

Soaring News

News on advancement for the Susquehanna Council

Edition 23-1

November 2023

This newsletter is prepared by the Susquehanna Council Advancement committee as a resource for leaders of cub scout and Scouts BSA units and merit badge counselors. Its purpose is to provide current information on changes regarding advancement, as well as clarifications of advancement requirements and tips, reminders, and guidelines on advancement.

Headlines

[A significant resource available](#)
[Special needs Scouts](#)

Scouts BSA

None in this edition.

Merit Badges

[Applying to serve as a merit badge counselor](#) – very important to provide qualifications for each merit badge.
[Required training for merit badge counselors](#)
[Registration fee for merit badge counselors](#)

A significant resource available

Go to the advancement section of the council's website, if you need any of the following:

- Information to answer many (most) questions, such as
 - BSA or Council policies and procedures for advancement.
 - Current requirements for rank advancement.
 - Current merit badge requirements and info for counselors, including the application and training.
 - Information to assist Life Scouts, unit leaders, and parents to plan for and complete the requirements for Eagle, including guides and all forms.
 - Headlines with information on current topics.
- Points of contact for advancement questions.
- Other resources for current information.
- Link to the site: <https://susquehannabsa.org/advancement/>

Make it a start point and go-to resource for advancement information and all advancement related forms. Strongly suggest that you bookmark this page or the Council's website on your computer for quick access. Tell us if you think something is missing and we will look into adding it.

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Special needs Scouts

- Resources. A section has been added to the main Advancement page. The section provides links to resources available to plan for request modifications to assist a special needs Scout in completing advancement requirements. [{click here}](#) and scroll down the page.

Scouts BSA

None in this edition.

Merit Badges

- **Applying to serve as a merit badge counselor – very important to provide qualifications for each merit badge.**
“In order for a request to be complete, the merit badge counselor must provide a list of qualifications for each merit badge for which the counselor requests approval. The list must provide specific information that demonstrates the individual’s qualifications in the subject of the merit badge, such as training or education completed, certifications received, and experience (work or personal activity). The counselor should use as much space as necessary to provide their qualifications (such as using additional lines on the form or attach an extra page). The counselor must provide copies of appropriate certificates with the Information form.” {Extracted from 3.1.1.f., Susquehanna Council Advancement Policies and Procedures}
Providing specific qualifications for each merit badge to serve as a counselor is essential to the approval process and will greatly contribute to a more rapid review and approval.

- **Required training for merit badge counselors.**
Attention merit badge counselors.

The council has changed the required training policy to require all individuals to complete the position specific training for merit badge counselors prescribed by National BSA to serve as a merit badge counselor in the council, with a phased implementation plan.

The policy: All individuals are required to complete the position-specific training for merit badge counselors prescribed by National BSA to serve as a merit badge counselor in the council. The training is available on-line or scheduled classroom training.

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The implementation plan for this change in the required training policy for Merit Badge Counselor training is as follows:

Effective November 1, 2023, all individuals applying for the first time to serve as a merit badge counselor must meet the training requirement as a prerequisite for approval as a counselor.

Effective June 1, 2024, all individuals currently approved to serve as a merit badge counselor must meet the training requirement as a prerequisite for renewal as a counselor. Thus, **currently approved counselors that have not completed the training should do so before the end of May 2024.**

➤ **Registration fee for merit badge counselors.**
Attention merit badge counselors.

BSA National has implemented an annual registration fee of \$25.00 for merit badge counselors. However, the payment of this fee is only applicable for adults registered with BSA only as a MB counselor; it is not applicable if the adult is also registered for another adult leader position. The implementation of the fee is as follows:

Effective now, first time applicants to serve as a merit badge counselor must pay the fee to be registered as a MB counselor.

Effective June 1, 2024, any adult currently approved to serve as a merit badge counselor and is not also registered for another adult leader position must pay the fee to re-register.

Significant Links

- Susquehanna Council's Advancement pages {[click here](#)}.
- Guide to Advancement: <https://www.scouting.org/resources/guide-to-advancement/>
- Advancement News from the National Advancement Program Team, Previous issues are available at: <https://www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/advancement-and-awards/advancement-news/>
- Merit badge requirements: <https://www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/advancement-and-awards/merit-badges/>
- Advancement and awards: <https://www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/advancement-and-awards/>
- Information for Life Scouts in the Susquehanna Council to help in attaining the rank of Eagle: <https://susquehannabsa.org/advancement/boy-scouts/information-and-resources-for-life-to-eagle-advancement/>