Scouts and Parents Guide to

Scouting Adventures:

Key Points We Wish We Knew After Crossover



Scouting America

HOW BOYS AND ADULTS MAKE TROOP 171 FUNCTION

Troop 171 operations and planning are Boy Scout-led. Boy Scouts create schedules and oversee activities and potential for individuals and the Troop. Adults – parents/family/guardians – are as important to Boy Scouts as in Cub Scouting; just in a different way. Each boy's growth and development are enhanced by interaction with non-family adults. Parents are *not* authorized to sign-off on Advancements for their own Scout*. Interactions with non-family adults develop self-confidence, communication skills, and the ability to adapt to other people. *You help others and they help you*. Boy-led planning and execution can be a bit messy, but the outcomes are always valuable. Some of the greatest growth comes from failure. Adults keep failure safe, ensure the Troop still has fun, and that other boys still succeed. **Registered Adults – Scouters –** continue the adventure with their boys: at campouts, at service events, at meetings in roles such as a ScoutMaster team member or on committee. Roles require background checks, and training in safeguarding youth and positions. **Without adults, it is difficult to execute plans the boys create**. *No adult in our Troop is an employee of Scouting – all are parents and volunteers, just like you*. We need adults to take turns supervising activities and keeping boys safe; to manage banking; to make reservations; to pull trailers; and to be trained to provide boys with important advice and resources. All Boy Scouts deserve *Trained* leaders.

The first thing needed for a new Boy Scout is the official Handbook. The handbook is *the* number one resource for Scouts: the end of the book is where you will find all seven rank-advancement sections. Each section contains requirements the Scout is expected to learn. Scouts then approach an adult-leader to demonstrate their mastery of skills. The book details "how-to" for all rank Advancements.

HOW BOY SCOUTS PARTICIPATE IN SCOUTING

There is no correct way or wrong way for a Boy Scout to approach Scouting opportunities – aside from behavioral issues. Every boy has different goals: some want to have fun, camp, earn merit badges, or make new friends; others also want to practice leadership and pursue all the ranks up to Eagle Scout.

We as adults and parents help each boy meet the goals they set. If your Scout is interested in Advancement – making it through various ranks up to a point such as First Class or Eagle – your encouragement, support, and occasional, gentle pushing will be required.

Requirements for the first four ranks – Scout, Tenderfoot, Second Class, and First Class – may be worked on simultaneously; however, ranks are awarded in order. Star, Life, and Eagle require tasks and time while in First Class through Life. Starting with First Class, each Scout must serve actively and effectively in an elected leadership position on the Patrol Leaders Council (PLC); attend and participate in 3 out of every 4 meetings plus camping/events. Merit Badges and Community Service hours receive more focus.

Whatever the goal, participation is important to other boys: boy-leadership, EDGE-teaching requirements, Service Events, and Eagle Projects rely on Boy Scouts ***helping each other***. Help may mean being present and available to learn or do something. We understand involvement in other activities and will "excuse" absences; however, ***excusal from meetings and events does not exempt a Scout from completing advancement requirements*** such as active and effective participation with the Troop and in a leadership position. A one-for-one extension of time is expected to make up for absences.

Advancement can be quick. Earning First Class in the first 12-18 months is a great goal. Boys who prepare each week with 1-3 requirements earn rank advancement routinely, especially if they attend campouts and Summer Camp. The skills are important to practice; they are needed through Scouting.

"New" interests will compete for time and attention as boys get older: jobs, social-life, cars, sports, and more. If Advancement is a goal, doing so before the Scout reaches 16 years helps. Doing so makes Scouting more enjoyable. Again, boys choose their goals: camping, STEM stuff, high-adventure, service, personal associations and growth, rank advancement, or any or all combinations of these things.

Are you part of that small percentage on the "Path to Eagle"? Here are Scouting, Council, and Troop practices you need to know in addition to the official guidelines listed in the Eagle project workbook:

- Life Scouts propose Eagle projects; Star Scouts can start thinking of a beneficiary to serve: drives projects most effectively; our website lists ideas, examples, and resources for Eagle-candidates. Scouts: READ the entire Eagle Workbook before starting anything to get a better understanding of what you need to do. Read a blank Eagle application, too, so you can plan time to complete different tasks like asking people if they are willing to be a reference for you or writing your letter.
- Eagle Projects are for non/not-for-profit groups: Troop and Council must approve projects
- Scouts draft proposals using the current Eagle Workbook and submit for review and approval: ScoutMaster, SM Emerita, Eagle Coach, Advancement Chair, Troop Committee Chair, COR (info only and no reply): Mr. McCullough, Mrs. Baum, Mr. Lindsey, Mrs. Vogel, Mr. Huffman, Mr. Otto
- The review and editing process can seem long and tedious: it is necessary to minimize hurdles once the proposal goes to Council for approval. Be patient, responsive, and respectful
- Details are key: Council requires more information than you might think
- Once Troop adults approve, you may print proposal section, obtain beneficiary signature, ScoutMaster signature. then Committee Chair signature. Email to Council Eagle Board rep. If Council approves you may begin the project, pursue fundraising, and buy supplies and services
- The project and final write-up sections ask for time/hours of all involved from the very beginning of the proposal process; cost details; and other relevant items. Stay organized to make it easy, e.g. use binders. Do not wait to catch up: do as you go. Signatures from beneficiary and unit leader are required at the end of final write-up. Schedule ScoutMaster conference
- Eagle Application: obtain references; write letter of aspiration; print the application from ScoutBook (fills in data); get signatures from SM and Troop Chair; take all material to Council
- Eagle BOR will follow; plan Eagle Court of Honor after the Board
- **Important**: parents and Scouts should remember to ***respect*** the time, personal life, and availability of Adult Volunteers when seeking conferences, document-reviews, and in obtaining signatures. Make ***requests*** that fit within or close to the time of existing Troop or PLC meetings. Remember that "**life happens**" to all of us – Scouts and leaders. Plans may have to be changed. The answer "no" from an adult is truly an acceptable answer. Never stop by a leader's home, unannounced to ask for a review, conference, or signature. Leaders will bend over backwards to help a Scout meet deadlines before their 18th birthday but should not be expected to expedite for personal convenience. Planning, time-management, and personal responsibility are part of the Scout's growth and development process and ultimately lay with the Scout, not the adult volunteers. **Parents:** if you are the "driver" behind pushing and expediting steps other than in cases of "aging out," you must ask yourself the question "Why?" "What does my son gain from speeding through the process?" "What am I teaching my son with my example?" And as much as you may disagree, accept decisions of adults in the various stages of Advancement.
- Scouting is Fun. Scouting is Service. Scouting is Goodness. Scouting is Volunteerism. Scouting can and should be Family Time. Scouting is not "retail"

TROOP RESOURCES YOU NEED

- ✓ **Weekly Troop email** - called the **Mid-Week**. Be sure to scrutinize changes or updates. Boy-led means the message and details will change… and details may be fuzzy sometimes
- ✓ **SCOUT BOOK Plus** is the number one way to keep up to date on your Scout's progress and current Advancement requirements: https://advancements.scouting.org/login
- ✓ **My.scouting.org (**https://my.scouting.org/**)** your portal to membership, renewals, and required Scout training; topics include safety, position-specific training, and more
- ✓ **Online background check** completion and uploads: https://newbirthoffreedom.org/pa-clearances/
- ✓ **Parent/Committee email** – occasional messaging about essential information for all adults
- ✓ **Time to Sign Up**: https://www.timetosignup.com/troop171/
  - VERY important – check regularly and be sure to sign up so that events are not cancelled due to lack of people
  - Boy Scouts need certain things as they advance (giving leadership, service hours, etc.), and they need help from others who may not "need" the same requirements (yet). Helping early on gives younger Scouts a chance to become familiar with things they need to learn later. What will happen when *your* Scout needs help?
- ✓ **Troop website**: https://www.scouting171.org/troop
  - "**Resources**": required forms, packing lists, Eagle-stuff, and much more
  - **"Troop By-Laws"** under Resources includes policies, disciplinary programs, financial support, and more. Acceptance is required before participating
  - "**Calendar**" is a way to keep up with planned events
  - **"Troop Welcome"** contains contact information and Scouting terminology
  - **Planning Guides** for Scouts to write down their needs for programs and events
  - **"Election Packet"** to run for PLC positions: rank requirements start at 1st Class
- ✓ **Merit Badges with FREE pamphlets**: https://www.scouting.org/skills/merit-badges/all/
  - **"Black Pug"**: https://scoutingevent.com/000/Login/ to register and pay for Scout events as an individual or if serving as Activities Coordinator or Treasurer
- ✓ More resources and information may be found on the Council website (https://newbirthoffreedom.org/) or National: Scouting America (https://www.scouting.org/)

**** From the 2025 Guide to Advancement: 4.2.1.2 The Scout Is Tested - The Scout's unit leader authorizes those who may test and pass the Scout on rank requirements (primary unit leader if the Scout is registered in multiple units). They might include the patrol leader, the senior patrol leader, the unit leader, an assistant unit leader, or another Scout…***

Merit badge counselors guide Scouts and verify requirements for merit badges. Authorized testers must verify that requirements have actually and personally been completed by the Scout, exactly as written.