

Blue Card Guide

Planning for merit badge classes

Scouts should please review requirements for merit badges that they are interested in earning before registering for any merit badge classes. BSA posts current merit badge requirements on the page at <https://www.scouting.org/programs/scouts-bsa/advancement-and-awards/merit-badges/> Some classes may not be a good fit for a Scout because of knowledge of the subject, interest, motivation, or homework that must be completed before class.

Some classes may not be a good fit for a Scout because of size and strength. For example, shotguns are heavy and each shot generates significant recoil.

Some classes may not be a good fit for a Scout because of maturity. For example, welding is potentially dangerous if a Scout is not attentive or is prone to horseplay.

For all merit badge classes, Scouts are expected to read the merit badge requirements and are expected to read the BSA merit badge pamphlet before arriving at their class(es).

Many merit badges require significant homework before class(es) to assure blue card completions by the end of the classes.

Blue card requirement for merit badges:

In traditional circumstances, each Scout should present to each merit badge counselor a new, separate blue card signed by their Scoutmaster indicating permission to participate in that course.

Scouts and parents can find information on the appropriate process of a Scout obtaining a Scoutmaster signature on their blue card before merit badge work on page 41 of the BSA Guide to Advancement 2021 posted at <https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/33088.pdf>

We encourage all Scouts to review their participation and advancement plans with their Scoutmasters before registering for their merit badge classes.

Scouts, parents, Scout leaders, and merit badge counselors should all review this video about to how manage blue cards start to finish:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DSMnQyzOrmM>

The Scout must completely fill out all relevant blanks on the blue card in ink before handing the blue card to the counselor.

Scouts must not reuse partially filled out blue cards from other merit badges. Lining out or erasing or putting a label over a merit badge name or over a counselor or

Scoutmaster signature on an old card for a merit badge never started or completed is not acceptable. Each blue card should be a new, original card with new, original initials or signatures in ink.

The counselor must sign the back of the blue card in 2 places, both indicated by "Signature of Counselor", once on the left panel and once on the middle panel. The counselor must indicate the date of the signatures. All blanks and all signatures and dates should be written in ink. Each Scout is responsible to obtain these signatures and to personally deliver the card to their Scoutmaster so that the merit badge can be registered and awarded.

In addition, the counselor must complete the grid on the blue card front middle panel. Each numbered requirement should be listed, initialed, and dated if complete. Pending requirements should be noted so that the Scout has a readily available record of their completed and yet-to-be completed work for review with that counselor or another counselor later.

The counselor should keep the Counselor's Record panel in a secure location. If the merit badge somehow is not registered or recorded or if the Scout's portion of the blue card is lost or damaged, the Counselor's Record can be invaluable.

The Scout must show the signed and dated and completed blue card to the Scoutmaster. The Scoutmaster will sign on the line "Signature of unit leader" on the back middle panel of the blue card.

The Scout must show the signed and dated and completed blue card to the troop Advancement Coordinator. The Advancement Coordinator will take the blue card for further processing, registration and stamping at the Scout Shop, and for purchasing a merit badge patch for the Scout to receive at a troop meeting or at a Court of Honor.

When a blue card is returned to the Scout with a merit badge patch at a presentation ceremony at a troop meeting or at a Court of Honor, the Scout must keep that blue card in a safe and protected place to maintain a personal record of their accomplishment. Blue cards are invaluable if computer or troop records become unusable or unavailable for any reason. Blue cards are customarily part of a Scout's Eagle application packet.

The Scout is responsible for planning and completion of each step in the blue card management process.

Partial or Full Completion

Full completion of many of these merit badges is possible IF Scouts complete above preparations before class. If a Scout does not finish all requirements, the Scout must work with their counselor to list and initial requirements completed on their blue card for later completion with that counselor or with a registered counselor associated with their

home troop or a registered counselor identified through Scoutbook. Scouts should follow the buddy system with 2-deep adult leadership for all merit badge counseling sessions.