



BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA®

CAPITOL AREA COUNCIL

Merit Badge Counselor Registration Standard Operating Procedure

The Capitol Area Council (CAC) Advancement Committee confirmed this standard operating procedure in 2014 and it is effective for all merit badge counselors. The purpose of this document is to communicate the council processes and procedures required to ensure that all merit badge counselors are registered and trained in compliance with Boy Scouts of America national policy as published in the current version of the *Guide to Advancement*.

Registration

The BSA national policy requires that all merit badge counselors be registered as a merit badge counselor and complete Youth Protection Training within the last two years. In order to qualify as a merit badge counselor, prospective volunteers must have the education and skills needed to provide instruction and to evaluate performance. It is also important they are older than the Scouts and are able to set that positive example. This calls for both good rapport and good character.

To enhance the merit badge counselor experience, all merit badge counselors should be trained. The National Advancement Committee's Webinars and Education Task Force have developed the presentation "The Essentials of Merit Badge Counseling". It can be featured in merit badge counselor training events, delivered as part of a wider experience covering several levels of Scout leader training or downloaded and viewed individually at <http://www.scouting.org/scoutsource/BoyScouts/AdvancementandAwards/resources.aspx>.

CAC Registration Process (This process applies to all potential Merit Badge Counselors regardless of their current registration status in the BSA):

1. The individual wishing to be a new merit badge counselor completes and submits a BSA Adult Application form with Position Code "42" / Description "Merit Badge Counselor" and attaches a copy of their current Youth Protection Training credentials.
2. The individual wishing to be a new merit badge counselor or one adding merit badges completes form 34405 Merit Badge Counselor Information sheet listing the desired merit badges and indicating his/her skills and qualifications for each merit badge. The Merit Badge Counselor Information sheet is where counselors describe their skills and education related to each badge they wish to counsel. The description could include college degrees, formal training, various certifications, jobs held, specific life experiences, and so forth. On the application, the individual indicates the completion date of Youth Protection Training (YPT) and if they wish to be a merit badge counselor for a specific unit(s), district or council-wide. The CAC strongly encourages merit badge counselors to be a council-wide merit badge counselor.

- a. Multiple 34405 Merit Badge Counselor Information forms may be used if the counselor is applying to work with more badges than will fit on just one form. This same form is used if a counselor wishes to add merit badges when it comes time to reregister.
3. The individual submits the Adult Application, Youth Protection Training credentials and the Merit Badge Counselor Information sheet to the District Advancement Chair and/or Committee.
4. The District Advancement Chair and/or Committee review the adult application and Merit Badge Counselor Information form to assess the qualifications of the individual. If approved, the District Advancement Chair and/or Committee representative initials the Adult Application form and signs the 34405 form.
 - a. CAC strongly encourages the District Advancement Chair and/or Committee representative to make a copy of the application and form.
5. The District Advancement Chair and/or Committee representative submits the originals to the District Executive. If not approved, the District Advancement Chair and/or Committee representative informs the individual of the decision and reason.
6. Certain merit badges requires more advanced qualifications or certification. Examples include Scuba, Climbing, etc. as per the BSA Guide to Advancement. Members of the CAC Aquatics, Climbing, and Shooting committees are available to assist in evaluating potential merit badge counselors for these badges. Contact the Council Advancement Chair for assistance.
7. The District Executive reviews the adult application and Merit Badge Counselor Information form to assess the qualifications of the individual. If approved, the District Executive signs the form and application and submits to the CAC for processing. If not approved, the District Executive informs the District Advancement Chair and/or Committee representative then contacts the individual.
8. CAC personnel process the Adult Application by confirming the completion and eligibility of the YPT and registering the individual. The council performs the background check, ensure Youth Protection certification is on file, and checks additional certifications if the council requires them.

Re-Registration

1. During the annual re-chartering, the Council Advancement Committee Chair coordinates the report distribution of every registered merit badge counselor by district to the District Advancement Chairs. The District Advancement Chair works with the unit Committee Chairs or other district/troop personnel to determine which merit badge counselors wish to re-register. This can be done via email, phone call, or in-person. The merit badge counselor indicates whether or not he/she wants to continue as a merit badge counselor and any changes to the list of his/her merit badges.

2. The District Advancement Chair and/or representative submit the results to Council Office.
3. The Council personnel update the record and distribute an updated report of Merit Badge Counselors to the District Advancement Chairs.

Reporting/Communicating Available Merit Badge Counselors

1. The Council Advancement Committee Chair distributes a report of the registered merit badge counselors to the District Advancement Chairs on a monthly basis.
2. The District Advancement Chair and Committee determine the district process for sharing merit badge counselor information to the units. They can choose to distribute the:
 - a. entire council list of merit badge counselors to all the unit leaders
 - b. entire district list of merit badge counselors to all the unit leaders
 - c. unit list of merit badge counselors to the unit leader of that specific unit and have the unit leaders contact the District Advancement Committee for requests for merit badge counselor of specific merit badges

District Advancement Chair/Committee Related Responsibilities

1. Communicate the BSA policy that all merit badge counselor must initially register with separate Adult Application and Merit Badge Counselor Information sheet and take training.
2. Review, sign and submit the paperwork to Council as described in the procedure.
3. Provide Merit Badge Counselor training.
4. Determine approach and communicate/provide list of qualified merit badge counselors to unit leaders.

Recommended Merit Badge Procedure

1. The Scout indicates an interest and discusses it with his unit leader.
2. The unit leader signs a blue card and provides the Scout with at least one counselor contact.
3. The Scout contacts the counselor provided or another registered merit badge counselor.
4. The Scout, his buddy, and the counselor meet (often several times).
5. The Scout completes the requirements.
6. The Merit Badge Counselor approves completion and signs the blue card.

7. The Scout returns the signed blue card to his unit leader, who signs the applicant record section of the blue card.
8. The unit leader gives the Scout the applicant record.
9. The unit reports the merit badge to the council.
10. The Scout receives his merit badge.