



GROUP MERIT BADGE DAY CERTIFICATION POLICY

POLICY STATEMENT

The question arises as to whether it is permissible to have Scouts earn Merit Badges in groups. Many subjects may be presented to groups of Scouts without defeating one of the purposes of the Merit Badge plan—working closely with a qualified adult.

The National Executive Board has approved this policy statement on Merit Badge counseling:

“To the fullest extent possible, the Merit Badge counseling relationship is a counselor– Scout arrangement in which the Scout is not only judged on their performance of the requirements, but receives maximum benefit from the knowledge, skill, character, and personal interest of their counselor. Group instruction and orientation are encouraged where special facilities and expert personnel make this most practical, or when Scouts are dependent on only a few counselors for assistance. However, this group experience should be followed by attention to each individual candidate’s projects and their ability to fulfill all requirements.”

In the end, the Scout must be reviewed individually by the counselor to ensure completion of the badge’s requirements.

The OCBSA released the following statement on Merit Badge Days:

Merit Badges have long been a cornerstone of the Boy Scouts of America program, allowing Scouts to try different hobbies, explore career opportunities, and even learn skills that could save their lives, or that of someone else. Group Merit Badge instruction, or “Merit Badge Days,” which have been widely practiced in the Orange County Council and elsewhere, can be a very effective way for Scouts to learn and earn badges. In order to maintain the quality of group Merit Badge instruction, the National Council of the Boy Scouts of America has prescribed certain rules for this type of learning environment in its *Guide To Advancement*.

Because of concerns raised by leaders and parents, The Orange County Council’s Executive Board recently affirmed the importance of these national policies and agreed that all Merit Badge instruction for groups of Scouts from more than a single unit conducted in the Orange County Council would comply with them. In many cases, this will entail no structural change to the way a Merit Badge Day is conducted. After all, many of these events are of very high quality, adhering rigorously to the standards of advancement that any leader or parent would desire. In others, it may require some changes.

MERIT BADGE DAY CERTIFICATION PROCESS

- Each unit hosting an Merit Badge Day must have 2 registered leaders complete certification, 1 leader must be the point of contact for the event.
- The certification is good for 2 years.
- The council advancement committee will offer the certification course at least 2 times per year.
- Only one unit sponsored Merit Badge Day per year allowed.
- Certification must be completed prior to Merit Badge Day Event.

WHAT WILL BE TAUGHT IN THE CERTIFICATION COURSE?

- Specifics about Merit Badge Counselors
- Details about Merit Badge Day Merit Badges
- The Registration Process
- Budgeting Overview
- Policies for Merit Badge Day Offerings
- The Feedback Loop

Boy Scouts of America

Orange County Council

MERIT BADGE DAY CERTIFICATION PROCESS

INSTRUCTORS SYLLABUS

MERIT BADGE DAY TRAINING OVERVIEW

- Policy Statement
- Merit Badge Counselors
- Merit Badge Day Merit Badges

Rev: 10/10/2018

- Merit Badge Day registration Procedures
- Merit Badge Day Policies
- Merit Badge day Feedback

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Because of concerns raised by leaders and parents, our council’s Executive Board recently affirmed the importance of these national policies and agreed that all merit badge instruction for groups of Scouts from more than a single unit conducted in the Orange County Council would comply with them. In many cases, this will entail no structural change to the way a Merit Badge Day is conducted. After all, many of these events are of very high quality, adhering rigorously to the standards of advancement that any leader or parent would desire. In others, it may require some changes.

MERIT BADGE DAY COUNSELORS

The following quotes are from the Guide To Advancement (#33088)

All [Merit Badge Counselors](#) must be

- **Qualified:** *"They must be men or women of good character, age 18 or older, and recognized as having the skills and education in the subjects they cover., It is important, too, they have good rapport with Scout-age youth and unit leaders."*
- **Registered and Approved:** *"People serving as merit badge counselors must maintain registration with the Boy Scouts of America as merit badge counselors and be approved by their local council advancement committee for each of their badges." (Registration includes current YPT)*
- **Trained:** *"The council or district advancement committee must assure counselors understand the Boy Scouts of America's aims, methods, and mission. It is also important they know how Scouts learn and grow through the merit badge process."*

Each Scout is individually tested

- *"There must be attention to each individuals projects and their fulfillment of all requirements. We must know that each Scout-actually and personally-completed them."*
- *"Members must meet current advancement requirements as written for merit badges, all ranks, and Eagle Palms-no more no less-and they are to do exactly what is stated."*

MERIT BADGE DAY MERIT BADGES

- What Merit Badges can be taught? What Merit Badges take ½ day? What Merit Badges take a full day? Required Pre-Requisites? The Orange County Council website has a list of which Merit Badges are appropriate for a Merit Badge Day and which are the minimum required prerequisites for each.
- Only 2 Merit Badges can be earned by each Scout at each Merit Badge Day?
- Only 1 EAGLE Required Merit Badge may be earned per Scout, per Merit Badge Day!

MERIT BADGE REGISTRATION PROCEDURES

- Application procedures for applying to host an Merit Badge Day (Applications, Timelines, Approvals, Only 2 per Council/per day)
- Cover CampMaster registrations for Scouts
- Access to CampMaster for volunteers
- No Waiting List Policy for Merit Badges
- 100% Online Pay
- Walk-Ins are not allowed
- Schedule Changes

MERIT BADGE DAY SPECIFICS

- National Council Policies

Rev: 10/10/2018

- Orange County Council Policies
 - [Group Merit Badge Instructions](#)
 - [Group Merit Badge Instructions Supplemental](#)
 - [Application for Group Merit Badge Day](#)
 - [Items to include in the Group Merit Badge Day Flyer](#)
 - [Minimum Prerequisites for Group Merit Badge Days](#)
- Schedule – Same for each Merit Badge Day (3 hours, 1 hour, 3 hours)
- Budgeting for a Merit Badge Day – How to
- Collection and Handling of Fees
- Merit Badge Counselor List
- Class Size, Ratio 1:8
- 2 Deep Leadership in every class
- Policy on Merit Badge Helpers
- Unit sponsored Merit Badge Days may not be held on Orange County Council properties
- Available Council/District Support
- Certificates of Insurance
- Blue Cards are the only record keeping system approved by National and by OCBSA
- Blue Cards – Signature Policies - Signed by registered counselor, returned to Scout
- Merit Badge Partials - Guidelines
- Merit Badge Worksheets (review latest issue of *[Guide To Advancement](#)*)
- Money Policy (After Merit Badge Day, check will be automatically made out to unit)
- Scholarships for Scouts in Need
- Conflict Resolution

MERIT BADGE DAY FEEDBACK

- One council wide survey (One for youth, one for adults)
- Visitation from council advancement team
- Penalties for breaking policies
- Use of *[Reporting Merit Badge Counseling Concerns](#)* form #512-800