



Boy Scouts of America MERIT BADGE COUNSELOR INFORMATION



(Please type or print legibly.)

Name* _____ Primary phone* _____ Home Cell Work
 Address* _____ Other phone _____ Home Cell Work
 City/state/zip* _____ Date of birth _____
 Email address* _____ BSA ID _____
 District _____ Unit: Troop Crew Ship Pack No. _____

I am not affiliated with a district. I am not affiliated with a unit or the BSA. A registration fee is included with my application

*Required field. Primary phone and email address indicate how Scouts should contact you.

To qualify as a merit badge counselor, you must

- Be at least 18 years old and of good character.
- Be registered with the Boy Scouts of America (position code 42).
- Complete Youth Protection training.
- Be recognized as having the skills and education in the merit badge subjects covered and hold any required qualifications and training as outlined in the *Guide to Safe Scouting* or the *Guide to Advancement*—or use others so qualified.
- Be able to work with Scout-age youth.

As a merit badge counselor, I agree to

- Follow the requirements of the merit badge, making no deletions or additions, ensuring that the advancement standards are fair and uniform for all Scouts.
- Have each Scout accompanied by another person during all instructional sessions.
- Keep my Youth Protection training current.
- Renew my registration annually if I plan to continue as a merit badge counselor.

Merit Badges <i>For more than eight merit badges, attach additional sheets.</i>	Add (A) Drop (D)	For each merit badge, list qualification(s) that support your request. <i>Qualifications could include college degrees, formal training certificates, positions held, and specific life experiences.</i>
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		

A = Adding a new merit badge that you will counsel to the roster. D = Removing your name from the roster for this merit badge.

Complete the following:

- This is a new application (first time to register as a merit badge counselor).
 Attach this form to the BSA Adult Application, indicating position code 42.
- This is an update to an existing list of merit badge subjects.
- I no longer wish to serve as a merit badge counselor.

Youth Protection training date _____

(Attach copy of the current certificate.)

Merit badge counselor training date _____

I agree to work with:

- All Scouts
- All Scouts in these districts: _____
- Only with Scouts in these units (indicate whether troop, crew, or ship): _____

Counselors are encouraged to be available to work with any Scout in any unit.

I only plan to serve as a merit badge counselor for this event or outside organization: _____

Applicant Signature _____ Date _____

Council Approval:	
Name (print) _____	_____
Position _____	Date _____

INSTRUCTIONS FOR MERIT BADGE COUNSELORS

What's It All About?

The merit badge counselor is a key player in the Scouts BSA advancement program. Whatever your area of expertise or interest—whether it is a special craft or hobby (basketry, leatherwork, coin collecting), a profession (veterinary medicine, aviation, engineering), or perhaps a life skill (cooking, personal management, communication)—as a merit badge counselor, you play a vital role in stirring a Scout's curiosity about it. By serving as a counselor, you offer your time, knowledge, and other resources so Scouts have the opportunity to broaden their horizons. And in doing so, your mission is to combine fun with learning.

You are both teacher and mentor as the Scout learns by doing. By presenting opportunities for growth via engaging activities like designing a webpage (Computers), performing an ollie and a wheelie (Snow Sports), or fabricating rope (Pioneering), you may pique a Scout's interest and inspire a Scout to develop a lifelong hobby, pursue a particular career, or become an independent, self-supporting adult.

Learning to Be a Merit Badge Counselor

All merit badge counselors must attend a counselor training session, either in-person or online. It is important that they have a full understanding of their responsibilities and also of the recommended practices for quality counseling. All merit badge counselors should take part in Merit Badge Counselor Position Specific Training found in their my.scouting account under Scouts BSA.

Another resource is the *Guide for Merit Badge Counseling*, No. 512-065. This resource can be found online at www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/advancement-and-awards/resources/.

Processing This Application

Merit badge counselors *must* register as adult Scouters and be approved by the council advancement committee for each merit badge listed on this Merit Badge Counselor Information form. **A merit badge counselor must submit a \$25 registration fee if not already registered elsewhere in the BSA as a leader.** Merit Badge Counselor must complete the Adult Application for position code 42, fully complete this form, complete BSA Youth Protection Training (YPT), and submit your YPT completion certificate. Submit the Adult Application with the Merit Badge Counselor Information form and fee to your council. Counselors may wish to associate with a particular unit but are encouraged to serve any Scout from any unit.

Special Qualifications and Guidelines for Merit Badge Counselors

A number of merit badges involve activities that are restricted or require certification or special training for those supervising these activities. See the [Guide to Advancement](#), topic 7.0.1.1, "Qualifications of Counselors." Merit badge counselors may personally meet these required qualifications, or they may use others so qualified. Additionally, the BSA [Guide to Safe Scouting](#) has specific requirements and procedures for shooting sports and for aquatics, winter, and other activities. These policies apply to all BSA activities, including merit badge instruction. For other merit badges where specific BSA requirements do not exist, counselors should have sufficient depth of knowledge and experience to understand how to safely present the material.

Instructions to Counselors

- The unit leader (Scoutmaster, crew Advisor, or Skipper) recommends and provides the name and contact information of at least one merit badge counselor to each Scout desiring to work on a merit badge. Before beginning to work with a youth, counselors should check the Scout's merit badge application (blue card) to ensure it is signed by the unit leader.
- Every Scout must have another person with them at each meeting with a merit badge counselor. This person can be their parent or legal guardian or another registered adult. There is no one-on-one contact allowed with Scouts and counselors.
- Counselors may not add to or delete any merit badge requirements. Group instruction is allowed where special facilities and expert personnel make this most practical, or when Scouts are dependent on a few counselors for assistance. However, any group experience must provide attention to every individual candidate's projects and progress, and assure each has actually and personally fulfilled *all* the requirements. If, for example, a requirement uses words like "show," "demonstrate," or "discuss," then every Scout must individually do so. It is unacceptable to award badges on the basis of Scouts sitting in classrooms and watching demonstrations or remaining silent during discussions.
- When a Scout begins working on a merit badge, the current-year *Scouts BSA Requirements* book lists the official requirements in effect at that time. If requirements change after a Scout has started working on a merit badge, the requirements that were in effect when the Scout began working on the badge can still be followed unless the BSA's National Council places a specific timeline on the implementation of new requirements.



Merit Badge Counselor Application Process

QUALIFICATIONS – All merit badge counselors must be:

1. At least 18 years old.
2. Of good character.
3. Recognized as having the skills required for each of the badges requested.
4. Recognized as having the ability to work with Scout-age boys.
5. Registered with the Boy Scouts of America as a Merit Badge Counselor (no fee required).
6. Youth Protection Trained within 2 years.
7. Complete Merit Badge Counselor training (does not expire).

APPLICATION PROCESS – Persons who are not currently registered as a Merit Badge Counselor must do the following to register. This includes applicants already registered in another Scouting position.

1. Complete a **BSA Adult Application** form. In the space for Position Code, enter “42.” In the space for Scouting position description, enter “Merit Badge Counselor.” Be sure to read and sign the “Disclosure/Authorization page as well as signing the application itself.
 - a. Signatures of the unit committee chair and chartered organization representative **are not required** for merit badge counselors.
 - b. There is no fee to register as a merit badge counselor.
2. Complete the **Application for a Merit Badge Counselor** Information form.
 - a. If applying for any merit badge listed below under “Special Qualifications,” include a copy of the certification or other documentation as required for that merit badge.
 - b. Check whether you wish to serve all units, or only a specific unit(s).
3. Complete Youth Protection Training (YPT), if you have not done so within the past two years. Be sure to obtain a copy of the completion certificate. Information for completing this online is available at <http://www.my.scouting.org>
4. Complete Merit Badge Counselor training by reviewing the package at <https://training.scouting.org/learning-plans/1148> Upon completion, print, sign, and date the completion certificate at the end of the package.
5. Submit both forms (adult application and Merit Badge Counselor application), YPT certificate, Merit Badge Counselor training completion certificate, and documentation of special qualifications (if applicable) to Great Southwest Council, 5841 Office Blvd NE, Albuquerque, NM 87109. If already registered in another Scouting position and Youth Protection training was previously completed, you may submit your BSA Membership ID number on the Merit Badge Counselor information form in lieu of the YPT certificate.
6. **ADDING & DROPPING MERIT BADGES** – If you are already registered as a Merit Badge Counselor and you wish to add or delete merit badges, submit only an updated Merit Badge Counselor information form. If special qualifications apply to any added merit badge, also submit the required certification or documentation.

SPECIAL QUALIFICATION – Counselors for the following merit badge must meet the specific requirements stated below and must submit **proof of qualification** with their application. Full details can be found in the BSA publication *Guide to Advancement*.

Archery – Archery activities must be supervised by a BSA National Camping School trained shooting sports Director or USA Archery or National Field Archery Association instructor, or by someone who has been trained by one of the three; or alternatively, the activities may be supervised by someone with at least Level 1 training in the operation of an archery range from USA Archery, NFAA, or an equivalent.

Canoeing – Must be (a) BSA Aquatics Instructor, (b) American Canoe Association Canoeing Instructor, (c) American Red Cross Canoeing Instructor, or (d) trained by an instructor so qualified. Must have *BSA Safety Afloat* and *BSA Safe Swim Defense* training.

Citizenship in Society - Must complete the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion on-line training and review the *Citizenship in Society Merit Badge Counselor Guide* at https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/diversity_equity_and_inclusion/Citizenship-in-Society-Merit-Badge-Counselor-Guide-2021.pdf

Climbing – Must be (a) a qualified rock-climbing instructor, (b) trained in *BSA Climb on Safely*, and (c) must be at least 21 years of age. Training as a BSA Climbing Level 2 instructor is highly recommended. Current policies are found in the *Guide to Safe Scouting* at www.scouting.org/health-and-safety

Kayaking- Must have formal training in kayaking and paddle craft instruction, as evidenced by either BSA Aquatics Instructor certification or Paddle Craft Safety instructor certification.

Lifesaving – Must be (a) certified in Red Cross First Aid/CPR/AED or equivalent, (b) certified as BSA Lifeguard or Aquatics Instructor or equivalent, and (c) at least 21 years of age. Must have *BSA Safety Afloat* and *BSA Safe Swim Defense* training.

Motor Boating- activities must be supervised by adult, at least 21 years of age. Appropriate credentials include current or previous certification by an organization such as the National Safe Boating Council or others.

Rifle Shooting – Must be (a) a certified BSA National Camping School shooting sports director or (b) an NRA Rifle Shooting Instructor or Coach and must be at least 21 years of age.

Shotgun Shooting – Must be (a) a certified BSA National Camping School shooting sports director or (b) an NRA Shotgun Shooting Instructor or Coach and must be at least 21 years of age.

For activity with muzzle-loading rifles (Option C), must also be (a) a certified BSA National Camping School shooting sports director or (b) an NRA or National Muzzleloader Rifle Association certified muzzle-loading firearms (or shotgun) instructor.

Rowing – Must be (a) BSA Aquatics Instructor or equivalent, or (b) trained by an instructor so qualified. Must have *BSA Safety Afloat* and *BSA Safe Swim Defense* training.

Scuba Diving – Must be trained and sanctioned by one of the BSA's recognized scuba agencies as found in the *Guide to Safe Scouting*.

Small Boat Sailing-Must complete *Safety Afloat* training. Must be at least 21 years of age. Appropriate credentials include instructor certification with a recognize sailing agency or school, US sailing, or equivalent.

Snow Sports – Must be at least 21 years of age. Must comply with *BSA Winter Sports Safety*, found in the *Guide to Safe Scouting*. www.scouting.org/health-and-safety.

Swimming – Must have *BSA Safe Swim Defense* and *BSA Safety Afloat* training.

Water Sports- Must have *BSA Safe Swim Defense* and *BSA Safety Afloat* training.

Whitewater – Must be (a) certified as whitewater canoeing or kayaking instructor by American Canoe Association, or equivalent, and (b) approved by the council.