Boy Scouts of America
MERIT BADGE COUNSELOR INFORMATION

(Please type or print legibly.)

Name* _____ Primary phone* _____ ◯ Home ◯ Cell ◯ Work

Address* _____ Other phone _____ ◯ Home ◯ Cell ◯ Work

City/state/zip* _____ Other phone _____ ◯ Home ◯ Cell ◯ Work

Email address* _____ ☐ I do not have email. Age _____

District _____ Unit: ◯ Troop ◯ Crew ◯ Ship No. _____ BSA ID _____

◯ I am not affiliated with a district. ◯ I am not affiliated with a unit.

***Required field. Primary phone and email address indicate how Scouts should contact you.**

To qualify as a merit badge counselor, you must

- Be at least 18 years old and of good character.
- Be registered with the Boy Scouts of America (position code 42).
- Complete Youth Protection training.
- Be recognized as having the skills and education in the merit badge subjects covered and hold any required qualifications and training as outlined in the *Guide to Safe Scouting* or the *Guide to Advancement*—or use others so qualified.
- Be able to work with Scout-age youth.

As a merit badge counselor, I agree to

- Follow the requirements of the merit badge, making no deletions or additions, ensuring that the advancement standards are fair and uniform for all Scouts.
- Have each Scout accompanied by another person during all instructional sessions.
- Keep my Youth Protection training current.
- Renew my registration annually if I plan to continue as a merit badge counselor.

Merit Badges *For more than eight merit badges, attach additional sheets.*	**Add (A) Drop (D)**	**For each merit badge, list qualification(s) that support your request.** *Qualifications could include college degrees, formal training certificates, positions held, and specific life experiences.*
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		

A = Adding a new merit badge that you will counsel to the roster. D = Removing your name from the roster for this merit badge.

Complete the following:

◯ This is a new application (first time to register as a merit badge counselor).
Attach this form to the BSA Adult Application, indicating position code 42.

◯ This is an update to an existing list of merit badge subjects.

◯ I no longer wish to serve as a merit badge counselor.

Youth Protection training date _____
(Attach copy of the current certificate.)

Council Approval:

Name (print) _____

Position _____

Date _____

I agree to work with:

◯ All Scouts

◯ All Scouts in these districts: _____

◯ Only with Scouts in these units (indicate whether troop, crew, or ship): _____

Counselors are encouraged to be available to work with any Scout in any unit.

◯ I plan to serve as a merit badge counselor for this event or outside organization: _____

Signature _____ Date _____

INSTRUCTIONS FOR MERIT BADGE COUNSELORS

What's It All About?

The merit badge counselor is a key player in the Scouts BSA advancement program. Whatever your area of expertise or interest—whether it is a special craft or hobby (basketry, leatherwork, coin collecting), a profession (veterinary medicine, aviation, engineering), or perhaps a life skill (cooking, personal management, communication)—as a merit badge counselor, you play a vital role in stirring a Scout's curiosity about it. By serving as a counselor, you offer your time, knowledge, and other resources so Scouts have the opportunity to broaden their horizons. And in doing so, your mission is to combine fun with learning.

You are both teacher and mentor as the Scout learns by doing. By presenting opportunities for growth via engaging activities like designing a webpage (Computers), performing an ollie and a wheelie (Snow Sports), or fabricating rope (Pioneering), you may pique a Scout's interest and inspire a Scout to develop a lifelong hobby, pursue a particular career, or become an independent, self-supporting adult.

Learning to Be a Merit Badge Counselor

All merit badge counselors should seek training. It is important that they have a full understanding of their responsibilities and also of the recommended practices for quality counseling. The presentation "The Essentials of Merit Badge Counseling" has been designed for this purpose and covers the following topics:

- A Scouting overview: mission, aims, and methods
- Merit badge counselor qualifications
- The merit badge counseling process
- Effective counseling
- Merit badge program role and benefits
- How to become a counselor
- Merit badge requirements
- Group instruction and camp settings

The session can be downloaded and viewed from www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/resources/advancement-presentations/.

Another resource is the *Guide for Merit Badge Counseling,* No. 512-065. This resource can be found online at www.scouting.org/programs/boy-scouts/advancement-and-awards/resources/.

Processing This Application

Merit badge counselors *must* register as adult Scouters and be approved by the council advancement committee for each merit badge listed on this Merit Badge Counselor Information form. A merit badge counselor does not have to pay a registration fee, but must complete an Adult Application for position code 42, fill out this form, and complete BSA Youth Protection training. Submit the Adult Application with the Merit Badge Counselor Information form to your council. Counselors may wish to associate with a particular unit but are encouraged to serve any Scout from any unit.

Special Qualifications and Guidelines for Merit Badge Counselors

A number of merit badges involve activities that are restricted or require certification or special training for those supervising these activities. See the *Guide to Advancement*, topic 7.0.1.1, "Qualifications of Counselors." Merit badge counselors may personally meet these required qualifications, or they may use others so qualified. Additionally, the BSA *Guide to Safe Scouting* has specific requirements and procedures for shooting sports and for aquatics, winter, and other activities. These policies apply to all BSA activities, including merit badge instruction. For other merit badges where specific BSA requirements do not exist, counselors should have sufficient depth of knowledge and experience to understand how to safely present the material.

Instructions to Counselors

- The unit leader (Scoutmaster, crew Advisor, or Skipper) recommends and provides the name and contact information of at least one merit badge counselor to each Scout desiring to work on a merit badge. Before beginning to work with a youth, counselors should check the Scout's merit badge application (blue card) to ensure it is signed by the unit leader.
- Every Scout must have another person with them at each meeting with a merit badge counselor. This person can be their parent or legal guardian or another registered adult. There is no one-on-one contact allowed with Scouts and counselors.
- Counselors may not add to or delete any merit badge requirements. Group instruction is allowed where special facilities and expert personnel make this most practical, or when Scouts are dependent on a few counselors for assistance. However, any group experience must provide attention to every individual candidate's projects and progress, and assure each has actually and personally fulfilled *all* the requirements. If, for example, a requirement uses words like "show," "demonstrate," or "discuss," then every Scout must individually do so. It is unacceptable to award badges on the basis of Scouts sitting in classrooms and watching demonstrations or remaining silent during discussions.
- When a Scout begins working on a merit badge, the current-year *Scouts BSA Requirements* book lists the official requirements in effect at that time. If requirements change after a Scout has started working on a merit badge, the requirements that were in effect when the Scout began working on the badge can still be followed unless the BSA's National Council places a specific timeline on the implementation of new requirements.