

ADVANCEMENT INFORMATION FOR SCOUTS

September 2025

I. RANK ADVANCEMENT

A. Scoutmaster Conferences (SMC)

1. For Scout, Tenderfoot, Second Class, and First Class ranks - please contact your PASM to schedule your scoutmaster conference once all other requirements are complete.
2. For Star and Life ranks - please contact Scoutmaster Dr. Hou to schedule your SMC. SMC for Star and Life are generally held at monthly campouts.

B. Boards of Review (BOR)

1. Once your SMC is complete, please complete the BOR Request Form on the troop website. This requires you to also upload a PDF copy of your Scout Handbook pages for the rank you are seeking. **DO NOT** attach copies of your Scoutbook profile, as I already have access to that information.
2. BOR for Star and Life ranks are typically held at the monthly campouts. You are **REQUIRED** to request BOR approval **NO LATER** than **NOON** on the Wednesday prior to the campout.
3. Completed BOR forms are submitted directly to Advancement for processing. There is nothing you need to do after your BOR. Your awards will be presented at the next COH.

II. MERIT BADGES

A. Steps to begin/earn a MB

1. Scout approaches PASM to ask for blue card **for a specific MB.**
2. PASM recommends name of **at least one registered MBC for that MB** and signs the **FRONT** of the card **OR** logs the initial leader signature within Scoutbook.
3. Scouts may begin working with MBC. Scout may choose to work with any registered MBC he wishes, but **it is required that he verify that the MBC is registered for that MB.**

4. Some MBC may desire/require Scouts to connect with them via Scoutbook. If you need assistance with this, please contact me. I am happy to help.
5. Once all requirements are signed off by the MBC, Scout returns to PASM for second unit leader signature. At this time, the PASM discusses the Scout's experience - what he learned, what went well, what was challenging, etc. ***A BUDDY OR PARENT MUST BE PRESENT DURING THE ENTIREITY OF THE CONVERSATION per YPT.*** Second leader signatures ARE NOT logged in Scoutbook. Second leader signatures may be submitted via printed email OR on a printed blue card.
6. Scout turns in completed blue card - completed in ink/printed from Scoutbook, **labeled with patrol**, ALL requirements signed as completed, and TWO unit leader signatures. Initial leader signatures logged in Scoutbook will automatically fill when the blue card is printed from Scoutbook. Second unit leader signature may be on printed email OR signed directly on the blue card.
7. MB submissions may be turned in at scout meetings or delivered to my house if it is time issue.

B. MB Reminders

1. It is possible that some PASM and MBC communications may be occurring via email. The scout should print and attach those emails to the blue cards when submitting to advancement for processing.
2. If you are participating in virtual MB classes, please be sure to keep track of all names and contact addresses for the program(s) you are taking. It will be difficult for you to follow up if there are any questions or concerns after the class if you do not have this information. These are not our programs so we do not have access to the contact information for you.
3. **ALWAYS check to see if the MB class will cover ALL reqs.** If you aren't sure, ask the program coordinator.
4. **If the class DOES NOT cover all reqs, you are REQUIRED to find a registered MBC willing to help you with the pre-reqs and/or incomplete items remaining after the class, BEFORE you begin the class. NO EXCEPTIONS.**
5. REMINDER - it is ALWAYS your responsibility to verify that the MBC you choose to work with is registered with BSA as an MBC for

the MB you are working on. If you need help with this, please contact me.

6. I STRONGLY ADVISE THAT SCOUTS KEEP ALL MB MATERIALS/DOCUMENTATION (worksheets, projects, photos, etc.) UNTIL AWARDS ARE PROCESSED. Help us help you by being prepared. It is a LOT easier to address any potential issues if all of the materials are present.

C. Submitting MB

1. ALL ITEMS must be submitted via hard copies. NO ELECTRONIC SUBMISSIONS ARE ACCEPTED. You may mail items to my home address OR deliver in an envelope LABELED WITH YOUR NAME AND PATROL. NO LOOSE ITEMS, because loose items get lost.
2. If you work with an MBC who connects to you through Scoutbook OR take a MB class that logs data using Scoutbook, you must print your blue card from Scoutbook and submit the hard copy. Make sure the initial unit leader signature is handled BEFORE your first MBC meeting/class by your PASM (it will print automatically on the blue card) and your patrol is written on the card. Second unit leader signature given via email should be printed and attached.
3. If you do not see your submitted items in your Scoutbook profile, please feel free to follow up via email and ask, but please be patient and allow reasonable time for things to get into the system. Remember we are all volunteers offering our 'free time' to make Scouting happen for you. ☺

D. Gigglin' Marlin

1. As of February 1, 2022, NO MB will be accepted from Gigglin' Marlin.
2. NO EXCEPTIONS.

III. COMMUNICATION TIPS

A. Telephone

1. When you call someone, be sure to say hello and then immediately identify yourself.
2. Ask to speak to whomever you were calling and then ask your questions.

3. Thank whomever you were calling for their help.
4. YPT policy holds true here – make sure you have a trusted adult or buddy present for the whole conversation. Speakerphones work well. FaceTime is even better, because then the person at the other end of the call can see who is speaking.

B. Email

1. **When sending emails to any adult, Scouts are REQUIRED to copy in a parent or other trusted adult.** This is Cyber Chip and YPT policy in place for YOUR protection.
2. Use proper salutations and closings. It is always important to know your audience and always be respectful. You can find the full names of every troop member in the troop directory on the website. This is a convenient way to check spelling too. This shows the recipient that you took the time to care enough about what his/her name is to spell it correctly. Little things matter and this is a great time to make this a habit for life.
3. **Always use your first and last name and patrol when you sign the email.** We have over 200 Scouts, so it helps us find your records faster.
4. Send Scouting-related emails to the Scouting email contacts for Scoutmaster, Troop Committee Chair, Advancement, BOR, etc, rather than our personal email addresses. This helps us keep our volunteer work separated from our personal emails and keep organized communication records, which means we can help YOU more efficiently. Addresses are available on the troop website.
5. Be polite – all those manners you learn at home and school apply here too. Please, thank you, making requests rather than demands, etc, go a long way.
6. **Parents, please let your son learn these lessons!** Yes, you could probably type faster than he can, but he needs to learn how to send emails, make requests, solve problems. Please allow him the space to do so.

C. Videoconferences

1. During videoconferences, be sure to have your video and microphone ON.
2. Check to make sure your face is visible in the camera. If you cannot see yourself in the preview window on your screen, the person on the other end cannot see you either. Adjust your screen angle if necessary.
3. Try not to move around a lot. It is hard to keep your face within the camera range if you are moving around a lot.
4. Be prepared. Make sure you have whatever materials you will need for your meeting handy.

5. YPT policy holds true here – make sure you have a trusted adult or buddy present for the whole conversation. During a BOR, a parent will be asked to confirm it is acceptable for their child to participate in the meeting, but may NOT be present during the actual BOR. This is consistent with how BOR are run in person and is in accordance with YPT/Cyber Chip because three YPT-trained adults are present on the call.

IV. COURTS OF HONOR

1. Courts of Honor are held several times a year. These are formal Scouting events during which we honor the Scouts for their achievements.
2. All Scouts are expected to participate in COH, even if they are not receiving awards.
3. Scouts should attend in FULL Class A uniform.
4. No electronics are permitted during the ceremony.
5. The deadline for submissions is always 2 weeks prior to the event. Check the Troop website for the event calendar.
6. If a Scout does not attend the event for some reason, he has until the next COH to claim his awards from Advancement. After this time, the physical awards will no longer be available.

V. QUESTIONS, CONCERNS, CONFUSION?

Please just call or email me. I will do my best to help.

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