

Soaring News

News on advancement for the Susquehanna Council

Edition 18-1

May 2018

This newsletter is prepared by the Susquehanna Council Advancement committee as a resource for leaders of cub scout and boy scout units and merit badge counselors. Its purpose is to provide current information on changes regarding advancement, as well as clarifications of advancement requirements and tips, reminders, and guidelines on advancement.

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Cub Scout rank advancement

- **Lions to become a cub scout rank in Fall 2018** [from Bryan On Scouting [February 14, 2018 Bryan Wendell](#)]

After roaring success, Lions will move from pilot to full-time part of Cub Scouting

On the heels of a successful pilot that introduced new families to Scouting and raised retention rates, Lions, the BSA's Cub Scout program for kindergarten-age youth, will become an official part of Cub Scouting this year.

The decision was made official after a vote by the BSA's volunteer-led National Executive Board.

The Lions uniform won't change. Lions will continue wearing the blue Lion T-shirt. There's also an optional cap and new neckerchief and slide. All are suitable for wearing with the T-shirt.

But many exciting changes are on the way based on feedback from families participating in the pilot. These include the introduction of a rectangular rank patch, rank cards, advancement chart and Lion adventure loops.

Keep reading for details about these new items, which will be available in late summer — in time for the start of the fall program.

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Can all packs offer Lions?

Absolutely! Lions are official nationwide, meaning that, beginning this fall, any unit in any council has the green light to begin recruiting new Lions and their families. (Previously, the BSA needed to approve individual councils and units to offer Lions.) The rank is an official part of Cub Scouting — just like Tiger, Wolf, Bear and Webelos.

Lions offers a great opportunity for your pack to serve more families. Packs that participated in the Lions pilot program saw an 87 percent retention rate, steady growth and excellent parental involvement.

When can my pack begin welcoming Lions?

This fall — as part of the 2018-2019 program year.

What are these new Lion adventure loops?

Lions, like their older packmates, will get to earn adventure loops.

Over the course of a year, Lions will complete all five of the required adventures (compared to at least seven for Tiger and above). They also may complete one or more of the nine elective adventures.

Adventure loops are immediate recognition items, meaning packs should present them to Lions right away — not wait until a big event like a blue and gold. Adventure loops should be worn with pride on the Cub Scout belt.

Lion adventure loops, as well as a Lion advancement chart, will be available in your council's Scout Shop by late summer.

Do Lions come to every pack meeting?

Lions should participate in at least two or three pack meetings a year. Ultimately, it's up to the family. If they'd like to attend more pack meetings, they are welcome. Lions can also have lots of fun doing elective adventures and earning additional adventure loops beyond what's required.

Can Lions camp?

Yes. Lions can participate in family camping with their pack.

Lion dens shouldn't participate in overnight den-specific camping, but pack and family camping are encouraged. Day camp and activities such as shooting sports are reserved for older Cub Scouts. Lion dens should focus on exciting (and age-appropriate) adventures and fun family outings.

Can Lions participate in the Pinewood Derby?

Yep! You can include Lions in your pack's regular Pinewood Derby routine or encourage Lions to use the wedge car available at Scout Shops — no cutting required.

Will Lions wear the blue Cub Scout uniform shirt?

No. They'll wear the blue Lion T-shirt and blue Cub Scout belt. The hat, neckerchief and neckerchief slide are optional and can be worn after the completion of the "Gizmos and Gadgets" adventure.

What is the Lion rank strip?

Once Lions complete their rank, they can wear the rectangular Lion patch on the upper left of their T-shirt. (That's the Lion's left, or over his or her heart.)

When Lions move into Tigers, they can sew the patch under the left pocket — below where the Tiger rank patch will go.

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The previously introduced diamond-shaped Lion patch is going away.

Do Lions now earn Bobcat first before working on the Lion rank?

No, Lions work on their Lion rank first. When they become a Tiger, they'll begin to work on Bobcat.

Are Lion Guides now called den leaders?

Yes. The BSA has changed the name to better align with the rest of Cub Scouting. The position's responsibilities have not changed. Lion den leaders still facilitate and engage families so that each family takes a turn leading one den meeting and outing.

Where can I get more info?

The BSA will update its Lions website with more details.

Boy Scout rank advancement

➤ **Clarification on Boy Scout advancement requirements**

The latest annual edition of Boy Scout Requirements provides the official requirements for advancement (rank and merit badges). Once a new or revised requirement appears in that publication, which is released annually, any Scout beginning work on his next rank or Eagle Palm must use the new or revised requirement as stated there. Beginning on January 1, 2017, all Scouts MUST use the rank requirements that became effective on January 1, 2016, regardless of when the Scout joined the BSA and the rank that they are working on. Thus, units may no longer use ANY requirements for rank advancement published before January 1, 2016, regardless of the version of requirements that the Scout started in for his next rank(s) (such as a Scout Handbook). Printable inserts of the requirements published in the 2017 edition of Boy Scout Requirements are available at this link:

https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/boyscouts/pdf/524-012_BS_Requirements_Printable_Insert.pdf

See Guide to Advancement, section 4.0.0.1

➤ **Clarification on camping nights** From the January-February 2018 issue of *Scouting* magazine

In Scouting's early years, camping was pretty simple. You slept under the stars. Or the roof over your head was an Army surplus pup tent — or maybe a lean-to shelter you built. These days, Scouts spend the night in cabins, yurts and museums — or even on aircraft carriers.

So what kind of camping counts for Boy Scout advancement? Read on to find out.

What do the Boy Scout rank requirements say?

For Tenderfoot requirement 1b, a Scout must spend at least one night on a patrol or troop campout in a tent he helped pitch. For Second Class requirement 1a, a Scout must have tallied five separate troop/patrol activities, at least two of which must include overnight camping. First Class requirement 1a calls for 10 separate troop/patrol activities since joining, at least three of which must include overnight camping. In all cases, the Scout must "spend the night in a tent that you pitch or other structure that you help erect, such as a lean-to, snow cave or teepee."

What do the camping merit badge requirements say?

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For requirement 9a, a Scout must camp in a tent or under the stars at least 20 nights at designated Scouting activities and events, which may include one long-term camp experience of up to six consecutive nights.

What about an overnight in the church basement?

For rank advancement, that could count as one of the troop/patrol activities but not as overnight camping. It wouldn't count for the Camping merit badge.

What about cabin camping at our council camp?

Same answer as above.

What about camping with a family or school group?

That wouldn't count. Both the rank and merit badge requirements specify that the camping must be part of a patrol or troop activity.

What about participation in a council high-adventure trek?

Both the trek (up to six nights) and any shakedown trips that involve camping would count toward the Camping merit badge. These trips wouldn't count for rank advancement, which specifies troop and patrol activities.

Our summer camp sets up tents before we arrive. Is that OK?

For the Camping merit badge, yes. For rank advancement, no.

Am I missing any other details?

Be sure to look at the requirements that surround the camping requirements. For example, on one of the Second Class campouts, a Scout must explain how he practiced Leave No Trace (requirement 1b), and on a separate campout, he must choose his campsite (requirement 1c). For requirement 9b of the Camping merit badge, a Scout must do two specific activities on any of his campouts, such as hiking up a mountain or planning and carrying out a snow camping experience.

Can camping nights count for both rank and merit badge advancement?

Yes, since the requirements match up and have the same basic intent.

Advancement to Eagle

➤ **Time extension for application for Eagle**

The completion of requirements to earn the rank of Eagle requires planning, that demonstrates the application of the Scout motto: Be Prepared. A lack of planning is not a sufficient basis for a time extension for completion of the requirements for Eagle.

If a youth foresees that, due to no fault or choice of his own, he will be unable to complete the Eagle Scout rank requirements before age 18, he may apply for a limited time extension. These are rarely granted and reserved only for work on Eagle. When a time extension is requested, the Scout should continue working on the requirements as processing occurs. In most cases, for a request to be considered the following five tests must be met.

- 1) The member joined or rejoined—or became active again after a period of inactivity—in time to complete all requirements before turning 18. That is, the time remaining between joining, or rejoining, and when the Scout turns 18 is more than the total of the active-time requirements for the ranks left to achieve.

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The Boy Scouts of America will welcome Scouts back after periods of inactivity. However, all time-oriented requirements must still be met. Scouts reactivating too late to complete time-related requirements will not be granted extensions, nor will those who remained active but simply did not focus on advancement.

- 2) A circumstance came to exist that now precludes completion before the deadline. Examples might include a health-related incident requiring a hospital stay, a disabling injury, a significant employment conflict, a family relocation, a family emergency, a natural disaster, severe unseasonable weather that could not have been anticipated, or unforeseen actions of others affecting the youth's ability to complete the requirements. It is extremely unlikely an extension will be granted if resolution of the circumstance—such as recovery from an injury, for example—still allows enough time for an adequate service project, or for completing the position of responsibility, active participation, or merit badge requirements if they have not already been met.
- 3) The circumstance is totally beyond the control of the youth member. Injuries, unanticipated family incidents, or various mistakes or omissions by adults, for example, could be legitimate causes. The Boy Scouts of America assumes anyone working on Boy Scout ranks has a Boy Scout Handbook and has read the requirements. Despite this, misinformation from unit leadership is often cited as grounds for extensions. These cases will be considered, but they should be very rare and would point to a need for basic training and assistance.
- 4) The circumstance is severe and not the norm of the Scout's life. In most cases, Scouts are expected to overcome life's ordinary trials. Cause for an extension normally requires an extraordinary circumstance uncommon to the youth. For example, known circumstances such as moderate learning disabilities or ADD/ADHD that the Scout has faced over many years and which he has coped with in the past, should not suddenly become an issue shortly before his 18th birthday. It is important for council and district advancement committees to keep unit leadership informed of this so it does not become a surprise. An exception might be considered for Scouts with significant disabilities that do not meet the level of severity or permanence required for registration beyond the age of eligibility, but are such that they essentially preclude advancement within the timeframe allowed.
- 5) The circumstance could not have been planned for or anticipated. If it is health-related, it should have been unforeseen and of recent onset, or a complication or intensification of an ongoing issue.

See Guide to Advancement, section 9.0.4.0

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Merit Badges

➤ **Expectations to use most current MB requirements**

The current annual edition of Boy Scout Requirements lists the official merit badge requirements. However, those requirements might not match those in the Boy Scout Handbook, the merit badge pamphlets, and the requirements listed at www.scouting.org/meritbadges because the Boy Scout Requirements book is updated on an annual basis.

When new or revised merit badge requirements appear in the Boy Scout Requirements book, any Scout beginning work on a merit badge must use the requirements as stated therein. However, if changes to merit badge requirements are introduced in a revised merit badge pamphlet or at www.scouting.org/meritbadges during the year after the Boy Scout Requirements is released, then the Scout has through the end of that year to decide which set of requirements to use. Once a Scout begins work, he may continue using the requirements he started with until completion of the badge. Alternatively, he may choose to switch to the revised requirements. Sometimes, however—especially for more significant changes—the Boy Scout Handbook, the Boy Scout Requirements book, www.scouting.org/meritbadges, or official communications from the National Council may set forth a different procedure that must be used and may establish a date by when use of the old requirements must cease.

The authoritative source for all merit badge requirements is the current year's Boy Scout Requirements book.

See Guide to Advancement, section 7.0.4.0

➤ **Unit leader checking if counselor is approved**

The process of completing requirements for a merit badge begins with a meeting between the Scout and a designated unit leader (such as the scoutmaster or unit advancement coordinator). It is the responsibility of the unit leader to ensure a Scout plans to work with a counselor that is currently approved by the Council. Before a Scout begins working with a merit badge counselor, however, he is to have a discussion with his unit leader. That a discussion has been held is indicated by the unit leader's signature on the Application for Merit Badge, No. 34124, commonly called the "blue card." Although it is the unit leader's responsibility to see that at least one merit badge counselor is identified from those approved and made available, the Scout may have one in mind with whom he would like to work. The unit leader and Scout should come to agreement as to who the counselor will be. Lacking agreement, the Scout must be allowed to work with the counselor of his choice, so long as the counselor is registered and has been approved by the council advancement committee.

See Guide to Advancement, section 7.0.0.3

Links

Guide to Advancement: <https://www.scouting.org/resources/guide-to-advancement/>

Advancement News from the National Advancement Program Team, Jan-Feb 2018:

https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/advancement_news/2018_Jan-Feb.pdf