

## COVID-19 FAQ

### In-Person Unit Activities

**Q:** Should we hold in-person Scouting meetings, outings, or activities?

With safety in mind and based on guidance from national health officials, the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) is strongly advising that in-person meetings, activities, events and gatherings be suspended through the end of April. This applies to youth and adults out of an abundance of caution. Please also follow any restrictions outlined by your state and local health department or other local officials.

**Q:** What do we do about Scouts' fundraising activities?

The BSA is strongly advising that in-person activities be suspended through the end of April so any in-person fundraising should be postponed. If fundraising activities can be facilitated using digital methods while still adhering to applicable rules, then those activities may continue. For plans beyond that date, the BSA will continue to monitor the guidance as the COVID-19 pandemic evolves and will further update guidance accordingly.

**Q:** What is BSA's policy on social distancing in a tenting environment when camping?

With safety in mind and based on guidance from national health officials, the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) is strongly advising that in-person meetings, activities, events and gatherings be suspended through the end of April. This applies to youth and adults out of an abundance of caution. Please also follow any restrictions outlined by your state and local health department or other state and local authorities.

Beyond this timeframe, tent buddies should not participate if ill. There is no formal policy on social distancing in tents, just as there is no prohibition on tenting alone if logistics can accommodate that request.

**Q:** If council and district events are cancelled, how should units decide whether to cancel or postpone their own events?

With safety in mind and based on guidance from national health officials, the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) is strongly advising that in-person meetings, activities, events and gatherings suspended through the end of April. If you council has cancelled events based upon local restrictions, then units should follow that guidance.

**Q:** What are the refund policies if I have already paid for an event that has been cancelled?

Event organizers typically set refund or cancellation policies. Please reach out directly to those organizers. In the case of attendance at a national high adventure base, contact them directly about your crew.

## Camping this Summer

**Q:** What if I cannot get a new Part C, pre-placement exam because my healthcare provider is not taking well care exams now?

We are evaluating all options while being mindful of those who have valid exams as well as those new members and adults who may have never completed a Part C exam, state and local authority requirements, and the special review required by high adventure programs. In the interim, we recommend that council health supervisors, camp staff, and volunteers begin a conversation on local availability of well exams and alternatives that could be put in place.

**Q:** My Wilderness First Aid Course has been cancelled; can I still go on my trek?

Current Wilderness First Aid (WFA) certification will continue to be required for all backcountry adventures. As a reminder, a current CPR/AED certification is a pre-requisite for a WFA course.

We are working with our partners at the American Red Cross and the Emergency Care and Safety Institute to look for solutions in response to the current situation.

**Note:** Online-only WFA courses do not meet the WFA requirement. As we review the issue, we suggest you begin working with your council's WFA trainers to develop a plan for classes during the month of May or early June.

## Advancement

**Q:** How can advancement be tracked remotely?

Scouting units should use Scoutbook to record and track advancement.

To track advancement remotely, parents should:

- » Connect with their child's member profile via an invitation that the unit leader sends within Scoutbook. You may also connect to your youth via the Scouting app "Add a Parent connection."
- » Once a connection is made, the parent should use the Scouting app, found in both the App Store and on Google Play, to stay connected with their unit.

» The Scouting app provides parents the ability to report any advancement that was completed at home.

Learn more about how to start using Scoutbook and how to connect parents to their Scouts at [Scoutbook.com](https://scoutbook.com).

## Advancement – Cub Scouts

**Q:** May parents sign off on Webelos and Arrow of Light requirements?

**Yes.** Through July 31, 2020, parents and other adults in the Cub Scout's family, may sign off on Webelos and Arrow of Light requirements. We strongly encourage that parents use the Scouting App or ScoutBook to record completion of their child's requirements.

**Q:** If my den is behind in advancement due to COVID-19, can my Cub Scout continue to work on advancement through the summer?

**Yes.** Cub Scouts can continue to work on their current den's advancement through July 31, 2020. This is to provide any additional time a Cub Scout needs to complete their badge of rank; if they earn their badge of rank prior to July 31, 2020, they may advance to the next rank.

**Q:** Can the Arrow of Light (fifth-grade dens) requirements fulfill the requirement to visit a troop or attend a troop outing to function as a patrol?

**Yes.** Two things to keep in mind, the standard of completion for Cub Scout advancement is "Do Your Best," so given the circumstances, we want to look at the purpose behind the requirements. Remember that doing nothing is never doing your best.

Dens can visit a virtual troop meeting to see the patrol method and youth leadership in action. Since the den cannot attend a troop campout or outing, the idea is for the den to function as a patrol while attending the virtual troop meeting. During this time, a virtual den meeting where the den functions as a patrol can be done. Elect a patrol leader, pick a patrol name, play a virtual game together as a patrol. Plenty of opportunities to Do Your Best to meet the intention of the requirement. Remember to maintain all youth protection standards online.

## Advancement – Scouts BSA, Venturing and Sea Scouts

**Q:** May merit badge requirements or rank requirements be modified?

**No.** All requirements must be completed as written. If meetings or activities are canceled or limited, youth should continue to work on requirements as far as possible. By employing common sense and creative solutions, many requirements—even Scoutmaster conferences—can be fulfilled through videoconferencing or telephone calls.

**Q: Can merit badge counseling or Nova/Supernova counseling be done using digital technologies like Zoom or WebEx?**

Yes, registered merit badge counselors or Nova counselors/Supernova mentors may work with youth using digital platforms, ensuring that all youth protection measures noted in the Guide to Safe Scouting and BSA's social media guidelines are in place. In addition to youth protection, the advancement guidelines in Guide to Advancement (GTA) Section 7 are required.

**Q: Are merit badge counselors allowed to provide online instruction?**

Yes. Merit badge counselors should follow the guidelines in the Guide to Advancement 7.0.3.2 and ensure you are adhering to all youth protection requirements and online communications guidelines. It is acceptable—and sometimes preferable—for merit badges to be taught in group settings, including online instruction. We currently allow group instruction at camp and merit badge midways, fairs, clinics, or similar events. These can be efficient methods, and interactive group discussions can support learning. Gathering a group online can also be beneficial. Guest experts and speakers that assist registered and approved counselors may be more willing to speak to a larger online audience. Slide shows, skits, demonstrations, panels, and various other techniques can also be employed, but as any teacher can attest, not everyone will learn all the material. Therefore, the standards we use to verify that each Scout has fulfilled requirements must not be relaxed. Merit badge counselors must be sure that each Scout has individually gained the knowledge intended. When accomplished, counselors can easily sign off requirements via ScoutBook.

**Q: Can I connect directly with my Scouts/Venturers/Sea Scouts if I am a merit badge counselor?**

Yes. In ScoutBook, merit badge counselors can now connect directly with the Scouts they are counseling; see <https://discussions.scouting.org/t/march-23-2020-scoutbook-updates/165970> NOTE: Scouts still must get approval from their leader, according to Guide to Advancement 7.0.3.0, prior to starting work on a merit badge.

**Q: How will I know if a Scout/Venturer/Sea Scout has obtained approval from their leader to work on a merit badge?**

In the member profile, you will see if the leader has signed off with their approval.

**Q: What if my member profile shows that my merit badge counselor status has expired: Check with your council. Local councils may need to upload their latest list of approved merit badge counselors.**

**Q: Will unit leaders know that a merit badge counselor has connected with one of their Scouts/Venturers/Sea Scouts?**

Yes. The unit Key 3 will receive an email that includes the name of the merit badge counselor, the Scout, and the name of the merit badge.

Q: What if I have other merit badge/ScoutBook questions?  
See <https://help.scoutbook.com/knowledge-base/scoutbook-merit-badge-counselor-council-upload-faq/>

Q: May time missed due to canceled unit meetings count toward active participation requirements?

Yes. If youth are registered and in good standing, a disruption from COVID-19 virus can be the “noteworthy circumstance” that prevents participation. This policy has been in place for many years and is explained in GTA Topic 4.2.3.1.

Q: May time missed due to canceled unit meetings count toward position of responsibility requirements?

Yes. If youth are registered and unable to meet the expectations of their positions because of COVID-19 disruptions, then units may need to waive or rethink the expectations. Just as youth must not be held to unestablished expectations, they must not be held to expectations that are impossible to fulfill. See GTA Topic 4.2.3.4, “Positions of Responsibility,” with its six subtopics.

Q: Does the National Council grant extensions of time to complete rank requirements beyond the 18<sup>th</sup> birthday for the Eagle or 21<sup>st</sup> birthday for Summit or Quartermaster?

Yes, but only for the Eagle Scout rank as described in GTA Topic 9.0.4.0 or for Venturing Summit or Sea Scout Quartermaster as described in GTA Topic 4.3.3.0. Unit leadership must become familiar with the five tests under 9.0.4.0. The tests were designed to accommodate such obstacles as those presented by COVID-19 disruptions.

Q: Will youth who are not yet Life Scouts be allowed to apply for an extension to earn the Eagle Scout rank?

Extensions are considered only for Scouts who are Life rank. If, once a Scout achieves Life rank, it turns out that COVID-19 disruptions along the way have left them with insufficient time to complete Eagle requirements, then this may be cited when the time comes to submit an extension request.

Q: May local councils grant extensions?

Normally, that is not allowed. However, due to the current situation—effective immediately and through September 30, 2020—council Scout executives may grant extensions, or delegate authority to the Council Advancement Committee to grant extensions under the following limitations:

- » It can be established that COVID-19 disruptions were the only circumstances that delayed work on Eagle Scout/Summit/Summit/Quartermaster advancement requirements, such as the service project or merit badges. If any other causes were involved, the extension request must go to the National Council following the process outlined in the GTA.
  - » Extensions shall only be granted to youth in Scouts BSA who have already achieved Life rank.
  - » When the council receives a COVID-19-related request for a time extension, the council reviews the request and approves it if appropriate. A written response stating the outcome of the extension request must go to the youth. If approved, the notification must be attached to the youth's Eagle/Summit/Quartermaster rank application. For Eagle, the extension must not exceed 3 months from the youth's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday; for Summit/Quartermaster, the extension must not exceed 3 months from the youth's 21<sup>st</sup>.
  - » Upon turning 18, the Scout must submit a completed adult application and successfully complete YPT; their participant code will now be UP for SBSA or VP for Venturing and Sea Scouting.
  - » Extension requests for more than 3 months beyond the youth's 18<sup>th</sup>/21<sup>st</sup> birthday must be sent to the National Service Center following the process outlined in the GTA.
- Note:** A "month" in BSA advancement is defined as a day from one month to the next. For example, March 5 to April 5.
- The authority for councils to grant extensions is temporary, lasting only through Sept. 30, 2020.
- Q:** If youth have already received an extension, can they request additional time due to COVID-19?
- Yes.** Council Scout executives may grant extensions, or delegate authority to the Council Advancement Committee to grant extensions under the limitations listed above.
- Q:** What should be done while an extension request is being considered?
- Youth should continue to work on advancement in so far as they are able—e.g., independently, or over the phone or videoconference—and at Scouting activities once they resume.
- Q:** Are extensions required when an Eagle/Summit/Quartermaster board of review must be delayed?
- No.** Councils may grant Eagle/Summit/Quartermaster boards of review up to six months after the youth's 18<sup>th</sup>/21<sup>st</sup> birthday. See GTA Topic 8.0.3.1, "Eagle Scout Board of Review Beyond the 18th Birthday."

See also, GTA Topic 8.0.1.6, "Boards of Review Through Videoconferencing."

**Q: Are electronic or digital signatures acceptable for rank advancement or for the Eagle/Summit/Quartermaster packets/applications?**

**Yes. Electronic or digital signatures will be accepted through September 30, 2020.**

**Q: How can a youth continue to work on advancement requirements if they don't have internet or high-speed internet for videoconferencing?**

**Youth may take a picture of their completed activity/requirement and share the work with unit leaders. In keeping with Youth Protection Training policies, all communications from youth should be sent to at least two adults. Parents or guardians may send advancement work on behalf of their child.**