

# Trail to First Class – Rank Advancement and Patrol Purpose Orientation

April 3, 2009

# Agenda

This Rank Advancement Orientation presentation covers:

- Boy Scout Ranks
- Trail to First Class Rank Advancement Process
- Camping Rank Requirements
- Purpose of Patrols
- How Parents Can Help Their Scouts Advance
- Other Tools Used in Rank Advancement
- Upcoming Topics

Most of this information is taken from the Troop 839 Orientation Manual distributed to parents at the Orientation Campout. If you need a copy, please send an email to [pcagney@reliant.com](mailto:pcagney@reliant.com).

# Boy Scout Ranks

There are 7 Boy Scout Ranks to Earn:

1. Scout
2. Tenderfoot
3. Second Class
4. **First Class\*\*\*\*\***
5. Star
6. Life
7. Eagle

# Rank Advancement Process

Steps in the rank advancement process include:

1. Scout reads/studies the applicable Scout Handbook pages
2. Scout learns information and practices the skills
3. Scout demonstrates knowledge of information or skill of requirement for Troop Guide or Assistant Scoutmaster
4. Troop Guide or Assistant Scoutmaster signs-off on requirement (or provides coaching if scout needs more practice).
5. Scoutmaster Conference
6. Board of Review
7. Rank awarded at Troop Meeting and next Court of Honor

The scout is responsible for looking up the requirements, learning and practicing the required steps, scheduling reviews by Assistant Scoutmasters or Troop Guides, scheduling a Scoutmaster Conference, and scheduling a Board of Review.

# Rank Advancement Process

## Scout Learns Information / Practices Skills

- *The Scout Handbook, 11th Edition*, is the primary resource for, and record of, a Scout's progress. Scouts must bring the Handbook to EVERY Troop meeting, patrol meeting, and campout.
- The Tenderfoot through First Class requirements can be read, learned and signed-off in any order, so it's possible (and recommended) to work on more than one Trail to First Class (TFC) rank at a time to take advantage of special opportunities that don't come up often (5-mile hike, Ax Yard Training, etc.) See Handout
- However, a scout can only advance ranks in the order shown.
- Scouts are to read the material and learn the requirement in advance of asking to demonstrate the skill for sign-off.

# Rank Advancement Process

## Scout Demonstrates Knowledge of Information of Skill

- The Scout should study his book and work with other Scouts, especially the Troop Guides for his patrol, to master the required skills. The Patrol Mentors assigned to the patrol are expected to be an available resource to help motivate and instruct as necessary.
- The Scout must then demonstrate mastery of the skill to the Troop Guide or Assistant Scoutmaster who will initial and date completion of the requirement in the Scout's book (or provide coaching if the scout needs more practice).
- Requirements can be signed off only by a Troop Guide, the Scoutmaster, or an Assistant Scoutmaster (preferably not the parent of the Scout involved). They need to be in full First Class Uniform.
- Scouts cannot learn a requirement and get it signed off at the same meeting. This helps ensure the scout knows (and will remember) the material / skill and has not just memorized it temporarily.

# Rank Advancement Process

## Scoutmaster Conference

When all skill requirements for a rank have been signed off, the Scout must contact the Scoutmaster to schedule a conference.

Together they will set goals for advancement to the next rank. Upon completion, the Scoutmaster will initial in the Scout's handbook that the conference has been completed.

*TIP: Phone the Scoutmaster in advance to schedule a time and avoid confusion & delays at Troop Meeting.*

# Rank Advancement Process

## Board of Review

- After completion of the Scoutmaster Conference, the Scout must contact the Advancement Committee Chair to schedule a Board of Review.
- The Board is composed of three Committee Members (other than the particular Scout's parents or Assistant Scoutmasters assigned to the Scout's patrol).
- The purpose of the Board is to assure that the Scout is learning his scouting skills, enjoying the program, etc. The Board has the Scout demonstrate knowledge of most of the skill items, including those that were covered in prior ranks.

# Rank Advancement Process

## Board of Review - continued

- This means that the Scout should carefully study his *Scout Handbook* in preparation for the Board. While the purpose of the Board is not to intimidate or embarrass the Scout, its examination will be thorough and constructive, especially for the rank of First Class. Full Class A uniform is mandatory for a Board. Boards generally are conducted during Troop meetings and on campouts, but the Scout **MUST** contact the Advancement Committee Chair in order to schedule a Board.

*TIP – Contact the Advancement Committee Chair in advance – can be same day, but one week ahead is safest approach, especially near “COH” time.*

*TIP – Scout must arrive at Board of Review with rope, compass, map, etc. to demonstrate if asked his competency. Remember - Be Prepared*

# Rank Advancement Process

## Court of Honor

- The Troop holds three Courts of Honor each year -- May, September, and January.
- The Court is held on a Troop meeting night in the Church sanctuary, and is a formal presentation and recognition of ranks, merit badges, and awards earned.
- Parents and guests are not only invited, they are strongly urged to attend to show their support for their son's achievements.

***TIP – KEEP MERIT BADGE CARDS AND RANK ADVANCEMENT CARDS IN A SAFE PLACE. THEY WILL BE NEEDED FOR EAGLE REVIEW.***

# Some Camping Rank Requirements Apply

- Including the first trip to the U.S.S. Lexington, a boy must have attained the “Scout” rank to attend any outing or campout. The requirements for this rank are listed on page 4 of the *Boy Scout Handbook*.
- Several of the campouts and outings have certain rank requirements. For example, a Scout must be First Class or above to participate in shotgun shooting on the shooting campout, or to take the back- pack trail on the wilderness campout.
- This is a reflection of the level of maturity and experience required on some of these outings, as well as serving as an incentive to advancement.
- Any special rank or training requirements for a campout will appear on the info section of the permission slip.

# Purpose of Patrol Meetings

## Boy Leadership

In Cub Scouting, Cub Scouts belong to a Den.

The Dens compose a Pack.

In Boy Scouting, Boy Scouts belong to a Patrol, and the Patrols make up a Boy Scout Troop.

While the unit structure is similar, there is a very fundamental difference. In Boy Scouts, the boys, not the adults, plan and lead the activities. This is the “Patrol Method.”

# Purpose of Patrol Meetings

- Patrols are composed of 8-10 boys
- We try to put each boy into a patrol with his friends and other scouts of similar skills and abilities
- Regular patrol meetings with the Troop Guides and Parent Coordinators are essential to complete the First Class Trail in the first year of Scouting.
- **These patrol meetings should focus on mastering the skills required for Tenderfoot through First Class.**
- Review the scout's books to decide topics for next meeting, then inform the Troop Guide, so he can prepare the training and any materials.

# Purpose of Patrol Meetings

- Especially for new scouts, we expect that each patrol will meet twice monthly on days outside of regular troop meetings
- Patrol meetings should be set for times when all, or at least most, of the patrol members can be present. The site can vary each month the first year – usually at the home of that month's Patrol Leader.
- Usually an hour meeting at someone's home on Sunday afternoon or Thursday evening seems to work best.
- This also serves to meet one of the requirements for the Baden Powell Award for patrol excellence.

# Purpose of Patrol Meetings

## Troop Guides

- Assist new scouts in learning basic scouting skills and advance toward the rank of First Class.
- At least 2 Troop Guides will be assigned to each new patrol for a 6 month period (Aug 1-Dec 31 & Jan 1-June 30).
- The Troop Guides are experienced scouts who hold at least First Class rank.
- The Troop Guides will:
  - attend each patrol meeting,
  - help new scouts master skills necessary for advancement toward First Class, and
  - assist the new scouts in learning camping and cooking skills on their first few campouts.

# Purpose of Patrol Meetings

## Patrol Leader Role

- The Patrol Leader represents the members of the patrol at the Patrol Leaders Council (PLC). This is the planning body of the troop.
- He also carries out decisions made by the PLC and explains them to the patrol members.
- Generally speaking, all scouts look to their Patrol Leader for direction.
  - In the first instance, scouts should direct questions or concerns to their Patrol Leader.
  - If he cannot help them, the Patrol Leader should go to the SPL for assistance.
  - If the SPL cannot answer the question or address the issues, the SPL will go to one of the adults.
- While this chain of command is intended to foster leadership and decision-making skill in the scouts, any scout or his parents should always feel free to contact any of the adult leaders. This is especially true if the circumstances are personal or where normal use of the chain of command might cause embarrassment.

# Purpose of Patrol Meetings

## Patrol Leader Election

- Each established patrol elects a patrol leader every six months in Dec/May.
- In new patrols, the scouts rotate each month from April through the following January (not including August) as to who will be the patrol leader.
- This is intended to give each boy the opportunity to demonstrate his leadership skills, and to permit the boys to determine who has the strongest skills when they hold their first election for patrol leader in December.
- To be eligible for the first regular election to patrol leader in January, a scout **MUST** have
  - 1) been active in troop activities
  - 2) attended Troop Junior Leader Training.
- Junior Leader Training is offered periodically by the Scoutmaster. It consists of at least half a day of leadership training employing the guidance of senior Scouts, training exercises, and video instruction. When schedules permit, this may be done as an overnight campout with a small group.

# Purpose of Patrol Meetings

## New Patrol Mentor

- The role of Patrol Mentor is key to patrol functioning in the first 6-8 months of a new patrol's existence.
- During this transition period from Webelos to Scouting, the Patrol Mentor must help motivate, organize, and instruct, as well as assuring the active participation of the Troop Guides.
- This does not mean that the Patrol Mentor does the Scouts' tasks for them, but rather that he provides the supervision and impetus necessary to make certain that tasks are performed safely and correctly.
- Most importantly, he helps the boys organize themselves to learn the basic skills necessary for advancement to First Class.
- We need at least two Patrol Mentors drawn from parents of the patrol's members.
- One **adamant rule** of the Boy Scouts is "two deep" leadership. Other than with his or her own son, no adult should ever be alone with a single scout out of sight of others.

# How Parents Can Help Their Scout Advance

- Even if the parents are not Patrol Mentors or otherwise involved in Troop leadership, we strongly encourage them to sit down periodically with their son and go over where the Scout stands on advancement.
- Parental interest, motivation, and encouragement is vital to successful advancement.

***TIP – Periodically, make a copies of the sign-off pages in your son’s Scout Handbook for any requirements signed-off since his last rank advancement. This way, if any pages fall out of the book and get lost, the requirements since his last rank advancement won’t need to be re-done.***

***TIP – “Clear tape” the requirement pages into the book.***

# How Parents Can Help Their Scout Advance

## Boy Scout Handbook

- The *Boy Scout Handbook 11th Edition* must be brought to ALL troop meetings, on ALL campouts, and to summer and winter camps.
- This is the basic resource of Scouting, and contains the record of each Scout's advancement.
- The *Handbook* has all the information necessary to advance to the rank of First Class, and to learn basic outdoor skills, as well as stressing the intrinsic values for which Scouting stands.

*TIP: ALL HANDBOOKS LOOK ALIKE; SO MAKE SURE THE SCOUT'S NAME IS ON THE BOOK IN SEVERAL PLACES INCLUDING THE OUTSIDE EDGE, SO IT'S READILY IDENTIFIABLE WHEN ITS TIME TO LEAVE OR TO GET A REQUIREMENT SIGNED OFF.*

# How Parents Can Help Their Scout Advance

*Example Question: What would you do if your son asks: “Hey Dad/Mom, can you help me earn my Tenderfoot Badge?”*

- Recommended Approach: See pages 438-439 which shows the Tenderfoot Rank Requirements.
  - You see there are 15, including the Scoutmaster Conference and Board of Review.
- The requirements are described, the applicable pages to review are listed for the scout, and the column to the right shows whether the Troop Guide has signed off. No sign-off, its not completed yet – opportunity!
- Has your scout camped one night with the 839 Troop yet? If so, #2 should be signed off. If not, he can earn this the first night in camp if he helps pitch the tent.

# How Parents Can Help Their Scout Advance

*Example Question: What would you do if your son asks: “Hey Dad/Mom, can you help me earn my Tenderfoot Badge?” - Continued*

- 1, 2, 3, 13 can all be done on your scout's 1st campout. However, he has to take advantage of the opportunities to cook, pitch tent, etc. He also needs to get a Troop Guide to witness his work and sign-off **at the campout**
- They can learn any or all of 4a, 4b, 5, 7, 9, 11, 12a, 12b, and 13 at home between now and next week's Troop Meeting and get it signed-off between 7 and 7:30.
- Opportunities for 10a and 10b will be given on the Beach Campout and over the summer (or at later campouts too).
- 6 and 8 can be done and signed-off at your next patrol meeting if completed. 6 requires a flag pole.

# How Parents Can Help Their Scout Advance

***Example Question: What would you do if your son asks: “Hey Dad/Mom, can you help me earn my Tenderfoot Badge?” - Continued***

- If you or your scout has questions on how to do something, the first place to look is in the book. If they have trouble with it, ask a Troop Guide, Assistant Scoutmaster (or in a pinch, another scout with it signed-off) for help, a tip, or trick to help do/remember it.
- The Trail to First Class (TFC) requirements can be done in any order, as fast or as slow as your scout wants to progress. He and you are in control.
- Note on the chart the similar concepts that exist for T, S and F (Tenderfoot, Second Class and First Class). These are basically the same pages to study. There is no rule saying you can't knock out your First Aid requirements for all 3 ranks at once. If the scout knows it, he can get signed off on these TFC items (Star and higher ranks work differently).

# Other Tools to use in Rank Advancement

## Other Tools/Sources of Information and Channels to receive upcoming opportunities

1. Troop Calendar (when and where for campouts, troop meetings, Merit Badge classes, summer camp, winter camps, Courts of Honor)
2. Contact List
3. Email distributions (make sure you're on the distro/contact list)
4. Hand-outs at first table at Troop Meetings
5. Patrol Leader updates at Patrol Meeting following PLC meeting
6. Troop Tracks / Trail to First Class Newsletter
7. Troop 839 Orientation Manual
8. Periodically read your scout's Handbook. (If it's not signed-off, it's not complete).

# Other Subjects Coming Up

- Merit Badge Process and Strategies
- Conducting Effective Patrol Meetings
- Rank Advancement for Star, Life and Eagle Ranks
  - Leadership Positions
  - Service Hours
- Scout Equipment: What to Buy and When to Buy
- Troop Policies and Procedures