



POLICY FOR UNIT-SPONSORED MERIT BADGE EVENTS

This policy has been developed by San Diego-Imperial Council to ensure that merit badges earned in a group setting are instructed and earned in compliance with the aims and goals of Scouting. The information provided below is to assist units who would like to hold a group merit badge event. Any questions regarding this policy should be discussed with your District Advancement Chair.

Council, district, and unit merit badge events have become increasingly popular over the past several years. While they provide a service to Scouts, they should not be presented as fundraisers. Although charging fees for MB events is not prohibited, any fees charged should be limited to recovering the costs related to presenting the opportunity. Using merit badge events as fundraisers, however, is discouraged, and councils may exercise their authority not to approve them (*Guide to Advancement 2013: 7.0.4.10*).

The National Executive Board has approved this policy statement on MB 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.”

Note: Units planning group events for only the registered members of their unit are not required to obtain district and council approval, but must meet all other requirements of this policy.

General Guidelines for Unit-Sponsored Merit Badge (MB) Events

A. The Application Process

1. The Event Chair starts the MB Event approval process with enough lead time to deliver the completed approval package to their District Advancement Chair at least **90 days prior to the date of the MB Event**.
2. The Event Chair should obtain the following documents from the council website:
<http://www.sdicsa.org/Advancement/>
 - a. Policy for Unit-Sponsored Merit Badge Event
 - b. Approval for Unit-Sponsored Merit Badge Event
3. 90 days prior to the event:
 - a. Event Chair emails the completed and electronically signed Approval for Unit-Sponsored Merit Badge Event to their District Advancement Chair
 - b. Attach the unit promotional flyer
4. 30 days prior to the event:
 - a. Event Chair verifies that confirmed MB Counselors are currently registered council-wide for the merit badge they will instruct.
 - b. Event Chair emails the list of confirmed MB Counselors to their District Advancement Chair.

B. District and Council Approval should be requested at least 90 days prior to the event date. The Request must include the following:

1. Completed Approval for Unit-Sponsored Merit Badge Event
2. List of merit badges to be offered, with prerequisites (The list of confirmed MB Counselors must be submitted 30 days prior to the event)
3. Promotional flyer

C. Recommended Best Practices for Event Fees

1. Units who wish to charge an event fee are encouraged to charge no more than their expected costs.
2. It is recommended that event fees should not exceed \$10.00 per Scout.
3. Lunch must be optional.
4. Reasonable material fees may be charged for merit badges requiring materials, which is in addition to the event fee.

D. Event Publicity Flyers

1. Must include: Unit type/number, Event Chair/email, event date, location, session schedules, merit badges offered, and prerequisites for each MB.
2. Must state "A Scout may earn only one Eagle-required merit badge."
3. Must state that scholarships are available.
4. Unit may provide 150-175 copies of flyer to their District Executive for council display and Roundtable distribution.

E. Advancement Standards (Guide to Advancement 2013: 7.0.0.3 and 7.0.3.2):

The Counselor must agree to follow advancement standards in the Guide to Advancement, which include the following:

1. Each Scout must bring a completed MB Application (blue card) signed by a unit leader. If a Scout does not bring a signed blue card, the Scout should not be signed off at the event.
2. Counselors must agree to sign off only requirements that Scouts have actually completed. If a Scout does not complete all the requirements, the counselor simply indicates and initials those that were fulfilled in the spaces provided on the back of the blue card (a partial completion).
3. Counselors agree not to assume prerequisites have been completed without some level of evidence that the work has been done. Scouts must bring appropriate proof of completion of prerequisites (photos, statements from adults, etc.) and be prepared to discuss, demonstrate, and be tested on all prerequisites, if required by the counselor.
4. Completing worksheets from meritbadge.org may suffice where a requirement calls for something in writing, but this would not work for a requirement where the Scout must discuss, tell, show, or demonstrate, etc. Note that Scouts shall not be required to use these learning aids in order to complete a MB (Guide to Advancement 2013: 7.0.4.8).

F. Session Structure and Operations

1. Each session must be taught by a qualified individual.
2. A single merit badge session must be of sufficient length to ensure that requirements are adequately covered. All prerequisites must be identified prior to the event.

3. The session size shall be limited to provide sufficient opportunity for individual review with each Scout. Additional individuals may assist the MB Counselor for small group break-out sessions to allow for individual review. Unit-created written tests are not allowed.
4. No more than two merit badges shall be earned by any Scout in a single MB event. Only one of the merit badges earned may be an Eagle-required MB.
5. The location of the event must provide an appropriate venue for reviewing the subject matter of the merit badges.
6. Requirements may not be altered in any manner to fit the event format. For example, if the requirement is for a Scout to create a spreadsheet on a computer, he must do it individually and not as a group.
7. If a requirement uses words like “show,” “demonstrate,” or “discuss,” then every Scout must do that. It is unacceptable to award a MB on the basis of sitting in classrooms *watching* demonstrations or *remaining silent* during discussions.

G. Additional Notes:

1. No MB event will be approved for dates when a council-sponsored event is scheduled. The San Diego-Imperial Council Advancement Committee reserves the right to decline approval for any event.
2. Scouts should dress in field uniform for the event with appropriate shoes. The point of this is not to add to the MB requirements, but to have the Scout in an appropriate attitude at the event.
3. When a MB 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 to the Scout. It is up to each Scout to contact the counselor prior to the MB event to obtain that approval.
4. Unit leaders or others may report MB counseling issues and concerns to their District Advancement Chair. Complete and submit the Reporting Merit Badge Counseling Concerns form that may be downloaded from the council website: <http://www.sdicsa.org/Advancement>.

H. District Advancement Chair

1. Reviews the documents in a timely manner (within two weeks) and checks that all policies are being followed.
2. If all documents are in order, the District Advancement Chair electronically signs the Approval for Unit-Sponsored Badge Event or,
3. If the documentation is not complete, the District Advancement Chair notifies the Event Chair, with deficiencies noted.
4. District Advancement Chair emails the signed approval form to the Council Advancement Chair.
5. District Advancement Chair emails final approval to the Event Chair.

I. Council Advancement Chair

1. Reviews the documents in a timely manner (within two weeks) and electronically signs the Approval for Unit-Sponsored Merit Badge Event.
2. Emails approval to the District Advancement Chair.
3. Emails the appropriate documents to the Council Activities Chair for subsequent posting on the council website.