

Soaring News

News on advancement for the Susquehanna Council

Edition 24-1

January 2024

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](#) {Information repeated from content in Edition 23-1 and 23-2}

Cub Scouts

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[Required training for merit badge counselors](#) {Important info repeated from content in Edition 23-2}

[Registration fee for merit badge counselors](#) {Important info repeated from content in Edition 23-1 and 23-2}

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/>

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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.

Special needs Scouts

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

Cub Scouts

- **Cub Scout Program – new program information.**
Attention Cub Scout leaders and parents.

In 2024, BSA National is making significant changes to the Cub Scout program. The most current information can be obtained by going to the Cub Scout page on this site [{link}](#)

- **Cub Scout Program – learn about major changes to the program** {Article from Aaron on Scouting}
The BSA is at the very start of what will be a monthslong rollout of information about the latest Cub Scout program updates. To make sure you are getting only the most accurate information, here are four resources for you to keep your eyes on.

1. **The official Cub Scout program updates rollout schedule.**

We have a lot of information to share with you, which is why we're spreading it out over several months.

[Click here for the official rollout schedule.](#)

The excitement began last month, **[when we presented a general overview of the program.](#)**

Each month from now until June, we'll be discussing different aspects of the new updates, including rank advancements and Bobcat, new and improved features, Webelos and Arrow of Light updates, and much more.

2. **The official BSA program updates page**

[This is the BSA's official website for announcing program updates.](#)

On it, you can read the **[official announcement on the program updates.](#)**

You can also get **[a list of frequently asked questions.](#)**

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This page will be updated regularly over the coming months, so be sure and bookmark and check back often.

3. Keep watching #CubChatLive

#CubChatLive is our weekly Facebook live show in which we discuss all things related to Cub Scouts. A live show allows viewers the opportunity to ask questions to our expert guest of the week.

The #CubChatLive on December 1 talked about the new Bobcat requirement and how Cub Scout leaders can best make it work for them. Here is a link to that chat:

<https://www.facebook.com/theboyscoutsofamerica/videos/369841078745726>

4. #CubChatLive is also a podcast

If you'd prefer to get the latest Cub Scout program updates while you drive to and from work or go on your daily walk, you can subscribe to our podcast through either [Apple Podcasts](#) or [Spotify](#).

Is there one link I can bookmark to help me keep track of all these resources?

There is! The National Cub Scouting Subcommittee has created [a Linktree page](#) to put all of these great resources together for you.

Scouts BSA

➤ **Updated Scouts, BSA rank Requirements.** ***Attention Scouts and unit leaders.***

In 2024, BSA National has made a minor change to one requirement for the rank of Scout (# 6) and Star (# 6). The requirement to earn the Cyber Chip has been removed from the requirement for those ranks. Scouts should use the Personal Safety Awareness training at <https://www.scouting.org/training/youth-protection/scouts-bsa/> for both Scout and Star ranks. The updated requirements go into effect on 1/1/2024.

➤ **Updated requirements for Eagle Palms.** ***Attention Scouts and unit leaders.***

In 2024, BSA National has eliminated the time requirement of three months for earning Eagle palms. A scout may now be awarded an Eagle palm as soon as they have earned five additional merit badges and meet the other two requirements. The updated requirements go into effect on 1/1/2024.

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Merit Badges

➤ **Merit Badge College 2024.**

The Merit Badge College (MBC) in 2024 is scheduled for Saturday, **February 17, 2024**. The event will offer an opportunity to earn up to three of 20 merit badge offerings. Most of the merit badge offerings are related to a STEM area of interest. **The website is now open for registration (<https://susquehannabsa.org/2024-merit-badge-college/>).**

Change in prerequisite. **Having a current Cyber Chip is no longer a prerequisite** for every Scout that attends the Merit Badge College. Effective on 1/1/2024, BSA National has discontinued the Cyber Chip.

Be Prepared requirements. **Scouts are encouraged to start now to work on the Be Prepared requirements**, so they are ready on the day of the event! Please go to and carefully read the information on [Be Prepared requirements](#).

This MBC will utilize the requirements for each merit badge in effect in 2023. The following merit badges have changes effective in 2024, so utilize the “Previous” version of requirements available online: Chemistry, First Aid, Sustainability.

Registration closes for the event on February 5, 2024.

➤ **Updated Merit Badge Requirements.**

Attention Scouts and merit badge counselors.

At the start of every year, BSA National publishes updates to the requirements for selected merit badges. The update of the requirements for a merit badge will include one or more of the following types of changes: 1) modification of a previously established requirement, 2) addition of a new requirement, 3) deletion of a previously established requirement, and/or 4) reordering of previously established requirements.

In 2024, BSA National has updated the requirements for the following thirty (30) merit badges, including five (5) merit badges that count towards the requirements for the Eagle rank [highlighted]. The updated requirements go into effect on 1/1/2024.

Automotive Maintenance	Insect Study
Backpacking	Journalism
Bird Study	Law
Camping	Mining in Society
Canoeing	Nuclear Science
Chemistry	Photography
Coin Collecting	Plant Science
Cooking	Programming
Digital Technology	Radio
Engineering	Safety
Fire Safety	Scouting Heritage

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First Aid
Fly Fishing
Golf
Indian Lore

Skating
Surveying
Sustainability
Swimming

Any Scout starting any of these thirty merit badges in 2024 must meet the new requirements. Anyone can find the most current requirements for every merit badge, including the merit badges with updated requirements, on the advancement [website](#) and on the page “The Merit Badge Program”, then finding the “Requirements” section and clicking on the link.

The specific requirements that have been changed are identified on the page “All Merit Badges A–Z”.

Any Scout that started any of these thirty merit badges prior to 1/1/2024 may complete the merit badge utilizing the requirements previously in effect which are available as the “Previous” requirements on the website.

➤ **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.

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➤ **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.

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.**

The training is available on-line through my.scouting.org. The training for merit badge counselors is called: "Scouts BSA - Merit Badge Counselor Position Specific Training". The training consists of two modules requiring a total time of about 34 minutes. The training only needs to be completed once.

➤ **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.

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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/>