



Council Youth Development Committee

March 2013

To: Prospective Merit Badge Counselors
From: Hudson Valley Council Youth Development Committee
Re: Process for Merit Badge Counselor Registration

Thank you for your interest in applying to be a Merit Badge Counselor for the Boy Scouts of America. Learning about the world around them through Merit Badges is important to our Boy Scouts. We want them to be successful at learning these subject areas and gaining new knowledge and skills. At the same time, earning Merit Badges is important to a Scout's individual rank advancement in Boy Scouting.

The Boy Scouts of America have a registration process that must be followed in order to get you registered with the BSA, and to be an authorized counselor in the Hudson Valley Council. Please complete the forms attached to this package and submit them to the Council office. See page 2 of this packet for more details.

We also want you to enjoy being a Merit Badge Counselor, and to be successful in helping our Scouts grow. Here is a good way to get started:

1. Review these two resources on the internet:
 - a. <http://www.scouting.org/scoutsource/BoyScouts/GuideforMeritBadgeCounselors.aspx>
 - b. <http://meritbadge.org>
2. Review the requirements for the Merit Badge

There is a Boy Scout Publication which lists the requirements for all the current Merit Badges – there are 129 of them! It contains an overview of each badge – typically, less than a half-page each. Or, if a Scout has asked you to be his Merit Badge Counselor, he probably has the booklet for the specific Merit Badge of interest – and you could give that a quick read.

Many Troops also have a “library” of Merit Badge booklets as a resource.

3. Have a short, informal meeting with your local scout leader(s)

Stop by a Troop Meeting. Get the names, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses of his Scoutmaster, Committee Chair, and Advancement Chair. Give them your contact info.

They will be interested in knowing about you – does your work or a hobby or your life experience make you a good match with the Merit Badge subject?

They will be able to give you an idea of how many boys might be interested in the Merit Badge that you are considering. Knowing that, you can keep your commitment manageable.

They will give you a memo that walks you through the process of enrolling as a Merit Badge Counselor. It's free, easy to do, and will leave you prepared to be a successful part of a young man's growth and advancement in Scouting.

Once again, thank you for volunteering to be a Merit Badge Counselor.





In order to clarify the merit badge counselor approval process, below are the required steps:

- **NEW COUNSELOR, NOT REGISTERED WITH BSA**

Each candidate must fill out the forms in this packet:

1. National BSA Adult registration form – (Pages 5-6) are required. Indicate Merit Badge Counselor, code 42, in the position description box.
2. Merit Badge Counselor form (page 7) to indicate which badges are being requested. A maximum of seven will be permitted, with no more than four coming from the Eagle required list.
3. Complete the BSA Youth Protection on-line training and print out the completion card (<http://www.scouting.org/Training/YouthProtection.aspx>). Create a profile, and then take the training.

The forms should be filled out, copied, with the originals mailed to the Council office attention “MBC Registration”. Alternatively, the forms may be computer scanned and sent via email to advancement@hudsonvalleyscouting.org . If sent by email, use the subject line “MBC Registration”. The originator should retain copies of all forms.

4. Following approval by the Hudson Valley Council office, the Counselor form will be stamped “approved” and given to the specific District Advancement Chair for review and approval of each MB requested. This should be provided within one week of approval.
5. Following District approval, the District Advancement Chair, or designee, will contact the individual and inform them of the action taken.

There is a requirement to confirm the registration of each counselor, and ensure active status of Youth Protection Training, every year, as part of the District Charter Renewal:

- **PERIODIC REGISTRATION RENEWAL AND RENEWAL OF YPT EVERY TWO YEARS**

The Council Office is required to contact each Counselor to renew their intent to continue counseling the MBs they have requested in the past, and to ensure that all Counselors have an un-expired YPT training certification. Postcards with instructions will be mailed to all Counselors on file, with a required response as indicated on the card. If the card is not returned within 30 days, the counselor will be dropped from the active list.



The mission of the Boy Scouts of America is to prepare young people to make ethical and moral choices over their lifetimes by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Scout Law.

BY SUBMITTING THIS APPLICATION YOU ARE AUTHORIZING
A CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK OF YOURSELF.
THIS CHECK WILL BE MADE FROM PUBLIC RECORD SOURCES.
YOU WILL HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO
REVIEW AND CHALLENGE ANY ADVERSE
INFORMATION DISCLOSED BY THE CHECK.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE A COPY OF YOUR CRIMINAL BACKGROUND
REPORT, PLEASE CONTACT YOUR LOCAL COUNCIL OFFICE.

Youth Protection Training

All applicants for membership are required to complete Youth Protection training before submitting this application and before volunteer service with youth begins. It is available online at www.scouting.org and each local council provides training to leaders on a regular basis throughout the year.

For more information, refer to the back of this application.



BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA®

Instructions:

Please read the Disclosure/Authorization Form on the back of this page. In the space provided at the bottom of the statement, fill in the spaces for your name, signature, and date to acknowledge your review of the form.

This Disclosure/Authorization Form and the Boy Scouts of America Adult Application must be signed and turned in together to complete the application process.

DISCLOSURE/AUTHORIZATION FORM

NOTICE TO APPLICANT REGARDING BACKGROUND CHECK

In order to safeguard the youth in our program, the Boy Scouts of America will procure consumer reports on you in connection with your application to serve as a volunteer, and the Boy Scouts of America may procure additional consumer reports at any time during your service as a volunteer in order to evaluate your continued suitability for volunteer service. The Boy Scouts of America has contracted with LexisNexis, a consumer reporting agency, to provide the consumer reports. LexisNexis may be contacted by mail at LexisNexis, 1000 Alderman Drive, Alpharetta, GA 30005 or by telephone at 800-845-6004.

The consumer reports may contain information bearing on your character, general reputation, personal characteristics, and mode of living. The types of information that may be obtained include but are not limited to Social Security number verification, sex offender registry checks, criminal records checks, inmate records searches, and court records checks. The information contained in these consumer reports may be obtained by LexisNexis from public record sources.

The consumer reports will not include credit record checks or motor vehicle record checks.

The nature and scope of the consumer reports are described above. Nonetheless, you are entitled to request a complete and accurate disclosure of the nature and scope of such reports by submitting a written request to LexisNexis at the address listed above. Additional notices for applicants in California, New York, Minnesota, and Oklahoma are provided.

APPLICANT'S ACKNOWLEDGMENT AND AUTHORIZATION

I have carefully read this notice and authorization form and I hereby authorize the Boy Scouts of America and LexisNexis to procure a consumer report, which as described above will include information relating to my criminal history as received from reporting agencies. I understand that this information will be used to determine my eligibility for a volunteer position with the Boy Scouts of America. I also understand that as long as I remain a volunteer, additional consumer reports may be procured at any time. I understand that if the Boy Scouts of America chooses not to accept my application or to revoke my membership based on information contained in a consumer report, I will receive a summary of my rights under the Fair Credit Reporting Act and contact information for the reporting agency, LexisNexis.

ADDITIONAL NOTICES TO CALIFORNIA, MINNESOTA, OKLAHOMA, AND NEW YORK APPLICANTS

California

Under California law, the consumer reports described above that the Boy Scouts of America will procure on you are defined as investigative consumer reports. These reports will be procured in connection with your application to serve as a volunteer, and additional reports may be procured at any time during your service as a volunteer in order to evaluate your continued suitability for volunteer service. The reports may include information on your character, general reputation, personal characteristics, and mode of living.

Under section 1786.22 of the California Civil Code, you may inspect the file maintained on you by LexisNexis, during normal business hours and with proper identification. You may also obtain a copy of this file, upon submitting proper identification and paying the costs of duplication, by appearing at LexisNexis offices in person, during normal business hours and on reasonable notice, or by certified mail upon making a written request. You may also receive a summary of the information contained in this file by telephone. LexisNexis will provide trained personnel to explain any information furnished to you and will provide a written explanation of any coded information. This written explanation will be provided whenever a file is provided to you for visual inspection. If you appear in person, you may be accompanied by one other person of your choosing, who must furnish reasonable identification.

For Applicants in California, Minnesota, and Oklahoma Only

You have the right to request a free copy of any report procured on you. If you wish to receive a free copy of any report procured on you, check the box below.

I request a free copy of any report procured on me.

New York

As explained above, a consumer report will be requested in connection with your application, and additional consumer reports may be requested during the course of your service with the Boy Scouts of America. You have the right, upon request, to be informed whether or not a consumer report was requested and, if a consumer report was requested, of the name and address of the consumer reporting agency that furnished the consumer report.

My signature below indicates that I have read, understand, and accept the accompanying disclosures and acknowledgments.

First name **(No initials or nicknames)** Please print.

Middle name

Last name

Suffix

Signature of applicant

Date

Unit No.



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* _____ Other phone _____ Home Cell Work
 Email address* _____ I do not have email. Age _____
 District _____ Unit: Troop Team Crew Ship No. _____ BSA ID _____
 I am not affiliated with a district. I am not affiliated with a unit.

***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 boys.

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 a Scout accompanied by his buddy 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.)

I agree to work with:

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

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

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

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

Signature _____ Date _____

INSTRUCTIONS FOR MERIT BADGE COUNSELORS

What's It All About?

The merit badge counselor is a key player in the Boy Scout 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 young man'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 to the Scout as he learns by doing. By presenting opportunities for growth via engaging activities like designing a Web page (Computers), performing an ollie and a wheelie (Snow Sports), or fabricating rope (Pioneering), you may pique a young man'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 should seek training. It is important that they have a full understanding of their responsibilities and also of the recommended practices for quality counseling. The presentation "Getting the Most From Merit Badge Counseling" has been designed for this purpose and covers the following topics:

A Scouting overview: mission, aims, and methods	Merit badge program role and benefits
Merit badge counselor qualifications	How to become a counselor
The merit badge counseling process	Merit badge requirements
Effective counseling	Group instruction and camp settings

The session can be downloaded and viewed from www.scouting.org/BoyScouts/AdvancementandAwards/resources.aspx.

Another resource is the *Guide for Merit Badge Counseling*, No. 34532. This resource can be found online at www.scouting.org/BoyScouts/GuideforMeritBadgeCounselors/MBCounselorGuide.aspx.

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 does not have to pay a registration fee, but must complete an Adult Application for position code 42, fill out this form, and complete BSA Youth Protection training. 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, Varsity Coach, 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 boy's merit badge application (blue card) to ensure it is signed by the unit leader.
- Every Scout must have a buddy with him at each meeting with a merit badge counselor. This buddy could be another Scout, a parent or guardian, a brother or sister, or a relative or friend. There is no one-on-one contact allowed with Scouts and counselors—the buddy requirement is mandatory.
- 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 *Boy Scout Requirements* book lists the official requirements in effect at that time. If requirements change after a Scout has started working on a merit badge, he may stay with the requirements in effect when he started unless the BSA's National Council places a specific timeline on the implementation of new requirements.

