

Troop 956 Policies and Procedures

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Troop 956 Policies and Procedures

Participation

Scout Participation

We want Scouting to be a part of your son's life. We understand that there are many other activities that compete for his time but much of Scouting is compatible with other youth activities so long as those activities are discussed and approved ahead of time. While we do not expect him to choose Scouting to the exclusion of all other activities, neither should you expect him to advance unless he puts sufficient time and energy into Scouting. Because Scouting provides your son with not only physical but mental and emotional development, we ask that he and you make Scouting equal in importance to those other youth activities while we work to incorporate those activities into Scouting.

In order to advance, a Scout must "be active" in his Troop. This requirement is important since we must insure that the values of Scouting and the skills and knowledge required for advancement are learned before we certify his rank advancement. Unless we have sufficient contact with your son this would be impossible.

While we do not put hard and fast rules in place about what defines "being active", we do expect a Scout to participate in as many Troop activities (meetings, outings, service projects, Courts of Honor, fundraising, etc.) as possible. If a Scout is active in his school or community sports or extracurricular programs, that activity can also keep him active in his Troop at the same time by working on a related Merit Badge (Sports, Physical Fitness, Scholarship, Music, etc.). If he participates in other volunteer activities with church or other groups, that activity can also keep him active in his Troop by simply getting the activity approved ahead of time so it counts as service hours for Scouting advancement. If he has a team practice on Troop meeting nights, then may be he can make time on other days to help a younger Scout learn an advancement skill, he can make sure he makes all the outings and attends those Scouting activities that do not coincide with his other activities.

Adult Leadership and Participation

The secret to a successful Boy Scout Troop lies in its active Adult Leaders. Troop 956 invites every parent to become a registered adult leader. There are plenty of leadership roles to be filled within our active and growing Scout Troop. We need Committee Members, Activity Coordinators, Assistant Scoutmasters, Merit Badge Counselors and Board of Review members. Our Troop Committee meets on the third Wednesday of each month to guide Troop activities and monitor performance. We invite and encourage all parents/guardians to join us in "Delivering the Promise" to your sons through the Scouting program.

While not every parent or guardian can commit to becoming a registered Scout Leader, Troop 956 expects each parent/guardian to participate in at least one Troop outing and one Troop Service project each year. In addition, we expect each Scout and his family to attend our twice/year Court of Honors. This is the least each family can do to support their son as he learns, grows and matures within the Boy Scout program.

Uniforms

Scouts have various types of uniforms that are appropriate for different activities and functions. These uniforms are called either Class A or Class B. Troop 956 has established a Scout uniform closet where Scouts who are in need of a uniform piece may borrow one for use until the Scout outgrows it. We ask that all Scout families donate unneeded uniform pieces to our uniform closet so that we can recycle them to new Scouts and their families.

Class A Uniform:

Each Scout joining Troop 956 is expected to have at least one full Class A uniform for wear during specific activities and functions.

A Class A uniform consists of the following pieces:

- 1-Khaki BSA shirt (short sleeve is more versatile) complete with appropriate insignia
 - Council Shoulder Patch (CSP):available from Dan Beard Council
 - 956 numerals (Troop provides one per Scout; additional patches are \$3.00)
 - Patrol Patch (Troop provides one per Scout)
 - Red epaulets (Troop provides one set)
 - Leadership position patch (Troop provides one per Scout)
 - Rank patch (Troop provides one per Scout per rank)
- Troop 956 neckerchief (Troop provides one/Scout; additional ones are \$5.00 each)
- BSA neckerchief slide (Troop provides one/Scout; additional ones are \$3.00 each)
- 1-BSA long pants
- 1-BSA shorts
- 1-BSA mesh belt
- 1-BSA green Scout socks
- 1-BSA Merit Badge sash

A Class B uniform consists of the following pieces:

- Any t-shirt with a Scouting related theme or logo on the front/back
 - Official Troop 956 Class B t-shirts are available from the Troop for \$10 each.

Troop 956 wears the BSA uniforms in one of four ways:

1. Class B casual: refers to wearing a Class B t-shirt with any appropriate shorts or pants and shoes/socks. ***This is the uniform allowed for Troop meetings in the summer (from Memorial Day through Labor Day).***
2. Class B formal: refers to wearing a Class B t-shirt with official BSA shorts or pants with BSA socks.
3. Class A casual: refers to wearing a Class A shirt with any appropriate shorts or pants and shoes/socks. ***This is the uniform required for Troop meetings in the winter (from Labor Day through Memorial Day).***
4. Class A formal: refers to wearing a full Class A uniform complete with BSA shorts or pants; BSA belt and socks; Troop neckerchief and BSA slide; merit badge sash; and/or OA sash if activity is an OA function.

Travel Uniform

When Troop 956 travels together as a Troop on an outing, we always travel in Class A casual or Class A formal uniform at the direction of the Scoutmaster. Scouts who do not arrive for the outing ready to travel in the specified Class A uniform will not be allowed to participate in the activity until they arrange to obtain the appropriate uniform for travel.

Fees and Costs

Initial Joining Fee: A fee is assessed at the time of joining Troop 956. The fee, equivalent to \$10/month from the month the Scout joins until September 1st covers the costs associated with transferring the Scout from the Pack to the Troop, outfitting the Scout with Troop 956 items, Scout dues and associated Troop expenses. At the time of joining, the Scout receives from the Troop the following items that are covered by the joining fee.

- 1-Boy Scout Handbook
- 1 set-Red shoulder epaulets
- 1-Troop 956 numeral patch
- 1-Patrol Patch
- 1-Troop 956 neckerchief
- 1-BSA neckerchief slide
- 1-Transfer Fee (covers cost to transfer Scout from Pack to Troop)

Upon joining Troop 956, a “Scout Account” is established for the Scout. The Troop Finance Chairperson manages these accounts. Neither the Initial Joining Fee nor the Annual Participation Fee goes into the Scout’s “Scout Account”. The purpose of the “Scout Account” is to allow the Scout to earn money through various Troop sponsored fund raising activities that can be used to pay for the Scout’s Troop related activities and fees. Funds earned by the Scout can be used to cover expenses such as:

- Annual Participation Fee
- Monthly Outing Fees
- Special Activity Fees
- High Adventure Fees
- Summer Camp Fees

Annual Activity Fee: An annual fee of \$150 is assessed, each September 1st, against each Scout’s “Scout Account” to cover the costs associated with re-chartering, Troop dues and other Troop related expenses. This is the only source of income for the Troop from which to cover costs associated with rank advancement, gear replacement, Court of Honor expenses, annual Troop Thanksgiving dinner, re-chartering fees including insurance and Boys Life, Eagle Scout recognition, postage and mailing expenses and other miscellaneous costs involved with running the Troop. This fee will be pro-rated for the year the Scout turns 18.

Special Activity/High Adventure/Summer Camp Fees:

Fees for special activities/high adventure/summer camp can vary from as little as \$5 to over \$1000 depending on the nature and duration of the activity. Activities that will cost more than a nominal fee (>\$25) are always announced well in advance so that the Scout and his family have time to plan and execute the necessary fundraising.

Additional Fees/Assessments:

- Scouts wishing to take a Merit Badge for which the Troop does not have a current Merit Badge book can purchase the current book and receive a credit in their Scout Account by turning the book and the purchase receipt into the Troop immediately upon completion of the merit badge.
- Any Scout who damages Troop property may be required to reimburse the Troop for the repair or replacement cost of the equipment at the discretion of the Troop Committee/Scoutmaster.

Rank Advancement

In order to advance from one rank to the next, the Scout must fulfill all the requirements as listed in the current Boy Scout Handbook. Good record keeping is essential to timely rank advancement. It is the primary responsibility of the Scout and his family to keep accurate, up to date records of his activities and advancement paperwork. While the Troop maintains all Troop records on multiple computers, the primary record for a Scout remains his handbook, rank advancement cards, merit badge blue cards and merit badge completion cards. Each Scout and his family should establish a single ring binder where they can accumulate the Scouts advancement related records. Each Scout should keep his own record of activities, including dates, locations and activities so that a separate record is available to the Scout and family as the Scout prepares for each rank advancement.

The steps to Rank Advancement are the responsibility of the Scout and are as follows:

1. Complete all Rank Requirements: The Scout completes each rank requirement. (see Rank Requirement Procedure listed below). Rank requirements do not have to be completed sequentially. For example, requirements for later ranks (2nd Class or 1st Class) may be completed while the Scout is still working on Tenderfoot rank.
2. Insure that all dues and Scout Account balances are current: Once all the requirements for the rank are complete except for those that involve “Scout Spirit”, Troop Activity and the Scoutmaster Conference, the Scout checks his weekly dues status and “Scout Account” balance with the Troop Scribe/Scoutmaster/Troop Finance Chairperson. The Scout is responsible for getting his accounts current before requesting a Scoutmaster Conference.
3. Prepare Advancement Resume: The Scout prepares his “Advancement Resume” according to the procedure listed below.
4. Scoutmaster Conference: The Scout requests and successfully completes a Scoutmaster Conference.
5. Board of Review: Once the Scout successfully completes the Scoutmaster Conference, a Board of Review will be convened by the Troop Committee to evaluate the Scout’s readiness for the pending Rank.

Individual Rank Requirement Completion Procedure

Each rank from Tenderfoot through 1st Class has specific requirements detailed in the Scout Handbook. The Scout is expected to master the skill/knowledge associated with the requirement and be able to demonstrate that skill/knowledge to the satisfaction of a Trained Adult Scout Leader (Scoutmaster or his designate) before the requirement is signed off in his Scout Hand Book and recorded in the Troop Master computer records. In order to insure that a Scout has mastered the skills/knowledge for each requirement the procedure for a Scout to get a requirement “signed-off” in his Handbook is as follows:

1. Study/Prepare: The Scout reads/reviews/studies the pages/portions of the Boy Scout Handbook that pertain to the requirement. The Scout should highlight important parts or otherwise leave notes in his Handbook that indicate he has reviewed the material before going on to step #2.
2. Demonstrate Skill/Knowledge: When the Scout feels he has prepared sufficiently in Step 1, he approaches an Senior Scout (1st Class rank or above) to review his skill/knowledge/understanding of the requirement. The Senior Scout will provide additional coaching or teaching so that the junior Scout becomes proficient in the skills of the requirement. When the Senior Scout feels like the junior Scout has mastered the requirement skills and is ready to certify that he meets the requirements, the Senior Scout will sign and date the junior Scout’s Handbook in the left margin next to the requirement that has been reviewed.
3. Practice Skill/Knowledge: Once the Senior Scout signs and dates the requirement, the junior Scout must continue to study and practice the skill for at least two weeks before approaching a Trained Adult Scout Leader (Scoutmaster or his designate) seeking to have that requirement “signed-off”.
4. Verify Skill/Knowledge: If after two weeks of practice and additional study, the Scout can demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Trained Adult Leader that he knows the skill/knowledge without prompting or assistance, the Leader will “sign-off” and date the requirement
 - For those requirements that call for an activity (plant or animal identification, making a camp gadget or first aid kit, showing improvement in physical fitness, etc.) rather than a skill/knowledge, the junior Scout should bring evidence of completion of the activity to the senior Scout for his review and verification. The Scout may then take that requirement directly to a Trained Adult Scout Leader (Scoutmaster or his designate) for “sign-off” immediately.
 - In the event that a Scout cannot demonstrate the skill/knowledge required the Adult Leader will sign the Handbook next to the requirement but he/she will not date it. The Scout will be referred back to the original Senior Scout who verified his abilities for additional coaching/counseling. The Scout must return to the same Adult Leader for a subsequent review if sufficient progress has been made. Once successful, the Adult Leader will date the requirement to verify it is complete.
5. Once the Scout completes a requirement, as evidenced by the signature (initials) and date of an Adult Leader, the Scout must notify the Advancement Chairperson or Troop Scribe so that the Troop records can be updated.
6. Exceptions to these stated timelines can be made at the discretion of the Scoutmaster.

Merit Badge Procedure

Merit badges are part of the rank advancement process once a Scout reaches 1st Class. The Scout can earn merit badges anytime after joining the Troop by following the simple procedure shown below. He does not have to wait until he reaches 1st Class to begin working on merit badges. A Scout must earn a total of 21 merit badges, 12 of which are required, in order to attain the rank of Eagle. The procedure to earn a merit badge is as follows:

1. Select: Decide which merit badge you wish to earn.
2. Prepare: Obtain a “blue card” from the Troop Advancement Chairperson or Scoutmaster.
3. Document: Fill out the front of the “blue card” with you name, address, Troop number, district name (Ft. Hamilton) and Council name (Dan Beard). Fill out the back of the “blue card” everywhere it asks for the name of the applicant (that’s you!), the name of the merit badge, the Troop Number, etc.
4. Approval: Take the completed “blue card” to the Scoutmaster for his approval. This must be done before starting the merit badge. Failure to do so will result in the merit badge being rejected upon completion.
5. Materials: Obtain a current copy of the merit badge book from the Troop library or purchase a copy at the Scout Service center.
6. Counselor: Obtain the name of the merit badge counselor from the Troop Advancement Chairperson and approach the counselor to discuss beginning the merit badge.
7. Complete: Complete the requirements of the merit badge to the satisfaction of the merit badge counselor.
8. Verify: Have the merit badge counselor sign and date all required portions of the “blue card”.
9. Approve: Return the two sections of the “blue card” marked Applicant Copy and Troop Copy to the Scoutmaster for approval.
10. Document: Take the section marked “Troop Copy”, after being signed by the Scoutmaster, to the Troop Advancement Chairperson for recording.
11. Record keeping: Upon receiving the Merit Badge Card from the Troop at a Court of Honor, be sure to store all Applicant portions of each merit badge’s “blue card” in a safe place along with the corresponding Merit Badge Card for your future reference.

Advancement Resume

When preparing for a Board of Review, we ask that the Scout prepare an Advancement Resume. This Advancement Resume is a summary of his activities since his last rank advancement. This informational summary helps the Scout to remember what he has accomplished when asked questions by the Board. Because participation is important, it allows the Board to know how active the Scout has been. This is also good practice for what will be required as the Scout works on his Eagle rank.

The Board of Review for each rank has certain items (shown below) that should be presented by the Scout in his Advancement Resume. These items should be considered the minimum amount of information to be presented by the Scout. Listing regularly scheduled troop meetings is not required. Service hours should indicate if the work was for a Scout or non-Scout function. Service outside of the troop is highly recommended. The Scout may provide more than the minimum information indicated below for the rank that the Scouts seeks to attain.

Tenderfoot

- 1.) Listing of Troop and Patrol Activities since joining.
- 2.) Listing of Service hours since joining.
- 3.) Copy of paperwork from 30-day fitness requirement.

2nd Class

- 1.) Listing of Troop and Patrol Activities since last advancement.
- 2.) Listing of Service hours since last advancement.
- 3.) Listing of any positions of leadership since last advancement.
- 4.) Comments on goals for 1st Class Rank.

1st Class

- 1.) Listing of Troop and Patrol Activities since last advancement.
- 2.) Listing of Service hours since last advancement.
- 3.) Listing of any positions of leadership since last advancement.
- 4.) Copy of any paperwork used for requirement #4.
- 5.) List of merit badges worked on or completed.
- 6.) Comments on Personal Goals for Star Rank.

Star

- 1.) Listing of Troop and Patrol Activities since last advancement.
- 2.) Listing of Service hours since last advancement.
- 3.) Listing of any positions of leadership since last advancement.
- 4.) Copy of Leadership Goals Agreement.
- 5.) List merit badges for this Rank and any others worked on or completed.
- 6.) Comments on Personal Goals for Life Rank.

Life

- 1.) Listing of Troop and Patrol Activities since last advancement.
- 2.) Listing of Service hours since last advancement.
- 3.) Listing of any positions of leadership since last advancement.
- 4.) Copy of Leadership Goals Agreement.
- 6.) List merit badges for this Rank and any others worked on or completed.
- 7.) Comments on possible Eagle Projects.
- 8.) Comments on Personal Goals for Eagle Rank.

Note:

- The scout should bring any items (rope, compass, etc.) that may help him to explain how he accomplished the requirements.
- Because the troop uses a software package that controls which merit badge is used for each rank, scouts preparing for advancement in the Star, Life and Eagle should contact the Advancement Chair to get a list of which merit badges are assigned to the next rank.

Board of Review

The advancement program, including the Board of Review, is a tool designed to aid the development of moral strength and character, citizenship and fitness (mental and physical). There are four (4) steps to advancement in Scouting:

- The Scout learns by DOING.
- The Scout is tested. (Troop Policies and Procedures/Scoutmaster Conference)
- The Scout is reviewed. (**Board of Review**)
- The Scout is recognized. (Court of Honor)

When a Scout has completed all of the requirements for a rank, he appears before a board of review composed of at least three and not more than six committee members. The board of review is not a time to retest the Scout, but to determine the Scout's attitude and his acceptance of Scouting ideals. We want it to motivate boys to grow and advance, not to intimidate them.

Purpose

The Board of Review has three purposes:

- To make sure that the work has been learned and completed.
- To find out what kind of experience the boy is having in his patrol and troop.
- To encourage the Scout to progress further.

Procedure

1. Scout completes all the requirements for the rank in question.
2. Scout completes an Advancement Resume for the rank he seeks to achieve.
3. Scout approaches the Scoutmaster to schedule a Board of Review.
4. Scoutmaster arranges for a Board of Review. The Board of Review members may not include any member of the Scouts family, the Scoutmaster or Assistant Scoutmasters.
5. Board of Review convenes at a prearranged time and place. The scout should be in full uniform before the interview begins.
6. At the conclusion of the review; which should last somewhere between 15 and 30 minutes depending on the rank being sought, the board should know whether a boy is qualified for the rank or palm.
7. If members are satisfied that the Scout is ready to advance, he is called in, congratulated, notified as to when he will receive his recognition, and encouraged to continue his advancement or earn the next palm.
8. If at any time during the Board, the Scout is not actively participating in his review, or appears to have little or no interest in the questions being asked, the Board is obligated to inform the Scout that he will need to come back at a later date when he is truly prepared.
9. If the Scout does not pass the Board of Review for any reason, the Board is required to specify to the Scout exactly why he did not pass. A brief note should be given to the Scout and his parents stating the area(s) of his deficiency. The Board must list explicit and reasonably obtainable goals that the Scout is expected to achieve in order for the Scout to pass the Board on the next attempt. A written copy of these goals should be given to the Scout and the Committee Chairman at the conclusion of the Board.

Travel

Troop 956 travels to many of its activities in vehicles supplied by Adult Leaders and parents. Scouts are required to wear seat belts at all times and to conduct themselves in a manner which will not disrupt the concentration of the vehicle's driver.

Permission Slip/Medical Form

Each Scout who travels with or attends a Troop 956 activity must have a signed parents permission slip on record with the Scoutmaster or Activity Leader. In addition, Scouts must have current, valid medical forms on record with the Troop at all times.

Travel Uniform

When Troop 956 travels together as a Troop on an outing, we always travel in Class A casual or Class A formal uniform at the direction of the Scoutmaster. Scouts who do not arrive for the outing ready to travel in the specified Class A uniform will not be allowed to participate in the activity until they arrange to obtain the appropriate uniform for travel.

Electronics/Personal Gear

Electronics, such as walkmans, video games, cellular phones, two way radios, etc. are not permitted on Scout activities unless expressly approved in advance by the Scoutmaster or Activity Leader. Scouts who bring unapproved electronics on outings, to activities or meetings, are subject to having them impounded until the conclusion of the outing/activity. Under no circumstances, even when electronics are impounded due to unauthorized utilization, is Troop 956 or its Adult Leaders, responsible for the loss or damage to electronics or other personal gear of the Scout.

Behavioral Expectations

Scouts are expected to act, at all times, in all activities, within and apart from the Troop, according to the Scout Oath and Law. Failure to live up to the Scout Oath and Law may subject the Scout to sanctions from the Troop, including suspension or expulsion from the Troop.

Scouts are expected to refrain from any actions while on Scouting related activities that could lead to damage to property or equipment of the Troop, Chartering Organization, Adult Leaders, parents or facilities utilized by the Troop. Evidence of a Scout's participation in actions that causes damage will require the Scout and/or his family/guardians to reimburse Troop, Organization or Individual for all costs associated with repairing or replacing the damage.