

Advancement News

January-February
2023

Vol. 13, No. 1

Prepared. For Life.®

As programs and opportunities modify over time, your friends at *Advancement News* will continue to be here to share these changes with you and offer insights. *Advancement News* will be uploaded directly to the [Advancement Resources](#) page of Scouting.org. Each bimonthly edition will be found on the [Advancement News](#) page. Since advancement evolves and occasionally changes, please note that the most current information found in *Advancement News* and the online version of [Guide to Advancement](#) supersedes previous versions.

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Advancement News is designed for council and district advancement committees, advancement staff advisors, and Eagle processors. However, any Scouting volunteer or professional may subscribe. To subscribe to the *Advancement News* announcements, click here: [Subscribe](#)

From the *Guide to Advancement*

A Scout is Reverent

The sun does not always shine brightly on a Scouting weekend campout. Sometimes it rains Friday night, drizzles all day Saturday, and it's just a chilly fall weekend. Sometimes it's just a miserable rainy weekend. (This is a true story.)

We got up Sunday morning and prepared our breakfast. Then, because "A Scout is Reverent" we asked who would like to say grace. First-time camper, Tenderfoot, eleven-year-old Bryan volunteered. Here's Bryan's prayer:

Lord, thank you for the food we are about to eat.

Thank you for keeping us safe.

And thank you for the fun we had this weekend.

Amen

(Bryan's Eagle Court of Honor was held October, 2006)

For every advancement rank, one of the required items is to tell how you have done YOUR Duty to God. Of course, this is not about any one religion but about a youth's own religious duty. Thus, we need to make sure that the program in our unit has opportunities for this to happen in a natural way.

Scouting abounds with many such opportunities: for adventure, for fun, and for the chance to explore new things. One of those opportunities is the chance to learn about "A Scout is Reverent." Many of our youth come to Scouting from families that are unchurched. Dr. Avery Post, one time

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The *Guide to Advancement* has an abundance of references regarding the importance of supporting the Scout's journey as they explore what being reverent means to them.

- *Guide to Advancement*, Section 3.0.0.1, Item 18 reminds Council Advancement Committee responsibilities include the need to "Support and promote awards such as the religious emblems and the STEM Nova awards, as well as those approved by the local council executive board."
- Section 3.0.0.2, Item 11 reminds us that the District advancement committee responsibilities include the need to "Support and promote awards such as the religious emblems and the STEM Nova awards, as well as those approved by the local council executive board."
- Section 3.0.0.5 suggests the various advancement committees include a member that supports the religious emblems topic.
- Section 4.2.3.2 emphasizes the importance of Scout spirit for all Scouts which includes being able to explain "what Scout spirit, living the Scout Oath and Scout Law, and duty to God means to them."
- Section 5.5.0 – Religious Principles, specifically states the position of the Boy Scouts of America on religious principles.

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President of the United Church of Christ once said that he believed that his path to the ministry was started in Scouting. (Daley, F. Darnall, *The Commissioner's Corner*, 2007, p. 106)

At unit Scouting events we say grace at meals. At summer camp we say grace at meals in the dining hall. At District and Council events we have religious services at the appropriate times, and we invite local religious leaders to come and conduct these services. At the National Scouting Jamboree, worship services are held at venues throughout the Jamboree and in each subcamp. Being with 500 youth at a hillside worship service is a sight to behold and is spiritually uplifting.

Many of our units are chartered to churches. Scout Sunday is annually an opportunity for our youth to worship together.

We need to make sure that our young people have an opportunity to learn about THEIR Duty to God. Now isn't that what we are all about?

On Increasing Advancement

Positions of Responsibility - Instructor

A very important trait of a good leader is their ability to help the members of their team learn about and acquire, additional skills.

In this series of articles, we have been sharing the linkage between the Scouting Aim of leadership development and the Scouting Method of advancement via youth positions of responsibility.

All the positions of responsibility listed in the requirements for Star, Life, and Eagle help a Scout help lead others in various ways. But, in addition to the troop guide, there is one specifically related to teaching and learning – instructor.

In most troops there is that Scout, or Scouts, who quickly understand a basic Scout skill. As they mature in the troop they may have also, often by what they have learned in other positions of responsibility, developed an ability to communicate and share what they know. The wise senior patrol leader and Scoutmaster take advantage of these skills.



As we find in "Troop Leader Resources" on Scouting.org and in the *Scouts BSA Handbook*, an instructor is an older troop member proficient in a Scouting skill who must also have the ability to teach that skill to others. An instructor typically teaches subjects that Scouts are eager to learn - especially those such as first aid, camping, and backpacking - that are required for outdoor activities and rank advancement.

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Their responsibilities are to:

- teach basic Scouting skills
- schedule/coordinate merit badge counselor(s) for troop/Scout instruction
- set a good example
- wear the Scout uniform correctly
- live by the Scout Oath and Law
- show Scout spirit

Ideally, the instructor uses the Scouting EDGE method (Explain, Demonstrate, Guide, Enable) to help other Scouts learn a basic skill – while improving their own ability to share information.

Another practical value of the instructor position, especially in large troops, is the troop's opportunity to have multiple instructors thus, giving even more leadership opportunities for Scouts on the trail to Eagle Scout.

A former director of volunteer training for the BSA is fond of saying: "The best way to learn leadership is having frequent opportunities when you are young to practice being a leader." Seton, Beard, Baden-Powell, and the others who developed the Scouting program in the early days, built youth leadership ideas around that concept.

The instructor role is an excellent way for a Scout who has grasped a basic Scouting skill to get even better at that skill, to improve their ability to share knowledge, and to pass that skill on to other Scouts – to become a better leader and to meet one of the requirements for Star, Life, or Eagle. This will thus fulfill both the BSA Aim of leadership development and the Scouts BSA method of advancement.

We encourage you to use this important position of responsibility to give your Scouts more leadership experience, to keep them engaged in the troop, to help them advance, and to strengthen your troop.

Take a look at <https://troopleader.scouting.org/instructor/> for a brief orientation on the instructor role.

About *Advancement News*

Advancement News is the official e-letter of the Boy Scouts of America National Advancement Program Team. Its intent is to provide and clarify procedures found in the *Guide to Advancement*, announce various changes and updates in advancement, and to assist advancement committees in making decisions that can help increase the rate of advancement. Therefore, districts and councils may reprint articles from this publication. Our plan is to distribute six issues of *Advancement News* annually, but special editions may go out whenever there is important information to share. Feedback, suggestions, and letters to the editor are welcome at advancement.team@scouting.org

Eagle, Summit, Quartermaster Highlights



Time Extensions for the Rank of Eagle Scout

The 18th birthday looms large in the minds of many Scouts, as the deadline before which they must complete all requirements for the rank of Eagle Scout. However, many don't know that in certain special circumstances a time extension may be granted. Section 9.0.4.0 of the *Guide to Advancement* details the requirements and procedures for these rare extensions. Local councils may grant extensions of enough time to complete the requirements, but only up to six months. If the council denies the request, or the Scout needs more time, the request must be appealed to, and reviewed, at the national level.

These extensions are “reserved only for work on Eagle”, which means the Scout **MUST** have earned the rank of Life by their 18th birthday. There are no exceptions to this policy, and it is the most common reason that extension requests are declined.

There are three tests used to evaluate extension requests, and **the Scout must meet all three** (GTA section 9.0.4.0).

“Test 1 The member joined or rejoined (or became active again after a period of inactivity or became re-focused on advancement after a period of inattention) in time to complete all requirements before turning 18.”

A Scout who simply did not focus on advancement, or joined too late, will not be eligible.

“Test 2 Through no fault or choice of the Scout, an unforeseen circumstance or life-changing event with severe consequences has come to exist that now precludes completion of the requirements before the deadline. Examples might include, but are not limited to, a hospital stay, disabling injury, significant personal or family incident or issue, natural disaster, severe unseasonable weather, or the actions of others (“Misinformation from adults in positions of authority” as explained in GTA 9.0.4.0). If the circumstance is health-related, it should have been unforeseen and of recent onset, or a complication or intensification of an ongoing issue.”

Test 3 The circumstance is beyond the control of the Scout, could not have been anticipated or planned for, and was not or cannot be resolved in time to complete the requirements.”

Setbacks and surprises are part of everyone's life, but sometimes they rise to an entirely different level. If this is the case, and it threatens to prevent a Scout from earning the rank of Eagle Scout, the extension process would be appropriate. COVID alone is no longer sufficient, but may be considered as one factor.

To apply for an extension, complete the forms [available online](#), with as much detail as possible. The request must include an explanation of why or how circumstances necessitate an extension, the number of months needed to complete the requirements, how that number was determined, and documentation of the circumstances. If the issue is medical, documentation from a health professional must be included. The Scout should continue working on rank requirements throughout the process.

Merit Badges

Merit Badge Requirement Updates (January 2023)

Every merit badge is reviewed on a two year cycle, and any needed updates are made. The merit badges listed below have updated [requirements](#) which take effect January 1, 2023. As always, if a Scout has started work using the old requirements they may complete the merit badge using those requirements, or switch to the new ones. A Scout starting after January 1, 2023 must use the new requirements."

Consult the [Guide To Advancement](#), Section 7.0.4.3 for further information.

Requirement Updates 2023

Merit badge requirement updates from 2023 Scouts BSA Requirements (33216):

[American Business](#) (2c)

[Animal Science](#) (1, Avian Option a, c, e)

[Archery](#) (1a, b, c, d, 3b, 4a, b, c, d, 5ac, 5af1cd, 5bc, 5bf1cd)

[Architecture](#) (1b)

[Composite Materials](#) (1c 3a)

[Cooking](#) (2c, d, 4a, 5b, d, e, g, 6a, f)

[Cycling](#) (1a, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 Option A a1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, Option B a1, 3, b1, 2, 3, c, d, e)

[Digital Technology](#) (3a, 3e, 4a, 5a, 7c)

[Disabilities Awareness](#) (6)

[Emergency Preparedness](#) (3)

[Environmental Science](#) (3, 3f2, 5)

[Family Life](#) (6b1, 2, 3)

[Farm Mechanics](#) (1d)

[Game Design](#) (1b, 5b, 8a, b)

[Genealogy](#) (1a, b, c, 4a, b, c, d, e, 8b, c)

[Geology](#) (5d2)

[Golf](#) (3, 7g)

[Hiking](#) (2a, b, c, 4, 5)

[Inventing](#) (6b)

[Mammal Study](#) (3a, b, c)

[Nature](#) (4g2, 4h1, 6a, b)

[Personal Fitness](#) (4d)

[Plant Science](#) (8 Option 3 Field Botany A2, B, F1d, F3c1, 2, 3)

[Programming](#) (1b, 3a)

[Reptile and Amphibian Study](#) (3d, 5)

[Salesmanship](#) (2b, 2d, 3, 4, 6a3)

[Small-Boat Sailing](#) (6i, j)

[Snow Sports](#) (2b, 7 Downhill a, h, i; Cross country a, b, d, i; Snowboarding i, k; Snowshoeing e, i, j)

[Sports](#) (5)

[Swimming](#) (5a)





Sea Scouts

Highlighting Advancement—Promoting Success

Advancement is one of the things that makes Sea Scouts so rewarding. You learn and lead, and then pass that along to others. Leadership development happens as a part of the Sea Scout program. Sometimes, however, we don't always do a very good a job at sharing this key information. If someone gets Able rank, if someone wins a Sea Scout Leadership Award, if someone runs a successful event like Safety at Sea, we need to let others know about it.

Why? Because it gets the word out about what we do. Everyone has seen that blank stare in the eyes of a Scouts BSA person when you tell them you are in Sea Scouts, and they don't know what we are. This is one of the best ways that BSA-affiliated members can know about Sea Scouts.

The use of videos and photos is one of the most impactful methods to spread the word about Sea Scout advancement to non-Sea Scouts. It is easier to talk to someone who is asking about a photo, than it is to try and approach someone "cold-turkey." Social media is there for us to exploit that. Imagine seeing people in canoes, the sunset behind a 34-foot sailboat, or even going to a Christmas Boat Parade. Those kind of High Adventure events are noticed.

Create a Facebook page – like SHAC Sea Scouts for Sam Houston Area Council, or Chief Seattle Sea Scouts, or South Florida Sea Scouts -- and put your photos there. Facebook also takes videos. So be aware to take still photos and videos. There also is Instagram, which a lot of youths use, and Twitter. And like anything electronic, there is always something new on the horizon.

When taking the photos, please consider these helpful hints:

- Take photos of all people there, not just those in your Ship. Your photos are more-likely to be shared if they have males and females, different backgrounds of people, different units and different things being shown. Photos are free, so taking 100 photos to get 10 or 20 really good shots is a good way to work at it.
- Large group shots are difficult. You can split people up, if you need to.
- Don't take photos into the sun. As a photographer, know your lighting. It is one of the most-important things you can do. While some cell phones now are better than they were event 2-3 years ago, the best photos are when the sunlight is behind the photographer. Also, the best lighting outdoors in early morning and late evening, when the sunlight is at an angle. The worst lighting is High Noon. And days they are dark, grey and cloudy will allow you to take great photos with great lighting all day long.
- Use the rule of thirds, which is a standard style pro photographers employ. That simply means to take an imaginary ruler and draw three lines in your mind across the top of the photo and three lines across the side of the photo. The subject should touch those at least one of lines, and preferably two of those lines. You can look up Rule of Thirds on the Internet, and it will show you how to do this.

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- Use a flash. Even if you are outdoors, you need to illuminate the face of your subjects. The only real way to do that is to use a flash. If you are concerned, take a photo with the flash and a photo without the flash. But the flash will make your photos look better 90 percent of the time.
- Take two or three steps closer to the subject. We don't care about shoes. We want to see faces when they are getting their new rank or award. And getting closer will illuminate faces and make the subject come into focus better.
- Take photos that are horizontal. Sometimes you have to take a photo that is vertical, like if you have a tall ship in the background, but horizontal is the way things are set up to show photos. Think of your TV. It is horizontal, and a vertical photo will not show well on a TV.
- When taking videos, do not talk. Most videos cannot be used if there are people talking loudly in the background, especially if they are not talking about the subject matter.
- Some videos need to be about five seconds or so, so they can be used on Facebook banners or Instagram. Other videos might need to be a few minutes long. One key point is that it may be hard to get people to view a video which is more than two minutes.

There are many other tips, but getting advancements in the public eye -- and in the eye of your fellow acquaintances -- is a very positive way to get attention for Sea Scouts. Follow up and recruit them once you have their attention so they can join in the adventure, too.

Sea Scouts Advancement



Apprentice



Ordinary



Able



Quartermaster

Special Needs

The Inclusion Toolbox is Here

(Originally Published—Fall, 2020 Abilities Digest)

This article from the National Special Needs and Disabilities Committee was published in the Fall, 2020 *Abilities Digest* to explain and provide guidance for use of The Toolbox. It has been updated for this edition of *Advancement News*. Additional issues are available at the [Abilities Digest Archives](#).

For the last four years, the National Special Needs & Disabilities Committee has been hard at work on the replacement for the 2007 *Scouting for Youth with Disabilities Manual*. The new product has been rolled out on [AbleScouts.org](#) as a web-based information resource and the title is the *Inclusion Toolbox for Special Needs and Disabilities*, or *Toolbox* for short. (<https://ablescouts.org/toolbox/>) The *Toolbox* is designed to support several different audiences with actionable knowledge. Families new to Scouting will find information about how Scouting works and how to get the most from the programs. Unit-level leaders will find ideas and techniques for building inclusive units.

In the *Toolbox*, we provide information for ten major classes of special needs and disabilities, so you can adapt the activities we do in Scouting to the needs of individual Scouts. It includes new sections on food allergies, mental health, learning disorders, and speech/language that were not in the 2007 manual, and it has expanded sections on autism and ADHD. We have partnered with many specialty disability organizations to make sure you are getting accurate and useful information.

The *Toolbox* is built to work like a physical toolbox, where you can look around and quickly find what you need without having to read through a book. Everything is indexed and hyperlinked in a two-level table of contents. You can download modules in PDF form and print out sections to share with others or to carry with you in the field.

You don't need a background in special needs to use the *Toolbox*. We worked hard to make it easy to read and avoided medical, special ed, or disability-specific jargon. We did not spend time or space on background information you don't need to deliver the Scouting program.

It was important to create a resource that would be available to anyone who needed it on a 24/7/365 basis. We wanted volunteers and professionals to be able to get answers quickly when a situation arose because human experts are not always handy. Difficulties are resolved best when they can be handled quickly at a local level.



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We are really excited to get this resource into the hands of the Scouting community. We are already making use of the material to respond to questions from the field and as a resource for training activities. We continue to expand the *Toolbox* with modules to help even more volunteers and professionals with “job specific” ideas and adaptations for advancement specialists, commissioners, camp directors, outdoor program coordinators, facilities managers, and more.



[Guide to Advancement](#), Section 10, begins with the statement: “Youth with physical disabilities and youth and adults with developmental or cognitive challenges are welcome in the Boy Scouts of America.”

A Novel Pack Meeting Highlighting Special Needs

Have you planned a pack meeting about special needs? Here is how one pack planned and executed a pack meeting where abilities became the key element.

Opening: The pack meeting was opened by a Cub Scout leading the Pledge of Allegiance in ASL (American Sign Language).

The Scout Law was then signed by Scouts and others who were familiar with ASL.

An older Scouts BSA youth spoke about what life is like for him having Autism. When the Scout was introduced to the pack, the leader asked the Cub Scouts if this Scout looked like he had a disability. They answered “no.” What followed was a question and discussion interchange with the Cub Scouts sharing what they knew about autism.

The young man then spoke about what life is like for him having autism. He further shared about his heightened senses and ways he has learned to cope with them. He talked about how he worked to have better control of himself. Plus, he shared how autism is his “super power”. He explained it helps him see things and think about things in different ways. At one point he shares that he struggles with writing and one of the Tiger Scouts shared that they also struggled with writing and used an orthotic to help. Thus a connection was made.

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A representative from a local adaptive sports group talked with the Scouts about being in a wheelchair. The speaker had been injured and as an adult got to learn how to navigate life using a wheelchair. They asked the Scouts to name a sport they think this person couldn't do. They went through a whole list... swimming, golf, baseball, football, biking, etc. The speaker shared with them how those sports have been adapted so people who use wheelchairs can play them. A sibling of one of the Scouts showed their sports wheelchair. The Cub Scouts then could ask other questions like 'how do you drive a car' and 'how to you dry yourself off after a bath or shower'. Questions that were raised were answered and the Scouts were excited to hear the responses.

At this point in the pack meeting, the Scouts were broken into smaller groups and had the experience of facing varied challenges.

- Both crutches and a wheelchair were available so that the Scouts could experience mobility challenges.
- Noise canceling headphones were provided so the Scouts experienced auditory challenges with someone speaking to them.
- Dexterity issues were presented, as there were gloves to wear while trying to pick up beans or to try to tie a knot.
- Lastly, a 25 piece puzzle was provided as the Scouts wore goggles that were obscured, while putting the pieces together.

Throughout the experiences, talk centered on how disabilities are really different abilities and specifically at what a person "can" do instead of "can't"

When presenting challenges to illustrate disabilities, it is easy to mislead the participants. This may be their first time encountering these challenges and they will find them harder to accomplish than the individuals who live with them. Obviously, the brief simulation will never have the same impact as the day-to-day experience of having the disability. Plus, the Scouts have never had those challenges prior to the pack meeting.

Getting to know the individuals who came to share at the pack meeting, demonstrates one key element as a "take away" for the Scouts and adults in attendance. People with disabilities have adapted to meet their challenges and that this is just one part of who that individual is.

Cub Scout Advancement opportunities. Be sure to review rank advancement such as:

Wolf Cub Scouts

Cubs Who Care elective adventure



Webelos Scouts

Aware and Care elective adventure, digital, page 234.



Worth Repeating

Addressing Positions of Responsibility

(February 2012)

When a youth is appointed or elected to a position of responsibility, the unit should provide them with guidance as to what is expected so there will be a strong chance for success. This may be done in a variety of ways—for example, using position descriptions found in adult leader and or youth handbooks or those already designed by the unit, or providing assistance and coaching from a unit adult to help Scouts develop their own descriptions that provide reasonable challenges. A unit may also allow Scouts to do this without any help. In any of these scenarios if the youth makes a reasonable effort to fulfill the duties described, the requirement should be considered fulfilled. If unit leadership, however, provides very little or no guidance, it is inappropriate to surprise the youth after six months to say, for example, that the Scout has not completed their position of responsibility requirement. This practice does not help youth grow and produces conflict in the unit.

To avoid this situation, *Guide to Advancement* topic 4.2.3.4.4 also specifically addresses the issue of “Meeting the Requirements in the Absence of Unit Expectations.” There are valid reasons why many units may choose not to have pre-existing written position descriptions that Scouts must meet. There is, however, an expectation that adult leaders will work with Scouts to help them to succeed. The topic referenced above says, “...AN adult leader [thus not necessarily THE adult unit leader], or the Scout, or both, work out the responsibilities to fulfill.” The key is that in some way responsibilities are determined ahead of time, either by the Scout on their own or with help from an assistant Scoutmaster, for example.

Remember, the youth must actually do something and should be held accountable if expectations are established and coaching provided, but still little or nothing occurs. This is clearly defined in topic 4.2.3.4.5. However, the failure of unit leadership to clarify, assist, and support cannot be held against a Scout who did what they were left to assume was OK to do! Consult the *Guide to Advancement*, section 4, topics 4.2.3.4–4.2.3.4.6, for further detail and clarification.

Editor’s Note

- This article was written before the inclusion of girls in the Scouting program. General references have been modified as appropriate to include references such as “Scout”, “Scouts” or “youth”.
- Citations of the *Guide to Advancement*, Section 4, are also found in the 2021 current version available online which may be found here [Guide to Advancement](#)

Helpful Links

The most current materials of interest for Scouters who are involved in the administration of advancement are located in one handy place. Many resources are available via the Advancement Resources page at www.scouting.org/Advancement.



Building Effective Advancement Committees

[Building Effective Advancement Committees](#) is a valuable resource that assists Scouters in developing supportive and functional committees. It provides helpful techniques for recruiting and assigning tasks to individuals as well as providing resources for the Scouts, Scouters and units.

The first section outlines the many areas of responsibility that can be served by volunteers. Each position is described in detail so that clarification of the role can be easily understood.

The next section outlines the tasks and explores possibilities on finding and recruiting volunteers for advancement committees. This document suggests ten specific places to look for individuals to fulfill roles on the committee.

Additional recruitment tactics are explained and suggested regarding how to approach the individual, the best methods to achieve the best results, as well as hints on how the recruiter can best be prepared.

Concluding suggestions encourage the recruiter to start the individual out slowly, give them positive feedback when that task is completed. Next, be prepared to suggest another task for the Scouter. As stated: "Typically, larger advancement committees will be more effective". The fact is that different councils and districts will have their own specific needs, as well.

Using the guidelines and suggestions in this document will help Scouters provide the best possible support for the advancement function of the council and district, with support for smooth advancement for the Scouts at all levels.