

Introduction

The current edition of the **Guide to Advancement** replaces any previous editions and is the official Boy Scouts of America source on advancement procedures. The most current and official version of the **Guide to Advancement** can be accessed from www.scouting.org/advancement.

Policy on Unauthorized Changes to Advancement Program

No council, committee, district, unit, or individual has the authority to add to, or subtract from, advancement requirements. There are limited exceptions relating only to members with special needs. For details see Section 10, "Advancement for Members With Special Needs."

The Guide to Safe Scouting Applies

Policies and procedures outlined in the Guide to Safe Scouting apply to all BSA activities, including those related to advancement and Eagle Scout, Summit, and Quartermaster service projects.

How Is a "Month" Defined?

A month is a month regardless how many days it has. It is not defined as 30 days or four weeks. February 2 up to August 2, or August 31 up to February 28 (or 29th if leap year) are examples of six-month periods. Six months does not mean 180 days.

4.0.0.1 Changes to Requirements

Advancement requirements change from time to time. For each program's requirements, consult the following web pages, which are expected to be updated annually:

Cub Scouting: www.scouting.org/programs/cub-scouts/what-cub-scouts-earn/the-advancement-trail

Scouts BSA: <http://www.scouting.org/programs/scouts-bsa/advancement-and-awards>

Venturing: <http://www.scouting.org/programs/venturing/venturing-awards-and-advancement/rank-advancement>

Sea Scouts: <http://www.seascout.org/advancement-central>

Please note that web addresses appearing in the Guide to Advancement are confirmed prior to publication, but they are subject to change.

Once a new or revised requirement appears on one of those web pages, any Cub Scout, Scouts BSA member, Venturer, or Sea Scout beginning work on the next rank (or Eagle Palm) must use the new or revised requirement as stated there.

Changes may also be introduced in youth handbooks or various official BSA publications or releases before appearing on one of the above web pages. In this case, unless official communications set forth a different procedure or establish a date by when use of the old requirements must cease, youth members have through December 31 of that year to decide what to do. They may continue—or begin work—using the old requirements, or may switch to—or begin work—using the new requirements. Scouts who choose to use the old requirements may continue using them until the rank (or Palm) has been completed. Those who have not begun work on a rank (or Palm) by December 31 of the year a change in its requirements is announced must use the new requirements.

For handling changes to merit badge requirements, see "What to Do When Requirements Change," 7.0.4.3.

Former members who rejoin a BSA program, still as youth members, may carry on in the advancement program and pick up where they left off, but they will not receive credit for activities while not registered. A former member who is no longer eligible to participate in a BSA program as a youth member due to age, for example, can neither receive credit for completing advancement requirements nor be awarded any advancement-oriented recognition such as ranks or merit badges, etc., that the individual was ineligible to earn as a youth member under the rules in effect at that time.

4.1.0.3 Who Approves Cub Scout Advancement?

A key responsibility for den leaders is to implement the den meeting plans as outlined in Scoutbook's Den Leader Experience. For Lion through Bear ranks, if activities take place outside the den meeting, a parent, guardian, or another trusted adult may verify that Cub Scouts have done their best to meet the requirements completed at the activity. The den leader then records the requirements.

If the requirement is completed in a den meeting, Scoutbook's Den Leader Experience can be used to automatically record the advancement to the Cub Scouts official record. If not using digital assets, the den leader signs the handbook and records the requirement. Den leaders may delegate an assistant or parent who helps at meetings to assist with the approvals. For Webelos and Arrow of Light Adventures and ranks, the den leader signs for approval of all requirements, unless the den leader delegates this responsibility.

4.1.0.4 "Do Your Best"

Cub Scouts—even those of the same age, grade, and gender—may have very different developmental timetables. For this reason, advancement performance in Cub Scouting is centered on its motto: "Do Your Best." When Cub Scouts have done this—their best effort possible—then regardless of the requirements for any rank or award, it is enough; accomplishment is noted. This is why den leaders, assistants, and parents or guardians are involved in approvals. Generally they know if the effort put forth is really the Cub Scout's best.

A Cub Scout who has completed advancement should be congratulated immediately and publicly. And though badges of rank should be reserved for the next pack meeting, it is best to present items such as belt loops and pins soon after they have been earned. If it is possible for the pack to report and purchase these awards quickly, they could be presented at a den meeting, rather than waiting for a pack meeting. If presented at den meetings, the accompanying pocket certificates can be used in a ceremony at a subsequent pack meeting—or vice versa with the pocket certificates at a den meeting. However this is done, it is important to note that advancement is an individual process, not dependent on the work or progress of others. Awards should not be withheld for group recognition. Likewise, a youth should not be presented with recognition that was not earned simply to avoid anyone "feeling left out."

In the same spirit as "Do Your Best," if a Cub Scout is close to earning a badge of rank when it is time to transition to a new den, the pack committee, in consultation with the den leader and the Cub Scout's parent or guardian, may allow a few weeks to complete the badge before going on to the next rank. Earning it will give the youth added incentive to continue in Scouting and carry on and tackle the next rank.

What about a youth who must repeat a grade in school? Generally, repeating a grade does not mean being kept back in Cub Scouting, but it depends on the circumstances and what is best for the youth. The decision is up to the parent or guardian.

Additional notes of interest:

- Cub Scouts may complete requirements in a family, den, pack, school, or community environment.
- **Akela** (Ah-KAY-la) is a title of respect used in Cub Scouting—any good leader is Akela, who is also the leader and guide for Cub Scouts on the advancement trail.