

ADVANCEMENT FOR BOY SCOUTS WITH DISABILITIES

Normal Advancement

All current requirements for an advancement award (ranks, merit badges, or Eagle Palms) must actually be met by the candidate. There are no substitutions or alternatives permitted except those which are specifically stated in the requirements as set forth in the current official literature of the Boy Scouts of America. Requests can be made for alternate rank requirements for Tenderfoot, Second Class, and First Class using the information outlined in this chapter. No council, district, unit, or individual has the authority to add to, or to subtract from, any advancement requirements. The Scout is expected to meet the requirements as stated—no more and no less. Furthermore, he is to do exactly what is stated. If it says, "show or demonstrate," that is what he must do. Just telling about it isn't enough. The same thing holds true for such words as "make," "list," "in the field," and "collect, identify, and label."

Alternate Requirements for Tenderfoot, Second Class, and First Class Ranks

A scout who has a permanent physical or mental disability and is unable to complete all of the requirements for Tenderfoot, Second Class, or First Class rank may submit a request to the council advancement committee to complete alternate requirements. Below are the procedures for applying for alternate requirements.

To keep Scouts with disabilities as much in the advancement mainstream as possible, some advancement accommodations may be required. Thus, a Scout in a wheelchair can meet the requirements for hiking by making a trip to a place of interest in his community. Giving more time and permitting the use of special aids are other ways leaders can help Scouts with disabilities in their efforts to advance. The substitute should provide a similar learning experience. Bear in mind the outcome of the Scouting experience should be one of fun and learning, and not completing requirements for rank advancements, which might place unrealistic expectations on the special-needs Scouts.

Step 1 – Do As Many Standard Requirements As Possible.

Before applying for alternate requirements, the Scout must complete as many of the standard requirements as his ability permits. He must do his very best to develop himself to the limit of his abilities and resources.

Step 2 – Secure a Medical Statement.

A clear and concise medical statement concerning the Scout's disabilities must be submitted by a licensed health-care provider. It must state that the disability is permanent and outline what physical activities the Scout may not be capable of completing. In the case of a mental disability, an evaluation statement should be submitted by a certified educational administrator relating the ability level of the Scout.

Step 3 – Prepare a Request for Alternate Requirements.

A written request must be submitted to the council advancement committee for the Scout to work on alternate requirements for Tenderfoot, Second Class, and First Class ranks. The request should include the standard requirements the Scout has completed and the suggested alternate requirements for those requirements the Scout cannot complete. This request should be detailed enough to give the advancement committee enough information to make a decision. The request should be prepared by the Scout, his parents, and his Scoutmaster. A copy of the medical statement in step 2 should be included.

Step 4 – The Advancement Committee Reviews the Request.

The council advancement committee should review the request, utilizing the expertise of professional persons involved in Scouts with disabilities. The advancement committee may want to interview the Scout, the parents, and the leader to fully understand the request and to make a fair determination. The decision of the advancement committee should be recorded and delivered to the Scout and the Scoutmaster.

The council committee responsible for advancement must then secure approval of the council executive board. The Scout Executive must attach a letter to the application indicating that the executive board has approved the application.

The candidate's application for the award must be made on the Eagle Scout Rank Application or Quartermaster Award Application and recoded on the Advancement Report form.

In the application of these policies for Scouts with special needs, reasonable accommodation in the performance of requirements for advancement may be made. These may include such things as the extension of time, adaptation of facilities, or the use of equipment or necessary devices consistent with the known physical or mental limitations of the handicapped individual. It is urged that common sense be employed.

STAR, LIFE, AND EAGLE RANKS

The focus of these ranks is merit badge completion. There are sufficient variety of non-Eagle required merit badges for the scout to be able to find merit badges they are able to complete. More often the problem comes in completing all of these Eagle required merit badges.

Alternate Merit Badges for the Eagle Scout Rank

1. The Eagle Scout rank may be achieved by a Boy Scout, Varsity Scout, or qualified* Explorer who has a physical or mental disability by qualifying for alternate merit badges. This does not apply to individual requirements for merit badges. Merit Badges are awarded only when all requirements are met as stated.
2. The physical or mental disability must be of a permanent rather than a temporary nature.
3. A clear and concise medical statement concerning the Scout's disabilities must be made by a physician licensed to practice medicine, or an evaluation statement must be certified by an educational administrator.
4. The candidate must earn as many of the required merit badges as his ability permits before applying for an alternate Eagle Scout rank merit badge.
5. The candidate must complete as many of the requirements of the required merit badges as his ability permits.
6. The Application for Alternate Eagle Scout Award Merit Badges must be completed prior to qualifying for alternate merit badges.
7. The alternate merit badges chosen must be of such a nature that they are as demanding of effort as the required merit badges.
8. When alternates chosen involve physical activity, they must be approved by the physician.
9. The unit leader and the board of review must explain that to attain the Eagle Scout rank, a candidate is expected to do his best in developing himself to the limit of his resources.
10. The application must be approved by the council committee responsible for advancement, utilizing the expertise of professional persons involved in Scouting for people with special needs.
11. The candidate's application for Eagle must be made on the Eagle Scout Rank Application, with the Application for Alternate Eagle Scout Award Merit Badges attached.