

# Troop 168 Merit Badge Philosophy and Policy

**This document will tell a scout how to open merit badges, and how an active parent can become a Troop 168 Merit Badge Counselor.**

Consider that your son is in scouts to enjoy the outdoors, learn leadership skills and have fun. Over 100 merit badges are offered to scouts of any rank, to explore the world around them, and gain knowledge, skill and pleasure from a huge variety of subjects.

**Troop 168** has a number of adult members who are merit badge counselors, as well as access to active counselors in the community. Adult members may offer a merit badge for the troop at their personal schedule (in conjunction with troop activities). The offerings for these will be posted on the website (<http://www.bsa168.org>). Some badges are taught during campouts and regular meetings; some will be held before or in addition to regular troop meetings. Scouts may also personally ask to open a merit badge with a troop counselor. **When interested, a scout must obtain a blue card from the Advancement Chairman after Scoutmaster approval.** These blue cards will be signed by the Scoutmaster and "opened" with a counselor who will sign off the requirements as completed. There is no time limit to close a merit badge (other than age 18). Each merit badge offers a booklet that covers the requirements; these are obtained at Scout Shops, online (<http://www.meritbadge.com>), and through the **Troop 168 library**.

Within the BSA system, 12 specific badges are required for Eagle. They cover the fundamentals of outdoor skill, safety, management and communication. In addition to those 12, a scout advancing to Eagle must complete 9 other merit badges of his choice.

**Eagle required Badges** may be obtained at merit badge college, a summer camp, or sanctioned merit badge counselors. **Troop 168 will regularly offer some of these badges with in house counselors. They will be announced at meetings and on the website.** Please consider the age and maturity of your scout when undertaking some of these badges. The book work and/or service hours required can be stiff. The scout should read the requirements and look through the booklet. Ask the Scoutmaster or Assistant Scoutmasters if in question.

## Eagle Requirements:

<b>Citizen in Community</b>	<b>Emergency Preparedness</b>	<b>Swimming or Cycling or or Lifesaving</b>
<b>Citizen in Nation</b>	<b>Environmental Science</b>	<b>Hiking</b>
<b>Citizen in World</b>	<b>First Aid</b>	<b>Camping</b>
<b>Communications</b>	<b>Personal Management</b>	<b>Family Life</b>
		<b>Personal Fitness</b>

In addition, **Troop 168** highlights instruction in twelve additional badges, emphasizing outdoor and camping skills. These skills may be learned on campouts, or during summer activity camps. The troop maintains Counselors in the following badges, or provides Counselors at specific campouts. These Counselors may offer to open these badges to groups of scouts and will cover the badge requirements mostly during campouts. **Your scout will be notified at troop meetings when the Troop will open one of the following badges.**

## Outdoor Badges Important to Troop 168:

**Archery**

**Climbing**

**Orienteering**

**Astronomy**  
**Backpacking**  
**Canoeing**

**Cooking**  
**Fishing**  
**Hiking**

**Pioneering**  
**Rifle Shooting**  
**Shotgun Shooting**  
**Wilderness Survival**

***"Many men who were once Scouts feel that their entire lives were influenced by their merit badge work ... hundreds of doctors, engineers, forest rangers, and naturalists had their ambitions kindled while earning badges as Scouts."*** Boy Scout Handbook, 6th Edition, 1959

Now, believe it or not, there are still 86 "interest" badges remaining (and more in development). Here is your opportunity for your scout to realize the scope of Boy Scouts, and how it is **integrated** in his world. These badges cover interests, hobbies, skills, sports, science, academics, **life**. Your scout has the opportunity to turn almost any personal activity into a merit badge experience. In a sense, double the value of any given activity. Note the list below. Again, review the Troop Counselor list to see if we have a current counselor, or find your own.

### **86 "Interest" Badges:**

American Business	Dog Care	Law	Rowing
American Cultures	Drafting	Leatherwork	Safety
American Heritage	Electricity	Mammal Study	Salemanship
American Labor	Electronics	Medicine	Scholarship
Animal Science	Energy	Metalwork	Sculpture
Archaeology	Engineering	Model Design and Building	Shotgun Shooting
Architecture	Entrepreneurship	Motorboating	Skating
Art	Farm Mechanics	Music	Small-Boat Sailing
Athletics	Fingerprinting	Nature	Snow Sports
Atomic Energy	Fire Safety	Oceanography	Soil and Water Conservation
Auto Mechanics	Fish and Wildlife Management	Painting	Space Exploration
Aviation	Fly Fishing	Pets	Sports
Bird Study	Forestry	Photography	Stamp Collecting
Bugling	Gardening	Plant Science	Surveying
Camping	Genealogy	Plumbing	Textile
Chemistry	Geology	Pottery	Theater
Cinematography	Golf	Public Health	Traffic Safety
Coin Collecting	Graphic Arts	Public Speaking	Truck Transportation
Collections	Home Repairs	Pulp and Paper	Veterinary Medicine
Computers	Horsemanship	Radio	Waterskiing
Crime Prevention	Indian Lore	Railroading	Weather
Cycling	Insect Study	Reading	Wood Carving
Dentistry	Journalism	Reptile and	Woodwork

Disabilities  
Awareness

Landscape  
Architecture

Amphibian Study  
Rifle Shooting

### **How to Find a Merit Badge Counselor: Check our Counselor List**

(<http://www.bsa168.org>) -- **Use them when you can. Or find your own counselor (school teacher, coach, knowledgeable adult over 18 -- you must have them fill out paperwork and register them with BSA).**

Your counselor should be someone knowledgeable to the subject or skill, and willing to review the requirements and pamphlet. **They must fill out an adult application and merit badge counseling form. There is no cost involved. These forms must have dates that cover the counseling experience; they must be returned to Troop 168 Merit Badge Counselor Coordinator.** A blue card will be issued by Troop 168 prior to the start of the "counseling" and must be returned completed for the Scoutmaster's signature. Be certain the counselor signs all required spaces.

These badges can be acquired individually, or with your patrol, or some group of your troop. Consider inviting another scout to buddy with you. Otherwise a sibling or parent must attend counselor meetings. Many teachers are willing to sign on as a counselor; they may work with you during their tutorial period or after school. Other counselors can set meetings that are mutually convenient. This is where parents can get involved; make it fun, make it a field trip. Improve your golf game and take lessons too. Scouts need to realize that schoolwork, like it or not, is covered in dozens of merit badges. Look at the list; you may see a science subject or history chapter. Work the merit badge and make it extra credit at school, cover your required school reading, double the value of whatever you "have" to do. Finally, learn a skill for a part-time job, get a discount on your driver's insurance; use merit badges as a stepping stone for other activities. You don't have to get your Eagle just to get the benefits of the Scouting program. **(Remember, your scout must always be accompanied by someone else while working with a counselor on a badge).**

#### **Value:**

- Improve ability to speak to adults about a topic of mutual interest
- Improve ability to ask for help
- Hobbies of others -- discover new interests
- Discover integration of Scouting in teen life -- through sports, outdoors, and academics
- Improve grades
- Learn to ... "NETWORK" -- Scouting has been doing this for a long time

Parents, please consider BEING a merit badge counselor. It's a great way to invest in your child and his friends in scouting. Look at that list -- you ARE an expert. Please contact the Merit Badge Counselor Coordinator if you are interested in being a counselor for Troop 168. There is no cost, but there is paperwork.

Any questions pertaining to Troop 168 and Merit Badges:

- Counselor Coordinator: Mr. Frank Whelan ([frankjwhelan@yahoo.com](mailto:frankjwhelan@yahoo.com))
- Advancement Chairman: Mr. Al Kepler ([al.kepler@yahoo.com](mailto:al.kepler@yahoo.com))
- Scoutmaster: Mr. David Lackey ([dblackey@yahoo.com](mailto:dblackey@yahoo.com))

VERY Important Links:

- <http://www.meritbadge.com>