

Boy Scout Troop 661

First Class Emphasis Program

So, you've heard everyone talking about the "First Class Emphasis Program" but don't know what that means? Simply put the "First Class Emphasis Program" (aka "Trail to First Class") is an organized method of taking new Scouts through the four steps of advancement using the time honored tradition of a "Boy led Troop." The four steps of advancement are that a Scout:

1. Learns by doing "hands on"
2. Is individually tested by his boy leaders
3. His progress is reviewed by his Scoutmaster and a Board of Review, and
4. He is recognized for his achievement

Advancement takes place by earning rank and merit badges. Each boy follows these four steps through each rank from Scout, to Tenderfoot, Second Class, First Class, Star, Life and Eagle. The "First Class Emphasis Program" is concerned with the advancement through First Class Rank only.

All new Scouts are encouraged to achieve First Class Scout rank within their first year with the Troop. Although merit badges are fun, no merit badges are required until after a Scout reached First Class rank, and basic skill awards (like in Cub Scouts) are no longer given. The first ranks of Boy Scouting focus on basic Scout skills and elementary leadership. Nationwide studies indicate that when a boy moves from Scout to First Class within the first year:

He will stay in the program an average of 18 months longer, providing more opportunity for personal growth through the Scouting method.

He will have a good Scouting experience which he will remember the rest of his life.

He will adopt the ideals of Scouting in his life.

He will be more likely to become involved with his own children, especially in Scouting.

Scouts who achieve First Class rank have learned personal satisfaction and the recognition that comes from achieving. They are more satisfied with their progress, and they have established a pattern of advancement which will help them mature into young adults, becoming leaders among their peers, and many of them will move forward toward the rank of Eagle Scout.

The “First Class Emphasis Program” at Troop 661 follows the BSA guidelines for a “Boy led” Troop. We have a youth leader who has been specially selected to lead the new Scouts through their skills work. This youth leader is the Troop Guide. Another youth leader who is actively involved with the “First Class Emphasis Program” is the Instructor. Both of these youth leaders work under the direct supervision of the “top dog” or “head boy”, who is known as the Senior Patrol Leader. These boys lead the new Scouts through their skills instruction at regular meetings and on camp outs. Other Scouts in the Troop, who are First Class rank or higher, also help out with instruction and “signing off” skills when a Scout has proven himself. A trained adult leader, known as the First Class Emphasis Coordinator (an Assistant Scoutmaster position) oversees the boys and provides support and encouragement. All boys, and especially the new Scouts, are encouraged to attend as many outings and camp outs as possible. Many requirements for rank advancement are fulfilled through outing participation. Outings are the method that makes Scouting work, as it has been said that three-quarters of Scouting is “outing.”

There are at least two very important outings for all new Scouts to attend. Those are the Spring Camporee (a mandatory event) and the First Class Emphasis Camp Out. Both of these outings focus on basic Scouting skills, and the First Class Emphasis Camp Out is specially designed to assist the newer Scouts in learning and proving their skills so that they can achieve rank advancement. The First Class Emphasis Coordinator helps the youth leadership in planning this event to ensure that time is spent wisely and the new Scouts have the greatest chance of success while having fun in the outdoors. A sample schedule of events for Troop 661’s most recent First Class Emphasis Camp Out is attached. We hope that this handout has been helpful to you.

FIRST CLASS EMPHASIS PROGRAM

Point Mugu Naval Station Campout

April 15-17, 2005

Friday June 25 Upon arrival until lights out

- Tenderfoot #1 Arrive in Class A Uniform / Show your gear
- Second Class #2b Pick location to pitch tent
- Tenderfoot #2 Pitch tent / sleep in it
- #4b Demonstrate Taut Line Hitch vs. Two Half Hitches while pitching your tent, show knots & which one you use
- #8 Patrol Assembly: Name, Yell, & Flag
- #7 Do Oath, Law, Motto & Slogan

Dinner (if not brought with you or eaten in advance)

- Tenderfoot #3 Cooking / Cleaning Dishes
- Second Class #2f Light campfire and/or stove

Saturday June 26 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.

- Tenderfoot #3 Cooking / Cleaning Dishes
- Second Class #2f Light campfire and/or stove
- #2e Discuss Cooking Fire vs. Lightweight Stove

9:00 a.m. – 11:45 a.m. - Skills

- Second Class #2c Axe / Saw / Knife use, handling, and sharpening
- #2d Prepare tinder for fire, methods of starting fire
- #2g Cook meal over open fire (if possible) / Food Groups

11:45 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. - Lunch

- Tenderfoot #3 Cooking / Cleaning Dishes
- Second Class #2f Light campfire and/or stove

1:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. – Activities and Skills

Pre-Hike

- Tenderfoot #11 Poisonous Plants
- #9 Buddy System
- #7a Discuss Safe Swim Rules

Hike

- Second Class #1a Compass & Map Orientation
- First Class #1 Demonstrate How to Find Directions w/o Compass

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| | #2 | Complete Orienteering Course w/ Compass |
| Second Class | #1b | Five Mile Hike (look for animals) |
| | #5 | Identify Animals (write them down) |

Alternate Activities After Hike ...

- (1) Go Bowling ...
- (2) Swim Activities & Skills (Second Class #7b, 7c basic swimmer test (25 feet) and rescues, First Class #9b, 9c BSA swimmer test (75 yards) and rescues)

7:00 p.m. – Lights Out - Dinner / Campfire

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| Tenderfoot | #3 | Cooking / Cleaning Dishes |
| Second Class | #2f | Light campfire and/or stove |
| First Class | #4a | Additional cooking skills |

Campfire with Skits and/or songs/stories (fun and socializing)

Sunday June 27 7:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m. – Breakfast

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| Tenderfoot | #3 | Cooking / Cleaning Dishes |
| Second Class | #2f | Light campfire and/or stove |
| First Class | #4a | Additional cooking skills |

9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. – Skills

Alternative Skills to Learn this Morning ...

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| First Class | #7a | Lashings Discussion |
| | #7b | Lashings: Learn, Practice & Demonstrate |
| | #7c | Make Camp Gadget |
| | #8a | Bowline Knot |
| Tenderfoot | #10a | Physical Fitness (initial) |
| | #10b | Physical Fitness (30 day follow up) |

11:00 a.m. – Departure

Clean Up: Pack up your gear, your Patrol's gear, do visual camp inspection and trash clean up line.

Scout's Own (remember that "A Scout is Reverent.")