

Online Merit Badges – How it all works!

When you sign up for an online merit badge, please be aware of the following things.

- 1) None of our online merit badges have pre-requisites. We start at the beginning. It is encouraged that the Scout read through the requirements and familiarize themselves with the topic, but no work needs submitting prior to the first class.
- 2) We encourage the Scouts to get approval from their Scoutmaster before starting a badge online with us, just like they would for any in person badge sessions. We do not require proof of it.
- 3) The scope of badges varies a lot. Some badges are covered entirely in the online class. MOST require follow up homework. Some are covered in one session; some require two sessions. Please be aware that you must attend both sessions if two are listed. You will miss out on key content if you only attend one session.
- 4) The link to the online session will be sent to you the morning of the day of your class. This allows us to keep sign ups open until the morning of the class, or when the badge sells out. Some of our counselor's use Go To Meeting, some use Zoom.
- 5) We require participation from the Scouts in order for them to receive credit for any given requirement. If your Scout does not answer questions either via speaking or typing in the chat box, they will likely not be given credit for the topic being discussed. It is crucial our counselors are made aware that your Scout is listening, learning, participating. Keeping screens on helps confirm engagement.**
- 6) Scouts should be prepared to take notes during class. This will help them keep track of what is expected of them regarding homework. They should write down their counselor's name and email to be able to follow up with the rest of the badge after class.
- 7) This is the SCOUT'S merit badge! Questions for counselors should be written and asked by the Scout. Homework should be completed by the Scout. Parents can certainly help, but please remember the purpose of these badges is for the Scout to learn not only the content, but organization, communication, and accountability.
- 8) Two Deep Leadership is vital even in a virtual setting. **ALL** emails sent from/to a minor should also include a minimum of two adults. We will only run classes if at least 3 Scouts sign up for the class to ensure a counselor is not left alone with a Scout online.
- 9) We have created a 'digital blue card'. These are sent out via email the Friday after the week of your class. (7-11 days after your class). This allows the counselors time to mark any homework submitted and include it on the blue card.

10) Homework should be submitted to the counselor AND Jenny Trickett – jenny.trickett@scouting.org .

It should always include the following information -

Scout name

Merit badge name

The date you started the merit badge

What requirement you are fulfilling with the assignments you are sending in.

A scout is helpful and courteous! Homework sent in without the above information costs our counselors time which is already in short supply.

11) Homework submitted after the blue cards are sent will also be reviewed and updated blue cards will be sent out to reflect the work done. We do not have a deadline for homework submission. We encourage Scouts to complete the work in a timely fashion for both their sake and ours. The older a badge is, the harder it is for all of us to remember!

12) Counselors will often not confirm receipt of homework. You will get an updated blue card once the work is marked and recorded. If you send homework, please allow us some time to process it before worrying it has not been seen.

13) The digital blue card we send via email is the only confirmation you will get from us that the work is complete. We do not update Scoutbook, Troopmaster, or any other advancement tracking software. You should forward or print the digital blue card and give it to your Unit's advancement person. You can consider the date we email you a completed digital blue card to be the date we considered your merit badge completed. Some Scoutmasters require a "completed" date, so please write down the date you receive these emails before handing them to your Scoutmaster for tracking if that is the case for your unit.

Things we come across all too often -

- Scouts misspelling counselor names and email addresses. This leads to homework being sent into the internet void and never being marked. PLEASE triple check spellings.

- "I never got my blue card". 99% of the time this is because the email used to register for the badge, and the email typed under "participant email" are different. Blue cards will go to "participant email". Please be sure this email address is the one you WANT blue cards to be sent to when you sign up. Please check all possible inboxes if your family uses multiple.

- Occasionally we come across email accounts which send our Blue Cards to spam. Please check spam folders and save our email addresses as recognized addresses for future emails.

- We do not offer refunds for online merit badge classes. You do not need to let us know if you are unable to attend a class at the last minute. Attendance is taken at the beginning of every class.

Our Counselors and key personnel:

Jenny Trickett – jenny.trickett@scouting.org

Jenny oversees the production of and the admin for all blue cards. Cc her on all homework submissions to help speed up the process of getting your blue card updated. General questions about our online merit badge program can go to her.

Darrin Johnson – Darrin.johnson@scouting.org

Darrin our Program Director at Spirit of Adventure Council. He teaches a host of online merit badges and all our online NOVA Awards.

Zack Shepherd – zack.shepherd@scouting.org

Alison Batey – alison.batey@scouting.org

Chuck Blanchette – chuck.blanchette@scouting.org

Nick Kerpan – nick.kerpan@gmail.com

Angela Rzeszut – angela.rzeszut@scouting.org

Angela is our office manager and sends out the links for the online merit badge classes. Otherwise, she is not involved in online merit badges as she leads our online Cub program! Homework should not be sent to her.