

California Inland Empire Council
Council Advancement Committee

Group Merit Badge Day Policies & Instructions

This California Inland Empire Council (CIEC) policy is to ensure that all Merit Badges earned in a group setting are instructed and earned in compliance with the aims and goals of scouting. It is perfectly appropriate to have scouts earn merit badges in groups, however it is important that we follow the principles of the Merit Badge plan. The National Executive Board provides this policy statement on Merit Badge counseling:

To the fullest extent possible, the Merit Badge counseling relationship is a counselor– Scout arrangement in which the boy is not only judged on his performance of the requirements, but receives maximum benefit from the knowledge, skill, character, and personal interest of his counselor. Group instruction and orientation are encouraged where special facilities and expert personnel make this most practical, or when scouts are dependent on only a few counselors for assistance. However, this group experience should be followed by attention to each individual candidate’s projects and his ability to fulfill all requirements.

In the end, **the Scout must be reviewed individually by the counselor** to ensure completion of the badge’s requirements.

General Guidelines for All Group Merit Badge Day Instruction

- A. The Council Advancement Committee shall:
 1. Post this policy on the Council’s Advancement website;
 2. Publicize the policy through the District Roundtables;
 3. Maintain current District Merit Badge Counselor lists;
 4. Receive and give prompt review to all applications for Group Merit Badge day events.

- B. Class structure and operations must comply with the following:
 1. The class size shall be limited to a typical patrol size (8 to 10 scouts) for each counselor, to provide sufficient opportunity for individual review with each Scout.
 2. A single Merit Badge session must be a minimum of two hours in length. Depending on the Merit Badge, pre-requisites allow the Merit Badge to be completed in the time allotted.
 3. Each class must be taught by a qualified and certified Merit Badge counselor who is registered (for the Merit Badge they are instructing) within a California Inland Empire Council District. All event counselors must be trained in the aims of Scouting and in advancement procedures, and are required to have their Youth Protection Training current.

4. No more than three badges shall be earned by any Scout in a single Merit Badge Day's event. Only one of the Merit Badges earned at an event can be an Eagle required Merit Badge. These statements must be included in all advertisements and fliers.
5. The location of the event must provide an appropriate venue for reviewing the subject matter of the Merit Badge(s).
6. Merit Badge requirements cannot be altered in any way to fit the event format. For example, if the requirement is for a Scout to create a spreadsheet on a computer, they must do it individually and not as a group. Showing the Scout how to do a requirement does not meet the requirement for the Scout to demonstrate the requirement.
7. First Aid Merit Badge - requirement 3b requires current Red Cross or equivalent certification for CPR instruction. If the Merit Badge Counselor is not certified, any currently certified adult may conduct this training in support to the First Aid Merit Badge Counselor. Include a copy of the certification in the Group Merit Badge Day event documentation signed by the event point of contact.
8. The Guide to Advancement (No. 33088 - latest revision) specifies merit badges which have additional qualifications and certifications required of either the Merit Badge counselor or the person supervising.

General Supervision Requirements – Guide to Advancement No. 33088 (latest revision):
Swimming and watercraft activities must be conducted in accordance with BSA Safe Swim Defense or BSA Safety Afloat, respectively, and be supervised by mature and conscientious adults at least 21 years old and trained in the program applicable. Counselors for merit badges involving swimming or the use of watercraft must be so trained, or use others who are. CPR instruction, wherever it is required, must be taught by instructors currently trained by a nationally certified provider. Several such providers are mentioned in the *Guide to Safe Scouting*.

C. Advancement standards are:

1. The Scout must be reviewed individually by the counselor to ensure that he has met all of the requirements.
2. Partial credit must be given for partial completion of a Merit Badge and the completed requirement(s) must be signed off by the counselor on the Merit Badge application (blue card) by the conclusion of the event.
3. All attending Scouts must bring a Merit Badge application (blue card) with them, signed by their Unit Leader. Fliers and registration materials should urge Scouts to contact a counselor and complete certain requirements **prior to the event**. Blue cards shall not be issued at the event. (If a Scout does not bring a signed Blue Card, the Scout may not be signed-off at the event.)
4. Units must also provide an **Activity Consent Form and Approval by Parents or Legal Guardian** form.

Additional Guidelines for Group Merit Badge Day Events

D. Council Advancement Committee application approval should be requested at least 30 days in advance of the event date. The request must include:

1. A completed California Inland Empire Council Application for Group Merit Day with appropriate attachments.
2. Proposed publicity flier(s) showing the date, location, times, Merit Badges offered and permission slip with consent to treat a minor (see C.4). No fliers or other publicity may happen prior to approval by the California Inland Empire Council Advancement Committee and the Council Advancement Committee Advisor.
3. When circulated after approval, the flier(s) must note the approval of the event by the California Inland Empire Council Advancement Committee.

E. Group Merit Badge Day Fees

1. Registration fees may not exceed \$20 per Scout. Merit Badge Day fees are to cover the costs of running the event and are not to be used as a fundraiser.
2. Lunch must be optional, and may not exceed \$6.
3. In addition, reasonable material fees may be charged for Merit Badges requiring materials, which is in addition to the Registration Fee.

F. Event publicity fliers must state that Scouts who cannot afford the registration fee will be allowed to apply to the event sponsors for a scholarship.

G. Organization responsibilities include:

1. Complying with this policy and all other BSA activity and advancement policies.
2. Providing a list of all counselors and their phone numbers at the event for Scouts to follow-up and complete the partially approved badges.
3. Provide Merit Badge counselors that have been certified.

H. CIEC Group Merit Day Approved Merit Badges and Prerequisites: See the recommended CIEC Group Merit Day prerequisite list on the Advancement website.

1. No Merit Badge sessions will be approved for Merit Badge prerequisites that are "Do all requirements."
2. The Advancement Committee will consider special approvals if the Merit Badge Day point of contact can make a case for additional prerequisites in writing.
3. If the prerequisite list does not include any listed, attach an explanation of how you are planning to accomplish the unlisted prerequisites at your event.
4. If you plan to request offering a not normally permitted Merit Badge, attach an explanation of why this should be offered and how you plan to accomplish this Merit Badge.

Additional Notes:

1. Organizations planning group instruction for only the members of their unit do not need to obtain Council approval, but must meet all other requirements of this policy.
2. A Council-issued tour plan must be obtained when the nature or location of the event requires one (e.g., water safety. See the CIEC Council web site for the current tour plan policy).
3. A Trail to First Class session may be offered at a Group Merit Badge Day event. Only requirements appropriate to the time allowed for the event and the location are permitted. The Group Merit Badge Day application for the event must have attached an outline what requirements will be completed to gain approval. The flier for the event should notify Scouts that they must bring a written note from their Scoutmaster approving their attendance.
4. CIEC will only approve two Merit Badge events within the Council on any single date. No more than one event may occur within the same District on the same day. This will be decided based on the date of application for an event.
5. No Group Merit Badge Day event will be approved for days when a Council sponsored event is scheduled (Adventure Weekend, Scout-o-Rama, Scouting for Food, Camporee, etc.) The CIEC Advancement Committee reserves the right to decline approval for any event.
6. Scouts should dress in field uniform (shirt only is okay) for the event. The field uniform is determined by the Scout's unit (Venture Crew's specifically have a choice of uniform.) Shoe wear should be appropriate for the activities the Scout will be involved in. The point of this is not to add to the MB requirements, but to have the Scout in an appropriate attitude at the event.
7. When a Merit Badge is offered that requires the counselor's prior approval of any part of it, then either a phone number or email of that counselor needs to be provided. It is up to each participant to individually contact the counselor prior to the Merit Badge day to obtain that approval.

Group Merit Badge Day Flyer Recommended Items to Include:

1. Unit Type and Number
2. District
3. Location of Group Merit Badge Day, Name, Address, City, & Zip Code
4. Date of Group Merit Badge Day
5. Check-in Time, Start Time, 1st Session Start Time, Lunch Time, 2nd Session Start Time, End Time, etc.
7. Last Date to Register
8. Registration Information
9. Fee \$20 Maximum & Material Fee
10. Lunch Fee \$6 Maximum & give description of what is included
11. List of Merit Badges – include any prerequisites (no more than three merit badges may be offered)
12. Name of Point of Contact or Coordinator, E-mail
13. The statement: "Approved by the California Inland Empire Council Advancement Committee".