

MERIT BADGE DAY OVERVIEW

This document includes:

- Policy Statement
- Merit Badge Day Certification Process
- What Will Be Taught in the Certification Course?

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 youth 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, 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 a Merit Badge Day must have at least 2 registered Scouters be Merit Badge Day Unit Coordinators and complete Merit Badge Day Coordinator training certification. The Merit Badge Coordinators must be present at the Merit Badge Day, and one of the two Scouters must be the point of contact for the event.
- The Merit Badge Day Coordinator 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 submitting Merit Badge Day Event application.

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 Course Offerings
- The Feedback Loop
- On Site Monitoring