

On Increasing Advancement

Boy Scout Rank Requirement Changes Begin January 1, 2016



With all the recent “buzz” about the new Cub Scout rank changes, some may have missed that at the beginning of next year, Boy Scout rank requirements will also undergo changes.

What’s Changing?

Scout Badge Becomes Scout Rank

Beginning January 1, 2016, Scout becomes a rank and is no longer considered just a “joining badge.” As with all other ranks, each requirement now must be completed as a member of a Boy Scout troop. The Scoutmaster or designated leader must sign off each individual requirement as the boy demonstrates his knowledge or skill. There is no board of review for Scout rank— the Scoutmaster conference is considered sufficient adult interaction at this introductory rank.

Service : The Scout Oath in Action

In keeping with the Scout Oath and “helping other people at all times,” service is now a requirement at each Boy Scout rank except for Scout rank – one hour at Tenderfoot, two hours at Second Class, and three hours at First Class. The total hours for Star and Life remain the same at six hours each. But half of the hours for Life rank must now be conservation-related, emphasizing the importance of stewardship of the earth.

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When/Who?

The new Boy Scout rank requirements become effective on January 1, 2016, subject to these transition guidelines:

- Boys registered in a troop on or prior to December 31, 2015, who are working on Tenderfoot through First Class may continue to work using the old requirements through 2016, but they must convert to the new requirements upon attaining First Class.
- Boys registered in a troop, team, crew, or ship, who have completed First Class rank on or prior to December 31, 2015, may complete the rank they are currently working on with the old requirements through 2016, but then must convert to the new requirements for subsequent ranks.
- Any boy registering in a troop for the first time on or after January 1, 2016, must use the new requirements.
- Beginning January 1, 2017, new requirements must be used for all ranks earned.

Scout Spirit and Duty to God: It's a Monologue, Not a Dialogue

Scout spirit requirements are not meant to require a discussion or a two-way conversation about duty to God. The boy is simply to “tell” how he believes he has done his duty to God as defined by him and his family. The troop leader’s role is to listen. The intent is for the Scout to have a self-reflection about belief and reverence, for expression **by** the Scout **to** his leader.

Physical Fitness: Developing Lifelong Habits

New requirements in Tenderfoot through First Class ranks are designed to encourage physical activity as a lifelong habit. Boys are challenged to set goals and work toward achieving them. This might include additional exercise or incorporating requirements for earning merit badges that encourage physical activity. Troop programs can make fitness activities a regular part of their program plan—which could lead to even higher goals, such as the SCOUTStrong® program or the Presidential Active Lifestyle Award (PALA).

Camping: Learning in the Great Outdoors

Although the number of troop or patrol activities remains the same (10 total for First Class), the number of campouts required has doubled – one for Tenderfoot, two more for Second Class, and three more for First Class – for a total of six campouts. This increase will help ensure that First Class Scouts have sufficient camping experience to have developed and improved upon the outdoor skills that Scouting promotes.

Navigation: Using Handheld GPS Units

Some navigation requirements allow the option of using a handheld GPS unit, GPS app on a smartphone, or other electronic navigation system. Map and compass requirements are still included as Scouts should “be prepared” for situations where electronic systems are not available. However, Scouting wants to train Scouts to use their resources, including electronic ones, safely and appropriately.

Program Updates Web Page

Watch the [Program Updates](#) web page for “Frequently Asked Questions” about the new Boy Scout requirements. Submit your own questions at advancement.team@scouting.org. The FAQs will be updated periodically as new questions arrive.

www.scouting.org/programupdates

