

Merit Badge Challenge – 2013

Frequently Asked Questions by Parents and Scout Leaders

What is the purpose of the Scoutmaster's signature on the Registration Form?
This question is listed first because it is the most important item that determines the success of a Scout at the Merit Badge Challenge.

This event has been conducted in at least one district for the past 13 years. The average success rate for a Scout is about 50-60% with younger scouts having a lower success rate.

“Not all merit badges are created equal.” Our staff fully recognizes this fact and recommends an age appropriateness or additional class time for others in structuring the event. But there is only so much the Merit Badge Challenge staff can do to help the Scout select badges appropriate to his maturity, attitude, interest, and ability.

This is where the Scoutmaster is the key, and parents can certainly help as well. A completed Registration Form requires the signature of the Scoutmaster attesting the Scout can handle the work required to complete the selected badges. **To sign the Registration form for a badge(s) that is not appropriate for the Scout's mental and physical abilities is probably dooming him to failure.** Once the Registration form is received at Scout Service Center, the youth remains in that class.

Scoutmasters, please take the time to ensure the right badges for your youth. We both want them to be successful and it starts with you.

Where can I get a Registration Form to sign up for the event?

The he Troop received a packet of information at the October 2012 Round Table along with the re-charter information. One of the items in the packet was a blank Registration form that can be copied for each Scout.

The Registration form for all schools is available on <http://danbeard.org>, the Dan Beard Council Website. Look under ‘Youth Advancement’ to find this information.

The form or online registration can be used by an individual scout to register for one of the four events. The preferred method of registration is group registration by a unit leader, similar to registering to summer camp.

Which location for the Merit Badge Challenge should I attend?

A Scout may attend any of the high schools for Merit Badge Challenge. Troops usually attend one of the Merit Badge Challenge as a unit. If you do not know which school your unit normally attends, you may want to contact a member of your unit before completing your Registration. Merit badges offered vary from location to location.

Does a Scout have to do the Prework?

Only if he wants to earn the merit badge!

Parent and Scoutmasters: The second discriminator for the successful earning of a merit badge at the Challenge is the completion of the Prewrite required by most badges. The Prewrite consists of one or more of the requirements for the badge. Lack of timely completion of this Prewrite is the number one complaint by our counselors. As the time for the first Saturday approaches, please verify your Scouts are prepared.

How is the Merit Badge Challenge structured?

Each Merit Badge Challenge follows a standard format and offers counseling for 30-50 merit badges.

The event is held at four high schools (Dixie Heights, Fairfield, Sycamore, and Bethel) with varying dates in January February and March. The event is structured for a Scout to have the opportunity to earn up to 3 merit badges by:

1. Attending the event held on all 3 Saturdays
2. Completing the Prewrite and Homework between sessions
3. Passing an exam on the last Saturday.

What is the schedule at the Challenge?

The Merit Badge Challenge is divided into 3 sessions on each of the 3 scheduled Saturdays. All sessions are 75 minutes in duration.

First Session (A)	8:30 am to 9:45 am
Second Session (B)	10:00 am to 11:15 am
Third Session (C)	11:30 am to 12:45 pm

Are all merit badges the same time duration at the Challenge?

Most of the badges offered are for a single session on each of the 3 Saturdays. Here are the exceptions.

The following merit badges are scheduled for all three sessions. If a scout is assigned this merit badge, it will be the only badge he will have the opportunity to earn.

First Aid Emergency Preparedness

The following merit badges are normally scheduled for 2 of the 3 sessions.

Astronomy Railroadng Aviation Electronics Robotics

What determines what merit badge a Scout is assigned?

First, a Scout selects a 1st choice for each of the three sessions, and provides three alternate badges. His 1st choice indicates to the Registrar those badges that he most wants to earn, and the Registrar uses this fact to first determine if this badge is still available. If the class is filled, the Registrar moves to the second choice and attempts to give him this badge. If both are filled for a given session, the Register will contact the scout via email or phone to determine a satisfactory badge based on availability.

Remember merit badge assignments are made on a first come, first serve basis. Therefore, the earlier the Registration form is received at the Scout Service Center, the greater the probability the Scout will receive his 1st Choice. **Be on the safe side**

How do I pay fees for a associated with a specific badge?

Some of the merit badges offered have fees to allow for the purchase of needed training material for a badge. These fees are paid directly to the Counselor at the first session.

How many Eagle required merit badges may a scout take?

If a scout has not attained the rank of First Class at the time of sending in his Registration, he may take up to one Eagle required badge. He should list no more than one Eagle badge on his Registration Form as his 1st choice, and no more than one Eagle badge as an Alternate.

If a scout has attained the rank of First Class at the time of registration, he may take up to two Eagle required badges. He should list no more than two Eagle badges on his Registration Form as his 1st choice, and no more than two Eagle badges as an Alternate.

No scout may take three Eagle required badges.

What are the key dates associated with the event?

- **REGISTRATION VARIES PER SITE :**
- **CHECK WEB SITE FOR SPECIFIC DETAILS**
- **NORMAL REGISTRATIONS (\$15)**
- **CLOSED WHEN CAPACITY IS REACHED**

What are the dates of the Merit Badge Challenge for 2011?

- **Dixie Heights High School**
 - **March 2 & 23, 2013 (No snow date)**
- **Fairfield High School**
 - **January 26, February 16, & March 16, 2013 (Snow date is March 30, 2013)**
- **Sycamore High School**
 - **Feb. 23, March 16, & March 23, 2013 (Snow date is March 30, 2013)**
- **Bethel High School**
 - **Feb. 2, Feb. 23, & March 9, 2013 (Snow date is March 16, 2013)**
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Can I change my merit badge selection after completing my Registration?

Generally not, but here are two exceptions that can be discussed with the MBC Event Registrar.

- If the Scout completes a merit badge that he signed up to take, he will be granted a change provided an alternate badge can be found at the same time.
- An extenuating circumstance dictates a change. For example, the Scout has signed up for Dog Care and his dog died since sending in the form, then efforts will be made to provide an alternate badge.

How do I contact the MBC Event Registrar about my class?

Dixie Heights High School: Andy Fine, trailblazermbc@gmail.com

Fairfield High School: Tom Montgomery, montgota@fuse.net

Sycamore High School: Hal Wood, halwoodmbc@yahoo.com

Bethel High School: Cassie Anderson, cassiea1@roadrunner.com

Does a Scout have to take a merit badge all three sessions?

Our policy with the high schools is that a Scout participating in the event is to be in class all three sessions. They are not permitted to be wandering around the school or pass the time in the lunchroom. By pre-arrangement with the Registrar they may attend fewer than 3 sessions, but must leave the school property when not attending class.

Who do I contact to find out the name of one of my Counselors?

This information has been provided to the Boy Scout, by his Counselor, on the first day of the class. Look inside the Merit Badge Book for the Counselor contact information.

Special note on Music Merit Badge

The playing and reading skills needed for the Music Merit Badge would suggest at least two years of playing with individual lessons. You must be able to sight read a song chosen by the counselor; therefore, if you can't read music you can not pass. You must also demonstrate good technique, phrasing, tone, rhythm and dynamics which all are not normally acquired by beginners (those with less than 2 years experience).

Note, musical training is not provided at the Merit Badge Challenge. A Scout should register for this badge only if adequate musical proficiency can be demonstrated. The Merit Badge Challenge staff and the music counselors strongly suggest the Scout first review the requirements with an adult knowledgeable in his musical abilities before committing to this badge.

It's already July and my son never got his blue card. What should I do?

Merit badge counselors are instructed to put their name and contact information on the board at each session. Your son should have copied down this information for just this reason. In addition, when the counselor returns the blue card to the scout, the name, address and telephone number of the counselor should be filled in. Call the counselor and see what the problem is. The MBC staff has no records of classroom activities, no ability to generate copies of records, and little influence over the counselors.

I paid my registration fee for the MBC but my son didn't get anything from it.

The fee covers some of the costs of holding the event. Attendance at all three MBC sessions and completion of the pre-work, exercises, worksheets and other activities is the only way to earn Merit Badges. You cannot 'buy' Merit Badges. At the MBC, scouts are provided the opportunity and access to knowledgeable counselors who are volunteering their time to help scouts learn the material. Whether the scouts complete the requirements or not is completely up to them.

Why can't my son change classes to be with his friends? My son didn't get the badges he signed up for. My son was assigned to a badge he already has or did not want to take.

Scheduling a large number of youth for the various MBC classes is one of the most tedious tasks of the MBC – the challenge of the MBC, so to speak. Registrations are accepted on a first-come, first-served basis. And the rules are quite clear, for example, no more than two Eagle-required badges. The Registrar does their best to fit the scouts into their requested classes providing that they meet the criteria. If their request does not meet the criteria, he may schedule the scout for classes that are available to the best of his ability, filling sessions and time slots to minimum and maximum levels. As this process continues, classes may be added (if there are more applicants and counselors can be recruited) or dropped if too few sign up.