

# Soaring News

*News on advancement for the Susquehanna Council*

Edition 25-2

July 2025

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

[Reporting community service hours](#) (Packs, Troops, Crews)

[Guide to Advancement – new version in 2025](#) {Important info repeated from content in Edition 25-1}

[Guide to Safe Scouting](#) {Important info repeated from content in Edition 24-3 and 25-1}

[A significant resource available](#)

## Cub Scouts

[Cub Scout Program – new program reminders](#) {Important info repeated from content in Edition 25-1}

[Transitioning from the Cub Scout program to Scouts BSA](#)

[Cub Scout use of knives](#)

## Scouts BSA

None.

## Merit Badges

[Merit Badge pamphlets](#) – now available for free.

[Updated Merit Badge Requirements in 2025](#) {Important info repeated from content in Edition 25-1}

[Requirements prior to meeting with a MB Counselor](#). {Important info repeated from content in Edition 24-3 and 25-1}

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

## Reporting community service hours.

Susquehanna Council needs all units (Packs, Troops, Crews) to make sure that they are reporting all hours completed for community service. The easiest way to do this is through Scoutbook. Other unit management systems do not share this data with Scoutbook, such as Troopmaster or Scout Manager. If your unit does not use Scoutbook please report your unit's service hours through submission of an excel spreadsheet and send it to: [susq533@gmail.com](mailto:susq533@gmail.com). The spreadsheet and contact information for these reports has been sent to all Key 3 leaders in the council. The spreadsheet is also available on the council's website in the Forms section [{link}](#). If you need assistance with reporting these hours, please reach out to your District Executive.

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Service to the community is a cornerstone of Scouting America. Units in Susquehanna Council provide several thousand hours of service each year to organizations in their community. Reporting these hours is crucial for two reasons: 1) the number of hours helps to quantify and make tangible the contribution provided to the community and 2) this information is used to help get support for the Scouting program in the Susquehanna Council. Total service hour statistics are used in the application for several grants that the Susquehanna Council applies for each year, and the total number of hours for some of these grants correlates to the amount the Council is granted. These statistics are also used when communicating with other service agencies in the communities such as Kiwanis Clubs, Lions Clubs, VFWs and more. These agencies look at the statistics and use them to determine if they will donate to the Susquehanna Council. Thus, reporting service hours is crucial to help obtain funds for the council's expenses and assist in keeping fees lower.

## Guide to Advancement – new version in 2025.

Scouting America has published a new version of the Guide to Advancement. The 2025 version updates the previous version, published in 2019. Section 1.0.3.0 provides a summary of the significant changes in this version. The new Guide to Advancement is available to view on the council's advancement page:

"Advancement Resources" [{click here}](#) If you want to download the new guide, [click here](#)

An article about the changes in "Aaron On Scouting" is available at this [link](#).

## Guide to Safe Scouting

Scouting America 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}](#).

- **Transitioning from the Cub Scout program to Scouts BSA.** The Council Advancement Committee has created a guide to provide information to assist parents, guardians, and Scouts in understanding the differences between the Cub Scout program and Scouts BSA program for a smoother transition [{link}](#).

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- **Cub Scout use of knives.** A reminder that a change has been made to what is required for a Cub Scout to use any knife during a Cub Scout activity. The Cub Scout program now in effect eliminated the Whittling Chip. The Whittling Chip is NO longer available and valid. Now, the Scout must complete the appropriate adventure for their rank before he/she can use any knife during a Cub Scout activity. For example, all Bears, Webelos and AOLs need to complete their knife safety adventure each scouting year, which starts June 1, if they want to use a knife.

## Scouts BSA

None.

## Merit Badges

- **Merit badge pamphlets - Free**

***Attention Scouts and merit badge counselors.***

The merit badge pamphlets are now available to download for FREE from National. Anyone can find the merit badge pamphlet for every merit badge through the Council's Advancement site by going to the page "The Merit Badge Program", then finding the "Requirements" section and clicking on the link. Then go to the link for the specific merit badge.

The merit badge pamphlets are an exceptional resource for a Scout to learn and prepare for the completion of requirements.

- **Updated Merit Badge Requirements in 2025.**

***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 2025, Scouting America has updated the requirements for the following forty-one (41) merit badges, including seven (7) merit badges that count towards the requirements for the Eagle rank [highlighted]. The updated requirements went into effect on 1/1/2025.

Animal Science

Archery

Astronomy

Aviation

Chemistry

**Citizenship in the Community**

Climbing

**Cooking**

Crime Prevention

**Cycling**

Fire Safety

**First Aid**

Fish and Wildlife Management

Fishing

Gardening

Insect Study

Landscape Architecture

Law

Metalwork

Motorboating

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Dentistry	Nature
Digital Technology	Plumbing
Dog Care	Pottery
Drafting	Programming
Electricity	Reptile and Amphibian Study
Electronics	Rifle Shooting
<b>Emergency Preparedness</b>	Shotgun Shooting
Energy	Skating
<b>Environmental Science</b>	Snow Sports
<b>Family Life</b>	Sports
Fingerprinting	

Any Scout starting any of these forty-one merit badges in 2025 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 Council's Advancement site 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 forty-one merit badges prior to 1/1/2025 may complete the merit badge utilizing the requirements previously in effect which are available in Scoutbook.

➤ **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.

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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/>