

## Merit Badge Counselor Policy

Merit badges are awards earned by Scouts in Scouts BSA program for completing specific requirements in various subjects, such as sports, crafts, and life skills. There are over 140 merit badges and they play a key role in a Scout's advancement, especially towards achieving the rank of Eagle Scout. The earning of merit badges is overseen by a registered merit badge counselor, who is someone knowledgeable in the subject matter of the specific badge and is willing to share that knowledge and enthusiasm with Scouts.

### THE MERIT BADGE PROCESS:

- Via the “Blue Card” or in Scoutbook, a Scout expresses interest to their Scoutmaster about a badge they would like to earn.
- The Scoutmaster approves the Scout to begin the process and approves which Counselor will be teaching the badge.
- The Scout, using appropriate Safeguarding Youth measures including the buddy system, works with the counselor to complete the requirements.
- Once all requirements have been met, the counselor signs the blue card or submits the completion online in Scoutbook.
- The Scout and Scoutmaster then meet to discuss the Scout’s experience and celebrate their success. The Scoutmaster signs the blue card or submits the completion online in Scoutbook.
  - *Notes: Scoutmasters can delegate the merit badge process responsibilities to Assistant Scoutmasters. If the Scoutmaster believes the badge was unearned, they may conduct a review as outlined in the Guide to Advancement.*

### MERIT BADGE COUNSELOR REGISTRATION PROCESSES:

#### Traditional Process:

- Complete the online **Safeguarding Youth Training** at [my.scouting.org](http://my.scouting.org) and print a copy of your certificate.
- Fill out a paper **Merit Badge Counselor Information form** and a paper **Adult Leader Application** with Scouting Position Code 42 (Merit Badge Counselor). These forms can be found at [www.awbsa.org/forms](http://www.awbsa.org/forms)
- Submit all 3 items, along with a **\$25 registration fee** for non-registered adults to a local Adventure West Council office or to your District Advancement Chair.
- The District Advancement Committee will review your information form and contact you regarding approval status.

The Adventure West Council (AWC) has made the decision to simplify the operational burdens required for merit badges.  
The following policies apply to registered adult leaders within the Adventure West Council.

#### For AWC REGISTERED Adult leaders:

- Registered Adult Leaders can serve as counselors for the badges they feel qualified to teach with the approval and agreement of both the Scoutmaster & Unit Committee Chair. No additional application or paperwork is required.
- Scoutmasters and Assistant Scoutmasters can sign off on partially completed badges, making the process significantly easier for our Scouts, parents, and leaders.
- Via the Merit Badge Process outlined above, the Scoutmaster continues to be responsible for approving, monitoring, and controlling the Merit Badge process with their Scouts.
- **PLEASE NOTE:** *Without registering as an official merit badge counselor via the traditional process, a counselor will not show up in Scoutbook as a merit badge counselor. Units can continue to use the traditional process as they'd like.*

#### Badge Exceptions:

- CPR instruction, wherever it is required, must be taught by someone currently trained as a CPR instructor.
- Badges that require special qualifications or certifications remain in place. A list of these badges can be found in the Guide to Advancement section (7.0.1.0) and are generally related to Climbing, Aquatics, and Range and Target Sports.

Merit Badge Counselor Training (34 min) is available in [my.scouting.org](http://my.scouting.org)

