



Boy Scout Troop 661

"How to Earn A Merit Badge"

1. Choose a Merit Badge that you want to work on. You can do this either by looking in your Boy Scout Handbook, looking at the Troop Library, speaking with other Scouts, or choosing from available Merit Badges being offered at a Merit Badge Day or Summer Camp. There are two main types of Merit Badges: (a) Eagle Required, and (b) non-Eagle or elective Merit Badges. Eventually, you need both types but it is often easier (and more fun) to do an elective Merit Badge first. There are well over 100 Merit Badges to choose from, so look over the list to see what interests you. A list of ALL the merit badges, and the requirements needed to accomplish them is at www.meritbadge.com. You still need the Merit Badge book, but it's an easy way to find something you can do. Once you choose your Merit Badge you are on your way!
2. Talk to your Scoutmaster, and get a blue card to fill out so he can sign it (authorizing you to begin work on your Merit Badge), and have your Scoutmaster give you the name of a Counselor (that's the way it is supposed to be done,) OR have him let you look at the Counselor list, and you decide which Counselor you want to use. **Hint: Many parent volunteers in your own Troop are Merit Badge Counselors, so be sure to use them first.** With outside Merit Badge Counselors, be sure to get two or three names and telephone numbers as some of them have "retired" or may be unavailable.
3. Get the right Merit Badge book and read it over. (There is a LOT of good information in those books!) Look over the requirements for your Merit Badge.
4. Call the Merit Badge Counselor. (Before you call the Counselor you are supposed to have read the book, AND have the signed blue card. You shouldn't have done any of the requirements before now. If you have already done the work the Merit Badge Counselor has the right to accept or reject your prior work. Most will accept it, but they are supposed to reject it, so don't be surprised, or hold it against them if they do. Attached is a script you can use in calling Counselors. Role play a few times before you call. Then you sound smart and professional when you talk to the Counselor. The Counselor will may want to meet you BEFORE you begin working on the requirements. Remember, always use the buddy system!!! If another Scout does not go with you, take your parent along.
5. Do the work. (It does not hurt to make a booklet for each Merit Badge you do away from Camp, Merit Badge day, or Scout Meetings. Where ever the requirements says, "Tell" you should write it out. Get the most you can from the experience. Take pictures too, and put them in the booklet you create for each Merit Badge you do. This is a good way to review before going to see the Counselor to prove your stuff, and a good tool to remember what you did, so you can speak with knowledge and authority when you see the Counselor. Having written materials shows exactly what you did in learning and preparing to pass off the Merit Badge, and is a great little scrap book for you – it may even be very useful to have when you go for your Eagle rank. At your Eagle Court of Honor, these booklets can be displayed with all of your other achievements, and everyone will know what you did, plus it is an added thing to add as a portfolio to their educational work.
6. When ALL of the requirements are completed, call the Merit Badge Counselor again, make an appointment to visit and prove that you have done all the requirements and earned the Merit Badge.
7. Go visit the Counselor (with your Scout buddy or parent), be courteous and professional, and be prepared to pass off the Merit Badge. The Counselor will want to make sure that you have

completed the requirements, and shouldn't just GIVE you the badge. You have to earn it. If there is something missing, you will have to go and complete it before getting signed off. Less trips for your parents if they review it with you, and if you do it right the first time!

8. When completed, the Counselor will sign and return the blue card. Hand your blue card to your Scoutmaster or Committee Chair for signature, then give the completed blue card to the Advancements Chairperson. He or she will order the Merit Badge, and present it to you at the next Troop Court of Honor.
9. After the Court of Honor (or at the Court of Honor) put your "proof" portion of the blue card in a "baseball collection" type plastic card holder. (9 slots/page.) DON'T lose them. These are like gold as they are your only proof that you earned the Merit Badge. You should keep these in your Scout Binder, a special book just for blue cards, Camping information, and Service Hours.
10. Sew the Merit Badge on your Sash and wear it with pride.
11. Keep up the good work, and decide on your next Merit Badge!!

Your Scoutmaster,
David P. Berschauer