



Scouting 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* _____ Date of birth _____

Email address* _____ Scouting America ID _____

District _____ Unit: Troop _____ Crew _____ Ship _____ Pack _____ Number _____

I am not affiliated with a district. I am not affiliated with a unit or Scouting America. A registration fee is included with my application

*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 Scouting America (position code 42).
- Complete Safeguarding Youth 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 youth.

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 each Scout accompanied by their parent or guardian, or at least one other Scout and one other registered adult, during all sessions.
- Keep my Safeguarding Youth 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 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.

Safeguarding Youth training date _____
(Attach copy of the current certificate.)

Merit badge counselor training date _____

By default, all merit badge counselors are expected to work with Scouts from their entire district or council. Counselors wishing to work with only certain subgroup may change their listing preference in Scoutbook through the My profile/My positions/merit badge counselor function.

Applicant Signature _____ Date _____

Council Approval:

Name (print) _____

Position _____ Date _____

INSTRUCTIONS FOR MERIT BADGE COUNSELORS

What's It All About?

The merit badge counselor is a key player in the Scouts BSA 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 Scout's curiosity about that topic. 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 as the Scout learns by doing. By presenting opportunities for growth via engaging activities like designing an experiment (Chemistry), performing an ollie and a wheelie (Snow Sports), or fabricating rope (Pioneering), you may pique a Scout'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 must attend a counselor training session, either in-person or online. All merit badge counselors should take part in Merit Badge Counselor Position Specific Training found in their [my.scouting](https://my.scouting.org) account under Scouts BSA. It is important that they have a full understanding of their responsibilities and also of the recommended practices for quality counseling.

Additional information can be found in the *Guide for Merit Badge Counseling*, No. 512-065, available at www.scouting.org/programs/scouts-bsa/advancement-and-awards/resources/.

Processing This Application

Merit badge counselors *must* register as adult Scouters and be approved by the council advancement committee for each merit badge they intend to counsel. A potential merit badge counselor also must submit a \$25 registration fee if not already registered in Scouting America as a leader. They should complete the Adult Application for position code 42, this form, and submit both with proof of Safeguarding Youth Training completion and required fee to their council. 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 *Guide to Safe Scouting* has specific requirements and procedures for range and target activities and for aquatics, winter, and other activities. These policies apply to all activities, including merit badge instruction. For other merit badges where specific 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, crew Advisor, or Skipper) recommends and provides the name and contact information for at least one merit badge counselor to each Scout desiring to work on a merit badge. Before beginning to work with a youth, counselors must first confirm with the Scout that they have discussed with the unit leader their interest in working on the merit badge. This is normally done with a "blue card" signed by the unit leader or a connection made between the counselor and the Scout in Scoutbook.
- For merit badge counselor meetings only, the Scout and counselor may meet as long as a parent or guardian also is present. In a group setting with at least two Scouts, there must be at least two registered leaders present. All merit badge classes and counseling sessions must always be conducted in accordance with the *Guide to Safe Scouting*. See also *Guide to Advancement*, topic 7.0.3.1.
- 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 requirements on scouting.org list the official requirements in effect at that time. If requirements change after a Scout has started working on a badge, the requirements that were in effect when the Scout began working on the badge can still be followed, or the scout may switch to the new ones (Scout's choice) unless Scouting America's National Service Center places a specific timeline on the implementation of new requirements.

Merit Badge Counselor Application Process

QUALIFICATIONS – All merit badge counselors must be:

1. At least 18 years old.
2. Of good character.
3. Recognized as having the skills required for each of the badges requested.
4. Recognized as having the ability to work with Scout-age youth.
5. Registered with the Boy Scouts of America as a Merit Badge Counselor (no fee required if already in a paid position otherwise a \$25 fee required).
6. Youth Protection Trained within 2 years.
7. Complete Merit Badge Counselor training (does not expire).

APPLICATION PROCESS – Persons who are not currently registered as a Merit Badge Counselor must do the following to register. This includes applicants already registered in another Scouting position.

1. Complete a **BSA Adult Application** form. In the space for Position Code, enter “42.” In the space for Scouting position description, enter “Merit Badge Counselor.” Be sure to read and sign the “Disclosure/Authorization page as well as signing the application itself.
 - a. Signatures of the unit committee chair and chartered organization representative **are not required** for merit badge counselors.
 - b. There is no fee required if already in a paid position otherwise a \$25 fee required.
2. Complete the **Application for a Merit Badge Counselor** Information form.
 - a. If applying for any merit badge listed below under “Special Qualifications,” include a copy of the certification or other documentation as required for that merit badge.
 - b. Check whether you wish to serve all units, or only a specific unit(s).
3. Complete Youth Protection Training (YPT), if you have not done so within the past two years. Be sure to obtain a copy of the completion certificate. Information for completing this online is available at <http://www.my.scouting.org>
4. Complete Merit Badge Counselor training by reviewing the package at <https://training.scouting.org/learning-plans/1148> . Once logged in, the software will take you to the BSA training site. Click on the catalog tab at the top of the page, then type Merit Badge Counselor in the search bar and enter. It will load four courses that are needed. If a course shows 100%, you’ve previously completed it. Only courses not showing as 100% need to be completed. Once all four courses are completed, take a screenshot of the page, and attach it to your application.
5. Submit both forms (adult application and Merit Badge Counselor application), YPT certificate, Merit Badge Counselor training completion certificate, and documentation of special qualifications (if applicable) to **High Desert Council, 5841 Office Blvd NE, Albuquerque, NM 87109 or Lockheed Dr. Address.** If already registered in another Scouting position and Youth Protection training was previously completed, you may submit your BSA Membership ID number on the Merit Badge Counselor information form in lieu of the YPT certificate.
6. **ADDING & DROPPING MERIT BADGES** – If you are already registered as a Merit Badge Counselor and you wish to add or delete merit badges, submit only an updated Merit Badge Counselor information form. If special qualifications apply to any added merit badge, also submit the required certification or documentation.

SPECIAL QUALIFICATION – Counselors for the following merit badge must meet the specific requirements stated below and must submit **proof of qualification** with their application. Full details can be found in the BSA publication Guide to Advancement. All special badges are being reviewed in relation to the new Guide to Advancement 2025 7.0.1.1

Archery – Archery activities must be supervised by a BSA National Camping School trained shooting sports Director or USA Archery or National Field Archery Association instructor, or by someone who has been trained by one of the three; or alternatively, the activities may be supervised by someone with at least Level 1 training in the operation of an archery range from USA Archery, NFAA, or an equivalent.

Canoeing – Must be (a) BSA Aquatics Instructor, (b) American Canoe Association Canoeing Instructor, (c) American Red Cross Canoeing Instructor, or (d) trained by an instructor so qualified. Must have *BSA Safety Afloat* and *BSA Safe Swim Defense* training.

Climbing – Must be (a) a qualified rock-climbing instructor, (b) trained in *BSA Climb on Safely*, and (c) must be at least 21 years of age. Training as a BSA Climbing Level 2 instructor is highly recommended. Current policies are found in the Guide to Safe Scouting at www.scouting.org/health-and-safety

Kayaking- Must have formal training in kayaking and paddle craft instruction, as evidenced by either BSA Aquatics Instructor certification or Paddle Craft Safety instructor certification.

Lifesaving – Must be (a) certified in Red Cross First Aid/CPR/AED or equivalent, (b) certified as BSA Lifeguard or Aquatics Instructor or equivalent, and (c) at least 21 years of age. Must have *BSA Safety Afloat* and *BSA Safe Swim Defense* training.

Motor Boating- activities must be supervised by an adult, at least 21 years of age. Appropriate credentials include current or previous certification by an organization such as the National Safe Boating Council or others.

Rifle Shooting – Must be (a) a certified BSA National Camping School shooting sports director or (b) an NRA Rifle Shooting Instructor or Coach and must be at least 21 years of age.

Shotgun Shooting – Must be (a) a certified BSA National Camping School shooting sports director or (b) an NRA Shotgun Shooting Instructor or Coach and must be at least 21 years of age.

For activity with muzzle-loading rifles (Option C), must also be (a) a certified BSA National Camping School shooting sports director or (b) an NRA or National Muzzleloader Rifle Association certified muzzle-loading firearms (or shotgun) instructor.

Rowing – Must be (a) BSA Aquatics Instructor or equivalent, or (b) trained by an instructor so qualified. Must have *BSA Safety Afloat* and *BSA Safe Swim Defense* training.

Scuba Diving – Must be trained and sanctioned by one of the BSA's recognized scuba agencies as found in the Guide to Safe Scouting.

Small Boat Sailing-Must complete Safety Afloat training. Must be at least 21 years of age. Appropriate credentials include instructor certification with a recognized sailing agency or school, US sailing, or equivalent.

Snow Sports – Must be at least 21 years of age. Must comply with *BSA Winter Sports Safety*, found in the Guide to Safe Scouting.www.scouting.org/health-and-safety.

Swimming – Must have *BSA Safe Swim Defense* and *BSA Safety Afloat* training.

Water Sports- Must have *BSA Safe Swim Defense* and *BSA Safety Afloat* training.

Whitewater – Must be (a) certified as whitewater canoeing or kayaking instructor by American Canoe Association, or equivalent, and (b) approved by the council.