



# Backpacking

## Merit Badge Workbook



This workbook can help you but you still need to read the merit badge pamphlet.  
 This Workbook can help you organize your thoughts as you prepare to meet with your merit badge counselor

**Merit Badge Counselors may not require the use of this or any similar workbooks.**

You still must satisfy your counselor that you can demonstrate each skill and have learned the information.  
 You should use the work space provided for each requirement to keep track of which requirements have been completed, and to make notes for discussing the item with your counselor, not for providing full and complete answers.

If a requirement says that you must take an action using words such as "discuss", "show", "tell", "explain", "demonstrate", "identify", etc, that is what you must do.

No one may add or subtract from the official requirements found in Scouts BSA Requirements (Pub.# 33216) and/or on Scouting.org.  
 The requirements were last revised on January 1, 2024 • This workbook was updated in January 2024.

Scout's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Unit \_\_\_\_\_ Date Started \_\_\_\_\_

Counselor's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone No.: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Please submit errors, omissions, comments or suggestions about this **workbook** to: [Workbooks@USScouts.Org](mailto:Workbooks@USScouts.Org)  
 Comments or suggestions for changes to the **requirements** for the **merit badge** should be sent to: [Merit.Badge@Scouting.Org](mailto:Merit.Badge@Scouting.Org)

1. Discuss the prevention of and treatment for the health concerns that could occur while backpacking, including hypothermia, heat reactions, frostbite, dehydration, insect stings, tick bites, snakebite, and blisters.

Hypothermia:


Heat reaction:


Frostbite:


Dehydration:


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Insect stings:


Tick bites:


Snakebite:


Blisters:


2. Do the following:

a. List 10 items that are essential to be carried on any backpacking trek and explain why each item is necessary.

1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	

7.	
8.	
9.	
10.	

b. Describe 10 ways you can limit the weight and bulk to be carried in your pack without jeopardizing your health or safety.

1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
9.	
10.	

3. Do the following:

- a. Define limits on the number of backpackers appropriate for a trek crew.


- b. Describe how a trek crew should be organized.


- c. Tell how you would minimize risk on a backpacking trek.


- d. Explain the purpose of an emergency response plan.


4. Do the following:

- a. Describe the importance of using Leave No Trace principles while backpacking, and at least five ways you can lessen the crew's impact on the environment.

Importance of using Leave No Trace


Ways to lessen the crew's impact on the environment.

1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

b. Describe proper methods of handling human and other wastes while on a backpacking trek.


Describe the importance of and means to assure personal cleanliness while on a backpacking trek.


5. Do the following:

a. Demonstrate two ways to treat water and tell why water treatment is essential.

<input type="checkbox"/> 1.	
<input type="checkbox"/> 2.	
Why?	





Type:		Fuel:	
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Advantages:	

Disadvantages:	

Type:		Fuel:	
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Advantages:	

Disadvantages:	

- b. Demonstrate that you know how to operate a backpacking stove safely and to handle liquid fuel safely.
- c. Prepare at least three meals using a stove and fuel you can carry in a backpack.
- d. Demonstrate that you know how to keep cooking and eating gear clean and sanitary, and that you practice proper methods for food storage while on a backpacking trek.

9. Do the following:

- a. Write a plan that includes a schedule for a patrol/crew backpacking hike.



- b. Conduct a prehike inspection of the patrol and its equipment.
- c. Show that you know how to properly pack your personal gear and your share of the crew's gear and food.
- d. Show you can properly shoulder your pack and adjust it for proper wear.
- e. While using the plan you developed for requirement 9a, carry your fully loaded pack, to complete a hike of at least 2 miles.

10. Using Leave No Trace principles, participate in at least three backpacking treks of at least three days each and at least 15 miles each, and using at least two different campsites. Carry everything you will need throughout the trek.

Trip 1:	Dates:	Miles:	
	Campsite 1:	Campsite 2:	
Trip 2:	Dates:	Miles:	
	Campsite 1:	Campsite 2:	
Trip 3:	Dates:	Miles:	
	Campsite 1:	Campsite 2:	

11. Do the following:

a. Write a plan for a backpacking trek of at least five days using at least three different campsites and covering at least 30 miles. Your plan must include a description of and route to the trek area, schedule (including a daily schedule), a list of food and equipment needs, a safety and emergency plan, and a budget.

Trip:	Dates:	Miles:	
Campsite 1:			
Campsite 2:			
Campsite 3:			
Description:			

Route to area:




Equipment needs:


Safety and emergency plan:


Budget:


- b. Using Leave No Trace principles, take the trek as planned in requirement 11a that is at least five full days, covering at least 30 miles and utilizing at least three different campsites. While on trek, complete at least one service project approved by your merit badge counselor.

Dates: \_\_\_\_\_

Service Project:


- c. Upon your return, write a report about the trek that includes a day-by-day description of what you did or what happened, and what you might do the same and what you might do differently on your next trek.

Day 1:


Day 2:


Day 3:


Day 4:


Day 5:


What you might do differently


When working on merit badges, Scouts and Scouters should be aware of some vital information in the current edition of the *Guide to Advancement* (BSA publication 33088). Important excerpts from that publication can be downloaded from <http://usscouts.org/advance/docs/GTA-Excerpts-meritbadges.pdf>. You can download a complete copy of the *Guide to Advancement* from <http://www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/33088.pdf>.

## Wilderness Use Policy of the Boy Scouts of America

All privately or publicly owned backcountry land and designated wildernesses are included in the term “wilderness areas” in this policy. The Outdoor Code of the Boy Scouts of America and the principles of Leave No Trace apply to outdoor behavior generally, but for treks into wilderness areas, minimum-impact camping methods must be used. Within the outdoor program of the Boy Scouts of America, there are many different camping-skill levels. Camping practices that are appropriate for day outings, long-term Scout camp, or short-term unit camping might not apply to wilderness areas. Wherever they go, Scouts need to adopt attitudes and patterns of behavior that respect the rights of others, including future generations, to enjoy the outdoors.

- In wilderness areas, it is crucial to minimize human impact, particularly on fragile ecosystems such as mountains, lakes and streams, deserts, and seashores. Because our impact varies from one season of the year to the next, it becomes important for us to adjust to these changing conditions to avoid damaging the environment.
- The Boy Scouts of America emphasizes these practices for all troops, teams, and crews planning to use wilderness areas:
- Contact the landowner or land-managing agency (USDA Forest Service, National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, state and private agencies, etc.) well before an outing to learn the regulations for that area, including group size limits, to obtain required permits and current maps, and to discuss ways Scouts can fulfill the expectations of property owners or land managers.
- Obtain a tour permit (available through local council service centers), meet all of its conditions, and carry it during the trip.
- Review the appropriate BSA safety literature relating to planned activities. (See Safe Swim Defense, Safety Afloat, Climb On Safely, and Trek Safely.) Also see the Guide to Safe Scouting on the BSA Web site at <http://www.scouting.org/pubs/gss/toc.html> for more information on current BSA policies and procedures for ensuring safe activities, as well as the Fieldbook Web site at <http://www.bsafieldbook.org>.
- Match the ruggedness of high-adventure experiences to the skills, physical ability, and maturity of those taking part. Save rugged treks for older unit members who are more proficient and experienced in outdoor skills.
- Conduct pretrip training for your group that stresses proper wilderness behavior, rules, and skills for all of the conditions that may be encountered, including lightning, missing person, wildfire, high winds, flooding, and emergency medical situations.
- Participate in training in how to apply the principles of Leave No Trace, and be proficient and experienced in the leadership and skills required for treks into wilderness areas.
- Adhere to the principles of Leave No Trace.

### ***The Outdoor Code***

As an American, I will do my best to—

***Be clean in my outdoor manners.*** I will treat the outdoors as a heritage. I will take care of it for myself and others. I will keep my trash and garbage out of lakes, streams, fields, woods, and roadways.

***Be careful with fire.*** I will prevent wildfire. I will build my fires only when and where they are appropriate. When I have finished using a fire, I will make sure it is cold out. I will leave a clean fire ring, or remove all evidence of my fire.

***Be considerate in the outdoors.*** I will treat public and private property with respect. I will follow the principles of Leave No Trace for all outdoor activities.

***Be conservation-minded.*** I will learn about and practice good conservation of soil, waters, forests, minerals, grasslands, wildlife, and energy. I will urge others to do the same.

### ***The Principles of Leave No Trace***

1. Plan Ahead and Prepare
2. Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces
3. Dispose of Waste Properly (Pack It In, Pack It Out)
4. Leave What You Find
5. Minimize Campfire Impacts
6. Respect Wildlife
7. Be Considerate of Other Visitors