



# FACT SHEET

## Lifesaving or Meritorious Action Awards

### Lifesaving Awards

Recognition may be given to a member of the Boy Scouts of America—Cub Scout, Boy Scout, Varsity Scout, Venturer, or adult leader—where the evidence presented to the National Court of Honor, in accordance with prescribed regulations, shows that he or she saved or attempted to save life under circumstances that indicate heroism and risk of his or her own life. The court will give consideration to resourcefulness and to demonstrated skill in rescue methods.

In no case shall recognition be given where it appears that the risk involved was merely in the performance of duty or the meeting of an obligation because of responsibility to supervise and give leadership to the person or people whose lives were saved.

It shall be wholly within the discretion of the National Court of Honor to determine from evidence presented which lifesaving award, if any, shall be made. Awards are issued in the name of the Boy Scouts of America. These awards are as follows:

**Honor Medal With Crossed Palms.** The Honor Medal With Crossed Palms may be awarded in exceptional cases to a youth member or adult leader who has demonstrated both unusual heroism and extraordinary skill or resourcefulness in saving or attempting to save life at extreme risk to self.

**Honor Medal.** The Honor Medal may be awarded to a youth member or adult leader who has demonstrated unusual heroism and skill in saving or attempting to save life at considerable risk to self.

**Heroism Award.** The Heroism Award may be awarded to a youth member or adult leader who has demonstrated heroism and skill in saving or attempting to save life at minimum risk to self.

### Meritorious Action Awards

Recognition may be given to a youth member or adult leader where the evidence presented to the National Court of Honor, in accordance with prescribed regulations, shows that a significant or outstanding act of service of exceptional character was performed. The action taken need not involve attempts of rescue or risk to self but must put into practice Scouting skills and/or ideals. Recognition shall not be given where it appears that the action involved was merely in the performance of duty or the meeting of an obligation. The awards are as follows:

**Medal of Merit.** The Medal of Merit may be awarded to a youth member or adult leader who has performed some outstanding act of service of a rare or exceptional character that reflects an uncommon degree of concern for the well-being of others.

**National Certificate of Merit.** The National Certificate of Merit may be awarded to a youth member or adult leader who has performed a significant act of service that is deserving of special national recognition.

All applications should be submitted to the National Court of Honor through the local council upon duly prescribed forms, and it shall be within the discretion of the National Court of Honor to determine which type of recognition shall be given. Recipients of these awards must have been registered members of the Boy Scouts of America at the time the action was performed. Awards are made in the name of the Boy Scouts of America.

## **Nominating Procedures**

A council advancement committee, volunteer recognition committee, or subcommittee must investigate the case, interview the principals and witnesses, secure necessary signed statements, and make recommendations based upon a full knowledge of the facts within 30 days of the receipt of the recommendation. Unless there are unusual circumstances that account for the time lapse, no application may be considered after a lapse of six months from the deed without a written explanation from the Scout executive or adviser to the council committee.

Separate applications are required if more than one member is being recommended for recognition. It is recommended that no case be forwarded to the National Court of Honor without the endorsement or statement of an eyewitness. All recognitions are reserved for registered members, and no such member should be encouraged to submit an application on his or her own behalf. Caution is urged not to submit weak cases (in terms of meaningful action or documentation) to the National Court of Honor. Deliberations are conducted by the court, not only to recognize deserving individuals but also to preserve the historical integrity of the awards.

**Note: If the situation is deserving of merit but does not qualify for a national award, the local council writes a letter conveying the recommendation of the committee. The Local Council Certificate of Merit, No. 33732, is used for this purpose.**