *Scout Requirements* book can help explain levels of difficulty. *If a Scout plans on working on the badge independently, though, they should follow the steps outlined in this section in Steps Toward Earning Merit Badges.* Of course, each Scout should be careful not to overwhelm themselves at first. They should concentrate on achieving the rank of First Class before devoting a great deal of time to working on merit badges.

Number of merit badges to take on. Although there's no limit to the number of merit badges a Scout can take on, we recommend that they actively work on no more than two at a time until they reach First Class rank. After that, we recommend no more than five at a time.

Which merit badges are required. Advancement to each new rank demands a certain *number* of merit badges, some of which are required badges. See the Rank Requirements chapter in the SH, pages 4448-450.

Rank Advancement

This section will help you understand rank advancement, outlining the advancement process and recommending a timetable for advancement.

How to advance in rank. Advancing in rank involves a combination of skills, merit badges, and—most importantly—personal commitment. *Scout Handbook* outlines the specific requirements for each rank. The requirements for Scout, Tenderfoot, Second Class, and First Class are designed to help Scouts get the most out of Scouting. Star, Life, and Eagle focus more on service to others and leadership skills. So, each rank has different requirements. Each Scout can work on advancement requirements with family members, other Scouts, or with adult leaders. They can do so on their own, during Scout meetings, or during other Scout activities. They can also complete any requirement for any rank at any time, but must still earn the ranks in order. (For example, they could pass a First Class requirement before reaching Tenderfoot, but they'd still have to earn Tenderfoot before reaching Second or First Class.)

When to start advancing. A Scout should start working toward Scout rank as soon as they join the troop. Most Scouts should earn this rank within a few months of joining. Then, Scouts should plan to earn Tenderfoot, Second and First Class within one year.

Special requirements for Star, Life, and Eagle. To earn these three highest ranks, the Scout will need to meet BSA leadership requirements. During their Scouting career, they will need to hold several leadership positions in the troop. They can find a description of the available positions in the *Junior Leader's Handbook*, or a short listing of them in this handbook (*Getting Started: Organization of Troop 20 & 21*). As a leader and a high-ranking Scout, they should also attend at least half of the troop meetings, and try to come to every planned troop and district event. Patrol leaders must also organize at least one patrol activity each quarter. Before actually taking a leadership position, a Scout will fill out the *Troop Leadership Agreement* form, which explains responsibilities in more detail. Scouts will turn in this form to the Advancement Chairperson before their Board of Review. A copy of the *Leadership Agreement* is on the Troop 20/21 web site

Timetable for advancement. This timetable is a very general guide to staying on track in rank advancement; *keep in mind that a Scout cannot continue to advance after they turn 18.*

Scout & Tenderfoot: within a few months of joining.

Second Class: within one year of joining.

First Class: one year after joining.

Star: four months to one year after reaching First Class.

Life: six months to one year after reaching Star.

Eagle: at least six months after reaching Life. (Most Scouts take much longer to earn Eagle. A very early age to reach Eagle is 14; a good target age is 15.)

Steps Toward Advancement

Start working on requirements. The requirements for advancement (merit badges, service, and others) can be found on pages 439-452 of the *Scout Handbook*. Each Scout can—and should—start working on the requirements for the next rank as soon as they can.

Be tested on requirements. As they finish each requirement, the Scout will tell their counselor, and the counselor will test them on that particular skill. Then the counselor will verify completion of that particular requirement in the back of their *Scout Handbook*, pages 439-452. An entry will also be made in Troopmaster, which is the software that tracks advancement and participation for the troop.

Contact the Advancement Chairperson. After a Scout has met all of the requirements for a rank, they'll show their *Handbook* to the Advancement Chairperson. The chair will check to make sure that the Scout has met all of the requirements, and mark the *Handbook* as ready for the next stage.

Have a Scoutmaster Conference. While a Scout is working toward a rank, they must request a conference with the Scoutmaster. (If necessary, the Scoutmaster may ask an Assistant Scoutmaster to hold the conference in their place.) This meeting takes place at every level of advancements. It allows the Scoutmaster to review the Scout's personal growth and help the Scout set goals for further advancement. Afterward, the Scoutmaster will sign the Scout's *Handbook*, verifying the conference. The meetings are usually held at troop meetings or on campouts.

Have a Board of Review. A Board of Review is a meeting between the Scout and several troop adult leaders (parents or registered leaders); it's usually held during a regular troop meeting. During the Board of Review, the adults make sure that the Scout has met all of the rank requirements, talk about the Scout's troop experience and goals, and encourage them to continue to advance. The Board of Review should be a learning experience for the Scout and a chance for the adults to see how the Scout is developing. *For a Board of Review, a Scout must wear uniform.*

Get the new badge of rank. After a successful Board of Review, the Scout will receive the new badge of rank and a wallet-sized certificate card at the next Court of Honor. Eagle Awards are presented at special Eagle Courts of Honor. The date of rank is the date the board was held, not the date the award was presented.

Record-keeping. Each Scout should keep the rank certificate cards and the signed *Scout Handbook* in a very safe place until they are 18 years old or earns the Eagle Award, whichever is earlier. In case of a discrepancy or missing record, these certificates are proof of each rank earned.

Steps Toward Earning Merit Badges

See pages 27-28 in the Requirements book.

Through troop or camp classes.

Attend the badge sessions. When a Scout is working toward a badge either in their patrol or during camp, they should attend a majority of the sessions (usually four out of six).

Meet the requirements. Even if they miss a session, a Scout must complete all of the requirements for each badge; these are outlined in *Scout Requirements*. If there are any questions or problems, the Scout can contact the Merit Badge Counselor, the adult leader who is supervising the badge sessions. *When a Scout receives partial credit for a merit badge through summer or troop classes, they must finish work on the badge in a timely manner.*

Receive the merit badge. After finishing the badge requirements, each Scout will receive the new merit badge and card at the next Court of Honor.

Individually

Choose a merit badge. Although the Scouts work on merit badges during meetings, we encourage each Scout to choose merit badges that interest them and to work toward those on their own. *Scout Requirements* describes the various badges, and BSA publishes a pamphlet about each individual badge, which you can find in the troop library, in the Scout Shop, or through the *Scout Catalog*.

Get a blue Merit Badge Card. These blue cards are available from the troop web site or the Scout Shop. A Scout will need to get a new Merit Badge Card for each merit badge they start on outside of class or summer camp; they'll use these blue cards to record work toward each merit badge. They'll also fill in their name, address, and the name of the badge they're working toward. Then they'll ask an Assistant Scoutmaster to sign the card, authorizing the beginning of the work toward that merit badge.

Contact a counselor. When the Assistant Scoutmaster signs the Scout's blue card, they will recommend a counselor. This counselor is a registered adult leader who will help the Scout meet all of the requirements for that particular badge, and the Scout will have different counselors for the different merit badges that they're working toward. Next, the Scout will meet with the counselor, who will explain the merit badge requirements and help get started.

Work on the merit badge. With the counselor's help, the Scout will start working on the merit badge requirements, keeping track with the blue card. After meeting all requirements, the Scout will have the counselor sign the blue card and keep the counselor's section of it.

Give the blue card to the Advancement Chairperson. After finishing the merit badge requirements and getting the card signed by the counselor, the Scout will turn in the blue card to the Advancement Chairperson. The chair will keep the troop section of the blue card for the troop records.

Put the blue card in a safe place. When the merit badge is finished, the Scout will still have the Scout section of the blue card, which be kept in a safe place until the badge is awarded. Baseball card protectors that fit a 3-ring binder are just the right size for holding these, protecting them and keeping them all together.

Receive the merit badge. The Scout will get the new merit badge and will receive a wallet-sized certificate card at the next Court of Honor.

Late badges. Sometimes a badge does not get documented in time for an upcoming Court of Honor. When this happens, the Scout will get the badge at a later troop meeting or will be recognized at the next Court of Honor.

Eagle Award

Eagle is the highest rank in Scouts, and reaching this rank is a tremendous honor. After a Scout reaches Life, they should download a *Life to Eagle* packet and will be counseled on how to complete the Eagle requirements.

Troop 20 has a Life coach who is available to guide Scouts after they achieve the Life rank. There is also an Eagle coach who will work with Scouts who are actively pursuing the requirements for Eagle. The contact information for these adults may be found on the Troop 20/21 website.

Eagle requirements may be found on pages 440-441 of the *BSH*. There are several documents related to Eagle on Troop 20/21 website also. Also see pages 21-25 in the *Requirements* book.

Leadership. All Eagle Scouts must have fulfilled BSA's leadership requirements, which are explained in the *Rank Advancement* section of this chapter. They also sign the *Troop Leadership Agreement* form, found at Troop 20/21 website.

Eagle Scout project. Each Eagle candidate finishes an Eagle Scout Project that helps them fill the service requirement. An adult leader will meet with the candidate to talk about ideas and suggestions for the project, but the project is ultimately the Scout's responsibility. It also must conform to the special guidelines that have been outlined by BSA, which the *Life to Eagle* packet explains. The candidate must have the project approved by the Scoutmaster, Advancement Chairperson, and the Toqua District.

Beyond Eagle

Besides Eagle, there is a vast world of Scouting waiting to be enjoyed.

See

<https://tmweb.troopmaster.com/Unit/DownloadFile/201291c56b73d1a1da4c52b58bd479224718f7>

Religious Emblems. A Scout is reverent. Each faith has its own requirements for the Religious Emblem, which can also be worn as an adult leader. Check the *Requirement* book or www.praypub.org.

Volunteering Your Time

Administrative Positions. These administrative offices generally require a yearlong commitment to the troop. Many of them also call for weekly or monthly activity on the part of the volunteer.

Troop Committee Chairperson.

Calls and presides over regular meetings of the Troop Committee. Recruits adults for the following positions and coordinates their efforts.

Troop Committee Co-Chairperson.

Presides over committee meetings in the absence of the chairman.

Secretary.

Takes minutes of Troop Committee meetings.

Keeps the committee's historical records.

Compiles and types information for the troop newsletters.

Treasurer.

Collects and keeps records of dues paid.

Records the amount of money raised and paid out by the troop.

Takes care of the troop accident insurance.

Prepares a brief treasurer's report for Troop Committee meetings.

Prepares the annual financial statement, including a balance sheet & a total annual income & expense statement.

Assists with the annual rechartering process.

Medical Forms coordinator

Maintains health records on all registered members. Notifies members whose records need updating. Ensures that tour leaders get copies of health records

Registration Chairperson.

Maintains a re-registration list of all members with their proper information.

Collects money for re-registration and for adult registration.

Collects money for *Boy's Life*.

With the Scoutmaster, makes sure that our charter is up-to-date.

Youth Advisers.

Mentor Scouts in leadership positions, such as: Scribe, Patrol Leader, Librarian, Den Chief, Historian, and Quartermaster.

Eagle Plaque Chairperson.

Makes a framed plaque for each Eagle Scout.

Collects all appropriate badges each Eagle's award.

Venture Scouts Assistant Scoutmaster.

Works with older Scouts, ages 13 and up.

Helps develop a program of high adventure.

Promotes activities to keep older Scouts interested in Scouting.

First-Year Scouts Assistant Scoutmaster.

Works with new Scouts during their first year.

Helps each new Scout reach the rank of First Class.

Makes sure all new Scouts have the necessary records.

Trains and advises Den chiefs

Equipment Volunteer.

Keeps all troop gear in working order.

Recommends new equipment.

Advises the Quartermaster

Activities Positions

Activities volunteers usually work with the troop on very specific activities. These positions don't require as great of a time commitment as the administrative positions do, but they're still extremely important to the troop! Of course, the amount of time for each position will vary based upon that chairperson's responsibilities, but most of these positions call for seasonal or yearly activity.

Outdoor/activities Coordinator

Helps Scouts select outing locations and activities.

Signs up drivers and Scouts.

Requests tour permits.

Participates in as many outings as possible.

Prepares for outings.

Summer Camp Volunteer.

Promotes summer camp attendance.

Collects payments from Scouts for summer camp.

Makes sure that each Scout turns in a correct, complete medical form.

Makes sure that the troop meets the Scout Office deadlines for camp.

Helps Scouts determine what classes they need to take at summer camp.

Helps Scouts sign up for summer camp classes.

Order of the Arrow adviser.

Advises the youth OA Rep.

Provides transportation to OA events.

Promotes Order of the Arrow.

Organizes Order of the Arrow elections.

Scouting for Food Volunteer.

Reserves dates at supermarkets.

Organizes Scouts and parents to work shifts at the entrance to supermarkets.

Coordinates with the district, including reporting progress.

Makes sure that participating Scouts receive service hour credits.

Popcorn coordinator

Promotes the program within the troop and coordinates with the district.

Advancement Positions

Advancement volunteers work very closely with the Scouts to help the Scouts advance. Their responsibilities are on going and last throughout the year. To learn more about advancement, see *Advancing*.

Court of Honor Volunteer.

Helps Scoutmaster get ready for Courts of Honor.

Helps collect the awards that will be presented during Courts of Honor.

Advises youth who plan and conduct the Court of Honor.

Training Coordinator.

Determines which required merit badges should be taught.

Recruits counselors (teachers) for troop merit badge classes.

Coordinates registration for four merit badge colleges.

Advancement Coordinator.

Prepares and submits Advancement Reports to the Scout office.

Keeps track of each Scout's merit badges, ranks, and the dates they're earned.

Eagle Advancement Coordinator.

Helps and advises Scouts who are working toward the Eagle award.

Reviews all Eagle award paperwork regularly, and guides the Scouts in filling it out.

Life Coach.

Counsels new Life Scouts and introduces them to the resources available on the path to Eagle.

Leadership Chair.

Approves and tracks leadership forms.

Helps recruit advisers for youth leaders.

Follows up with advisers to ensure that they know their responsibilities and are counseling youth on an ongoing basis.

Being Safe

Safety Measures in BSA and Troop 20

Safety is one of the biggest concerns both of BSA and of the Troop, and the Troop makes a special effort to teach each Scout the steps to safety.

[A Guide to Safe Scouting](#) covers just about every type of activity. A copy is required to be taken on all outings. It can be saved on a phone as a PDF file.

Adult Supervision

BSA knows that adult supervision is necessary in keeping our Scouts safe; therefore, for any Scout activity, there must be at least two registered adults over 21 present at all times.

Youth Protection Training is required every two years for all registered adults. It can be taken on line.

Fireman's Chit

A Fireman's Chit is a card given to Scouts who finish the BSA fire safety program. The requirements are in the *Scout Requirements* book. A Scout must earn Fireman's Chit *and have it with them* before they can start or attend any fire on any Troop outing.

Totin' Chip

Before any Scout is allowed to carry outdoor tools (knives, axes, or saws) on any Scout outing, they must prove that they know how to use them safely and responsibly by earning the Totin' Chip. The requirements are in the *Scout Requirements* book. When any Scout wants to carry an outdoor tool on any Troop 20 outing, they *must* have their Totin' Chip.

Food allergies

It is not unusual for troop members to have serious allergies to nuts and nut products. Keep them away from all troop activities. It's just not worth the risk.