



Boy Scout Troop 507 New Scout FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions)

1. What is the troop website, user name and password?

{contact your Patrol Leader for this info}

2. Where does my scout learn the information necessary for rank advancement?

Please refer to the Boy Scout handbook for the requirements for rank advancement. The national Boy Scouts of America website at www.scouting.org has detailed rank advancement info. Another unofficial useful link for advancement is www.meritbadge.org. The San Gabriel Valley Boy Scout Council's website has some useful information for Eagle related documents at www.sgvcbasa.org.

3. On advancement, I've read that First Class should be achieved in the first year. Is that the goal?

No. Each scout progresses at their own pace (not the parent's), and it is important to remember that scouting is a marathon intended to teach the scout leadership skills. It is not a sprint. Advancement tends to proceed at minimum six month intervals.

4. How does service hours work? Is there a master schedule for service hour opportunities?

Opportunities for service hours are discussed at the Tuesday troop meetings. The Communication Coordinator sends out an email after the Tuesday troop meeting with a recap of the announcements and details of service opportunities. The troop calendar on the troop website may also list current activities. It is the scout's responsibility to keep track of their service hours in their scout handbook or a notebook.

5. What do you need to go on a scout trip?

Permission slips are required for scouts to participate on scout trips. In addition, all scouts and parents need an annual physical and to have a completed BSA medical form on file annually in order to participate on scout trips. The form is found on the troop's website and should be provided annually to the Medical Forms Coordinator. Parents attending scouting activities need to complete the Youth Protection Training every two years. Occasionally, the troop provides the opportunity for parents to be trained during a Tuesday troop meeting. In addition, there is an online class, and the certificate of completion must be provided to the troop's Adult Training Coordinator and recorded in the troop's records. The online training can be found at www.scouting.org/training/youthprotection.aspx. You will need to create an account, click on the E-Learning, and take the Youth Protection course. Print and save the certificate and email it to the troop's Adult Training coordinator.

6. Can the whole family go on a scout trip?

The ability for scout family members to go on trips is dependant on the trip and space available. Scout trip sign-ups and details are offered at Tuesday scout meetings, and scouts have priority over other adults and siblings. Drives are needed for all scout trips, and lack of drivers from time-to-time has necessitated the cancellation of trips. Parent participation and volunteerism is crucial to our troop.

7. Do parents need to go on camping trips with their scout?

A certain number of adults are required on any scout trip so that an adequate number of drivers are available to transport all the scouts. Troop 507 has had to cancel a few trips in the past because there were not a sufficient number of drivers. In addition, attending trips allows for bonding with other parents and scouts.

8. How much does it cost for food for my scout on camping trips?

Typically, the food cost for scouts is \$20 for a weekend trip. The patrols shop for food together prior to the trip. Money is also normally needed (approximately \$10) for food stops on the way to and from the destination.

9. My scout has gone on some trips, but he isn't getting signed off on anything?

It is the scout's responsibility to see the Trip Leader or Assistant Scoutmasters participating on the trip along with their Patrol Leader to get the scout signed off on rank advancement activities the scout has completed on the trip. In addition, during Tuesday troop meetings and on weekends, there are opportunities for sign-offs at troop organized advancement activities such as Trail to First Class.

10. Can first year scouts bring knives on campouts? Is there knife safety training for the scouts?

Scouts may not use their knives until they receive a Totem Chip. Refer to the scout handbook for the requirements for receiving the Totem Chip. Troop 507 Totem Chip opportunities occur around Camporee Training time (March-April).

11. My scout went on the Joshua Tree trip and completed the rock climbing merit badge, why hasn't he gotten it yet?

The rock climbing merit badge requires proficiency in knot tying, and a pre-requisite for this merit badge is the First Aid merit badge. The knot tying skill is re-taught at a Tuesday troop meeting following the trip to ensure the scout's proficiency. Once this proficiency has been determined for each scout, and they have earned the First Aid merit badge, they will have completed the requirements for the Climbing merit badge.

12. If my son needs to take medicine on a scout trip, will someone help remind him?

The troop or adults participating on a scout trip can not be responsible for a scout's medication on camp trips. The scout's medical form must have the complete record of all medications that a scout is taking.

13. How do I keep track of my scout's achievements?

It is the responsibility of the scout to keep track of their achievements in their scout handbook or in a notebook. Service hours should be noted as well as positions of responsibility and their time periods. It is recommended to photocopy the information regularly if you are keeping the information in the scout handbook in case the book gets lost. The Troop's records do not maintain the sign-offs of each individual item for a given rank until all of them have been signed off for that rank, and the scout has passed his Scoutmaster Conference and Board of Review for that rank. For Star, Life and Eagle, the records involve Merit Badges earned and the scout has proof with his blue card. Once the blue card is turned into the advancement coordinator, it is entered into the Troop database. All records of leadership, service hours that are also required for those ranks are kept by the scout and are verified at the scout's Scoutmaster Conference. If records have not been maintained by the scout and the book or notebook is lost, those previously achieved advancements will need to be re-achieved due to lack of proof by the scout.

14. What is a merit badge?

There are approximately 126 merit badges that the scout can earn. Merit badges are a short course in a single subject important to the scout's leadership and life training. Merit badges are led by an approved counselor, and Troop 507 prefers that our troop's approved merit badge counselors lead our scouts' merit badge work. San Gabriel Valley Boy Scout Council (Smizer) in Pasadena sells the merit badge books; the troop Librarian has badge books, and merit badge workbooks can be found at www.meritbadge.com.

15. How does my scout earn merit badges?

Patrols meet four times during each six month rotation. Patrol Leaders, as part of their patrol meetings, may engage the troop's merit badge counselors to work on badges with their patrols. Merit badges may also be earned at scout summer camp. Merit badges earned should be age appropriate and coordinated with the Adult Merit Badge Leader Coordinator. In addition, a scout must have prior approval of the scout master before beginning work on any merit badge. Failure of the scout to have merit badges pre-approved by the scout master may result in the scout not receiving credit for the merit badge.

16. What are blue cards and how are they used?

Blue cards are BSA forms that are used to verify completion or partial completion of a merit badge. They are signed off by the approved merit badge counselor and scout master. Although the Advancement Coordinator keeps records of each scouts completed merit badges, the scout is supposed to retain a portion of the completed blue card for their own records.

17. Can the scout's parent sign off their own scout for rank advancement or merit badges?

No.

18. What is the purpose of the Tuesday troop meetings?

Tuesday troop meetings are designed for the scouts to learn about the troops announcements regarding upcoming trips, request and have Scoutmaster Conferences or Boards of Review for rank advancement, Eagle related events, sign up for service hour opportunities, hear about other advancement opportunities, return troop camping gear, etc.

19. What do the scouts wear to the Tuesday meetings and Court of Honor?

Scouts wear their Class A uniform to Tuesday meetings. Class A is everything except hat, sash and neckerchief. It is important to wear the complete uniform with the shirt tucked in. Flip-flops are not appropriate footwear. The uniform in its entirety must be worn, or not at all. Class B uniforms are worn for service hours and scout trips, unless otherwise advised. Class B is the troop t-shirt. For Court of Honor, scouts wear Class A, neckerchief and sash. Troop 507 wears no scout hats. Sash may be worn once the scout has earned 5+ merit badges. If the complete uniform is not worn at Scoutmaster Conferences, the conference will be rescheduled until the full uniform is worn.

20. Where do I buy the scout uniform?

San Gabriel Valley Council BSA Headquarters (Smizer) in Pasadena has a scout shop and sells scout uniforms and other scouting items. Sport Chalet in LCF sells some miscellaneous scouting uniforms. Smizer is located at 3450 East Sierra Madre Boulevard, Pasadena. Their telephone is 626.351.3638. Glendale has a scout shop for the Verdugo Hills Headquarters on 1325 Grandview Avenue (818) 243-6282.

21. What patches do scouts need for their uniform and where do they go?

The Advancement Coordinator sells many troop patches and can assist with where they go on the uniform. Also refer to the scout handbook inside cover of the front and back for placement of badges. The scout shops in Glendale and Pasadena (see addresses in question 20) carry patches and other scouting items. Some of the patches come on the scout uniform.

22. What happens in Patrols?

Patrol meetings occur at least four times during each six month rotation of leadership. Leaders are encouraged to work on age and skill appropriate merit badges with their patrols. They may also organize trips to local archery or shooting ranges, candy stores, etc. Additional trip specific patrols are also created for trips. Patrols are designed to create an opportunity for older scouts to mentor and friend younger scouts.

23. Why is there nothing on the troop calendar on the website after June?

After the Court of Honor in June, the troop is dark June through August. Tuesday troop meetings start up with the beginning of school in September. Trips during the summer are announced prior to the troop going dark. The Communication Coordinator also sends periodic emails in the summer regarding summer trips and Eagle service opportunities.

24. How do the scouts get their rank advancement signed off?

Scouts demonstrate to the assistance scoutmasters they have completed the requirements for rank advancements. The assistant scoutmasters sign off completed requirements in the scout's handbook. It is recommended that the handbook advancement sign off pages be photocopied frequently.

25. What is Board of Review and Scoutmaster Conference?

Prior to rank advancement, the scout (never the parent) contacts the Scoutmasters and Advancement Coordinator to schedule a Scoutmaster conference to determine if the scout has successfully completed the requirements for rank advancement. The scout may do this by email or at the Tuesday troop meetings. Conferences for ranks prior to First Class are conducted during the Tuesday troop meeting with one scoutmaster. Conferences for ranks after First Class are normally scheduled on a non-Tuesday evening with both scoutmasters. Due to the time constraints of the scoutmasters, it is recommended that the scout accept the schedule offered by the scoutmasters to avoid delays in scheduling. Once the scout passes the Scoutmaster conference, the Advancement Coordinator will schedule the Board of Review. The Board of Review is composed of a group of three scout parents selected by the Advancement Coordinator. BOR is conducted to further ensure that the scout has accomplished the requirements for rank advancement, to help scouts to become comfortable and articulate with scouting related questions from adults. There is an opportunity during the BOR for the scout to offer recommendations on how the troop could be improved. The BOR is scheduled during the Tuesday meetings. The troop needs parent volunteers to participate and become trained in the BOR process.

26. What is Court of Honor?

COH is the presentation of rank advancement and merit badges earned over the prior advancement time period. There are four COH each year in March, June, September and December.

27. Do we bring food to the Court of Honor?

The Hospitality Coordinator will ask for assistance with food preparation prior to the COH. The Communication Coordinator will email the request for assistance to the troop.

28. How do parents keep their older scouts interested and involved in scouting?

Scouting teaches leadership and life skills. As scouts get older they are pulled between school, sports, scouting, family, etc. Remaining in scouting may get more difficult, but continue to encourage your scout to participate and go on trips where he can mentor other younger scouts. Attending trips with your scout may help keep them involved in scouting.

29. Where do new families go to ask questions?

The troop conducts new parent meetings normally in March-May after new scouts have bridged over to the troop. Also, refer to the Troop 507 website's Organization Chart for the appropriate troop coordinators, or the assistant scoutmasters, or ask parents of older scouts if you have questions. Participating, volunteering for troop adult leadership positions, and going on scout trips will also help in the acclimation to the troop.