



Guidelines for Scouts and Parents

**BSA Troop 680
Saint Louis Catholic Church**

**Web: Troop680.net
Calendar: Troop680.net**

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Guidelines for Scouts and Parents

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Introduction for New Scouts and Parents

Welcome!

You are joining a great group of folks in Troop 680 and over one million other boys across the country in the adventure of Scouting. We've got a good Troop and it will be even better with you as a member. **We're glad you're here!**

How Boy Scouting Differs from Cub Scouting

Boy Scouting differs from Cub Scouting. Some of these differences are worth noting right up front.

For Scouts...

- Unlike a Cub Scout den and pack, Boy Scout Troops are **boy-led organizations**. You and your fellow Scouts drive the decisions about Troop leadership, Troop activities and Troop outings.
- You earn the Scout patch by completing the joining requirements. You then may progress through the ranks: Tenderfoot, Second Class, First Class, Star, Life and Eagle.
- Advancement responsibility belongs to you. While your parents, older Scouts and, adult Troop leaders may help you along the way, you are responsible for knowing which skills you need to earn your next rank or merit badge, making the personal effort to learn those skills, and letting the Scoutmaster (SM) know when you are ready to demonstrate those skills.
- You must complete a Position of Responsibility requirement for each of the ranks of Star, Life and Eagle. These are on our troop website Troop680.net under forms.
- Only adult Troop leaders registered with the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) approve your rank advancement and merit badge accomplishments. Scouts designated by the Scoutmaster (SM) and the Senior Patrol Leader (SPL) may sign off on requirements through First Class. The SM or designated Assistant Scoutmasters approve all rank advancements.

For Parents... The parents' role in the Scouting program also changes as a boy moves up to a Boy Scout Troop. **In the Boy Scout program, parents give the boy more opportunity to act on his own.**

- Parents' direct involvement includes:
 1. Volunteering through the Troop Committee – the Committee Chair knows the Troop's needs. Being personally involved shows your son how important his Scouting experience is to you, **and goes a long way towards sustaining his long-term participation in Scouting**. The list of committee members and adult troop leaders is provided on the Troop 680 web site, under "Who we are".
 2. Supporting Troop meetings through the Troop Committee, e.g., as Merit Badge Counselors, as Board of Review members, and as required by the Scoutmaster and Assistant Scoutmasters.

3. Helping on camping trips – This includes providing proper supervision and transportation to and from the outing. Scouts camp in their patrol campsites. Adults camp in a separate site with direct view of the Scouts' area.

- Parents who wish to become actively involved with the Troop should contact the Troop Committee Chair. The Chair has the paperwork necessary to register adults and information about potential opportunities to help through the Troop Committee and as an adult Scouter. Parents should also be aware of training requirements/certifications needed to work with the Troop (see below). These apply whether you are a uniformed leader or periodic volunteer with the Troop.
- Parents should spend time working on the Troop Committee before becoming directly involved with the boys as a Troop leader. This gives the adult time to learn how the Troop and the Troop Committee work together to provide a quality program.
- We encourage adults to help as Merit Badge Counselors, Committee Members, Patrol Advisors or Assistant Scoutmasters.

A Special Note for Parents

Your personal interest in your son's involvement with Scouting directly affects his success. You should take an active interest in his Scouting experience. You can do this in a number of ways:

- Look through your son's Scout Handbook when he comes home after **every** troop meeting and have him tell you about his progress on rank requirements. Check the record keeping section at the end of the The Boy Scout Handbook.
- Work with your son on his knot tying, map and compass, first aid, and other skills.
- Attend every Court of Honor. The Court of Honor is the official ceremony when a scout formally receives recognition for rank advancement, merit badge patches, and other honors or awards. This ceremony formally recognizes and reinforces the Scouts' efforts and accomplishments. Every Scout is expected to attend (even if they are not receiving an award at that ceremony) to cheer their fellow Scouts' achievements. Having the whole family there for the honors makes it extra special. The bigger the audience the better!
- Parents play an important role in their son's activities. We recommend you sit down, discuss, and prioritize what is important to him at least semi-annually.
- Use the school calendar, sports calendar, the Troop *Guidelines*, Troop calendar, and emails on troop activities to establish your role in each of them.
- Realize that Scouts' participation in outdoor activities is a must for advancement.
- Summer Camp is a particularly important annual event and goes a long way towards ensuring the Scouts have fun in the program, learn skills, and earn Merit Badges. All of these things help maintain a Scouts' momentum towards advancement. Historically the Troop has attended camps in PA and VA, usually around the end of June-mid-July. If financial issues are a concern, see the Committee Chair or Scoutmaster as the Troop normally has the resources to assist Scouts with "scholarships" and many camps, particularly those in Council offer some financial aid.

Adult Leader Training

All adults working with Scouts require appropriate training. This is listed on our website under resources/adult leader training.

Any adult working directly with youth in the Troop or wanting to go on a campout must complete BSA Youth Protection Training (YPT) and the Arlington Diocese VIRTUS program, explained below. BSA YPT training is good for two years and must be renewed to remain active in the Troop. VIRTUS is renewed every three years and individuals are notified directly by the Diocese of upcoming expirations.

Arlington Diocese required Virtus training includes a seminar and completion of a background check. See <https://www.arlingtondiocese.org/Child-Protection/VIRTUS/>.

Summary of required training for Merit Badge Counselors

1. BSA Youth Protection Training
2. Diocesan VIRTUS Training at <https://www.arlingtondiocese.org/Child-Protection/VIRTUS>
3. Merit badge counselor training

Summary of required training for Committee Members

1. BSA Youth Protection Training
2. Troop Committee Challenge
3. Diocesan VIRTUS Training

Summary of required training for Scoutmasters, Assistant Scoutmasters and Patrol Advisors

1. Youth Protection Training
2. New Leader Essentials
3. Scout Master/Assistant Scoutmaster Specific Training
4. Introduction to Outdoor Leader Skills [IOLS] (usually, Friday + Saturday campout)
5. Diocesan VIRTUS Training
6. Recommended but not required: Wood Badge for the 21st Century is the core leadership skills training course for the BSA; this course focuses on strengthening every volunteer's ability to work with and lead groups of youth and adults and is less focused on outdoor skills, which are more effectively addressed in other courses.

Section 1: Scouting Organization

BSA National Organization

Troop 680 is part of a large organization—the Boy Scouts of America. The BSA has over one million members across the country. You can learn more about the national BSA organization at its Web site: <http://www.bsa.Scouting.org>.

BSA Council

The BSA is made up of regional councils. The headquarters for our council, called the National Capital Area Council (NCAC), is in Bethesda, MD. More information about the council is available on their Web site: www.ncacbsa.org

BSA District

The NCAC is made up of districts. Ours is called the Colonial District which covers the area south of the beltway and east of I-95 to the Potomac River. Almost all of the people who work for the Colonial District are volunteers. The district Web site is <https://www.ncacbsa.org/colonial/>

Unit Commissioner. Trained and experienced volunteer leaders from the Colonial District, called Unit Commissioners, oversee the operations of Troops in every district. Usually, each Unit Commissioner oversees three or four Troops, Packs, and/or Venture Crews. Our Troop's Unit Commissioner is the best person for a parent to talk to if they are not able to resolve a problem with the Scoutmaster or the Troop Committee.

BSA Charter Organization

Troop 680 is chartered by Saint Louis Catholic Church under an agreement with the BSA. The church as our Chartering Organization oversees our Troop program and has approval authority for adult leaders. The Executive Officer is our pastor and the Troop's Charter Organization Representative (COR) is our youth minister or another parish member appointed by the pastor.

Troop 680

Patrols are the building blocks of our Troop. Beginning Scouts join a New Scout Patrol to help them follow the recommended Boy Scout timeline (18 months) towards First Class rank. At that point, there may be a realignment of patrols as the next set of new Scouts joins by bridging from Pack 680 and/or other packs in March. Patrol members elect their Patrol Leader (PL).

Troop Committee. Volunteer parents, registered with BSA, make up our Troop Committee. The committee ensures our Troop has safe outings and has the resources needed to support our activities. Committee members receive training from the Colonial District in Troop leadership and in youth protection. They also require VIRTUS, the Diocese of Arlington youth protection training. Among its duties, the committee selects the Scoutmaster, raises and manages the money

for our program, supports Troop awards and advancement ceremonies, and handles the paperwork between the Troop and the BSA council. The Troop Committee Chair is the best person for a parent to talk to if they are not able to resolve a problem with the Scoutmaster. One parent for each Scout is expected to be involved in the program as a committee member, merit badge counselor or adult Troop leader. The Troop 680 web site lists the committee members and adult Troop leaders. The Troop Committee meets the third Sunday of the month, usually the week before the monthly youth leaders' meeting – the Patrol Leaders Council (PLC).

Adult Troop Leaders

The Scoutmaster (SM) and the Assistant Scoutmasters (ASMs) are BSA registered adults working directly with the Scouts. The adult Troop leaders receive Troop leadership and youth protection training from the District. They also require VIRTUS training (see <http://www.virtus.org/virtus/>) from the Diocese of Arlington. The Scoutmaster serves as the link between the Troop Committee, provides guidance to the Senior Patrol Leader (SPL) and the other Troop leaders in running the Troop program, and selects the Assistant Scoutmasters.

Boy Leadership

The Scouts are the leaders of Troop 680 and are responsible for running the Troop. Ideally, members of the Troop elect the key Troop Patrol Leaders about every six months but at a minimum, every year. The Troop leaders must perform their duties as specified in the job descriptions/agreements listed on our website under forms for credit toward the 'Position of Responsibility' requirement. Troop leaders who are not able to meet all of the requirements listed in their position agreement may have to continue in their current position beyond a rank-required 4 or 6 month tenure for it to count for advancement.

- **Senior Patrol Leader (SPL).** The SPL is the Scout who leads Troop meetings, outings, and coordinates Troop operations through the Assistant Senior Patrol Leader (ASPL) and the Patrol Leaders. Ideally, the SPL is elected by the Troop but in rare instances, the SM may appoint or recruit a Scout to fulfill this position.
- **Assistant Senior Patrol Leader (ASPL).** ASPLs may be elected by the Troop, or may be appointed by the SPL, in either case with Scoutmaster approval. ASPLs assist the SPL and serve as Troop leaders when the SPL is absent. The ASPLs also help the SPL manage his immediate supporting staff: Troop Guide, Historian, Order of the Arrow Representative, Librarian, Quartermaster, Scribe, Instructor, Chaplain Aide, Den Chief, Leave No Trace Trainer, Webmaster, and Junior Assistant Scoutmaster. They also develop and lead skill-training programs for the Troop.
- **Patrol Leader (PL).** Each patrol elects a Patrol Leader from among its members; the Patrol Leader for the new Scout Patrol may be appointed by the SPL and Scoutmaster. The PL leads his patrol in meetings and outings. He is responsible for ensuring his patrol carries out its duties to the Troop. He is also responsible for representing his patrol members when the PLC meets to decide on plans for Troop outings and other activities. The Patrol Leader selects his Assistant Patrol Leader (APL), the Patrol quartermaster, and the Patrol scribe. If the Patrol leader cannot make it to the PLC, he will ask the APL to attend.

- **Staff positions.** In coordination with the SPL and the Scoutmaster, the ASPL oversees the work of the Troop staff:
 - **Troop Guide**, who works as a mentor with first year Scouts.
 - **Historian**, who records the Troop's history, maintains an archive of Troop photos and documents, collects information on troop activities during his tenure, and prepares the Troop's Annual Report to the parish.
 - **Order of the Arrow Troop Representative**, who serves as a communication link between the Troop and the local Order of the Arrow lodge.
 - **Librarian**, who manages the Troop's library of merit badge pamphlets and other literature.
 - **Quartermaster**, who manages the Troop's equipment inventory.
 - **Scribe**, who keeps the minutes of the PLC, and documents Troop rosters and program plans.
 - **Instructor**, who provides training expertise in a specific area of Scout craft and leads the annual and/or semi-annual Troop Youth Leader Training program.
 - **Chaplain Aide**, who assists the Troop chaplain in serving the religious needs of the Troop, leads one devotional a year, and helps coordinate the annual Scout mass.
 - **Den Chief**, who works with boys in local Cub Scout dens.
 - **Leave No Trace Trainer**, who teaches Leave No Trace principles to the troop and ensures they are followed on outings.
 - **Webmaster**, who maintains the Troop's website, updates calendar, and posts meeting notes.

Note for new Scouts: Knowledge and experience are important to succeed in Troop leadership; Scouts normally must be First Class rank or above to serve in these Troop leader positions. Star is the minimum requirement for SPL and ASPL. Service in one or more of these leadership positions is required for advancement to Star, Life, and Eagle ranks. Younger Scouts should serve in positions within their patrol to gain leadership experience.

Patrol Leaders' Council (PLC). Led by the SPL, the PLC is made up of the Troop leaders. This group meets every month (usually on the last Sunday of each month, instead of a regular Troop meeting) to make plans for future Troop meetings and to decide on other Troop business—outings, policies, and Troop goals. The younger scouts, not holding positions of responsibility, have the Sunday off.

Elections are held at a minimum once a year (in April or May), but may be as often as twice a year, depending on the needs of the Troop. Training resources include: The Patrol Leader Handbook, The Senior Patrol Leader Handbook, Junior Leader Training (video and book), Troop-level junior leader training sessions. Each Patrol Leader should have his own copy of The Patrol Leader Handbook. The PLC members are the SPL, ASPLs, PLs and other troop leadership positions listed as staff positions above.

Section 2: About Our Troop Program

Scouting is an outdoor program. Our Troop emphasizes activities that teach and test you in your outdoor skills. Camping is an essential part of our outdoor program—and it's also a lot of fun! Our calendar and program plans run from September through August of the following year. At the end of this *Guidelines* document are details on camping gear and other equipment you should have and where you can buy those items.

Annual Program Plan

The PLC has a special planning meeting in June to decide on the Troop's goals and objectives for the coming year. The PLC also decides what activities and outings the Troop should do. They look at school, church, and District calendars and decide when best to schedule Troop activities and outings. This is another opportunity for Scouts through their PL to make sure the kinds of activities you and your fellow patrol members like to do are included in the Troop's plans. The PLC's Annual Plan is reviewed and approved by the Scoutmaster and the Troop Committee to ensure that the Troop has the funds and other resources to support the PLC's plans.

Calendar

Based on the Annual Plan, the Troop publishes its annual calendar no later than the beginning of the Troop program year (September) to provide everyone with plenty of notice about Troop activities and outings. This helps everyone minimize conflicts with their family calendars and maximize participation in Troop and advancement activities. Highlights of the Scout year include:

- Late June- Annual planning meeting
- Late August-Beach Campout and Team Building Event
- Sep – First weekly meeting
- Oct – Colonial District Fall Camporee, St. Louis Fall Fest (Scout Jail)
- Nov – Scouting for Food (2nd weekend)
- Dec – Wreaths Across America, Annual Troop Christmas Party
- Jan – Klondike Derby
- Feb – Scout Sunday (may occur in early Mar), Colonial District Merit Badge Jamboree
- Mar – Jump Start for Arrow of Light Scouts Bridging to the Troop
- Apr - Colonial District Spring Camporee
- May – Memorial Day Flags at the Alexandria National Cemetery
- Late June – Summer Camp, High Adventure Trip
- Troop outings, including camping trips, are planned around the above events.
- A cold-weather campout usually is planned for late February
- Courts of Honor are scheduled at least 3 times during the year (in place of weekly meetings) to recognize Scouts who have earned Merit Badges, rank advancement, or otherwise participated in Scouting activities.

Advancement Opportunities

The PLC does its best to include training and advancement opportunities when planning campouts and other Troop activities. But, it is up to you to take advantage of those opportunities.

If you participate in Troop activities on a regular basis, and do your best, you can expect to advance through the ranks and earn merit badges in a reasonable time. Be sure to read **Section 3** carefully for all the details on advancement.

Troop Meetings

Our Troop meets the first three Sundays (four in five-Sunday months) of every month from 5:30 pm to 7:00 pm. We meet in McClunn Hall unless Church activities preclude it. When this happens, you will be informed via e-mail as to the new meeting place. Most of our meetings include some kind of special presentation or skills instruction, as well as Patrol Meeting time and an inter-patrol game or competition you have helped put together through the PLC.

PLC Meetings

The last Sunday of the month is usually reserved for PLC meetings. These meetings are also held in McClunn unless the parish requests otherwise. The PLC meetings are **just for the SPL and the other Troop leaders**. Younger scouts do not attend, although they are welcome to come if they so desire.

Scouts' Conduct at Troop Meetings and Outings

Courtesy and respect for fellow Scouts and leaders is always essential. Every Scout is expected to follow the Scout law and behave properly, not to speak out of turn, and to be courteous to others at all times. In addition to all the fun we have at our Troop meetings and on outings, we also do important Troop business. Scouts who are disruptive will be required to stay after the meeting and meet with the Troop leaders to address ways to eliminate disruptions. If they misbehave again, their parents will be called and they will be sent home from the meeting or from the outing—even if that outing is several hours drive from home.

Scout Uniform Requirements

The uniform is a very important symbol of our identity as Scouts and as a unit. You are responsible for wearing your uniform correctly and at the right times. The Troop has two types of uniform, Class A and Class B.

Parts of the Class A Scout Uniform. The main parts of your Class A Scout uniform are:

- **Tan Scout shirt**, either short-sleeved or long-sleeved. The short-sleeved shirt is more economical since it can be worn year-round—even in the winter over a long-sleeved shirt.
- **Green Scout pants** (or green Scout shorts). No substitutes are allowed for scouts in the rank of Star, Life or Eagle. Scouts below the rank of Star have the option of wearing green/tan cargo pants in lieu of the green scout pants/shorts.
- **Belt:** green web belt with brass BSA buckle. The newer convertible pants have a built in belt.
- **Merit badge sash** is required for boards of review and courts of honor.
- Scout neckerchief (Navy Blue) and slide are required when the Class A uniform is worn.
- **Shoes and socks** may include sneakers and gym socks, since our meetings and outings typically involve physical activity. No open toed shoes or flipflops.
- **Scout caps are optional.** (unless at summer camp.)

Parts of the Class B Scout Uniform. The main parts of your Class B Scout uniform are:

- **Troop t-shirt.** The Troop designed these to wear at outings when the Scout is not wearing the Class A uniform. The basic design is a small circle printed on the front left side and the characters “T680” printed inside the circle. These are usually purchased in the Spring through the Troop, but some inventory is available all year.
- **Pants.** These are left at the discretion of the Troop leaders. The options are: green Scout pants, green Scout shorts, or other appropriate color/material combination such as tan/green cargo pants.
- **Belt.** green web belt with brass BSA buckle. No substitutes are allowed. The newer convertible pants have a built in belt.
- **Scout caps are optional.** Other baseball-style caps that have a Scout-related theme, such as a Scout camp, are acceptable substitutes for the Scout cap. You are not allowed to wear hats which promote sports teams or other commercial themes with your Scout uniform at any time.

Imitation of United States Armed Forces Uniforms is prohibited by the provisions of the organization’s charter. This means that scouts may not wear military garb or fatigues, including camouflage at any scout meeting or activity.

When to Wear Your Scout Uniform. Every Scout and registered adult leader is required to wear their uniform for all official functions unless your Patrol Leader specifically tells you otherwise. The Class A uniform is worn at all meetings and activities unless specifically stated by the SPL. All Scouts assigned to a position of responsibility are required to wear the Class A uniform to all meetings. The complete Class A uniform is mandatory for Scoutmaster Conferences and Boards of Review and when representing the troop in community events. The Class B uniform is designed for outings when the Class A uniform is not required.

Sewing Patches on Your Uniform. An easy way to get uniform patches to line up correctly is to first glue them on with a water-based white glue (like Elmer's) before sewing. When you wash the shirt, the glue will wash out. Check your Scout Handbook for details on proper placement of your patches. Alternatively, Badge Magic semi-permanent adhesive is available for a no-sew option.

Where to Buy Uniforms and Other Scouting Items

The NCAC has a Scout Shop at 5234 Port Royal Road, in Springfield in the Ravensworth Shopping Center (just outside the beltway, phone (703) 321-4836). Other local sources for Scouting items in Alexandria are Robcyns (703) 379-7800 at 3660 King Street in the Bradlee Shopping Center, and Casual Adventure 3451 North Washington Blvd. Arlington, VA 22201 Phone 703-527- 06006. You can also call the BSA's catalog order line 1-800-323-0736 or at scoutstuff.org.

Recycled Uniform Closet. Because Scout uniforms are made to be very tough, you will probably outgrow your uniform before you wear it out. We encourage you to turn in your outgrown uniform parts to the Troop. We recycle these for use by other Scouts. This saves money and keeps everyone in full uniform. That keeps our Troop looking sharp!

Troop Information Sources

- **Web Site.** Our Troop has a web site <http://troop680.net/> which publishes information about upcoming events, district roundtable notes, 12-month calendar, adult leadership, etc.
- **Calendar.** The Troop maintains an annual activity calendar on the Troop 680 web site with monthly updates.
- **Email.** The Troop maintains a complete e-mail list of parents as the primary way to distribute Troop information.

Troop Records. A Troop Committee member (Database Coordinator) maintains a computer database, which records the dates of completion for rank advancement requirements and merit badges throughout a Scout's career, along with participation in campouts, service projects, and other Troop activities. Scouts must also keep their own records of activities and requirement completions with associated dates (month, day and year). This is typically done directly in the Scout's Handbook. The database also includes some personal information (parents' names, address, telephone number, patrol, and leadership positions held in the Troop).

Scout Records. Scouts must keep their copy (Applicant Record) of merit badge blue cards and rank advancement cards they've earned in a safe place at home. One handy way to organize and store them is in plastic cardholder sheets (like those used for trading cards), which fit in a 3-ring binder. Also, the back of the Boy Scout Handbook, the Rank Requirements has a special layout to check and the adult leader to date and initial the completed requirements. It is a Scout's responsibility to keep good records of their advancement achievements; adult Patrol Guides will generally assist the younger Scouts. Check with the Troop Database Coordinator to verify accuracy and completeness of your Individual History Report at least quarterly. Contact the Scoutmaster or an Assistant Scoutmaster to resolve discrepancies. If a scout has to leave the Troop, his handbook and 3-ring binder become the primary record of achievements to carry over to a new Troop, along with his Troop Master Record from the Advancement Chair. All of these records and cards are an essential part of the Eagle application when a Scout is ready to advance to that rank.

How We Pay for Our Troop Program

Scout Dues. Dues are \$130.00 per year for the first Scout in each family. Additional siblings pay \$70.00 per year. BOY'S LIFE magazine is not included – add \$15.00 per scout for this. The Troop Committee treasurer will collect once in September. The money we collect from dues payments helps the Troop pay for merit badges, rank patches, camping equipment, and other materials we need. Part of the registration includes paying a registration fee, which supports the national BSA organization.

Fundraising. Our Troop sells evergreen wreaths during the Christmas season. Besides your dues payments, this is the other major source of money to pay for our Troop equipment, uniform patches, and other Troop expenses. We also have car washes several times per year. This project also provides an opportunity for Scouts to support the troop. In the spring, we had a shredding event for records/documents.

Section 3: Earning Ranks and Merit Badges

“...a boy cannot master the skills of the outdoors without learning something of the skills of living and working with other—outdoors or in...indeed, the advancement program may well be the most effective tool we have to stimulate in a boy the personal growth we want him to develop through Scouting.” ...from the **Boy Scout Handbook**

How Boy Scout Advancement Differs from Cub Scouting

Just as the Cub Scout program was tailored to your capabilities, so too the Boy Scout ranks increase in difficulty and challenge. They are also designed to emphasize different things. The lower ranks (Scout, Tenderfoot, Second Class, and First Class) emphasize the development of skill. The higher ranks (Star, Life, and Eagle) emphasize leadership and service. Several big differences exist, though:

- The ranks are not tied to a particular age group. In fact, you can work on your Tenderfoot, Second Class and First Class requirements all at the same time, although the ranks will not be awarded out of sequence. See your Scout Handbook for a list of all rank advancement requirements.
- **Individual effort is the foundation of advancement.** You are responsible for knowing which skills you need to earn your next rank or Merit Badge, making the personal effort to learn those skills and letting the Scoutmaster know when you are ready to demonstrate those skills.
- Instead of Troop leaders being the sole instructors, we encourage the experienced boys to work with others in their patrol or the Troop on the skills they need to master.
- As it was with the WEBELOS, your parents can also help with your learning. But, **they cannot sign off the approval for your requirements. That is the responsibility of the SM, designated ASMs, and the registered Merit Badge counselors.**

Four Steps to Rank Advancement

1. **Learning.** You learn new skills by taking part in Troop and patrol meetings and outdoor activities. The requirements for Tenderfoot, Second Class, and First Class are largely hands-on requirements, with each rank getting more challenging. The Troop Guide and senior Scouts in Instructor positions, as well as the SM and ASMs, may be involved in helping you learn the basic Scouting skills. Your parents can help you at home, too.
2. **Testing.** Your progress is the natural outcome of your active involvement in regular Scouting activities. When you think you have mastered a particular skill, let the Scoutmaster know. When the leaders see that you have mastered a given skill and satisfied a given requirement, they tell you so—and record your achievement in your Handbook, and in a computer database maintained by the Troop Database Coordinator.

3. **Review.** After you have passed all of the requirements for your next rank, you will meet with the SM for a conference and then with a Board of Review.
 - a. The **Scoutmaster Conference** (SMC) will help you get to know the SM and help him get to know you. This conference is usually short (about 10-15 minutes). You and the Scoutmaster will talk about what you have learned (the SM may test you on some of those skills), things you like and dislike about the Troop, how you're getting along with the leaders and other Scouts, and your Scouting goals. The SM's procedures for requesting a SMC and guidance on preparing for a SMC are posted on the website at: [http://troop680.net/downloads/SM%20Conference%20Procedures%20\(08-23-2016\).pdf](http://troop680.net/downloads/SM%20Conference%20Procedures%20(08-23-2016).pdf)
 - b. The **Board of Review** (BOR) is a small group of parents (at least one of them is a registered Troop Committee member—at least three adults in all) you will meet with after your Scoutmaster Conference. The board's job is not to re-test you, but to make sure you have met all requirements for the rank, and to learn how you feel about your experiences with the Troop and with Scouting.
 - c. For an SMC and BOR you are required to have your Scout Handbook, wear the proper uniform and have a paper copy of your advancement report from the database.
4. **Award.** Following a successful Board of Review, you will receive your new rank badge at the Troop's next Court of Honor. Our Troop has a Court of Honor every three to four months. However, immediately following a successful BOR, a scout is considered advanced and may begin working on rank requirements as the new rank.

Merit Badges

As you progress toward First Class and higher ranks, you will spend much of your time working on merit badges. The BSA offers more than 100 badges you can earn. Some of these badges are required for promotion to Eagle Scout rank. Earning a merit badge requires you to work directly with a registered adult who serves as the counselor for that badge. For a list of merit badges see <http://www.meritbadge.com>. You have four different opportunities to earn merit badges.

1. You may work directly with a registered counselor on a merit badge of interest to you; unless at a Scout function with several other Scouts and adults around, you must work with a buddy Scout and there must be two adults present (the Counselor and one other) to meet YPT requirements.
2. You may be a member of a group within the Troop working on a specific merit badge.
3. You can participate in the District Merit Badge Jamboree held in February each year.
4. You may earn merit badges while attending summer camp with the Troop.

Note for new Scouts: Only BSA-registered adults registered with the Colonial District and the NCAC for a specific merit badge approve the award of that merit badge.

Steps to Earning a Merit Badge (MB)

1. As a Scout, you can learn about sports, crafts, science, trades, business and future careers as you earn MBs. Any Boy Scout may earn any MB at any time. Talk to your SM, ASM, SPL, PL, Advancements Coordinator, MB Coordinator or parents about your interests. Read the requirements of the merit badges you think might interest you at <http://www.meritbadge.com>.

2. When you are ready to work on a badge, you must first ask the SM for approval to start working on the MB you choose. Get a blue card (a three-part Merit Badge Application card used to record your completed work) from the Troop Advancement Chair and fill out the blue card with your personal information and name of merit badge to be earned..
3. The SM signs the "blue card" and optionally (for a very few long term merit badges, e.g., camping) records the start date of your merit badge effort in the Troop database. The SM also recommends a registered MB Counselor (MBC) to you (either a Troop 680 parent or a Colonial District counselor) and provides you with contact information for the MB Counselor.
4. You get a copy of that merit badge pamphlet (either borrowed from the Troop library or bought from a store) and review the requirements.
5. You contact the registered MBC for that badge and schedule an appointment for instruction and testing. Many MBs require several such sessions. The counselor does not sign the blue card until all badge requirements are completed. You give the blue card to the merit badge counselor who maintains it until all requirements are completed.
6. Discuss the requirements with the MBC. Regular Troop meetings provide a great opportunity for this. The MBC will ask you to do each requirement to make sure that you know your stuff and have done or can do the things required. Take along the things you have written/made or take pictures if it is too big to move.
7. When the MBC is satisfied that you have finished all of the requirements, the MBC will sign your blue card, keeping the Counselor Record portion of the card. The scout returns to the SM to request his sign off of the completed MB on the remaining two portions of the blue card. Once signed by the SM, the remaining two portions of the blue card should be given to the Troop advancements coordinator. The MB, MB card and your part of the blue card will be presented to you at the next Court of Honor. Keep the merit badge card and blue card safe in a binder. You will need these for Eagle rank.

Partial Merit Badges:

If you aren't able to complete all of the requirements with a MBC, the MBC can initial each completed item on the back of the blue card. This is called earning a "partial." In this case, you will keep the whole card and try to complete it with another counselor at some other time in the future.

Deadlines.

There is NO DEADLINE for earning Merit Badges (other than your 18th birthday). Once you start working on a Merit Badge (i.e. obtain a signed "Blue Card" Application for the Merit Badge), have an initial discussion with a MBC, and start working on the requirements), you may continue using those requirements until you complete the badge or turn 18 years of age. **There Is No One Year Limit On So-Called "Partials"**.

Merit Badge Changes.

If the requirements change while you are working on the badge, you may continue to use the OLD requirements until you complete the work, or you may use the new requirements. It is YOUR choice, and yours alone unless the BSA has specifically mandated otherwise, which occasionally happens. In such situations, Scouts are often given a date certain by which to complete the MB under the old requirements. If the MB is not completed by that date, the Scout is then required to complete the MB under the new requirement. Your MBC should inform you of such situations. A Scout may not choose a mix of old and new requirements.

Discontinued or Renamed Merit Badges

If a MB is discontinued while you are working on the badge, you may continue to work toward completing the badge, and get credit for earning the badge, until you turn 18. However, it may not be possible to obtain an actual MB patch once the local council's supply is exhausted.

If a discontinued MB is replaced with one or more other MB covering the same or similar topics (such as Rifle and Shotgun Shooting MB which was replaced by Rifle Shooting MB and Shotgun Shooting MB), a Scout that has earned the discontinued badge may also earn the new badge or badges. If the badge is simply renamed (such as Firemanship MB which was changed to Fire Safety MB), Scouts may NOT earn the badge again. If the badge number in BSA's numbering system is the same before and after the change, it is a renaming. If a new number is assigned, it is a replacement.

Troop 680's Eagle-Required Merit Badge Program/Schedule

Eagle-required merit badges are among the most challenging badges you will earn. In many cases, working on these projects with your fellow Scouts and helping each other along the way can make these challenges easier. Our Troop provides opportunities for you to earn many of the Eagle-required merit badges in a group setting. The list of Eagle required merit badges includes: First Aid; Citizenship in the Community; Citizenship in the Nation; Citizenship in the World; Communications; Personal Fitness; Emergency Preparedness or Lifesaving; Environmental Science; Personal Management; Swimming or Hiking or Cycling; Camping; and Family Life.

Section 4: What Each Scout Should Have—*Be Prepared*

Boy Scout Handbook

The Boy Scout Handbook is THE guide to the Scouting adventure, which you can buy at the Scout Shop or another store that sells Scout items. Read it carefully and often—it is packed with good ideas about camping skills, Scoutcraft skills, and valuable information about you and the world around you.

Boy's Life Magazine

The magazine about Scouting. If possible, you should join the million other boys who subscribe to this great publication. Subscriptions can be included in your registration when you join or renew your membership in the Troop.

What Each Scout Should Not Have:

- **Personal Electronics.** Scouting is about fellowship. So, when we go on campouts and other outings, leave your CD player, video game players, cell phone and other personal electronic gear at home. These are allowed on long car trips, but then are stowed during the campout.
- **Long Knives.** For safety reasons, you are not allowed to carry a fixed blade (sheath) knife of any size or any other knife with a blade longer than 3 inches. Knives that are 3 inches or less in length are sufficient for our needs on the trail.
 - *Note for new Scouts: You must earn the right to carry a knife. For safety reasons, you are not allowed to carry any knife, hatchet or other sharp tool until you have earned your Totin' Chip badge. It signifies that you have mastered the skills for safe handling of woodcutting tools.*
 - *Mishandling your knife results in loss of your privilege to carry it until you satisfy the SM/ASM that you understand and will comply with safe handling requirements.*
- **Prescription Drugs.** On Troop outings, any prescription medications your doctor requires you to take must be turned in to the adult leader who will keep your medicine and give you the amount needed for each dose. This helps the adult leaders stay informed about each Scout's medical condition.

Essential Backpacking Gear

While the Troop provides each patrol with much of the gear for camping, such as tents, and cooking equipment, each Scout must have basic personal gear suitable for carrying (compact and lightweight) on overnight hikes. The following summarizes the basic gear you need to enjoy our Troop's backpacking and camping programs.

Gear Sources. Campmor mail-order camping supply company (1-888-226-7667, or on the web at www.campmor.com). Hiker Direct is another mail order contact for discount camping gear. Hikerdirect.com. Local suppliers with comparable offerings are Appalachian Outfitters (Oakton), REI (Bailey's Crossroads), Casual Adventure (703-527-0600), Galyans (Off I-66), and Ranger Surplus at 9514 B Main Street, Fairfax, 703-426-1326.

Cost versus Value. The smaller and lighter the load, the more enjoyable the hike. When shopping for these items, always consider weight and packed size when comparing prices. These are often tradeoffs for lower price.

Backpacks. There are essentially two types: internal and external frame. The type is usually a matter of personal preference and the advantages and disadvantages are covered in the Backpacking MB. Our SM, ASMs, and Backpacking MBCs can offer guidance to anyone looking to purchase a backpack. The Hiker direct program noted above typically has annual sales and offers both styles at great prices.

Sleeping Bag. Although styles differ, a sleeping bag that rolls up to a small, easily packable size is essential. These range in price from about \$70.00 and up. The +20°F degree-rated bags (comfortable at +20 degrees Fahrenheit) with synthetic insulation provide the best balance of weight, cost and insulating value for three-season camping. (Bags with lower temperature ratings will be too warm in summer months.) With a liner (blanket, etc.) and thermal underwear, a +20-degree bag can be effective for winter camping too. Synthetic insulators (Hollofil II, Quallofil, etc.) provide adequate insulation at lower cost than natural down-insulated bags (the tradeoff is a slight increase in weight). Synthetics also provide better insulating performance when the bag gets wet. There are pros and cons to synthetic v. natural fill and different styles of bags. The SM, ASM,s and Backpacking MBCs can advise you on what to purchase.

In cold weather (late fall through early spring in the Mid-Atlantic region), a warm-rated (+20 degrees or lower) mummy bag is essential.

Sleeping Pad. These pads provide both comfort and insulation from the cold ground. Two types are common: closed cell foam mats and self-inflating air mattresses with open-cell foam inside. The best balance of weight, pack size and cost is a 3/4-length pad. These effectively cushion and insulate the torso area. Self-inflating air mattresses with open-cell foam provide more insulating value and pack to a smaller size. However, closed cell foam mats are tougher and more durable.

Note: Beach-style inflatable air mattresses are NOT recommended. They are very unreliable, frequently developing leaks, provide no insulating value and are a poor value despite the low cost

Recommend:

- 1.) Self-inflating open-cell foam air mattress: Therm-A-Rest brand's LiteFoam model 3/4 mattress—47" length; packs to 3"x26"; 11lb 6oz.
- 2.) Closed cell foam mat: Therm-A-Rest brand's Ridgerest Z-Rest model 3/4 pad—51" length; packs to 5"x20"; 12oz.

Hiking Boots. Every Scout needs comfortable shoes or boots that provide ankle support as well as hiking socks, usually a combination of a heavy pair of synthetic fiber over thin-wicking socks will keep your feet dry.

Recommend: Lightweight shoes or boots are best for Troop trail hiking. The most important factors are ankle support and proper fit—walking with blisters is extremely painful and will quickly take all of the fun out of a hike. Lightweight hiking shoes or boots should be fitted wearing hiking socks (usually thicker) that you will wear on the trail. The boots should fit comfortably but snug across the middle of the foot and leave enough space to fit a finger behind the heel when the foot is pushed forward against the toe of the boot. Boots with Gore-tex lining will keep your feet dry in rainy weather.

Note: Heavy, rigid-sole hiking boots are NOT recommended. They are too expensive and too heavy for relatively short-distance hiking on established trails. Their heavy treads also cause unnecessary damage to the trail.

Rain Gear. Every Scout should be prepared for an occasional rainstorm.

Recommend: A top and bottom raincoat with vents to provide proper air circulation. An emergency poncho in their fanny packs or backpacks offer a quick solution to staying dry but only for a short period of time like setting up camp but not for on the trail use. Vinyl rain suits are effective but bulky, heavy, and with poor ventilation.

First Aid Kit. Every Scout should be prepared for an occasional minor injury.

Recommend: A small assortment of Band-Aids for minor cuts (std ¾ inch width); Dr. Scholl's "moleskin" adhesive padding for protection and treating blisters; small sewing needle for draining blisters; splinter tweezers; triple antibiotic cream; burn cream or ointment; Sting Eze insect bite relief lotion; gloves; chapstick with UV protection; sun block cream with OFF bug repellent SPF 15 or better. All packed in a heavy-duty zip-lock freezer bag.

Flashlight. Every Scout needs a small flashlight (with extra bulb and extra batteries).

Recommend:

1. The mini-MagLite (2 AA batteries) size offers a good balance between cost and performance. It fits easily in a pocket, in a pocketknife and flashlight combo belt carrying case, or hangs by a hook in the tent. While flashlights with C or D size batteries provide more light for a longer time, they do so at far greater weight.
2. Lightweight headlamps are also effective and provide the added convenience of hands-free operation. There is a head strap that fit the mini-MagLite, making it more versatile than regular flashlights.
3. Technology has made it possible for LED flashlights to compete with the mini-MagLite. Besides these being lighter, they offer the advantage of long-lasting bulbs and battery life of up to 200 hours of operation versus the mini-MagLite 5 to 6 hour battery life. Remember that there are no other sources of light besides the stars and the moon where we use the flashlight. A little light goes a long way.

Dining Utensils. Every Scout needs a personal set of cooking/eating utensils.

Recommend: An insulated 12-ounce mug with lid, stainless steel or durable plastic (Lexan) soup spoon or "spork" which is a combined spoon+fork, a Lexan bowl for both liquid and solid foods and a small sponge/scrub pad for cleaning. This combination works for all meals, thus minimizing cleanup time, pack weight and expense.

Personal Care Kit. Every Scout needs a few personal care items on the trail.

Recommend: Toothbrush w/case; small (travel size) tube of toothpaste; biodegradable soap; lightweight (plastic or stainless steel) mirror; comb; wash cloth—pack in a zip-lock freezer bag. Pack a hand towel too.

Appendix A—Patch/Insignia Placement



