Merit Badge Counselor Registration Instructions

Below are instructions on BSA registration for merit badge counselors. Even if an adult is currently registered with a troop as a committee member or as a uniformed leader, they still need to register with a new Adult Application for their new role as merit badge counselor in addition to other registrations.

To register as a Scouts BSA Merit Badge Counselor with our Mecklenburg County Council, an adult age 18 or older must

1. Be current on BSA (Boy Scouts of America) Youth Protection within the last 2 years

(go to https://my.scouting.org/, sign in or register, then click on upper right Youth Protection logo, complete Youth Protection course modules, and print certificate)

2. Be registered as a BSA volunteer by completing and signing the BSA Adult Application form posted at

https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/524-501.pdf

3. Be registered as a Merit Badge Counselor by completing Merit Badge Counselor Information form posted at

http://www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/34405.pdf

Please send all 3 documents by USPS to

Registrar

Mecklenburg County Council

1410 East 7th Street

Charlotte, NC 28204

704 333 5471

Original signatures on an original BSA Adult Application form, including page 3 and the Background Check Authorization on page 9, will allow a background check.

Here is information on BSA background check policy:

https://blog.scoutingmagazine.org/2019/10/14/rechecks-of-criminal-backgrounds-explained/

Merit badge counselors do not pay a registration fee.

Merit Badge Counselors must renew their registrations as Counselors every year in November and must remain current on BSA Youth Protection. Counselors should look for information about renewing their merit badge lists in November and December of each year.

Merit Badge Resources for Scouts and Counselors

Current official BSA merit badge requirements

<https://www.scouting.org/programs/scouts-bsa/advancement-and-awards/merit-badges/>

Unofficial library of merit badge requirements, workbooks, resources

<http://usscouts.org/meritbadges.asp>

By BSA policy, counselors cannot requirement Scouts to use a workbook. However, Scouts are encouraged to use a workbook because it keeps their work organized and because the paper record can be important to replace last blue cards or to document participation and learning.

Merit Badge Resources for Counselors

BSA offers on-line training modules **specifically for merit badge counselors**.

Log in at https://my.scouting.org/

Click on BSA Learn Center

Click on Course Catalog, search for:

Introduction to Merit Badges

Scouts BSA - Merit Badge Counselor Position Specific Training

BSA offers on-line training modules of **general interest**.

Log in at https://my.scouting.org/

Click on BSA Learn Center

Click on Course Catalog, search for:

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Scouting

Safe Swim Defense

Safety Afloat

Climb On Safely

Hazardous Weather Training

Drive Safely

Sexual Abuse

Emotional Abuse

Bullying

A Guide for Merit Badge Counseling

<https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/512-065.pdf>

Unofficial guide to merit badge homework

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1jm7GIJ9V9FbZZQTVU3hO74bc_yaiXkBN/edit>

Here are links to information and guidelines that are important to effective merit badge counseling:

Merit badge program overview and links to all merit badge requirements:

Official BSA site

<https://www.scouting.org/programs/scouts-bsa/advancement-and-awards/merit-badges/>

Pages 40 to 51, 2021 Guide to Advancement pages 38 to 51 cover all aspects of the merit badge program

<https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/33088.pdf>

Special certifications for

Climbing

Snow Sports

Canoeing

Kayaking

Lifesaving

Motorboating

Rowing

Motorboating

Scuba Diving

Small Boat Sailing

Swimming

Water Sports

Whitewater

Archery

Rifle Shooting

Shotgun Shooting

Pages 42-43, 2021 Guide to Advancement

<https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/33088.pdf>

Here are scuba guidelines from the Guide to Safe Scouting at

<https://www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/gss/gss02/#i>

Merit Badge Group Instruction Guide

<https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/512-066_WEB.pdf>

Guide to Safe Scouting

<https://www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/gss/>

Age-Appropriate Guidelines for Scouting Activities

<https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/HealthSafety/pdf/680-685.pdf>

SAFE Checklist

<https://www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/safe/>

<https://www.scouting.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/680-07221-Commitment-to-Safety.pdf>

SAFE Project Tool Use and Age-Appropriate Guidelines—Project Tool Use

<https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/healthsafety/pdf/680-028.pdf>

Suggestions for Preparing to Teach a Merit Badge Course

1. Please review the current official BSA merit badge requirements

<https://www.scouting.org/programs/scouts-bsa/advancement-and-awards/merit-badges/>

Obtain a copy of the latest edition of the merit badge book. Troop libraries may have merit badge books. Often these are older but serviceable editions. The latest print editions are stocked and are for sale at the Mecklenburg County Council Scout Shop at

1410 East 7th Street Charlotte, NC 28204

704 333 5471

[www.mccscouting.org](http://www.mccscouting.org)

Scouts may order printed copies from [www.scoutshop.org](http://www.scoutshop.org).

Scouts may order digital copies for Kindle devices from <https://smile.amazon.com/> or from<https://amazon.com/>

Please follow current requirements for the course instruction plan.

2. Please consider printing a merit badge workbook from <http://usscouts.org/meritbadges.asp>. BSA policy is that counselors or troops cannot require a Scout to use a pre-printed workbook. Scouts can be encouraged to use these workbooks because they keep information organized and progress toward completing all requirements is easy for the Scout and others to follow.

If a counselor completes a merit badge workbook, this will help to organize presentations. Sometimes a Google search for "xxx merit badge answers" will turn up useful information or PowerPoint presentations.

3. Please consider searching for Youtube videos and web documents and PowerPoint presentations that support the merit badge topics and requirements and projects.

Sources of PowerPoint and pdf presentations for merit badges may include

<http://www.authorstream.com/>

<http://bsa344.com/Troop_Resources.html>

<http://www.troopresource.org/powerpoints.html>

<https://sites.google.com/site/troop100phenixcity/mb-presentations>

<https://sites.google.com/view/meritbadgedepot>

<https://slidetodoc.com/>

<https://www.powershow.com/>

<https://www.slideserve.com/>

<https://www.slideshare.net/>

These sites are not sponsored or endorsed by BSA and may or may not be secure or safe.

Blue Cards

Unofficial guide to blue cards

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1R-9a4mZuGMgrR1SECJdKsMkt4c4kxda4/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=109493158571682052737&rtpof=true&sd=true>

In the most ideal circumstance, Scouts should discuss their plans for earning a merit badge with a buddy or through a group class with their Scoutmasters before beginning the work to earn the badge. The Scoutmaster can give guidance on the appropriateness of the badge considering the Scout’s knowledge base and experience. For example, a new 11-year-old Scout with no work experience and no allowance should not work on Personal Management Merit badge. When the Scoutmaster clears the Scout for participation, the Scoutmaster can sign a new blue card and give it to the Scout to indicate approval.

Before Scouts arrive for their first meeting with the counselor, they should fill in the parts of the card with their identification information and merit badge name. The Scouts must use new blue cards and not recycle old cards with outdated information erased or lined out. The Scouts should use ink, not pencil, to fill in the blanks on their blue cards.

The "inside" of the trifold card has a line at the top for the Scout to write in the name of the merit badge.

Often Scouts arrive without a merit badge card or with a blue card without a Scoutmaster signature or with a blue card filled out in pencil. The best course of action is to provide the Scout with a blank blue card and to require them to fill out the relevant Scout parts in ink.

The Scout needs to complete as much of the information on these sections as possible, including the merit badge counselor's name and address and contact information, which the counselor can provide to the whole class at one time. Scouts should fill in their names, dates, the unit information on the 3rd section. If these are black when the Scout presents the card to the counselor, the counselor should hand the card back to the Scout to complete these fields before signing it. At the opening of any merit badge class, the counselor should post their identification information and the requirement numbers for the blue card grid so that the Scouts can fill in that information in ink. Merit badge counselors should not themselves repetitively fill out this information at the end a class when signatures and initials for badge and requirement completions take place.

The Scout must fill in the grid portion of the card. The first column is for requirement #'s. Some counselors and troops prefer a simple list, like this

1

2

3

4

5

Other counselors and troops may prefer more detail:

1a

1b

2

3a

3b

3c

4

5

Others are okay with

1ab

2

3abc

4

5.

Scouts must fill in the dates in the next column.

If the Scouts have now completed their responsibility for the blue card blanks, filled in with ink, the counselor is ready to

1. initial those requirements on the grid that the Scout has completed

2. leave initials blank for those requirements not completed or to write in "pending" in the initial column, if the Scout did not complete or demonstrate that requirement or sub-requirement. If a Scout has not a prepared a presentation or written a report or performed an observation or experiment as defined by a requirement, that requirement should not be signed off or initialed as completed.

3. sign and date in 2 places on the left part and the center part of trifold, if and only if the Scout has completed every appropriate element of the requirements or sub-requirements. If the Scout has completed every requirement, the Scout has earned his merit badge and the counselor should sign and date in 2 places, make sure the grid is complete and accurate, hand the blue card back to the Scout, and extend their left hand for Scout handshake (or fist bump in the COVID era), and congratulate the Scout on their achievement.

4. Then the counselor should fold and tear off the Counselor’s Record of the blue card. The counselor should keep this part of the card as a permanent record of the Scout’s completion in case the other 2 panels of the card are misplaced by the Scout, by the troop, or by the council. Blue cards can be accidentally washed in a washing machine, lost if saved in the folds of the pages of a book, or dropped on a trail on camping trip. The Counselor’s Record offers a means of recovery for the Scout and the troop so the earned merit badge can be recorded in the Scout’s advancement record.

5. The Scout must take their 2 panels of the card to their Scoutmaster or troop Advancement Chair so that the merit badge can be officially registered at the Council office and the merit patch obtained. The blue card and merit badge patch are customarily presented to the Scout at a troop meeting or Court of Honor.