

Advancement Education

BSA

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The Merit Badge Program *Guide to Advancement Section 7*

National Advancement Program Team

Expiration Date

This presentation is not to be used after January 31, 2021.

Obtain an updated version at www.scouting.org/advancement



BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA

Benefits of Merit Badges

GTA 7.0.0.1

- ♣ Acquire skills, hobbies
- ♣ Explore career possibilities
- ♣ Grow in confidence, social skills, self reliance
- ♣ Experience learning in many different settings
- ♣ Associate with new adult role models



The Blue Card

GTA 7.0.0.2

The only nationally recognized merit badge record

Information for Applicant

- A merit badge application can be approved **only** by a registered merit badge counselor.
- You **must** have a buddy with you (Scout buddy system) at each meeting with the merit badge counselor.
- Turn in your approved application to your unit leader. You will be awarded the merit badge emblem and certificate at a suitable occasion.

Information for Counselor

- Merit badge applications **must** be signed in advance by the applicant's unit leader.
- The Scout **must** have his buddy (Scout buddy system) in attendance at all instructional sessions.
- You may not change any requirement, but you may share your knowledge or experience that will make the counseling more interesting and valuable.

Counselor Initial									
Date of approval									
Requirement No. and letter									

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Date of approval									
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APPLICATION FOR MERIT BADGE

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

is a registered
☐ Boy Scout ☐ Varsity Scout ☐ Venturer
of _____ No. _____
Troop, team, crew, ship

District _____

Council _____

I have discussed this merit badge with this Scout and recommended at least one merit badge counselor.

_____ Date _____ Signature of unit leader

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Unit Leader Approval

GTA 7.0.0.2, 7.0.0.3

- ✦ The Scout may start a merit badge before meeting with their unit leader.
- ✦ Challenge by choice: The Scout decides.
- ✦ Use the opportunity to discuss the badge.
- ✦ Discuss concerns, if any, but allow the Scout to choose.
- ✦ The unit leader signs the application (blue card).



The Process of Counseling

GTA 7.0.3.0

- ✦ The Scout develops an interest in a merit badge and may begin working on the requirements.
- ✦ The Scout discusses their interest in the merit badge with the unit leader.
- ✦ The unit leader signs the blue card and provides the Scout with at least one registered counselor contact.
- ✦ The Scout contacts the counselor.
- ✦ The counselor considers any work completed prior to the initial meeting with the unit leader.
- ✦ The Scout, their buddy, another adult, and counselor meet - often several times.



The Process of Counseling

GTA 7.0.3.0

- ♣ The Scout finishes the requirements.
- ♣ The counselor approves completion.
- ♣ The Scout returns the signed blue card to the unit leader who signs the applicant record section.
- ♣ The unit leader gives the Scout the applicant record.
- ♣ The unit reports the merit badge to the council.
- ♣ The Scout receives the merit badge.



Other Issues

- ❖ Take a friend or buddy. (7.0.3.1)
- ❖ If merit badge counseling includes any electronic interaction, it must be conducted in accordance with BSA Social Media Guidelines. (7.0.3.1)
- ❖ Merit badge counselors can be used to finish a partially completed merit badge. (7.0.3.3)



Merit Badge Counselors Must....

GTA 7.0.1.1

- ♣ Complete Youth Protection Training
- ♣ Be men or women of good character.
- ♣ Be at least age 18.
- ♣ Have skills and education in the subject.
- ♣ Maintain registration with the Boy Scouts of America as a merit badge counselor.
- ♣ Be approved by the local council for each merit badge counseled.



Counselor Limitations

GTA 7.0.1.4

- ✿ Counselors may counsel as many badges as they are qualified and approved for.
- ✿ A Scout may earn unlimited badges from any one counselor who is approved to counsel the badges.
- ✿ Approved counselors may work with their own son, daughter, ward, or relative.
- ✿ Scouts should be encouraged to seek counselors beyond their family and unit whenever possible.



Certifications for Specific Badges

GTA 7.0.1.0

- ✦ Badges involving higher-risk activities may require counselors or supervisors to hold additional certifications.



Consult the Guide to Safe Scouting and the Guide to Advancement for the latest information.



Registering and Training Counselors

GTA 7.0.1.4, 7.0.1.5

♣ To register, all counselors must complete:

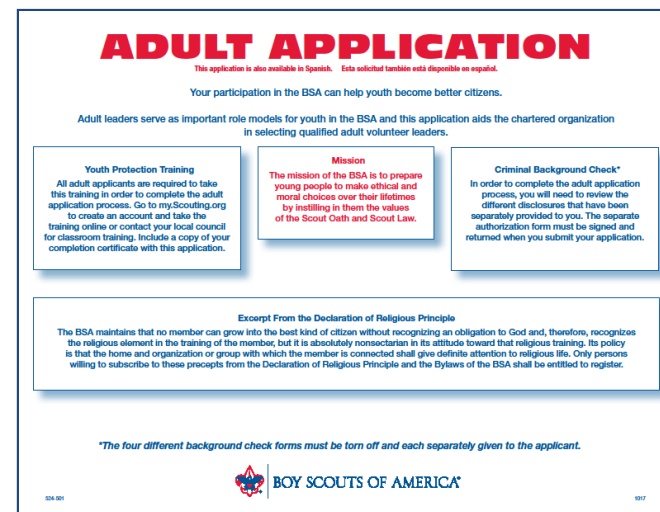
♣ Merit Badge Counselor Information Sheet. No. 34405

♣ BSA Adult Application No. 524-501 with code 42.

♣ Resources:

♣ Essentials of Merit Badge Counseling.
(scouting.org/advancement)

♣ *Guide for Merit Badge Counseling*, No. 34532



The image shows a sample of the BSA Adult Application form. At the top, it says "ADULT APPLICATION" in large red letters. Below that, in smaller text, it says "This application is also available in Spanish. Esta solicitud también está disponible en español." and "Your participation in the BSA can help youth become better citizens." The form is divided into several sections. One section is titled "Youth Protection Training" and states that all adult applicants are required to take this training. Another section is titled "Mission" and states that the mission of the BSA is to prepare young people to make ethical and moral choices. A third section is titled "Criminal Background Check" and states that in order to complete the adult application process, you will need to review the different disclosures that have been separately provided to you. At the bottom of the form, there is a section titled "Excerpt From the Declaration of Religious Principle" which states that the BSA maintains that no member can grow into the best kind of citizen without recognizing an obligation to God. The form also includes the BSA logo and the text "BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA".



Group Instruction

GTA 7.0.3.2

- ❖ It is acceptable, and sometimes desirable, for merit badges to be taught in group settings.
- ❖ Summer camp, merit badge fairs and midways are examples.
- ❖ Scouts must be tested individually and must show that they actually and personally completed the requirements as written.
- ❖ *Group Instruction Guide*, No. 512-066



Merit Badge Miscellany

GTA 7.0.4.0

- ♣ Suggesting new merit badges.
merit.badge@scouting.org

- ♣ Suggesting revisions.

- ♣ When requirements change (GTA 7.0.4.3).



Merit Badge Miscellany

GTA 7.0.4.0

- ❖ Discontinued merit badges. (7.0.4.4)
- ❖ Eagle-required badges for Star and Life rank. (7.0.4.5)
- ❖ Once it is earned, it's earned. (7.0.4.6)
- ❖ Partials only expire on the Scout's 18th birthday. (7.0.3.3)
- ❖ A Scout of any age may work on any merit badge at any time. (7.0.0.3)



Summary

- ✿ The merit badge program provides Scouts with the opportunity to learn new skills by pursuing merit badge topics that are of interest to them.
- ✿ The program provides a Scout with the opportunity for greater interaction with adult role models.
- ✿ The process gives a Scout confidence in overcoming challenges while improving social skills and developing self-reliance.



For More Information

- ✦ *Guide to Advancement*, current edition
- ✦ Merit.badge@scouting.org
- ✦ www.scouting.org/scoutsource/BoyScouts/AdvancementandAwards/MeritBadges.aspx
- ✦ If you have questions, address the district and council advancement administrators first, then:
 - ✦ Advancement.team@scouting.org





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Questions?

