

This document is for adult volunteers who are thinking about becoming a merit badge counselor for the Troop. It gives a general overview of the skills you may want to have to be a counselor for a specific merit badge.

Please note: the Atlanta Area Council approves merit badge counselors, and the only required certifications are for certain merit badges listed in the document Merit Badges-special certifications.

Once you are ready to join our Merit badge counselor team, please see “how to I register as a merit badge counselor?” to guide you through the registration process.

Eagle Required merit badges are listed in a separate document titled “Eagle Required Merit Badges”

Merit Badge Pamphlets are a great way to gain understanding and familiarize yourself with concepts covered in requirements.

The merit badge program is based on the Scout demonstrating the knowledge and skills needed to complete the merit badge. The merit badge counselor will:

- Assist the Scout as they plan the assigned projects and activities to meet the merit badge requirements.
- Coach the Scout through interviews and demonstrations on how to do the required skills.
- Follow the exact wording of the requirements of the merit badge, making no deletions or additions
- Complete a blue card (paper or in Scoutbook) after determining the Scout is qualified for the merit badge

ELECTIVE MERIT BADGE	SKILL SET
American Business	Business degree/course or familiar with how business impact local, national, world economy, financial statements, taxes, corporations
American Cultures	vocabulary and what it means to have different racial, cultural, national, religious and ethnic backgrounds
American Heritage	enjoy American history, current news
American Labor	Work related concerns, labor unions, globalization, field of labor relations
Animal Science	Work/degree or knowledge in animal sciences, livestock, poultry management
Archaeology	Archaeologist or interest in archeology, familiar with vocabulary and terms
Archery	See merit badges -special certifications
Architecture	Architect or interest in architecture, familiar with vocabulary and terms, what scale is

Art	Knowledgeable in art elements like line, shape, color, texture
Astronomy	Astronomer or enjoy astronomy
Athletics	Athlete or enjoy athletic pursuits, first aid and safety related to athletics
Automotive Maintenance	Mechanic or knowledgeable about auto repairs, access to a car or truck to work on requirements, safety and first aid
Aviation	Pilot or familiar with aviation basics and mechanics of flight
Backpacking	Familiar with backpacking, hiking, camping, first aid
Basketry	Familiar with basketry requirements
Bird Study	Understanding of bird types, behaviors, sounds, how to use a bird field guide, vocabulary associated with bird study
Bugling	Understanding of how to play a brass instrument, brass instrument parts, how sound is produced, familiar with music
Canoeing	See merit badges -special certifications
Chemistry	Chemist or related degree, job or hobby
Chess	familiar with the game of chess and chess terms
Climbing	See merit badges -special certifications
Coin Collecting	Understanding of coin collecting vocabulary, hobbyist
Collections	Understanding of collecting vocabulary, hobbyist
Composite Materials	Technical knowledge of composite materials, safety, project guidance
Crime Prevention	Understanding of laws and society, groups working to prevent crime, crime in the community, state and nation, neighborhood prevention
Dentistry	Background in dentistry, dental terminology, anatomy and common dental procedures
Digital Technology	Understanding of digital technology
Disabilities Awareness	Understanding of disabilities awareness terms, agencies that work with people, advocacy
Dog Care	Knowledgeable in dog ownership, history and domestication of dogs, dog breeds, body parts, care and handling, local laws
Drafting	Understanding of drafting principles, techniques, industry standard computer aided design software, material selection basic manufacturing processes relevant to drafting
Electricity	Basic knowledge in voltage, current, resistance, circuits, ac/dc power and how electricity is generated
Electronics	Basic knowledge in capacitors, transistors, resistors, building, altering or repairing circuits, understanding of safety precautions
Energy	Know about energy sources, energy efficiency practices, environmental awareness and sustainability
Engineering	Engineer or understanding of engineering, engineers code of ethics, professional engineer registration

Entrepreneurship	Have experience or knowledge in starting and running businesses including marketing, finance and planning
Farm Mechanics	Familiar with types of farm machinery like tractors, mowers, balers and their components including engines, transmissions, hydraulics and electrical systems, safety and first aid, basic maintenance skills
Fingerprinting	Understand history of fingerprinting, different fingerprint patterns and how to id them
Fire Safety	Understanding of fire safety, burn prevention and camping safety
Fish and Wildlife Management	Knowledgeable about diversity, communities, ecological impact and wildlife conservation
Fishing	Understanding of skills, equipment and vocabulary associated with fishing, first aid, knots, lures, regulations, outdoor code, fish identification, cleaning and cooking
Fly Fishing	Knowledge of fly-fishing techniques like casting, knot tying, fly selection, first aid and safety
Forestry	Understanding of different tree species, forest ecosystems and environmental impacts of forest activities
Game Design	Knowledge of games from different mediums, game design terms, game prototypes
Gardening	Knowledge of gardening, composting, hydroponics, water gardens, understand how to grow & care for plants, safety & precautions
Genealogy	Understand genealogical terms, services, records, resources
Geocaching	Understanding of GPS location apps, terms, weather hazards, first aid and safety, Leave no trace principles, map and compass
Geology	Know geological terms, rock formations, landforms and processes that create them, read and interpret geological maps, safety protocols and potential hazards
Golf	Knowledge and skill set to golf, golf terms, safety and first aid
Graphic Arts	Understanding of printing processes such as lithography, screen printing and digital printing, vocabulary, design and producing printed pieces
Home Repairs	Knowledge of basic home repairs, safety and first aid
Horsemanship	Knowledge of horse breeds, horse anatomy, saddle and bridle parts, how to groom, feed and care for a horse, understanding of skills necessary to ride a horse https://www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/gss/gss08/#a
Indian Lore	Understanding of native American tribes and cultural areas, traditions, languages and historical context

Insect Study	Understanding of anatomy, life cycle, ecology of insects, safety and first aid
Inventing	Understanding of the process of inventing, intellectual property, patent, prototypes
Journalism	Grasp of journalistic concepts like news gathering, fact checking, interviewing, writing styles and ethical reporting, experience working in journalism or related field
Kayaking	See merit badges -special certifications
Landscape Architecture	Landscape architect or related field of study, understanding of design and planning of outdoor spaces
Law	Law profession or related field of study,
Leatherwork	Understanding of skills used in leatherwork like hand stitching, lacing, braiding, how to preserve and protect leather
Lifesaving	https://www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/gss/gss08/#a
Mammal Study	Understanding of mammal's diet, habitat and reproduction, human interaction, identification of mammals
Medicine	Experience in a medical field, ideally certified in first aid/CPR/AED, understanding of medical concepts, healthcare systems
Metalwork	Understanding of metalwork techniques, safety, skills, tool usage, different metals and alloys
Mining in Society	Understanding of the history of mining, hazards, first aid, knowledge of Summit Bechtel's transformation from a mine site
Model Design and Building	Knowledge of types of models, scales, project design, model building, safety equipment, skills to demonstrate tools
Motorboating	See merit badges -special certifications
Moviemaking	Understanding of filmmaking concepts like camera angles, shot composition, lighting, sound recording, editing, visual storytelling, have technical skills to demonstrate basic camera operation
Music	Knowledge of groups of musical instruments, what is tone, rhythm, dynamics, phrasing, how to read a musical score
Nature	Understanding of the connection between soil, plants, animals, conservation
Nuclear Science	Education or experience in a field of science, knowledge of nuclear reactions, radioactivity, radiation safety, nuclear applications
Oceanography	Understanding of oceanography, ocean currents, marine life, salinity, temperature, underwater topography
Orienteering	Skilled in map reading, compass usage, terrain features, navigation

Painting	Knowledge of oil, acrylic, water paints, principles of design, hazards and disposal of paints, art elements like line, shape, color, texture
Pets	Know how to care for a pet, what responsible pet ownership is, ideally own a pet
Photography	Basic skills in camera use, exposure, depth of field, composition, angle of view, stop action and blur motion, lighting, safety. Knowledge of camera parts and operation
Pioneering	Skills to demonstrate rope handling, knots, lashings, building pioneer structure, safety, first aid
Plant Science	Knowledgeable in plant anatomy, functions, life cycle
Plumbing	Know vocabulary, plumber's tools and uses, pipe types and uses, knowledge of residential plumbing systems
Pottery	Basic pottery skills, use of a potter's wheel and how to make pottery forms, vocabulary and terms and understanding of the ceramics industry
Programming	Skills to demonstrate programming languages, software development practices
Public Health	Experience in the field of public health or understanding of disease transmission, prevention, sanitation, role of public health professionals
Public Speaking	Understand how to prepare and deliver speeches, impromptu talks, basic parliamentary procedures
Pulp and Paper	Understanding of the pulp and paper industry, history of papermaking, how paper is made
Radio	Understand radio operation and communication, transmission, reception, radio frequencies, electronics related to radios
Railroading	History of railroading, basic understanding of model railroading, signals, railfanning, hobbies
Reading	Understanding of different types of books
Reptile and Amphibian Study	Understanding of reptile and amphibian care, habitats, reproduction, laws and regulations, identification of venomous species
Rifle Shooting	See merit badges -special certifications
Robotics	Understand basic robotics concepts, design, construction and application
Rowing	BSA aquatics instructor certification or equivalent, knowledge of rowing terms, safety and skills
Safety	Knowledge of safety and best practices in various situations
Salesmanship	Understanding of salespersonship or career in sales or related area
Scholarship	Interest in scholarship

Scouting Heritage	Understanding of Scouting origins, life and philosophy of Lord Baden-Powel and evolution of Scouting programs
Scuba Diving	Hold an instructor rating and be in current teaching status with PADI, NAUI, SSI or other member of the RSTC
Sculpture	Experience, training or skills in sculpture, explain methods and tools used
Search and Rescue	Knowledge of search and rescue hazards, first aid and prevention, demonstrate how to stay found and avoid being lost, discuss differences between PLS and LKP
Shotgun Shooting	See merit badges -special certifications
Signs, Signals, and Codes	Understanding of various types of signs, signals and codes including hand, visual and audible signals, morse code, basic cryptography
Skating	Basic knowledge of different types of skating, skills used, safety and parts of skates https://www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/gss/gss08/#a
Small-Boat Sailing	Safety afloat, instructor certification with recognized sailing agency or school, US sailing or American Sailing Association, familiar with different hull types
Snow Sports	Know ski equipment and maintenance, basic principles of skiing, different types of skiing, topographic maps, winter sport safety and first aid. Compliant with BSA winter sports safety
Soil and Water Conservation	Understanding of soil erosion, conservation, types of soil, water pollution, watershed, hydrologic cycle, water conservation
Space Exploration	Interest in space exploration
Sports	Knowledge of sports related first aid, understanding of sports, nutrition
Stamp Collecting	Knowledge of vocabulary and terms associated with stamp collecting
Surveying	Surveyor or understanding of surveying concepts, equipment, methods for measuring angles and distances, interpreting topographic maps
Swimming	See merit badges -special certifications
Textile	Knowledge of textile fibers, fabrics, factors that influence textile quality
Theater	Knowledge of vocabulary and terms related to theater
Traffic Safety	Knowledge of traffic laws, vehicle safety, driving
Truck Transportation	Industry knowledge of truck transportation, different types of trucks, engine mechanics, safety regulations, logistics
Veterinary Medicine	Veterinarian, veterinary technician or knowledgeable in the field of veterinary medicine

Water Sports	See merit badges -special certifications
Weather	Understand weather related concepts like high- and low-pressure systems, wind patterns, precipitation formation, the water cycle
Welding	Understanding of welding techniques, tools, first aid and safety, project guidance
Whitewater	See merit badges -special certifications
Wilderness Survival	Experience in the field of wilderness survival
Wood Carving	Understanding of carving tools, methods, first aid, tool safety, basic carving skills, project guidance
Woodwork	Understanding of woodworking techniques including tool safety, different types of wood, joinery methods, finishing techniques

Additional Resources

<https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/512-065.pdf>

<https://www.scouting.org/resources/guide-to-advancement/>