

Appendix 7 to Troop 1140 Policy Handbook

MERIT BADGE COUNSELOR VOLUNTEER INFORMATION

A Merit Badge Counselor Is ...

A merit badge counselor is a key player in the Boy Scout advancement program; your mission is to join fun with learning. Whatever your area of expertise or interest -- whether it is a special craft or hobby (basketry, leatherwork, coin collecting), a profession (veterinary medicine, aviation, engineering) or perhaps a life skill (cooking, personal management, communications) -- as a merit badge counselor, you can play a vital role as both a teacher and mentor to the Scout, in stirring a young man's curiosity about that particular topic. By serving as a merit badge counselor, you offer your time, knowledge and other resources so that Scouts can explore a topic of interest. Your hands-on involvement could inspire a Scout to develop a lifelong hobby, pursue a particular career or become an independent, self-supporting adult.

If you are not yet a merit badge counselor, it is easy to become a volunteer. You will need to register with the Boy Scouts of America, through your BSA local council. This entails completing and turning-in the "Adult Application" to the Troop. The District will then process the application (every applicant is screened). The "Merit Badge Counselor Information" form should also be turned into the Troop's MB Counselor Coordinator.

Required Training for Counselors. The Boy Scouts of America seeks to create a safe environment for young people and adult leaders to enjoy the program and related activities. BSA Youth Protection Training helps preserve that environment. Upon approval to serve as a volunteer, individuals are expected to complete BSA Youth Protection Training within 90 days of assuming a leadership position. This training can be done through the BSA's Online Learning Center at:

<http://www.scouting.org/scoutsourc/sitcore/content/Scouting/Training.aspx>

Note: Be sure to Login for credit!

- Youth Protection Training

<http://www.boyscouts-ncac.org/openrosters/DocDownload.aspx?orgkey=370&id=79067>

- Orientation Training: "This is Scouting" (*not required, but a good program overview*)

<http://www.myscouting.org/>

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How Do Scouts Sign-up for a Merit Badge? When a Scout decides to start a merit badge, he must first contact the Scoutmaster. The SM will consult the Scout's record and discuss it with the Scout, such as any merit badges that the Scout is currently working on.

- To get him started, the SM will give the Scout a signed Application for Merit Badge ("blue card") along with the name and telephone number of a District-approved Merit Badge Counselor – most likely, an adult in Troop 1140. The list of merit badges and qualified counselors is also available from the MB Counselor Coordinator or the Advancements Coordinator (via the TroopMaster (TM) database).
- The Scout then contacts the Merit Badge Counselor and makes an appointment.
- The Merit Badge Counselor sets a date and time to meet with the Scout and his buddy, and may suggest the Scout bring the merit badge pamphlet along with the blue card. MB Pamphlets can be found in the Troop Library or purchased at the Scout Store. Scouts/Counselors should ensure that they have the most current version.
- MB Counselors may also offer a merit badge by making an announcement at a Troop meeting or event, by posting a flyer or with a notice in the weekly Troop email.
- See also, T1140 Policy Handbook, Section 9.7.

A few resources (there are many!):

- 1) Merit Badge worksheets, information and resources
http://meritbadge.org/wiki/index.php/Merit_Badges
- 2) Guidelines for MB Counselors – from the Colonial District Committee (NCAC)
<http://www.doubleknot.com/openrosters/docdownload.aspx?ID=51835>
- 3) BSA Scout Source – A Guide for Merit Badge Counselors
<http://www.scouting.org/scoutsource/BoyScouts/GuideforMeritBadgeCounselors.aspx>
- 4) MB Counselor Orientation – Patriot District (NCAC) (45 PowerPoint slides)
<http://www.boyscouts-ncac.org/openrosters/docdownload.aspx?ID=34040>
- 5) Old Dominion District Documents and Forms (Search for: Merit Badge Counselor)
<http://www.boyscouts-ncac.org/openrosters/ViewOrgPageLink.asp?LinkKey=17130&orgkey=2017>

Thank you to those of you that have volunteered to be merit badge counselors! This answers a critical need and will increase the opportunities we can offer to our sons.

Yours in Scouting,

Troop 1140, Merit Badge Counselor Coordinator