

**Weekly Troop Meetings - Merit Badge Counseling - Scout Requirements -  
Service hours – What is an Activity? - What is Camping? – Behavior  
July 17, 2016**

**WEEKLY TROOP MEETINGS**

The weekly Troop meeting is the glue that holds a Boy Scout Troop together. These meetings, *are planned and run by the troop's youth leaders*. They serve many purposes:

- **Motivating Scouts.** From Scouts' points of view, troop meetings are chances for them to get together with their Patrol friends for fun and adventure. For the Scoutmaster, meetings offer opportunities for Scouts to learn, advance, learn new leadership skills, and improve themselves.
- **Strengthening Patrols.** Patrols have opportunities at troop meetings to meet together, to learn as a team and to share what they know. Whether they serve as the honor guard for the meeting's opening ceremony, as presenters of a Scouting skill or as the organizers of the weekly inter-patrol game or activity, every patrol can contribute to every troop meeting.
- **Learning & Practicing Scouting Skills.** A portion of every Troop meeting is focused on the demonstration and practice of skills that will enhance Scouts' ability to hike and camp, and to meet advancement requirements.
- **Exercising Leadership.** Every week, the Troop's youth leaders take charge of planning, carrying out and then assessing the success of their troop meetings. Leadership can be learned only by experience, and troop meetings are the venue for this to happen.
- **Promoting Scout spirit.** Troop meetings offer ideal settings for Patrols to take part in contests and competitions that test their expertise and abilities to cooperate with one another. Meetings always end with the Scoutmaster's Minute – an inspirational and/or informative take-home message for the Scouts.

**MERIT BADGE COUNSELING**

**No Merit Badge Counseling during Troop meetings.**

Holding Merit Badge counseling sessions during the meeting removes the scout from what he should be doing – participating in the Troop meeting. Scouts can meet their counselor before the meeting, after the meeting or on another day.

## **RANK ADVANCEMENT**

### **4.2.0.1 Scouting Ranks and Advancement Age Requirements (BSA Guide to Advancement)**

“All requirements for Star, Life, and Eagle, except for those related to merit badges, must be fulfilled after the successful completion of a board of review for the previous rank.”

## **SERVICE HOURS**

Double Counting of requirements, and “Double Dipping” when it relates to Service hours:

### **4.2.3.6 Fulfilling More Than One Requirement with a Single Activity (BSA Guide to Advancement)**

“Some requirements may have the appearance of aligning, but upon further examination actually differ. These seemingly similar requirements usually have nuances intended to create quite different experiences. The Communication and Citizenship in the Community merit badges are a good example. Each requires the Scout to attend a public meeting, but that is where the similarity ends. For Communication, the Scout is asked to practice active listening skills during the meeting and present an objective report that includes all points of view. For Citizenship, he is asked to examine differences in opinions and then to defend one side. The Scout may attend the same public meeting, but to pass the requirements for both merit badges he must actively listen and prepare a report, and also examine differences in opinion and defend one side.”

“When contemplating whether to double-count service hours or a service project, and apply the same work to pass a second advancement requirement, each Scout should ask himself: “Do I want to get double credit for helping others this one time, or do I want to undertake a second effort and make a greater difference in the lives of even more people?” To reach his decision, each Scout should follow familiar guideposts found in some of those words and phrases we live by, such as “helpful,” “kind,” “Do a Good Turn Daily,” and “help other people at all times.” As Scout leaders and advancement administrators, (and Parents in my opinion) we must ask ourselves an even more pointed question: “Is it my goal to produce Scouts who check a task off a list or Scouts who will become the leaders in our communities?” To answer our own question, we should consult the same criteria that guide Scouts.”

**1911 SM Comment:** Nothing says you need to stop performing service once the minimum requirement for service hours is reached. Serving others is one of the pillars of character building and development in Scouting.

**1911 SM Comment:** All Service Hours must be approved by the Scoutmaster. Contacting the Scoutmaster in advance and asking for approval is wise and the requirement. If the SM sends an email announcing the opportunity for Service hours you can assume they are approved. A reminder about where and when Boy Scouts must accumulate service hours. **Here's the official language:**

### **New Boy Scout service requirements**

- **Tenderfoot, requirement 7b: One hour of service (Up from zero)**
  - Participate in a total of one hour of service in one or more service projects ***approved by your Scoutmaster***. Explain how your service to others relates to the Scout slogan and Scout motto.
- **Second Class, requirement 8e: Two hours of service (Up from one)**
  - Participate in two hours of service through one or more service projects ***approved by your Scoutmaster***. Tell how your service to others relates to the Scout Oath.
- **First Class, requirement 9d: Three hours of service (Up from zero)**
  - Participate in three hours of service through one or more service projects ***approved by your Scoutmaster***. The project(s) must not be the same service project(s) used for Tenderfoot requirement 7b and Second Class requirement 8e. Explain how your service to others relates to the Scout Law.
- **Star, requirement 4: Six hours of service (Unchanged)**
  - While a First Class Scout, participate in six hours of service through one or more service projects ***approved by your Scoutmaster***.
- **Life, requirement 4: Six hours of service, at least three of which are conservation-related (changed from six hours, period)**
  - While a Star Scout, participate in six hours of service through one or more service projects ***approved by your Scoutmaster***. At least three hours of this service must be conservation-related.
- **Eagle Scout: The Eagle Scout service project (Unchanged)**

### **Per the National BSA Advancement Committee:**

*All service projects must be approved by the unit leader (Scoutmaster in this case).*

*However, service hours are not restricted to just unit-sponsored events or projects. On page 84 of the Boy Scout Handbook, it states in part: "A service project is a special Good Turn that puts Scout spirit into action. Projects can take many forms. You might take part in a community cleanup; repair a place of worship, a museum, or the home of an elderly person; improve a wildlife habitat; volunteer at a hospital or with a public safety group; organize a recycling effort; or conduct a clothing pickup or food drive."*

*Scouts may also assist on Eagle Scout projects being conducted by the Eagle Scout candidate. Again, approval must be obtained from the unit leader; this is how service hours are counted and accounted for."*

### **First Class Rank Requirements**

3. Since joining, have participated in **10 separate troop/patrol activities (other than troop/patrol meetings), three of which included camping overnight.** Demonstrate the principles of **Leave No Trace** on these outings.

### **What is an Activity?**

**Common sense needs to prevail here:** Our troop does enough activities outside of the troop meetings that scouts who are active in the unit should not have a problem fulfilling this requirement. It is my belief that this requirement is here to make sure a scout gets experience and exposure that is diverse, making him a better-prepared First Class Scout. Below are some examples. If you are not sure whether it counts as an activity, contact the Scoutmaster.

Participating in a group Merit badge that has five different sessions to complete, and counting this as 5 activities doesn't pass the common-sense test of what the requirement is asking. If you want to do this to get your First class rank, then you do not participate enough in troop activities. As a general rule, it should take about 9 to 12 months to earn First Class rank (in some cases, more) but there isn't a time limit. The scout can certainly take as long as he feels is necessary. It is a self-paced program, not a race. If you are a very active scout who takes advantage of all troop events this is not difficult to accomplish.

- A two-night weekend campout counts as one activity, not two. A one-night camp out counts as one activity.
- Flag ceremony – one activity
- Service project – one activity
- Going on a snowshoe hike – one activity
- Going on a 2 day skiing weekend – one activity
- Bowling with the troop – one activity
- Court of Honor – one activity
- Pancake breakfast sale – one activity
- Annual troop bike ride – one activity
- Carroll College Merit Badge University – one activity
- Canoe expedition- one activity
- Going to BSA summer camp – one activity

**Scoutmaster’s Hint – Use a 3x5 card clipped to your Scout Book to keep track of your 10 activities. Note which activity it was and the date it took place.**

### **Camping**

Per Camping MB

“Sleep each night under the sky or in a tent you have pitched.”

“If the camp provides a tent that has already been pitched, you need not pitch your own tent.”

**Very good article by BSA on What is/counts as Camping for BSA requirements and experience:**

**Ask the Expert: What is (and what isn’t) a camping night for the Camping MB?**

<http://blog.scoutingmagazine.org/2015/06/24/ask-expert-isnt-camping-night-camping-mb/>

Camping Merit Badge:

9. “Show experience in camping by doing the following:
  - a. Camp a total of at least 20 days and 20 nights.\* Sleep each night under the sky or in a tent you have pitched. **The 20 days and 20 nights must be at a designated Scouting activity or**

**event.** You may use a week of long-term camp toward this requirement. If the camp provides a tent that has already been pitched, you need not pitch your own tent.”

\*All campouts attended since becoming a Boy Scout or Varsity Scout may count toward this requirement.

What does not count (not an all-inclusive list):

- An individual family activity or a couple of Scouts and their parents heading off into the woods does not count.
- Sleeping inside any type of RV is not camping for the purposes of this requirement.
- Sleeping in a cabin is not camping.
- Sleeping inside a gym on the floor is not camping.

**Behavior**

All Scouts are expected to follow the Scout Oath and Law when interacting with fellow Scouts and others. Bullying, put-downs, aggression, violence, threatening or other inappropriate behavior **cannot** be tolerated. If a Scout is behaving inappropriately, the parent(s)/guardian(s) will be contacted in an effort to correct the inappropriate behavior. If the behavior continues, the Scout may be asked to leave the troop (temporarily or permanently).