



Merit Badge Counselor (MBC) Job Description

Merit Badge Initiation

- Scouts need to have a discussion with the Merit Badge Lead (“MBL”), and receive approval, prior to starting a MB. The MBL will try to ensure Merit Badge Counselor (MBC) identification, training, registration, and availability. The Troop cannot guarantee the ability to support all MBs offered in the BSA program, but will do their best to identify an appropriate counselor within the Troop or broader Piedmont Council.
- If a Scout approaches you to work on a merit badge, please ask them to connect with the MBL first. This is to ensure that the Advancement Team knows what Scouts are working on, and at times, suggest another course of action—perhaps the merit badge that they have chosen will be led by the Troop in one of the following seasons, or there is another merit badge that will be better for them to achieve their goals.

Standards for Merit Badge Completion

- MBCs need to have an actual discussion(s) with each Scout individually for those requirements that say “discuss” to “test” them and ensure that they understand the content. Scouts will benefit from the conversation, and this will ensure that they master the content, and have not just copied down answers from a pamphlet, internet source, or parent. Therefore, **turning in a workbook and considering the merit badge complete is not acceptable.**
- Scouts must complete the requirements as they are stated—**nothing more, nothing less.**
 1. If it says “show or demonstrate,” that is what Scouts must do. The same thing holds true for such words as “make,” “list,” “discuss,” etc.
 2. Some merit badges request that work be done in order.
 3. If a requirement says, “with your counselor’s approval,” Scouts **must get the MBC’s approval before proceeding.** It can mean avoiding rework or disappointment.
 4. If it is not possible for the MBC to “see” the completion of a requirement (for example, demonstrating a line rescue in the water), the Scout needs to talk with the MBC **in advance** and then **show a photo or video of the requirement being completed.**
- Scouts should read the Merit Badge Pamphlet for each Eagle-required merit badge so they have an opportunity to familiarize themselves with the basic knowledge on the topic. It is our hope and understanding that the subsequent discussion with the MBC, and demonstration of skills will turn this theoretical knowledge into a much deeper understanding.

Leading a Merit Badge

- Leading a Merit Badge provides structure around helping Scouts work on Eagle Merit Badges. They are to plan, set expectations, answer questions and check on progress.

- Meetings are not intended to get requirements “signed off” as a group. MBCs are expected to teach and talk about the subject matter and discuss the requirements, yet the **Scout needs to do their own work. Teach to the group and test individually.**
- It is not the MBC’s job to follow up with Scouts to get them to complete the requirements. **Scouting is “boy-led,”** and as such, they need to learn to take the initiative, especially when it comes to Eagle-required merit badges. Of course, encourage them, though!
- If you think a Scout has a disability, please talk with the MBL or Advancement Chair (“AC”) regarding how to address it.
- You may track Scout’s progress on a spreadsheet, in a database such as TroopWebHost or Troopmaster, or on a blue cards. If you choose to track online, let the MBL and AC know when Scouts are done.
- You may want to have a sign-up sheet at meetings.

Important Rules

- **Parents are not permitted to sign off on their own Scout’s requirements.** If you are team-leading a merit badge, have the other parent meet and review your son’s requirements. If you are leading the merit badge alone, have your Scout meet with the MBL to review your son’s requirements.
- MBCs must be registered with the Piedmont Council as a Merit Badge Counselor for the merit badge that you are leading, and Adult Leader, and have taken Youth Protection Training (YPT is an annual requirement).
 - Adult Leader Application: <http://www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/524-501.pdf>
 - Merit Badge Counselor Application: <http://www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/34405.pdf>
 - Youth Protection Training: <https://www.scouting.org/Training/YouthProtection.aspx>
- If a MBC meets with a Scout, they must have another adult present (2-deep leadership) or the Scout can have a buddy with him.

Background on MBCs

Merit badge counselors (MBCs) are key players in the Boy Scout advancement program. MBCs offer their time, knowledge and other resources to help Scouts learn and complete requirements of a merit badge. One of the methods of Scouting is association with adults who act as mentor and guides. Besides a Scout's parents and relatives, his schoolteachers, his religious leaders, and possibly his sports coaches, most Scout-age youth do not have much contact with many other adults or professionals. MBCs provide an excellent means for a Scout to grow through his exposure to outstanding adults who serve as examples and mentors to them. It offers Scouts the opportunity to deal with business leaders, trained specialists and experienced hobbyists.

From the BSA website

*[A Merit Badge Counselor’s] duty is to be satisfied that each Scout who comes to you meets all the requirements for the merit badge you are coaching. You do this by helping Scouts overcome the different hurdles of the requirements and making them aware of the deeper aspects of the subject through their learning experience. You may tell about your own experiences to help positively reinforce the subject matter. However, you may not tack on new requirements or extra work. While you may guide and instruct a Scout on the subject matter, he must do the work himself. As each requirement is completed, **you will test the Scout individually, with his buddy present...** You may wish to seek additional training from your local council/district on local policies and procedures for merit badge counselors.*

For more information: <http://www.scouting.org/meritbadges.aspx>