

## Merit Badge Guidelines

There have been several questions about merit badges and what is needed to get a merit badge. The primary source for information on how to go about earning a merit badge is in the Boy Scout Handbook. Chapter seven (7) beginning on page 185 explains the process, from how to start to how to wear the badges after they are earned. Page 187 explains how the scout gets a merit badge card and begins work on the merit badge. The following information is from the Boy Scout Requirements 2001 book to help everyone understand the process better.

The scout can learn about sports, crafts, science, trades, business and future careers as he earns merit badges. There are more than 100 merit badges (119 as of January 1, 2001). Any Boy Scout may work on any merit badge at any time. However, to complete some merit badges, the Scout must complete another merit badge first (e.g., First Aid is required for Emergency Preparedness and Swimming is required for Lifesaving). You don't need to have had rank advancement to be eligible.

**Pick A Subject.** Talk to your Scoutmaster or Assistant Scoutmaster about your interests. Read the requirements of the merit badges you think might interest you. Pick one to earn. Your Scoutmaster or Assistant Scoutmasters will give you the name of a person from a list of counselors. These counselors have special knowledge in their merit badge subjects and are interested in helping you.

**Scout Buddy System.** *You must have another person with you at each meeting with the merit badge counselor.* This person can be another Scout, your parents or guardian, a brother or sister, a relative, or a friend.

**Call The Counselor.** Get a *signed* merit badge application from your Scoutmaster or Assistant Scoutmasters. Get in touch with the merit badge counselor and tell him or her that you want to earn the merit badge. The counselor may ask you to come and see him/her so he/she can explain what he/she expects and start helping you meet the requirements.

When you know what is expected, start to learn and do the things required. Ask your counselor to help you learn the things you need to know or do. You should read the merit badge pamphlet on the subject. Many troops and school or public libraries have them.

**Show Your Stuff.** When you are ready, call the counselor again to make an appointment to meet the requirements. When you go take along the things you have made to meet the requirements. If they are too big to move, take pictures or have an adult tell in writing what you have done. The counselor will ask you to do each requirement to make sure that you know your stuff and have done or can do the things required.

**Get The Badge.** When the counselor is satisfied that you have met each requirement, he or she will sign your application. Give the signed application to your Scoutmaster or Assistant Scoutmaster so that your merit badge emblem can be secured for you.

**Requirements.** You are expected to meet the requirements as they are stated --- no more and no less. You are expected to do exactly what is stated in the requirements. If it says "show or demonstrate," that is what you must do. Just telling about it isn't enough. The same thing holds true for such words as "make," "list," "in the field," and "collect," "identify," and "label."