



Introduction

The current edition of the *Guide to Advancement* is the official source for administering advancement in all Scouting America programs: Cub Scouting, Scouts BSA, Venturing, and Sea Scouts. It replaces any previous Scouting America advancement manuals and previous editions of the *Guide to Advancement*.

Producing the *Guide to Advancement* involves many members of Scouting America's national staff, many volunteer advancement administrators, and subject matter experts from across the country. The result is a resource intended to efficiently meet the needs of those who would most often consult it. The policies and procedures specified in this document must be implemented by all units, districts and councils. Therefore, they must work for all units, districts and councils, no matter how large, small, geographically dense, economically diverse, etc. For this reason, policies have been designed to be firm enough to maintain the integrity of the Scouting program, while broad enough to allow councils and districts to match to their circumstances while retaining the intent.

Additional information and best practices, as well as the most current version of the *Guide to Advancement*, appear on the Advancement Resources web page, www.scouting.org/advancement.

1.0.1.0 How to Approach Issues Not Covered in the *Guide to Advancement*

Be aware that statements or interpretations offered from unofficial websites and other such sources may be out of date or incorrect. They will not be considered in resolving advancement questions and issues. In situations not specifically covered in this guide, advancement chairs, coordinators, or other administrators should consult with each other, study all related *Guide to Advancement* sections and topics, and make decisions based on the aims and mission of Scouting America, the Scout Oath and Scout Law, other applicable current and official Scouting America resources—and common sense.



Regardless of the program—Cub Scouting, Scouts BSA, Venturing, or Sea Scouts—where advancement takes place, it is nothing more and nothing less than one of several *methods*. It is a means of accomplishing the Scouting America mission, not an end in itself. When as advancement administrators—both volunteer and professional—we recognize this, we can expect success. To see it otherwise is to indicate we have forgotten our purpose.

1.0.2.0 Questions and Suggestions

Every effort has been made to provide clear procedures and guidelines for a mission-oriented delivery of advancement. Its administration, however, largely takes place locally. Therefore, volunteer advancement administrators should always consult first with the district and council—the district advancement chair, district executive, council advancement chair, or the council's professional staff advisor for advancement. These officials can provide many answers and a certain level of interpretation.

For recommendations or suggested corrections to this publication, or for questions that cannot be handled locally, contact advancement.team@scouting.org.

Direct suggestions for new merit badges, or updates to existing ones, to merit.badge@scouting.org.

1.0.3.0 Significant Changes

Almost every section of this guide has received some minor or major revisions since the last edition. Readers are encouraged to carefully review the entire guide, especially those topics frequently referenced. In particular, the following sections merit close review:

- 4.2.1.2** “Once a Scout has been tested and signed off by someone approved to do so, the requirement has been met.” Added “and cannot be rescinded.”
- 5.0.8.0** Added policy dealing with group/online instruction, and use of artificial intelligence
- 7.0.4.12** Online Merit Badge Classes
- 8.0.4.1** Added two-week time limit for council to document denial of advancement to the rank of Eagle Scout, and two months for Scout or parents to file appeal.
- 9.0.1.7** Changed way Eagle Scout references are handled
- 9.0.1.8** Added two-week time limit for council to document denial of advancement to the rank of Eagle Scout, and two months for Scout or parents to file appeal.
- Section 10** Advancement for Members with Special Needs (completely reorganized and rewritten)
- Removed all** References to Advancement News, and National Advancement Program Team
- Changed all** “Scoutbook” to “Scoutbook Plus”, not “Scoutbook Plus Internet Advancement”