

Soaring News

News on advancement for the Susquehanna Council

Edition 24-3

September 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

[Guide to Safe Scouting](#) – an update on this newsletter from National.
[A significant resource available](#)

Cub Scouts

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Merit Badges

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[Merit Badge College 2025.](#)

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

Guide to Safe Scouting

BSA National has published updates to the **Guide to Safe Scouting** that are only available on line.

The most recent updates were published in August 2024. The latest updates are to:

Scouting's Barriers to Abuse

Prohibited activities

The chart on "Age appropriate guidelines for Scouting Activities"

The most current information for the Guide to Safe Scouting can be obtained by going to this [link](#).

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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.

Cub Scouts

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

The new Cub Scout program is up and running!

Please remember to check all adventure requirements at each den level, as many requirements have changed with the new program. For example, each den now earns the Bobcat adventure every year, and the requirements vary depending on den level. Once your Cub Scouts have earned adventures, take the time to enter their hard work into Scout Book (even partial adventures).

Remember that adventures should be awarded frequently to keep Cub Scouts motivated to continue to work toward additional adventures.

The most current information on the program can be obtained by going to the Cub Scout page on this site [{link}](#).

This is the BSA's official website with the archive information on the program updates [{link}](#).

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Scouts BSA

➤ **Reporting and recognizing merit badges earned at resident camp**

If the unit has not already done so, a reminder to informally recognize the merit badges and awards earned by your Scouts this past summer, especially during resident camp. This informal recognition could be part of a troop meeting to recognize the Scout's achievements and encourage continued work on advancement. The formal recognition should take place at a Court of Honor but not be the only time the Scout's achievements are recognized.

Also, it is important to enter right away all completion information for each Scout pertaining to merit badges and completion of rank advancement requirements into ScoutBook. Do not wait to enter this information.

Merit Badges

➤ **Requirements prior to meeting with a merit badge counselor.** ***Attention Scouts and unit leaders.***

In order to address concerns expressed by a number of unit leaders, the Council Advancement Committee has developed and approved a policy that requires Scouts to meet with a unit leader before contacting a MB counselor to begin the completion of requirements or registering for an on-line MB opportunity. The policy formalizes a longstanding expectation in the Guide to Advancement that each Scout first meet with the unit leader before pursuing completion of a merit badge. The purpose for establishment of the requirement is twofold:

1. To verify for each MB if the counselor is registered in Scouts BSA and is approved as a counselor for that MB (by any council).
2. Provide an opportunity for the unit leader to review with the Scout whether the offering provides an acceptable opportunity to learn and complete the requirements as written for the MB, if the Scout is considering an on-line offering.

The complete version of the policy, including procedures to follow and some additional guidance, can be obtained by going to the "Advancement Resources" page on the council's website {[link](#)}. The policy is in Section 3.4.

➤ **Merit Badge College 2025.**

The Merit Badge College (MBC) in 2025 is scheduled for Saturday, **February 15, 2025**. The event at Pennsylvania College of Technology offers an opportunity to earn up to three merit badge offerings. The list of merit badge offerings is still being finalized, but we expect to offer 20-22 merit badges. Most of the merit badge offerings are related to a STEM area of interest.

The registration for the event is projected to open before Thanksgiving.

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➤ **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.

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/scouts-bsa/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/>