

## Troop 616: BSA Merit Badge Procedures

(Effective February 2011)

A Scout first expresses an interest in a particular merit badge by letting his Scoutmaster, Assistant Scoutmaster or Merit Badge Counselor know. To get him started, the Scoutmaster or one of his Assistants will give him a signed Application for Merit Badge (Blue Card) and assist him with finding a Counselor on the Troop or Council website if he does not already have one. Starting on Merit Badge requirements prior to obtaining a signed Blue Card is strongly discouraged. The Scout then contacts the merit badge counselor and makes an appointment. The merit badge counselor sets a date and time to meet with the Scout in accordance with YPG guidelines, and may suggest the Scout bring the merit badge pamphlet along with the Blue Card.

Most local councils (including summer camps) use the Application for Merit Badge, or Blue Card, although it is not required. This tool just makes the recordkeeping easier for the Scout, the merit badge counselor, and the Scoutmaster. At summer camp, a Scout may receive partial credit for completion of a merit badge on the Blue Card. Back home, the Scout contacts a merit badge counselor for assistance with completing the rest of the requirements.

At the first meeting, the Scout and his merit badge counselor review and start working on the requirements. If a Scout has a partially completed Blue Card, the scout should share with the merit badge counselor the work he has started or accomplished. The Scout may have completed some requirements with another Counselor or on his own. A Scout cannot do all the requirements for the merit badge on his own and then present them to the Counselor for sign off. The merit badge counselor and the Scout work out a tentative schedule for completing the requirements. Both short-term and long-term goals should be considered, keeping other obligations (school, Scouting, sports, and so on) in mind, and set dates, times, and a location for future meetings. The number of meetings will depend on the difficulty of the requirements and the preparation and ability of the Scout.

The counselor has to be satisfied that the scout meets all the requirements for the merit badge before providing the final signature on the Blue Card. The counselor will help the scout overcome the different hurdles of the requirements, making them aware of the deeper aspects of the subject through their learning experiences. The counselor may tell about his own experiences to help positively reinforce the subject matter. However, the counselor may not tack on new requirements or extra work. While the counselor guides and instructs a Scout on the subject matter, the Scout must do the work himself.

As each requirement is completed, the merit badge counselor will test the Scout individually, in accordance with YPG guidelines. The Blue Card will be updated as the Scout completes each requirement. When the Scout has completed all the requirements, the merit badge counselor signs off on the Blue Card. The Scout then has the Scoutmaster or one of his Assistants sign the back of the Blue Card before turning in the completed card to the Advancement Chair