



# FACT SHEET

## Merit Badge Program

- Background and Purposes** As chartered by the Congress of the United States, the Boy Scouts of America is a movement dedicated to supplementing and enlarging the education of youth. The merit badge program, which provides opportunities for youth to explore more than 120 fields of skill and knowledge, plays a key role in the fulfillment of this educational commitment.
- A vital part of the BSA's advancement plan, the merit badge program is one of Scouting's basic character-building tools. Through participation in the program (which may begin immediately upon registration in a troop or team), a Scout acquires the kind of self-confidence that comes only from overcoming obstacles to achieve a goal. Instruction is offered in everything from animal science and public speaking to swimming and communications, providing a young man with invaluable career, physical, and interpersonal skills.
- Merit Badge Pamphlets** Each merit badge subject is outlined and explained in a pamphlet that contains short introductory information written for Boy Scouts/Varsity Scouts by recognized authorities. More than a million pamphlets are sold yearly, and many are used as approved reference texts in libraries and school curricula.
- Counselors** People who are knowledgeable about the various merit badge subjects are selected, approved, and trained by council and district advancement committees to serve as merit badge counselors. For example, a dentist might be asked to serve as a counselor for the Dentistry merit badge. A counselor must not only possess the necessary technical knowledge but also have a solid understanding of the needs, interests, and abilities of Scouts. A counselor must also be a registered adult with the BSA.
- Procedure** When a Scout has an interest in earning a particular merit badge, he obtains his Scoutmaster's/Varsity Scout Coach's approval and identifies another Scout with similar interests to become his partner. They are then directed to the appropriate merit badge counselor. The counselor reviews the badge requirements with the young men and decides with them what projects should be undertaken and when they should be completed. After the counselor has certified that the Scouts have qualified for the merit badge, it is presented to them at a troop/team meeting and can be applied toward rank advancement.
- Badges for Eagle** To qualify for the Eagle Scout Award, Scouting's highest advancement rank, a Scout must—along with meeting five other requirements—earn a total of 21 merit badges, including First Aid, Citizenship in the Community, Citizenship in the Nation, Citizenship in the World, Communications, Personal Fitness, Emergency Preparedness OR Lifesaving, Environmental Science, Personal Management, Camping, Hiking OR Cycling OR Swimming, and Family Life.
- New Badges** To meet the changing interests of boys, new merit badges are added from time to time. In addition, all merit badges are reviewed and revised periodically. The most recent is Composite Materials in 2006.

MERIT BADGE	2007	TOTAL 1911 THROUGH 2007
Agribusiness (2)	0	6,716
American Business	539	48,453
American Cultures	2,334	49,551
American Heritage	4,274	118,154
American Labor	1,060	16,544
Animal Science	2,608	34,690
Archaeology	5,522	96,236
Archery	46,550	1,286,606
Architecture	2,104	193,458
Art	27,112	1,106,190
Astronomy	10,087	544,829
Athletics	5,959	1,040,227
Auto Mechanics	7,480	99,127
Aviation	16,483	467,275
Backpacking	4,974	182,285
Basketry	28,256	2,279,180
Beekeeping (2)	0	60,261
Bird Study	5,327	537,689
Botany (2)	0	87,752
Bugling	684	165,643
Camping*	58,022	4,242,599
Canoeing	41,685	2,754,919
Chemistry	5,944	286,512
Cinematography	4,839	57,050
Citizenship in the Community*	48,498	3,068,990
Citizenship in the Nation*	54,368	2,770,809
Citizenship in the World*	58,608	1,811,599
Climbing	22,495	249,405
Coin Collecting	4,909	453,376
Collections	5,011	105,850
Communications*	54,214	1,648,244
Composite Materials	1,623	1,868
Computers	13,702	417,582
Consumer Buying (2)	0	26,970
Cooking	24,025	4,074,054
Crime Prevention	6,158	84,156
Cycling**	6,754	526,565
Dentistry	3,974	104,310
Disabilities Awareness	3,964	75,463
Dog Care	2,948	408,403
Drafting	1,501	214,872

\*On required list for Eagle Scout rank

\*\*Required for Eagle (must complete Cycling, Hiking, or Swimming)

MERIT BADGE	2007	TOTAL 1911 THROUGH 2007
Electricity	10,034	728,783
Electronics	5,680	162,721
Emergency Preparedness***	44,987	1,493,208
Energy	2,620	55,906
Engineering	5,733	82,582
Entrepreneurship	1,332	9,779
Environmental Science*	72,279	2,194,532
Family Life*	51,225	773,995
Farm Mechanics	1,951	203,825
Fingerprinting	39,482	1,351,387
Fire Safety	13,661	2,503,544
First Aid*	82,274	6,361,479
Fish and Wildlife Management	15,002	547,394
Fishing	26,769	1,782,550
Fly Fishing	685	7,458
Forestry	14,864	1,041,526
Gardening	1,715	372,464
Genealogy	4,387	192,430
General Science (2)	0	52,953
Geology	19,525	489,419
Golf	6,831	124,946
Graphic Arts	2,373	28,888
Hiking**	7,781	1,275,737
Home Repairs	4,292	2,384,715
Horsemanship	11,771	553,492
Indian Lore	29,624	1,006,056
Insect Study	1,536	142,981
Journalism	1,113	98,369
Landscape Architecture	1,649	71,040
Law	5,545	137,441
Leatherwork	50,852	2,104,721
Lifesaving***	27,676	2,844,641
Machinery (2)	0	175,322
Mammal Study	28,888	998,261
Masonry (2)	0	160,151
Medicine	3,644	43,093
Metals Engineering (2)	0	29,857
Metalwork	10,683	1,048,028
Model Design and Building	2,282	200,613
Motorboating	13,324	501,386

\*\*\*Required for Eagle (must complete Emergency Preparedness or Lifesaving)

(1) Discontinued in 1993

(2) Discontinued in 1995

MERIT BADGE	2007	TOTAL 1911 THROUGH 2007
Music	15,114	1,211,155
Nature	16,441	1,545,332
Nuclear Science	4,595	129,040
Oceanography	9,357	215,147
Orienteering	19,803	685,065
Painting	4,796	529,147
Personal Fitness*	53,030	2,107,226
Personal Management*	49,861	1,439,063
Pets	6,287	616,714
Photography	12,447	383,533
Pioneering	21,292	2,265,542
Plant Science	928	29,475
Plumbing	5,366	350,314
Pottery	8,574	316,172
Public Health	1,487	1,504,707
Public Speaking	5,827	595,080
Pulp and Paper	3,492	72,763
Rabbit Raising (1)	0	137,332
Radio	5,766	125,382
Railroading	6,378	182,171
Reading	6,178	1,441,821
Reptile and Amphibian Study	10,434	582,050
Rifle Shooting	46,174	981,791
Rowing	16,484	1,618,890
Safety	3,605	2,906,882
Salesmanship	5,254	281,544

\*On required list for Eagle Scout rank

\*\*Required for Eagle (must complete Cycling, Hiking, or Swimming)

MERIT BADGE	2007	TOTAL 1911 THROUGH 2007
Scholarship	6,607	1,231,674
Sculpture	9,091	224,275
Shotgun Shooting	22,986	344,035
Skating	2,920	153,926
Small-Boat Sailing	17,852	524,722
Snow Sports	10,671	381,472
Soil and Water Conservation	13,630	1,023,560
Space Exploration	19,943	401,454
Sports	10,968	1,080,553
Stamp Collecting	1,057	381,769
Surveying	1,166	142,583
Swimming**	74,108	5,776,804
Textile	3,677	118,539
Theater	1,937	67,389
Traffic Safety	5,817	105,833
Truck Transportation	3,167	117,332
Veterinary Medicine	2,355	53,197
Water Skiing	3,556	218,672
Weather	16,001	459,169
Whitewater	3,557	62,019
Wilderness Survival	40,496	1,330,251
Wood Carving	45,659	1,977,764
Woodwork	4,621	935,073
Unclassified	0	10,324,955
TOTAL	1,879,476	113,638,951

\*\*\*Required for Eagle (must complete Emergency Preparedness or Lifesaving)

(1) Discontinued in 1993

(2) Discontinued in 1995

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