Old North State Council

Merit Badge Counselor Requirements

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<tr>
<th>Effective Date:</th>
<th>4-15-2019</th>
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<tr>
<td>Initiating Authority:</td>
<td>Council Advancement Committee</td>
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| Other Authorities:  | BSA Barriers to Abuse (*Guide to Safe Scouting* online)  
Boy Scouts of America Guide to Advancement |
| Purpose:            | Establish requirements to serve as a merit badge counselor in the Old North State Council. |
| Policy Statement:   | Any individual who wishes to serve as a merit badge counselor and in the merit badge counselor process in the Old North State Council must be approved by the Old North State Council Advancement Committee. Merit badge counselors must meet the registration requirements of the Boy Scouts of America, including being current in Youth Protection training, in order to work on merit badges with Scouts.  
Merit badge counselors must provide the current leadership requirements when working with Scouts as defined in the *Guide to Advancement* (7.0.3.1): 
"A youth member must not meet one-on-one with an adult. Sessions with counselors must take place in accordance with the *Guide to Safe Scouting*. Notwithstanding the minimum leader requirements, age- and program-appropriate supervision must always be provided. Youth should be encouraged to bring a buddy, such as a friend, parent, guardian, brother, sister, or other relative—or, better yet, another Scout working on the same badge."  
New merit badge counselors will initially be approved to counsel no more than eight (8) merit badges.  
Renewing merit badge counselors will be approved to counsel no more than sixteen (16) merit badges at one time.  
To retain merit badge counselor status, merit badge counselors must go through the annual renewal process, as required by the Boy Scouts of America. Merit badge counselor approvals expire on December 31 of each year, if not renewed. |

Definitions:  

Scope:  
The ONSC Advancement Committee provides oversight to the Scout advancement process throughout the council. The advancement committee has the sole authority for the approval of registered volunteers to serve in the merit badge counselor role and process.  

Procedure:  

Initial Approval: To be reviewed for approval, an individual must submit a Boy Scouts of America Adult Application, the Merit Badge Counselor Information sheet, BSA Form No. 34405, and proof of current Youth Protection training. The advancement chairman (or designee) within each district reviews each request for approval to counsel merit badges. It is the district advancement chairman’s responsibility to ensure that each applicant is well qualified to instruct the merit badges that are listed.  
The individual submitting a Merit Badge Counselor Information form provides a brief description of their qualifications for each merit badge. Please use an additional sheet, if needed, to describe your qualifications. The Guide to Advancement states that merit badge counselor should be "recognized as having the skills and education in the subjects they cover." (*Guide to Advancement, 7.0.1.0*)
If a district advancement chair questions the qualifications provided on the Merit Badge Counselor Information form, they will contact the applicant for additional information, in order to make an informed decision about the approval of the individual to counsel the merit badge in question. If the district advancement chair still questions the qualifications of the applicant, the application may be brought to the council advancement committee for consideration and a final decision.

**Annual Renewal:** The annual renewal process begins in October of each year. Merit badge counselors are contacted about their wish to continue as a merit badge counselor for the following calendar year and given instructions for the renewal process. Merit badge counselors who do not respond by December 31 of each year will not be renewed for the following calendar year. Reinstatement requires submission of documents under the same policy as if applying as a new merit badge counselor for initial approval.

**Supplemental Training Requirements:** The following merit badges will only be approved for individuals that have the required certification or training listed in the most current BSA’s Guide to Advancement *(see most current Guide to Advancement to verify in case additional merit badges have been added):*

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Climbing</th>
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<tr>
<td>Kayaking</td>
<td>Lifesaving</td>
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<td>Rowing</td>
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<td>Swimming</td>
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<td>Archery</td>
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**Working with Scouts:** Approved merit badge counselors may work with and pass any Scout, including their own child or relative. The council advancement committee strongly recommends that a Scout earn no more than four (4) merit badges from the same counselor. The BSA program encourages Scouts to reach out and meet adults that are not part of their unit as they benefit from the perspectives of many “teachers” and will learn as a result.

The Scout's parent may serve as the second adult for merit badge counseling as long as the parent is in sight of and in ear shot of any meeting with a Scout. This maintains the requirements of 2-deep leadership and no one-on-one contact.

**Appeals Process:** If an individual is not initially approved for a merit badge, or to serve as a merit badge counselor, due to quantity requested or qualifications provided, the individual may appeal the decision to the Old North State Council Advancement Committee.

**Related Documents:**
BSA’s Guide to Advancement, Merit Badge Counselor Information Sheet – No. 34405
BSA Adult Application, 524-501